

letters

Invest in safety on Broadway

From: Mike Kennedy
Winona

The portion of Broadway (Sioux Street to Mankato Avenue) that was identified in the 2015 study for pedestrian, bike, and traffic safety will be improved by a "road diet," or a four-to-three-lane conversion. Many traffic accidents prompted the study, including a pedestrian death, as well as several other severe pedestrian/vehicle accidents. Since 2015, the city grant request for \$3.4 million was supported by the City Council and city engineering with considerable time and money spent preparing for the project. The approximately 1.5 mile portion would have a center turn lane and single wider

lanes on each side. The road bed size will not change. The professional traffic studies show no reduction in volume of traffic would occur now or in the future. The five sets of bump-outs will be placed at strategic intersections along the 1.5 mile route. Also, a needed improvement for all pedestrians, especially the elderly and kids, the entire route will have curb ramps installed to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations that are required by the state of Minnesota. This ADA improvement will be of noteworthy value to any person with limited mobility and users of handicap assistance equipment, as well as the many pedestrians crossing daily. The reduction of vehicle speeds is the main purpose of the "road diet" concept and has repeatedly shown in previous similar projects to not reduce usage and travel times. It does prevent the unnecessary and unsafe passing of speed-

ing drivers. The single lanes and center safe zone of the turn lane, greatly reduces the multi-lane visibility issues that cause vehicle accidents and many pediatrician injuries and close calls.

New council members Aaron Repinski and Steve Young were supported in their campaigns with funding from people ignoring or unfamiliar with the safety issues for people crossing this section of Broadway. They both need to reassess the whole community safety benefit in a developing city center and the costly installation of mandated ADA-compliant curb ramps that are included in the grant. Newspaper articles have even quoted some saying that their primary concern is not being able to pass other cars within the one lane, thus the proof of needed changes that often are a scary thought to some people, but necessary for the continuous improvement of public safety in Winona.

Labels can actually hurt the recovery process

From: Mark Jacobson,
peer support specialist
Winona

Today we challenge the lie that people have to label themselves as an addict or alcoholic to successfully recover.

There is no research that indicates people are more likely to recover from a substance use disorder if they label themselves as anything. However, there is research that shows forcing people to identify as an addict or alcoholic can actually be detrimental to their efforts to change. The latest diagnostic manual for professionals (DSM-5) recognized such research and accordingly removed addiction as an official diagnostic

label due to "its uncertain definition and its potentially negative connotation." Even in AA and NA the only requirement for participation is the desire to stop using, there is no requirement to identify as an addict or alcoholic.

The potentially negative connotations to the addict and alcoholic are prolific. When I ask people that I associate with to list all the adjectives that come to mind to describe an addict or alcoholic, I elicit a large list of negatives (e.g., drunk, manipulative, loser, weak, powerless, etc., etc.). If somebody labels themselves as an alcoholic or addict and think that means they are a lying, manipulative, weak, powerless, loser, then they probably don't feel too good about themselves. When we don't feel great about ourselves, substances offer an appealing and reliable break from uncomfortable feelings. Forcing people to think of themselves as lying, manipulative, powerless, losers is not only not helpful, it

is tantamount to abuse.

Changing the way in which we use words when speaking about addiction is an important step in helping reduce the stigma surrounding their illness. Choosing to use non-stigmatizing language allows people in recovery to choose how they want to identify themselves in regards to their substance use disorder. While we can't solve the problem of the underlying stigma surrounding addiction by just changing the words we use, it's one way we can break through society's negative perceptions about prevention, treatment, recovery, and substance use disorders. By doing so, people will begin to accept addiction as a disease, and those who have substance use disorders will not feel shame in seeking out help.

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction and would like someone to talk to, I may be reached at: gottahavehope38@gmail.com

We need housing, jobs, and mental health care, not jails

From: Mary Jo Klinker

Several years ago, I wrote a letter to the editor titled "#NoMoreBeds." I remain fundamentally opposed to jails and carceral punishments. Having taught courses for the last decade that emphasize the gendered, racialized, and classed impacts of incarceration, I know this: If you build it, you will fill it. Rather than jails, we need to invest in our community.

I implore county commissioners to slow this process and consider the importance

of investment in community-based programs and facilities instead. I am not placated by the narrative that jails are made "just" by the window-dressings of mental health and substance use services. These should exist in our communities, not behind bars. Policing and jails do not make us safer, rather they exacerbate harm. In 2018, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that 26 percent of folks incarcerated in local jails met the criteria for having serious mental health conditions. The Jail Advisory Committee's Report reflected a concern over recidivism, but more beds will not address the underlying causes of recidivism, such as access to housing, jobs, and mental health services. Community services, social support, and mutual aid are better avenues of funding to prevent recidivism. We must build systems of preven-

tative care rather than a bigger, newer jail.

Recently, the city of Winona has engaged in planning processes for a non-policing alternative response team, reflecting the reality that criminalization is not medical or mental health treatment. Surely, these services will offer further evidence of a need for fewer beds. During the early months of this pandemic, decarceration happened in Winona; these releases exposed the reality of unnecessary incarceration. When pressed by extraordinary circumstances, the county realized that many folks did not need to sit in jail to maintain public safety, that it was inhumane to lock people up in a pandemic. Whenever this pandemic subsides, it will still be inhumane.

Winona, we need to further envision preventative public health options for our community, not cages.

Permit

continued from page 1a

storage site next to a riverside residential neighborhood in Homer. Many Homer residents are strongly opposed to that site's continued existence. However, in a nod to requests from residents and the County Board to reduce the height of that pile — which blocks river views for neighboring homeowners — the USACE had planned to haul much of that sand up County Road 15 to a Milestone Materials-owned quarry for long-term storage.

The quarry proposal prompted new concerns from the residents of County Road 15, however. Winona County Planning and Environmental Services Director Kay Qualley — whose department recommended approval of the USACE permit — described the situation like this: "The concerns are going to exist no matter where the sand goes, because the sand has to go someplace and no one wants the sand to go either past them or to them or near them. So that's one of the problems, of course, we're all wrestling with."

County Board members felt the proposal did not meet one of the criteria for issuing a permit: that the activity not significantly harm neighboring property values. Board members Steve Jacob and Marie Kovacs also expressed concerns about how many times the details of the USACE proposal had changed. "I've never seen a proposal that has more changed and taken different forms than this proposal has taken," Jacob stated. Kovacs said, "I think even the things they considered as promises, they're not in writing. There's too many loose ends."

Jacob and County Board member Marcia Ward pointed out that the USACE has not pursued more island-building as a route for sand disposal, in part, because of the challenges of working with Minnesota and Wisconsin departments of natural resources. USACE officials also said the amount of sand island-building projects dispose of is too small to be an effective long-term strategy. "The Corps of Engineers can't work with another state agency?" Ward wondered aloud. "We're the path of least resistance. They came down to a local level to throw this into our laps."

Jacob added, "I saw this all play out in

Wabasha ... [Local people] resisted it, and eventually the Army Corps found a different solution."

Ward also noted that while the pile height at Homer will be temporarily reduced by the quarry proposal, the corps will eventually be placing more sand at the Homer site. "This is just a short-term fix," she said.

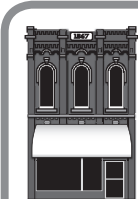
The County Board voted 5-0 to deny the permit.

It remains to be seen how the corps will react. USACE officials maintained they didn't actually need the permit — because, as a federal agency with a Congressional mandate to maintain the river lanes, they're exempt from local zoning — and only applied for a permit as a courtesy. County officials said that, because the quarry was privately owned, the proposal is subject to the county's legal authority.

"We are aware of Winona County's decision and are currently reviewing it," USACE spokesman Patrick Moes wrote in an email. "We hope to continue working with our community partners as we develop a long-term solution to the dredged material needs within the region."

Chris@winonapost.com

Winona First, Winona Proud, winonapost



winona's twice-weekly newspaper since 1971

winonapost

email: winpost@winonapost.com

winonapost.com



507.452.1262 800.353.2126
fax: 507.454.6409
P.O. Box 27, 64 E. 2nd St.
Winona, MN 55987

Publisher: Patrick Marek
Editor: Chris Rogers
Finance/Operations Director: Dana Cierzan
Advertising Director: Patrick Marek
Sales: Kim Farkas, Bob Shattuck, Les Guderian
Inside Sales/Classified: Amanda Sattler, Carol Fitzgerald

Reporter: Alexandra Retter
Columnist: Fran Edstrom
Circulation: Mary Veraguth
Creative Director: Ashley Blum
Composition Editor: Monica Veraguth

Creative Designer: Jared Ferk
Proofreader/Editorial Assistant: Cyndi Wehlage
Pressmen: Jim Bethke, Jesse J. Brandes
Mailroom: John Payne

letters

Speak up against new jail

From: Bonnie Hammack

I have often felt hopeless that we, as average citizens, have any voice or agency in effecting change in the structures and institutions that have the potential to massively impact our lives. I felt a glimmer of hope at the County Board meeting

this past Thursday that the democratic process may indeed work and people might actually have a voice in the decisions that shape our community. People have been reaching out and speaking up in opposition to the jail expansion planned. After a tense moment of reckoning with the decision to forge ahead with the jail plan, designed by those entrenched in the criminal justice system, or to listen to the people who oppose the large jail concept and all the criminal justice policies that will ensure it is filled, the will of the people was heard. Each of the board members sided with democracy, the jail size is back up for debate. I urge anyone who has felt it is hopeless to speak up, that no one who has the power to make decisions is listening, to speak up now. Join the conversation that will shape our community and impact our families and neighbors for decades. The size of the jail will be debated at the next County Board meeting, December 22. Reach out to your County Board commissioner. Our community has the opportunity to become truly healthier and safer by demanding our resources be put toward services for the entire community, not funding coercive services behind bars.

City should ban lighted displays on bluffs

From: Mike Abdo
Winona

In case you haven't noticed, there's been a big, ugly, brightly lit cross over Winona near the Garvin Heights lookout the past two winters.

While I'm typically all for flamboyant public displays, this one ruins the beautiful nighttime views of the silhouetted bluffs from my front porch.

Some might call me a scrooge (including my wife), but I would love to see the city ban such obnoxious lighted displays on the bluff tops. They can put their decorations on their front lawn like everyone else.

Unity Alliance: Thank you for donating

From: Brian Mueller, president, Winona Dakota Unity Alliance

The board of the Winona Dakota Unity Alliance is grateful for the response to our call for winter clothing and gear donations for the reservations in South Dakota and Nebraska. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to provide warm clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, and other winter gear for all our relatives — Mitakuye Oyasin (we are all related.) Unfortunately, a lack of access to basic necessities is still a daily struggle for many living on reservations.

Our dear friend Martin Bernard drove round trip from Flandreau to pick up a large van full of donated items, and over \$500 in cash donations. We are grateful for his call to service and for his guidance.

A special thank you to Grace Place, Restored Blessings, the businesses that contributed, Nick Perrella, Sunshine Wilson and Orion, Jessica Kasper, Paul Barrett, and Doreen Moesch. Your generosity humbles us.

Do you need to run
LEGAL ADS?

Assumed Name? Bids? Probate?

Dissolution of Marriage?

Call us for the lowest
prices in town!

507-452-1262 or FAX 454-6409

Check out more letters on page 5b