



Comprehensive Plan Update: Community Services & Institutions Subcommittee

Summary

The Community Services & Institutions Subcommittee explores the ongoing community services provided by the City of Winona and its partnerships with other institutions, community support for those services, feedback on performance, and future community service needs, goals, objectives, and policies/strategies.

Examples of discussion topic/focus areas:

- Coordination between public institutions and schools on capital projects
- Desired enhancements to existing community services
- Desired new community services
- Community Services Ideas and Issues from Comprehensive Plan Phase 1 Engagement (see following pages)
- Increasing equitable access to services

Overall Committee Product:

In accordance with Winona's 2045 vision, city values, and Comprehensive Plan Overarching Themes; community services goals, objectives, and policies/strategies identified by the subcommittee are recommended for incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan

Timeline:

- April-August 2022
- Two meetings per month – 1-1.5 hours long

Community services and institutions

Community services and institutions support the well-being and education of Winona residents. While not one of the initial 10 comprehensive plan topics, this topic emerged strongly in the engagement as an opportunity for the city to support the well-being of residents through its own community services and facilities, along with partnerships and collaborations with other institutions and organizations. We received 236 comments about community services in response to questions about issues and ideas for Winona's future. We'll also unpack 35 comments about education in the section below.

Connections to values

Community services connect to values of livability, lifelong learning, and community. This topic also connects to the comprehensive plan theme of equity.

Issues and ideas

1. Community spaces. Participants mentioned spaces for kids from early childhood through teens, along with spaces for older adults.
 - -defunding the library is very unfortunate—it decreases access to resources
 - more resources, more afterschool programming
 - don't look at teens as a problem, they get a bad rap - look at them as having a purpose, not a problem
 - connection with other people is how people are staying sober. it would be a lot more beneficial to get rid of the stigma of once an addict, always an addict if we could get the community more involved in these meetings for connection.
 - a lot for kids, but once you graduate there are outdoor activities - but there are not many indoor activities
 - i value the friendship center as a senior - I loved the plan that was intergenerational. we have met people (retirees) who've moved here just for that - at some point we need a place that is reasonable for a friendship center that has daylight
 - -services for families and young people more than services to incarcerate
 - I've always dreamt about having an indoor park - like in Edina, edinburgh park, merged with senior apartments. 3-story atrium with trees, plants, pool, basketball, 3-story climbing wall - for stay at home parents in the winter, having some place to go - hook that up with early childhood family education program.
2. Better communication and citizen involvement in city programming and decisionmaking.
 - general city updates on social media
 - building relationship with law enforcement
 - more teen or youth-focused things in government, so we get interested
 - Further collaboration and sharing of resources within the community. Listening sessions, are we addressing the community
 - Sticking points: for me as a common citizen, where do I go with my concerns, opportunities, small things like tree branches. I never felt like the city really wanted to hear from me, so I don't call them anymore. It's never been received in a welcome manner, even though I get that they can't be everywhere, and I'm trying to help out. Money and resources are always a part of it. Having enough staff - I'm sure that limits what they can do.

3. Community spaces that are open more hours, and located across the city. Participants also noted that bathroom facilities are not present in many of Winona's community gathering spaces, and gaps remain in safety and services for people experiencing homelessness.
 - -seems like the city is consolidating to big playgrounds vs small, local playground - big equity issue— access points
 - We have really good businesses and attractions, but physically it's not comfortable to enter this town - where is the bathroom, the changing table, the signs. Think about tourism, bikes, water fountains, and safety.
 - Too many drugs- worry I will be robbed- we have been robbed and kicked at the levee at night- it is not safe there at night
4. Trust, transparency, and access to government
 - you still can't make public comment at city council, you can't show up to a meeting and present an idea. hope that is resolved soon. allow people to show up at your meeting
 - it seems as though Fastenal gets to decide what happens to land, buildings, our river view. i think the community should have more say, and not just rich white men with money. there are VERY passionate people of all ages working to make more beauty and justice here, and it is so discouraging to see how the town doesn't encourage this passion, especially when it's young people.
 - Some way for the city to have steps for how to get what you need. Here's how you do this, here's how you reach out to us. easier to contact and help walk people through. we are in this major growth period at (my business). I think I remember the founders having to fight to even have a brewery downtown, some kind of restriction in the code.
 - -seems weird we elect officials to represent us who don't seem to care what we think/don't ask/listen—send back a form letter instead
 - accountability for city council - their decisions need to match the strategic plan, and they need to have a better knowledge of public service and how economic development, planning, finances all work. accountability - if they're not really looking at what's best for the community, accountability there.
5. Excellence in programming, with metrics to track outcomes.
 - Measurements and outcomes to ensure a clear understanding of needs and how to support those needs.
 - evaluations - the city of winona does not do program evaluation, build metrics into programs
6. Collaborations and partnerships to address mental health, substance abuse, poverty, and more.
 - many philanthropic opportunities. I'm part of the WCF, and lots of requests come in for services I didn't even know existed. how do we make those services more broadly accessible? lots of services like habitat, food banks, medical clinics, for a community our size. we're a community rich in resources but not always rich in ways that we communicate that those resources are available. e.g. you don't have to go hungry. you don't have to go without medical services.
 - There's a growing prevalence of youth and adult substance abuse, and I want to create more community options for treatment and support. Those who are suffering, and also their family and friends

- The city's plan is everybody's plan, so how do they engage and partner with others to ensure that those things are happening?
- A community support clinic downtown, it would have a CAHOOTS model alternative response team, non-coercive mental health and addiction services, on site support for housing. Community led programming. I know there is money coming from ARPA to support this. There are no longer excuses for our elected officials to do nothing and solely invest in punitive institutions while we sit without these vital resources.

Additional Issues and Ideas from Phase I Engagement

1. Value for education institutions and partnerships in the community as a standout characteristic
 - Winona as a center for learning
 - Value education and etiquette
 - Image associated with education
 - Colleges, education, and work opportunities
 - Connections between education and recreation in the natural landscape
 - Good private schools
 - Vibrant educational and cultural communities
 - Historical connection as an education hub
 - Schools are places where all are welcomed
2. Institutions and businesses as service and connector hubs
 - Shelters for the homeless
 - Community and family connections with churches, coffee shops, the environments
 - Connections to music and recreation organizations that are close by
 - Coffee shops, third places nearby
 - Proximity and access to local service and connector hubs
 - An atmosphere of service
 - Community connectivity
 - A vibrancy in Winona that comes from the collection of organizations across the artistic, entrepreneurial, and intellectual spectrums that make Winona a vibrant place to live.
3. Community culture of service in institutions
 - Farmers market and the connection to the outdoors
 - Awareness of keeping Winona's uniqueness
 - Culturally expansive and able to grow to meet challenges
 - Strong connections to places of worship
 - Winona has the capacity to realize great things and should be focused on development of building systems around compassionate ways of living. Access to education, art, nature, and social/community activism is important to that.

Spotlight: Education

Education also emerged in the engagement as an asset to Winona and an opportunity for improvement. Education was identified as a core value, and it supports other core values like entrepreneurship and community.

Ideas and issues

1. Pathways to success for Winona's youth.
 - A partnership between the public schools, the city and business leaders to collaborate in a way that lifts up the working poor. No one entity can do it alone, but a comprehensive program might. <https://swifoundation.org/what-we-do/grow-our-own/>
 - Commitment to improve the public pre-k 12 school system, including programming, quality and facilities.
 - Improvement across the board in education - lots of options, but it's not universally supported and celebrated. Certain groups focus on areas that need to be improved, but there's a lot to celebrate. Intentional about making improvements, and leverage relationships among educational institutions. Improve the narrative, especially for K12
 - High school internship connections- this feels really possible to have during the school day, trade experience→ Build greater relationships within the town, kids identify what they want/enjoy
2. Partnerships and shared planning with local education institutions.
 - Winona should strive to maintain its educational facilities, both public and private. At the higher education level, there are fewer residential students than in the past. The comprehensive plan should address what will happen when WSU rebuilds its central campus dormitories. When completed, the new dormitories may allow for less student housing off-campus, enabling the city to convert residences now used for student housing into single or multi-family homes.
 - WSU enrollment- big part of economy- general college enrollment, getting that back
 - Partnerships- buy energy together with the city schools etc. buy in bulk for LEDS etc.