

Purpose

After careful consideration, the citizens of Scandia have embraced the vision, principles, policies, and recommended strategies set forth in this document as the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Scandia. The Comprehensive Plan will serve as a blueprint for the city, describing how natural resources will be protected, where and how development will take place, and how Scandia will continue to maintain its rural character and provide a high quality of life to all its residents. The Plan was developed with substantial participation from the citizens of Scandia and is responsive to their unique concerns and goals for the future of their community. The previous Comprehensive Plan for New Scandia Township was adopted in 1998.

Statutory and Metropolitan Council Requirements

The Metropolitan Council adopted *2030 A Regional Development Framework*, a long-range plan for regional infrastructure in January 2004. Following the adoption of this document, the Council issued system statements to all communities within the Metropolitan Area. The system statements describe goals for the regional systems, such as transportation networks, wastewater services, parks and open spaces within each community; the council's goal was to help communities understand how they fit into regional plans as they update their comprehensive plans. According to the Metropolitan Land Planning Act, local governments within the Metropolitan Area must update their comprehensive plan within three years after receiving a system statement from the Metropolitan Council. This plan has been developed in accord with the system statement issued to Scandia in November 2005.

Overall, the densities planned for the future land use areas described in this plan meet the Metropolitan Council's guidance for Scandia as a "diversified rural" planning area. Diversified rural areas allow densities averaging 1 housing unit per 10 acres. This average density can be achieved with a mix of low-density agricultural areas, large-lot rural residential development, clustered housing, and other rural uses.

Process of Developing the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Committee

A Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) was created in April 2007 to lead the planning process. The CPC was chaired by Mayor Dennis Seefeldt and included members of the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Committee, and citizen representatives. The responsibilities of the CPC included providing guidance to city staff and the consultant team during the development of the plan, reviewing a final draft of the plan, and, ultimately, recommending a plan to the City Council for adoption. In addition, CPC members were asked to participate in public involvement activities and to keep their neighbors and constituents informed about the planning process.

The CPC met twice monthly throughout the year-long planning process to guide the construction of final plan language and the future land use map. The CPC considered background materials compiled by the consultant team as well as extensive public input provided through public meetings, focus groups and public surveys.

Public Meetings

The planning process included three rounds of public meetings, one near the beginning of the process, one mid-process, and one near the end. Each round consisted of two meetings held on different days of the week to ensure multiple opportunities for participation. At each meeting the consultants gave a short presentation, and then the audience was asked to participate in small group discussions designed to solicit input from a diverse group of individuals.

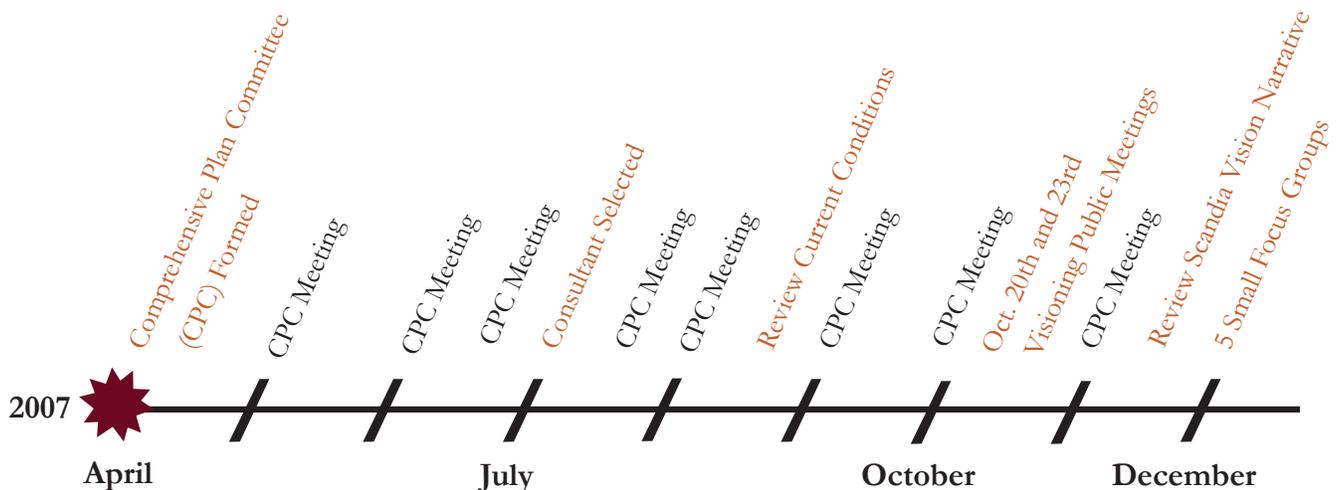
- 1) The first round of meetings was held in October 2007, near the beginning of the process. The purpose of these meetings was to present preliminary background information and gather input on the community's vision for development and natural resources.
- 2) The second round of meetings was held in April 2008, in order to present future land use alternatives and solicit comments from the public prior to developing a draft plan.
- 3) The final round presented the final draft plan for comment prior to the formal public hearing process.

Focus Groups

Five focus group meetings were held to gather input from residents of Scandia's distinct geographic sub-areas and social groups. One focus group was held for residents of each of the following areas: the St. Croix River corridor, the village, the lakes, and the rural residential areas. A focus group was also held for agricultural producers. Attendees were invited to discuss the unique character of their area and their priorities for its future. Their discussions helped the CPC create a Comprehensive Plan that is responsive to the needs of each area and group.

Public Survey

Residents of Scandia were invited to respond to an online survey. Respondents were asked to complete the sentence "In 2030, I believe Scandia should . . ." They were also asked to select their top three picks from a list of factors defining "rural character," and to describe how development should occur in an area that maintains its rural character. A series of demographic questions (gender, age, length of residency, etc.) rounded out the survey.



Business Survey

In February 2008 interviews were conducted with 26 existing Scandia businesses. The survey asked seven questions focusing on perceptions of the current businesses environment and expectations for the future. Business owners held in common a perspective that doing business in Scandia was a positive endeavor; the small town feel of the community and the friendliness of our people contributed greatly to a good business environment. When asked about the preferred pattern of commercial expansion, about half answered that retail and services should be clustered around the downtown area of the village and half that thought retail and services should extend out of the village area, along Highway 97. Only 3 respondents answered that business growth should be distributed across Scandia in a number of areas. For future development outlook for businesses, several respondents emphasized that the city needs to build in the village center first, and to plan and work toward a more cohesive appearance and character for the village center locations.

Using the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan consists of a number of inter-related sections. These sections are:

- *Vision for the City of Scandia.* This section describes Scandia’s overarching vision for its future.
- *Current conditions.* The current conditions reports present the historic trends and current conditions of Scandia’s demographics, natural resources, land use, economic situation, and the condition of public infrastructure systems such as transportation.
- *Future Land Use Areas and Map.* The Future Land Use Areas and Map section illustrates the 20-year vision for preferred land uses across the city.
- *Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies.* The Goals and Policies established in this section will guide the interpretation of the Vision for the City of Scandia and the Future Land Use Map. This section also identifies implementation strategies and actions that the City should take to realize its vision and goals.

Each section of the Plan needs to be taken in perspective with the other sections. Recognizing this is critical to correctly understand and use the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the Future Land Use Map cannot be correctly understood or applied without also referencing the Vision, Goals and Policies, or Implementation Strategies sections.

