



# Tourism Development Opportunities in Scandia, Minnesota

Authored by Cynthia C. Messer and Tammy Koerte





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Authored by Cynthia C. Messer and Tammy Koerte, University of Minnesota Tourism Center

**Editors:**

Elyse Paxton, Senior Editor, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality

**Expert Team Members:**

Tammy Koerte, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Tourism Center  
Cynthia Messer, Director, University of Minnesota Tourism Center  
Danielle Daugaard, Marketing and External Relations Coordinator, Minnesota Grown  
Dorian Grilley, Executive Director, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota  
Carrie Hatler, University of Minnesota Tourism Center  
Mary Ann Hennen, Extension Educator, Leadership and Civic Engagement, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality  
Ben Leonard, Statewide Sites and Partnership Manager, Minnesota Historical Society  
Lori Peterson, Metro Regional Manager, Explore Minnesota Tourism  
Liz Templin, Extension Educator, Community Economics, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality  
Brigid Tuck, Senior Economic Analyst, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality

**Community Leadership Team:**

Neil Soltis, City Administrator  
Brad Borg, City of Scandia Economic Development Authority  
Jan Lynn, Crabtree's Garden Gate  
Lynne Marotzka, Gammelgarden Museum  
Matt Miller, Brookside Bar & Grill  
Colleen Nora

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Scandia contracted with the University of Minnesota Tourism Center to assist with its tourism development efforts. The 12-month Tourism Assessment Program gathered input from community, experts, and visitors to provide a 360-degree snapshot of current tourism in Scandia and identify opportunities for the community to enhance or expand its tourism offerings.

Data gathered during the project was coupled with research compiled by the Tourism Center on tourism trends and information provided by the City of Scandia. Ten experts participated in a one-day community visit to assess current and potential tourism. A community meeting was also held to gather resident input. Finally, select individuals representing current or potential visitor markets made mystery visits to the community to assess tourism from a visitor perspective.

The most pressing need for tourism in Scandia is to identify who will lead tourism efforts for the community. In the short term, tourism efforts can be coordinated by a task force or committee under an existing organization. The committee can organize and host regular meetings to create a tourism development plan that communicates the value of tourism and local assets, as well as implement a marketing plan to coordinate tourism promotion efforts.

This report explores tourism opportunities from a supply and demand perspective, and focuses on Scandia's structure for tourism, enhancing Scandia's tourism assets and infrastructure, and marketing. The following actions will help Scandia develop tourism that meets local goals while addressing visitors' interests and needs.

## **SCANDIA'S TOURISM STRUCTURE**

### **Short-term ideas and strategies**

- Create a task force/committee to lead community tourism efforts.
- Establish ongoing community and stakeholder engagement to build support and a vision for tourism development that aligns with community goals.
  - Identify others in the community who can/should be involved in tourism.
  - Invite youth, seniors and new community members to participate in tourism discussions.
- Develop a written plan for tourism development.
- Create a marketing plan for tourism in the community.
- Establish a budget for tourism promotion.

- Coordinate current city, business, and other tourism promotion to maximize resources and effort.
- Explore joint tourism marketing efforts with Marine on St. Croix.
- Coordinate tourism development with city, county and regional tourism and economic planning and development.

#### **Long-term ideas and strategies**

- Strengthen collaboration across the community and region.
- Identify and recruit tourism complementary businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Provide new businesses assistance to find funding.
- Establish a joint Scandia/Marine on St. Croix destination marketing organization.

### **ENHANCING SCANDIA'S TOURISM ASSETS**

#### **Shorter-term ideas and strategies for cultural/heritage tourism**

- Visual Enhancement
  - Implement the city's Architectural Design Guidelines to protect the historic Village Center and strengthen it as the focal point for tourism.
  - Paint or consider adding a mural on the warming house.
  - Invite local artists to create murals or public art around town to further visually tell the community's story.
  - Improve the overall streetscape (e.g. lighting, benches, parking, crosswalks etc.) to enhance visitors' first impressions.
  - Add directional signage to the Community Center.
  - Post a map to other key historical sites in the Village Center.
- Prioritize increasing access and availability of public toilets. If the Community Center is closed where can visitors find them?
- Asset enhancement
  - Recruit small businesses to fill vacant buildings. Target specialty retail that will appeal to visitors rather than service oriented businesses.
  - Consider pop-up shops or artisan galleries until permanent businesses are found.
  - Feature regional food and products in restaurants and other businesses. (It was noted that the Gammelgarden gift shop and Crabtree's offer regional products)
  - Host a Taste of the Valley event featuring local products.
  - Offer the barn quilt tour as a self-guided tour.
  - Enhance Copas by adding interpretive signage about what the buildings used to be, when they were built, etc.

### Shorter-term ideas and strategies for outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism

- Inventory outdoor recreation and nature-based experiences in Scandia.
  - What programs and activities are currently offered.
  - List facilities available, hours, costs, seasonality etc.
  - Use Worksheet 6.3 from the *Community Tourism Development Manual* to gather information.
  - Make the above information available in digital and print marketing materials.
- Enhance amenities for bicyclists at the trailhead and in the Village Center. (e.g. water fountain, toilets, bike racks, a bike maintenance station, lighting, etc).
- Use the recent research and knowledge of Cycling Scandia and Friends of Scandia Parks and Trails and other sources to inform decisions related to rider needs.
- Improve availability of maps and community information to further encourage bicyclists and outdoor recreationalists to stay in town.
- Enhance current facilities for multigenerational use. Examples include:
  - Updated playground equipment.
  - Large scale chess or checker boards.
  - Add outdoor fitness equipment for adults.
  - Birdwatching stations with signage or guided walks.
- Promote recreational activities complement cultural/heritage, rural character, and agritourism experiences (e.g., Nordic sports, walking tour, etc).
- Promote recreational opportunities for all demographics and user types (e.g.' bikers, boaters, hunters, horseback riders, cross country skiers, snowmobilers etc.) to encourage year-round use of local trails, lakes and parks.
- Promote local parks and outdoor recreation opportunities to diverse populations (e.g. Hmong, Somali, Hispanic) in the metro area. Between 2010 and 2015 the state added four times as many people of color as non-Hispanic white residents (Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2019).
- Highlight public facilities, such as group picnic areas, and scenic settings as venues for special events, work events, or other gatherings.
- Review the Minnesota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for opportunities to link local assets to other opportunities  
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/scorp/index.html>.

### Short-term ideas and strategies for Tourism Infrastructure

- Inventory existing signs (e.g. gateway, wayfinding, bike and trail signs, interpretive etc).
- Continue the Dala Horse theme on signs.
- Create a business directory.
  - The print *Scandia History and Museum* sheet with business directory on the back is a good start. Enhance it with key information including business's address, phone number, website and hours.
    - Use worksheet 6.3 from the *Community Tourism Development Manual* to gather this information.

- Create a map of all community businesses.
- Encourage businesses to modify hours to meet visitor needs on weekends, holidays, and evenings, or one evening a week. This can benefit residents too.
- Encourage businesses to accept credit cards.
- Ask businesses to cross-promote other local businesses and attractions.
  - Provide each with a business directory.
  - Provide resources to businesses about assets and amenities so they can answer the typical visitor question, “What else is there to do around here?”
- Provide customer service training to businesses and public sector staff
  - University of Minnesota Tourism Center offers a customer service training program called At Your Service. [www.z.umn.edu/ays](http://www.z.umn.edu/ays)
- Develop a list of short-term lodging for visitors seeking accommodations.

#### Longer-term ideas and strategies for cultural/heritage tourism

- Consider moving the obelisk to a central location or across the street into Lion’s Park to improve visibility.
- Are there historically significant headstones in the cemetery that need protection and interpretation?
- Invite long-time residents to help tell the story of Scandia’s history. Build on existing work such as *Scandia Then and Now*.
- Offer and promote guided tours or develop a self-guided audio tour, as well as a map with historic sites and interpretation. See Owatonna, Minnesota’s example on their website [www.visitowatonna.org](http://www.visitowatonna.org).
- Develop virtual tours that can be accessed on websites, through mobile applications, and other emerging technologies.
- Develop a visitor center.
  - The Heritage Alliance is working to acquire the historic Water Town Barn building and has a vision for its future use. They could lead on this.
  - Explore acquisition of the property on the SW corner of Highways 95 and 97 for a small visitor center or kiosk. This could be in partnership with the byway.
- Seek funding strategies to support development.
  - Could the city or EDA use Community Development Block grants or offer low interest loans for downtown improvements that meet Architectural Design Guidelines and enhance community goals?
  - Grant funding may be available. (e.g. Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants <http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants>).

#### Longer-term ideas and strategies for outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism

- Explore a bike rental service or public bike share program.
- Explore feasibility of a bike or outdoor recreation business.
- Grow an existing, or develop a new event utilizing outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., a kayaking/biking biathlon, fitness bootcamp, cross country skiing or fat tire biking event).



- Create a "farm trail" or a map to show the agritourism opportunities in the area.
- Do local farmers sell at the farmer's market? Local foods and products appeal to visitors.
- Is hunting available on private lands in the area? If so, could this opportunity be marketed?
- Are guides available for fishing on Big Marine Lake?
- Develop publications, signs, and other materials in multiple languages.
- Host cultural/ethnic celebration events that draw linkages to other immigrant stories, especially targeting first-time visitors.
- Consider the needs and wishes of visitors within the target markets as well as residents in future facility designs.
- Explore development of new activities. (For example: Winona, Minnesota created an ice climbing wall on the river bluff, and an entrepreneur near Henderson, Minnesota established a zipline course).

#### **Longer-term ideas and strategies for Tourism Infrastructure**

- Work with MNDOT and the county on highway signage and explore additional MNDOT resources related to road landscaping, integration of art etc.
- Can signage for the Swedish Circle communities be developed and installed regionally? This will require working with those communities and MNDOT.
- Establish a business networking group, council, or chamber of commerce.
- Consider developing guidelines for short-term lodging.
- Explore the feasibility of commercial lodging.
- Consider the needs of group tours (e.g., public toilets, parking and safe loading/unloading, a staging area that includes motorcoach turnaround space, knowledgeable step-on guides and group dining options).

### **MARKETING TOURISM IN SCANDIA**

#### **Short-term ideas and strategies for marketing Scandia**

- Conduct an audit of current marketing materials from all sources within community. Identify what is available, types of messaging and how the community is presented.
- Determine city's tourism messaging (e.g., focus, how to complement local organizations and business' marketing, etc).
- Create coordinated community marketing materials across mediums including print materials (e.g. brochure, posters), website, social media and community signage.
- Enhance the city's website to include a visitor page.
  - Add complete information for trip planning.
  - Include a map showing all tourism attractions and facilities and link to their sites.
  - Include a downloadable bike trail map.
  - Make webpages mobile-friendly.

- Create suggested themed tours of key points of interest (e.g., cultural/heritage, biking, agritourism, barn quilts).
- Include links to other regional and tourism-related websites (eg., Explore Minnesota, Forest Lake Chamber, Chisago Lakes Chamber of Commerce)
- Link to other regional Swedish communities and ask them to link to Scandia.
- Include more community photos and short videos.
- Use social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) to promote Scandia as a tourism destination. These require consistent management.
- Use Hashtags
  - Create a Scandia hashtag (e.g., #VisitScandiaMN or similar) to build visitor awareness and local pride.
  - Use multiple hashtags to extend your reach. For example, add #OnlyinMN to tie into Explore Minnesota Tourism social media.
  - Encourage businesses and attractions with hashtags to add Scandia's hashtag to their messages that promote a visit to Scandia.
- Encourage business owners to claim their listings on Google My Business, Yelp, and TripAdvisor, and to add information (e.g., location, hours, photos, menus), which is helpful to potential visitors as well as residents.
  - Encourage businesses to respond to online customer reviews, both positive and negative. Respond to negative reviews in a positive-not defensive-manner.
- Create an inventory of short-term (VRBO/Airbnb) lodging.
- Take advantage of free marketing resources and assistance at Explore Minnesota Tourism. [www.exploreminnesota.com](http://www.exploreminnesota.com)
- Work with faculty and students at regional schools or colleges to develop projects or internships to move tourism priorities forward. Examples may include:
  - A marketing student to help with the marketing audit or website building.
  - A student to assist businesses to claim their listings online (e.g. My Google, Yelp, Trip Advisor)
  - The University of Minnesota GoldPass system to post internship and job opportunities.
  - Geography and GIS students to help with creating maps.

#### **Longer-term ideas and strategies for marketing Scandia**

- Hire staff to support social media and marketing efforts.
- Propose a joint Scandia/Marine on St.Croix tourism website.
- Encourage/invite businesses to link to the city's tourism page.
- Build local support for tourism with residents and businesses. Examples include:
  - Host an event to orient and educate residents about tourism, its value, and local assets already in place. Use resources like:

- Explore Minnesota Tourism's current Tourism and the Economy (<https://mn.gov/tourism-industry/research/tourism-and-the-economy.jsp>)
- US Travel's Answer Sheet (<https://www.ustravel.org/>)
- Encourage attractions and businesses to invite local and regional residents to visit (similar to shop-local day).
- Include a short information article (sound bites) in community newsletters or city communiques with residents.
- Invite residents to submit their top five things to see or do in short "My Scandia" videos. (e.g., best scenic views, top fishing places, great bike rides). These should be curated.
- Consider working with professionals to develop a community brand.

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Scandia contracted with the University of Minnesota Tourism Center to assist with its tourism development efforts. The 12-month Tourism Assessment Program gathered input from community, experts, and visitors to provide a 360-degree snapshot of current tourism in Scandia and identify opportunities for the community to enhance or expand its tourism offerings.



Data gathered during the project was coupled with research compiled by the Tourism Center on tourism trends and information provided by the City of Scandia. Ten experts participated in a one-day community visit to assess current and potential tourism. A community meeting was also held to gather resident input. Finally, select individuals representing current or potential visitor markets made mystery visits to the community to assess tourism from a visitor perspective.

This report examines the current state of tourism in Scandia, as well as future possibilities. It also provides collective findings from experts and visitors that align with relevant tourism trends and existing data and information provided by the community.

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The Tourism Assessment Program with the City of Scandia began in May 2018 with the formation of the community leadership team. This leadership team represented local businesses, tourism attractions, government, and economic development. A representative from the University of Minnesota Tourism Center met with the leadership team in mid-July 2018 to discuss tourism goals, a program timeline, and a process for completing the asset inventories. The leadership team led the asset inventorying by community members, and provided key insights and secondary data and reports about the community. Secondary data sources included Scandia's 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the city's Architectural Design Guidelines, the St. Croix Scenic Byway Historical Traveler Guide, and local brochures and literature.

An expert team was formed based on the community's tourism interest and ideal target markets. In addition to individuals from the University of Minnesota Tourism Center and Extension Center for Community Vitality, the expert team included representatives from the Minnesota Historical Society, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, Minnesota Grown, and Explore Minnesota Tourism.

The expert team visited Scandia on October 29, 2018 to assess the community for tourism. Expert team members used an assessment tool to provide feedback about the

community's assets, services/infrastructure, and appearance and overall visitor experience.

Expert team members also facilitated a meeting with community members. They completed a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis about tourism in the community. This enabled community members to provide input about tourism in their community, as well as raise concerns and potential challenges with tourism.

### **SWOT analysis**

The SWOT analysis was completed by approximately 22 residents and leaders from Scandia, including city council members, the local economic development authority, service organizations, and business owners. Attendees worked in small groups to complete the activity. Participants were encouraged to share their perceptions of Scandia's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the city's current or future tourism development. Comments were captured on flipcharts at each table. Overarching themes were observed across all groups.



Major strengths identified included Gammelgarden, Swedish heritage and history, scenic beauty, location, St. Croix River, small town charm and a variety of resources for agritourism. Weaknesses included a lack of businesses downtown, how spread out things are in the community, and the lack of restaurants, lodging, and community connections.

Participants were also asked to identify potential tourism strategies and the resources needed to pursue each one. The strategies suggested reflected the awareness that developing tourism will require more than just marketing. Strategies included enhancing and expanding tourism amenities and assets, strengthening local and regional connections, educating the community and planning tourism to protect the assets and character of the community. A transcription of SWOT analysis worksheets is found in Appendix A.

To gain visitor perspective on tourism in Scandia, the Tourism Center recruited seven individuals to conduct unannounced “mystery” visits to the community. These mystery visitors were from the Twin Cities Metro area and interested in tourism experiences related to cultural/heritage tourism, outdoor recreation, or agritourism. Visits occurred mid-October to early November. The Tourism Center provided visitors with an assessment workbook to help capture their experience and observations. In addition to

providing feedback on the community's assets, services/infrastructure, and appearance, they were also asked about their experience finding information online about the community prior to visiting. Though the number of mystery visitors was not a sufficient sample size for decision-making, their feedback provided information about real visitor experiences.

## **TOURISM AND ITS IMPORTANCE**

Tourism is defined by the U.S. Travel Association as "...a trip away from home overnight in paid accommodations or on a day or overnight trip to places 50 miles or more [one-way] away from home." This definition aligns with destination marketing organization (DMO) goals to generate overnight stays and includes the specific criteria of measurable distance, time, and paid accommodations. It does not, however, describe the purpose of travel. According to the U.S. Travel Association, 74 percent of domestic trips are for leisure, with top leisure activities including visiting relatives, shopping, visiting friends, fine dining, and rural sightseeing.

The Destination Excitement Index, created by Destination Analysts, measures domestic travelers' excitement for various types of destinations. In 2018, Destination Analysts found that on a 100-point scale, small towns, villages, or rural destinations/attractions scored 68.5. Only beach destinations (74.9) and cities or metropolitan areas (70.3) ranked higher than small towns, villages or rural destinations/attractions as being more exciting; however, compared to both, small towns, villages, or rural destinations/attractions will be visited more frequently at 2.1 trips expected within the next 12 months compared to 1.0 trips for beach destinations/resorts and 1.6 trips for cities or metropolitan areas (Destination Analysts, 2018).

### **Minnesota and Regional Tourism**

Tourism is a key economic sector for the state of Minnesota. Tourism generates \$15.3 billion in gross sales and supports more than 270,000 full- and part-time jobs. Tourism also contributes \$996 million in state sales tax, which is 18 percent of Minnesota's sales tax revenues (Explore Minnesota, 2019). Washington County, which includes the City of Scandia, receives over \$566 million in gross sales from tourism. Tourism also supports 11,781 full- and part-time jobs in the county (Explore Minnesota Tourism, 2019).

In Minnesota, tourism is a year-round industry. According to Explore Minnesota Tourism (2019), 37 percent of traveler expenditures occur in summer (June - August), followed by the fall (September - November) at 25 percent and winter (December - March) at 24 percent. Fourteen percent of traveler expenditures occur in the spring (April - May). In addition to being a year-round industry, tourism also encompasses many sectors of the economy, including food, lodging, retail, transportation, recreation, and second homes. Below is a breakdown of traveler spending by sector:

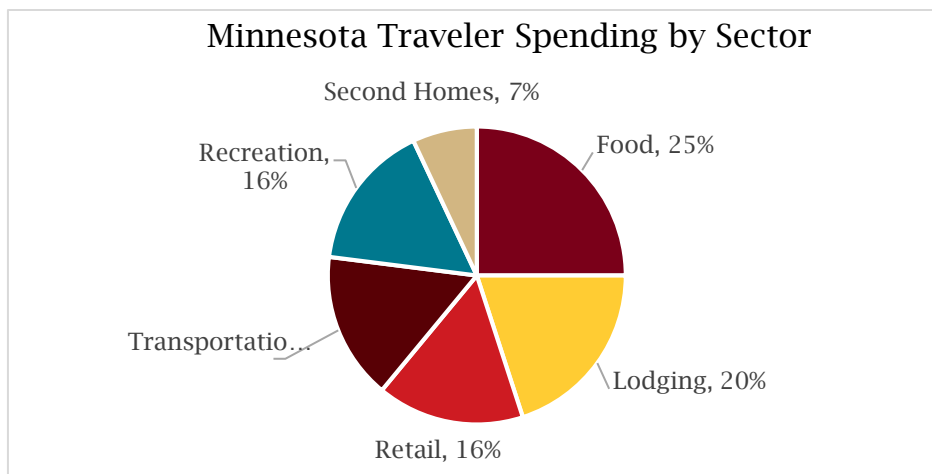


FIG. 1: Explore Minnesota Tourism 2019, based on 2017 revenue data

### Developing tourism opportunities

In his book, *Marketing for Entrepreneurs*, Frederick Crane (2013) says opportunities can be “recognized, discovered, or created.” This is particularly true of tourism opportunities because tourism is about individual experiences.

Recognizing opportunities means matching existing assets–supply–with current or potential tourism markets–demand. Local efforts to increase the number of bicycling visitors is an example. Discovering opportunities means either supply or demand exists, and the other must be found or “discovered.” Creating opportunities is necessary when neither supply or demand exists in an obvious manner.

Developing tourism in Scandia requires recognizing, discovering, and creating opportunities for long-term success. The findings, ideas, and strategies in this report address both tourism supply and demand in Scandia.

### SCANDIA’S VISITOR MARKETS

Identifying and differentiating current and potential visitors is an important step for Scandia. The community identifies cultural/heritage tourists interested in Swedish heritage, outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism including bicycling and agritourism as target audiences. These markets fit well with Scandia’s assets, and can be the foundation for building a long-term. The following definitions help clarify these markets.

#### Cultural/heritage tourism

The UN World Tourism Organization defines cultural tourism on their website as:

“...a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination.



These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.”

### **Outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism**

Outdoor recreation and nature-based are broadly defined as leisure activities conducted outdoors. It can be something as simple as taking a walking outside, flying a kite, or fishing to more physical activities such as bicycling, kayaking or cross country skiing. Nature-based tourism also includes things like agritourism, or birdwatching. Agritourism is “farming-related activities carried out on a working farm or other agricultural settings for entertainment or education purposes” (Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rich, 2013, p. 45). It includes a variety of activities, including education, direct sales of produce and value-added products, entertainment (e.g., corn mazes, festivals), outdoor recreation, and hospitality-based activities like farm-to-table dinners and farm stays (Chase et al., 2018). Both outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism offer the ability to connect with nature, making it accessible to everyone.

According to the community, current visitors are primarily day trippers. Continuing to promote Scandia to attract these visitors is a good short-term strategy, but a sustainable long-term strategy for tourism in Scandia requires the community to expand beyond these short-term strategies.

- **Day-trippers:** For Scandia they are the primary visitor market currently because of Scandia’s proximity to the Twin Cities metro, easy access, the location on the St. Croix River, and the lack of commercial lodging in the community. Day-trippers include individuals, families and groups.
- **Visiting friends and relatives (VFR):** Marketing to the VFR market is done primarily through community residents. Building awareness of local tourism attractions, businesses, activities, and events gives residents information to share with friends and family. It also has other positive benefits, such as increasing community pride and involvement.
- **Pass-through visitors:** Many travelers and commuters use both Highway 95 and 97 on a regular basis. According to MNDOT Traffic Data, in 2017 the average daily count on Highway 95 at the intersection of Highway 97 was 7,600 vehicles, and on Highway 97 between Highway 95 and Olinda Trail was 4,700 vehicles.

Targeted marketing such as zip code specific, or location-based marketing using mobile technology, can help reach this audience. Clear way-finding signs, maps and literature about local attractions, services, and events placed at key locations (e.g. gas stations and restaurants) is also a way to reach these visitors. Additionally, ask businesses to cross-sell other community businesses.



## SCANDIA'S CURRENT TOURISM STRUCTURE

Scandia has a core group of passionate and dedicated leaders and tourism supporters in both the private and public sectors. This type of support is a true asset for the community and critical to advancing tourism efforts.

The vision detailed in the City of Scandia 2040 comprehensive plan sets the stage for sustainable tourism development.

*Scandia is known for its distinctive character and history. The City's overall vision is to maintain its rural character typified by the agricultural heritage and natural resources. In 2040, Scandia has an economically vibrant village center, which is home to a diverse population that is surrounded by mix of natural resource and agricultural areas intermixed with rural residential and lakeshore neighborhoods. As new development is proposed, the emphasis will remain on the protection of rural, agricultural and natural resources.*

The comprehensive plan also notes four overarching goals for the City of Scandia, based on this vision that also provide direction for developing tourism within the community. These goals are:

1. Maintain and promote the City's cultural character and history.
2. Maintain and promote a variety of land uses and residential densities while maintaining Scandia's existing agricultural and rural character.
3. Preserve and protect the City's natural resources.
4. Provide economic opportunities for residents and businesses.

Tourism fits solidly within Scandia's vision for the future. However, a specific tourism development plan that ensures tourism meets local goals while addressing visitors' interests is needed. Engaging residents and stakeholders to create this plan will build support for its success.

The most pressing need for tourism in Scandia is to identify who will lead tourism efforts for the community. Right now, tourism efforts appear to be ad hoc, driven primarily by either a motivated business owner or by Gammelgarden. Bringing tourism to the next level requires broader and stronger support from across the community and a higher degree of coordination. This requires creating a tourism committee or task force to lead tourism development.

In the short-term, tourism efforts can be coordinated by a task force or committee under an existing organization. (For example, establish a subcommittee of the economic development authority to provide leadership to address the priorities identified from this report.) The committee/task force should represent diverse

interests, demographics, and voices from across the community. It should organize and host regular meetings to create a tourism development plan that communicates the value of tourism and local assets, as well as implement a marketing plan to coordinate tourism promotion efforts.

Creating a joint tourism promotion committee with Marine on St. Croix may be a way of bringing the two communities together around tourism and economic development. This can help maximize visibility of both communities and extend limited promotion budgets.

Eventually, Scandia may need a formal tourism organization or chamber of commerce with operating and marketing budgets. Again, this could be in conjunction with Marine on St. Croix. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce offers a number of online resources related to starting a chamber. ([www.uschamber.com](http://www.uschamber.com)) The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is also a resource. ([www.mnchamber.com](http://www.mnchamber.com)). Minnesota Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus ([www.macvb.org](http://www.macvb.org)) or the Leadership in the Valley program offered through the Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce may also be helpful. Establishing a destination marketing organization (DMO) funded by a lodging tax may be a long term goal if commercial lodging is developed.

#### **Short-term ideas and strategies for Scandia's tourism structure**

- Create a task force/committee to lead community tourism efforts.
- Establish ongoing community and stakeholder engagement to build support and a vision for tourism development that aligns with community goals.
  - Identify others in the community who can/should be involved in tourism.
  - Invite youth, seniors and new community members to participate in tourism discussions.
- Develop a written plan for tourism development.
- Create a marketing plan for tourism in the community.
- Establish a budget for tourism promotion.
- Coordinate current city, business, and other tourism promotion to maximize resources and effort.
- Explore joint tourism marketing efforts with Marine on St. Croix.
- Coordinate tourism development with city, county and regional tourism and economic planning and development.

### **Long-term ideas and strategies for Scandia's tourism structure**

- Strengthen collaboration across the community and region.
- Identify and recruit tourism complementary businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Provide new businesses assistance to find funding.
- Establish a joint Scandia/Marine on St. Croix destination marketing organization.

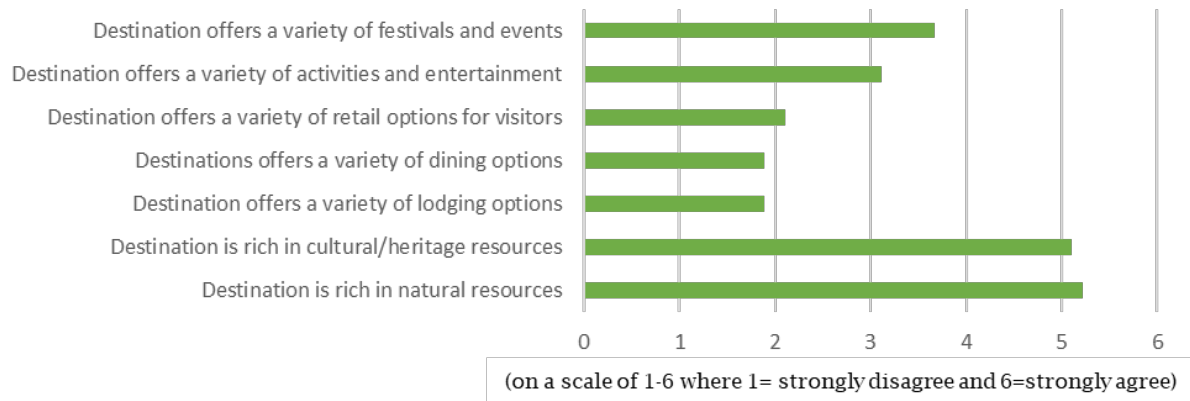
While it was beyond the scope of this project to assess resident support for tourism in Scandia, there is evidence of community support. This included welcoming attitudes and positive customer experiences, as noted by both expert and mystery visitors. Additionally, comments by the community leadership team and during the SWOT analysis reflected community pride and enthusiasm.

Public comments cited in the city's Comprehensive Plan also show that tourism is viewed as a positive development strategy that complements the city vision. The plan noted resident ideas for types of businesses that will address resident and visitors needs. "Residents of Scandia want growth to match existing community character, supporting existing small businesses and the history of the community. There is interest in a range of community businesses and attractions, many of which can cater to both local and tourist markets, such as coffee shops, restaurants, and recreation. There is also interest in exploring alternative agricultural opportunities, like co-ops, and tourism as key elements of the city's economy, as traditional agriculture will become increasingly difficult to maintain. Focus groups also noted slow and sporadic internet speed as a limiting factor in business operations" (Comprehensive Plan, p. 42).

## ENHANCING SCANDIA'S TOURISM ASSETS: FINDINGS AND STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Inventoried of Scandia's tourism assets was led by the community leadership team. A small group of residents completed the inventory and assessment of attractions prior to the expert team visit (Appendix B).

The expert team and mystery visitors also used worksheets during their visit to assess tourism assets, services, and infrastructure.



**Figure 2: Expert team assessment of asset availability**

### Cultural/heritage tourism

Scandia has both the Swedish heritage and rural character that warrant being preserved and promoted for tourism. The Swedish heritage is clearly a source of pride and a key driver of current visitors. It is part of the past, present and future of tourism in Scandia. Community leaders noted the importance of retaining authenticity and the small town character while promoting the culture and heritage of the area. A discussion of exactly what this means for the community and what residents envision the community to look like 10 or 20 years down the road, is critical to determining how to develop tourism.

Many examples exist of communities sharing their culture/heritage to generate tourism. Two examples of culturally-themed communities are Pella, Iowa ([www.pella.org](http://www.pella.org)) and Solvang, California ([www.cityofsolvang.com](http://www.cityofsolvang.com)). These communities are much further along with tourism development than Scandia and may have commodified heritage more than Scandia envisions. They do however, offer examples of how heritage tourism can be presented. Both include visitor information on their city webpages (Pella even notes locations of public bathrooms!), have implemented architectural guidelines, and established village centers as the core of tourism activities.

## Gammelgarden Museum

Gammelgarden Museum is unique, and has national and international significance and drawing power. It is already well connected to all things Swedish in Minnesota. This is the primary draw for many visitors to Scandia, and the organization does an excellent job with its facility, marketing and events. The city can build on Gammelgarden's relationships and success to further promote the community's Swedish heritage.

Gammelgarden offers a variety of events and activities for visitors and residents. Explore how the community can build complementary offerings or create a signature event that aligns with the Swedish heritage. For example, host an ABBA themed concert, an art in the park event celebrating immigrants or a series of movies in the park with films like "the Immigrants," or "Sweet Land."

## Village Center

Scandia's Village Center/downtown, which includes the Gammelgarden Museum, Elim church, the community center, commercial properties, and residences is the historic and social core of the community. It should serve as the first place to welcome and provide visitors information on things to do in the area. Labeling it the Scandia Village Center rather than "downtown" or central business district (CBD) helps create a sense of place that fits the rural, small town character of Scandia. A welcoming Village Center will encourage people to visit businesses, socialize, and interact with the community.

Are the buildings in the village center historically significant? Could they be on the National Register of Historic Places? If so, they should be preserved and have interpretative signage. If not, encourage building/business owners to refresh facades and enhance architectural features to reflect Scandia's rural and/or Swedish heritage.

The Scandia Market and Mercantile is in a prime location and has space to enhance its offerings for visitors. One expert stated, "The Scandia Market and Mercantile feels like a missed opportunity." Another visitor noted, "Going into something titled 'market and mercantile' I expect more of a gift-type store."

Enhancing the visual attractiveness of the area will also create a greater sense of place. Public art, including the Dala horses (see below) and



barn quilts, enhances the visual appeal of the community and can be used to invite local artisans to help visually tell Scandia’s story. It can build local pride as the community’s story bridges the past, present, and future.

Several buildings are occupied by services (e.g., insurance etc), and there are several vacant properties. Focusing business recruitment on visitor-oriented interests (e.g. retail, bakery, giftshop) will help draw both visitors and residents to the center.

### **Hay Lake School, Obelisk, and Copas**

The Hay Lake School and the adjacent Johannes Erickson House are both on the National Register of Historic Places. The school was an interesting historic schoolhouse worth visiting, but visitors noted that it felt disconnected from the Village Center. Its physical location by the park, however, is a lovely setting that invites visitors to stroll around and enjoy nature. Its proximity to the bike trail also offers bicyclists a reason to stop, relax, and visit. Creating better connections through signage, interpretation and cross-promotion can help more visitors enjoy these attractions.

The obelisk is located near Hay Lake School and across the street from the trailhead at Lions Park, but it is difficult to see. Several visitors noted that they initially passed it and that the signs are not clear as to its location. Also, several visitors mentioned the neighbor’s dogs are intimidating, and that they felt uncomfortable taking photos in from of a private residence.

Copas is also part of Scandia’s history, but it was difficult to find information about the neighborhood and its historic connection. Including interpretive signage, and adding information on a visitor webpage about its history and where it is located will highlight the area.



Improving the information available on websites, and at other attractions and establishments will help connect these areas to the Village Center and encourage visitors to stay longer as they move around to the various attractions.

### **Dala Horses**

Experts and visitors commented positively on the public statues and the integration of Dala horses in signage around the community. The horses were viewed as an asset to be enhanced to further engage visitors. In a google search of “Dala horse,” only the American Swedish Institute or Mora Minnesota came up. Comments included:

- “Even as a non-Swede, I was fascinated with the Dala horses all over Scandia. One quick improvement could be to add signage to the bases of the horses. This would explain the history of the Dala horse and their



significance in Scandia,” and “Dala horses are the major community icon—does every visitor know what a Dala horse is? How do they find out?”

- “The Dala horses are great photo opportunities. They could generate interest and visibility by having people post their photos on social media.”
- “There are a plethora of exciting ideas that could be done with the Dala horses. One idea is to have a scavenger hunt. People could check in at the Gammelgarden and get a punch card. If they visited a set number of horses, they could return to the museum for a small prize. My children have walked all over the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum looking for things just to get a small prize.”

### **Shorter-term ideas and strategies for cultural/heritage tourism**

- Visual Enhancement
  - Implement the city’s Architectural Design Guidelines to protect the historic Village Center and strengthen it as the focal point for tourism.
  - Paint or consider adding a mural on the warming house.
  - Invite local artists to create murals or public art around town to further visually tell the community’s story.
  - Improve the overall streetscape (e.g. lighting, benches, parking, crosswalks etc.) to enhance visitors’ first impressions.
  - Add directional signage to the Community Center.
  - Post a map to other key historical sites in the Village Center.
- Prioritize increasing access and availability of public toilets. If the Community Center is closed where can visitors find them?
- Asset enhancement
  - Recruit small businesses to fill vacant buildings. Target specialty retail that will appeal to visitors rather than service oriented businesses.
  - Consider pop-up shops or artisan galleries until permanent businesses are found.
  - Feature regional food and products in restaurants and other businesses. (It was noted that the Gammelgarden gift shop and Crabtree’s offer regional products)
  - Host a Taste of the Valley event featuring local products.
  - Offer the barn quilt tour as a self-guided tour.
  - Enhance Copas by adding interpretive signage about what the buildings used to be, when they were built, etc.

### **Longer-term ideas and strategies for cultural/heritage tourism**

- Consider moving the obelisk to a central location or across the street into Lion’s Park to improve visibility.

- Are there historically significant headstones in the cemetery that need protection and interpretation?
- Invite long-time residents to help tell the story of Scandia's history. Build on existing work such as *Scandia Then and Now*.
- Offer and promote guided tours or develop a self-guided audio tour, as well as a map with historic sites and interpretation. See Owatonna, Minnesota's example on their website [www.visitowatonna.org](http://www.visitowatonna.org).
- Develop virtual tours that can be accessed on websites, through mobile applications, and other emerging technologies.
- Develop a visitor center.
  - The Heritage Alliance is working to acquire the historic Water Town Barn building and has a vision for its future use. They could lead on this.
  - Explore acquisition of the property on the SW corner of Highways 95 and 97 for a small visitor center or kiosk. This could be in partnership with the byway.
- Seek funding strategies to support development.
  - Could the city or EDA use Community Development Block grants or offer low interest loans for downtown improvements that meet Architectural Design Guidelines and enhance community goals?
  - Grant funding may be available. (e.g. Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants <http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants>).

## Outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism

Scandia has, or is in close proximity to, many outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism assets including the St. Croix River, parks, trails, and lakes. Many expert team members noted the relatively untapped potential of these resources and the potential to reach the visitors they attract.

Scandia's network of parks and trails provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities and linkages to regional recreation experiences. These trails and parks connect to important regional parks, including Big Marine Park Reserve operated by Washington County, William O'Brien State Park operated by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway operated by the National Park Service.

Scandia's close proximity to William O'Brien State Park and the St. Croix River make the community attractive to visitors interested in outdoor recreation. The William O'Brien State Park offers a variety of outdoor experiences, including camping, fishing, canoeing, skiing, and bird watching. In 2017, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conducted research about visitors to





Minnesota state park and their experiences. According to their data, in 2017, 13,422 adults and 6,225 children spent a total of 10,862 overnights in camper cabins, group camps, or campground facilities at William O'Brien State Park. Day visitor counts were not available.

In 2017, the median age of Minnesota residents visiting state parks was 51, and the average party size was 2.8 individuals (The Research Edge, 2017). In addition, 56percent of park visitors from Minnesota were part of adult only groups with 44 percent including teenagers or children. Eighty-one percent of visitors were from Minnesota, with 45 percent of that coming from the metro area. Participants were also asked about their in-park activities and 19 percent of all visitors indicated visiting historical sites, with 26 percent of campers and 18 percent of day visitors participating in this activity (The Research Edge, 2017). While these figures are not specific to William O'Brien State Park, it is possible that some William O'Brien State Park visitors would be interested in visiting historical sites outside of the park in Scandia.

Communicating to park visitors about Scandia's historical sites and family recreation opportunities in Scandia to these park visitors will be key in attracting these visitors to leave the park and explore the community. Consider what Scandia can offer that they cannot do or experience in the park itself. This can add value to their stay. Additionally, what weather-resistant activities can Scandia offer for days when the weather is not conducive to outdoor recreation?

Recent research by Schneider, Carlson, Pflughoeft, and O'Connor (2018) also points to the potential of regional visitors to the river. "National Park Service data reveal annual Riverway visitation more than doubled between 2013 to 2017 to an estimated 772,000 (National Park Service, 2017). Boaters constitute about one-fifth of reported visitors on the Lower St Croix." The authors also note that Minnesota and Wisconsin Interstate state parks located just north of Scandia average annual visitation of between 300,000 and 350,000 annual visitors.

A greater connection to the St. Croix River is needed. Although community members classify it as a primary attraction and rate it highly in terms of product quality, authenticity, and drawing power, the community's connection to the river is very limited. There appears to be no local outfitters or amenities, and limited access for visitors to enjoy the river.

There are two access points to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway in/near Scandia: Log House Landing and the William O'Brien Landing. Individuals must purchase an entry permit to the William O'Brien State Park in order to access the landing within the park. Log House Landing offers public access to the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and holds historical significance for Scandia as it is where "Swedish settlers arrived by boat ... in 1850" (Schlingerman, 2013, para. 1); however, there is no signage or interpretation at the landing about this historical significance.

Log House Landing has been a controversial topic for Scandia with differing views of the use and future plans for the landing (Weaver, 2017). It was unclear to the expert team whether the community wanted visitors to be aware of, and use, Log House Landing as an access point to the river. It is important to note that not all assets in Scandia need to be developed and marketed to visitors; however, the community needs to make that decision. If Scandia wants to promote Log House Landing to visitors, signage and infrastructure at the landing will need to be developed and/or improved.

## Bicycling

The local bike trails in Scandia as well as the proposed expansion of the Gateway State Trail, and the beautiful rural setting of Scandia make the community an attractive destination for bicyclists. Scandia has four local bike routes (Big Marine, Bone Lake, Dala, and Sand Lake Family routes) ranging from seven miles to 15 miles. There are two trail heads located at the Scandia Community Center and Lion’s Shelter, but there are limited amenities for bicyclists at these trail heads.



One expert team member stated, "The road riding is great. I have ridden the four Scandia bikes routes. I would say that the Sand Lake Route definitely qualifies as a "low stress" route that is family friendly. The roads are in great shape (new asphalt) and [have] very low traffic volume, but great for experienced riders. There are no off-road trails except the couple block segment near the historic schoolhouse."



Bicycle tourism is defined by The Path Less Pedaled (2013) as “any travel-related activity for the purpose of pleasure which incorporates a bicycle.” It can include organized tours, events and festivals, long distance self-supported touring, overnight or short-form touring, and destination bicycling. More information about each of these can be found at [www.pathlesspedaled.com](http://www.pathlesspedaled.com).

A study conducted by the University of Minnesota Tourism Center (2017) found the number of bicycle trips in Minnesota was estimated to be between 75.2 and 96 million annually. The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area accounts for 69 to 72 percent of the total number of trips and miles traveled in Minnesota.

Existing efforts by the City of Scandia, Friends of Scandia Parks and Trails, and Cycling Scandia to develop local bike trails and conduct research to understand bicyclists' needs is an excellent start. Supporting these voluntary efforts to address this niche market can help draw more bicycle tourism.

The proposed expansion of the Gateway State Trail will create additional opportunities to attract bicyclists from the Twin Cities. The Gateway State Trail currently connects St Paul to Pine Point Park, with proposed expansion plans to go through Scandia and William O'Brien State Park. Currently, fix-it bicycle tools (air pump, tire patches, wrenches, sockets) are available at the Scandia Mercantile. Continuing to develop the infrastructure and amenities desired by bicyclists will enable Scandia to better serve bicyclists already visiting Scandia (and thus creating positive word of mouth) and those using the Gateway State Trail.

### **Agritourism**

In addition to outdoor recreation and bicycle tourism, another nature-based opportunity for Scandia is agritourism. Agritourism fits nicely with Scandia's vision to retain and protect its rural character and agricultural resources.

Some farms already offer agritourism experiences (e.g., Poplar Goat Farm, Natura Farms). Team members who visited these sites noted, "Poplar Goat dairy was an enjoyable and educational tour complete with baby goats! It sounds like the owner is very welcoming of tour groups and even though she does not sell products on farm, it is great brand recognition for her goat milk/cheese in the store."



Both participants in the tourism assessment visits and community members noted a number of additional agritourism opportunities regionally. These included honey, vineyards/wineries, apples, berry farms offering U-pick, Abrahamsons, and equine experiences. Assessing farmers'/operators' interest in, and ability to, offer agritourism experiences is needed. These efforts will also require local coordination.

If farmers in Scandia are interested in offering agritourism experiences, the city could host and promote a weekend in which farmers open their farms to visitors. An example of this type of event is the North Star Farm Tour, which is a "self-guided tour of Twin Cities regional fiber farms, connecting people to farmers who produce local, natural fibers" (North Star Farm Tour, 2018). In 2018, 11 farms participated in the tour and opened their fiber farms to visitors on a Saturday and Sunday in September.



A weekend event can be an opportunity for farmers in Scandia to offer agritourism experiences during a limited period of time and determine if it is something they want to offer on a regular basis. It is important to note that, while such an event would be limited to a weekend (or set amount of days), an investment of time and resources will still be needed to create and promote such an event.

Some risk exists when inviting visitors on to farms; thus, hosting or directing operators to training and resources to get started with an agritourism effort will be beneficial. Some potential resources are included on the resources page.

### Shorter-term ideas and strategies for outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism

- Inventory outdoor recreation and nature-based experiences in Scandia.
  - What programs and activities are currently offered.
  - List facilities available, hours, costs, seasonality etc.
  - Use Worksheet 6.3 from the *Community Tourism Development Manual* to gather information.
  - Make the above information available in digital and print marketing materials.
- Enhance amenities for bicyclists at the trailhead and in the Village Center. (e.g. water fountain, toilets, bike racks, a bike maintenance station, lighting, etc).
- Use the recent research and knowledge of Cycling Scandia and Friends of Scandia Parks and Trails and other sources to inform decisions related to rider needs.
- Improve availability of maps and community information to further encourage bicyclists and outdoor recreationalists to stay in town.
- Enhance current facilities for multigenerational use. Examples include:
  - Updated playground equipment.
  - Large scale chess or checker boards.
  - Add outdoor fitness equipment for adults.
  - Birdwatching stations with signage or guided walks.
  - Agritourism experiences or events.
- Promote recreational activities to complement Scandia's cultural/heritage, rural character, and agritourism experiences (e.g., Nordic sports, walking tour, etc).
- Promote recreational opportunities for all demographics and user types (e.g.' bikers, boaters, hunters, horseback riders, cross country skiers, snowmobilers etc.) to encourage year-round use of local trails, lakes and parks.
- Promote local parks and outdoor recreation opportunities to diverse populations (e.g. Hmong, Somali, Hispanic) in the metro area. Between 2010 and 2015 the state added four times as many people of color as non-Hispanic white residents (Minnesota State Demographic Center, 2019).



- Highlight public facilities, such as group picnic areas, and scenic settings as venues for special events, work events, or other gatherings.
- Review the Minnesota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for opportunities to link local assets to other opportunities  
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/scorp/index.html>.

#### **Longer-term ideas and strategies for outdoor recreation/nature-based tourism**

- Explore a bike rental service or public bike share program.
- Explore feasibility of a bike or outdoor recreation business.
- Grow an existing, or develop a new event utilizing outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., a kayaking/biking biathlon, fitness bootcamp, cross country skiing or fat tire biking event).
- Create a "farm trail" or a map to show the agritourism opportunities in the area.
- Expand the farmer's market times and include local foods and products to appeal to visitors.
- Is hunting available on private lands in the area? If so, could this opportunity be marketed?
- Are guides available for fishing on Big Marine Lake?
- Develop publications, signs, and other materials in multiple languages.
- Host cultural/ethnic celebration events that draw linkages to other immigrant stories, especially targeting first-time visitors.
- Consider the needs and wishes of visitors within the target markets as well as residents in future facility designs.
- Explore development of new nature-based activities. (For example: Winona, Minnesota created an ice climbing wall on the river bluff, and an entrepreneur near Henderson, Minnesota established a zipline course).

#### **Tourism Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is generally thought of as things like roads, sewers, emergency services, utilities, and internet access. These services are critical to supporting both the community and tourism development, but tourism infrastructure includes additional things like signage, visitor readiness and lodging to address visitor needs. During the SWOT analysis, the need to improve WiFi access and the sewer services in the downtown village center were mentioned. Visitors noted difficulty accessing WiFi and had limited cellphone service. Positive ratings were given to the availability of emergency services and the quality of area roads. Several team members noted the potential at the intersection of Highways 95 and 97 for development of tourism related information, business or facilities.

## Signage



Both visitors and expert team members noted that signage in Scandia could be improved. The gateways to the community, especially on Highway 95 are not well defined, nor are signs well positioned. Visitors who traveled to Scandia on Highway 95 noted that the first MNDOT destination sign indicating they were entering Scandia was well before additional directional signs. As one expert team member commented, “[I saw the] green Scandia sign long before the business area. Wondered

where the ‘town’ was.” The welcome signs on Highway 97 are attractive. A visitor noted, “The official green metal city sign was a few miles from the actual community. When I got to the ‘town’ there was a welcome sign reflecting their Scandinavian heritage, the school had a horse and sign reflecting their heritage, houses/barns, buildings had quilt square reflecting their heritage and the entire area seemed well kept.” Others noted that the directional signs on Highway 95 before Highway 97 name Forest Lake, but not Scandia. Work with MNDOT and the county to determine how these issues could be addressed, and how Scandia and the historic Village Center can be more clearly featured.



Wayfinding and interpretive signage within the community can also be enhanced. They should be a systematic and cohesive guide for visitors and residents to cultural, recreational, and civic facilities or locations. As previously noted, the use of the Dala horses on street signs, the gateway ‘Valkommen Till Scandia’ signs, and at various businesses help to highlight Scandia’s Swedish heritage and help create a sense of

place. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding plan. Consider integrating the Dala horse theme into all wayfinding and interpretive signage. Hastings Minnesota provides a good example of wayfinding and interpretive signage.



Signage for businesses in town has mixed visibility—some signs are on the business, other signage on shared cooperative signs, but overall there is not a coordinated feel that reflects a sense of place. Consider a commercial signage strategy that uses the architectural guidelines to improve attractiveness and function.

## Visitor Readiness

Visitor readiness is ensuring that local businesses and attractions are prepared to address the needs and expectations of visitors. A number of visitors commented positively on the hospitality they experienced throughout their visit. Comments included:

- “Hospitality was notable everywhere I went,”
- “Clerk at gas station provided good mini-history of Scandia (unsolicited).”
- “Gammelgarden gift shop volunteer was experienced and was able to answer all questions.”
- Several visitors noted the Scandia Café by name.
  - “The Scandia Café was a great stop.”
  - “I thought it really represented the small-town diner-nothing fancy but good food.”
  - “Cafe is filled with cow art but doesn’t sell ice cream nor does it specialize in dairy products. Missed opportunity.”

Concerns were also expressed about business hours, lack of shopping opportunities, and businesses not accepting credit cards. These issues can create negative experiences for visitors when their expectations are not met. According to YouGov, 86 percent of Americans use debit or credit cards when making purchases in-store.

Visitors noted:

- “We went on a Saturday morning when an average visitor would expect things to be open and busy. The entire town was dead. There were no specialty/interesting shops to check out. If you want visitors to stay, things need to be open.”
- “Restaurant worker seemed proud of the fact they do not accept credit cards (cash or check only). When I asked about this, the reply was—‘if someone needs cash, we will direct them to the Mercantile or Super America for an ATM machine.’ This might work well for them, but I suspect most visitors would prefer to use credit (cards).”

Many local businesses not directly involved in tourism can help promote Scandia to their customers, or cross-market other businesses. A robust business directory on the city website makes businesses more accessible to visitors and other businesses. Provide businesses with information about local attractions, amenities and events. The city could also host a local business mixer. For example, VisitWinona (Minnesota) hosts monthly casual meetings at different businesses to encourage sharing and networking.

Scandia currently does not have commercial lodging, and current demand does not warrant it at this point. Commercial lodging does exist in nearby communities (i.e., Forest Lake, Chisago City, Stillwater), however and there are short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO) operating in Scandia. Commercial lodging is unlikely to be developed until visitor demand increases.

### Short-term ideas and strategies for Tourism Infrastructure

- Inventory existing signs (e.g. gateway, wayfinding, bike and trail signs, interpretive etc).
- Continue the Dala Horse theme on signs.
- Create a business directory both online and in print.
  - The print *Scandia History and Museum* sheet with business directory on the back is a good start. Enhance it with key information including business's address, phone number, website and hours.
    - Use worksheet 6.3 from the *Community Tourism Development Manual* to gather this information.
- Create a map of all community businesses.
- Encourage businesses to modify hours to meet visitor needs on weekends, holidays, and evenings, or one evening a week. This can benefit residents too.
- Encourage businesses to accept credit cards.
- Ask businesses to cross-promote other local businesses and attractions.
  - Provide each with a business directory.
  - Provide resources to businesses about assets and amenities so they can answer the typical visitor question, "What else is there to do around here?"
- Provide customer service training to businesses and public sector staff
  - University of Minnesota Tourism Center offers a customer service training program called At Your Service. [www.z.umn.edu/ays](http://www.z.umn.edu/ays)
- Develop a list of short-term lodging for visitors seeking accommodations.

### Longer-term ideas and strategies for Tourism Infrastructure

- Work with MNDOT and the county on highway signage and explore additional MNDOT resources related to road landscaping, integration of art etc.
- Can signage for the Swedish Circle communities be developed and installed regionally? This will require working with those communities and MNDOT.
- Establish a business networking group, council, or chamber of commerce.
- Consider developing guidelines for short-term lodging.
- Explore the feasibility of commercial lodging.
- Consider the needs of group tours (e.g., public toilets, parking and safe loading/unloading, a staging area that includes motorcoach turnaround space, knowledgeable step-on guides and group dining options).



## MARKETING TOURISM IN SCANDIA: FINDINGS AND STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Expert team members, mystery visitors and community members all recognized the need to enhance marketing for Scandia tourism to grow. As previously mentioned, many also noted the need for a coordinated effort to maximize tourism potential. Positioning Scandia as a destination with a range of tourist experiences will attract visitors and encourage longer stays. Comments included:

- “Not having a chamber or CVB is a definite disadvantage---Some information is on Forest Lake Chamber website or Explore Minnesota but the casual visitor may not want to take the time to search very far.”
- “Some brochures were available at the Gammelgarden Museum but they are limited in scope and numbers.”
- “No tourism information was available at Super America.” Many visitors look at convenience stores as a first point for information about a community.
- “Make community, historic trail and bike trail maps more readily available. Distribute widely in businesses, the Gammelgarden brochure rack, and the Community Center, as well as online for download.”
- “Professionally created brochures and maps are needed.”

### Existing tourism promotions

Overall, there are a number of existing promotional and visitor information materials and websites generated by the city and other organizations (e.g., Gammelgarden, Hay Lake School, Eko-Backen, Crabtree’s). Gathering these materials to analyze what exists, what is needed, and how to coordinate these efforts to benefit visitors and the community will be helpful. It will point to where city marketing efforts can fit to enhance existing private marketing efforts.



Another way to build awareness of Scandia is by inviting individuals who interact with visitors in the region (e.g., at lodging facilities, restaurants, attractions) to visit Scandia and experience its attractions and businesses. This strategy can help to build awareness and drive visitation since those interacting directly with visitors will have first-hand experience and can recommend Scandia to visitors inquiring about things to do in the area.

## Online presence

In today's digital world, businesses, attractions and destinations need an online presence and mobile-friendly websites. Visitors are increasingly conducting pre-travel research online or searching for additional things to do once in the area.

Destination Analysts (2018) found that “96 percent of American leisure travelers own or regularly use a mobile phone, with 64.7 percent using this device to plan their trips.” There is also an increase of mobile use in-destination. According to research conducted by Think with Google, there has been a “6 times increase in mobile searches for ‘things to do/activities’ plus ‘near me’ over the last two years” (Kleinberg, 2018). Similarly, within the last two years, “mobile searches for ‘events/attractions’ plus ‘near me’ have grown over 500 percent” (Kleinberg, 2018). These findings highlight the importance of an online presence and having mobile-friendly sites. As Gevelber (2018) stated, “If people are searching for something near them, that’s a pretty strong signal of intent.” This is especially important if Scandia wants to take advantage of the visitors already traveling on the St. Croix Scenic Byway and/or visiting nearby communities, parks and attractions.

Expert team members and mystery visitors were unable to find much online information for visitors. Several noted they were able to find some information about parks and local businesses on the city’s website, but that it was difficult because the website is geared more to residents.

The lack of easily accessible visitor information online hinders visitation to Scandia. Adding a visitor section on the City’s webpage ([www.ci.scandia.mn.us](http://www.ci.scandia.mn.us)) for visitors will suffice in the short-term. An example of how a community has added tourism to the city website is Henderson Minnesota (<http://www.henderson-mn.com/>). As tourism increases, a website dedicated to visitor information should be developed. Information on other sites, like Explore Minnesota, could be repurposed on a visitor -focused page including the community’s history, culture, museums, events, outdoor recreation opportunities and agritourism.

At the launch of the Tourism Assessment Program with Scandia, a search of ‘things to do’ and restaurants in Scandia on online review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor yielded few results. For example, in a search of ‘things to do’ in Scandia, only the Gammelgarden Museum and Poplar Goat Farm Tours showed up in the results. When searching for restaurants in Scandia, Scandia Cafe, Scandia Pizzeria, and Meisters Bar & Grill were included in the results; however, not all have claimed their listings.

Encourage local attractions and businesses to claim their listings on Google My Business, Yelp, and TripAdvisor. These sites allow businesses to add information (e.g., location, hours, photos, menus) and respond to customer reviews. A robust online presence is an indication to potential visitors that there are things to do in Scandia and is worth the investment (in time and money) to visit. Mystery visitors experienced

difficulty finding information about the community online, which led them to form a less than positive first impression. Visitors were asked to conduct research pre-visit and describe what they expected to experience in the community as a result of their pre-visit research. One visitor commented, “My expectations would be low with regard to finding a variety of interesting tourism opportunities to take advantage of.” Another noted, “I wouldn’t bother visiting. It seems to be some place to live but nothing ‘touristy’ to do.”

### **Collaborations and cross-promotion**

Scandia is part of a number of collaborations including the St. Croix Scenic Byway, the St. Croix Valley Regional Tourism Alliance and the Swedish Circle/Ring communities. Collaborations can be especially beneficial for emerging destinations like Scandia to build awareness of the community as a tourism destination. This also enables communities to attract visitors, despite having limited services and infrastructure to accommodate overnight visitors.

City of Scandia marketing efforts can position the community holistically by promoting outdoor recreation, bicycling, agritourism, and the arts beyond its Swedish heritage. For example, Gammelgarden does a good job promoting Scandia’s Swedish heritage, and has relationships with tourism-focused entities such as the Swedish American Institute and tour companies. Complementing Gammelgarden efforts by promoting Scandia’s additional attractions will extend impact for both the community and Gammelgarden.

A perceived challenge for Scandia is the fact that it is served by two post offices: Scandia and Marine on St. Croix. Some tourism attractions and businesses located in Scandia have a Marine on St. Croix zip code. For example, Crabtree’s Garden Gate has a Marine on St. Croix zip code and is thus listed as being in Marine on St. Croix on sites like TripAdvisor. For visitors unaware of the proximity between Scandia and Marine on St. Croix, this likely creates confusion about what is available to visitors in Scandia.

Both Scandia and Marine on St. Croix will benefit from partnering on marketing that promotes both communities as a single destination. It will extend limited marketing resources, and potentially keep visitors in the region longer, which can help the economy of both communities. An example of a successful marketing collaboration between communities is the Minne-Roadtrip ([www.minneroadtrip.com](http://www.minneroadtrip.com)). Faribault, Owatonna and Northfield collaborate on an award-winning tourism marketing effort that encourages visitors to stop in all three communities. Each community retains its own marketing efforts, but this collaboration adds to their ability to draw visitors.

There are also opportunities for Scandia to both leverage and add value to regional tourism efforts and collaborations. For example, the St. Croix Scenic Byway highlights both the natural beauty and historical significance of the region. Scandia is featured as the “first Swedish settlement (Hay Lake, 1850), first Lutheran church (Scandia, 1856), oldest parsonage (Scandia, 1868).” Not only is the St. Croix Scenic Byway an existing tourism attraction that is in line with Scandia’s cultural/heritage tourism, but Scandia, with its significant contributions to Minnesota’s history, is a key element of a visitor’s experience along the byway.



Scandia is also part of the Swedish Ring of communities (with Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City, Shafer, Taylors Falls, Almelund and North Branch). Strengthening this collaboration is encouraged through cross-marketing, maps, brochures and linking websites. Strengthening the Swedish Circle collaboration could bring more international visitors to Scandia. See Appendix C for information about Swedish visitors to the United States.

Collaborating with other organizations in the St. Croix valley including ArtReach ([www.artreachstcroix.org](http://www.artreachstcroix.org)) and North Woods and Waters of the St. Croix Heritage Area (<http://northwoodsandwaters.org/>) extends community efforts to promote Scandia’s rural character, arts, culture and outdoor opportunities. ArtReach St. Croix is a non-profit organization that partners with community art, cultural and nature, supports regional artists. It also connects communities in the St. Croix River Valley to visual, literary and performing arts. They offer a regional arts calendar that allows Scandia to add events, attractions and experiences. <https://www.stcroixsplash.org/> The website is also linked to other regional sites that broadens the visibility of listings.

### **Market research**

Very little information is available about current visitors to Scandia. This information however, is critical for developing effective marketing strategies and informing tourism development strategies. Anecdotal information suggests that Scandia attracts visitors primarily from the Twin Cities Metro area, although Gammelgarden has state, national, and international drawing power.

Team members also noted potential visitor markets that may be opportunities for Scandia to target efforts to grow tourism. Comments included:

- “Need to attract younger audiences, and people of color. That’s growing demographics of the metro – which is their market. More options for younger audiences would be great, but hard to happen organically.”
- “Their resources (park and river) scream young people.”

A systematic collection of visitor information is needed. Asking local businesses and attractions to collect customer zip codes can be a start. Zip codes indicate the geographic origin of the visitor. Companies like ESRI can provide some demographic and psychographic information about residents in those zip codes. The University of Minnesota Center for Community Vitality uses ESRI data to create maps and insights into community visitors.

Informal conversations with visitors about what brought them to Scandia can also provide some insight into visitor motivations and interests. While this is not systematic data collection and we caution against making decisions based on anecdotal information, the insight gained can still be valuable in beginning to understand who visits Scandia, and their experiences in the community.

Formal data collection about visitor demographics, motivations and needs through visitor profile research will help the community make informed decisions. Conducting a visitor profile will provide Scandia with this information. The University of Minnesota Tourism Center can assist in conducting visitor profile research. As tourism develops, the community and its businesses may need or want to make adjustments. Gathering data systematically will help provide “the big picture” and guide decisions.

### **Short-term ideas and strategies for marketing Scandia**

- Conduct an audit of current marketing materials from all sources within community. Identify what is available, types of messaging and how the community is presented.
- Determine city’s tourism messaging (e.g., focus, how to complement local organizations and business’ marketing, etc).
- Create coordinated community marketing materials across mediums including print materials (e.g. brochure, posters), website, social media and community signage.
- Enhance the city’s website to include a visitor page.
  - Add complete information for trip planning.
  - Include a map showing all tourism attractions and facilities and link to their sites.
  - Include a downloadable bike trail map.
  - Make webpages mobile-friendly.
  - Create suggested themed tours of key points of interest (e.g., cultural/heritage, biking, agritourism, barn quilts).
  - Include links to other regional and tourism-related websites (eg., Explore Minnesota, Forest Lake Chamber, Chisago Lakes Chamber of Commerce)
  - Link to other regional Swedish communities and ask them to link to Scandia.
  - Include more community photos and short videos.

- Use social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) to promote Scandia as a tourism destination. These require consistent management.
- Use Hashtags
  - Create a Scandia hashtag (e.g., #VisitScandiaMN or similar) to build visitor awareness and local pride.
  - Use multiple hashtags to extend your reach. For example, add #OnlyinMN to tie into Explore Minnesota Tourism social media.
  - Encourage businesses and attractions with hashtags to add Scandia's hashtag to their messages that promote a visit to Scandia.
- Encourage business owners to claim their listings on Google My Business, Yelp, and TripAdvisor, and to add information (e.g., location, hours, photos, menus), which is helpful to potential visitors as well as residents.
  - Encourage businesses to respond to online customer reviews, both positive and negative. Respond to negative reviews in a positive-not defensive-manner.
- Create an inventory of short-term (VRBO/Airbnb) lodging.
- Take advantage of free marketing resources and assistance at Explore Minnesota Tourism. [www.exploreminnesota.com](http://www.exploreminnesota.com)
- Work with faculty and students at regional schools or colleges to develop projects or internships to move tourism priorities forward. Examples include:
  - A marketing student to help with the marketing audit or website building.
  - A student to assist businesses to claim their listings online (e.g. My Google, Yelp, Trip Advisor)
  - The University of Minnesota GoldPass system to post internship and job opportunities.
  - Geography and GIS students to help with creating maps.

### Longer-term ideas and strategies for marketing Scandia

- Hire staff to support social media and marketing efforts.
- Propose a joint Scandia/Marine on St.Croix tourism website.
- Encourage/invite businesses to link to the city's tourism page.
- Build local support for tourism with residents and businesses.
  - Host an event to orient and educate residents about tourism, its value, and local assets already in place. Use resources like:
    - Explore Minnesota Tourism's current Tourism and the Economy (<https://mn.gov/tourism-industry/research/tourism-and-the-economy.jsp>)
    - US Travel's Answer Sheet (<https://www.ustravel.org/>)
  - Encourage attractions and businesses to invite local and regional residents to visit (similar to shop-local day).
  - Include short articles in community newsletters or city communiques.
  - Invite residents to submit their top five things to see or do in short "My Scandia" videos. (e.g., best scenic views, top fishing places, great bike rides). These should be curated.
- Consider working with professionals to develop a community brand.



## CONCLUSION

The city's vision as put forward in its Comprehensive Plan 2040 clearly indicates the importance of tourism to Scandia's future. Local leaders have a good sense of current tourism assets and see the potential for tourism to grow beyond the present level of day visitors. The pride of residents and businesses is evident. Businesses, attractions and organizations are interested in helping tourism grow. This support from both public and private sectors, and the fact that Scandia is in an early stage of tourism development, creates a need to focus on marketing, and enhancing or developing additional visitor amenities and assets. Leveraging internal and external resources and strengthening regional cooperation will help Scandia move forward. The city and Economic Development Authority can help with strategic infrastructure investment, the recruitment of new complementary businesses, and small business assistance.

Tourism, like any development brings change. For tourism to be sustainable in Scandia, the community must balance the needs of visitors and residents, provide quality tourism products and services, and market effectively. Creating a plan to ensure that tourism development meets local goals and remains aligned to the community vision is critical. Developing tourism that can be sustained will take time and resources, but Scandia has a foundation upon which to build.

## RESOURCES

- University of Minnesota has many resources
  - GoldPass [goldpass.umn.edu](http://goldpass.umn.edu) to post student employment or internship opportunities
  - Faculty may consider local projects as a class project. University of Minnesota Tourism Center and Extension Center for Community Vitality educators can assist with faculty connections for specific projects.  
For example:  
The College of Design ([www.design.umn.edu](http://www.design.umn.edu)) has a number of relevant programs and faculty focusing on aspects of design including landscape architecture and retail merchandising.
- Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) have partnered to offer workshops (in-person and online) for those interested in offering agritourism experiences. Additional resources, including posters and training videos, are available at <http://umash.umn.edu/agritourism/>.
- Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) and Renewing the Countryside have created a manual for those interested in serving food on farms. The manual can be accessed at <https://www.misa.umn.edu/publications/comeandgetit>.
- Minnesota Grown is a “statewide partnership between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota producers of specialty crops and livestock” (Minnesota Grown, 2019). Some of the benefits and services Minnesota Grown offers its members (depending on membership level) includes use of the Minnesota Grown label, marketing materials, and a listing in the Minnesota Grown Directory.
- Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT) resources:
  - Set up a free listing for Scandia on the EMT website once a tourism page on the city’s website has been created.
  - Promote events on EMT’s site. This is free and listings get picked up and used in consumer emails promoting events in the area.
  - Local tourism businesses, organizations, or events may be eligible for a free listing in the Explore Minnesota Tourism database. The free listing includes organization's address, phone number, website, email, amenities, a single photo, the option to accept reviews from customers.



- Make information about local tourism attractions available at EMT Travel Centers around the state.
- Check out co-op programs and ways to advertise on exploreminnesota.com (<http://www.exploreminnesota.com/industry-minnesota/ways-to-get-involved/>)
- Add Explore Minnesota Tourism's hashtag to your Twitter and Instagram posts with #OnlyInMN.
- Connect with EMT's Metro Regional Manager, Lori Peterson at [lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us](mailto:lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us) or 651-757-1876 for more information.

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## APPENDIX A

### TRANSCRIPTION OF WORKSHEETS FROM SWOT ANALYSIS FOR TOURISM

#### SCANDIA COMMUNITY MEETING OCTOBER 29, 2018

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Swedish connection/heritage x 2</li> <li>○ Gammelgarden x 3</li> <li>○ History x4</li> <li>○ Back country scenic roads x2</li> <li>○ Landscape, beauty of area x3</li> <li>○ Topography x2</li> <li>○ Beautiful lakes x4</li> <li>○ St. Croix River x5</li> <li>○ Cycling Scandia</li> <li>○ Wm O'Brien state park x3</li> <li>○ Small town charm x3</li> <li>○ People/residents</li> <li>○ Visible</li> <li>○ Old cemetery</li> <li>○ Civic engagement</li> <li>○ 30-40 miles in metro area x2</li> <li>○ 2 state highways</li> <li>○ Dark/quiet night sky x2</li> <li>○ 3 SNA's</li> <li>○ Farmers market x2</li> <li>○ Lake focused festivals</li> <li>○ Kid focus lake festivals</li> <li>○ Fishing tournament – warming house x2</li> <li>○ Community center x2</li> <li>○ Hay Lake School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Horse riding ring</li> <li>○ Goat farm</li> <li>○ Bone lake honey</li> <li>○ U-pick Farms</li> <li>○ Small scale ag businesses x2</li> <li>○ Koi farm</li> <li>○ Quality</li> <li>○ Scout camp Lakamaga</li> <li>○ Snowmobile trail</li> <li>○ Targeting focus on small number</li> <li>○ EDA loans for business</li> <li>○ Scandia/ Marine Lions x2</li> <li>○ Crabtree's</li> <li>○ Abrahamson</li> <li>○ Volunteers</li> <li>○ Age out vs. burn out</li> <li>○ Accomplishments of children (eagle scouts, 4-H)</li> <li>○ Responsive city services</li> <li>○ Safety</li> <li>○ Good neighbor awards</li> <li>○ Community events: 'Welcome Wagon', welcome bags x3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lack of businesses downtown, business development x4</li> <li>○ Big and spread out, lack of walkability x5</li> <li>○ Tourism local and scenic x3</li> <li>○ Lack of Restaurant options x2</li> <li>○ Lack of Lodging x3</li> <li>○ Community connections x3</li> <li>○ Retail – no evenings</li> <li>○ Arts venue</li> <li>○ Parks/trails missing</li> <li>○ Identity</li> <li>○ Limited number of historical buildings</li> <li>○ Limited public access to river</li> <li>○ Lack of communication on where to go (attractions) x3</li> <li>○ Target market</li> <li>○ Better signage x2</li> <li>○ Drive-by town</li> <li>○ Small downtown buildings</li> <li>○ False visibility</li> <li>○ Borton Travel connection- Nordic</li> <li>○ Pot Scandia on pottery tour</li> <li>○ City center</li> <li>○ Lack of public facilities</li> <li>○ Bedroom community</li> <li>○ Hwy 97 bypassing downtown</li> <li>○ Demographics (race, age)</li> <li>○ Housing prices x3</li> <li>○ Aversion to brand business</li> <li>○ Only one church</li> <li>○ Business increases for extensions</li> <li>○ Zoning changes for rural/commercial business</li> <li>○ American girl book -- recreate</li> <li>○ Limited parking</li> <li>○ Infrastructure</li> <li>○ Downtown sewer (30% capacity) x3</li> <li>○ Internet – 50% unserved x3</li> <li>○ Water</li> </ul>

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Gateway trail x3
- Commuter traffic x3
- On the way to Lindstrom, Osceola, Taylors Falls
- Farm to table, healthy food x4
- Fine dining/restaurants x2
- Seasonal/weekend housing/cabins, historical inn, Airbnb x4
- Wm O'Brien campers
- Splash pad?
- Make downtown more charming
- Work to better promote architectural guidelines x3
- Better connect downtown to river/water feature x3
- Vineyard
- 97 and 95 trails
- Bring in businesses that support Scandia's strengths
- Business development x4
- Water tower barn
- Connection to river x2
- Community/education hikes/bikes, farm events x2
- Posted signs
- Garden club
- Stargazing
- Swedish heritage, Chisago county heritage x2
- Community theatre
- Guided fishing
- Close to cities
- Explore neighboring chambers for ideas
- Explore MN marketing grants
- We can change rules
- Big Marine Lake store
- Expansion of trails
- Grassroots leadership
- Leos- Lions under 18
- Historic
- RV park
- New zoning
- Feasibility
- Need a scenic view
- Expand log house landing
- Affordable housing
- Senior population
- Include family growth

## THREATS

- Development that doesn't support our character
- Hold fast to Scandia
- Rural vision
- Timing
- Locals don't want to, fear of change x2
- Nimby (not in my back yard)
- Only 2-3 business owners live here
- Lack of workforce – especially young
- Youth too busy
- Lot size right of way
- Mother nature – weather, climate change x2
- Byway restrictions
- Gas prices increase x2
- Building highway bridge
- Not enough small businesses to create a chamber
- Create a name in combine marine and Scandia
- Splitting up farms
- Limited first responders
- Grow too fast
- Change of leadership
- Speed of influx of tourists, crowds, effects x3
- Traffic
- Noise
- Potential loss of school, connecting school x2
- Internet x2
- Distance from town center
- RV's perception – trailer trash
- No public/senior transportation
- 2 post offices in area
- Identity due to zip code
- Orphaned residents
- Zoning restrictions
- Proximity to metro area

## **STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED**

- Develop a cohesive PR/marketing strategy
- Use cycling symbols on roads
- Educate community about city assets
- Add to community events and find better ways to advertise and share information
- Add branding (Dala horses)
- Promoting bed and breakfast and lodging x2
- Promote gateway trail extension x2
- Establish a gathering place
- Define distinct interests, be known for something x2
- Partner with community organizations and Marine on St Croix x2
- Visitor center- water tower barn
- Connect and increase cooperation among attractions
- Better signage – throw/review ordinances
- Accessible brochures highlighting attractions
- Reach out to new businesses (incentives?)
- A walkable city center
- Plan that allows for expansion
- Support commuter traffic amenities -- farm or high quality healthy foods/ coffee in morning
- Community/educational hikes, bikes/birding
- Posted interpretive signs
- High quality historically designed inn/lodging
- Coordinated network of airbnb sites
- Explore participating in river community including Wisconsin towns and border communities
- Engage more people in the strategies with personal outreach
- Advertise/promote accomplishments of children (Eagle scouts/ 4H)

## **Success**

- Build on uniqueness and character and quality/historic
- Building on success and pride of community
- Information about how to sign up for Nextdoor Scandia



# APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY INVENTORY OF ATTRACTION

## Worksheet 6.1: Inventory of Attractions (Page 1 of 5)

### A. Inventory of Natural of Scenic Attractions

Attraction Category	Number of Existing Attractions		Potential Attractions (Time Frame to Develop)			Description (Notes/Problems)
	Public	Private	1 yr	3 yrs	5 yrs	
Beaches						
* Bird-watching sites	✓					Crabtree's Viewing Window
Botanical gardens						
Canyons and gorges						
Caves						
Cliffs						
Deserts						
Fall foliage <i>Hwy 95</i>	✓					Science Byway - MN. - <i>DNR</i>
Farms, ranches, dude ranches						
Fishing streams and lakes						
Forests						
Geologic formations						
Geysers						
Headwaters						
Hiking trails	✓					PARK
Islands						
Lakes	✓					Big Marine
Mineral or hot springs						
Monuments (natural)						
Mountains						
Natural bridges						
Nature trails	✓					
Oceans						
Orchards <i>and</i> vineyards	✓					Pleasant Valley Apple Orch. <i>(NOT IN SCAND)</i>
Parks (national, state, local)	✓					
Rivers	✓					St. Croix
Sand dunes	✓					
Scenic views/ roads	✓					<i>Hwy 95</i>
Ski slopes or trails <i>cross country</i>	✓					W. Park
Star gazing	✓					W. Park
Swamps/wetlands/tundra	✓					
Valleys						
Volcanoes						
Waterfalls	✓					St. Croix River
Whitewater						
Wildlife (natural settings, sanctuaries, zoos)	✓					W.O.B. State Park
Other:						

## Worksheet 6.1: Inventory of Attractions (Page 2 of 5)

### B. Inventory of Cultural or Historic Attractions

Attraction Category	Number of Existing Attractions		Potential Attractions (Time Frame to Develop)			Description (Notes/Problems)
	Public	Private	1 yr	3 yrs	5 yrs	
Antique and craft shops						
Archaeological sites	✓	✓				Swedish Settlement, Indian mounds
Art galleries		✓				
Battlefields						
Burial grounds		✓				
Ceremonial dances	✓					Gammelgarden
Churches	✓					
Conservatories						
Costumed events	✓					Gammelgarden
Courthouses						
Covered bridges						
Early settlements	✓					
Ethnic celebrations	✓					Taco Daze - Boy Scouts
Ethnic grocers						
Ethnic restaurants						
Exhibits	✓					Gammelgarden
Famous historical buildings	✓					" & Hay Lake School
Famous people						
Folk art collections	✓					Quilt Train Building Tour
Ghost towns						
Historic building						
Historic railroads	✓					Osciola Train (OCCASIONALLY STOPS AT SAFE PARK)
Historical reenactments	✓					Gammelgarden
Indian culture/ reservations						
Landmarks						Hay Lake School
Libraries						
Lumber camps						
Mansions						
Memorials	✓					Vet. Memorial
Mines						
Missions						
Monuments						
Museums						
Old forts						
Post Offices	✓					
Public Art						
Ruins						
Theaters (stage, film)						
Train depots	✓					Osciola
Other:						

# Worksheet 6.1: Inventory of Attractions (Page 3 of 5)

## C. Inventory of Recreational Attractions

Attraction Category	Number of Existing Attractions		Potential Attractions (Time Frame to Develop)			Description (Notes/Problems)
	Public	Private	1 yr	3 yrs	5 yrs	
Amusement or theme parks						
Archery						
Ballooning						
Beachcombing						
Biking, road or trail	✓					GATEWAY - Trail
Bingo	✓					Lion's
Bird watching	✓					Crabtree's PARK
Boating	✓					St. Croix River
Bowling						
Camping	✓					
Canoeing/ Kayaking	✓					Park River
Disc Golf						
Fishing	✓					River, Lakes
Golf						
Hang gliding						
Health and beauty spas						
Hiking	✓					PARK, BANK Roads
Horseback riding	✓					
Hot springs and mud baths						
House boating						
Hunting	✓	✓				Community Center
Ice skating	✓					
Kite flying	✓					
Mountain biking	✓					
Mountain climbing						
Pack horse or llama trips						
Professional sports events						
Racing and regattas	✓					FAT CAT TOUR - TRIP - LION'S
River tubing						
Rock hunting						
Sailing						
Scuba diving						
Skiing (downhill/cross country)	✓					PARK
Swimming	✓					
Tennis	✓					Community Center
Trap or skeet shooting						
Video arcades						
Water skiing	✓					Lakes -
White-water rafting						
Other:	Geo Caching in the PARK					

# Worksheet 6.1: Inventory of Attractions (Page 4 of 5)

## D. Inventory of Special Events

Attraction Category	Number of Existing Attractions		Potential Attractions (Time Frame to Develop)			Description (Notes/Problems)
	Public	Private	1 yr	3 yrs	5 yrs	
Agricultural fairs	✓					Farmer's Market - week
Air shows	✓					Oscoda - wings & wheels - Sept.
Animal shows						
Antique/collectible shows	✓					Taco Daze - car show
Art shows						
Artisan studio tours						
Auto shows						
Ball games/tournaments	✓					Baseball - Community Center
Barbecues						
Barn dances Weddings		✓				Redeemed - Wed. of Event Center
Card tournaments						
Comedy contests						
Drama productions						
Ethnic restaurants/grocers						
Farm tours		✓				goat farm
Fishing derbies						
Flower shows or festivals						
Food festivals	✓					TACO DAZE
Harvest celebrations						
Hayrides						
Hobby shows						4th July - Marine Fireworks -
Holiday celebrations	✓					Winter fest of Crabtree's Mother's Day Holiday Home Open House
Home tours						
Living history festivals						
Music festivals						
Pageants						
Parades	✓					Taco Daze, 4th July - Marine
Photo contests						
Races	✓					Fat cat - Tric
Rodeos						
Seasonal events						
Specialty food-tasting events						
Threshing bees						
Tractor pulls						
Triathlons/marathons	✓					Fat cat
Winery tours/tasting rooms	✓					In the area
Other: Bone Lake Honey Farm		✓				State fair winner - multi year

# Worksheet 6.1: Inventory of Attractions (Page 5 of 5)

## E. Inventory of Other Attractions

Attraction Category	Number of Existing Attractions		Potential Attractions (Time Frame to Develop)			Description (Notes/Problems)
	Public	Private	1 yr	3 yrs	5 yrs	
Arenas						
Bakeries						
Ball parks	✓					T-Ball - Base
Bridges						
Children's park/playgrounds	✓					Community of Gammelg
Dams and power stations						
Ferryboats						
Fish hatcheries	<del>none</del>	✓				Koi - fish farm Hydroponic farm
Food-processing plant tours		✓				
Friends/Family to visit -						
Government buildings						
Handicraft/craft shows	✓					farmer's Mkt. - crafts
Industrial plant tours						
Large city attractions						
Local "oddities"						
Lumber camps						
Military installations <sup>2,</sup>	✓					Vet's Camp / Big Maroon Lake
Most remote spot						
Most winding road	✓					199th across from Crabtree's Quinnell - Queen Side
Murals						
Nightclubs						
Observation towers						
Planetarium or telescope						
Roadside produce stands						
Settings for movies						
Shopping centers	✓					"Grumpy Old Men" Scandia Plaza - outstanding Scandia Pizza - ↓ Scandia Old Towne Square
Showboats						
Statuary						
Swimming pools						
The biggest "something"	✓					Crabtree's - "largest selection of out door garden art" Bird Watching Window
The first of its kind						
The only one of its kind						
The smallest "something" Town - "Cepas"						
Universities and colleges						
Unusual buildings						
Unusual restaurants or bars						in the area Watershed - Oscicola
Windmills						
Other: Garden Center large -						- Sparhamser's - Landscape alterations - Prairie Restoration - Crabtree's - +





# APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY INVENTORY OF ATTRACTIONS

## Worksheet 6.2:

### Evaluation of Existing Attractions



Attraction	Type of Attraction	Category of Attraction	Public	Private	Primary/Secondary Attraction	Tourism Development Assessment Criteria (Rate 1-4)				Months of Use												Site Information
						Product Quality	Authenticity	Uniqueness	Drawing Power	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Abrahamsons	Other			x	Primary	3	3	2	3	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	
Barton Johnson Memorial Park	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)		x	Primary	2	2	1	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	
Barton Johnson Memorial Park	Other	Children's park/playgrounds		x	Secondary	2	2	1	1													
Barton Johnson Memorial Park	Recreational	Tennis		x	Secondary	2	2	1	1													
Berry Patch	Natural or Scenic	Orchards and vineyards		x	Primary	2	3	2	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	c	
Big Marine Lake	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	3	4	2	1	p	p	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s	
Big Marine Lake	Recreational	Boating	x		Secondary	3	4	2	1													
Big Marine Lake	Recreational	Fishing	x		Secondary	3	4	2	1													
Bone Lake	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	3	4	2	1	p	p	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s	
Bone Lake	Recreational	Boating	x		Secondary	2	4	2	1													
Bone Lake	Recreational	Fishing	x		Secondary	3	4	2	1													
Bone Lake	Recreational	Water skiing	x		Secondary	2	4	2	1													
Bone Lake Park	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	2	3	2	1	s	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s	
Bone Lake Park	Natural or Scenic	Swamps/wetlands	x		Secondary	2	3	2	1													
Community Building	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Secondary	2	1	1	1													
Community Building	Other	Children's park/playgrounds	x		Secondary	2	1	1	1													
Community Building	Natural or Scenic	Picnic areas	x		Secondary	2	1	1	1													
Community Building	Recreational	Tennis	x		Secondary	3	1	1	1													
Copas	Cultural or Historic	Early settlements	x		Primary	2	4	3	3	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Crabtree Garden Gate	Other			x	Primary	4	4	3	3	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Crystal Springs SNA	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	3	4	3	3	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Crystal Springs SNA	Natural or Scenic	Bird-watching sites	x		Secondary	3	4	3	3													
Crystal Springs SNA	Natural or Scenic	Geologic formations	x		Secondary	3	4	3	3													
Crystal Springs SNA	Natural or Scenic	Forests	x		Secondary	3	4	3	3													
Eco Bakken	Recreational	Other:		x	Primary	3	1	2	1	p	p	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	p	
Elim Church	Cultural or Historic	Burial grounds		x	Primary	3	4	3	4	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Fall Creek SNA	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	3	4	3	3	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Fall Creek SNA	Natural or Scenic	Bird-watching sites	x		Secondary	3	4	3	3													
Fall Creek SNA	Natural or Scenic	geologic formations	x		Secondary	3	4	3	3													
Fall Creek SNA	Natural or Scenic	forests	x		Secondary	3	4	3	3													
Far Cat Triathlon	Special Events	Triathlons/marathons	x		Primary	4	3	4	3	c	c	c	c	c	c	p	c	c	c	c		
Farmers Market	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Primary	3	4	2	1	c	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	p	c	c	

Gammelgarden	Cultural or Historic	Museums		x	Primary	4	4	4	4	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	p	p	c	c	
Goose Lake	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	2	4	2	1	p	p	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s	
Goose Lake	Recreational	Boating	x		Secondary	2	4	2	1													
Goose Lake	Recreational	Fishing	x		Secondary	2	4	2	1													
Hay Lake Beer Festival	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Secondary	3	3	2	1													
Hay Lake School	Cultural or Historic	Museums	x		Primary	3	4	3	2	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	p	p	c	c	
Immigrant day	Special Events	Living history festivals	x		Secondary	4	4	3	2													
Ironwood Golf Range	Recreational	Golf		x	Primary	2	1	1	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	
Lilliskogen Park	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	2	3	2	1	s	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s	
Lilliskogen Park	Cultural or Historic	Memorials	x		Secondary	2	3	2	1													
Lilliskogen Park	Natural or Scenic	Swamps/wetlands	x		Secondary	2	3	2	1													
Lilliskogen Park	Natural or Scenic	Nature trails	x		Secondary	2	3	2	1													
Lions Park	Recreational	Picnicking	x		Primary	2	1	1	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	
Log House Landing	Cultural or Historic	Landmarks	x		Secondary	3	4	3	1													
Log House Landing	Recreational	Boating	x		Secondary	3	4	2	1													
Log House Landing	Recreational	Fishing	x		Secondary	3	4	2	1													
Log House Landing	Recreational	Canoeing	x		Secondary	3	4	3	2													
Lucia Dagen	Special Events	Holiday celebrations (e.g., Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanuka)	x		Secondary	4	4	4	1													p
Gammelgarden event																						
Lutfisk & Swedish Meatballs	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Secondary	4	4	3	1													p
Gammelgarden event																						
Marine Ski Race	Special Events	Triathlons/marathons	x		Secondary	3	3	3	2	p												
William O'Brien SP event																						
Midsommer Dag Festival	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Secondary	3	4	4	1													p
Gammelgarden event																						
Pilar Road	Natural or Scenic	Scenic views	x		Primary	2	4	2	1	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Poplar Hill Farm	Special Events	Farm tours		x	Primary	4	4	3	2													
Prairie Restoration	Other			x	Primary	3	3	3	1	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	p	s	p		
Running of the Meatballs	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Secondary	3	1	3	1													p
Taco Daze event																						
Scanley Cup	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Secondary	2	2	2	1	p												
Vinterfest event																						
South Ballfield	Recreational	Other:	x		Primary	1	1	1	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	
Spelmansstamma Fiddle Fest	Special Events	Music festivals	x		Secondary	3	4	4	2													p
Gammelgarden event																						
St. Croix River	Natural or Scenic	Bird-watching sites	x		Secondary	4	4	3	4													
St. Croix River	Natural or Scenic	Fall foliage	x		Secondary	4	4	4	4													
St. Croix River	Natural or Scenic	Fishing streams and lakes	x		Secondary	4	4	3	3													
St. Croix River	Natural or Scenic	Parks (national, state, local)	x		Primary	4	4	3	4	s	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
St. Croix River	Natural or Scenic	Scenic views	x		Secondary	4	4	4	4													
St. Croix River	Natural or Scenic	Wildlife (natural settings, sanctuaries, zoos)	x		Secondary	4	4	3	4													
St. Croix River	Recreational	Boating	x		Secondary	4	4	3	3													
St. Croix River	Recreational	Fishing	x		Secondary	4	4	3	3													
St. Croix Scenic Byway	Natural or Scenic	Fall foliage	x		Secondary	4	4	4	4													
St. Croix Scenic Byway	Natural or Scenic	Scenic views	x		Primary	4	4	4	4	s	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Swedish Settlers Monument	Cultural or Historic	Monuments	x		Primary	2	4	4	4	s	s	s	s	p	p	p	p	p	s	s		
Taco Daze	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Primary	3	2	3	1	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	p	c	c	c	
Taco Daze	Special Events	Parades	x		Secondary	3	2	2	1													
Taco Daze	Special Events	Auto shows	x		Secondary	3	2	2	1													
Taco Daze	Special Events	Craft shows	x		Secondary	3	2	2	1													
T-Ball Field	Recreational	Other:	x		Primary	1	1	1	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	
Vinterfest	Special Events	Seasonal events	x		Primary	2	2	2	1	c	p	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	
Wayne Erickson Memorial Ballfield	Recreational	Other:	x		Primary	2	1	1	1	c	c	c	c	p	p	p	p	c	c	c	c	



## APPENDIX C: SWEDISH VISITOR PROFILE DATA

The following Swedish visitor data characteristics are based on the national Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT), conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration's National Travel and Tourism Office. The full report is available online at [http://tinnet.ita.doc.gov/outreachpages/inbound.general\\_information.inbound\\_overview.asp](http://tinnet.ita.doc.gov/outreachpages/inbound.general_information.inbound_overview.asp)

In 2017, there were 522,000 arrivals into the United States from Sweden, with total expenditures of \$1.756 million. The main purpose for travel of these arrivals was holiday (61.7%) and visiting friends and relatives (15.3%). The top destinations were New York City, California and Florida.

Traveler Characteristics	2015	2016	2017
Advance Trip Decision (mean days)	114	115	122
Advance Trip Decision (median days)	90	90	90
% Used Prepaid Package	6.0	6.6	6.1
% First International U.S. Trip	16.8	21.0	23.2
Length of Stay in the U.S. (mean nights)	15.8	15.5	12.4
Length of Stay in the U.S. (median nights)	9	9	9
U.S. Trips Past 12 Months (mean )	1.6	1.5	1.7
U.S. Trips Past 12 Months (median)	1	1	1
Number of States Visited (% 1 state only)	73.2	76.7	74.2
Number of States Visited (mean average)	1.4	1.4	1.4
Hotel/Motel (% used 1+ nights)	75.8	77.9	82.0
Hotel/Motel (mean average # of nights)	9.7	8.8	8.5
Travel Party Size (mean # of persons)	1.7	1.8	1.7
Gender (% Male-among respondents)	45.5	50.8	50.6
Household Income (mean average)	\$89,913	\$76,935	-
Household Income (median average)	\$75,000	\$70,000	-
Age: Female (mean average among respondents)	39.0	42.8	38.4
Age: Male (mean average among respondents)	41.4	40.7	42.5

Activity Participation While in Other Countries (multiple responses; % of profiled inbound)	2015	2016	2017
American Indian Communities	2.7	6.7	2.7
Amusement/Theme Parks	25.3	26.5	22.8
Art Gallery/Museum	27.6	30.1	28.4
Camping/Hiking	4.6	4.9	7.1
Casinos/Gamble	9.0	7.2	6.4
Concert/Play/Musical	15.1	17.4	14.6
Cultural / Ethnic Heritage Sites	8.0	15.8	11.3
Dining (Experience Fine)	30.3	33.5	34.1
Environmental/Eco. Excursions	2.8	2.5	2.0
Golfing/Tennis	3.4	4.3	3.8
Guided Tours	22.3	30.0	28.9
Historical Locations	28.4	29.8	36.3
Hunting/Fishing	3.5	2.5	2.0
National Parks/Monuments	37.8	40.0	38.7
Nightclubbing/Dancing	14.9	13.7	11.9
Shopping	89.2	88.2	87.5
Sightseeing	78.5	82.4	72.8
Small Towns	31.4	34.5	33.7
Snow Sports	0.5	0.9	0.5
Sporting Event	19.3	18.7	16.2
Water Sports	10.0	11.8	8.1
Other	1.2	0.7	3.1

Source: adapted from Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT), NTTO 2017