



Memorandum

To: Megan Pierce, Assistant to the Village Manager
From: Michael Blue, Principal Consultant
Erin Cigliano, Project Planner
Date: December 2, 2015
RE: **Winnetka Downtown Master Plan – Village Council Status Report**

Consultant Team:

Teska Associates – Planning + Outreach, Goodman Williams – Market Analysis, Sam Schwartz – Traffic + Circulation

This review of project tasks conducted to date for the Village of Winnetka Downtown Master Plan is provided as an update for the Village Council. The list of meetings and input events is shown below. Brief summaries of key public engagement steps and project work tasks are provided on the following pages. We looking forward to discussing the project with the Village Council at the December 8, 2015 Study Session.

Overview of Meetings and Events (to-date)

- Kick-Off Meeting and Walking Tour (Steering Committee & Working Groups) - 10/12
- Park District Halloween on Ice event (Community Outreach) - 10/24
- Public Comment Chalkboards: Hubbard Woods + Downtown Elm - 10/23 through 11/30
- Steering Committee Meeting: Existing Conditions - 10/26
- Working Group Meeting (Community Organizations) - 10/26
- Stakeholder Interviews: Two half-day sessions - 10/30 and 11/5
- Workshop with Village Department Heads - 11/10
- Public Visioning Workshop - 11/16
- Steering Committee Meeting: Market Assessment - 11/30
- Working Group Meeting (Business District Members) - 11/30
- Project Website - Ongoing
- Project Branding - Complete
- Public Outreach Materials (posters, project cards, QR code, newsletter articles, working with local media) - initiated and ongoing

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Project Website: www.WinnetkaDowntownPlan.com

At the start of the planning process, an interactive project website was set-up that continues to serve as a collaborative resource for sharing ideas and information on the Downtown Master Plan. A primary feature of the approach to the Downtown Winnetka Master Plan is to provide “choice” in the ways people can engage - the website is one of those avenues. The ‘Idea Zone’ tool allows users to submit ideas and upload pictures and comments via the web. To date there have been 30 comments submitted, most of which (those that opted in the comment section to be set for public viewing) can be viewed by visiting that page on the website.

One feature that has proved very beneficial is the website’s “follow” feature, which allows visitors who submit their email to receive information about the plan when new items are posted to the website. Many users find this method ideal in that they don’t have to constantly check the website for updates, they receive important information automatically.

Quick Website Statistics

Total Page Views:	2,488
Total Unique Visitors:	506
Website Followers:	28
Total Website “News” Posts:	10
‘Idea Zone’ Comment Count:	23

Insights | October + November

OCTOBER 2015	
VIEWE	1,126
VISITORS	232
VIEWE PER VISITOR	4.85
POSTS PUBLISHED	4
NOVEMBER 2015	
VIEWE	1,236
VISITORS	263
VIEWE PER VISITOR	4.70
POSTS PUBLISHED	5

Kick-Off Meeting + Walking Tour | October 12th, 2015



The kick-off meeting for Winnetka’s Downtown Master Plan was held the evening of October 12th at the Winnetka Community House. Steering Committee members and Working Groups gathered from 6-9 PM with the consultant team and started the night by venturing out on walking tours through downtown. Participants stopped at different points along the way to discuss opportunities and general feedback unique to each vantage point and area. After the walking tours, individuals reconvened at the Winnetka Community House, and sat down in groups to consider the top issues, opportunities and priorities facing each of the three business districts. Input from this meeting, and the entire public engagement process, helps to identify issues to be addressed in the plan and define visions for each of the districts.

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Halloween on Ice Outreach Event | October 24th, 2015

Ideas and costumed-kiddies were a-plenty at Winnetka’s ‘Halloween on Ice’ event held Saturday, October 24th at the Winnetka Ice arena. Teska Associates set-up a booth to gather ideas and comments relative to Winnetka’s business districts – Downtown Elm Street, Hubbard Woods and Indian Hill. Participants had the chance to relay their thoughts by writing on chalkboards or posting written comments. At the end of the event both boards were filled with feedback.



Idea Chalkboards | Installed October 23rd – Removed November 30th, 2015



Two idea chalkboards were designed, built and installed at the start of the project to build awareness and generate feedback on what residents would like to see in Winnetka’s business districts. The two chalkboards, constructed by the Village’s Public Works Department and stationed in Hubbard Woods and Downtown Elm Street, were etch-a-sketched full of feedback — and it didn’t go unnoticed. Village staff snapped photos of the boards and wiped them clean when full. The findings, which displayed common themes, were summarized on the project website.

Relative to food — Winnetka is hungry for more options! Major “wants” include causal sit-down restaurants, healthy grab-n-go meal options, brew pubs, coffee shops, delis, bakeries, and ice cream shops. Other ideas include adding a dog park (and dog drinking fountains!), a higher diversity of housing types, shopping options, yoga studios, a community center / place to gather, a new sports store and ice skating rink in Hubbard Woods. With the exception of the ice skating rink, both boards displayed very similar ideas. Many other individual comments were noted and reviewed as well.

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Existing Conditions Meeting | October 26th, 2015



The Steering Committee meeting held on the evening of October 26th focused on existing conditions in Winnetka’s business districts. The Community Organizations Working Group session started at 5:30 PM by discussing and refining the issues, opportunities and priorities of each of the three business districts. At 7 PM the working group reported back to the Steering Committee on their findings, considerations and deliberations.

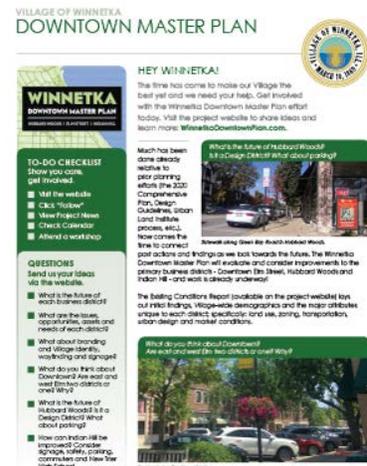
A presentation by the project consultants followed, highlighting Winnetka’s existing conditions: Michael Blue and Erin Cigliano with Teska Associates presented on the Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design; Mark de la Vergne with Sam Schwartz Engineering showcased transportation, signage and wayfinding elements; and Linda Goodman and Zach Lowe with Goodman Williams presented demographics and market data. Q+A by the Steering Committee and the public at large closed out the evening.

Stakeholder Interviews | October 30th and November 6th

Project consultants, Teska Associates, have met with 30+ stakeholders to gain deeper insights relative to Winnetka’s business districts. Two half-day sessions took place on the morning of October 30th and the afternoon of November 5th. Michael Blue and Erin Cigliano with Teska Associates sat down with business owners, residents, landlords, Village officials, etc. to discuss issues and opportunities related to Winnetka’s business districts.

Winnetka Report Special Insert

The Fall 2015 edition of “The Winnetka Report” Village newsletter included both an article and a special two page insert regarding the Downtown Master Plan. The insert focused on encouraging residents and others to become involved in the planning process. It provided a number of alternative ways in which people could participate, including: sharing insights and ideas about the business districts through the project website, taking the district walking tours, and attending meetings + workshops.



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Public Workshop | November 16th, 2015

“Creativity is intelligence having fun,”
– Albert Einstein

...and the ‘Visioning Workshop’ for Winnetka’s Downtown Master Plan held on November 16th at North Shore Country Day School embraced just that. About 35 residents, business owners and Village officials came out to share ideas and feedback via the four interactive activity stations that were set-up:

- Station 1: Priority Voting – invited a “thumbs-up” or “thumbs-down” vote on concepts for each district.
- Station 2: Visioning Collage – used magazine clipped pictures to express a vision for the districts.
- Station 3: Winnetka Madlibs – required filling in the blanks of a model vision statement to develop a vision for the districts.
- Station 4: District Discussion – included group discussions on the issues and opportunities for each of the districts.



A summation of findings and photos were posted to the project website, the results of which will be used to help inform the vision statements that will be presented at the December 16th Steering Committee Meeting. Reporters from local media were also at the event, interviewing participants and consultants. Head over to the project website’s “News” page to view the November 17th article entitled, “Winnetka Envisions Revitalized Downtowns”.

Market Analysis Presentation + Discussion | November 30th, 2015

Goodman Williams Group presented initial findings of the market assessment to the Steering Committee on November 30th. The presentation included key aspects of the substantial data used in evaluating local commercial and residential markets. The data and analysis are intended to inform the Village and the planning process regarding the various opportunities and issues presented by the market, so that this information can support thoughtful development of the Downtown Master Plan. The data will continue to be refined through ongoing analysis and conducting additional key person interviews. The discussion included a presentation by the Business District Working Group summarizing their meeting, held immediately prior to the Steering Committee, regarding issues and opportunities in the districts.

Next Steps

The consultant team is honing its understanding of the intricacies and opportunities in each of the three business districts present. The events to date have provided detailed insight relative to the current workings and future needs, community desires and market supported opportunities for the districts. The upcoming Steering Committee meeting, to be held on December 16th, will focus on refining district-specific vision statements, the drafts of which were created from the aforementioned feedback and events to date.