

Vision for the City of Scandia

What is a Vision Narrative?



Scandia's Comprehensive Plan identifies what development and preservation priorities need to be met as the City faces the challenges of the 21st century. The first step in the planning process is identifying long-range goals 20 – 25 years so that near-term decisions can be made to move the City step-by-step toward the vision of a better Scandia. The long-range goals are described in the vision narrative. The vision portrays Scandia's desired future in a way that guides the details of the rest of the Plan.



The City of Scandia has created a vision narrative to describe the desired future. The narrative is written in the present tense but is referring to how a person would describe the City in the year 2030, assuming the Comprehensive Plan has been successfully implemented. The vision narrative strives to provide enough details to guide decisions both during and after the Comprehensive Plan process, but not so much detail as to make the vision rigid or render it irrelevant due to unforeseen changes. The vision must be both general enough to provide flexibility, and specific enough to provide direction.

The primary purpose of the vision is to guide the direction that the community is moving rather than how far the community is capable of moving. As a result, the vision narrative may seem to be overly optimistic. But progress toward a goal is the first step to reaching the goal, and the vision sets an endpoint that allows progress to be measured.

The Vision and the Plan



The vision narrative identifies the priorities for both the Comprehensive Plan process and Comprehensive Plan implementation. During the Comprehensive Plan process, the vision served as a signpost, reminding us of the direction we should be going. The Comprehensive Plan Committee was faced with difficult decisions during the process and referred back to the vision to ensure that the discussion was not drifting away from the commonly held goals of Scandia stakeholders.

The vision narrative will continue to serve as a beacon to ensure that the Plan is implemented in a manner that moves Scandia toward the desired end result. The vision is considered in conjunction with the Plan's written goals and objectives, with the future land use map and other mapped priorities, and with the Plan's recommended strategies for action. The vision does not stand alone, but helps define the day-to-day implementation efforts along with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

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Scandia's 2030 Vision Narrative

(Note: The vision is in the present tense because it is written from the perspective of someone in the future seeing Scandia in the year 2030 when the desired changes have already been accomplished.)



Scandia of 2030 has successfully managed the change that has been a constant in the surrounding region to maintain its unique rural character, agricultural heritage, historic charm, and natural resources. Scandia remains unique because of its vibrant village center surrounded by natural resource corridors intersecting thriving agricultural areas interspersed with rural residential and lakeshore neighborhoods. Growth management emphasizes the protection of a rural agricultural feel without pulling up the drawbridge to change. The City has a reputation for being a welcoming, open, accepting place filled with new opportunities that build on and protect Scandia's many assets.

Cultural/Historic



Scandia is known throughout the area as a rural small town with a unique character and history. The village remains the center of social community activities. Gammalgarden attracts people to learn about Minnesota history and enjoy a slice of Swedish culture. Rural buildings endowed with Scandia's history and identity are preserved or incorporated into development and redevelopment, and family farms can still be found within the City. Structures in the village (store, old bank, other store fronts) are recognizable from old photos and other areas with distinct community or historic character such as Big Marine, Copas, and Otisville retain their uniqueness. Scandia has a thriving arts community that is a visible part of and contributor to the City's economic center. Art and recreational tourism provide a synergy that brings a variety of visitors to the City. Community events continue to create culturally diverse community identity, including Scandia's historic Swedish culture and other newer cultural identities reflecting the City's increasing variety of incomes, cultures, ages, household types, and ethnicities.

Land Use



Scandia has diverse land uses that emphasize its rural nature and natural landscape, including commercial agriculture, hobby farms, large lot and clustered rural residential housing, wooded areas, scenic areas and open spaces, recreational areas, and a compact village area with community-scale commercial and industrial uses. Agricultural uses include traditional commodity production, smaller farms devoted to local markets, and hobby farms. Commercial, healthcare, and industrial uses are primarily located in the village, although some agriculturally-oriented and recreational commercial uses are located near agricultural and recreational amenities. The City continues to see managed growth in its village lakeshore communities, while maintaining traditional agriculture-friendly densities elsewhere. The mix of land uses in different parts of the City changes with the geography, consistent with the distinct community character of different areas.

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Natural Resources



Scandia is characterized by a network of greenways and open space – public and privately owned - that protects the highest quality natural areas, clear air and water, and the City’s quiet, peaceful countryside. Permanent connections between open space areas provides for the functioning of natural systems and enjoyment by residents and visitors. Public access, physical and visual, to lakes and the St. Croix River has been improved, with an emphasis on non-motorized use. Groundwater and recharge areas are protected. Natural shoreline has been preserved or restored along and within most waterways, wetlands and fens. Restoration of shoreland and wetland buffers allows for development and use while protecting and improving water quality. The community has protected and restored much of its unique natural area; fish and native wildlife communities are self-sustaining, the wilderness of the Lower St. Croix River Valley is recognized as a unique regional asset and national park, and night skies are bright with stars rather than artificial light. Existing gravel mines are fully restored after mines are closed. Development in all areas protects and enhances the City’s green infrastructure – trails, green corridors, natural systems, surface and groundwater systems, scenic vistas, and night skies.

Parks and Trails



Scandia’s parks, trails, open space and recreation system preserves rural character, protects natural beauty, offers opportunities for healthy lifestyles, and recognizes the City’s history. An extensive and continuous network of parks, trails, boulevards, greenways, and scenic byways extends from the community center and connects all parts of the City, also linking to regional parks, trails, and greenways. The park and trail system supports a diverse set of activities and meets the needs of all age and ability levels of residents and visitors alike, providing a variety of amenities from ballfields to bird sanctuaries to horse trails. A strong stewardship ethic for lakes, streams, wetlands, woodlands, prairies and agricultural lands supports a healthy ecology and a diversity of habitat and recreation opportunities, building Scandia’s tourism base. New development adds to the City’s protected open space, non-motorized trail system, and visual access to wilderness and protected pristine natural areas.

Economy



Scandia’s economic base continues to grow, providing services, goods, and economic opportunities that meet both residents’ and visitors’ needs. The village is the economic center of the City, including the City’s primary retail, service, and healthcare businesses and its small but thriving manufacturing and business service base. Tourism and recreation businesses have expanded both in the village and near Scandia’s natural resource areas, trail system, and unique agricultural areas. Scandia’s high-speed telecommunications infrastructure has also helped create new economic activity; most of Scandia’s businesses are entrepreneurial, reflecting the high percentage of

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residents who are self-employed or work from home. Agriculture continues to diversify the City's economic base, including both traditional commodities and a number of small agricultural operations serving exclusively local markets. Niche commercial and service businesses target specific growing markets, such as the growing senior population.

Housing



Scandia has “lifecycle” housing opportunities that accommodate a variety of household types and incomes, including rental and owner-occupied, affordable and high end, small and large units. New housing development has proceeded in a way to connect, rather than isolate, new and existing neighborhoods. Housing design meets sustainable design goals to reduce the ecological footprint, and architectural designs add long-term value to neighborhoods. Housing is most dense in the village, but is spread throughout the City consistent with the land use and community character priorities.

Transportation



Scandia's road system retains the ambiance of the countryside, with minimal traffic signals outside of the village area and reflecting the rolling topography. The scenic qualities of Highways 97 and 95 remain undisturbed in spite of higher traffic volume. The City has not constructed bypasses, but instead has roads that connect sites within Scandia and connect Scandia with major arterial roads. The village center has created an internal street network that allows ease of movement through the village for autos, bikes, and pedestrians. Bike routes are generally separated from automobile traffic and are networked to allow bikes to serve residents as meaningful transportation options, in addition to recreational value. Public transit, such as commuter buses to the central cities, is available in surrounding communities but does not directly serve Scandia.

Public Services and Infrastructure



Centralized water and wastewater services have not been extended to Scandia. Scandia has a high-speed telecommunications infrastructure available for both residential and commercial use. Scandia has a new City Hall, community center, and library facilities in the village. Public buildings are designed to reflect Scandia's history and the building character of the village, and incorporate low-impact and green design features that provide an example of responsible development to the rest of the community. Renewable energy systems are integrated into Scandia's rural landscapes, housing, and village businesses. Scandia's thriving educational system offers learning opportunities to all ages. Public and educational buildings provide flexible space for traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities, including education, art, recreation, and theater. Quality healthcare is available locally. Public services and regulatory administration are efficiently provided through partnerships between the City, the School District, the County, surrounding communities, and state agencies.