

**Draft Version 3.3, October 9, 2023**  
**Section 6, Ongoing and Future Work**  
**Blueprint for the Keweenaw Heartlands**

*This draft will be incorporated into the final Blueprint but is being released online in draft form in the interests of transparency. This and other sections completed before publication of the final Blueprint will be subject to at least one additional round of editing to ensure consistency, clarity, accuracy, and flow in the final document.*

With the publication of this Blueprint, the initial phase of engagement with and gathering feedback from the residents, visitors and businesses interested in the future of the Keweenaw Heartlands comes to a close. The Blueprint represents the summary of the values and desired outcomes the authors heard from a wide range of interests and synthesizes that input into actionable recommendations for community leaders to consider and implement. However, to quote Winston Churchill's famous words from 1942, "...this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." Successfully implementing this Blueprint and managing the Heartlands for the benefit of the people, economy, environment, and culture of the region will require ongoing hard work and some immediate next steps.

This section memorializes some of the most important components of that work identified by the community and refined by the Blueprint Planning Committee, TNC, and DNR. Some of that work has already been initiated but much has yet to be started. While some of the work is directly related to successfully transitioning the Heartlands itself to local ownership, governance and management, there are discrete topical bodies of work (e.g. infrastructure, affordable workforce and family housing, public safety, economic and business transition and development, community leadership capacity) that while not directly part of the Heartlands project, are none the less exacerbated by the growing use of and interest in the property. If not successfully addressed, these issues can undercut long term public support and the ability to care for the Heartlands. Some elements of this work may be required or advisable prerequisites for other elements. For instance, ongoing community engagement will be essential for creating a long-term governance structure that is trusted by the people of The Keweenaw.

Finally, rural communities across the US, where many of our most treasured natural landscapes are located, have struggled for decades with population loss, limited economic opportunity and the transfer of material wealth and human capital out of their communities to distant urban centers. The Heartlands creates a community asset around which the region's residents can build a sustainable future. The work to date and the next steps outlined in this chapter were generated by 18 months of resident and stakeholder engagement and are intended to be a roadmap to that future.

The Heartlands project has three distinct, overlapping phases:

1. Phase One: Acquisition, Blueprint Development and Initial Management
  - Initiate community engagement process to develop a common vision for the property among stakeholders, based upon shared community values.
  - TNC acquires the Heartlands (complete).
  - TNC manages the Heartlands.

- Complete this Blueprint, including its governance and management structure recommendations.
2. Phase Two: Transition of Governance and Management
    - Conduct an inventory of natural, cultural/historical, timber/carbon, and infrastructure assets (e.g., roads, culverts) and develop recommendations for stewardship, management, and sustainable uses of the Heartlands.
    - Complete a utilization study to determine how the land is used and what portions are best suited for various activities.
    - Continue robust stakeholder engagement to further refine plans for addressing topical bodies of work, including (but not limited to):
      - Community Infrastructure
      - Land Management
      - Public Use and Access
      - Public Safety
      - Affordable Workforce and Family Housing
      - Economic and Business Transition and Development
      - Leadership Development
    - Develop a mechanism which allows a small percentage of Heartlands to be used for non-conservation, community purposes, including but not limited to housing, public infrastructure and emergency services.
    - Determine final plan for ownership and governance and create local ownership, governance and management entity(s).
    - Develop a financial sustainability plan.
    - Develop a land transition strategy appropriate to the governance structure selected.
    - Begin to transition ownership, governance, and management from TNC to ultimate governing entities.
  3. Phase Three: Long-Term, Local and State Governance and Management
    - Fully transfer the land to ultimate governing entities.
    - Ongoing ownership and management by ultimate governing entities.

**1. Recommended Next Steps for Successful Transition of Heartlands into Public Ownership**

**a. Inventorizing the Land**

Previous sections of this Blueprint emphatically call for data-informed governance, management, and land-use decision-making for the Keweenaw Heartlands, and stress the importance of developing, publicizing and adhering to data-informed plans. A common point made by Blueprint interviewees was that no comprehensive inventory exists documenting the environmental, cultural, historical, and geological assets of the Heartlands, and that past mineral and forest inventories were generally focused on determining commercially valuable resource extraction opportunities.

TNC also identified the need for an initial inventory of these assets to guide their interim management, place appropriate protections on important sites before transferring lands to new owners and inform management recommendations to future public owners. This was reinforced by the input of survey

respondents, public meeting participants and planning committee members. TNC commenced this inventory in spring 2023 with a goal of documenting the status of ecological, cultural, forest resource (timber and carbon), and infrastructure features.

This first step by TNC, while critically necessary, is not intended or expected to fully identify all the unique and valuable sites across more than 32,000 acres of the Heartlands. TNC and various stakeholders recognize that ongoing assessment and additional inventories may be necessary. In part this is because of the dynamic nature of ecological systems and their response to human management choices and a changing climate, as well as the ongoing process of discovery across the Heartlands. These efforts may focus on a subsection of the Heartlands or on a particular class of assets, set of species, type of habitat, physical feature of the land, or other sets of characteristics.

#### **b. Community Infrastructure Assessment**

Since the inception of this project, there has been a recognition that there are non-conservation community needs that might be met by using a small portion of the Heartlands acreage. It is not likely that all those needs can be quantified, and specific parcels identified before TNC transfers land to its final operating entity. TNC will develop language in the transfer documents that identifies areas within the Heartlands that could be suitable for non-conservation uses that may be required in the future. One of the most significant, allowable, non-conservation uses for small portions of the Keweenaw Heartlands will be to accommodate the development of critical public infrastructure.

Addressing infrastructure needs of the County and its communities will likely require use of at least some of the Keweenaw Heartlands' lands. For instance, local officials have reported that the only known site suitable for a new wellfield to assure Copper Harbor has an adequate future water supply is located on Keweenaw Heartlands' property.

However, experience from RES Associates' work across rural America has demonstrated that few communities are fully aware of their infrastructure needs. This is particularly true for underground infrastructure such as water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems, where the needs are usually "out of sight, out of mind" – until it breaks.

The need for communities to better understand and manage their water infrastructure is reinforced in Michigan by the creation in 2013 of the SAW (Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater) grant program that provides communities the resources to develop water asset management plans and in 2018 the passage of Public Act 324, which created the Michigan Water Asset Management Council specifically to help communities develop asset management plans for their water infrastructure.

This lack of broader public awareness often extends to electrical distribution systems and community facilities such as courthouses, schools, EMS facilities, fire stations and jails. As a result, identifying and addressing any of these needs is often reactionary and "crisis driven," which results in response efforts that are more expensive and often less effective. Communities with limited resources can least afford to be reactive.

Interviews with public officials and others strongly suggest that public awareness of infrastructure issues in Keweenaw County follows this pattern. While some public officials cited specific known infrastructure issues, such as the lack of an adequate water supply in Copper Harbor, no comprehensive inventory and assessment of current infrastructure or overall plan for repairs, replacement or upgrades exists.

A Community Infrastructure Assessment will be a critical early activity for the community to identify which, if any, of these lands may be necessary to address the non-conservation needs of the area.

### **c. Understanding Current Utilization**

Another critical early step for the Heartlands will be generating more and better data about the patterns of utilization for recreational, provisioning and other purposes. While this step does not have to be completed before the transition in ownership and management begins, better data and analysis will be prerequisites to many of the ongoing stakeholder engagement processes and is critical information for effective management planning.

When interviewees and survey respondents were asked about how they use the land, a broad and deep set of uses emerged. While the ATV, snowmobile, mountain bike and hunting and fishing users are well organized and their uses get most public attention, the data show that less organized, more individual uses like tent camping, self-provisioning (gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.), kayaking, hiking and sightseeing far outstrip the organized uses in number of participants. However, these data do not quantify the intensity or frequency of various uses. In addition, unlike the ATV, snowmobile and mountain bike users who largely confine their activities to established trail networks, the locations where other activities are conducted are not well understood.

Both the principle calling for governing the Heartlands using data-informed plans and the principles seeking balance among various uses and separation of incompatible uses require a better understanding of which users are doing what, where and when.

Additionally, this Blueprint calls for the development of amenities that would improve the visitor experience and reduce the negative impacts of visitors' uses of the land. Some locations needing amenities such as parking, sanitary facilities, refuse containers, or campsites may be self-evident. However, more study and data are required to best plan where to site amenities to distribute visitors more widely and reduce their impact on the Heartland's most popular features.

## **2. Establishing the Long-Term Governance Structure - Essential Groundwork for Phase Three**

At the time of publication of this Blueprint, perhaps the most critical need for the Keweenaw Heartlands is to create a local governance structure for the portion of the Heartlands that is not conveyed to and directly managed by MDNR. That structure should provide mechanisms to coordinate with MDNR to maintain and align with the values identified in this Blueprint for the Keweenaw Heartlands.<sup>1</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup>Given its commitment to ensuring that local governments are made whole for revenues that would otherwise be lost as lands transition to public or nonprofit ownership, local stakeholders strongly prefer

Planning Committee was formed to affirm the community values that the governance structure is guided by, and the attributes of the governing structure that would best align with these values.

The Planning Committee and TNC spent nearly a full day at the Committee's final meeting in June 2023, discussing and planning how to tackle this critical task. The process they developed has five major steps:

- Finalize the Desired Governance Structure
- Complete the Necessary Legislative Process
- Create a Financial Sustainability Plan
- Create the New Governing Entity
- Develop and Implement a Land Transition Strategy

These steps are discussed in Sections a. through e., below.

**a. Finalize the Desired Governance Structure**

Finalizing the Governance Structure for the lands that are transferred to a local governing entity (vs. those acquired by MDNR) is envisioned by the Planning Committee and TNC as an iterative process. It must involve a series of discussions with local units of government, key legislators, and the public. The Committee and TNC identified the preferred structure discussed in Section 5 and charted a process to determine and adopt the final structure but understand that the structure and path may need to be adapted along the way. The key element is dialogue to ensure that stakeholders, local elected leaders, and state legislators are all onboard with the final governance model recommended.

**b. Complete the Necessary Legislative Process**

No form of special purpose local unit of government currently authorized by Michigan law has all the critical or desired features described in Section 4 of this Blueprint. All the special purpose units of government currently enabled by Michigan law were created to address unique circumstances that could not be adequately addressed under previous law. Therefore, given the unique circumstances and the broad public consensus that has been developed in the Keweenaw Heartlands, it is reasonable to anticipate working with the Michigan Legislature to explore new legislation or statute modifications necessary to create the desired structure.

TNC's history of working with the Michigan Legislature and various state agencies to complete important conservation projects across the state makes it uniquely qualified to champion the process of obtaining necessary legislative approval and action. In addition, MDNR participated in the Project Oversight Team and all Planning Committee and Public Meetings associated with the Blueprint process. This provides the opportunity for MDNR to vouch for the process used to create this Blueprint and verify that the people of the Keweenaw and other stakeholders broadly supported it.

Working with the legislature to enable creation of a governance structure with the desired characteristics also requires an iterative process. This process has been ongoing for months as TNC staff

---

to see this governance structure own and manage any additional lands that may be conserved on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

have met with key legislators and their staff to inform and update them about the project's progress. Completion of the process is anticipated by early- to mid-2024 following the finalization of the desired governing structure discussed in the previous subsection.

### **c. Create a Financial Sustainability Plan**

Given the small local population base and the limited amount of taxable property, stakeholders understand that local taxes are insufficient to take on the additional costs of managing the Heartlands. At every step of the stakeholder engagement process, stakeholders raised questions and concerns about how a governing entity would support management and operations of the Heartlands. Stakeholders see securing new sources of revenue as crucial to the ongoing success of The Heartlands' acquisition and preservation efforts.

Building a successful management and operations funding model requires a deep understanding of costs and revenues, and creation of a sustainable business plan that balances sources and uses of funds. Particular attention to short and long-term revenue opportunities ranging from carbon offset credits to concessionaire arrangements to parking and user fees will be required to ensure sufficient revenue to both meet management costs and to replace the economic contribution of the Heartlands to local government coffers.

Fortunately, consolidation under public ownership creates new opportunities for revenue generation. In addition, there is wide recognition that achieving the environmental and community benefits desired from The Heartlands will require a stable stream of operating revenues sufficient to cover management and operating costs. TNC has committed to helping community leaders quantify the financial need, identify likely and potential revenue streams and help the community secure appropriate technical assistance to put in place the revenue streams required for successful management of the Heartlands.

TNC also recognizes that these revenue streams may not be sufficient to support the most desirable level of management and operations for the Heartlands. Therefore, it has committed to assist community efforts to establish an endowment to help support ongoing stewardship. TNC is also exploring potential sources of grant funds to help support Heartlands management and operations.

### **d. Create the New Governing Entity**

Following enactment of necessary enabling legislation, TNC will collaborate with local elected officials and stakeholders to create the new governing entity before the lands pass into local ownership and management. The exact nature of this work cannot be fully determined until the legislation is enacted, but the legislation cannot be pursued until the necessary community conversations occur to focus in on the final desired attributes of the governing entity. We can anticipate that local and state officials and staff will, with TNC assistance, undertake the following steps in the coming months:

1. Draft proposed governing instruments and necessary explanatory materials.
2. Conduct an iterative review of the proposed governing instruments with community members and various stakeholder groups.

3. Secure statutory changes necessary to allow local government(s) to establish the governing entity with the desired authority, transparency and accountability mechanisms
4. Execute the required ordinances, public hearings and/or articles of incorporation and bylaws to establish the new entity.
5. Conduct elections or other activities as specified in the items executed under step 4 to operationalize the local entity.

In addition, once formed, a variety of steps will be required to create committees, adopt plans, etc. These steps can be informed by this and other Sections of this Blueprint but cannot be fully determined until the final form of the governing entity is settled.

#### **e. Develop and Implement a Land Transition Strategy**

TNC and MDNR have already begun to formulate transition strategies for portions of the Heartlands that MDNR desires to ultimately own. The first piece to transfer will likely be the sections subject to a grant currently recommended by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and included by the legislature in the appropriations for the MDNR for the fiscal year starting October 1, 2023. Transfer of other parcels is under discussion between MDNR and TNC. However, at the time of publication of this Blueprint it is premature to describe which parcels might transfer or the status of transfer plans and discussions.

While it will be important to develop and implement a strategy to transition lands to the new local governing entity, it is premature to discuss the specifics. The final structure will influence the specifics of the transition plan and the forms of funding available to support the land's purchase.

### **3. Recommended Next Steps that Address Critical Community Challenges**

Robust stakeholder engagement has been a hallmark of Phase One and the creation of this Blueprint. Continuation of that engagement in the Phase Two transition and long-term throughout Phase Three is embodied in the governance principles set out in Section 4. It is also a strong expectation among the hundreds of stakeholders participating in the Blueprint development process.

Throughout the Blueprint development process, Keweenaw stakeholders shared their strong desire for the Heartlands' governing entity to adopt and follow data-informed plans, and that those plans be developed with the kind of robust stakeholder engagement process used to create this Blueprint. Seven areas requiring additional stakeholder-driven planning and/or development emerged from interviews and planning committee discussions. They include the following and are briefly described below:

- Community Infrastructure
- Land Management
- Public Use and Access
- Public Safety
- Affordable Workforce and Family Housing
- Economic and Business Transition and Development
- Leadership Development

In addition, to use limited resources most efficiently and effectively and to honor the past work of Keweenaw community members, leaders and stakeholders; Planning Committee members, interviewees and public meeting participants expressed a strong desire to see existing plans acquired, analyzed, and considered as a prerequisite to any additional planning and development. Existing plans should be collected and reviewed as a part of each process described below.

#### **a. Community Infrastructure**

An important task after creating the infrastructure inventory discussed subsection 1.b., above, is to develop and adopt a plan or plans (in the case of multiple jurisdictions) to address the infrastructure needs identified in that assessment. Formalization of infrastructure plan(s) based on the inventory results has several advantages. An infrastructure plan:

- Prepares units of government and others to capitalize on grants and other programs that can assist with costs of needed infrastructure.
- Helps communities understand upcoming investment needs and set utility rates sufficient to accumulate the funds (or local match) for needed improvements or repairs.
- Increases points scored by applications for grant programs that prioritize projects included in a plan.
- Facilitates a program of preventative maintenance to maximize the life of existing infrastructure and avoid costly, inconvenient disruptions.<sup>2</sup>
- Informs zoning and other land use decisions.
- Builds community consensus about how to best meet critical but controversial infrastructure needs such as cellular communications access.
- Creates public awareness and support for bond referenda or other infrastructure-related measures that require voter approval.

#### **b. Land Management**

The Management and Governance Principles and Values sections of this Blueprint call for the creation of a high-quality, comprehensive, land management plan once the land is transitioned into long-term public ownership. The forest management component of this plan is a requirement for continued enrollment of the land under Michigan's Commercial Forest Act (CFA), as committed to by TNC for the Initial Phase of Heartlands ownership to ensure that local governmental entities continue to receive tax revenues from the land.<sup>3</sup>

A land management plan is required to prioritize various and sometimes competing land uses. Documenting and recording trail and other easements are critical elements identified by the Planning Committee and other stakeholders. This Blueprint calls for the inclusion of both short and long-term protections for sensitive and valuable environmental, cultural, historical, and geological resources and

---

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the 2023 bridge collapse on M26, which, fortuitously, had been identified as a need and funded for the 2023 construction season.

<sup>3</sup> TNC is in the process of creating a Forest Management Plan at the time of publication of this Blueprint. Once the land transitions to public ownership, enrollment in CFA will no longer be possible, requiring other methods to replace tax revenue currently received by local units of government.



for zones that protect against activities that could damage these resources. The Planning Committee also suggested coordination between local zoning ordinances and the land management plan to ensure that uses on and adjacent to the Heartlands property are compatible.

### **c. Public Use and Access**

At least two of this Blueprint's Principles and Values for Land Management, "Preserve and Balance Historic Uses" and "Prudently Support the Visitor Economy," require completion of a plan for public uses such as recreation, self-provisioning (harvesting berries and mushrooms, etc.) and accommodating cultural or religious uses of Indigenous peoples.

Representatives of key stakeholder groups, such as the ATV, snowmobile, mountain biking and hunting and fishing clubs have also expressed the desire of their groups to see their historic uses of the land reflected in formal planning documents. They want Heartlands' plans to include selected enhancements or improvements that would benefit their constituents while remaining in keeping with the commitment to protect the Heartlands environmental, cultural, historical and geological assets.

Interviewees, survey respondents and public meeting attendees also expressed a desire to see a recreation and public use plan. Local landowners and those who participate in "quiet uses" were particularly emphatic about the need for a plan that protects and supports their ability to enjoy the land.

Absent such a Public Use and Access Plan, it is difficult or impossible to determine which trail improvements and which public amenities, such as sanitary facilities and parking, are necessary and prudent investments. A well-crafted plan could help to distribute visitor impacts, reducing the degradation of the Heartland's most popular spots, and to steer visitors away from sensitive areas, preventing their damage. It could also address safety concerns, and de-conflict uses where they overlap. Finally, a well-crafted plan can help secure operating funds by including revenue strategies such as a user fee system or paid parking facilities.

### **d. Public Safety**

As discussed earlier, like much of rural America, the Keweenaw Heartlands faces a crisis in affording and providing adequate public safety services to serve its people. The Heartlands, however, have an added burden of supplying public safety services for a population of visitors that at times far outstrips the population of year-round and seasonal residents. In addition, the property tax base is insufficient to pay for expanded services and the volunteer-based model for providing emergency response is breaking down under the simultaneous pressures of an aging volunteer base, limited population growth, and increased training requirements for new volunteers.

Keweenaw County has taken admirable first steps in addressing this problem, such as applying for funding to address the lack of facilities to support emergency response services. However, this is a long-term problem that likely requires a larger coordinated response and broader base of financial support than can be provided by the County taxpayers alone. Addressing this issue will require additional planning. Robust public engagement will be required to ensure that the plans are acceptable to the

taxpayers who must ultimately pay much of the cost while meeting the broader needs driven by recreational users and the tourism-dependent economy.

#### **e. Affordable Workforce and Family Housing**

As referenced in earlier sections, a recurrent theme in interviews with business owners, economic development professionals and local elected officials is the need for more affordable workforce and family housing to support the economy of the region. This need has been growing over time as residents age in place, young people leave to pursue economic opportunities and family housing is converted into seasonal rentals. The situation has reached an inflection point where current businesses are unable to attract sufficient labor to meet their workforce needs because the workers have no place to live in reasonable proximity to the jobs available. Absent a strategy to address this issue, labor shortages will continue, commute times will get longer and the economy of the Heartlands will stagnate and likely decline.

Unfortunately, little available land suitable for suitable housing development exists in nearby communities, so any strategy to address this need may require use of some of the Heartlands. Identifying the right parcels for this purpose will require a public engagement and planning process. Issues like availability of infrastructure, proximity to jobs and sites available for commercial development, and strategies for maintaining affordability will be necessary components of such a plan. Stakeholder engagement, especially of residents and business owners, will be critical to developing a plan with sufficient public support and public/private investment to succeed over time. Engagement of state and regional organizations with resources and expertise to support these efforts will also be essential.

#### **f. Business and Economic Transition and Development**

Since the 1960's the Keweenaw Peninsula has been undergoing a slow transition from a mining and forest dependent economy to one based more on tourism. Heavy harvesting of its forests has depleted the remaining stocks of mature timber, foreshadowing an inevitable decline in the contributions of the forest products industry to the area's economy. The acquisition of the Heartlands property by TNC and the commitment to a transition to a sustainable model of working forestry will require substantial time to allow the forest to rest and regenerate, limiting the short-term economic contributions of forest products from these lands to the local economy.<sup>4</sup>

While tourism has been on the rise replacing some of the economic losses from the decline in the local forest products industry, the job-quality in a traditional tourism economy typically provides half or less of the economic contribution of jobs in forest products and similar extraction or production industries.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Despite this short-term decline, sustainable forest management will likely increase the long-term economic contribution of the Keweenaw's forests compared to present practices.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding owner-income generated by locally owned establishments whose profits generally flow back into the local economy. Absentee-owned establishments and corporate chains typically provide minimal (or no) economic benefit to rural tourism-based economies because low wage levels and a proliferation of part-time jobs with few employee benefits increases employee reliance on publicly supported benefits programs.

There are some rural areas in America that have successfully addressed this by creating a robust local artisans' and epicurean culture which produces higher-valued goods and services for visitor consumption and export to urban markets. However, deliberately identifying and including higher value production and services is often atypical of a strategy based solely on outdoor recreation.<sup>6</sup>

Members of the community also identified that some private sales of property with limited specific conservation or cultural amenities that, with appropriate use restrictions, could be helpful in advancing the tourism economy, economic health and resilience of the region. Currently, there are only two transfers to private ownership under consideration, the current lease footprint of the Mt. Bohemia Ski Area and a small buffer to better control unauthorized motorized (snowmobile) encroachment at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. It is not known at this time if these transfers will occur during TNC ownership or after, or if they will occur at all.

The success of rural areas in increasing the economic contribution of tourism is generally dependent on a robust and well-planned local effort to develop value-added local products and services. These successful efforts generally include a strong set of local supports for entrepreneurs and artisans and a highly organized market-development program. This requires substantial local leadership, planning and stakeholder involvement. Keweenaw will likely be no exception.

In addition to the tourism economy, changing employment patterns that include hybrid and remote work are providing new opportunities for economic development across rural America. As noted by a number of interviewees, The Keweenaw, with its proximity to MTU (with its deep expertise in engineering, forestry and other technical fields in demand worldwide) has opportunities to develop as a desirable site for location of technical consulting firms and engineering and technical resource centers for global companies. This type of economic development would provide more economic resilience and diversity than a heavily tourism-dependent economy can generate by itself. It can also help increase the pool of local customers for the tourism-based businesses during the shoulder seasons. The same amenities that attract tourism also make The Keweenaw a much more desirable place for this type of development to occur.

One prerequisite must be addressed for successfully tapping into the region's potential for hybrid, remote and technical consulting-based development. The potential for this form of development requires robust telecommunications and Internet infrastructure, which currently do not exist in most rural areas of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Addressing this infrastructure gap will be essential for optimizing the economic prosperity, resilience and sustainability of the Keweenaw.

#### **g. Community Leadership Capacity**

With a local population of just over 2100 people, Keweenaw County must develop a strategy to not only support its current leaders, but also surface and develop its potential pool of leaders to fill the many leadership positions required for a functioning society, including the ongoing governance and management of the Heartlands. Unlike an area with a larger population base, one cannot assume that it

---

<sup>6</sup> See *Mapping a New Terrain: Call to Action*, Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, April 26, 2023, for research about tourism-dependent economies and strategies for how to improve them.

is possible to find enough willing candidates with a robust set of preexisting leadership experiences and skills to fill all the necessary leadership positions.

A consistent theme among interviewees and in Planning Committee discussions was the critical need for ongoing leadership capacity building. Ongoing attention to building leadership capacity will be a requirement for the ongoing governance of the Heartlands as well as for the other institutions required to maintain a healthy, thriving and prosperous local society.

DRAFT