



# **2024 Winnetka Caucus Council (WCC) - Proposed Platforms**

# Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District (WNPLD) Board Platform

## Plank #1: Northfield Branch Vision

93% of survey respondents consider the Winnetka campus their “home” library (with only 11% of these respondents saying they ever use the Northfield branch). Overall, 68% indicate that they do not ever use the Northfield library. A clear vision for the Northfield branch -- and its role in the community -- needs to be strengthened and communicated to increase its reach and use.

***WNPLD plans should address this underutilization and any lack of clarity distinguishing the two facilities.***

## Plank #2: Offering Best-In-Class Services

As public libraries evolve their role in today’s modern world, it is important that they provide facilities, services, programming, and the fostering of an environment to meet the demands of their communities. While the survey highlights the key role that the Children’s section/events play in the overall Library (84% of those with opinions rank the availability of Children’s events extremely to moderately important), the Library needs to serve all stakeholders.

***In its planning, the WNPLD should also consider the importance of adult collections, community meeting rooms, general programming, and how to best utilize outdoor areas.***

## Plank #3: A Third Place

In assessing performance, the highest level of dissatisfaction (13%) surrounded the use of electronic resources, e.g., e-books, audio-books, e-newspapers, streaming, and related media. Technology and flexible physical spaces are key components of the social infrastructure.

***As “work from home” continues, the Library should define the facilities and services that can help meet the need of a “third place” work space for the Winnetka and Northfield communities.***

## Plank #4: Meet Evolving Staff Needs

Library employees are critical to the strong culture and experience of the institution.

***The Strategic Plan should identify the challenges confronting Library Staff and take steps to improve their work environment to ensure they may serve our community with excellence. Noise levels, cell phone usage, child supervision, and the increasing use of facilities by child-care professionals should be considered. Staff input should also be sought for the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of events and activities.***

## Winnetka Park District Board Platform

### Plank #1: Intergovernmental Cooperation - Elder Beach

The Winnetka Park District and Village of Winnetka continue to work through the application process for the Centennial-Elder project. In the meantime, there is a clear desire for a temporary solution that will enable the Elder beach to be opened. As can be seen below, more than 60% of respondents are in favor of the temporary solution.

Yes	61.30%	955
No	19.58%	305
No Opinion	19.13%	298
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1558</b>
Skipped		65

***While the issues surrounding the Centennial and Elder parks / beaches are complex, the Village and the Parks Department should work together to prioritize a solution for beach access and swimming at Elder Park in the near-term.***

---

*Note: The questions below are based on percentage information provided directly from the survey software, which did not account for people who skipped answering the question. Of those who skipped the questions we identified that there were 264 respondents who did not answer any of the questions, so we do not consider these respondents valid for the questions.*

## Plank #2: Donation Agreement

The Park District entered into a Donation Agreement with restrictive covenants with a private party. The survey question asked if this should be renegotiated or go forward, with the results below:

Continue with the donation, as negotiated.	29.33%	366
Renegotiate to eliminate restrictive covenants with the possibility that the WPD will have to seek alternative funding (reserves, debt, etc.) if negotiations fail.	49.20%	614
No Opinion	21.47%	268
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,248</b>
Skipped		375

***The results of the survey show that nearly 50% of all responders agree that the Park District should reconsider the Donation Agreement. In addition, when excluding those who responded with “No Opinion,” 63% of responders indicated that the Donation Agreement should be renegotiated. The Park District should renegotiate the terms of the Agreement to eliminate the restrictive covenants, or pursue alternative funding if Necessary.***

## Plank #3: Organic Parks

In 2018 the Park District staff conducted a pilot program using an organic herbicide in one park. More than 68% of survey respondents have expressed a desire for the Park District to launch another pilot program.

Yes	68.26%	899
No	11.24%	148
No Opinion	20.50%	270
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1317</b>
Skipped		306

***With a view toward examining the viability of making more parks organic, the Park District should undertake a new pilot program utilizing any updated organic management techniques and exploring the use of a consultant.***

## Plank #4: WPD Top Areas of Interest (Q16)

The top three areas of interest WPD constituents would like to see addressed are a) an outdoor pool, b) an improved Green Bay Trail (requiring coordination with the Village) and c) an indoor pool. As can be seen in the results below, two other options were close to the top three:

Outdoor Pool	30.49%	397
Green Bay Trail	27.73%	361
Indoor Pool	22.50%	293
Non-Beach Off-Leash Dog Park	22.12%	288
Multi-Use Center (general use)	20.35%	265
<b>Total</b>		<b>1302</b>
Skipped		321

***Taken together, interest in a pool option remains a top priority for constituents. Taking direction from the unimplemented Plank #4 in 2022, the WPD should commission a comprehensive study on the feasibility and economics of various pool options, including partnerships with other towns and New Trier High School. This should be presented to the community, including location preferences, cost to build, cost to maintain, and revenue generation potential, and options to meet any potential shortfall.***

# Village Council Platform

## Plank #1: Referendum

In 2005, the Village voted to adopt Home Rule, a status that exempts it from many State and County requirements including referenda which are commonly used by municipalities to gain public approval for, among other things, various capital projects like property acquisition, public projects, plant and equipment purchases. When asked if the Village Council should consider going to referendum to secure residents' approval for all spending for capital projects above a predetermined limit, even if not required by state law, residents voted as follows:

Go to referendum	59.8%	748
Do not go to referendum	26.6%	333
No opinion	13.5%	169
Skipped		373

***The Village Council should develop criteria for predetermined spending limits in such a way that larger discretionary projects will be put before voters in a referendum.***

## Plank #2: Business Development

Last year, the Caucus survey asked what types of new businesses residents would like to see in Winnetka. A bakery led the responses which enabled the Village Business Development team, among other things, to assist in Hewn Bakery's plans to open a location in Winnetka. Additional comments also signaled a desire to see an increased number of food options in the Village.

This year, the Caucus solicited both more specific input on the number and types of food options as well as residents' views on how the village should be involved in managing the renewal of expired leases.

When asked what types of restaurants residents would like to see, and multiple answers were allowed, the top four responses were:

More Casual Dining	69.9%	874
Gastro Pubs	52.4%	655
More Family Friendly Dining	45.5%	569
More Fine Dining	30.2%	377

When asked what to do with Winnetka's the Village should do when leases expire, the top three responses were:

Work with landlords to fill space with resident preferred retail and dining options...Regardless of how long stores remain empty	55.2%	682
Revise Winnetka's zoning laws to allow for more non-retail businesses (i.e. medical offices, financial services etc.)	18.5%	228
Encourage landlords to renew leases, even if many of the services are duplicates	10.2%	126

***The Village Council should exercise patience in bringing dining and retail options to the Village and focus its business development efforts on an array of restaurants that reflect the broader preferences of the community.***

### Plank #3: Post Office Site Development

When considering a proposal for the space currently occupied by the Post Office and the surrounding above ground parking lots, residents, on balance, indicated a preference for some variant of not leveling the parcel without funding or a plan:

Wait until a plan is agreed to before spending any money	38.9%	477
Level the parcel and convert to open space	20.5%	252
Find funding to level the parcel and convert to green space with a few amenities (e.g., bathrooms)	16.7%	205
Repurpose the building until a plan can be agreed on	15.8%	194
Use the land to temporarily add more parking	8.1%	99
Skipped		396

Additionally, consistent with Pillar 2 of Winnetka Future 2040 which calls for vibrant business districts, the survey indicates resident support for a site plan that includes more retail and restaurant options, including seasonal outdoor dining space. While parking is not a top preference, the Village Council should anticipate increased demand for parking as a result of greater commercial activity.

When asked what amenities residents would like the Village to consider for a re-developed Post Office Parcel:

Retail and Restaurants, including seasonal outdoor options	75.7%	939
Public open space including a courtyard and fountain	68.2%	847
Mixed Use/Multi-Use Facility	44.3%	550
Parking	37.6%	466
Public Bathrooms	31.8%	394

(Aggregated Responses by Category. Multiple Answers Allowed)

Of note: 38% of responses (472) requested that the Village work with the Park District to connect Dwyer Park to the parcel.

***The Village Council is encouraged to take the next steps in developing a robust plan for the post office parcel that reflects the amenity preferences of residents and before incurring any meaningful expenses.***



## Plank #4: Open Spaces

A majority of respondents (55%) are satisfied with the Village's open space and a significant majority (75%) feel the open space should be protected from development or sale.

***The Village Council should review and determine ways to preserve and protect the current open space in the village.***

## Plank #5: Transportation and Mobility

***The Village Council should determine how best to address resident support (73%) for a safe, convenient East/West thoroughfare for non-motorized vehicles and study how best to address various safety concerns around child bike routes and motor-assisted transportation (i.e. scooters, e-bikes, skateboards etc.).***

## **District 36 School Board Platform**

### **Plank #1: Personal Devices**

Over 80% of respondents support prohibiting personal electronic devices during school hours. At the beginning of the school year, the District implemented the Yondr program to secure and store personal devices during the school day.

***At the end of the school year, the district should provide feedback and metrics, in line with the expected positive impacts, like changes in student behavior, engagement, academic performance and note any negative impacts of the program.***

### **Plank #2: Technology in the Classroom**

The WCC survey asked for opinions about technology in the classroom and received a range of responses from no concerns to interest in knowing more about how technology is used in the classroom.

***The District should present and/or clarify its philosophy on how various media (e.g. apps, lectures, videos, books, digital books, written assignments, typed assignments, paper submissions and electronic submissions) are selected for academic subjects and/or by teachers. This could include information and/or research about what is appropriate for students.***

### **Plank #3: Progressive Education and Measurement**

The survey showed that 38% of respondents believe that the District has done an effective job balancing the goal of progressive education and measuring progress. Other meaningful responses indicate a desire for a clear definition and/or suggest updates to the definition of progressive education.

***Consistent with the 2023 plank, the District should continue the work to codify the Winnetka vision of Progressive Education and clearly state how it can be optimized to measure student performance.***

### **Plank #4: High School Readiness**

High School readiness was a top priority in 2023 and remains a top priority for respondents in 2024. The District took actions to evaluate high school readiness through focus groups and student surveys.

***The District should share the information learned through those actions and defining high school readiness should be included in the upcoming strategic plan.***

## Plank #5: Communication and Clarity

The survey results reflect an interest in respondents to receive clear and concise information from the District. Some respondents are interested in receiving more information on content they deem sensitive.

***The District should identify improvements to communications to help parents and caretakers best receive information and be made aware earlier in decision-making processes.***

## **Village-Wide Platform:**

### **For all taxing bodies: Civility, Collaboration, and Efficiencies**

A version of this civility and cross-body collaboration plank has been included in the Winnetka Caucus Council platforms for the past several years, and it is still relevant.

We urge the Trustees and Commissioners of the Village's governing boards to work together in a civil and collaborative way for the good of all Winnetka. We further urge that coordination between taxing bodies be institutionalized and efforts to achieve cost-effective efficiencies through that coordination be routinely reported back to the respective taxing bodies and to the community to enhance accountability on this initiative.