Winona Comprehensive Plan Update
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 27, 2022
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers *(Zoom Option Available)*

MEETING NOTES

1) Roll Call

a)   Staff: Chad Ubl, Acting City Manager; Carlos Espinosa, City Planner; Luke Sims, Assistant City Planner
b)   Consultants: Jeff Miller, Planner and Project Manager, HKGi; Rita Trapp, Planner, HKGi; Marcia Ratliff, Executive Director, Engage Winona
c)   Steering Committee members: Andre Russeau, Annette Freiheit, Brian Buelow, Andrew Guzzo, Jeff Van Fossen, Laurie Lucas, Michelle Alexander, Nathan Woodworth, Rachelle Schultz, Rahel Mekonnen, Sadie Neuman

2) December 14th Steering Committee Meeting Notes

No questions or edits were identified.

3)   2045 Population and Household Projections

a) The meeting packet provided background on the methodology for population and household projections out to 2045. In preparing the projections, the staff/consultant team is looking at the City's and County's historic trends, as well as US, State, and County projections. Consideration is also given to trends related to average household size, college enrollment, and jobs.
b) College enrollment is impacting the City's population numbers in two ways: 1) household population number as students live off campus and 2) group quarters numbers for students who live on campus. The staff/consultant team will collaborate with WSU on understanding the trends.
c) Generally projections are calculated looking at births, deaths, and migration. National trends that impact Winona include net migration projected to be flat and population will continue to age. It is estimated that sometime around 2040, deaths will exceed births and there will be a natural decline in population. This trend will impact the County differently. At this point Winona County's population is projected to decline by 12%.
d) Decline in average household size will mean households may continue to increase even if population declines.
e) In determining projections it can be helpful to look at jobs too. Clarification was sought about whether WSU job numbers include students working at WSU or just staff.
f) It was noted that there has been a decline in birth rates – and COVID has increased this impact.
g) Also noted that COVID may have changed traditional college enrollment. A question was raised about how much of future college enrollment will be virtual classes.
h) It was noted that the City has a policy that limits household size. A question was raised about whether that limit could impact future population/households growth.

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4)   Engagement Phase 1 Report

a) There were more than 2,000 people involved in Phase 1 of the engagement effort. The approach was to go to people where they are – this included conversations and focus groups, digital surveys, an online interactive map, and pop-up events. Questions asked were designed to elicit community values, measure community activities, and identify visions for future improvements.

b) The most noted value was Winona's people and sense of community, People also highly valued environment, activities (things to do), livability, and small-town feel (small geographic size/heritage/knowing people). Note that recreation is separate from environment as that was about the city's natural beauty and setting rather than the opportunities for recreation.

c) Following values, participants were asked to dream about Winona's future. At the top of responses for dreams were livability, downtown, and economy.

d) In asking folks about places where they love to be, folks noted specific businesses or non-profits, followed by places adjacent to the river and downtown, and the bluffs. When asked about what best represents the community, the response was the river and downtown, followed by the lake.

e) Many issues identified through the engagement process naturally sort into typical comprehensive plan topics – such as transportation and housing. Some additional topics emerged in the data – community services and education, historic downtown, and equity/identity.

f) Steering Committee members found the ranking of education interesting. Also, they did not see healthcare noted as highly as they expected given all the resources. It was noted that healthcare was wrapped into the livability category and was a value noted in the community outreach.

g) Clarification was asked about what was meant by transportation. It is noted that transportation is a broad category – including all modes – vehicular, pedestrian, boat, etc. More information is on page 30 of the full report.

h) It was noted that the information gathered for each topic area will be shared directly with the key topics subcommittees.

i) While the engagement summary was completed by one individual, it will be reviewed by the entire staff/consultant team. All raw data is released and can be reviewed to understand how comments were attributed. Key topics subcommittee members will be encouraged to identify if other topics/themes should be specifically highlighted.

j) Clarification was made that the number of comments does not necessarily translate to a topic being valued less, e.g. education. It was noted that the questions were broad and there were no examples given. In addition, education is not typically a topic of a comprehensive plan based on the separation between cities and schools. As a result, it may not be something that was identified during the engagement process.

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5) Key Topics – Discussion of Two Additional Topics

a) There were 10 key topics approved by the Council. There are two additional topics intended to be identified through the engagement process.
b) Steering Committee confirmed that the two suggested additional topics – historic downtown & riverfront and community services & institutions are appropriate.

6) 2045 Visioning Input

a) The Steering Committee's values and issues identified at the previous meeting were reviewed for context when talking about the 2045 vision.
b) It was also noted that during the 2016 Engage Winona conversations, beauty, safety, heritage, feel of a small town, responsive elected officials and government, strong, and vibrant values emerged – and those have emerged again.
c) The Steering Committee underwent an exercise using the Mentimeter tool to identify desired elements of the vision and values statements, which will guide the comprehensive plan and community decisions over the next 20 years.
d) In reviewing the results of why some values didn't resonate, it was noted that the levee disconnects the community from the river. It was also noted that there is more to do related to full inclusion and equity.
e) Members noted an interest in understanding what someone who is new or who is from outside thinks about the community. Also, what about the 13,000 people who work in Winona but don't live in the city.
f) Suggestion raised about whether statistics should acknowledge those who work in Winona but live in Goodview or Minnesota City.
g) Members noted the importance of making sure the vision and values statements are inclusive and welcoming.

7) Next Steps

a) A draft vision and values will be developed based on this discussion
b) The draft vision and values will be presented to the City Council and released to the public for general comment.
c) Key topics subcommittees will be doing their work from March to August. At the next meeting the Steering Committee will be looking at the key topics frameworks for the subcommittees.
d) January 31st – information workshop about feasibility study for a public safety building. This project may be a part of the transformative projects key topic and the subcommittee's discussions.
e) The City is close to finalizing its Arts & Culture Strategic Plan and the plan consultants will present the plan document at the February 22nd City Council. The proposed plan is available on the City's website for review and public comment. The plan will be woven into the Comprehensive Plan.

Introduction

We'll spend a few minutes talking about the values that emerged in this phase of engagement.

The goal is to create values and vision statements that will guide the comprehensive plan and community decisions over the next 20 years.

2

Values -> one word

Livability

Winona is livable and attractive. (179 comments)

This includes housing choice and community services that support health and well-being.

Winona has something for everyone. (195 comments)

This includes community arts events, concerts, theater, family-friendly activities, and youth activities.

Environment

Winona has a unique natural setting and physical beauty. (218 comments)

Entrepreneurship

Winona has a robust, varied economy. (135 comments)

This includes entrepreneurship, innovation, and infrastructure.

Recreation

Winona has access to outdoor recreation and parks. (139 comments)

This includes trails, playgrounds, and other amenities.

Values -> one word

Heritage

Winona has a vibrant, historic downtown and riverfront. (87 comments)

Winona has a small geographic size and a small-town feel. (164 comments)

This includes a general feeling of safety, heritage, and ease of getting around.

Learning

Winona supports lifelong learning. (56 comments)

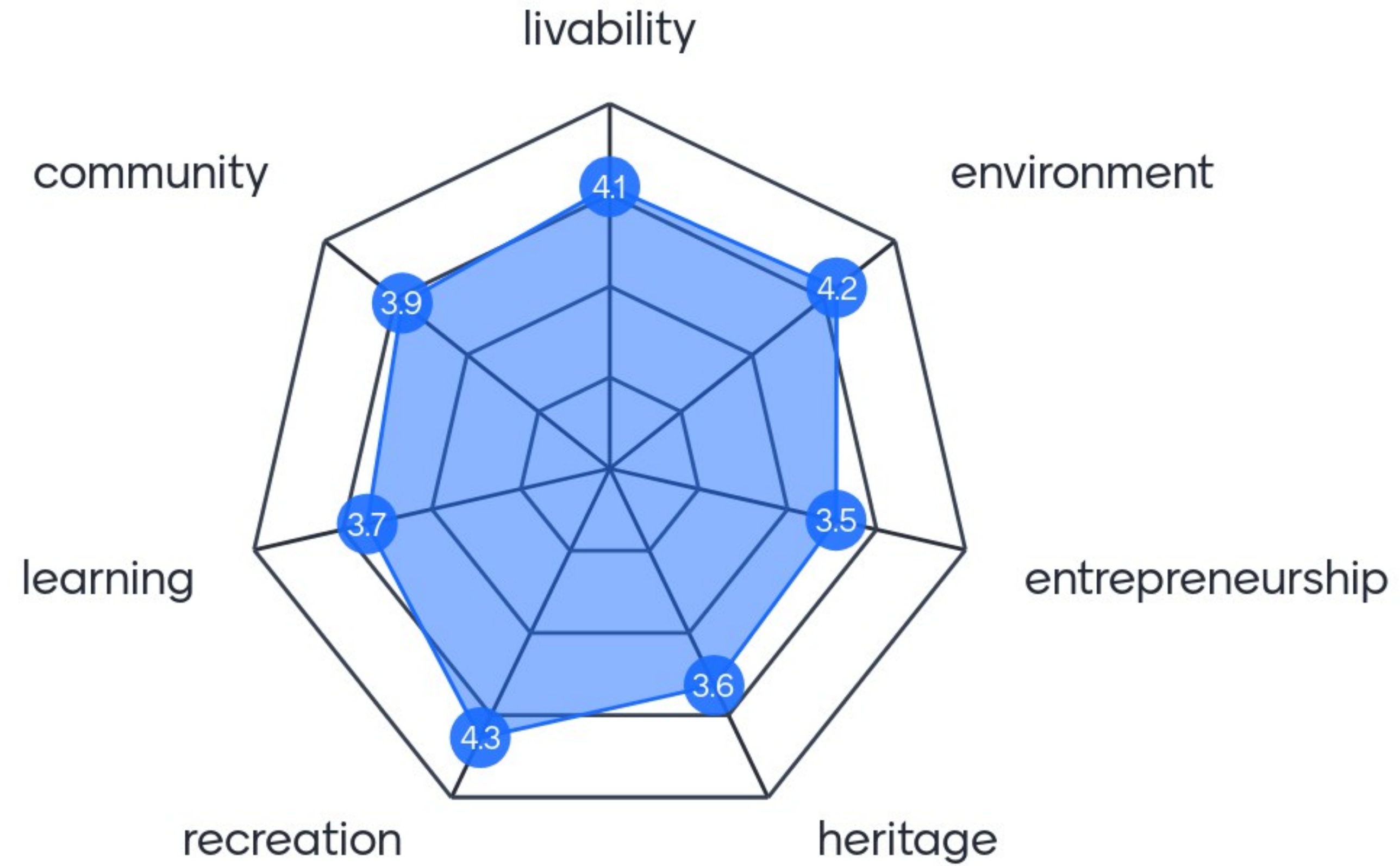This includes E-12 and higher education.

Community

Winona's got good people. (249 comments)

This includes a sense of community and inclusiveness, a community that is welcoming, diverse, and friendly.
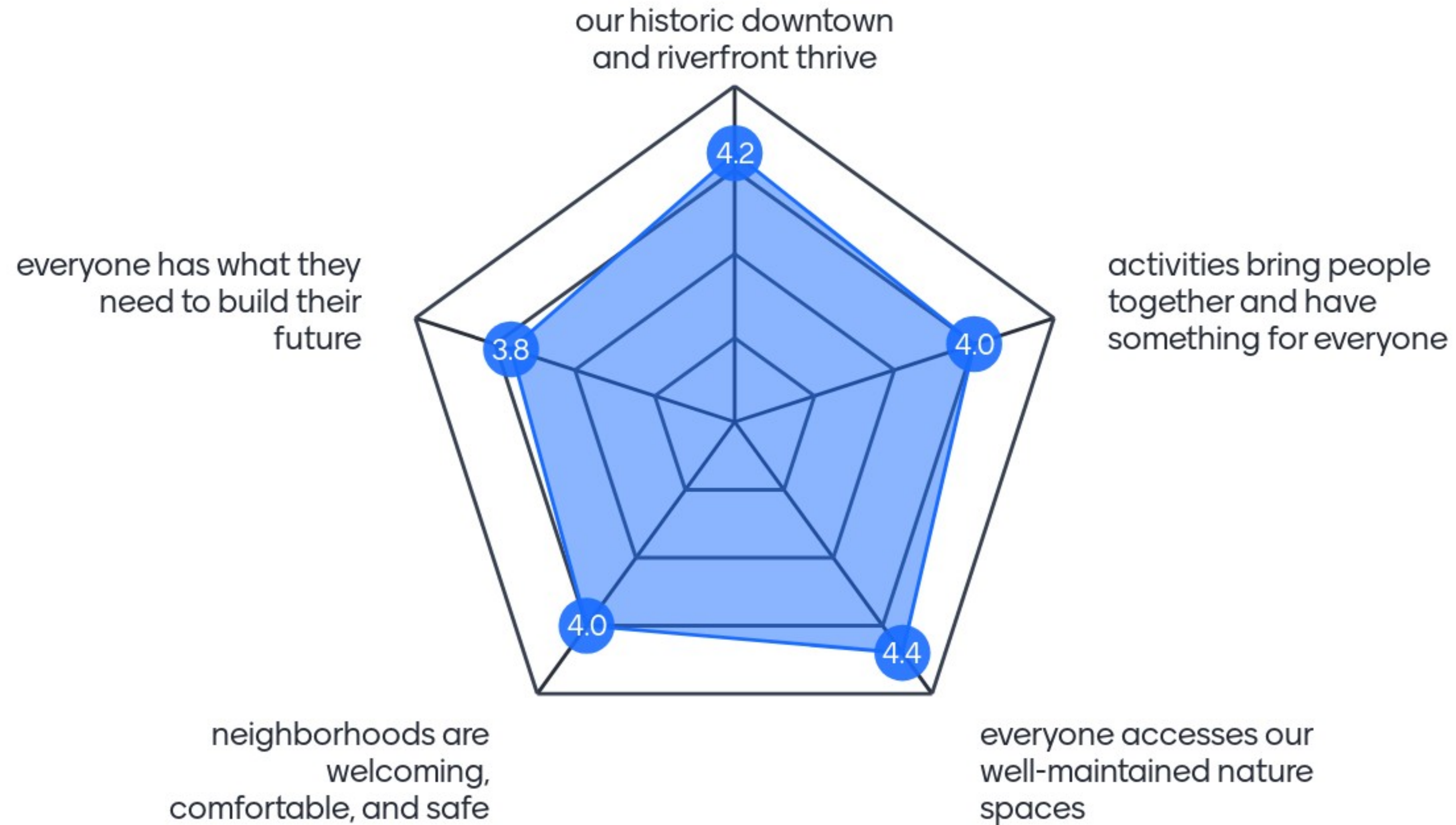
How do these values resonate?

Future vision: Winona is a community where...

Your thoughts: What didn't resonate? What different language do you want to see used? Was there anything missing, or anything that surprised you?