

EAST END/SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT



Celebrating history, imagining the future.



ART OF THE RURAL



ENGAGEWINONA

OVERVIEW

The East End/Side Neighborhood Project brought together a neighborhood to celebrate its history and imagine its future. From February to June 2019, we connected with diverse cross-sections of the community, built and strengthened relationships and networks, collected rich stories of the neighborhood's history and culture, and heard a wide array of ideas for change.

GOALS

- **Connect** folks to build relationships and social capital
- Learn what residents **value, seek to change, and dream big** about in their neighborhood
- Identify the **current story and future vision** for the neighborhood
- Collect, prioritize, and report back **themes and projects**
- Assist city with **resources to support projects and ideas**
- Guide neighbors to **take on changemaking projects**

OUTCOMES

- Created **strong and lasting social bonds**
- Identified **neighborhood values, assets and resources**
- Collected, prioritized **ideas and projects**
- Connected neighbors to **city resources**
- Created report to **focus change efforts**
- Provided data to the city in order to **bring in resources**
- Empowered neighbors with **changemaking tools**
- Assisted neighbors with **carrying vision, work forward**
- **Strengthened neighborhood's identity, story, sense of place**

PROCESS

- Interviews, conversations, events, surveys, pop-up events
- Nearly 400 participants
- More than 3,000 unique comments
- More than 50 individual, small-group conversations with business owners, neighborhood leaders, community stakeholders
- Several large public events and conversations
- Online and in-person surveys, with more than 160 responses
- Focused engagement with unheard, marginalized voices
- Interactive activities, creative approaches – like East Side Bingo

PEOPLE

- 75% East End and East Side residents
- 5% business owners, 10% employees, 10% former residents+stakeholders
- Ages: ranged from elementary-age youth to seniors
- Household income: Majority between \$25,000-\$75,000; less than 10% about \$100,000
- Education: 25% high school; 25% certificate or associate degree; 25% four-year degree; 25% split among kids, advanced degrees
- 60-65% female, 35-40% male
- 1/3 parents or guardians of children
- 80-90 percent white, 5-10 percent African-American, pockets of other ethnicities/backgrounds

SUPPORTERS

Hundreds of individuals, businesses, and institutions participated in this project; the folks below went above and beyond to provide extra support and help make it a success.

- East End Rec
- East End Neighborhood Watch
- Polish Cultural Institute & Museum
- Basilica of Saint Stanislaus Kostka/ Diocese of Winona
- St. Stan's Elementary/ Winona Area Catholic Schools
- Winona Volunteer Services
- Miller Ingenuity
- Miller Scrap
- Winona Health
- Boomer's Quality Plumbing
- Paperbacks and Pieces
- Severson Oil
- Winona ORC
- Pac 'N Mail Express
- NAPA Auto Parts
- Peerless Chain
- WKM Properties
- Washington-Kosciusko Elementary
- East Side Bar
- Kolter Bicycle & Fitness
- 929 Beer House
- Hogline Bait & Tackle
- Black Moth Tattoo
- Professional Cleaning Equipment
- Pony Motors
- SSI Gift Shoppe

EAST END + EAST SIDE

TWO DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS

- **East Side:** Franklin St. to Mankato Ave.
- **East End:** Mankato Ave. and east

We asked hundreds of participants to define the East End's boundaries. There were lots of ideas, and consensus that East Winona started at Franklin Street.

Most agreed there needed to be a distinction for what they called “the true East End” starting at Mankato Avenue – and from there imagined two distinct neighborhoods.

These are not formal boundaries. The goal was to have residents create a definition for their own neighborhoods to foster a stronger sense of place.



TOP PROJECTS + IDEAS

PROJECTS

- East End dog park (and potentially walking park)
- Revitalize baseball culture at Gabrych Park
- Beautify the boulevards
- Rental property cleanup, oversight
- Help with future of Athletic Club
- Address perception (and reality) of crime
- Branded wayfinding signs for East End
- Neighborhood block parties
- Youth programs, amenities at public parks
- Bytow Byway: Walking/driving tour of Polish East End
- Better infrastructure, support for pedestrians+bicyclists
- New story - East End is a great place to buy a home, live
- St. Stan's as a tourist destination, community hub
- Spruce Up Club - help neighbors in need with small projects
- Turn alleys into art, gathering places

PROCESS

Countless ideas emerged from conversations. Folks voted for their favorites, based on what they saw as **meaningful** (matters now, has impact) and **achievable** (can be accomplished).



THEMES



BUSINESSES+INSTITUTIONS

- Large businesses generally stable
- Small businesses thriving - and struggling
- Institutions looking for more support

Relationships to the neighborhood ranged from healthy and well-connected to challenged and isolated. Large businesses were appreciative of their location. Their primary challenge is train backups. Successful small businesses have created communities of supporters. Institutions (schools, churches, Polish Museum, etc.) are generally stable, with concerns about fading influence and support.

Values

- Working-class neighborhood; industry-appropriate areas; unique small and home-based businesses

Visions

- Better walking paths/sidewalks in industrial area; Athletic Club's future; placemaking/wayfinding signs; houses as businesses; neighborhood business associations

CULTURAL+SOCIAL

- Older, younger residents hungry to create connections

Values

- Bars and churches as social centers
- Growing diversity - younger couples, families, people of color
- Place where folks take care of each other

Visions

- Neighborhood associations/councils
- Informal social events in public places
- More block parties, especially streets or alleys
- More activities for youth
- Ways of welcoming homeowners and renters
- A neighborhood festival

STORYTELLING+PLACEMAKING

- Increasing a sense of place and identity

Visions

- Placemaking, wayfinding, "Welcome To" signs for the East End; some suggested an arch or gateway at a main intersection
- Similar idea to brand the East Side
- The Polish Museum's alleyway art program - painting garages
- The Polish Museum's Bytow Byway - a walking/biking/driving tour of the East End for locals and tourists
- A neighborhood newsletter, digital or a printed+delivered handout
- Imprinting resident-created poetry or designs on sidewalks



THEMES

PUBLIC SPACES+PARKS

- Residents love them, and were filled with ideas for changes

Values

- East End Rec - appreciated by multiple generations
- Historical baseball culture - once a local showcase
- Sobieski Park Lodge - the neighborhood's grassroots effort to build a cornerstone facility
- East End Rec garden
- Sinclair Park

Visions

- Dog park - most popular request for any project
- Revitalized baseball culture at Gabrych Park
- More youth programming at East End Rec
- Sobieski Park - replace courts, reimagine green space
- A walking park near industrial area
- Connect Sobieski/Gabrych parks by removing block of Wabasha St. for green space, parking



TRANSPORTATION+INFRASTRUCTURE

- More attention on walking, biking

Values

- Convenient, quiet location
- Low traffic - safe biking and walking

Visions

- Interested in Louisa Street overpass, not optimistic
- Opposed to Mankato overpass
- Notification signal, signs on Mankato to warn traffic when trains switching
- Bike path connections to other areas (Lake Park)
- Walking connection to retail area - Shives Creek
- Sidewalks, crosswalks in retail area
- Consistent sidewalks in industrial area
- Address on-street parking in industrial area

SAFETY+CRIME

- Perspectives vary; neighbors uncertain of how to help

Long-time residents have felt safe and unsafe. Newer residents feel safe. Residents from larger cities say it's the safest place they've lived. Everyone agrees drugs are an issue.

Values

- East End Neighborhood Watch - significant, lasting impact in empowering neighbors to address issues

Visions

- Combating presence of drug houses
- Residents record/report, aren't sure what else to do
- Increased police presence - community officers
- New Neighborhood Watch energy, members



THEMES



Beautify the boulevards (flowers, gardens, etc.)



VOTE! (PLACE STICKER HERE)

HOUSING+APPEARANCE

- Transitions create challenges, opportunities

Values

- Inexpensive homes - single people, couples, young families, downsizers
- Variety of unique home designs and styles
- Longtime neighbors and residents
- Mixed feelings on shotgun houses - icons vs. rundown rentals

Visions

- Spruce Up Club: Volunteers do small repairs for homeowners unable to
- Beautify the boulevards, especially in East End
- Rental property appearances improved
- Change the narrative - East End is attractive
- Promotion of home programs and resources
- Effort to buy, redevelop rundown properties
- Placemaking/wayfinding signs

HERITAGE+PRESERVATION

- Revitalizing interest of rich history

Values

- Prominence of Polish culture is well-known, though not deeply understood
- Working-class culture that started with immigrant families is still dominant
- Catholic heritage carries strong identity
- "Hog line" name appreciated by some, seen as a mild insult to others that perpetuates stereotypes

Visions

- Widespread desire to celebrate Polish heritage and culture - series of coordinated community events
- St. Stan's Basilica exploring renewed interest, tourism

GENERAL VISION+VALUES

- "Real genuine people, helping each other."
- "Warm, kind, and welcoming. The East End accepts everyone and I was part of the family right away."
- "Love the quiet and community."
- "Humble and proud: We need to toot our own horn about how family-friendly the East End is."
- "The neighborhood would thrive with more attention and investment."

friendly close knit businesses small close know East End East walk
 love home East End Rec people sense community history
 feel neighborhood places neighbors quiet parks
 bar family neighborhood feel community safe residents Polish
 houses Watkins grew know neighbor Winona



MANKATO AVENUE - A FUTURE VISION



OVERVIEW

Residents, business owners, and neighborhood leaders were invited to imagine potential visions and futures for the Mankato Avenue corridor — generally Second Street to Sarnia Street.

CONSENSUS

- Individual bright spots, lacking larger vision
- Missing structures, support to create critical mass of diverse businesses
- Stable service, retail businesses have built communities of supporters
- Small business owners highly supportive of visioning, interest

VALUES

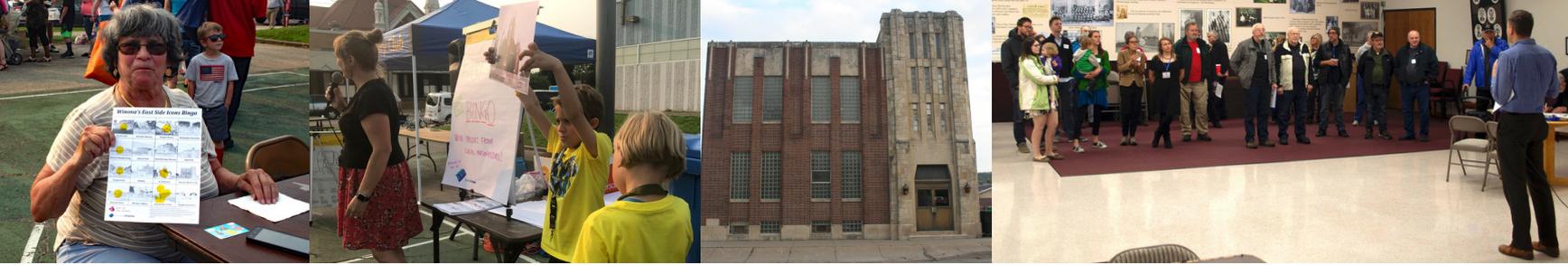
- **Unique places:** Mankato Avenue businesses are, with few exceptions, locally owned and cater to needs of neighborhood, community
- **Unique spaces:** Multiple businesses operate out of unique buildings, converted homes
- **Community-building focus:** Businesses put energy into connecting customers and supporters

VISIONS

- Sit-down restaurants, coffee shops with space for gathering
- Unique, locally owned stores, especially kid- and family-friendly
- Artist-run store/gallery featuring neighborhood artists
- Focus on pedestrians: Traffic calming, landscaped median, crosswalks with flashing signals
- Dedicated bike lanes
- Converting homes into businesses
- Athletic Club as thriving community hub

CHALLENGES

- **Mankato Avenue:** Four lanes, heavy truck traffic, a Point-A-to-B road
- **Regular train backups:** Detriment to daytime, lunchtime trips; inhibits visitors + parking
- **Cohesive vision, destination:** Individual businesses are destinations, but not Mankato Avenue as a whole



NEXT STEPS

The City of Winona, Engage Winona, Art of the Rural, and neighborhood leaders and residents will be collaborating to:

- Prioritize, focus ideas into manageable projects and steps
- Seek quick wins
- Focus on small, incremental change
- Align existing city resources to meet needs
- Provide guidance to folks taking on projects
- Help neighbors find funding and resources
- Create project tracker to document efforts
- Convene a neighborhood leadership group
- Continue efforts on storytelling, creative placemaking



GET INVOLVED



READ+COMMENT on the full report: engagewinona.org



JOIN Winona East End/Side Neighborhood group



JOIN Nextdoor: Mankato Avenue



CONNECT to groups, projects: neighborhoods@engagewinona.org

