

WINNETKA CAUCUS PLATFORMS 2022

Village Platform

PLANK #1 - Collaborative Cost Reduction

The Village Council should direct the executive staff and the President of the Village to confer and collaborate with the executive staff and chairs of each of the other Winnetka taxing authorities during the annual budgeting process with the objective of identifying opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings for the taxpayers of Winnetka. The executive staff and chairs of the various taxing bodies should evaluate opportunities, through collaboration, to reduce, defer or eliminate material annual expenditures. Whether, and the extent to which, efficiencies and cost savings have been realized should be reported by the executive staff to the Village Council.

PLANK #2 - Green Space

In an aggregate ranking of the relative strengths of Village attributes, WCC survey respondents ranked Winnetka's beaches and green spaces second and third in importance, with 50% and 39% of respondents including both in their top three. WCC respondents made clear in commentary that the preservation of mature trees, burying of utility lines (included in the 2012 WCC Village Platform), and addition of bike paths continue to be significant priorities to our community.

In that context, the Village Council should increase its focus on protecting, maintaining, and extending Winnetka's green spaces and tree canopy, and do what it can to advocate for clean, accessible high-quality beaches. This includes enforcing existing ordinances governing tree canopy, preservation of mature trees and green spaces, pursuing opportunities to install green infrastructure and native plants, and continuing to apply a sustainability perspective to Village decision-making.

PLANK #3 – Diversity

WCC survey respondents, in an aggregate ranking of opportunities for growth as well as in survey commentary, demonstrated a clear concern over the lack of diversity in the Village. Diversity ranked second among areas of opportunity, with almost a quarter (23%) of residents citing diversity among their top three choices.

The Village Council should therefore engage the community in a discussion to identify policies, and programs that promote and encourage policies, programming, and partnerships intended to attract and welcome socioeconomic diversity in our village.

PLANK #4 - Economic Development

The WCC asked respondents to rank types of new establishments they felt were missing in Winnetka, across a variety of retail and specialty retail options, ranging from restaurants to pet services. Respondents ranked “Specialty Foods” (e.g. butcher, baker, cheese, deli, etc.) as their top priority. These were ranked in the top three by 56% of respondents. The desire for additional restaurants was highly ranked by 49% of respondents, followed by “Specialty Retail” (e.g. paper goods/stationary, sports, etc.)” (ranking in top three by 32% of respondents). and “Brewery/Brewpub” by 30% of respondents.

In that context, while market forces play a significant role in businesses moving to Winnetka, the Village Council should continue to encourage economic dynamism in our community by proactively collaborating with regional economic agencies, real estate developers, business associations, and business owners to ensure Winnetka is an attractive place to do business. Additionally the Council should work with village staff to ensure that ordinances and processes enable businesses to establish operations in Winnetka as efficiently as possible.

Winnetka Northfield Library Platform

PLANK 1 - Collaborative Cost Reduction

The WNPL board shall direct the executive staff and the chair of the board to confer and collaborate with the executive staff and chairs of each of the other Winnetka taxing authorities during the annual budgeting process

with the objective of identifying opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings for the taxpayers of Winnetka. The executive staff and chairs of the various taxing bodies should evaluate opportunities, through collaboration, to reduce, defer or eliminate material annual expenditures. Whether, and the extent to which, efficiencies and cost savings have been realized should be reported by the executive staff to the WNPL board.

PLANK #2 - **Strategic Plan**

Nearly half, (47%) of those answering the strategic plan survey question were unsure or unconvinced of the value of the strategic plan and if the execution of the plan maximizes the return to the community. The WNPL Board should develop a clearer and more convincing value proposition for the strategic plan. The Library District should host public information sessions clarifying the objectives of the strategic plan, relating objectives to caucus survey and other usage data, clearly outlining sources and uses of funds, and ultimately seeking input about the community's desire for the plan to be implemented, refined, or dispensed with.

PLANK #3 - **Library and Park District Land Negotiations**

The Winnetka Park District owns a parcel of land east of the Winnetka Library along Green Bay Road. The Park District is contemplating selling the parcel to raise money for planned beach improvements. Selling to a third party would likely result in construction eliminating the current green space and also limiting future expansion of the library.

The Library District should retain access to the land currently owned by the Park District. If a reasonable price can be negotiated the library should purchase the property from the WPD. The library board should engage with the Park District to discern the best arrangement for the Park District, the Library and the overall Village.

PLANK #4 - **Financial Surplus**

As a result of a business decision to cancel certain budgeted capital improvements that were determined to be unnecessary for the Northfield library, the WNPL has been left with a financial surplus that far exceeds best practices of public entities in Winnetka and elsewhere. Survey responses indicated that the favored solution to address the surplus is for the Library Board

to develop a plan to keep the tax levy flat until it meets the standard of approximately 6 months of regular budgeted needs. The Library Board should be prudent in approving capital expenditures that use up the surplus.

Parks Platform

PLANK #1 - Collaborative Cost Reduction

The Winnetka Park District Executive Staff (the “Park District”) and Board of Commissioners (the “Parks Board”) should confer and collaborate with the executive staff and chairs of each of the other Winnetka taxing authorities during the annual budgeting process with the objective of realizing greater efficiencies and cost savings for the taxpayers of Winnetka. The executive staff and chairs of the various taxing bodies should evaluate opportunities, through collaboration, to reduce, defer or eliminate material expenditures to be made during each budgeting cycle. Whether, and the extent to which, efficiencies and cost savings have been realized during each fiscal year should be reported by the Park District to the Parks Board.

PLANK #2 - Communication

To rebuild trust and foster transparency, the Park District and the Park Board should maintain an open and continuous dialogue with Winnetka residents on topics, amenities and programs of interest. Respectful debate and discourse among members of the Parks Board and members of the community is a priority. The Park District and Parks Board should leverage various channels to reach a broad audience.

PLANK #3 - Beaches/Waterfront

The Park District should continue to implement Winnetka Waterfront 2030, with community support for the type of restoration and infrastructure work now complete at Lloyd beach, while facilitating maximum access and enjoyment by residents. Proactive engagement with the community should shift to a focus on amenities and the waterfront experience — with a goal of better understanding community priorities in each of those areas. Direct and transparent dialogue with stakeholders (including beach pass holders) via surveys and focus groups should be conducted to gain an understanding of the beaches/waterfront customer base. The District should specifically include discussion regarding the following topics: beachfront dining (including food trucks/grilled food options), expanded & improved bathroom access, additional beach seating, shade features, and small watercraft rental.

PLANK #4 - Swimming Pool

Recognizing that, while over 50% of respondents were willing to pay additional taxes for a pool, our community remains divided on the topic, the Winnetka Park District should evaluate the viability of a pool (outdoor and indoor, considered as separate and joint possibilities) by analyzing a possible change in demographics that has resulted in an increased need and desire for a pool. The Park District should research finance/sponsorship options, assess the possibility of collaborating with neighboring communities and New Trier High School, and consider the adequacy of the “acceptable” tax increases in meeting the financing needs. In conducting their research, the Park District should pursue further community engagement, like the dog-park advisory group, focusing on programmatic options (type of activities, clubs, classes) and financial elements (e.g., building costs, annual operating/maintenance costs, estimated revenue, finance/sponsorship options) and solicit community feedback of their findings.

PLANK #5 - Dog Park

There is broad support for a designated area for dog recreation in the Village of Winnetka — two-thirds of survey respondents are supportive of the plan proposed by the Dog Park Advisory Committee. Less clear is the community's willingness to carve out central beach property for dogs. While the Park District should move forward with implementing the proposed plan, there should be “checkpoints” to validate usage and community support.

Winnetka D36 Schools Platform

PLANK #1 - Collaborative Cost Reduction

The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 School Board (the “D36 Board”) shall direct the executive staff and the chair of the board to confer and collaborate with the executive staff and chairs of each of the other Winnetka taxing authorities during the annual budgeting process with the objective of identifying opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings for the taxpayers of Winnetka. The executive staff and chairs of the various taxing bodies should evaluate opportunities to reduce, defer or eliminate material expenditures to be made during each budgeting cycle. Whether, and the extent to which, efficiencies and cost savings have been realized during each fiscal year should be reported by the executive staff to the D36 Board.

PLANK #2 - Benchmarking Data

74% of 2022 WCC Survey respondents agreed they were interested in benchmarking data that indicates how well D36 prepares its students relative to other New Trier feeder schools and 80% agreed that the data should be made available to the community in a clear and concise way. This is consistent with the 2021 WCC Survey where 70% of respondents said they were interested in such data. Accordingly, the D36 Board should regularly share, in a clear and concise way, some form of data comparing performance of D36 schools with other New Trier feeder schools.

PLANK #3 - Hiring Processes

The D36 Board's new leadership should make hiring and retaining the best teachers and staff its highest priority, as it was the overwhelming top priority indicated on the 2022 WCC Survey. As part of its hiring process, the D36 Board should better document and communicate its hiring process policy for administrators, including at which points parental input is obtained. The D36's Board's next highest priorities should be to make facilities improvements, and make further strides in recovering in effects from the pandemic, in that order.

PLANK #4 - Tutoring

Of 2022 WCC Survey respondents who had children in D36, 56% indicated their children receive tutoring or support outside D36, and 63% of those who use tutoring indicated they did so because they "wanted to help my child work at grade level." The D36 Board should seek to understand why tutoring or outside support is utilized to this extent in D36 schools. For example, by surveying families in the district regarding tutoring and their rationale for using tutors and exploring if there are specific groups within the district (e.g., grade levels, schools, or demographic groups) who are utilizing tutoring at different rates and why.

PLANK #5 - Fiscal Stewardship

The D36 Board should continue its more disciplined approach to fiscal stewardship and increased community engagement on spending projects, as the 2022 WCC survey shows increased confidence and decreased dissatisfaction with fiscal stewardship since 2019.