



June 28, 2021

Citizens Environmental Quality Committee
Winona, Minnesota 55987

Dear Committee Members:

Beginning in July, City boards, committees, and commissions will be back to meeting in person. Thus, the next meeting of the Citizens Environmental Quality Committee meeting will be held on **Thursday, July 1, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.** in the Misato Room at City Hall.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Review of May Meeting Minutes**
3. **Sustainability Plan Discussion (1 minutes)**
4. **Community Garden Planning Update (5 minutes)**
5. **Tree Planting Grants Update (10 minutes)**
6. **Other Business (5 minutes)**
7. **Adjournment**

Sincerely,

John Howard

Natural Resources Sustainability Coordinator

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

DATE: Thursday May 6, 2021
TIME: Scheduled for 4:30 pm (Virtual Zoom Meeting)
PRESENT: Dan Hall, David Ruff, Julie Fassbender
GUESTS: Dicey Spring (WSU student)
STAFF: John Howard

1. **Call to Order:** Call to order at 4:33 PM by Dan Hall (Chair)
2. **Review and Approval of April 2021 Meeting Minutes:** Approval unanimously without alteration.
3. **Sustainability Plan Discussion:**

John provided a summary on engagement work. Over 500 people have taken the survey, and generally very supportive of sustainability focus. Topics of interest are all across the board. Focus of comments and interest are mostly local concerns, rather than global concerns like climate change. Survey will remain open through at least May.

John hopes for a July draft to share with the CEQC.

Dan asked about participant education level and demographics in general. Dan noted that about 40 % had college degree, which seemed higher than average. John agreed that the number is above the population average that he believed was 30% for Winona. Dan wondered if there were ways to engage more working class people. John suggested they could engage with people through businesses.

Julie said the work is pretty amazing, and thanked staff for their hard work. Dan said it is wonderful to have an organization like Engage Winona to do this work.

John asked if Dicey saw any notice of the survey? Dicey believes she took the survey after seeing it on social media.

4. **Noise Pollution Update:**

John relayed that the mayor spoke to the chief of police about noise issues. The state patrol does monitor for noise, and issues violations, yet these are occasionally thrown out in court since the driver cites the need to use them because of failing brakes.

Dan suspects the noise will be terrible for the Fastenal office building next to the bridge.

5. **Community Garden Planning Update:**

John provided an update on the community garden task force. Minnesota State Southeast is very interested in hosting a garden and has support from administration. John said there are some organization details to work out, such as how involved the city will be in running the garden. There is also a question about whether a second garden site should be pursued since MN State SE is on the edge of town and really only accessible by car. Dan suggests having sites more in town to serve populations that would struggle to get out to MN State SE.

6. **Commercial Shared Kitchens:**

Julie shared that the mayor is interested in the idea of having a shared commercial kitchen. The main priority would be entrepreneurial to help small household businesses grow. For instance, Julie said this can be useful for food trucks that need space for prep. John noted that a commercial shared kitchen may be included with the Mason Temple renovations, and that MN State SE has a commercial kitchen that they hope to use for community garden produce.

7. **Other Business:** Dicey gave a summary of her canopy analysis for EAB ash trees. Dicey explained that trees are often seen as having intrinsic and extrinsic values. Dicey found that a power function worked well to model out diameter at breast height and canopy cover. I-Tree was the program Dicey used. i-Tree showed Winona had 9.6 square miles of trees. Of these, about 0.66 square miles are ash trees.

i-Tree quantified air quality and pollution benefits of the ash trees, but the most significant benefit was from carbon sequestration and storage. The total value of Winona ash trees in 2017 was nearly \$2,557,291. Dicey's work also included a size distribution analysis. Ash tends to be concentrated in the 11 to 20 inch range, which are in the medium size range.

The city has been doing treatment for a decade to lower the impact of losing all of the trees in a short span. Dicey noted that currently maples are high in today percentage (40%) and face threats from the Asian Longhorn beetle.

Dan relayed his neighbor's experience with losing their ash in the boulevard, and how the City had a variety of replacement options.

David asked what the price per carbon was for the i-Tree program. Dicey looked it up to be \$170/ton. David's experience is \$7/ton in forestry work currently. Including the social costs probably leads to higher numbers.

8. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:13 pm. Motion by Julie, seconded by David. Approval unanimous.

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: 3. Sustainability Plan Discussion

PREPARED BY: John Howard

DATE: July 1, 2021

The City and Engage Winona concluded the initial phase of public engagement and outreach for the Sustainability plan. Engage Winona prepared a report, the summary of which is included.

Staff will update on the work of the steering committee and technical consultant.



Hopes, dreams - and actions - for Winona's sustainable future



Presented June 2021



CITY OF WINONA SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

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‘What does sustainability mean to you?’

(Separate document) — The full set of responses



Introduction letter

June 11, 2021

John Howard, sustainability and natural resources coordinator; Sustainability Plan Steering Committee; Steve Sarvi, city manager; Scott Sherman, mayor; and the Winona City Council

Dear all,

Public engagement for the city's first sustainability plan was designed to hear from broad, diverse cross-sections of the community about their hopes, dreams and visions for a sustainable future Winona. Throughout our engagement between February and May, we:

- Connected with more than 700 people and collected more than 3,000 unique comments
- Held more than 40 interviews and small-group gatherings with key stakeholders, including: business owners leaders; county, state and federal governmental bodies; sustainability and environmental organizations; preK-12 and higher education; nonprofits; grassroots community groups; and more
- Hosted public events and pop-up activities in public spaces that collectively drew more than 200 people
- Provided a digital survey that collected more than 500 responses
- Engaged unheard and marginalized voices using focused outreach
- Directly engaged the business community through multiple events and partnerships

The engagement was a big success. We heard diverse input from residents about how they defined sustainability, collected meaningful input and ideas on the six core plan areas - water, natural areas management, energy, food, transportation, and materials and waste - and heard concrete strategies, projects and visions for creating change, both on a community level and in collaboration with the city.

The full results of this work are included in this engagement report, sorted by sections, with special attention on the specific projects, ideas and strategies residents suggested.



This report is designed as a complement to the Center for Energy and Environment's technical analysis, benchmarking, goal-setting, data collection and related strategies to define Winona's sustainability baseline and set achievable future goals. We worked in close collaboration with CEE and John Howard, the city's natural resources and sustainability coordinator, throughout this project.

The report is also designed to nest within the larger comprehensive plan engagement coming later this year and 2022; many of the ideas, themes and input contained here both stand on their own and intersect with other key areas, especially as residents began exploring issues of equity, economic resiliency, and community values underlying city decision-making.

We hope this report does not mark the end of community engagement on these issues. We've provided a range of accessible strategies and pathways for the city and community to continue working together on sustainability goals and issues, as well as recommendations for the city to more strongly support collaborative efforts, ranging from the work of community groups to the strategic initiatives of large organizations and institutions. Engage Winona will continue to be available to talk through ideas, strategies, next steps and solutions - that's our commitment to every contract, and to Winona as a nonprofit founded to serve this community.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Winona in ensuring the community's voices are heard, represented and supported in this very first sustainability plan. The city is a critical partner, and we have long seen our role as deeply complementary to the city's desire to engage residents. Thank you for the ongoing investment the city is making in Engage Winona's mission-driven work around civic engagement and community problem-solving, and in our commitment to driving equitable civic action and social change by working to ensure everyone has access, voice and power in community planning, decision-making and changemaking.

Sincerely,

Brian Voerding

Executive Director, Engage Winona

brian@engagewinona.org | 507-450-7307



Project summary

Top strategies & next steps

Introduction

Engage Winona led community-wide engagement between February and May 2021 to frame the foundation and future action for the city's first sustainability plan. Our process served as the complement to the Center For Energy and Environment's larger work of designing and producing the overall plan; providing technical analysis, benchmarking and goal-setting; integrating case studies and recommendations; and other work.

Our ultimate goals were to create a plan that 1) included the views, visions and ideas of a broadly diverse and representative cross-section of the Winona community; 2) resulted in the creation of themes, actions, policies and projects that are meaningful and achievable; and 3) produced findings that will be willingly co-owned and supported by participants and the community in ways that drive future engagement, ownership, and work.

Activities

Stakeholder conversations

Through nearly 50 small-group conversations, we collected more than 2,000 unique responses and insights from nearly 200 individuals representing a diverse cross-section of key stakeholders across community sectors, including business, government, nonprofit, education, healthcare, grassroots and community groups, and others.

Public events

We held a series of public events in large indoor and outdoor spaces throughout late April and all of May, working to be responsive to COVID safety. We collected more than 500 comments and input from more than 200 individuals through activities and brief conversations at multiple locations around Winona.

Digital survey

We launched and marketed a digital survey between mid-March and the end of May and received more than 520 responses. The survey was more comprehensive than



much of our previous work, with an intent to capture the kind of broad and deep input that we were limited by COVID in gathering through in-person events.

Targeted engagement

We provided a combination of conversations and surveys to specific groups and populations, with a particular focus on business, preK-12 and higher education, and diverse and underrepresented voices.

Participants

We collect participant demographics primarily as a way to gauge whether our engagement broadly clears our ever-critical test of connecting with a diverse cross-section of community members. We were successful with this project in a number of ways - especially so given the constraints COVID placed on the work.

Here are some key demographic insights, representing everyone: survey respondents, participants in dozens of stakeholder conversations, participants in targeted outreach to specific communities, and participants in broad community events.

- **White-dominant but larger representation than city demographics:** About 85% white, 5-6% Black, 2-3% Indigenous, 2-3% Hispanic or Latino, 2-3% Asian (including Hmong)
- **Representation of younger voices** - 30% younger than 30, 50% younger than 40
- **Great balance of time lived in Winona** - 44% 10 years or less, 55% 10 or more
- **Household income generally aligned with city demographics**, with the largest participant group reporting between \$50,000-\$100,000.
- **Education levels skewed toward the highly educated**, with more than 60% holding some level of college degree
- **About 35-40% have children in the home**

What's in the full report

We really encourage all readers to spend the most time with the top strategies and next steps section immediately below. Beyond that, the full report includes these sections:

Defining & rating sustainability

- Importance of sustainability to the community
- Importance of seeing the city, community takes steps toward sustainability
- Responses to the plans' pillars - equitable outcomes, economic resiliency, climate action
- Responses to the prompt "What does sustainability mean to you?"



Engagement by plan topic area

1. Water
2. Natural areas management
3. Food
4. Energy
5. Transportation
6. Materials and waste

Other priorities and preparedness

- How prepared residents believe the city is to take on these issues
- Responses to how residents see the role of city government, the business community, other stakeholders in sustainability efforts

Appendixes

- 1. Business engagement**
 - a. Current sustainable practices and goals
 - b. Needs for resources, support from city
- 2. Favorite natural areas and accessibility**
 - a. Favorite public spaces
 - b. Input on access
- 3. Sustainable behavior and outdoor activities**
 - a. What residents do, what they would be interested in with support
- 4. Participants**
- 5. Project activities**

‘What does sustainability mean to you?’

We created a separate appendix with the full set of community responses to one of the project’s main prompts: “What does sustainability mean to you?” (and often revised in different contexts - “mean to your family, your organization, your business, etc.”)

The responses are rich, diverse, and speak to how the general community understands the word sustainability and the issues that surround it, as well as how engaged they are in sustainability issues and the energy around creating change.



Top strategies & next steps

Overview

This section is a collection of top strategies and next steps for the city as it moves forward with sustainability work. Many are explained in further detail in various sections of this report - the goal here is to have the action steps collected right in the executive summary.

These ideas were generated directly by the community through the engagement process - what's included here are ideas and strategies that were the most discussed, and feel most meaningful and achievable for the city.

They're sorted in two ways - by general theme, and by core plan topic area. Many require city involvement and investment, especially as a catalyst, but are rich with possibilities for community collaboration and sustained action.

1. The sustainability coordinator's role

A large part of engagement focused on the city's role, and the sustainability coordinator's role in particular, as serving as a go-to connection point, convener, resource provider, storyteller, and cheerleader for sustainability efforts.

The overwhelming community vision was for a position that supports existing work, brings stakeholders and groups together, tells and celebrates success stories, finds and delivers resources and education, and coordinates volunteerism and other community efforts.

This isn't a critique of the existing position, and likely many of these activities are already happening at different levels; it's simply the vision expressed by the community. Some of these strategies point to the value of staff support, like the GreenStep Cities program.

A. Community partnership designer

- **City as convener, issue leader:** Bringing together stakeholder groups on specific issues - like climate change action
- **Building networks + connections:** Among residents, city, business leaders, etc.
- **Business resource:** Staying closely connected with the business community, offering support and resources, bringing businesses with similar needs together



- **Backbone support:** For citizen, grassroots efforts - assist with needed resources, technical assistance, city approval for activities

B. Community educator

- Storytelling and communication around sustainability, success stories
- Produce set of materials on sustainability best practices, share around community
- Coordinate free workshops at city sites and natural areas

C. Engaging youth, college students

- Serve as a go-to connection point for higher ed and professors seeking ways to engage classrooms in community learning
- Coordinate, promote volunteer opportunities for youth
 - Focus impact projects

D. Resource and support hub

- Regularly collect and share information on incentive programs, rebates, etc. (big ask from the business community)
- Seek and co-write grant for grassroots projects with city benefit, and find other support for community organizations
- Coordinating reuse hub (business raw materials, community goods)

2. City policies + practices

A. Infrastructure

- **Expand, grow community gardens:** This was the overall number-one community request - more community gardens in more places across the city
- **Support for expansion of EV charging stations** (suggestions - Levee Park, Lake Park Lodge)
- **Better bicycle, pedestrian signage:** Consider creating citywide linked trail, widespread and consistent use of destination and wayfinding markers

B. Policies

- **Explicit support for reimagining residential lawns** - native plantings, growing food, boulevard plantings, and other approaches
- **Ways of more strongly encouraging and supporting commercial/industrial design:** Landscaping, runoff, other exterior issues



C. Development

- **Development checklist:** Integrated list of questions that incorporate environmental standards and practices into every review, application and process - not as a regulatory burden, but largely as a best practices checklist and way to educate/encourage developers
- **Directly address continued pressure on bluffland:** Review, consider renewed community input on sensitive land and bluff development ordinances, provide clarity from a policy and political (council, planning commission) standpoint
- **Energy standards:** Tell success stories, have resources ready, work with landlords on rentals, and other practices to upgrade energy efficiency

D. Natural areas management

- **Continue work on trail development:** Lots of enthusiasm and support for the ongoing work on the Bluffs Traverse trail, and the other renewed attention on trails
- **Master plans and inventories:** Develop for all natural areas, but especially and first for Prairie Island - map the natural resources, develop an intentional plan, and work with local experts

E. Lead from within

- **Create examples:** Convert unused green space (Lake Park, other areas) to native plantings, pollinators, experimental sustainable practice projects, etc.
- **Demonstrate, showcase sustainability practices with all upcoming building proposals and work** - (East End Rec, Public Safety, Masonic)
- **Resolution, show of committed support** for concrete action on sustainability issues from official bodies (planning commission, city council)

F. Maintenance

- **Consistent landscaping + management:** Avoid planting non-natives, use tree mulching and pruning best practices, intentional non-mowing of sensitive areas
- Work to minimize winter salt application, seek new storage area not by the Mississippi

3. Incentivize behavior, culture change

A popular request of the city throughout the engagement process was to promote and incentivize behavior change, both for individuals and for businesses and organizations.



Residents pointed to the fact that there was no organization doing this on a community-wide scale, especially not with the reach of the city.

A. Digital dashboard

- Creation of a website page on the city's site tracking key city goals and progress on core topic areas - energy, water, natural areas management, etc. - and promoting success stories

B. Resourcing, supporting businesses

- Researching and sharing information on incentive programs, tax benefits, savings, and other bottom-line approaches to adopting sustainability practices

C. Residential lawn transformation program

- Launch a program with a clear step-by-step guide, and backed by city codes and practices, that champions and celebrates residents making the choice to turn sections or all of grass lawns into native plantings, gardens, pollinator-friendly landscapes, or other sustainable approaches. Ensure promotion focuses not just on lawns, but on the intended effect of improving Lake Winona's water quality and ecosystem.

D. Create a public showpiece

- Center projects, signage, education workshops, public events and general efforts on sustainable practices in one highly visible and well-trafficked public area, in order to generate broad awareness and demonstrate ways residents can get involved. Community recommendations generally centered on Lake Park, but there was also widespread support for Prairie Island and the Sugar Loaf area.

E. City of Winona Sustainability Awards

- Provide annual awards in focused categories (resident, business, partnership, volunteerism, community group) as a way of telling success stories, celebrating good work, and raising awareness - as well as positioning the city as a leader in championing sustainability efforts.

4. Internal structures



A. Engaged citizen-city group

- Determine the best structure for a citizen group - the Citizens Environmental Quality Committee or a newly imagined group. The group could be coordinated by the city, or community-driven with city support, and could be designed to support the goals and strategies produced from this plan.

B. Integrate sustainability coordinator's work

- **Deeper connections with park/rec:** The public's recommendation was to see a stronger influence of attention on natural resources and ecosystems on park/rec planning and projects, not just a focus on use.
- **Collaboration with maintenance:** Work closely on best practices, provide advice and resources for plantings, etc.



Defining, rating sustainability

Rating the importance of sustainability

Overview

A key frame for public engagement was hearing from residents how important sustainability was to them.

We first invited residents to rate how important sustainability was to them. We also asked how important it was to them to see the city take steps to become more sustainable, and how important it was for the city to protect existing natural resources.

And we invited residents to rate the importance of the plan's three main pillars:

- Equitable sustainability outcomes
- Economic resiliency
- Preparing for climate change/climate change mitigation

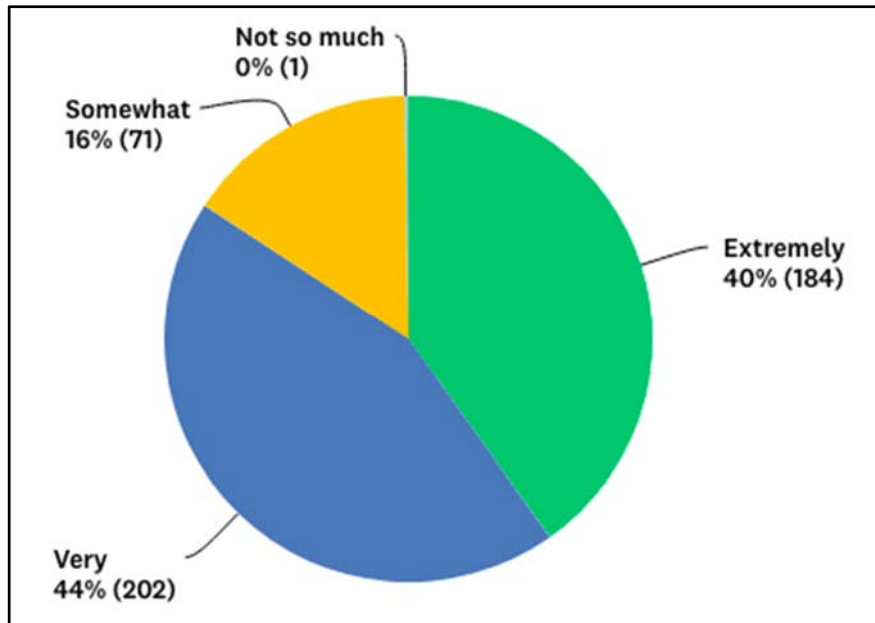
Analysis

Sustainability matters

Residents overwhelmingly said sustainability was important to them - 84 percent said extremely or very, and 98 percent said it was at least somewhat important.

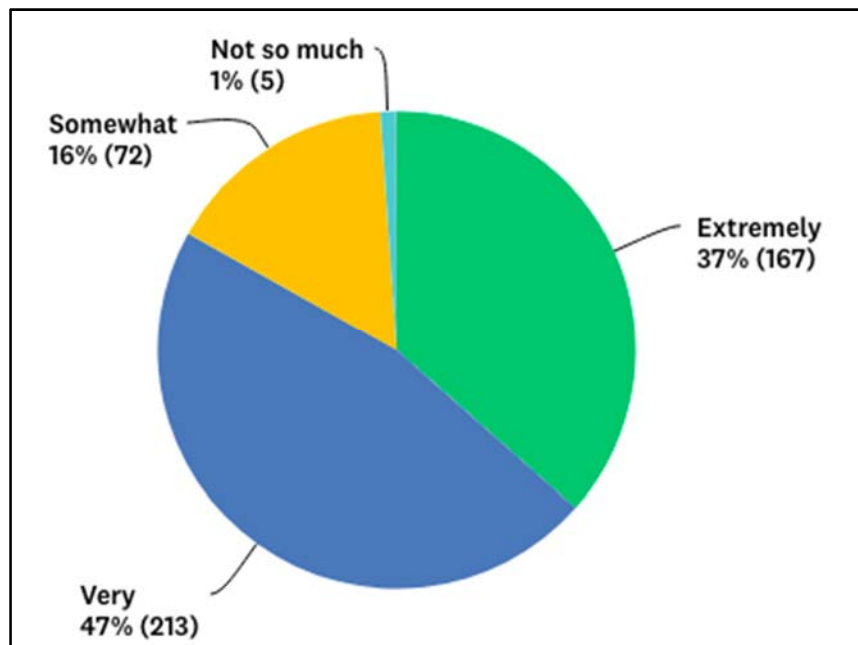


How important is sustainability to you?



These responses crossed demographic, social and cultural boundaries. They came not just from self-reported environmentalists and conservationists, but from folks who previously had little engagement with or knowledge of sustainability issues.

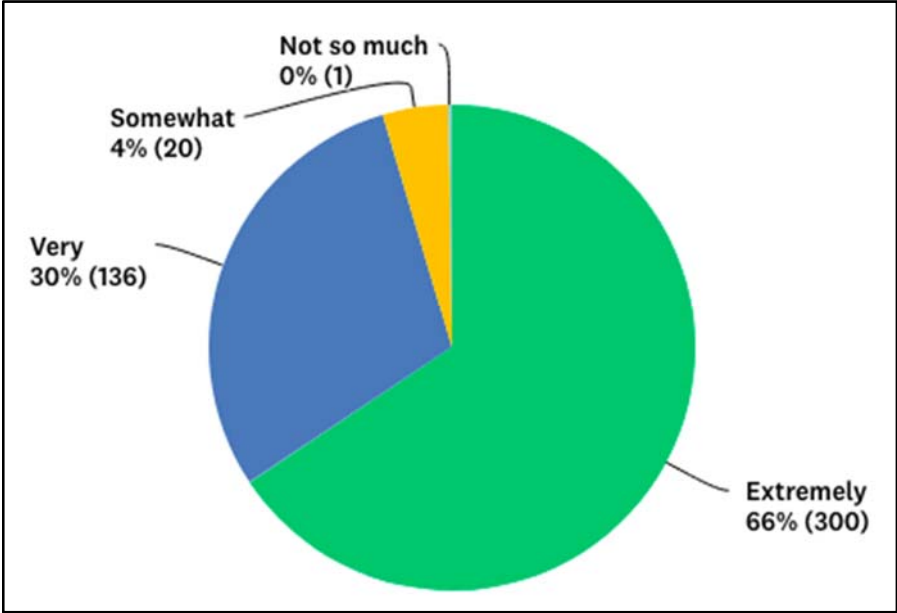
How important is it to you to see the City of Winona take steps to become more sustainable?





Residents also overwhelmingly said it was important for the City of Winona to take steps to become more sustainable - again at 84 percent saying extremely or very, and up to 98 percent saying at least somewhat. The strategies and ideas are broken down into the topic areas later in this report.

How important is it to protect Winona’s natural resources for all to use and enjoy?



And residents similarly rated the importance of protecting Winona’s natural resources for all to enjoy - up to 99 percent saying it was at least somewhat important.

CITIZENS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: 5. Tree Planting Update

PREPARED BY: John Howard

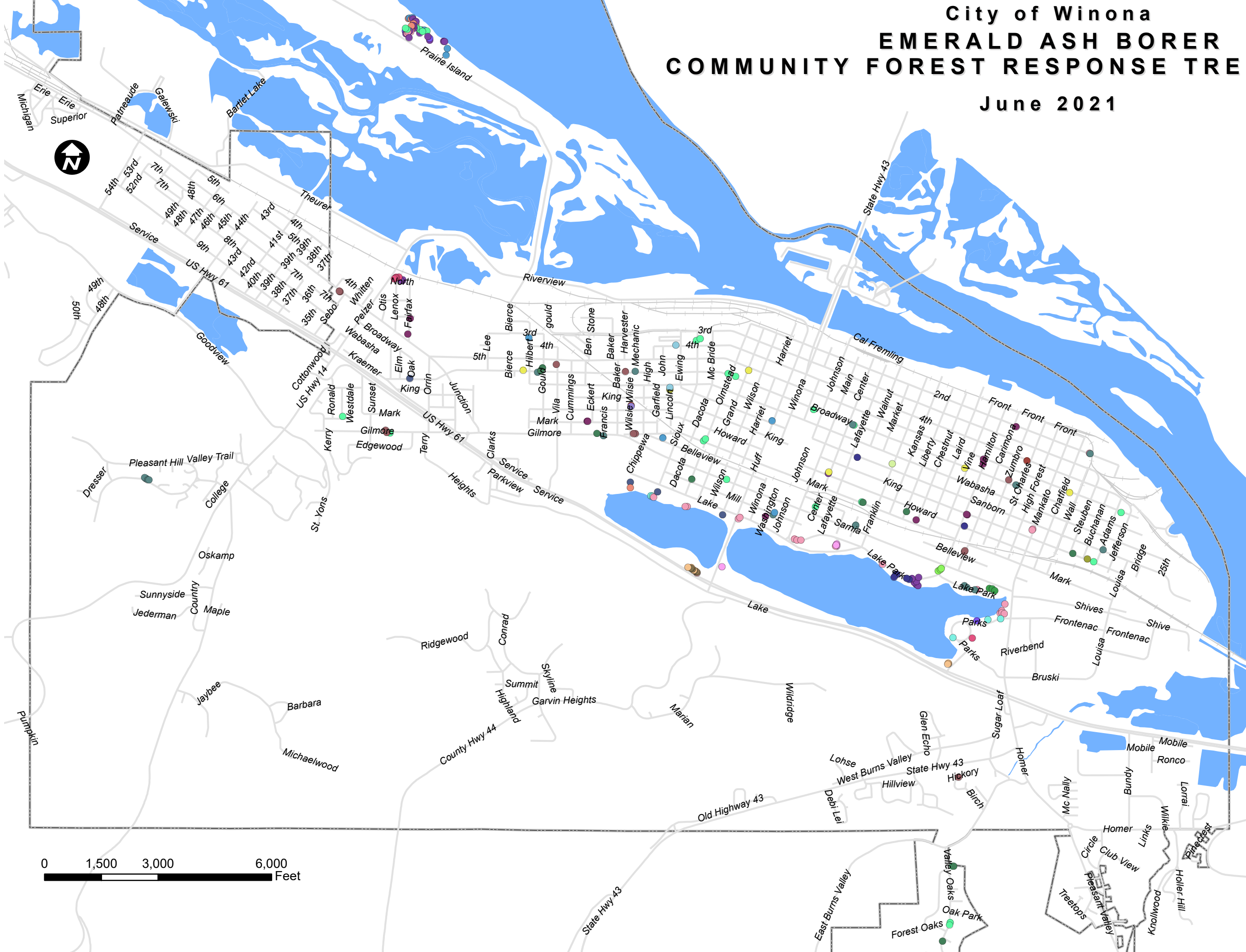
DATE: July 1, 2021

This was a record year for City tree planting. Approximately 1,800 trees were planted, mostly seedlings in the Lake Park area. Approximately 200 boulevard and park trees taller than 6 feet were planted (Map included)

The City is the recipient of a new grant to bring additional trees to Winona next year.

City of Winona EMERALD ASH BORER COMMUNITY FOREST RESPONSE TREE PLANTING

June 2021



Species	
●	American Linden (24)
●	Bicolor Oak (7)
●	Buckeye (3)
●	Catalpa (4)
●	Cherry (11)
●	Cottonwood (5)
●	Crabapple (5)
●	Elm (9)
●	Ginkgo (2)
●	Hackberry (2)
●	Hawthorn (4)
●	Honey Locust (24)
●	Kentucky Coffee Tree (1)
●	London Plane Tree (19)
●	Maple (7)
●	Pear (7)
●	Quaking Aspen (4)
●	Red Maple (5)
●	Red Oak (4)
●	Redbud (12)
●	River Birch (25)
●	Serviceberry (9)
●	Tulip (2)
●	Viburnum (1)
●	Willow (3)

TOTAL = 199

