

2011 WINNETKA CAUCUS PLATFORM

**Caucus Approved
November 21, 2011**

2011 WINNETKA CAUCUS PLATFORM

Contents

<i>PROPOSED 2011 PARKS' PLANKS</i>	3
Skokie Playfield Master Plan Communication	3
Hubbard Woods Ice Skating Shelter	3
Beach Amenities and Infrastructure	4
Inter-Agency Efforts	4
<i>PROPOSED 2011 VILLAGE PLANKS</i>	5
Storm Water Management	5
Affordable Housing	7
Village Trustee Term Limits	8
Winnetka Business District Responses	9
<i>PROPOSED 2011 LIBRARY PLANKS</i>	10
Services	10
Patron Satisfaction	11
Existing Spaces	11
<i>PROPOSED 2011 SCHOOLS' PLANKS</i>	13
Satisfaction	13
Communication	14
Progress Areas	15

PROPOSED 2011 PARKS' PLANKS

Skokie Playfield Master Plan Communication

Survey Results:

- 71% of respondents answered "No" or "Somewhat" when asked if they were familiar with the Skokie Playfield Master Plan and the plan priorities for the next three years.
- 79% of respondents indicated that their preferred means of receiving Park District communications is via the Park District website or through the local media.

Parks Plank #1

The Park Board should improve its efforts to communicate the details of the Skokie Playfield Master Plan (2012-14), placing particular emphasis on milestones, decision points, and capital and operating costs, utilizing E-mail, the Park District website and local media outlets.

Hubbard Woods Ice Skating Shelter

Survey Results:

84% of respondents answered "Yes" when asked if they support the Park District's efforts to engage in a partnership relationship with the private sector that could reduce the cost to complete improvements to the Hubbard Woods Ice Skating Shelter.

Parks Plank #2

The Park District should continue its efforts to research and then engage in a private sector partnership to help reduce the Park District's costs to complete improvements to the Hubbard Woods Ice Skating Shelter.

Beach Amenities and Infrastructure

Survey Results:

- A majority of survey respondents indicated that they would favor some type of amenity or infrastructure improvements at the Village beaches.
- 71% of respondents indicated that they visit the beaches fewer than ten times between Memorial Day and Labor Day.
- There were many survey comments from residents citing Wilmette and Glencoe as having numerous beach amenities and features beyond those offered in Winnetka.

Parks Plank #3

The Park District should explore improvements to beach amenities and infrastructure as a means to increase resident utilization between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Inter-Agency Efforts

Survey Results:

- In 2010, 79% of survey respondents answered "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that the Park Board should initiate inter-agency efforts to improve water management in the flood plain.
- 70% of respondents prioritized improvement of water management for Skokie Playfield among the surveyed projects.

Parks Plank #4

The Park Board should continue to coordinate inter-agency efforts related to storm water management at Skokie Playfield.

PROPOSED 2011 VILLAGE PLANKS

Storm Water Management

Survey Results

When asked if the Village should proceed with storm water improvements that will provide the most immediate resolution to as many homes as possible, an overwhelming 90% of those responding supported the implementation of improvements. These results are significant since 57% of respondents reported that they did not experience flood damage to their property after the July 22-23rd storm. Of those respondents who support proceeding with improvements, 42% support scheduling improvements as soon as possible, while 48% support implementation of improvements after the entire plan and funding sources are determined.

Village Plank #1

The Village Council should continue to focus all available resources to finalize the Storm Water Management Plan, and determine funding sources to commence implementation of improvements without delay.

Survey Results

86% of Survey respondents favor a separate funding source(s) for storm water improvements. When asked their preference with respect to the funding of storm water improvements:

- 45% supported creating a Storm Water Utility Fund;
- 22% supported a combination of Storm Water Utility Fund and increased Property Taxes; and
- 19% supported Increased Property Taxes.

Village Plank #2

The Village Council should use available cash reserves and then proceed with the creation of a Storm Water Utility Fund to fund the storm water management improvements.

Survey Results

58% of Survey respondents favor the implementation of a special service area for the purpose of funding storm water improvements that primarily benefit a specific area. The special service areas are those areas where the necessary storm water improvements primarily benefit specific areas at a substantially higher cost for the improvements when compared to other neighborhoods.

Village Plank #3

The Village Council should consider the implementation of special service areas as a means of additional funding for storm water improvements.

Survey Results

When asked about flood prevention programs for homeowners:

- 70% were not aware of the Village's Backflow Prevention program;
- 40% indicated an interest in educational materials or seminars on flooding issues; and
- 19% were interested in assistance in obtaining professional assessment and recommendations to address flooding problems on their property.

Village Plank #4

The Village Council should direct staff to engage in an educational effort to increase the public's awareness of flooding issues and means by which assistance with flooding issues can be obtained.

Affordable Housing

Survey Results

Winnetka residents were highly interested in addressing the issue of Affordable Housing (AH) with 97% of survey respondents taking the time to read extensive background descriptions on AH and answering the questions. The results were unambiguous, by a 67% to 27% margin, survey respondents were **against** expanding Winnetka's Affordable Housing Plan to set aside affordable housing units and provide tools to bridge the affordability gap for qualifying households. The comments revealed very little misinformation among respondents and only 6% of respondents were categorized as undecided/inconclusive on the issue of expanding the Affordable Housing Plan.

The top three reasons cited against the proposed AH Plan expansion focused on the role and priorities of Village government, with:

- 85% indicating that Village government should not be involved in determining who can live here and what prices can be charged for housing in Winnetka;
- 79% indicating that the Village should focus on other priorities; and
- 60% noting that, with Home Rule, Winnetka is not required to expand the AH Plan.

Further, a majority of those opposed to expanding the AH Plan (52%) cited as a reason that they expect an expanded program would fail to deliver and ultimately become a burden on the Village. Many comments expressed the view that housing needs should be based on the free market system, as

below-market programs would be an unsustainable means to address AH goals. Interestingly, this same concern was expressed by many of the 27% of respondents who support expansion of the AH Plan in general; one-third in this group indicated that the Village should *not* enact a below-market, “affordable” housing program in Winnetka but should promote efforts to enhance the diversity and quality of modest-priced housing options on the market.

Village Plank #5:

The Village Council should proceed promptly to conclude discussions on the Affordable Housing issue for Winnetka. In finalizing the Affordable Housing Plan on file with the State of Illinois, Village Council should not adopt an expanded Plan that would enact a below-market, “affordable” housing program in Winnetka, nor create the tools for such a program, i.e., affordability standards, local preference standards, inclusionary zoning ordinances, land trust, housing trust or housing commission.

Village Trustee Term Limits

When asked about adding a third term for Village Trustees, 54% of respondents answered YES and 46% answered NO. Due to other more important pending Village issues and the lack of significant support for adding a third term, the Caucus does not recommend a plank or Caucus rule change on term limits for Village Trustees at this time. However, based on our research, we suggest that the Winnetka Caucus continue to provide additional information to Winnetka residents on the advantages and disadvantages of the current 2-year 2-term limit. We also recommend that a question be included on the 2012 Caucus Survey to obtain feedback on whether or not the Village should consider changing the current 2 year term to a 4-year term for Village Trustees.

Winnetka Business District Responses

When asked about the General Ambiance, Appearance, Maintenance, Parking, Variety of Stores and Services, Quality of Stores and Services, Restaurants, Hours of Service and Events; at least 80% of survey respondents were satisfied in all areas except for Variety of Stores and Services and Restaurants. The largest number of dissatisfaction was in the Variety of Stores and Services in East Elm (36% dissatisfied) and Restaurants in Hubbard Woods (27% dissatisfied). Therefore, the Caucus is not proposing a plank on the Business Districts at this time. However, the Caucus urges the BCDC and the Chamber of Commerce to review the responses and comments from the 2011 Caucus Survey. Thereafter, the Caucus urges the BCDC and the Chamber of Commerce to work together with the Village Council to encourage new businesses; increase the variety of businesses; encourage an increase in the number and types of restaurants; and maintain the good condition of all aspects of the three Business Districts.

PROPOSED 2011 LIBRARY PLANKS

The 2011 Caucus Survey Questions focused on service awareness and user rates, library hours, recommended strategies as defined by the strategic plan, and how to improve services and facilities. The following are the responses to those questions, as well as the Library Committee's Planks based on the survey results.

Services

Survey Results

The Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District (WNPLD) offers many technological services to its patrons and there is often a large gap between awareness and usage.

Technological Service	Aware	User
Computer Classes	62%	5%
Downloadable books	54%	4%
Free Wi-Fi	62%	13%
Live chat reference	34%	2%
Genealogical research	38%	3%

Library Plank #1

The Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District (WNPLD) Board of Trustees should:

- **Track the marketing and communication of these services to ensure that patrons are more aware of technological services offered, their benefits and how to participate in these services;**
- **Evaluate which services are being utilized to capacity or near capacity, which are not, and further promote those services that have room for higher usage;**
- **Provide technology support services to help patrons better understand and utilize the technological services available to them at the library (e.g., designate a tech area or have tech specialist hours); and**

- **Improve visibility and location of Katharine Greeley Genealogical Collection and the WNPLD database offerings.**
-

Patron Satisfaction

Survey Results

53% of Survey respondents chose as a top priority, *"Ask patrons what they want and need and respond appropriately and promptly."* This aligns well with the Library's Strategic Plan's top priority that states the Winnetka-Northfield Library District should "ensure that patron-focused service remains [their] number one priority."

Library Plank #2

The WNPLD Board should appropriately and promptly assess patron satisfaction. One method to accomplish this would be to administer a short service evaluation to patrons (e.g., when a patron receives technology support for a Kindle or downloadable book, they could answer a three-question survey related to their satisfaction of this service).

Existing Spaces

Survey Results

52% of Survey respondents chose as a top priority: *"Use existing staff and spaces more effectively and efficiently."*

Library Plank #3

The WNPLD Board of Trustees should:

- **Finalize and adopt the “Plan” sections of the 2011-2015 strategic plan as soon as possible;**
- **Review the Capital Asset Study and the Strategic Plan in order to utilize “existing staff and spaces”; and**
- **Make needed improvements to the existing structure of the Winnetka Branch and better utilize space at the Northfield Branch.**

The following Survey responses did not result in Caucus planks:

Asked whether respondents would like extended hours at the library on Friday and/or Saturdays: 81% of respondents said NO. For this reason, the Caucus Council will not take a position on asking the WNPLD Board to review the cost of doing so.

There were 399 written comments for the Library portion of the Caucus Survey, the majority of which were positive. Only 22 negative comments were entered. Overwhelmingly respondents commended the librarians, staff and the services offered.

PROPOSED 2011 SCHOOLS' PLANKS

2011 Winnetka Caucus Platform - Schools

In 2009 and 2010, based on community survey responses, the Winnetka Caucus identified several important opportunities for improvement within the Winnetka Public Schools District 36. The Caucus further called upon the Board to complete a strategic plan addressing these areas. The 2011 Caucus Survey results indicate strong support in the community for continuing to address the issues identified in the 2009 and 2010 platforms.

In addition to the quantitative survey data summarized below, this year's school survey questions elicited approximately 397 total written comments. The written comments raised a wide variety of issues, but included some recurring themes, with the most frequent calling for: increased and more clear communications; increased transparency with regard to District issues such as academic performance and financial management; increased responsiveness to community concerns; steps to increase accountability within the District; and more aggressive cost control measures and/or lower taxes.

Satisfaction

- 64% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were, overall, satisfied with the District. 24% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. 12% did not express an opinion.
- 66% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the District does a good job of preparing students for success in high school. 19% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. 15% did not express an opinion.
- 45% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the financial management of the District. 33% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. 22% did not express an opinion.

- 44% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the performance of the Board. 34% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. 22% did not express an opinion.

Schools Plank #1:

The Board should continue to evaluate and address potential sources of concern or dissatisfaction, particularly with respect to financial management issues (33% dissatisfied) and the performance of the Board (34% dissatisfied). In doing so, the Board should consider and address as possible sources of dissatisfaction, the transparency, accountability and other recurring concerns noted in the survey comments.

Communication

- 59% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the communications that come from the District. 24% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. 16% did not express an opinion.

Schools Plank #2:

The Board should continue improving communication and transparency in all District matters, including by using the following preferred forms of communication based on survey responses:

- **83% find Newsletters/Email updates useful or very useful.**

- **69% find District sponsored surveys (e.g., the 2009 survey conducted by School Perceptions) useful or very useful.**
- **68% find forums addressing specific issues within the District useful or very useful.**
- **67% find presentations and discussion about performance and plans at Board meetings useful or very useful.**
- **66% find public Q&A sessions useful or very useful.**

Progress Areas

Schools Plank #3:

The Board should complete the strategic plan called for in the 2009 Caucus Platform and use the strategic plan or other means to address or further improve the following areas 2011 survey respondents found “important” or “very important”:

A. Quality of Curriculum and Instruction (81% find important or very important¹). The Board should further evaluate and take steps to ensure that the District’s curriculum and instruction are adequately preparing students for the next grade level.

B. Consistency of Curriculum and Instruction (75% find important or very important²). The Board should further evaluate and implement guidelines to ensure consistency across grade levels and between schools.

¹ 7% of respondents indicated “No improvement needed.” Another 12% indicated “No Opinion.”

² 12% of respondents indicated “No Improvement Needed.” Another 13% indicated “No Opinion.”

C. Assessment (70% find important or very important³). The Board should work with the District to further evaluate and revise the District’s approach to assessing and communicating student performance.

D. Differentiation and enrichment (69% find important or very important⁴). The Board should further evaluate the District’s approach to differentiation and enriched learning to ensure that each student is provided an appropriate and challenging education.

E. Foreign language skills development (65% find important or very important⁵). The Board should require an increased focus on foreign language skills development as opposed to cultural exploration.

F. Tutors (60% find important or very important⁶). The Board should work with the District to further evaluate the use of tutors or other private supplemental resources by parents and students to determine whether the District is adequately serving students’ educational needs during the school day.⁷

³ 15% of respondents indicated “No Improvement Needed.” Another 15% indicated “No Opinion.”

⁴ 19% of respondents indicated “No Improvement Needed.” Another 12% indicated “No Opinion.”

⁵ 21% of respondents indicated “No Improvement Needed.” Another 13% indicated “No Opinion.”

⁶ 27% of respondents indicated “No Improvement Needed.” Another 14% indicated “No Opinion.”

⁷ Based on the Caucus’ 2010 survey results, the predominant reason cited by parents for using a tutor was the student’s need for academic support (67%). Other reasons included: student needed help with homework (26%); maintenance of skills over the summer (24%); enrichment (23%); student’s/parent’s desire to work ahead (15%); and student needed emotional support (12%).