



## 2018 PLATFORM: VILLAGE OF WINNETKA

**Background:** *The Village of Winnetka is experiencing the effects of national social, commercial and retail changes. Decreasing government subsidies, increased online retail purchasing and a busy community's desire for engagement with neighbors continue to present complex issues requiring long-range strategic planning. In addition to Village policy review and exception requests, elected officials are required to research and understand complex multi-community, inter-government issues. 100-year rain events and storm water management require inter-state, multi-community, inter-governmental collaboration. Strategic support for retail and professional businesses in three distinct commercial areas requires additional public study sessions and multi-year planning. Our first-ever Public Use Development (PUD) project, One Winnetka, a cornerstone to the East Elm District, requires ongoing collaboration so that the developer will complete the project successfully. The opportunities and responsibilities of transferring the oversight for Green Bay and Sheridan Roads in 60093 require deliberation with the State of Illinois. Our current elected officials continue to push for successful conclusion to these decade-long issues.*

*The Winnetka Caucus Council Annual Residents' Survey in June provided both specific and anecdotal feedback from our residents. Highlights from the 1,071 respondents include:*

- 74% of respondents feel the Village holiday lighting creates a festive spirit, 65% believe the Village budget for holiday lights is appropriate, and 56% stated that the lighting does not necessarily encourage them to spend more time in the downtown shopping areas during the holiday season.
- Over 89% of Village residents responded that they attended special events in conjunction with the Park District/Village/Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce/Private Sponsors, including "First Friday", "Coffee and Classics", Memorial Day and Fourth of July festivities, "Wednesdays in the Woods", July Sidewalk Sale, Holiday Tree Lighting, and "Red Invitation Sale".
- 66% of respondents do not support the introduction of a Real Estate Transfer tax.
- 89% of Village respondents indicated their preferred method for receiving communication from the Village is email and would welcome additional topic specific email communication.
- There were many write-in comments about "what's happening" with Storm Water management, One Winnetka and Refreshing and updating the downtown commercial areas.

The Winnetka Caucus Council is aware of the extensive work that continues to bring action on these issues, and recommends the following 2018 Village Platform:

### **VILLAGE PLANK #1**

Enhance email communication to the Village residents on major long-range topics of interest. In addition to the weekly “Message from the Village of Winnetka”, add topic-specific emails to update residents on public meetings, after-meeting debriefs, timelines and completed actions.

### **VILLAGE PLANK #2**

The Village of Winnetka should refrain from implementing any new taxes or service fees, unless specifically tied to funding a specific service to residents. This includes Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Real Estate Transfer Tax, refuse assessment or any other added tax or fee.

### **VILLAGE PLANK #3**

The Village of Winnetka Forester, in conjunction with Environmental and Forestry Commission, should actively pursue a voluntary program for residents to recognize Heritage Trees on their properties and throughout the public areas of Winnetka. This voluntary program should be designed to provide support to residents who proudly maintain Winnetka’s Heritage Tree canopy and urban forest, referencing the Village Heritage Tree description published in the Village ordinances.

## **2018 PLATFORM: WINNETKA PARK DISTRICT**

***Summary:** The parks play an important role in the life of many Winnetkans. The number of general comments in this year’s survey were substantial and focused on Green Bay Trail improvements, beach improvements, the addition of a dog park and additional paddle courts. There is some energy around the elimination of beach user fees for Winnetka residents. Respondents are supportive of finding alternative sources to fund large projects, and don’t want any additional taxes. Highlights from the 1,071 survey respondents include:*

- 58% are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Dwyer Park alterations with a substantial 24% having no opinion on the improvements and 12% use it more often.
- 72% are Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Hubbard Woods alterations and 31% use it more often.
- 85% use the beaches; however, 62% use the beaches once per month or less during the beach season.
- Beach usage is limited by summer travel (20%), use of other beaches and/or pools (19%), no interest in going to the beach (19%), poor beach quality / beach closures (19%), lack of food & dining options (16%) and poor infrastructure (16%).
- Changes desired to increase usage include better infrastructure (31%), more food & dining options (31%) and improved beach quality (30%).
- 76% would likely support Resident Donations & Gifts to fund large projects, 67% would likely support Public/Private Partnerships, and 58% would likely support Sponsorship & Naming Rights.
- 53% are aware of the Winnetka Parks Foundation.

- 81% use of the Green Bay Trail, mostly for bicycling (60%) and jogging (53%).
- 68% Agree or Strongly Agree that we should improve the Green Bay Trail, with many respondents suggesting a volunteer program to help with improvements.

### **PARKS PLANK #1**

The Winnetka Park District should continue to put in place the vision set forth in Lakefront 2030 with a priority on improving infrastructure, food & dining options, and beach quality. Further, funding for larger capital expenditures should be supplemented by resident donations & gifts, public/private partnerships, and sponsorship & naming rights. Lakefront 2030 development priorities should have a strong emphasis on increasing beach usage for all Winnetka residents.

### **PARKS PLANK #2**

The Winnetka Park District should expand efforts to improve the Green Bay Trail addressing trail path quality, signage, and other amenities that will enhance resident experience. The Winnetka Park District should also convene a meeting of community volunteer groups, other interested parties, and required Village departments to develop a plan to improve trail habitat and beautification of the trail. The Winnetka Park District should coordinate with volunteer groups interested in leading funding for trail beautification.