

# Winona County Comprehensive Plan Update

## Winona County Open House #1 Engagement Summary

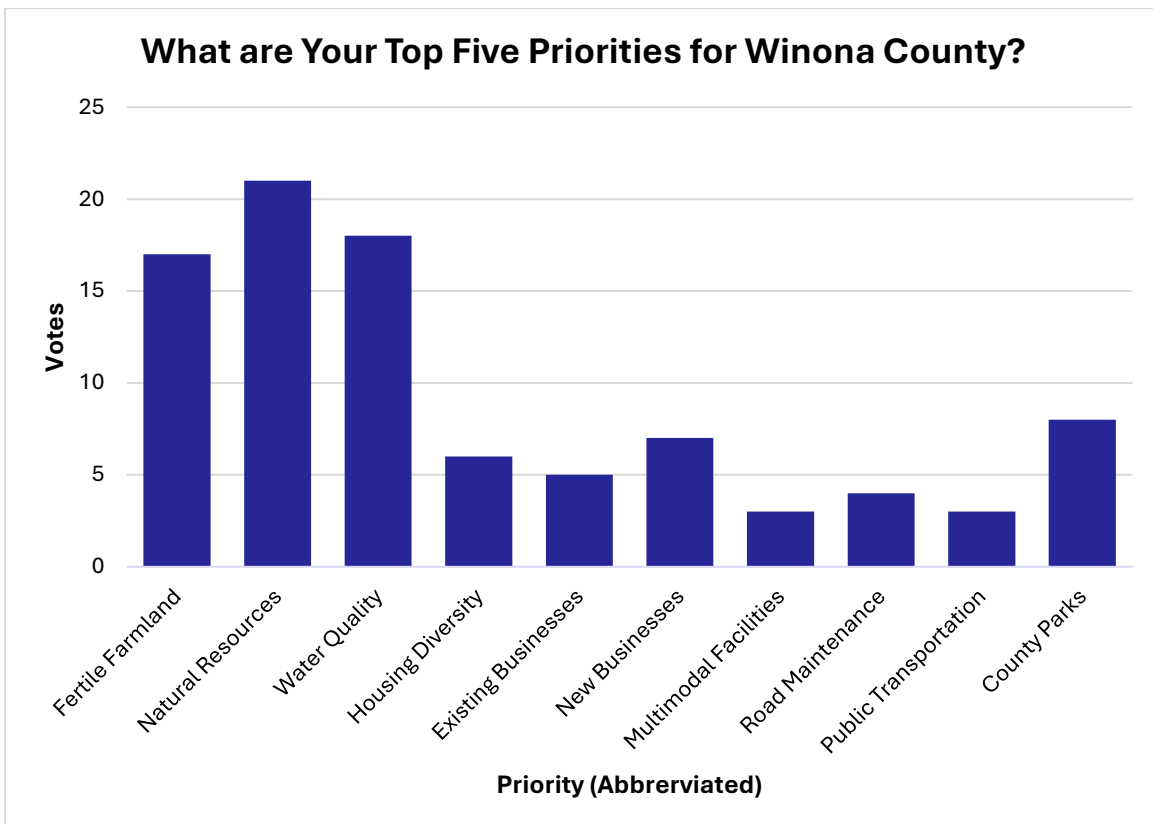
On Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, from 5-8pm, the Winona County Comprehensive Plan project team hosted an open house at Stockton City Hall and Community Center. The open house consisted of a variety of activities and poster boards that asked participants about existing conditions in Winona County and what should be prioritized over the next 20 years. A short presentation on the comprehensive planning process was provided to interested participants. The project team was able to engage participants in informal individual and group discussions as they completed activities to better understand their perspectives and priorities. In total, 21 people, excluding the project team, attended the open house. The feedback received during the open house will inform the Comprehensive Plan vision, goals, and implementation actions.



# What are Your Priorities for Winona County?

## What Are Your Top Five Priorities for Winona County?

This activity presented stakeholders with ten priorities, each related to topics in the Living Legacy Plan. Stakeholders were each given five pom poms to distribute among the ten jars (each associated with a priority), based on their priorities for the County. Participants were able to put multiple pom poms in the same jar if they desired.



## SEPTEMBER 2025 OPEN HOUSE ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Abbreviated Priority	Full Statement Displayed on Board
Fertile Farmland	Preservation of fertile farmland
Natural Resources	Preservation of natural resources
Water Quality	Improving water quality
Housing Diversity	Encouraging development of duplexes, townhomes, assisted living facilities, or apartments
Existing Businesses	Growth of existing businesses
New Businesses	Attracting new businesses to the County
Multimodal Facilities	Installation of new bicycle facilities and sidewalks
Road Maintenance	Maintenance of roads (summer and winter)
Public Transportation	Improving access to public transit/ Dial-A-Ride
County Parks	Improving and expanding the County’s parks

The top three priorities of open house participants, in order of votes, are natural resources, water quality, and fertile farmland. This indicates a strong connection to Winona County’s landscape and resource use.

### Housing Priorities

#### Two Statement Activity

Participants placed a dot on the poster somewhere between the following statements based on their level of agreement:

- Winona County needs to have different kinds of homes all over the County. This includes single-family homes, townhomes, homes for assisted living, and apartments
- Winona County should limit residential development in the rural portions of the County.



A majority of open house attendees agree to some degree with the statement “Winona County should limit residential development in the rural portions of the County.” Approximately 32% of open house attendees

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agree more with the statement “Winona County needs to have different kinds of homes all over the County. This includes single-family homes, townhomes, homes for assisted living, and apartments.” These responses indicate that, in most cases, development should be limited in rural areas of the County, with limited amounts of residential development in appropriate locations.

### Open Responses

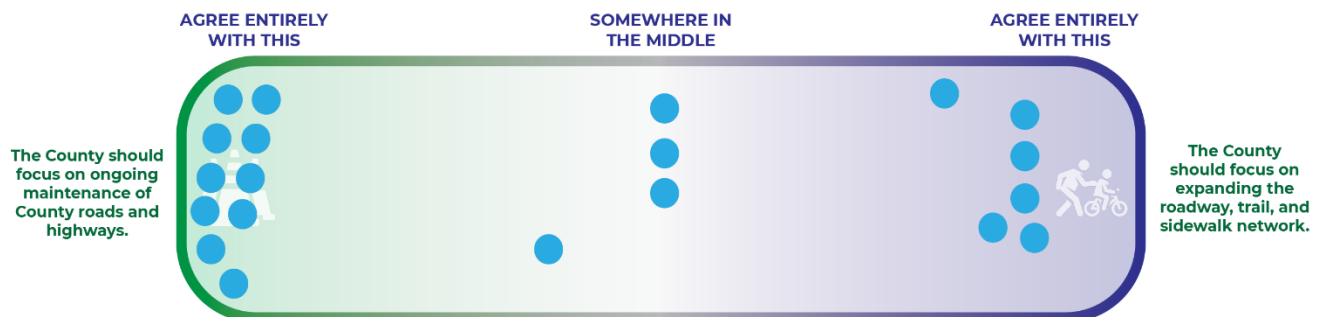
Priorities	Concerns	General Comments
Support increased density housing AND community development in smaller towns	Protect farmers from "rural gentrification"	No one wants unaffordable housing. Rural farmers and businesses also need employees...who need a place to live...
		Affordable housing is hard to find, but parcelization of large tracts of ag land also breaks up habitat and increases road traffic.
		Residential development in rural areas is a problem- folks want to be away from others, but everyone can't have that. Perhaps areas of consolidation for homes??

## Transportation Priorities

### Two Statement Activity

Participants placed a dot on the poster somewhere between the following statements based on their level of agreement:

- The County should focus on ongoing maintenance of County roads and highways.
- The County should focus on expanding the roadway, trail, and sidewalk network.



Slightly more open house participants believe that Winona County should focus more on transportation system maintenance than expansion. Some responses fell in the middle of the two statements, and 30% of respondents feel that the County should focus on expanding the transportation network. These responses

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indicate that maintenance should be the priority for the Winona County Highway Department, with select, high-impact projects focusing on expansion of a multi-modal transportation network.

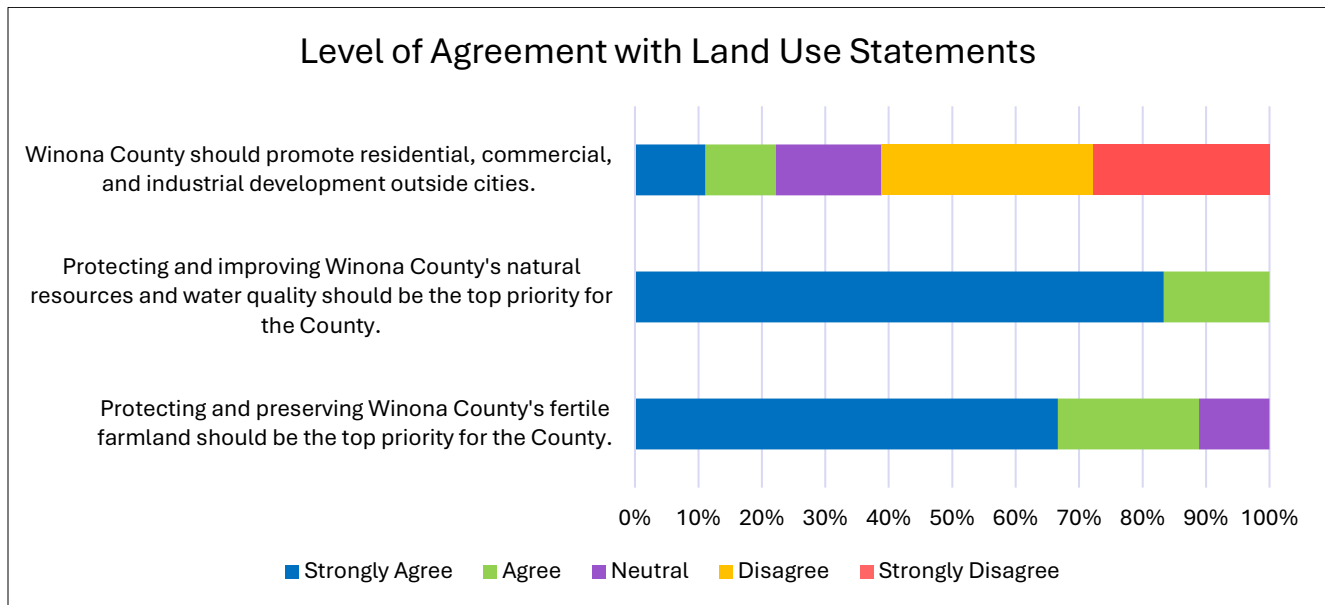
### Open Responses

Priorities	Concerns	General Comments
Maintenance is important, SAFE biking routes are very important too.	Sidewalks and bike trails in cities are great-less traffic and road wear and tear. Not all cities probably need that.	We need good roads and more bike trails
	Walking trails. Love the train	Widen shoulders on rural roads where bike traffic is common

### Land Use Priorities

#### Level of Agreement Activity

Participants were presented with three statements about land use in Winona County. For each statement, participants placed a sticky dot on the area of the poster board that matched their level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree). The results of the activity are displayed in the graph below.



More than half of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that Winona County should promote development outside of cities. All respondents either agree or strongly agree that “protecting and improving Winona County’s natural resources and water quality should be a top priority for the County.” 89% of respondents agree or strongly agree that “Protecting and preserving Winona County’s fertile farmland should be the top priority for the County.” The results of the second and third statements displayed on the graph are consistent with the results of the “What Are Your Top 5 Priorities for Winona County?” activity.

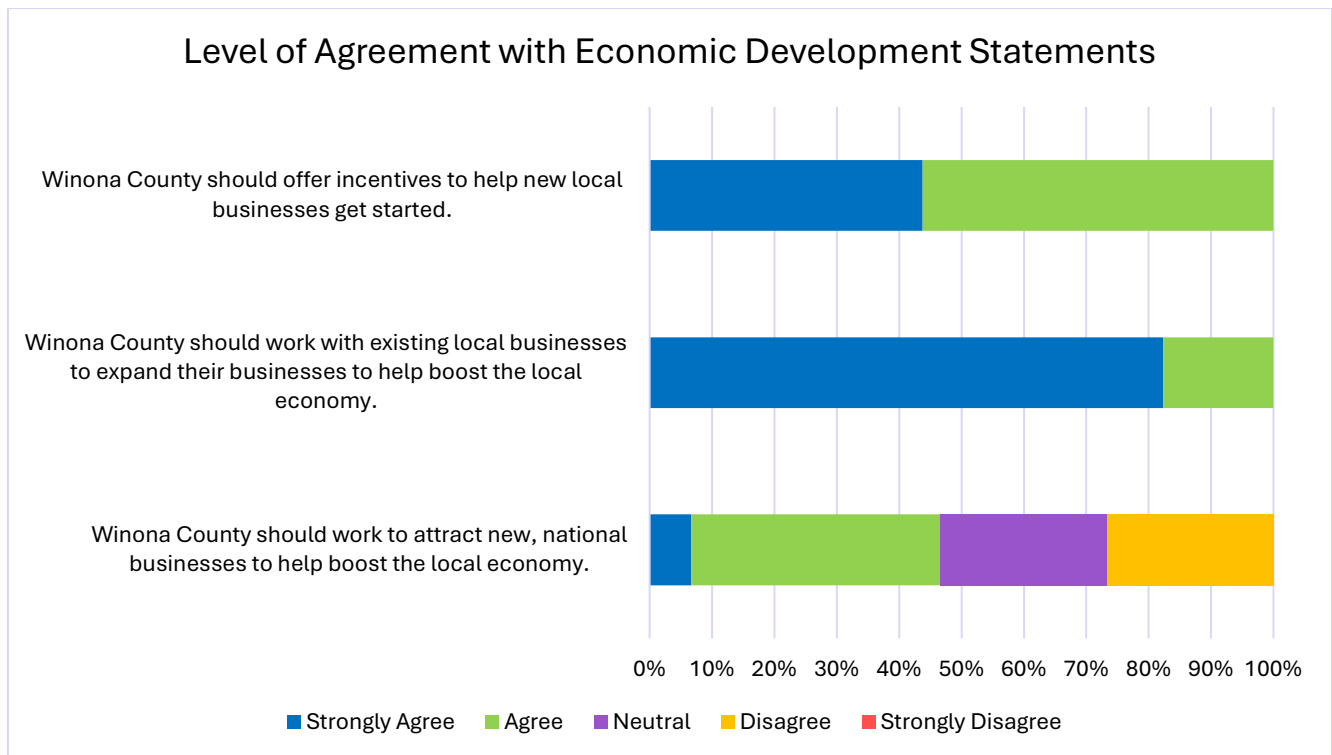
## Open Responses

Priorities	Concerns	General Comments
Affordable housing = base to safety, stability, and future contributions to community/workforce	Supporting farmers and the environment are not mutually exclusive	Subsidized (& not) developers require partnership w/ municipalities & local gov to lock-in state funding *housing*
	If housing development is a focus, the social aspect (transport, health and human services) need to follow. Driving= social and financial inhibitor	Balance is hard with growing population. Green space & water quality should be worked into all new development
	Protect clean water, conserve soil, while developing housing	
	Public spaces for education, recreation, preservation	

## Economic Development Priorities

### Level of Agreement Activity

Participants were presented with three statements about economic development in Winona County. For each statement, participants placed a sticky dot on the area of the poster board that matched their level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree). The results of the activity are displayed in the graph below.



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All respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statements “Winona County should offer incentives to help new local businesses get started” and “Winona County should work with existing local businesses to expand their business to help boost the local economy.” The level of agreement was stronger for working to expand existing local businesses than getting new businesses started. Responses were more divided for the third statement: “Winona County should work to attract new, national businesses to help boost the local economy.” 47% of respondents agree with the statement (strongly agree or agree), while 27% of respondents disagree with the statement.

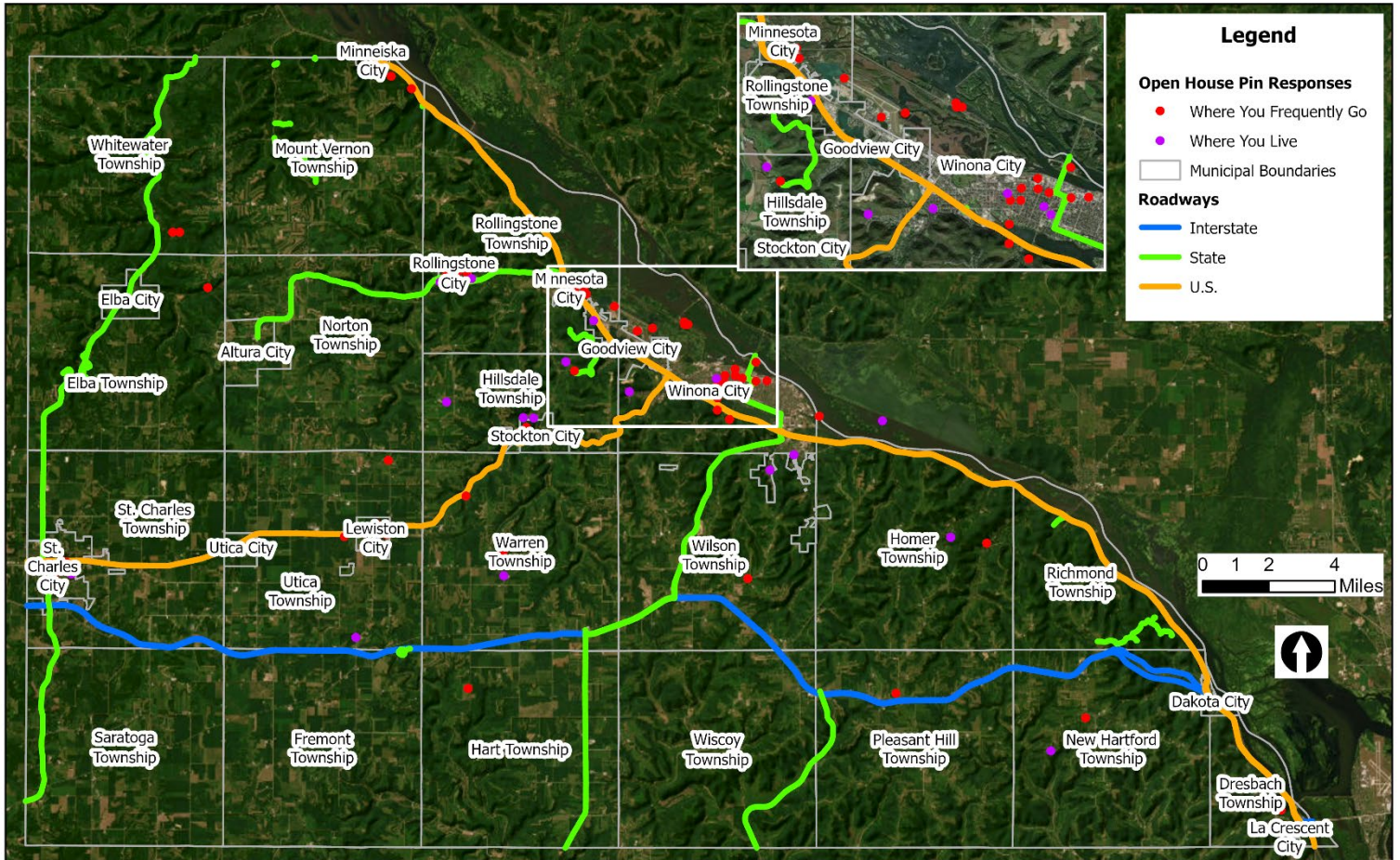
### Open Responses

Priorities	Concerns	General Comments
Increase animal unit cap to help expanding local business	Economic development that is balanced with sustainable use of resources	Look at Redwing Ignite! Not just funding, but how to use and be sustainable
Update agricultural provisions to reflect the changing agricultural environment that they have to compete in	Increase animal cap number of units	Like ag, small business is not as efficient/economic. But is SO important for local economy!

Tourism!

## Where Do You Live and Go in Winona County?

Open house attendees placed black pins on a large map of the County to mark where they live, and up to three red pins on the areas of the County that they frequently go. The map below displays the locations of the pins. The color of the black pins was changed to purple to be more distinguishable from the background imagery.



Most open house participants live in the east central portion of the County, within or near the incorporated municipalities of the City of Rollingstone, Minnesota City, the City of Winona, the City of Goodview, and the City of Stockton. Other respondents live in the City of St. Charles, and far away from cities in townships throughout the County.

The places that respondents frequent are clustered in the Cities of Winona, Goodview, and Minnesota City. Other common locations are locations within the Cities of Lewiston and Rollingstone, and Whitewater Wildlife Management Area.

## What Do You Love About Winona County?

In this activity, participants wrote their response(s) to the question “What do you love about Winona County?” on a sticky note and put it on the poster board under the question.

There were a total of 17 responses to this question. Themes in the responses are:

- **Winona County’s landscape and natural features-** bluffs, water bodies, bluffs, woods
- **The variety and vibrancy within the County-** people, businesses, institutions, sizes of cities, cultural events
- **Rural and agricultural character-** farms, rural environment

### All Responses:

#### “What Do You Love About Winona County?” Responses

Love this area

Diverse landscapes

City of Winona and surrounding communities offer great cultural events and ways to connect

Natural environment, great restaurants, universities lend interest and diversity of activities, cultural scene- museums, music

I love the natural rural character of our community. Economic development in rural areas does not have to mean more animal units.

10,001 reasons I love Winona!

The lakes and river

Natural resources, beautiful environment

Beautiful landscapes

The peace of woods

Great mix of businesses, universities, agriculture

Beautiful land and water, natural boundaries with bluffs and rivers

Incubator for businesses and creative collab.

A wonderful mix of professional and priorities making a vibrant community

Natural resources, outdoor rec., arts and culture

We have a little bit of everything (nature, ag., commercial, shopping, big-small towns)

The beautiful landscape, the farms, the people