

TOWN OF WINDSOR AGENDA REPORT

Joint Windsor Town Council, Windsor Redevelopment Successor Agency and Windsor Water District Meeting Date: September 3, 2025

To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Olivia Lemen, Parks and Recreation Director
Subject: Voices of Windsor Workshop Recap

Recommendation to Council:

Provide direction to staff regarding similar workshops in the future.

Strategic Plan Element:

The recommended action supports the goal of Organizational Effectiveness. Goal Statement: Achieve a high performing organization by nurturing an engaged workforce committed to a shared vision of public service.

Background:

On October 5, 2023, the Town held a Windsor NEXT (New and Emerging Transportation) Community Workshop. The workshop was facilitated by Public Works Director Shannon Cotulla and included presentations by consulting traffic engineers. The workshop included results from a community-wide transportation survey, followed by public comment and peer-led, small group discussions on transportation topics. This was hosted as a special Council meeting on a Thursday with councilmembers in attendance.

On February 16, 2024, the Town Council of the Town of Windsor held a “Look Ahead” retreat. In attendance were all five Councilmembers, Executive Staff and community members. The group received an overview of major activities and departmental priorities and reviewed the four strategic plan goals:

- Fiscal Health
- Infrastructure
- Livability
- Organizational Effectiveness

During the discussion of Organizational Effectiveness, Council discussed what success would look like and highlighted opportunities for increased community engagement. The Council identified a few goals in this area including finding ways to keep communication channels open on social media and to increase community workshops, such as the traffic workshop on targeted topics – specifically setting a goal for two workshops a year.

On March 24, 2024, Public Works hosted a second traffic workshop with the Police Chief to discuss speeding and other safety concerns. The format was similar to the first where the Town staff made a presentation followed by small group discussions.

Late in 2024, the Town was approached by a local and long-time community member Julian Cohen to consider a different meeting style. He proposed a workshop following the World Café Methodology.

The World Café Method can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. Specifics of context, numbers, purpose, location, and other circumstances are factored into each event's unique invitation, design, and question choice, but the following five components comprise the basic model:

1. Setting: Create a "special" environment, most often modeled after a café, i.e. small round tables covered with a checkered or white linen tablecloth, butcher block paper, colored pens, a vase of flowers, and optional "talking stick" item. There should be four chairs at each table (optimally) – and no more than five.
2. Welcome and Introduction: The host begins with a warm welcome and an introduction to the World Café process, setting the context, sharing the Café Etiquette, and putting participants at ease.
3. Small-Group Rounds: The process begins with the first of three or more twenty-minute rounds of conversation for small groups of four (five maximum) people seated around a table. At the end of the twenty minutes, each member of the group moves to a different new table. They may or may not choose to leave one person as the "table host" for the next round, who welcomes the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round.
4. Questions: each round is prefaced with a question specially crafted for the specific context and desired purpose of the World Café. The same questions can be used for more than one round, or they may build upon each other to focus the conversation or guide its direction.
5. Harvest: After the small groups (and/or in between rounds, as needed), individuals are invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group. These results are reflected visually in a variety of ways, most often using graphic recording in the front of the room.

Given Mr. Cohen's experience hosting these events in other communities, he approached the Town to facilitate one for Windsor. Voices of Winsor was developed, aimed to create more dialog with the community. The metaphor of "Tending the Garden" was used to set the stage for the experience. Like a garden, the process requires patience and kindness:

The seeds: the opportunities and the questions we ask.

The nutrients: the conversations and the stories we share.

The harvest: the shared visions we collect and build from.

The garden: a place called home.

The "Tending the Garden" metaphor captures the spirit behind Voices of Windsor: a collaboration that fosters growth. By working together, we can build trust and encourage vibrant community participation.

Discussion:

On April 2, 2025, the Town hosted the first Voices of Winsor workshop. Approximately 45 people were in attendance. The workshop started at 6:00 pm and lasted approximately two (2) hours. It was heavily advertised through the Town Newsletter (The Insider), Social Media platforms, print flyers posted around Town and word of mouth through personal invitations. The event was promoted as a Family-Friendly event with a Kids Zone staffed with Recreation leaders. Dinner was provided by the Town to participants.

The group of attendees divided into small table groups of 4-5 people with a host at each table. The group was given approximately 20 minutes to discuss each question and then each table reported out briefly to the larger group, sharing what had been discussed at the table. In between sessions, participants got up and moved to a new group so there was a unique group at each question session. The main themes were captured by the Town Clerk (Attachment 1). The three question sessions with the main discussion themes below:

1. What drew you to Windsor and what are your first memories? What compelled you to stay in Windsor?
 - a. Home Affordability (way back when)
 - b. Family-Friendly Programs and Events
 - c. School System / Good Schools
 - d. Community Feeling with Neighbors and Other Families, Visibility
 - e. Fresh Start Opportunities with Life/Work
2. Does Windsor feel like home? If not, what would it take for Windsor to feel like home?
 - a. YES!
 - b. Give Seniors a Better Sense of Belonging
 - c. Town and School District = Connection
 - d. Create Spaces for Teens/Young Adults (Late Night Events)
 - e. Strong Sense of Community, Continue to Connect
 - f. Windsor's Natural Beauty
3. Describe a future Windsor that you would be excited about, and how would you describe that future potential to a friend? Would you consider participating in meetings about Windsor's future, and what would it take to keep you involved?
 - a. More Vibrant Town
 - b. Push to Shop Local/Expand Businesses in Town
 - c. Invite Diversity/Celebrate it
 - d. Expand Walkability and Cycling Safety/Connectivity
 - e. Opportunities for Community Members to Give Back/Volunteer
 - f. Slow and Smart Growth, Sustainability
 - g. Affordability

The meeting summary was shared with the participants who left their email at sign-in after the workshop along with a survey to give feedback on the process. The survey responses are provided as Attachment 2. While the survey sample was small, of those who took the survey, 100% said they would attend another one if the topic related to them or interested them. The survey also reflected that increased and diverse participation from the community was key to the success of future events.

This information is presented to Council for discussion on the workshop structure, regularity of offering, and to provide direction to staff. Also, should Council like to continue this type of community engagement, staff are looking for suggestions for future workshop topics.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no immediate fiscal impact or request for changes to current appropriations. However, depending on the direction of Council, the action may have future financial implications that are difficult to quantify at this time.

Environmental Review:

The recommended action does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378 and requires no environmental review.

Attachment(s):

1. [Voices of Windsor Session Report Out](#)
2. [Voices of Windsor Survey Results](#)
- 13.1 [PowerPoint \(Distributed 2025-09-03\)](#)

Prepared by:

Olivia Lemen
Parks and Recreation Director

Approved by:
Jon Davis
Town Manager