

CHAPTER EIGHT

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan serves as a guide for New Scandia Township in developing a system that meets the needs and desires of its residents. Earlier chapters of the Plan analyzed existing conditions, identified park and recreation needs, and proposed park, trail, open space and recreational facility recommendations. This chapter assists the Township in implementing the recommendations of the Plan. It discusses implementation goals and strategies, priorities, financing, phasing, and maintenance.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies relate to implementation of the Parks, Trails, Open Space Plan and Recreation Plan. The goals are broad, general statements that New Scandia Township will strive to attain. The strategies are specific, action-oriented statements that provide the framework for a wide range of open space decisions that the Township will make through the year 2025. The Township should periodically review and update the goals and strategies expressed in this plan. The implementation goals and strategies are as follows:

Goal 1: Involve the public in all aspects of parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities and programs planning. To accomplish this goal, the Township establishes the following strategies:

1. Continue to encourage residents to serve on the Park and Recreation Committee and its subcommittees.

2. Formally express appreciation and recognize the efforts of the Park and Recreation Committee, volunteers, and the various individuals and organizations that contribute to parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities and programs.
3. Promote discussion of parks, trails, open space, recreation facilities and programs at annual community meetings, community events, through community newsletters and on the New Scandia Township website.
4. Periodically seek input from residents about existing parks, trails, open space, recreation facilities and programs and respond to the input.
5. Involve residents in the master planning process of parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities.
6. Recruit and make use of volunteers for special projects.

Goal 2: Clearly communicate decisions related to parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities and programs. To accomplish this Goal, the Township establishes the following strategies:

1. The Park and Recreation Committee, Township Staff, Planning Commission, and Town Board will come to consensus regarding the goals and strategies of this Plan.
2. Involve the Park and Recreation Committee in the early phases of discussing potential subdivisions, road improvements, and the like.
3. The Park and Recreation Committee will make clear, written findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission and Town Board related to parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities decisions. The Park and Recreation Committee will base its findings and recommendations on the adopted goals and strategies of this Plan.
4. The Township will promote review of this Plan by affected agencies, the area school districts, and adjacent communities.
5. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and the Town Board will formally adopt this Plan.

Goal 3: Maintain safe, efficient, and attractive facilities. To accomplish this Goal, the Township establishes the following strategies:

1. Develop a maintenance management plan that provides guidelines and schedules.
2. Plan and budget for improvements to existing facilities.
3. Develop a risk liability inventory of existing facilities and prepare a plan to effectively address the risks.
4. Consider aesthetics in addition to function throughout the development of facilities.

Goal 4: Continue to develop park master plans for each park. To accomplish this Goal, the Township establishes the following strategies:

1. Develop a model format for the master planning process.
2. Identify and prioritize parks that need master planning and design.
3. Reflect the goals and strategies of this Plan in each park master plan.
4. Ensure architectural integrity and continuity in master plan designs.
5. Use park-planning professionals to prepare master plans and construction documents.

Goal 5: Periodically review and update this Plan. To accomplish this Goal, the Township establishes the following strategies:

1. Annually review demographic conditions, funding issues, priorities, and so on and make necessary changes to this Plan.
2. Plan to provide a complete update of this Plan in 2025.

Goal 6: Set priorities for implementing this plan. To accomplish this Goal, the Township establishes the following strategies:

1. Prioritize park improvements and acquisition.
2. Prepare a five-year Capital Improvement Program and annually update the program.
3. Identify expected and potential funding sources.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

There is a logical sequence of actions needed by New Scandia Township to adopt and implement this Plan:

1. Inform Township Staff, residents, and developers about the Plan.
2. Conduct a public hearing on the Plan.
3. Adopt the Plan as part of the Township's Comprehensive Plan.
4. Prepare and adopt master plans with acquisition and development cost estimates and establish priorities for areas to be acquired or developed.
5. Allocate funds through the Township budgeting procedure for staffing, acquisition, and development to accomplish the Plan objectives.
6. Apply for funding assistance from appropriate agencies to supplement Township funding.
7. Begin acquisition of areas designated in the Plan.
8. Prepare detailed development plans and Contract Documents and award construction contracts according to established priorities.
9. Expand staff and equipment as needed to ensure a high level of maintenance and use of additional parks and trails.
10. Review and update the Plan at regular intervals.

ACQUISITION FUNDING SOURCES

The Township will need a variety of acquisition sources to successfully achieve the acquisition of properties identified in this Plan:

1. Acquire land through parkland dedication wherever possible.
2. Negotiate purchases when necessary.
3. Consider long-term leases.

4. Require easements for use or protection when desired.
5. Consider land trades or transfer of development rights.
6. Seek assistance or cost sharing with other agencies.
7. Encourage donations, bequests, and foundations.
8. Explore acquisition of tax-forfeited land.
9. Apply for grants through federal, state, private agencies and organizations.

SELECTED MnDNR GRANT PROGRAMS

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources offers several grant programs for land conservation, habitat improvement and community forestry. For additional information on all Minnesota DNR grants, refer to: www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants. Some of these programs are listed below:

1. METRO GREENWAYS

- a. Program's Purpose: To protect, connect, restore and manage a regional network of natural areas, parks and other open spaces interconnected by ecological corridors through collaborative public/private partnership.
- b. Eligible Projects: Land restoration and acquisition (fee title or conservation easement) on sites within Metro Wildlife Corridors Focus Areas with high overall ecological significance, willing landowners, local support and project readiness.
- c. Application Deadline: Typically in late fall to be funded the following year in July- confirm with MnDNR.

2. REMEDIATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM

- a. Program's Purpose: To acquire lands for protection and restoration of natural resources, compensating the State of Minnesota for damage to resources from the release of hazardous substances from closed landfills.

- b. Eligible Projects: Fee title acquisition of natural areas and administrative costs associated with the donation of fee title for natural areas; funding may also be available for restoration.
- c. Application Deadline: Late March for projects funded in July of the same year- confirm with MnDNR.

3. NATURAL AND SCENIC AREA GRANTS

- a. Program's Purpose: To increase, protect and enhance scenic areas.
- b. Eligible Projects: Up to 50% of the cost of fee title and permanent easement acquisition by local units of government and school districts.
- c. Application Deadline: Late March for projects funded in July of the same year- confirm with MnDNR.

4. OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANTS

- a. Program's Purpose: To increase and enhance outdoor recreation facilities.
- b. Eligible Projects: Up to fifty percent of the cost of park acquisition, development and/or redevelopment.
- c. Application Deadline: Late March for projects funded in July of the same year- confirm with MnDNR.

5. SHORELAND HABITAT RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM

- a. Program's Purpose: To expand the diversity and abundance of native aquatic and shoreline plants, improve and protect the quality of shoreline habitat, enhance and protect water quality and raise awareness of the value of native shoreline and aquatic vegetation.
- b. Eligible Projects: Shoreline habitat improvements and restoration (e.g. planting native species in buffer zones and related education and monitoring).

- c. Application Deadline: September 1 for projects starting the following year- confirm with MnDNR.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS GRANT PROGRAM

- a. Program's Purpose: To encourage the enhancement of fish, wildlife and native plant habitats, research and surveys of fish and wildlife directly related to specific habitat improvement projects and to encourage environmental projects, and related education activities through cooperation by private organizations and local government.
- b. Eligible Projects: Up to 50% of the cost of habitat enhancement project and related research/survey and environmental service (e.g. natural area clean up).
- c. Application Deadline: Late March for projects funded in July of the same year- confirm with MnDNR.

7. MINNESOTA RELEAF PROGRAM

- a. Program's Purpose: To assist Minnesota communities with planting and caring for their trees to increase energy conservation, reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide and achieve other environmental benefits.
- b. Eligible Projects: Up to fifty percent of the costs of purchase and planning of predominantly native trees to conserve energy, benefit wildlife and establish community windbreaks, actions to preserve and maintain healthy community forests (e.g. oak wilt control), educational programs in conjunction with these activities, and conducting tree inventories for land use and comprehensive planning.
- c. Application Deadline: To be determined- confirm with MnDNR.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION OPTIONS

New Scandia Township will use whatever means are most appropriate to acquire land for parks and trails. Sensitivity to landowners and dedication to accomplishing the goals of the Plan will be important ingredients in the negotiation process. The following lists possible acquisition options:

1. Acquire land from willing sellers.
2. Life tenancy of current owners.
3. Purchase – lease back.
4. Options and right of first refusal.
5. Relocation.
6. Tax advantages.
7. Land exchange.

PARK DEVELOPMENT FUNDING OPTIONS

The Township should explore a variety of funding sources for park development including the following:

1. Annual Township budgeting and Capital Improvements Program.
2. Grant programs through federal, state, and local agencies (see section “Selected MnDNR Grant Programs” above).
3. Park dedication fees for new subdivisions.
4. Periodically review and update the dedication requirement as necessary.
 - a. The 2005 Municipal License & Permit Fee Survey (see Resources) surveyed communities across the State of Minnesota for their park dedication requirements for commercial/ industrial, residential, and planned unit developments. According to the 2005 survey, Forest Lake was recorded as requiring \$2,000.00 per lot as park dedication fee for residential areas. New Scandia currently requires

\$1,500.00 per lot (2006). The Township should reevaluate their fees in keeping with similar communities in the surrounding area.

5. Private or non-profit organizations and local businesses.
6. Volunteer labor and contributions.

PRIORITIES AND INDICATORS

It may take 20 or more years to fully achieve the goals of the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan. Progress towards meeting the goals generally occurs in increments or phases, rather than all at once. Therefore, to help ensure continuous progress, the Township may prioritize and divide the goals into high and moderate priority goals. Although it is important for the Township to follow the guiding vision of the Plan, it is also important for the Township to be flexible in implementing the vision. Therefore, the Township should periodically review and refine the goals and priorities of this Plan. The following provides general recommendations for high and moderate priority goals.

High Priority Goals. High priority goals reflect actions that the Township should take over the next couple of years. Some high priority goals may also reflect actions that are very important to the community, but that the Township may not actually implement in the short term. For example, New Scandia Township identified the importance of developing a corridor for the Gateway Trail within the Township, and that this corridor should connect with other Township trails. A high priority goal would involve building consensus with regard to identifying the search area for the Gateway Trail extension and acquiring property for the trail. The development of the Gateway Trail itself may take many more years to complete.

It is also helpful to develop high priority goals that will have an immediate impact on the community. For instance, the Township may develop uniform signage for the park and trail systems or provide landscaping to improve the appearance of existing parks. These types of actions would likely not require a great deal of effort or cost, but it would likely inspire a desire to implement other projects. Developing high priority goals and making tangible progress in implementing these goals will help the community develop and meet other goals that may be more involved or long-term.

Primary high priority goals of this Plan are as follows:

1. Develop existing undeveloped parcels as an integral part of New Scandia Township's Park System for the benefit of residents and visitors.
2. Evaluate property located in park and/or recreational facility search areas for purchase, lease, or easement to augment the existing Park System, *if and when it becomes available*.
3. Identify the Gateway Trail Extension Search Area.
4. Promote trail connection between Big Marine Park Reserve and William O'Brien State Park.
5. Develop and install uniform park system signage (to include park, trail, open space and recreational facility components).
6. Provide pedestrian crosswalk on Olinda Trail North between the New Scandia Community Center and the Gammelgarden/ Barton Johnson Memorial Park.
7. Explore how the immediate needs for athletic fields can be met.
8. Continue development of master plans for all existing parks.
9. Implement the German Lake Management Plan, as per CMWD recommendations.
10. Develop a Landowner Outreach and Stewardship Program, as per CMWD recommendations.

Moderate Priority Goals. Moderate priority goals reflect actions that the Township should take over the next five to ten years. Primary moderate priority goals of this Plan include the following:

1. Develop neighborhood parks in growth areas as development warrants.
2. Continue development of trail network throughout the Township.
3. Update (or replace, if necessary) and enhance existing recreation facilities in existing parks as identified in park master plans.

4. Complete a Comprehensive Wetland Management Plan, as per CMWD recommendations.
5. Develop a Formalized Greenway Corridors Plan, as per CMWD recommendations.
6. Establish a Natural Resource Monitoring Program, as per CMWD recommendations.

Again, the Township should periodically review and refine the priorities set forth in this Plan.

Indicators. The Township should develop indicators to help evaluate progress in implementing this Plan. For example, a goal of this Plan is that the Township should provide recreation facilities that meet the needs of residents. A survey of residents and recreation organizations could indicate if the Township is making progress towards this goal. Other indicators might involve monitoring water quality, and so on.

The Township should periodically review the findings of its indicators. If the indicators show that the Township is not making progress on meeting its goals, then the Township should either refine its goals or develop new strategies for meeting its goals.

VISION

It is appropriate to conclude this Plan where it started – New Scandia Township’s vision. The vision succinctly states the community’s preferred future as it relates to parks, trails, open space and recreation. The Township should periodically review and update the vision statement to ensure that it is relevant and meaningful.

“We envision the New Scandia Township’s parks, trails, open space and recreation system will preserve our rural character, protect our natural beauty and recognize our history.”

“We support our Community Center as the heart of New Scandia Township from which a strong network of parks and trails extend throughout the township and beyond to serve the needs and desires of all residents.”

We value the natural environment of the Lower St. Croix River Valley and recognize that the River is a unique regional asset and national icon.

We encourage the stewardship of our lakes, streams, wetlands, woodlands, prairies and agricultural lands toward a healthy ecology that supports a diversity of habitat and recreation opportunities.

We strive for New Scandia’s parks, trails, open space, recreation facilities and programs to be appropriate across all age and ability levels.

We will promote the New Scandia Township’s Comprehensive Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Plan as a versatile and innovative guide for our future growth, while encouraging compatible development and preserving significant open space as a complement to the New Scandia Comprehensive Plan.”

-Adopted by the New Scandia Township’s Town Board

18 July 2006

“Vision without action is merely a dream....

Action without vision merely passes time....

Vision with action can change the world.”

Joel Barker