



## **Comprehensive Plan Update: Economic Development Subcommittee**

### Summary

The Economic Development Subcommittee proposes economic development goals and objectives to provide an environment for businesses to start, grow and expand in Winona. Strategies to accomplish retaining and growing businesses can be incorporated into the plan for economic development.

### Examples of discussion topics/focus areas:

- Diversified business and industry base and how can businesses grow
- Workforce as the new priority of human capital and ways to recruit, retain and reskill our workforce
- There are many terms used to foster entrepreneurship: ecosystem, *innovations*, *economic gardening*, etc. The idea is to be supportive and have a strategy to foster this type of business growth.
- Land availability- finding creative ways to develop with limited natural boundaries.
- Amenities- acclimate to the new workforce looking at communities they want to live, work and play in.
- Housing, Childcare, Transportation and access to healthcare for the workforce.
- Physical development- infrastructure, land, redevelopment areas, etc.
- Riverfront development- commercial harbor and growing tourism
- Downtown Development and Redevelopment- Opportunity Winona.
- Sectors that are growing Arts and Culture, Tourism, Recreation, etc.
- Economic Development Ideas and Issues from Comprehensive Plan Phase 1 Public Engagement (see next page)

### Overall Committee Product:

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

### Committee Timeline:

- March – June/July 2022
- One to Two meetings per month – 1-1.5 hours long

## Economic development

Responses about economic development were wide-ranging, reflecting Winona's strong, diverse economic base. In response to questions about issues and ideas for Winona's future, there were 202 comments about economic development.

A note about transformative projects: Future phases of plan development and engagement will identify these projects. For now, we're reporting general ideas that emerged in Engagement Phase 1.

## Connections to values

Economic vitality matters to Winona's shared values of livability and entrepreneurship, and comprehensive plan themes of equity, technology, and sustainability.

## Issues and ideas

1. Support for entrepreneurs and start-ups.
  - we need a commercial kitchen - (startup) making egg rolls out of her own home. school kitchen could be used for that with more collaborative effort, could bring more things like that
  - -create a market center where folks can start out with a booth
  - the incentives, for a small business it's a big risk, and we want people to be able to take those risks. Some kind of incentive to come and start your business here.
  - Most importantly, the Winona economy should be considered in all parts of the plan. The plan should favor the continued fostering of Winona's entrepreneurial spirit that has been the history of Winona leading to the growth of local start-ups into international companies. Local business expansion should be assisted rather than further regulated. Small businesses should not be burdened with unnecessary codes. Our standard of living is improved if more dollars flow into Winona enterprises from outside of Winona than flow out from Winona's population spending its dollars outside of our community.
  - Business partnerships and cooperatives. It seems like people creating new businesses run into a lot of barriers, limitations to who is around the table. Shared spaces for entrepreneurship
2. Retention of young professionals and workforce.
  - Developing a pipeline to retain college students in fulfilling careers. Most leave after graduating, or can't find gainful employment.
  - Businesses nation wide are dealing with staffing shortages including businesses in Winona.
  - economic support for young people with families... high quality jobs, affordable housing, internet and daycare access, high quality schools
  - Daycare! Especially infant care, it's such a need for people to keep working but so hard to find
  - not a lot of opportunities to grow within jobs - sometimes it feels like you need an "in"

- students coming out of college - I can't afford to live here
  - 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
3. Improvements to appearance citywide.
    - Updating basic infrastructure maintenance. Deteriorated streets, curbs, and sidewalks keep areas from looking truly nice.
    - The town looks like a dump due to heavy drinking, recklessness and drugs. The natural beauty of Winona is great, but the houses and business look like crap
    - Keep up with infrastructure, roads, internet - that make cities better places to live, drive
  4. Restaurant and shopping choices. Restaurants and shopping were mentioned frequently as both strengths and opportunities in Winona. Respondents appreciated Winona's local restaurants and wanted even more food and shopping options.
    - Big name stores like Kohls or TJMaxx so we don't have to leave Winona to shop. We need to leave town to shop for dressy clothes, etc.
    - adding more healthy food options for restaurants/quick food options (Panera, chipotle, etc.)
    - Investment in Winona. That's very broad, I know, but the biggest reason positive change comes to Winona is because too many people are content to gripe / resistant to change / take their business elsewhere. As a lifelong resident, I've seen my entire life how people complain that there aren't good restaurants and entertainment venues in town, while at the same time providing very little incentive for people to bring them here. On the whole, Winonans don't put their money where they live.
    - an actual real mall with major national stores and services
  5. Creative approaches to funding. Several comments were about the cost of improvements to the city's infrastructure and services, with ideas about paying for projects with diverse funding sources.
    - taxes: keep the taxes at a reasonable level so that companies don't move out to a lower tax State/City. Reasonable taxes so that folks can stay in their own home.
    - We have tax capacity and bond rating we could utilize
    - We need folks at the city who have enough of a vision to compete for bonding - we need more infrastructure for the economic development we're looking for, actual community infrastructure, not just the bridge. to get where we need to go, we need city staff to write those grants [and advocate for bonding]
    - Bottom line is Winona's great, but we rely too much on bake sales and fish dinners - the city has to dive in a little bit more and say you know what, this is important. a better job of presenting Winona to the people coming in and driving through. It's well worth it - why not invest in our own town.
    - A sales tax and a major push on street repairs and bike lanes.
  6. Development equity and reinvestment in underutilized areas. Respondents noted that much of recent development has happened in the East End shopping area and downtown, while shopping options elsewhere have decreased.
    - Rebuild the west end of Winona and have way more kid/family-oriented places and things to do and for all seasons!

- integrate stores closer to where people live
- Making sure the mall and downtown areas don't have empty storefronts, but rather have unique stores and restaurants to bring in tourism and to have places for area families to shop/play.