VISION STATEMENT

"IN THE FUTURE THE CITY OF TWO HARBORS IS A TRUE SMALL TOWN GATEWAY THAT SHOWCASES LAKE SUPERIOR AND THE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT EXIST IN THE AREA, WHICH ALSO THRIVES IN AND OF ITSELF WITH QUALITY HOUSING, JOBS, AND SERVICES.

THE CITY’S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE AND MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE ATTRACTION RESIDENTS, VISITORS, AND BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY."

In developing this vision statement the Planning Commission noted that ideas including “pedestrian friendly”, “livability”, Lake Superior shoreline protection, and public accessibility to the waterfront were reflected in a “small town atmosphere”, “quality of life”, and being a “gateway that showcases Lake Superior.” These details will be expressed throughout the plan in the appropriate places.
INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2009, the Mayor and City Council of Two Harbors asked the Two Harbors Planning Commission to begin the process to update the City's Comprehensive Plan. The existing Comprehensive Plan had been completed in 1999 with key updates addressing a city-wide trails system and waterfront planning completed in 2005 and 2006. The Planning Commission determined that general development and community conditions had changed enough in the city to warrant a full update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission began working with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, the City's planning services provider, to draft a planning proposal, and identify and apply for grant funding to update the Comprehensive Plan.

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is a tool that cities can use to decide how best to use resources and allocate services in the future to achieve a desired community vision. Comprehensive plans also serve as powerful legal documents that provide the justification and foundation for land use decisions, ordinances, and strategies enacted to achieve a city's long term vision.

The City of Two Harbors Comprehensive Plan focuses on what aspects of the city's land use goals and policies can be improved to ensure an optimistic future for the city. These development issues include housing, economic development, transportation, recreation and natural resources, and intergovernmental relationships.

The Comprehensive Plan will serve as the foundation for decisions regarding planning, zoning, subdivision, and general development for the next several years.

Legal Foundation of Comprehensive Planning

The State of Minnesota gives its cities the legal authority to regulate land use. The State does not require the creation of comprehensive plans for cities outside of the seven-county metropolitan area. However, it is recognized that a comprehensive plan is a valuable tool that a city can use to express its vision and develop strategies to fulfill that vision. The Municipal Planning Act (Minnesota Statutes Sections 462.351 to 462.364) creates a single, uniform procedure that applies to all cities. The comprehensive plan provides the legal foundation to enact land use controls and other municipal actions to implement long-term growth and development strategies and regulations. The city's land use (zoning) ordinances and official zoning map should be updated to conform to the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to adoption.
Planning Commission

A city’s planning commission, referred to as the “planning agency” in state statutes, is responsible for discharging several duties where a comprehensive plan is being formulated or implemented. These duties are defined in Minnesota Statutes Sections 462.355 and 462.356 and are described thusly in the League of Minnesota Cities Handbook for Minnesota Cities.¹

- The planning commission must create the comprehensive plan and coordinate planning activities with other city departments.

- The planning commission must consider the planning activities of adjacent units of government and other affected public agencies.

- The planning commission recommends the comprehensive plan or amendments, after a hearing date following a notice of 10 days publication in the official newspaper. The planning commission must submit the plan or proposed amendment to the council prior to publishing the notice. The council must formally adopt the plan as the official comprehensive plan; otherwise it remains only a recommendation to the council.

- The planning commission must study and propose ways to put the plan into effect, including zoning, subdivision regulations, official maps, a program of public improvements and services, city renewal and redevelopment, and a capital improvements program.

- The planning commission must periodically review the plan and recommend amendments when necessary.

- Once the city adopts a comprehensive plan, or part of a plan, all proposed land acquisitions and capital improvements of the city, or any other governmental unit with jurisdiction in the city, must go to the planning commission for review. The Planning commission will then submit a written report describing its findings. (The council may, by two-thirds vote, dispense with this requirement if it feels no planning implications are involved.) Failure by the planning commission to report in 45 days is deemed approval.

Planning Process

Two Harbors Planning and Zoning Commission

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 462.355 and 462.356 governing comprehensive planning the Two Harbors Planning and Zoning Commission lead the preparation of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Also in accordance with state statutes and League of Minnesota City guidelines, the professional planners from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission’s Regional Planning Division assisted the Planning and Zoning Commission in this role.

In its role leading the planning process, the Planning Commission further developed information it received from the public and the Two Harbors City council. Through a series of meetings the Planning Commission addressed issues and opportunities, identified important projects and programs, developed goals and recommendations, and charted implementation priorities and timelines. The Planning Commission also conducted a public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Plan on November 30, 2010 and recommended adoption of the Plan to the City Council.

Public Participation

Public participation is an important part of the comprehensive planning process; it exposes the planning commission and facilitators to a wider variety of community issues and views and assists in achieving public support for the plan and implementation of its vision. Documentation of the public participation element of the planning process is included in Appendix A: Planning Documentation. The Planning Commission took the following steps to invite public participation:

- Sent letters to public, private, and non-profit stakeholders informing them of the intent to update the Comprehensive Plan and soliciting comments about issues and goals relevant to the Comprehensive Plan.
- A public visioning meeting was held at the beginning of the planning process on June 29, 2010. Two planners from ARDC’s Regional Planning Division lead two dozen participants in asset mapping, issue identification, and vision development exercises.
- An open house was held on October 05, 2010 to allow the public to review and respond to proposed goals, action steps, and recommendations for changes to the Zoning Map.
- The Planning Commission held a formal public hearing on November 30, 2010.
- Documents, meeting summaries, schedules, and comment forms were posted on the City’s planning website at [www.arrowheadplanning.org/twoharbors](http://www.arrowheadplanning.org/twoharbors) The page is linked from the City’s website.
Two Harbors City Council

The City Council held a joint meeting with the Planning Commission on September 07, 2010 to review development of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council followed through on the recommendation to adopt the Comprehensive Plan on March 14, 2011.

Funding

The development of the Two Harbors Comprehensive Plan was funded by the City of Two Harbors, Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program, and Minnesota Housing Partnership Sustainable Community Engagement Fund.