



2025 Winnetka Caucus Council (WCC)

Proposed Platforms

Library Board of Trustees Platform

Plank #1: Serving the Whole Community

As public libraries evolve their role in today's modern world, it is essential that they meet the needs of their communities, with a special emphasis on children. The Library District should prioritize children's collections and programming, ensuring they are sufficient for all ages, grades of study, and genders. The Library District should also support the community through compelling adult collections; welcoming and flexible meeting rooms; engaging programming; and creative use of outdoor areas.

Plank #2: Northfield Branch Vision

As the Library District embarks on a Northfield branch expansion, it should work to articulate and communicate enhancements for users across the District and provide regular updates to ensure transparency throughout the project.

Plank #3: Consider Staff Needs

Library District employees are critical to the strong culture and experience of both branches. The Library District should continue to identify challenges confronting 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 be sought regularly for the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of events and activities.

Plank #4: Integrate with Schools

Initiate communication with school districts served by the Library District to ensure library staff are familiar with curricula and can recommend and provide resources to enhance learning and reading progress.

District 36 School Board Platform

Plank #1: Personal Devices

After the first school year with the Yondr program in place in the D36 middle schools, almost 90% of the respondents support prohibiting personal electronic devices during school hours.

At the end of the school year, the district should continue to provide feedback and metrics like changes in student behavior, engagement, academic performance and any other impacts of the program.

Plank #2: Technology in the Classroom

For a second year, 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 almost 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 and 2024 plank, the District should continue working to educate the community on Winnetka's vision of Progressive Education and clearly state how it can be optimized to measure student performance.

Plank #4: Communication

The 2025 survey results reflect that over 70% of the respondents feel they are receiving the right amount of communication from the D36 school district and respondents generally like receiving communications by email or newsletter.

As the District works to continue improving communications to parents and caretakers, almost half of the respondents would like the school district to look into the possibility of an application that could help streamline communications.

Park District Board of Commissioners Platform

Plank #1: CAMP COVERAGE

WPD should ensure parents have a camp option for the full summer when schools are not in session.

93% AGREE: Q21. Should the WPD coordinate with D36 to align summer camp offerings with the school calendar to provide coverage for the full summer?

Plank #2: COORDINATE PROGRAMMING

WPD should partner with local organizations to maximize access to programming and reduce duplicative/competing programs.

89% AGREE: Q23. Should the WPD coordinate with local third-party programming organizations to maximize access to a variety of programming available to residents? (examples: Community House, Hot Shots, Winnetka Hockey, Adventures in Learning Camp, Senior Center, NT Extension, etc.)

Plank #3: WEEKEND BEACH PASSES

WPD should offer beach and non-motorized boat launch weekend day pass options for residents.

80% AGREE: Q24. Weekend beach and non-motorized boat launch access is limited to season pass holders. Should the WPD offer weekend day pass options for residents to access these amenities?

Village Council Platform

Plank #1: Post Office Site Development Considerations

As the Village prepares to begin the long process of overhauling the Post Office site, the WCC surveyed resident opinions about the ways in which they would like to be able to use this site in the future.

When asked what the best use of the space might be, 708 residents selected the following:

An outdoor park or communal space to enjoy throughout the year (e.g. a community gathering or event space, complementing the adjacent Dwyer Park space)	24.3%
A space to congregate with indoor/outdoor flexibility (e.g. a covered area for events throughout the year, with space for kids to play)	16.8%
Additional retail space, including dining, potentially with outdoor seating (and no additional housing)	19.8%
Mixed use residential/retail/service space (similar to One Winnetka)	18.0%
An indoor cultural space (e.g., for public art, music performances, or small exhibitions)	5.2%
Other	15.82%

Based on this data, the WCC shares the following insights & Village Council Recommendations:

- Almost a quarter (24.3%) of residents prefer the space to be used for an outdoor park or a year-round communal space, and an additional 16.8% want a space to congregate with indoor/outdoor flexibility and space for kids to play. Taken together, this suggests that approximately 41% of residents want this space to become a place to congregate and/or be active.
- The next 2 options suggest that approximately 38% of residents would favor some form of mixed-use residential / retail / service space, but residents are split on whether it should include housing (similar to One Winnetka). **The Village Council should pursue a public engagement process by engaging a design professional that will evaluate the future use of the post office site soliciting further public input on the site options available to determine the best use of the site for the community.**
- Finally, with only 5.2% indicating interest in an indoor cultural space, **the Village Council should not develop additional indoor cultural space at this site.** Local theaters already exist, and the Winnetka Community House already features public art.

The WCC also analyzed the 112 comments on this question and adds the following insights and Village Council Recommendations:

- About 70% of the comments were positive and aspirational. This makes sense and indicates residents understand and are generally excited about the opportunity to make this space into a cherished asset that enhances life in our community. **The Village**

Council should fully embrace this project as an opportunity to do something great in the community and should keep residents positively engaged throughout. This can be a fun and constructive process and opportunity for all.

- Negative comments focused on concerns over potential loss of parking, residential development, and the many delays that have impacted past large-scale projects. **The Village Council should proactively engage residents to understand their parking concerns and gain input on Village parking plans as the Post Office space evolves.**
- Overall, it seems there is great interest in developing the Post Office site into a place that will foster a sense of community and provide a pleasant multi-generational space for residents to congregate and visit throughout the year. **The Village Council should look for inspiration from other successful public venues such as the Milwaukee Public Market, the Chicago Riverfront, or even vibrant town squares in European cities.**

Based on the information presented on this topic, the WCC shares this recommendation for the Village Council:

The Village should maintain focus on the design elements residents indicated they want to see, and the Village should ensure any design and development firms that are engaged thoroughly understand these resident priorities and interests as well. The Village Council has done a great job of hosting study sessions and engaging community input on key design decisions thus far (the Elm Street and Hubbard Woods streetscape projects being great recent examples), and the Village should build on this approach in assessing design concepts and developing plans for the former Post Office site.

Plank #2: Protecting Our Open Spaces

The 2024 WCC Survey shows that most 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.

This year, we sought clarity on what residents consider to be "Open Space" and learned that almost 90% of respondents consider "Open Spaces" to include "Parks and natural areas", and almost 50% think "Open Spaces" can also mean "Public gathering spaces (e.g. plazas or athletic fields)". Less than 14% consider spaces without buildings (such as parking lots) to be "Open Spaces".

Given this very clear direction that residents value and want to protect our Open Spaces, and that Open Spaces are defined as parks, natural areas, and public gathering places, the Village Council should develop and implement specific measures to preserve and protect our existing Open Spaces in the Village from being developed in ways that would not be consistent with this definition of an "Open Space". Open Spaces may still be enhanced or modified, but should remain Open Space. Furthermore, the Village Council should not be limited in considering alternate uses for spaces without buildings (such as parking lots).

Plank #3: Safety and Mobility

The WCC's 2024 survey generated hundreds of comments related to safety and mobility concerns around Winnetka, and residents reported a net increase in usage of all transportation modes within the Village of Winnetka over the past decade.

2024 Winnetka Caucus Annual Survey

SurveyMonkey

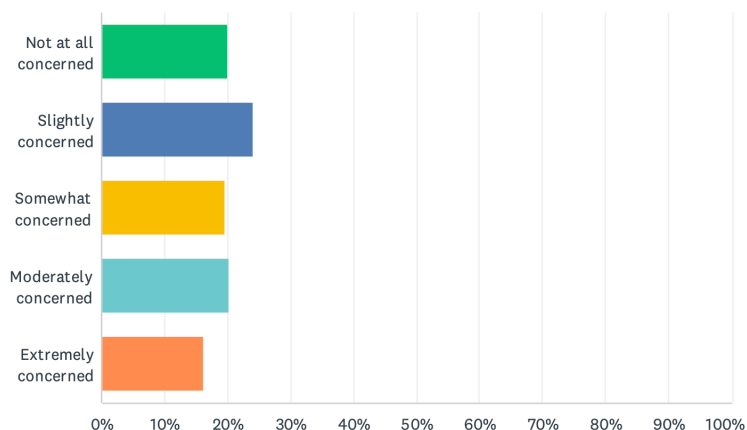
Q35 When traveling within the Village which modes of transportation do you and members of your household use and how has your usage changed over the past decade? Check all that apply.

	INCREASED	DECREASED	STAYED THE SAME	N/A	TOTAL
Car	22.22% 274	11.44% 141	65.21% 804	1.14% 14	1,233
Bike	42.03% 506	6.73% 81	31.48% 379	19.77% 238	1,204
Walk	63.99% 789	2.51% 31	32.04% 395	1.46% 18	1,233
Electric scooter	5.07% 58	0.61% 7	2.97% 34	91.35% 1,046	1,145
Electric bike	6.01% 69	0.26% 3	3.48% 40	90.25% 1,037	1,149
Moped/motorcycle	2.01% 23	0.70% 8	3.84% 44	93.45% 1,070	1,145
Pace bus	3.29% 38	2.60% 30	7.37% 85	86.74% 1,001	1,154

In this year's survey, we learned that over 55% of the 729 survey respondents are either Somewhat, Moderately, or Extremely concerned about "pedestrian mobility and safety in Winnetka today".

Q30 How concerned are you about pedestrian mobility and safety in Winnetka today?

Answered: 729 Skipped: 56



We also captured hundreds of comments from residents, and unlike the Post Office site development opportunity, of which ~70% of comments were positive or aspirational, 80-85% of the safety comments shared growing concerns about mobility safety. ***The Village Council should recognize there is concern about mobility-related safety in the community and concerns were expressed that accidents and injuries will increase if mobility-related safety is not addressed in the community.***

We asked residents to rate how important different response options might be in the next 1-2 years and 67% said that “Rules related to e-bikes, e-scooters, and motorized under-16 vehicles” are “Very Important”, with another 18% marking “Somewhat Important”. This suggests public support for stricter rules on these vehicles, similar to what neighboring communities have recently enacted, and the comments further indicate public support for a more regulation-focused approach to improving safety in the near-term. People are very concerned about seeing distracted driving, rolling stops, speeding, and in general reckless behavior both by car drivers and people riding electric or motorized vehicles (e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.), and they have expressed support for consequences for bad behavior. ***The WCC recognizes there will be nuance to which actions make the most sense for Winnetka, but we ask that the Village Council develop and implement a clear near-term (i.e. next 1-2 years) safety improvement plan that focuses on the following key points:***

- Clarify and reinforce the existing rules, leveraging existing state regulations where logical and applicable
- Establish new rules where needed, which may include bans on certain vehicle types in certain places, or limits on which ages can operate certain vehicle types
- Consistently enforce and clarify that tickets and fines that will be applied if residents break the rules
- Continue to educate residents so everyone can do their part to comply, and collaborate with District 36 and New Trier High School with messaging
- Implement signage where needed to document and communicate the rules
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As for the medium term (the next 3-5 years), the focus should be on improving safe non-car transit routes and on addressing high-risk streets and intersections.

Improving safe non-car transit routes:

Building on last year’s insight that 73% supported creating a safe, convenient East/West thoroughfare for non-motorized vehicles, this year’s survey showed that almost 65% of residents feel “adding or enhancing protected bike lanes where feasible” is either “somewhat” or “very” important in the next 3-5 years. And over 69% are still looking for the Village to “re-evaluate prior plans for safe East-West pedestrian and bike access across town”. The WCC recognizes that such improvements often take years of planning, coordination, and execution,

but we are looking for clear actions and progress here. ***This year we ask the Village Council to launch a specific initiative looking at how to enhance bike mobility in general in Winnetka, and specifically how we can improve East/West routes for bikes and other e-motor-assisted transportation.***

Addressing high-risk streets and intersections:

In this year's survey, over 61% of respondents felt it is "very important" that the Village focus mid-term safety improvement efforts on "identifying and evaluating high-risk intersections and streets", and another 27% said this was "somewhat important". To address these concerns, ***The Village Council should continue to evaluate high risk intersections for pedestrians, bikes and cars while also inviting resident input. The Village should continue to engage outside engineering and planning experts to assist with these reviews. The Village Council should prioritize high and medium traffic areas and continue to advance project plans in Hubbard Woods and along Green Bay Road.***

Plank #4: Sustainability

As our earth continues to change, there is growing interest in and awareness of sustainability efforts across the community. The WCC asked residents which types of information would be most helpful to their sustainability journeys and found the following:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Information on which home upgrades (e.g. new insulation, heat pumps, new windows, etc.) offer the biggest energy savings	55.41%	302
Information on navigating the permitting process for sustainable home improvements	46.42%	253
Information on grants, rebates, or tax credits available for green home upgrades	65.87%	359
Information on updated Village programs on residential solar installations, net metering, and other benefits	53.76%	293
Information on finding local, licensed firms that specialize in energy-efficient renovations	41.47%	226
Information on composting options (e.g. where to drop off, interest in doorstep pick-up, ability to access composting services with back door refuse service, willingness to pay more)	55.05%	300
Total Respondents: 545		

Simply put, this shows that residents want to know the following:

1. Which home changes really impact usage
2. Which home changes have the best return on investment
3. How implementing the changes works (procedurally with the Village, plus which companies are cleared to do the work, and what will follow)

It also shows that most residents would like more info on composting options, and presumably to see composting solutions expanded in the Village. ***The Village Council should explore ways to further expand composting across the Village.***

The timing of these insights is quite good as the Village Council has already tasked the Environment, Forestry, and Sustainability Commission (EFSC) with improving the Village's sustainability plans, beginning with residential solar. Given this information, ***the Village Council should task the EFSC with developing an overview document or other communications for review by Village Staff and Council to assist residents with assessing, navigating, and implementing residential sustainability improvements. The EFSC should continue to review the recently approved Comprehensive Plan regarding the sustainability pillar objectives and review and summarize the almost 200 comments regarding sustainability to help the Village Council establish the EFSC's priorities for the year(s) ahead***

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.