



ENGAGEWINONA

Comprehensive Plan Update Engagement Phase 1 Report



**YOUR IDEAS,
WINONA'S FUTURE**

Engaging the community to shape our future



ENGAGEWINONA

Presented January 2022



Introduction letter

Dear City of Winona Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, elected officials, staff, and community members,

Public Engagement Phase 1 for the city's Comprehensive Plan Update kicked off the project with big, essential questions: What do we value most as a community? What issues and opportunities are most important to us as we plan for our next 20 years? And what are our dreams for Winona's future? These questions use an asset-based framework to thinking about the future, one where we start from our strengths and build on a foundation of core values.

Our engagement strategy was designed to hear from broad, representative cross-sections of the Winona community. As we continue to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, we designed engagement to meet people where they are with a combination of pop-ups at public events, digital survey tools, in-person and virtual conversations, and a voicemail box.

From October 2021 to January 2022, we asked folks to share their values, issues, and dreams for Winona's future. Over the course of this engagement, we:

- Connected with more than **2,000 people** and collected more than **5,700 unique comments**
- Hosted **7 public community conversation events** at a variety of locations across Winona, including in-person and virtual offerings
- Hosted a **pop-up booth with activities** at 7 different community events
- Held **more than 55 small-group and individual conversations with key stakeholders** including business, nonprofit, education, and healthcare leaders; property owners and developers; faith leaders and more
- Provided a **survey that collected more than 800 responses**, with offerings both online and in print at community locations
- Provided an **online map** where people could comment on physical locations that stand out or need to be worked on
- Engaged **marginalized and underserved voices** through focused outreach to communities, including youth and older adults; refugees, immigrants, and people of color; people experiencing poverty and housing insecurity; people in addiction recovery, and more
- **Directly engaged the business community** through multiple events and partnerships, with over 100 business leaders represented in survey and conversation participation

Engagement was a huge success, and we heard meaningful input and ideas on each of the Comprehensive Plan Update's 10 key topics and 3 overarching themes, along with visions and ideas for creating change, both on a community level and through city programs and services.



The full results of this work are included in this engagement report and sorted by topic and theme. This report is designed as a complement to HKGi's Baseline Report, which presents technical data and analysis related to existing programs, services, and infrastructure, along with demographic and economic trends.

Engagement Phase 1 is the first of three major engagement phases for the Comprehensive Plan Update project prior to development of a draft plan. Phase 2, which starts in February 2022, will give community members opportunities to take a deeper dive into topics like housing, transportation, economic development, and more. And in Phase 3, we'll provide a range of engagements for community members to take a look at pathways and priorities, with an emphasis on projects that rise to the top and are attainable. Finally, community members will review and provide feedback on the draft plan in 2023.

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve the City of Winona with this work. Engage Winona exists to ensure all voices are heard, represented, and supported in community decision making, and we are honored to have worked with the city to engage residents on many occasions since our founding in 2017. We deeply appreciate the city's ongoing investment in Engage Winona's mission-driven work of civic engagement and community problem-solving.

Sincerely,

Marcia Ratliff
Executive Director, Engage Winona
engage@engagewinona.org | 507-312-9133

Project summary

Introduction

Engage Winona led community-wide engagement between October 2021 and January 2022 to frame the foundation of the city's Comprehensive Plan Update. Our process is a complement to HKGi's much larger work of designing and producing the overall plan including technical analysis, benchmarking and goal-setting, integrating case studies and recommendations, and other work.

Our ultimate goals are to create a plan that includes the views, visions, and ideas of a broadly diverse and representative cross-section of the community and results in findings that are co-owned by the community to produce results. It takes a village, as the saying goes, and our engagement in Phase 1 surfaced a variety of meaningful, achievable ideas that will take broad community ownership and collaboration.

Activities and approach



Below you'll find a summary of the different tools we used to reach a representative cross-section of community members in this phase of engagement. Since our inception in 2016, Engage Winona's community engagement process has been both universal and targeted. Our public events and surveys are open to all, and they are well-attended by folks who have a high level of interest and capacity to attend. However, public events by themselves fail to reach our most marginalized neighbors and cannot address all barriers to access. So we also bring our conversations to underserved groups, working closely with a wide variety of community partners to accomplish this.

Community conversations and focus groups

Through a total of 65 large and small group conversations in Phase 1, along with written and voicemail comments, we collected more than 1,800 unique comments from over 270 individuals representing a diverse cross-section of key stakeholders across sectors, including business, nonprofit, education, healthcare, grassroots and community groups, and others. Conversations were designed to be responsive to each group, with questions tailored to the demographics and perspectives present. Below you'll find a snapshot of stakeholder groups who participated in Phase 1.

Stakeholder groups engaged in Phase 1

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Higher education and preK-12 education | Tourism and small business |
| Youth | Winona Nonprofit Alliance |
| College students | Communities of color |
| Faith leaders | Immigrants and refugees |
| Older adults | Individuals and families in poverty |
| Winona Area Chamber of Commerce | Individuals experiencing homelessness |
| Large business/manufacturers | Veterans |
| Property and real estate developers | LGBTQ+ individuals |

We look forward to building on this strong foundation and bringing engagements to more community members in Phase 2. People interested in hosting a comment board, focus group, or other engagement at their business, organization, or community group can contact us at engage@engagewinona.org.

Online survey and map

We launched and marketed an online survey from November 15-December 19 that received more than 800 responses. The survey was comprehensive and designed to provide an alternative to events for those who preferred a quicker way to give input. The survey was also available by mail and on paper at three public locations.

We provided small incentives for participation - those who fully completed the survey were eligible to win either one of several \$25 gift cards to a local business of their choice, and one lucky winner received a \$100 grand prize gift card to the business of their choice. All responses to the survey, both open-ended and ranked, are detailed throughout this report.

We also launched an interactive map in partnership with HKGi that allowed folks to leave place-specific comments about aspects of Winona they like, areas that need work, and barriers to biking and walking. The map had over 550 unique visitors, and 54 users left a total of 285 comments.



The full set of public data, cleaned to remove any personal or identifying data, and sorted by theme and topic, is available as part of the public release of this report.

Pop-up activities booth

We hosted a pop-up activities booth at 7 events this fall including Big Muddy Brew n Que, Jeny Kochany Polish Festival, the Winona Farmers Market, Streets n Treats, Winona Area Chamber of Commerce Network Nite, Winona County Historical Society's Handmade Neighborhood, and Caroling in the Garten at Peter's Biergarten. The booth reached over 390 people and resulted in 244 unique comments.

Want to host our booth at your neighborhood block party, your break room, or somewhere else? Contact us at engage@engagewinona.org.

Voicemail project: What's your Winona story?

We tried something new with a dedicated voicemail number for folks to leave comments throughout the project. The prompt is this: *What are your hopes as you imagine your future in Winona? Leave a 1-3 minute voicemail with your answer at 507-312-9486.* We received comments from 2 individuals during Phase 1, and their comments are included in our aggregate analysis for this report. Audio responses will be woven into a collaborative recording and shared with the public at the end of the project.

Participants

We collect participant demographics primarily as a way to gauge whether our engagement truly connects with a diverse cross-section of community members. Demographics also show us where we have more work to do in future phases.

Here are some key demographic insights, representing everyone: survey respondents, participants in stakeholder conversations and targeted outreach, and participants in community events. Survey respondents voluntarily answered demographic questions, and demographics from events and conversations are approximations based on informal windshield counts.

- **Strong representation of racial and ethnic diversity:** About 88% identify as white, 5-6% Black, 2% Indigenous, 2% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Asian
- **Broad representation of ages, with more representation of voices under 45:** about 10% ages 13-24; 25% ages 25-34; 25% ages 35-44; 20% ages 45-54; 20% ages 55 and up
- **Great balance of time lived in Winona:** 40% 10 years or fewer, and 60% 10+ years.
- **Household income slightly higher than city demographics:** 25% reporting below \$50,000; 50% between \$50,000-\$99,000; 25% higher than \$100,000. According to census data at mncompass.org, the City of Winona's household income breakdown is 51% below \$50,000; 31% from \$50,000-\$99,999; and 18% \$100,000 or more.
- **Education levels were higher than city demographics,** with 55% having a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 34% in census data.
- **Families represented:** About 55% of participants have children 18 or younger in the home
- **Good representation of people who rent and people who own their home:** 30% renting and 70% owning, compared to 40% and 60% in census data.



We take a deeper dive into demographics in our full report.

What's in the full report

We've included the top themes and topics immediately below. The full report takes a deeper dive into the results in the following sections:

Values and dreams

- Responses to the prompts “What do you value most about Winona?” and “What are Winona’s greatest assets?”
- Dreams for Winona’s future

Ideas and issues

- Responses to the comprehensive plan update’s 10 topics and 3 overarching themes: equity, technology, and sustainability
- Responses to the prompt “What are your ideas for Winona’s future? What changes do you want to see, and what issues need to be addressed?”
- Sorted by plan topic area

Places and behaviors

- Places people value in Winona
- Behaviors - where folks spend time and shop in Winona
- Heat maps - showing where folks commented on the map of Winona

Participation

- Ideas for accessible government
- Participants

Top themes

Overview

This section is a collection of top themes. Many are explained in further detail in various sections of this report. The goal here is to have a high-level overview.

These themes 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.

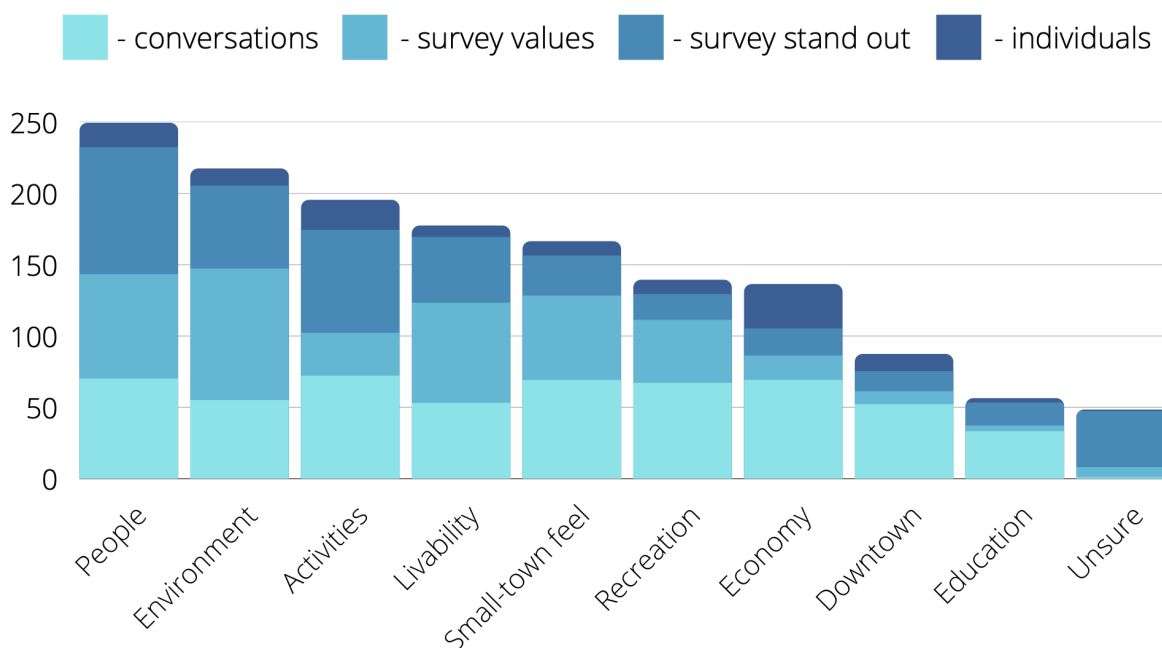
They’re sorted in two ways - values and dreams by general theme, and ideas and issues by core comprehensive plan topic area. Many require city involvement and investment, especially as a catalyst, but are rich with possibilities for community collaboration and sustained action.



Values

In our conversations and survey, we asked folks to respond to the question: What do you value most about Winona? What do you consider to be Winona’s assets? What makes Winona stand out as a community? The chart below represents 1,470 comments.

Values By Theme



Values were sorted according to interconnected themes that emerged in our analysis. We have named these themes as a starting point based on what we heard; we know that these ideas may shift and deepen as the project continues. We hope these placeholder values help give a snapshot of what we heard, and a pathway to connect our current strengths to our future dreams as a community.

People - Winona’s got good people. (249 comments)

This includes a sense of community and inclusiveness, a community that is welcoming, diverse, and friendly.

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

This includes taking care of Winona’s environment so future generations can enjoy it.

Activities - Winona has something for everyone. (195 comments)

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

Livability - Winona is livable and attractive. (179 comments)

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

Small-town feel - 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.

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

This includes trails, playgrounds, and other amenities.

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

This includes entrepreneurship, innovation, and public and private infrastructure.

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

This includes storefronts, streetscape, parking, and historic preservation.

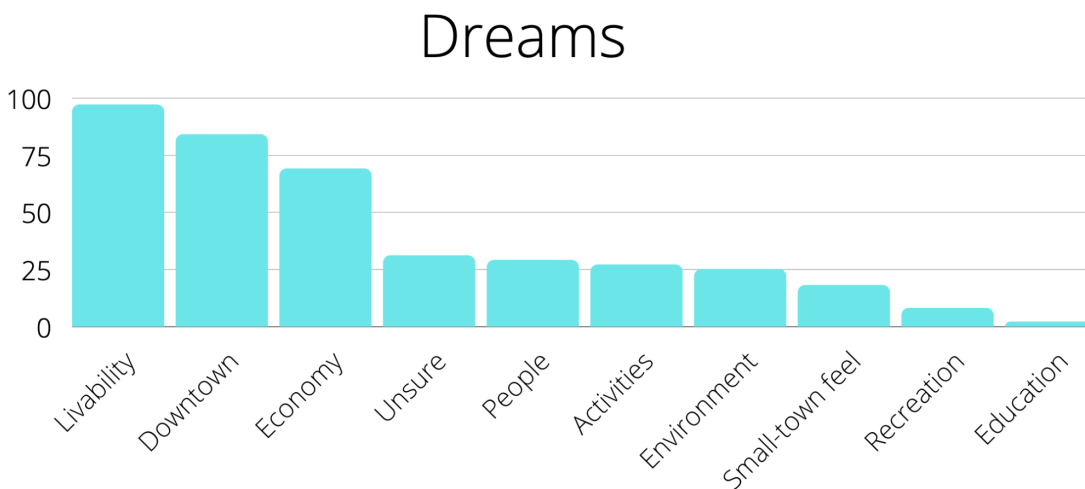
Education - Winona supports lifelong learning. (56 comments)

This includes E-12 and higher education.

Dreams

In our survey, we asked folks to dream big, imagine nothing is in their way, and tell us what Winona looks like in 15-20 years. We received 393 comments for this question.

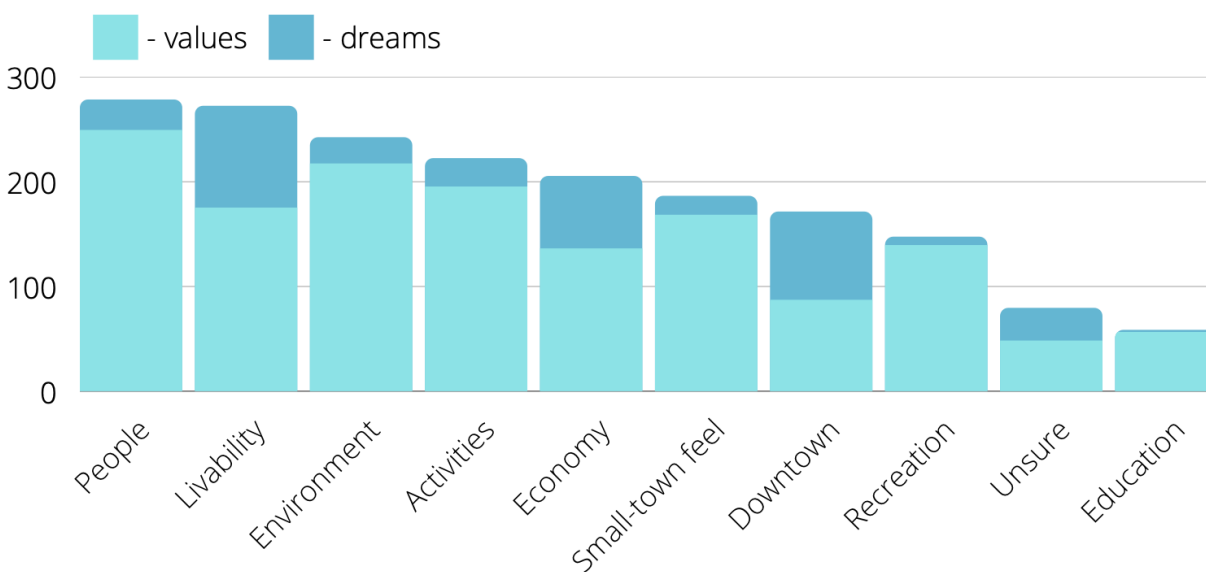
The largest categories of dreams were broad livability and community services (97 comments), downtown and riverfront vitality (84 comments), and a thriving economy, including workforce supports like childcare and improvements to the city’s infrastructure and overall appearance (69 comments). Many comments referencing broad livability included a variety of the other themes, reflecting a holistic vision for a vibrant future Winona.



In the chart below, we overlaid dreams onto the values from the section above. The chart below represents over 1,800 comments across methods.



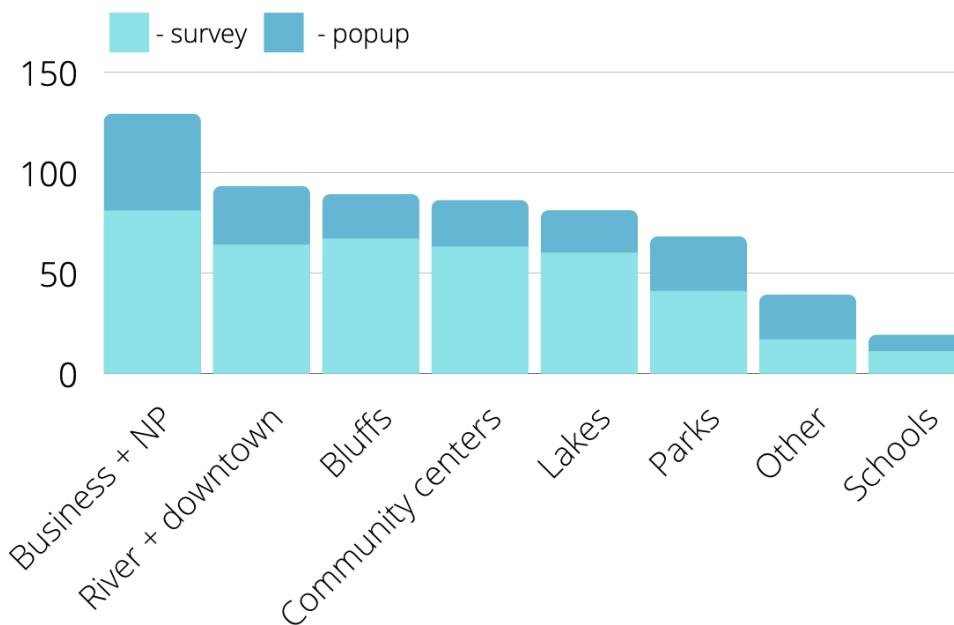
Values + dreams



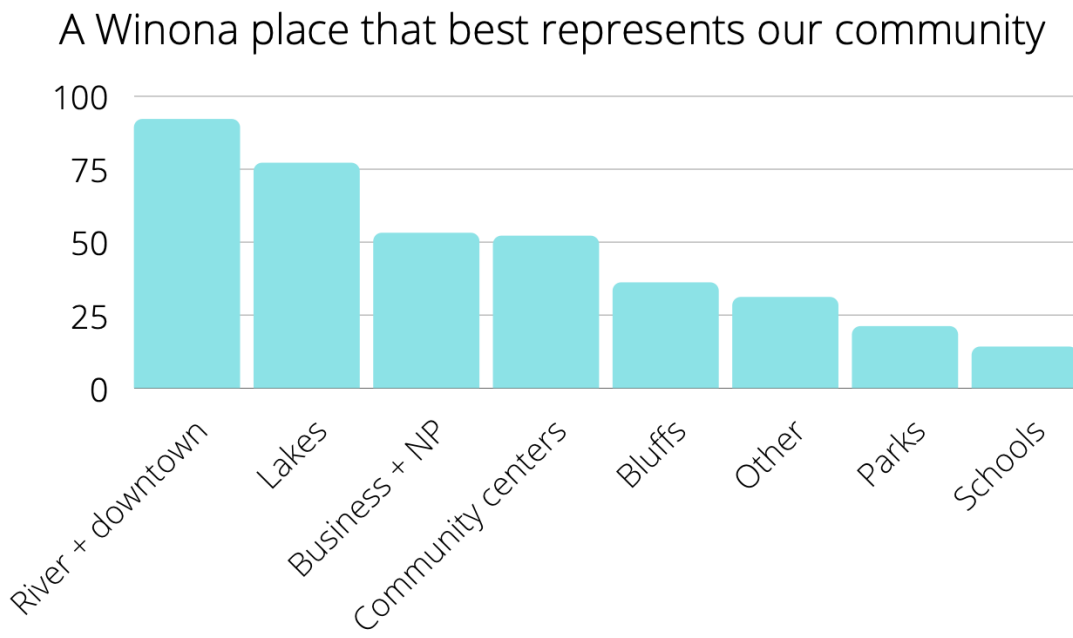
Places

In our survey and pop-up events, we asked folks to tell us about places they loved. We received a total of 976 comments for this question. NP stands for nonprofit in the charts below.

A place in Winona where you love to be



In the survey, we asked an additional question: What Winona place best represents our community? Folks unpacked this question in a lot of wonderful ways, as you'll see later.



Behaviors

In our survey, we asked a few questions about where folks in Winona relax and shop. **84% of participants said they spent free time in Winona daily or weekly.** 86% said they shopped in Winona daily or weekly. 79% said they frequently visit one or more small, locally-owned businesses in Winona.

About half of survey participants took a few minutes to tell us which small businesses they visited. **90% percent of responses mentioned businesses that are located in downtown Winona.** Restaurants, cafes, and bars were mentioned in 71% of responses; retail stores in 63% of responses; and grocery stores in 40% of responses.

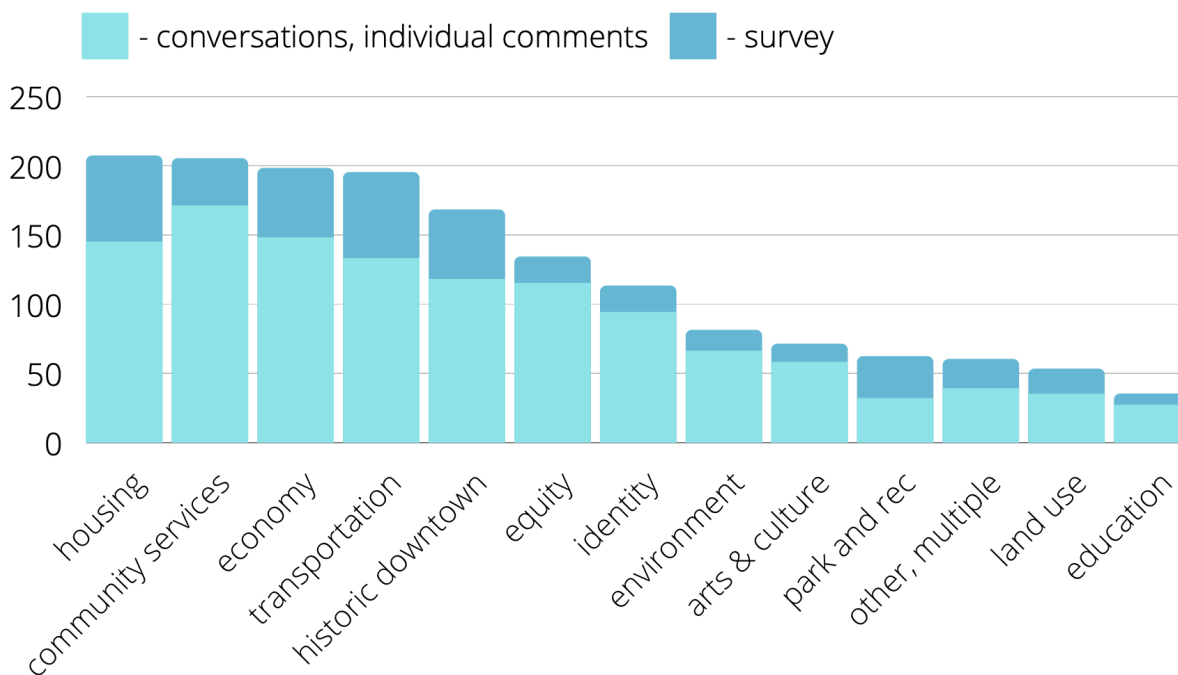
Ideas and issues

In our survey, map, conversations, and popups, we asked folks to tell us their ideas for Winona's future, and identify the issues that were most important to them. We received a total of 1,866 comments related to issues and ideas. We sorted the ideas and issues according to the comprehensive plan topics where possible.

Additional topics that emerged from these responses include **historic downtown, community services, community identity, and education.** We also received comments that did not fit into the comprehensive plan topics, and they are included under "other." In future sections, we'll unpack all feedback received by topic.



Ideas + issues



The majority of map comments we received were about transportation and recreation areas. The chart below shows the total ideas + issues comments with map comments included in dark blue.

Ideas + issues, including map

