



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
AGE-FRIENDLY ADVISORY AD-HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 8, 2023 – 6:00 PM
Village Hall – 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL 60305
Community Room

AGENDA

Public comments will be shared with the Committee. You may submit your public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: Matthew Walsh at mwalsh@vrf.us. You may listen to the meeting by participating in a Zoom conference call as follows, dial-in number: 312-626-6799 with meeting ID: 881 5715 8647 or by clicking here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88157158647>. If you would like to speak during public comment, please email mwalsh@vrf.us by 4:00 PM on February 8, 2023.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of the January 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes
4. Old Business
 - a. Review and Finalize Goals and Recommendations
 - b. Next Steps
5. New Business
6. Next Meeting: March 8, 2023
7. Adjournment

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
AGE-FRIENDLY AD HOC COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Age Friendly Ad Hoc Committee was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:17 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairperson Respicio Vazquez, Members Daniel Lauber, Deborah Frederick, Lydia Manning, James Flanagan, Helen Kwan and Barbara Mirel.

Absent: None

Also Present: Assistant Village Administrator Matt Walsh

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Committee Member Lauber made a motion, seconded by Committee Member Manning, to approve the December 14, 2022, meeting minutes.

Roll call:

Ayes: Chairperson Vazquez, Daniel Lauber, Lydia Manning, James Flanagan, Helen Kwan, Deborah Frederick, Barbara Mirel

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Presentation of Age Friendly Report- Discussion
- b. Review of Age Friendly Report Drafts – Discussion
- c. Finalize Findings and Report
- d. Next Steps

Member Manning introduced and explained the draft report to the group. Assistant Walsh shared his screen for the group to view the January 5, 2023, draft.

The Committee reviewed the findings for each domain. There was general agreement for each of the findings.

There was extensive discussion about next steps and the timeline for submitting a report. The group agreed to continue using the January 5 draft as the base document.

Chairman Vazquez asked the Committee to share input on goals and recommendations with Assistant Walsh by January 25. The group agreed.

Chairman Vazquez stated that the specific action items should be left for staff to execute. The Village and staff can work toward the goals that the group and Board decide.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Vazquez raised the idea of changing the regular meeting time. The group agreed to keep the meetings at 6 p.m.

6. NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 8, 2023

7. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Member Manning made a motion, seconded by Committee Member Kwan to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 PM.

Roll call:

Ayes: Chairperson Vazquez, Lydia Manning, James Flanagan, Daniel Lauber, Helen Kwan, Deborah Frederick

Absent: Barbara Mirel (left at 7:07 p.m.)

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator

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2-5-23



Age Friendly River Forest

Creating a Livable Community for All

Prepared by:
The Village of River Forest's
Age-Friendly Ad Hoc Committee

Year Two Report and Action Plan

January 2023

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Executive Summary

(or a letter from President Adduci)

DRAFT
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Letter to the Board of Trustees

To: Village of River Forest Board of Trustees
From: The Age-Friendly *Ad Hoc* Committee
Subject: Proposed Action, Implementation, and Evaluation Plan for AARPP Age-Friendliness
Date: XXXXXXXX

The Age-Friendly *Ad Hoc* Committee was tasked with assessing the age-friendliness of the Village of River Forest and creating a list of recommendation and an action plan for the Village to approve and adopt. The charge from the President of the Village reads:

"The COVID19 pandemic has only heightened the importance and need for this ad hoc committee. Given the virus' effect on our older adult population and the need to rethink how we build an age-friendly community, the timeliness of this committee couldn't be better.

The goals remains the same and below are some direction for the committee to consider but certainly not limited to these 5.

1. Conduct a baseline assessment of age-friendliness of the Village
2. Research and Discuss the new normal for age friendly communities amid COVID19 and other factors stemming from this pandemic.
3. Evaluate and Prepare a plan based on the American Association of Retired Persons and other organizations approaches to an age friendly community.
4. Review and Present the Plan to the Village Board and Village President for endorsement and consideration
5. Present the Final Plan to the Village Board and Village President to adopt by majority vote an Age Friendly Plan that will integrate with our municipal code for implementation of the Plan."

The goal is to support the Village of River Forest in being a designated age-friendly community and included in the AARP Age-Friendly national directory.

The committee has evaluated findings from a community-wide survey and has prepared a report of those findings and a subsequent Age-Friendly Action Plan, following AARP guidelines (<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/how-to-create-a-community-action-plan.html>). This work details the community assessment that the Committee conducted; its outcomes; and resulting recommendations and actions that the Committee proposes to advance age-friendliness in the Village of River Forest.

After the Trustees review findings from the Community Assessment and the Action Plan, the Committee recommends that the Trustees consider the value and benefit in preparing a complete Age Friendly Action, Implement, and Evaluation Plan to AARP for eventual approval.

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The recommendations and action plan presented here will enable stakeholders in the Village of River Forest to pursue the next steps needed for achieving greater age–friendliness in the years to come.

AGE-FRIENDLY RIVER FOREST YEAR TWO REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Age Friendly *Ad Hoc* Committee was tasked with assessing the age-friendliness of the Village of River Forest and creating an Action Plan for the Village to approve and then eventually submit to AARP. The goal is to support the Village of River Forest in being a designated age friendly community and included in the AARP Age Friendly national directory.

The committee evaluated findings from a community-wide survey and prepared an Age-Friendly list of recommendations and action plan. Once approved by the Village, this plan that will be submitted to the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) for review and endorsement.

This report has a two-fold purpose: (1) To detail the community assessment and its outcomes; and (2) to propose – based on the Village of River Forest’s current situation - an Action and Evaluation Plan for the Village consider adopting and submitting to AARP.

Vision, Mission, and Values

The **vision** is to have a community that is livable and sustainable, is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and supportive community features and services. These resources will enhance personal independence; allow residents to thrive as they age in place; foster residents’ engagement in the community’s civic, economic, and social life; and support individuals and families when a loved one needs additional care.

The **mission** is to create and sustain a more livable Village for older adults who choose to age in place in their current home or in this community and to create a community where people of all ages and backgrounds can thrive with a good quality of life as they grow older.

Our **values** include:

- **respecting** older adults as experienced, vital contributors to the social, economic, civic and life of the community
- **inclusion** of voices and needs of ALL older adults in our planning, programs, and policies
- having a **shared vision** and **common agenda** for quality of life in the Village of River Forest
- **collaboration** with local, regional, and national stakeholders doing related work
- **use of current data and information** to guide the work
- **promotion of existing** programs and services
- **piloting of best practices** from other Age-Friendly communities
- **ensuring** that individuals have access to existing and new **technology**

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- promoting **inter-generational solutions** and community improvements which benefit multiple generations

Members:

Trustee Respicio Vazquez, Chair (age)
Daniel Lauber (age)
Deborah Frederick (age)
James Flanagan (age 56)

Lydia Manning (age 45)
Barbara Mirel (age)
Helen Kwan (age)

**all members worked on the assessment and creation of this report as well as action and implementation plan*

Description of the Ad Hoc Committee

This age-friendly planning committee was comprised of a group of River Forest residents who worked together to make this community more accessible and supportive for people of all ages. We have identified and offered suggestions for addressing barriers to participation and inclusion, such as lack of transportation or insufficient housing options for older adults and other factors to improve the quality of life for older adults in River Forest.

Members of the committee include representatives from local government, community organizations, community members, as well as older adults themselves. The goal of this age-friendly planning committee is to create a community that is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive for people of all ages.

SECTION 2: RATIONALE FOR AGE FRIENDLY RIVER FOREST

An age friendly community engages older people and understands that to be age-friendly, the community must consider the social, economic, environmental, and lifestyle factors that influence wellness, quality of life, and aging. Age friendliness means making the Village of River Forest a community where people of all ages and backgrounds can thrive with a good quality of life as they grow older.

In November, 2019, the Village of River Forest became a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Network members are expected to create and implement an Action Plan to further achieve the qualities of age-friendliness found in AARP's Livability standards [give website]. Accordingly, in February 2020, the River Forest Village president constituted a seven-member Age-Friendly Advisory Ad Hoc Committee with the following two charges:

- (1) To conduct a baseline assessment of existing age-friendliness in River Forest by surveying members of the community; and
- (2) from results, to develop an Action Plan for the Board of Trustees to adopt and submit to AARP. After being in the AARP Network for five years, River Forest will evaluate the outcomes of the Action Plan and, based on outcomes will create a new set of goals and corresponding Action Plan to renew its membership for another five years.

The members of the River Forest Age-Friendly Advisory Ad Hoc Committee and the Village staff member on the Committee comprise substantial knowledge and experience in aging in-

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place, gerontology, and city and community planning. The Committee met monthly from July, 2020 to present, devoting ourselves to the following tasks:

- Educating ourselves about the tenets of age-friendliness developed by AARP and the World Health Organization; programs implemented in other AARP designated age-friendly cities and communities, public testimony, expert testimony and initiatives in our own Village.
- Reviewing other survey examples, considering options and choosing the effective survey questions for the community to assess age-friendliness in River Forest.
- Creating, pilot testing and disseminating the survey to a representative sample of XXX residents 50 years old and older and achieving a 60 per cent response rate.
- Analyzing and interpreting responses to identify positive aspects of age-friendliness currently found in River Forest, aspects in need of improvement, and aspects that are high priorities.
- Relating survey results to River Forest's 2022 score on AARP Livability and to other salient research related to communities taking steps to anticipate and support aging populations.
- Composing a comprehensive Action Plan accompanied by Evaluation methods and finalizing this report.

Throughout these processes the Ad Hoc Committee tied the assessment and the Action Plan to the vision, mission, and values of the Village of River Forest, as detailed in the Community Profile above. To do so, the Ad Hoc Committee identified ways in which the vision, mission, and values relate to AARP's domains of and criteria for Livability in Age-Friendly communities. We then focused the survey instrument and the sections of the Action Plan roughly on the following domains and criteria set forth by AARP.

AARP's "Age-Friendly" communities initiative is designed to help communities become more livable for people of all ages, including older adults.

AARP's Age-Friendly Domains:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and social inclusion
6. Civic participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services
9. Education and lifelong learning

Additionally, AARP's indicators of livability are factors that contribute to the overall livability of a community. These indicators can include the availability of public transportation, the quality of local schools, the crime rate, and the availability of healthcare.

AARP indicators of livability:

Housing - affordability and access
Neighborhood - proximity and security
Transportation - safety and convenience
Environment - clean air and water
Engagement - civic and social involvement
Health - prevention, access, and quality
Opportunity - inclusion and possibilities

Indicators of livability are likely to overlap with AARP's age-friendly domains, as both are concerned with making communities more livable for all residents. However, the age-friendly domains focus specifically on the needs of older adults, while indicators of livability may be more broadly applicable to people of all ages.

This list of recommendations to the Village has been created using survey input from older people and captures older people's priorities and concerns in the Village. This summary document is intended to provide leaders and decision-makers with the necessary information to construct, implement and evaluate an Age Friendly Action Plan for the Village of River Forest.

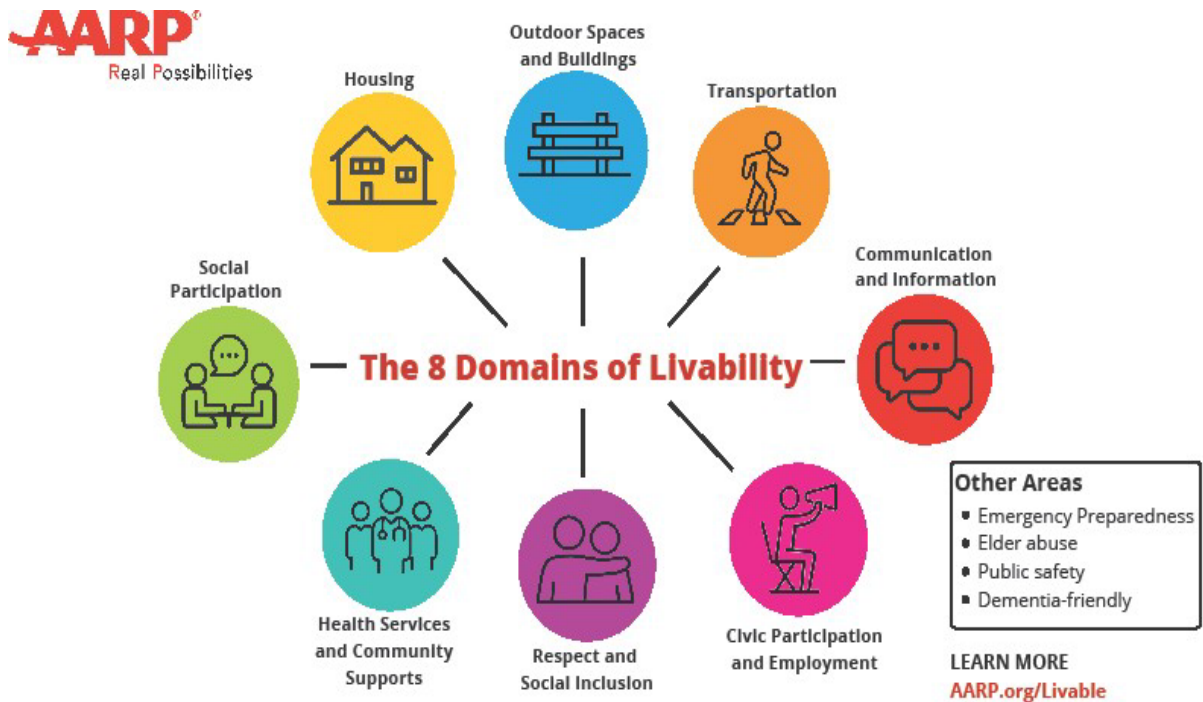
SECTION 3: OVERVIEW OF AGE FRIENDLY (AARP and WHO)

In 2006 the World Health Organization (WHO) created a network, the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, to prepare the world for the rapidly aging society. Its framework includes eight domains of livability that impact older adults and can be used to help a community gauge, organize, and prioritize how to become a livable community. Continuing the effort by WHO,

AARP created the Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in the United States. The AARP network is affiliated with the WHO's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities initiative.

The Domains of Livability

The Domains of Livability framework is used by many of the towns, cities, counties, and states enrolled in the AARP Network of the Age-Friendly States and Communities to plan their work to be more livable for people of all ages. Learn more at <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>



Illustrations from iStock

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Figure 1 Graphic with a circle for each area - outdoor spaces, transportation, communication, civic participation, respect, health services, social participation, and housing. Plus, areas of emergency preparedness, elder abuse, public safety, dementia-friendly, and **technology**.

1. Social Participation: To combat isolation, there will be opportunities for older adults to engage in the life of their community with accessible and affordable activities that are meaningful, engaging, and safe.
2. Respect and Social Inclusion: Everyone feels valued. The wisdom and experience of older adults are considered with intergenerational and multicultural options to eliminate ageism.
3. Civic Participation and Employment: Older adults in River Forest will continue to work for pay, volunteer their skills, and actively engage in community life.
4. Communication and Information: Communities support the dissemination of and access to information in various ways.
5. Community and Health Services: All people have access to affordable health care and community services that help them live safely and with dignity
6. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: Green spaces, safe streets, sidewalks, outdoor seating, and accessible buildings are used and enjoyed by people of all ages.
7. Transportation: Recognizing the geographic needs of the state, transportation in River Forest will be safe, reliable, and easy to use, including accessible and affordable public transit.

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8. Housing: Housing is accessible, designed, or modified to age in the community with affordable housing options for varying life stages.

9. Technology: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to include technology as a 9th domain of Age Friendly for the purposes of the community assessment.

AARP Domains	River Forest AF Survey Sections	AARP Livability Indicators
Social Participation	Social Participation	Engagement
Respect and Social Inclusion	Respect and Social Inclusion	Opportunity
Civic Participation and Employment	Communication and Information	Opportunity
Communication and Information	Community Support Services for Older Adults	Engagement
Community and Health Services	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Health
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Access to Transportation	Environment
Transportation	Housing and Finances	Transportation
Housing	Technology	Housing

WHO/AARP Framework, Process, and Key Principles

The WHO and AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities is a worldwide movement with over 40 countries participating across the globe. AARP is the U.S. affiliate and currently has over 400 communities in its membership network (The Network supports members through research, materials, and tools on best practices, professional development opportunities, technical assistance, and mini grants (AARP, 2019).

In a recent blog post, AARP provided guidance to assist communities as they strive to create livable communities by developing and implementing age-friendly policies and practices (AARP, 2019):

1. Leverage the current and potential contributions of older adults in your community. Look for opportunities to engage older adults as volunteers, entrepreneurs, or contributors to the local arts scene.
2. Recognize the value of retaining older adults' connections to both people and place. These associations are valuable to both the individual and the community and cannot be quickly or easily replicated in a new environment.
3. Ensure access to the built environment. Poor design of our homes, parks, streets, walkways, and transit infrastructure prevents access and engagement.
4. Support housing affordability and choice. Housing options should be available and affordable to people at all income levels.
5. Invest in a range of transportation options. One in every five persons age 65+ does not drive. Many need to use public transportation; others will need the additional support of paratransit, reduced fare taxis, or volunteer driver programs.

6. Improve health. Communities benefit when residents have access to healthy food options, opportunities for walking, biking and exercising, and access to health facilities.
7. Foster safety and personal security. Community safety and security initiatives prevent injuries, promote neighborhood cohesion, and maximize opportunities for residents to be active and engaged.
8. Support older adults and their family caregivers through long-term supports and services (LTSS). LTSS programs enable residents to stay in their homes as they age.
9. Coordinate planning processes. Community land use, housing, transportation, supportive services, and community health care planning should be interconnected.
10. Engage residents of all ages in community planning. Decisions regarding land use, housing, transportation, and services have broad effects on the lives of residents. The entire community must be represented in the process and costs and benefits must be shared across the entire community.

The Age Friendly Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee recommends that the Village of River Forest incorporate these practices into the development and implementation of Village function and related business.

SECTION 4: AGE FRIENDLY RIVER FOREST NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Joining the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in 2019 and developing the Ad Hoc Committee for Age-Friendly River Forest in 2020 represents the completion of stage one of the Age-Friendly process. The second stage of the Age-Friendly process—conducting a community needs assessment—began in August of 2020. The needs assessment was designed and conducted by the Ad Hoc Committee for Age-Friendly River Forest.

Community Profile

Introduction to River Forest

River Forest was incorporated as a Village on October 30, 1880. Prior to that, it was considered part of a larger community called Harlem, which included parts of Oak Park and Forest Park. Fearing the possibility of alcohol-related problems if Harlem incorporated, River Forest residents banded together to incorporate a smaller and initially "dry" community. Forest Park and Oak Park followed suit and were incorporated in 1884 and 1901, respectively.

Ten miles west of the Loop on the eastern bank of the Des Plaines River, River Forest grew from a settlement established near a sawmill in 1831 into one of the Chicago area's most picturesque suburbs. Like its sister village of Oak Park, the community experienced growth after the Chicago fire of 1871, when displaced city residents moved west looking for a new place to settle. After the village made infrastructure improvements in the late 19th century, the population grew quickly and became known for significant residential architecture such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Winslow House.

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River Forest has a strong base of residents who are committed to keeping the community vibrant and providing support to those who need it. For example, through grants and philanthropic fund management, the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation supports local nonprofits and social-service organizations.

The Village of River Forest provides a variety of services aimed at its older adult residents. Such programs and services include the: Senior Handyperson Program, Senior Basement Protection Program, and Senior Citizen and Persons with Disabilities Snow Removal Program. Furthermore, the Village of River Forest and the Townships of Oak Park and River Forest. Township Senior Services of Oak Park and River Forest continues to provide a full array of services such as meals, transportation, care management, information/referral, as well as various support programs. Additionally, the River Forest Library and the River Forest Community Center provides enhanced programming for older adults (i.e., Celebrating Seniors Week in May during the Administration on Community Living's Older Americans Month, Coffee Mondays and Celebrating Seniors All Year Long).

Demographic and Diversity of River Forest

River Forest is an affluent community of 11,597 with an average household income of \$206,744. Nearly three-quarters of all adults age 25 or older have a college degree. Persons 65 and older make up 17.5 percent of the population, and 94 percent of homes report having a computer and a broadband internet subscription.

- Population – 11,597
- Median Age – 41.6
- Per Capita Income – \$73,339
- Median Home Value – \$568,900
- Median Family Income – \$158,929
- Mean Family Income – \$251,095
- Median Household Income – \$106,947
- Mean Household Income – \$206,744
- Unemployment Rate (IDES) – 4.8 percent

The population is 84.1 percent white, 4 percent Black or African American, 4.8 percent Asian and 6.4 percent Hispanic or Latino (of any race). When considering racial diversity, the Village of River Forest can be considered homogenous. However, as a community the Village is diverse in other ways, including in ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and a range of other factors. The Village of River Forest is committed to diversity and inclusion as evidenced by the creation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group and recent diversity and inclusion partnerships with the surrounding communities of Maywood and Melrose Park, IL.

**Source: US Census Bureau (2021). Population by Age and Sex for the United States: 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/riverforestvillageillinois>*

Description of Age Friendly Features

Age-friendliness is an important part of any community, and the Village of River Forest is no exception. From the services and amenities that it provides, to the activities and programs it offers, River Forest works hard to ensure that it is a place that is welcoming and accommodating to all ages.

River Forest has an excellent public transportation system that is accessible and safe for older adults, making it easier for them to get around. Additionally, the community has sidewalks and pathways that are wheelchair-friendly, allowing older adults and those with mobility issues to safely navigate the neighborhood. River Forest also offers a number of activities and programs to keep older adults engaged and active. These include classes and social events that are designed to bring older adults together and give them the opportunity to socialize and make new friends.

Additionally, there are health and mobility resources that are available to help older adults stay independent and remain in their homes. Finally, the Village of River Forest is committed to providing services and support that are tailored to meet the unique needs of older adults. This includes access to health care, physical therapy, and nutrition services, as well as financial and legal assistance. Overall, River Forest is an age-friendly place that meets the needs of most all individuals.

What Did We Do?

Beginning in August 2020, the Village of River Forest's Age Friendly Advisory Ad Hoc Committee met virtually at monthly meetings to gather information and develop recommendations outlined in this report. The breadth of the meetings ranged from an overview by AARP about the tenets of an age-friendly state, presentations by AARP designated age-friendly cities and communities, public testimony, and expert testimony. Additionally, the committee created, disseminated, and analyzed the results from a community-wide survey with a representative sample size of middle-aged and older adults in the Village (see Appendix A for survey questions, responses, and description of the sample). The survey response rate was 60%. Through each meeting, the committee understood current efforts being made with older adults in River Forest. The committee drafted essential recommendations for the Village through each meeting and working session. Following the needs assessment, we created an action plan and strategy for implementation.

How Did We Do It?

The Ad Hoc Committee conducted an age friendly needs assessment for the Village of River Forest. Using a survey from a randomly selected sample of River Forest residents age 45 and older, we captured valuable information about various elements of age-friendliness in River Forest. We assessed what older residents need and want from their perspectives to age safely and securely in the place in River Forest. Furthermore, the needs assessment provided needed information regarding the Village's aging-friendly initiative to build on existing community strengths to address gaps in services.

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To assess community needs and aspirations for experiencing age-friendliness we developed a 64-item, Likert Scale survey with questions grouped in the following categories:

Social Participation
Respect and Social Inclusion
Communication and Information
Community Support and Services for Older Adults
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
Access to Transportation
Housing and Finances
Technology
Demographics

Demographics of Respondents

A random selection was used to recruit respondents for a community survey. We used the voter registration to capture a representative sample of people over the age of 55 in the Village of River Forest. Three hundred surveys were sent to the randomized sample; 201 surveys were completed and returned establishing a response rate of 67%.

Demographic Variable	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Age		
55 - 59	33	17.2%
60 - 64	31	16.2%
65 - 74	91	47.4%
75 - 84	26	13.5%
85+	11	5.7%
Gender		
Female		60%
Male		40%
Non-binary		0%
Race		
Asian	7	3.8
Black African America	5	2.7
White	171	93.4

Inclusion of Older Adults and Diverse Populations

A randomized sampling technique was used to gather these data. The committee did not over sample for diversity. The committee does however in the listing of recommendations, advocate for policies and practices that support the inclusion of older adults and diverse populations at the Village and community level.

AARP Livability Score

The Village of River Forest, IL has an AARP Livability Score of 55 . By AARP's metrics, any score above 50 is good. River Forest gets points deducted for lack of home affordability.

What Lessons Did We Learn?

Results from the River Forest Age Friendly Survey (see Appendix A) indicated several critical areas of focus for age friendly efforts to create an action plan. Overwhelming, residents in the Village of River Forest reported wanting to age in their community. These seven domains are: housing, outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, social participation, communication and information, civic participation, and respect and human inclusion.

Key Findings from Community Age-Friendly Assessment

Note: Only items of significance emerging from survey results (concerns – less than 20% no concern, 20 to 30 is low concern, 30 to 40 moderate concern and anything greater than 40% is of high concern) as agreed upon by committee in previous discussion.

Social Participation

- Some concern about learning about social events
- Some concern about the lack of range of events and activities sufficiently varied

Technology

- No major concerns with technology for villagers
- Findings demonstrate the 96% of households have Internet and large number of people have and do use comfortably use technology

Respect and Social Inclusion

- No major concerns with age discrimination and very few getting negative remarks related to age

Civic/Social Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities

- Appear to be adequate for civic involvement and volunteers opportunities, however people expressed interesting in having more opportunities for social involvement

Communication and Information

- No major concerns other than trying to understand whether or not to use regular mail or digital communication

Community Support and Services for Older Adults

- It is important to RF is supportive of people living with dementia
- Need to do a better job helping people understand what services for OA are available and how to access services

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Existing concerns for improved seating and streetlighting

Access to Transportation

- No major concerns with access to transportation other than better communication from the Village about transport services for older adults

Housing and Finances

- Most important thing is that people have options in different settings to age in River Forest
- Caveat: we uncovered that people would entertain modify existing space to accommodate a care situation
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) – 23% would consider it

The findings from this needs assessment were used to establish priorities, set goals, and decide action steps for the Age Friendly River Forest Action Plan.

SECTION 5: AGE FRIENDLY RIVER FOREST ACTION PLAN

Using findings from the community assessment and its outcomes, this proposed action plan is based on the Village of River Forest’s current situation. The committee recommends that the Village of River Forest adopt this Action and Implementation Plan then subsequently submit the plan to AARP. The Action and Evaluation Plan will lead to the subsequent steps needed for achieving greater age-friendliness in the years to come. These steps include implementing the plan; sharing solutions, best practices and progress reports with AARP; and evaluating outcomes and impacts to guide the development of new goals.

Management of Implementation Plan

The needs of residents in all the Domains of Livability are important. Based on the findings of the Age Friendly River Forest Community Needs Assessment, the committee identified the following area as important domains to address: social participation , respect and social inclusion, communication and information, community support and services for older adults, outdoor spaces and buildings, access to transportation, housing and finances, and technology.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social participation, inclusion, and educational opportunities are another important dimension of age-friendly communities. With the age friendly framework, AARP intends for communities to combat isolation while providing opportunities for older adults to engage in the life of their community with accessible and affordable activities that are meaningful, engaging and safe.

Findings

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While information obtained from research participants shows the majority are aware that there are community level activities to be engaged in, a significant minority of respondents feel there are not enough opportunities to meet people in River Forest. River Forest residents see a strong alignment between the importance and availability of social opportunities such as continuing education, cultural activities, activities for older adults specifically, and activities for people of all ages. Some concerns were expressed about the availability of information about social activities. Respondents indicated their desire for more occasions to meet people in River Forest, more variety in event and activity programming, and more opportunities for social involvement in the Village.

Basis

- 65% strongly agree that activities and events in River Forest are organized in places that are accessible to me
- 20% of respondents feel there are not enough opportunities to meet people in River Forest.
- Only 23% of older adults in River Forest have difficulty learning about local social events.

Challenges

There was a range in responses on social participation and engagement. A solid third are Neutral about issues of inclusion, belonging, valued, and participation. This percentage suggests something may be missing in the Village to keep responders from feeling inclined to answer positively. Or it could be that they don't care about inclusion, belonging et al; but that also suggests a disengagement of sorts from the Village. The disengagement is not negative if it comes from residents finding a sense of "community" elsewhere (personally made friendships, Chicago-wide groups and places). Finding out reasons for Neutrals is important for determining whether actions of various types by the Village would be worthwhile.

Goal (Lauber)

To combat isolation while providing opportunities for older adults to engage in the life of their community with accessible and affordable activities that are meaningful, engaging, and safe.

Recommendations

The Village of River Forest needs to combat isolation while continuing to provide opportunities for older adults to engage in the life of their community with accessible and affordable activities that are meaningful, engaging and safe. It is important to recognize the age friendly activities that the Village of River Forest does support. For example, The River Forest Library and the River Forest Community Center provides enhanced programming for older adults (i.e., Celebrating Seniors Week in May during the Administration on Community Living's Older Americans Month, Coffee Mondays and Celebrating Seniors All Year Long).

1. Create opportunities for more expansive community engagement for older adults in River Forest

Essential Activity: Provide more opportunities for social activities and no-cost-to-older adults events and improve communication about the events

2. Expand intergenerational social opportunities

Essential Activity: Work with relevant Village departments to expand intergenerational programming in settings such as parks, libraries and other nonprofit arts organizations, community and senior centers, and other facilities

[**Note to committee:** This recommendation really needs to be refined to be a bit more precise. Are there any museums in River Forest? Any community and senior centers besides the River Forest Community Center? What conceivable “other facilities” are envisioned?]

3. Encourage the Village of River Forest to collaborate with Oak Park River Forest Township Senior Services to create programming to decrease social isolation among older adults

Essential Activity: Create daily call program or work with animal shelter, pet adoption, or friendly visitor campaign as well as additional programming by the library, parks district and RF Senior Services.

The village and partner entities like River Forest Township should host an Age Friendly/Seniors Appreciation Day Town Hall Event.

[**Note to committee:** This recommendation needs to be clarified. What is a daily call program? If we’re going to use the term, we need to specify what it is. And where does this pet adoption idea come from? If this is something that is established as an age-friendly mitigation for social isolation, then we should also be informing the other domains with similar recommendations unrelated to what we surveyed, but known to be appropriate.]

6. Expand social participation and reduce social isolation through participation in the arts

Essential Activity: The Village can partner with park district and the Oak Park Art League to offer an intergenerational arts-education program where older adults and children are paired together to learn about local art history and make art together in a dedicated seminar series.

RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

In an age friendly community, everyone feels valued. The wisdom and experience of older adults is considered with intergenerational and multicultural options, with a goal to eliminate ageism.

Findings

A large number of respondents reported feeling valued as a community member in the Village. Age discrimination against River Forest seniors is not widespread. Respondents expressed there to be a low level of ageism in River Forest.

Basis

- Only about 50% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt like a valued member of the River Forest community. That more people didn't respond positively, however, might just be that it is unclear to respondents what that feeling is supposed to feel like. Almost 37% responded neutral.
- A large majority does not feel discriminated against based on age; nor have they experienced ageist comments.
- Of the 21 who do not feel valued have lived 11+ years in River Forest however have remained in River Forest despite this feeling. Eleven percent of respondents reported that they sometime feel discriminated against due to their age. (Item 10)
- Fewer than seven percent of River Forest seniors report hearing annoying or negative remarks due to their perceived age. (Item 9)

Challenges

Non-white residents are underrepresented in the survey. It's important to know if non-whites and whites have the same experience of feeling valued or not. Economic brackets may not all be represented adequately either.

Goal

To involve older residents in all aspects of village government and village life, free of ageism.

Recommendations

The Village of River Forest needs value the wisdom and experience of older adults is considered with intergenerational and multicultural options in the Village. As part of being an Age Friendly community, the Village of River Forest needs to address ageism as a public health issue.

1. Create an Anti-Ageism campaign and work to have River Forest a Village Without Ageism.

Essential Activity: Adopt the core principles of the anti-ageism the Dr. Becca Levy ABC framework the Reframe Aging model to combat ageism.

2. To adequately represent all interests in River Forest, gather more data from underrepresented groups

Essential Activity: Partner with Diversity and Inclusion Committee to understand the intersection of diversity and aging with respect to initiatives on inclusion and equity.

3. The village should incorporate intergenerational and multicultural factors and options into its governmental activities to include the wisdom and experience of its older residents.

[Note to committee: This section is really weak and I hope other committee members have ideas of how to bolster it.]

CIVIC/SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Civic engagement is characterized as having older adults continue to work for pay, volunteer their skills, and be actively engaged in community life.

Findings:

Survey results suggested that older adults in the Village were satisfied with opportunities for civic engagement and social participation.

Basis

- Most River Forest seniors with an opinion report that they are satisfied with opportunities for civic involvement here.
- Most River Forest seniors with an opinion are satisfied with opportunities to volunteer in the village.
- River Forest seniors tend to feel like a valued member of the River Forest community.

Challenges

Not all respondents expressed a lack of civic engagement as a concern.

Goal

Provide more opportunities for older adults continue to work for pay, volunteer their skills, and be actively engaged in community life.

Recommendations

The Village of River Forest needs to provide opportunities for older adults continue to work for pay, volunteer their skills, and be actively engaged in community life.

1. Create and maintain volunteer opportunity directly for those interested in volunteering

Essential Activity: Create a Village Volunteer Database with current volunteer opportunities and profiles of interested volunteers. The village and township should look into matching seniors with fitting volunteer opportunities.

[**Note to committee:** I can't figure out what this means even with the redundancy. Are we talking about the village? Other River Forest entities? Perhaps the following recommendation may be clearer and mean what the above recommendation is intended to mean.]

2. Create an older adult advisory committee for Village activities and new initiatives

Essential Activity: Establish an appointed group of older adults to serve an advisory committee for new initiatives and developments that the Village oversees and supports.

3. Actively involve older adults in the Village's legislative and planning processes

The village should actively seek to involve older adults to engage the "aging perspective" into the village's legislative and planning processes through mechanisms to regularly consult with older adults on specific codes, plans, policies, and ordinances, including regular review from an "aging perspective" of village codes, policies, plans, and ordinances.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Age Friendly communities support the dissemination of and access to information in a variety of ways.

Findings

Respondents indicated the need to receive information from the Village in various media forms (print and electronic).

Basis

- River Forest seniors report that they are comfortable using electronic communication devices.
- River Forest seniors understand digital and printed communications from the village.
- While most River Forest seniors prefer to receive village communications electronically, a significant percentage prefer to receive village communications by mail.

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- Nearly nine in ten River Forest seniors report they are comfortable using the Internet, smart phones, and other electronic devices. (Items 6-8)
- More than three quarters of River Forest seniors report that the digital information the village sends them is easy to read in terms of type face and size. (Item18)
- More than 92 percent of River Forest seniors report that they can understand printed information from the village (Item19) while 86 percent say the same about digital information. (Item 20)
- While 60 percent prefer to receive village information via electronic means (Item21), nearly 29 percent prefer to receive village information in print via the U.S. mail.

Challenges

The biggest challenge social services serving older adults face is getting the public to understand what services are available for older adults, especially when consumers are not in immediate need. The Village and Township of River Forest need to better communicate and promote offerings to older adults and their families.

Goal

Better support a variety of options for the dissemination of, and access to, information to more effectively communicate with older adults.

Recommendations

The Village of River Forest needs to better support a variety of options for the dissemination of and access to information.

1. Further refine network of communication channels in River Forest for receiving and sharing information such as community events and services [**Note to committee:** Can somebody please explain what this actually means in plain English?]

Essential Activity: Work to eliminate digital divide by providing more information in the form of mailings

2. Create an Age Friendly Rubric and Checklist that in incorporated in all Village work/decision-making and planning [**Note to committee:** I suspect folks may be confused by the word “rubric” – a work I love, frankly. But I’ve got to admit I’m not quite sure how that fits

in here. This recommendation aligns well with other recommendations to inform village activities with an aging perspective.]

Essential Activity: Develop a rubric with input from aging experts to help the Village maintain an inclusive age-friendly perspective when developing programs, policies, procedures, and protocol that the Village governs and oversees.

3. The village should increase awareness of existing resources that support older adults as they age in place in their home or this community. [Note to committee: This recommendation aligns well with other recommendations.]

4. The village should work to eliminate the digital divide by giving residents more opportunities to receive village information by mail.

5. Establish and maintain public posting sites, including additional kiosks in strategic locations

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Findings

Older adults in River Forest reported the need for better communication about services among community organizations, government agencies, and health care providers aimed at meeting the needs of older adults. Furthermore, there was considerable concern regarding the lack of information on the available services for older adults and the ability to access those services when needed. Approximately, 60% percent of participants indicated they know about older adult services and can access them. This suggests that there is a considerable percentage of the population of older adults in the Village that do not know what services exist. Respondents also expressed a significant interest in having the Village be a place that is supportive for people living with dementia.

Basis

- It is important to RF is supportive of people living with dementia
- Need to do a better job helping people understand what services for OA are available and how to access services
- Just 30 percent of River Forest seniors report that social services in River Forest meet their needs. Under eight percent reported that these services meet their needs. Sixty-two percent were neutral or chose “not applicable.” (Item 23)

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- About one in four River Forest seniors knows what services for older adults are available in River Forest (Item 24) while 26 percent know how to access these services. (Item 25)
- Fewer than six percent of River Forest seniors use services for older adults in the village. (Item 26)

Challenges

The biggest challenge social services serving older adults face is getting the public to understand what services are available for older adults, especially when consumers are not in immediate need.

1. Increase awareness of existing resources that support older adults as they age in place in their home or this community

Essential Activity: Create a speakers' bureau to provide information about senior services, create materials that can be shared with existing Village mailers, and have a special e-newsletter series dedicated to aging-related issues.

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

AARP suggests that outdoor spaces and buildings as well as green spaces, safe streets, sidewalks, outdoor seating and accessible buildings be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.

Findings

Respondents identified less issues related to the Village of River Forest's outdoor spaces and buildings. Most respondents considered the Village to value and provide availability of well-maintained and safe parks and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Survey respondents did express an interest in making River forest more walkable, expressing the desire for sidewalk improvements, adequate streetlighting and additional benches for sitting and resting be placed throughout the Village. There is a need to upgrade River Forest's street lighting to promote nighttime pedestrian and driver safety. Additionally, with more than a third of River Forest older adults expressing that there are not enough places to sit and rest in the village, more benches are needed.

Basis

Walking

- The majority of respondents considered River Forest to be a walkable community
- 19% of respondents indicated the need for safer sidewalks
- 81% indicated adequate lighting for walking and driving

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- 14% disagreed with the statement that “sidewalks in my neighborhood are safe for me to use”
- Only 10.6% disagreed with the statement that they usually have enough time to cross streets safely in River Forest” while more than 89 percent agreed

Seating

- 27% of respondents do not think seating is adequate and 22% are neutral
- More than one in four respondents reported that there are not enough places to sit or rest throughout the village
- 30%of respondents who were neutral or felt the question was not applicable, 27% reported that there are not enough places to rest or sit within River Forest.

Lighting

- 19% of respondents finding inadequate lighting for driving and walking present
- 31 % disagreed with the survey statement “Street lights in River Forest are bright enough for me to safely walk at night.”

Challenges

It will take a coordinated effort by the Village, park district, and other entities to meet needs related to lighting, sidewalk-related safety improvements as well as providing benches and providing places to sit and rest throughout the Village.

Goal

Facilitate safer pedestrian, vehicular, and cyclist movement throughout River Forest, especially for seniors in residential neighborhoods.

Recommendations

River Forest needs to ensure that the Village has green spaces, safe streets, sidewalks, outdoor seating, and accessible buildings are used and enjoyed by people of all ages.

1. Provide brighter lighting that is confined to the streets and sidewalks through the use of light shields and directed lighting to keep light from bleeding onto front lawns and into living rooms and front porches

Essential Activity: Working the safety commission, the Village can implement a lighting initiative to purchase and install more lighting throughout the Village

2. Continue to improve sidewalks are accessible and safe for walking.

Essential Activity: Do improved and routine maintenance on existing sidewalks and walkways; consider a sidewalk snow removal program for all walkways in the Village. The village should Incorporate into its capital improvements program sidewalk and curb repair to ensure pedestrian safety and accessibility for those whose mobility is limited.

3. Implement bench-installation program and related map for resting throughout the Village

Essential Activity: Creating a bench purchasing campaign, where Villagers can purchase and dedicate a bench on the parkway nearest to their residence or in other designated locations in the Village. Proceeds can go toward aging-related efforts and services in the Village.

The village should develop a plan to strategically locate resting places for older pedestrians and cyclists and incorporate this plan into the village's capital improvements program.

The village should produce and widely circulate online and in print a map showing resting places throughout the village.

ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

ARPR encourages that towns, cities, and villages recognize the geographic needs in their communities, and provide transportation options that are safe, reliable, and easy-to-use, including accessible and affordable public transit. Transportation was identified by respondents as being accessible, however survey results indication that the majority of residents drive themselves places. In general, the Village should have accessible, convenient, reliable, and affordable public transportation.

Findings

While River Forest seniors have easy access to public transportation, they overwhelmingly continue to drive themselves to get where they need to go. The vast majority of River Forest seniors continue to be independent in their transportation choices. Relatively few depend on others for their transportation. In general, older adults in River Forest are largely unaware of the transportation services that River Forest Township provides.

Basis

- Nearly 70% of River Forest seniors report they have easy access to public transportation such as Metra, buses, and the Elevated. Fewer than seven percent do not. However, fewer than eight percent usually take public transportation.
- 90% of River Forest seniors report that they usually drive themselves where they need to go.

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- Relatively few depend on others for their transportation with fewer than seven percent usually taking a taxi or rideshare, and less than five percent reporting they depend on others to get to where they need to go.
- Fewer than four percent need assistance to get from their home to their ride.
- 19% of respondents are aware of the transportation services the township furnishes.

Challenges

While 90 percent of respondents drive themselves to get around, there remains a proportion of older adults in River Forest who are dependent on others for transportation. The challenge is to provide and effectively inform residents about the local transportation services.

Goal

Ensure a range of safe, reliable, affordable, accessible, and user-friendly transportation options to maximize the mobility of older adults.

Recommendations

River Forest needs to have transportation options that are safe, reliable, and easy to use, including accessible and affordable public transit.

1. Maximize awareness and use of existing transportation and mobility options for residents in River Forest

Essential Activity: Communicate availability and cost of buses and cars: CTA fixed routes, on-demand, travel train, and private and small-organization vans and cars, and other transports serving the Village

2. Promote use of existing transportation options

Essential Activity: Document and promote use of active transportation options with maps and directories

3. Create public transportation platforms (entry and exit ways) that are accessible

Essential Activity: Make the CTA and METRA stations accessible (ADA and age friendly)

4. The village should assure that traffic signals allow enough time for mobility-limited people to cross the street.

5. The village should acknowledge the reality of older adult drivers and support their evolving competencies and needs through enhanced roadway design and appropriate visibility and nonglare lighting standards. [Note to committee: This recommendation is intimately related to the recommendation on street lighting under the “Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Domain.” I’m suggesting including it here in this broader language because it is just plain appropriate here under “Transportation” and that’s where a reader would expect it to be.]

HOUSING AND FINANCES

In an age friendly framework, AARP defines has determined that housing needs to be accessible and designed or modified to support people desiring to age in the community.

Findings

The average home in River Forest is nearly 100 years old in a Village with a footprint of 2.2 square miles. There is very little open space and limited existing space for redevelopment. Most residents believe their home is accessible and visitable. The vast majority of respondents feel safe in their home and in their neighborhood. A majority of respondents report that their home could accommodate another person living with them. The vast majority of respondents reported income adequate to cover basic housing costs including property taxes. Nearly 25% of respondents would consider modifying their home to accommodate another adult, caregiver or parent. Furthermore, 25% would consider building and living in an “in-law suite” or accessory dwelling unit (ADU).

Basis

Survey data indicated that:

- 87% of respondents believe their home is accessible to them and those that visit
- 80% of respondents report their home will allow another to live with them
- 95% of Villagers feel safe in their homes
- 9% strongly agreed and 18% agreed they would consider modifying their homes or building an ADU to accommodate future needs
- Nearly a quarter of River Forest seniors would consider modifying their property to add an accessory dwelling unit and would consider living in an accessory dwelling unit. More than 23 percent of those surveyed reported that they would consider modifying their property to create an accessory dwelling unit and nearly 24 percent would consider living in one. (Items 50 and 51)
- Similarly, nearly 24 percent would consider modifying their property to create a separate living space for a caretaker, boarder, or parent. (Item 49)

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- 90% of older adults in River Forest report that their current home would allow them to have another person live with them. (Item 45)
- Close to one in five River Forest seniors report that they cannot easily meet their monthly housing costs including property tax. (Item 42)

Challenges

Approximately 25% of respondents would consider modifying their homes to enable others to live there, including putting in an ADU or in-law suite. This same quarter also says they dwell in homes that support having another person live there. This group of respondents span all ages but are most heavily weighted to 55-74 years old (33% of them) and 61% of this group of respondents are also willing to live in in-law suites or ADU. Of the people who strongly agree that they're willing to live in these units, 100% of them are in the group of respondents who say they'd consider modifying their home.

Goals

1. Ensure that village codes, programs, policies, and practices facilitate enabling older River Forest residents to age in place.
2. Ensure that a range of affordable and accessible housing options are available to older River Forest residents to enable them to age here in community

Recommendations

River Forest needs to encourage housing that is accessible and conducive to aging in place. Create a streamlined process for modifications to accommodate needs of older adults. Encourage the development of a moderately priced senior living facility. Explore the possibility of accessory dwelling units. Furthermore, the Village needs to work to ensure access to the built environment while promoting quality design of homes and housing infrastructure to bolster access, affordability, and ability to age in place..

1. Facilitate a continuum of housing options affordable to River Forest seniors to enable them to age in community for as long as they wish to live here. (DL)

Essential Activity: Facilitate enabling River Forest seniors to remain in their current homes as they grow older

2. Create and sustain adequate and comprehensive housing options to rent and/or own which are suitable for a wide range of incomes, levels of ability, and across stages of life

Essential Activity: Develop a River Forest Age Friendly housing vision statement

- 3. Create and support the development of an age-friendly framework for the Housing and Building Zoning Commission in the Village to ensure opportunities for older adults to modify housing accordingly**

Or

The village should train village staff and members of its Zoning Board of Appeals in age-friendly planning and zoning practices that ensure opportunities for older adults to modify their homes so they can age in place.

Essential Activity: Create a rubric or toolkit using the National Aging in Place Council's list of best practices for any new development that the Housing and Building Zoning Commission oversees

- 4. Create a streamlined process to facilitate modifications for older adults living in the Village of River Forest by supporting them in understanding and accessing home modification resources (builders, products, workshops, and funding)**

Essential Activity: Create a fast-track system for home modifications specifically for older adults and people with disabilities

- 5. Explore the need for new zoning codes that allow and promote for future need of accessory dwelling units for older adults to use how best they see fit.**

Essential Activity: Conduct in-depth housing study on options for age and ability friendly housing and housing options (ADUs, congregate housing, group homes, etc.)

- 6. The village should examine and revise its zoning and building codes to facilitate age-friendly home modifications and design to make current homes of older residents more accessible to seniors with disabilities.**

- 7. The village and township should educate residents about options available for home modification that will enable seniors to remain in their homes.**

This can include publishing and widely distributing in print as well as online a directory of age-friendly contractors, builders, consultants, products, and funding sources for home modifications to enable seniors to age in place.

- 8. Support the pilot of a best practice home-sharing program for older adults living in the River Forest**

Essential Activity: Work with Betsy Kelly and the River Forest Township to publicize and pilot the RF Home Sharing Program.

The village should work with River Forest Township and private entities to expand home sharing opportunities through design and pilot programs and education of villagers about home sharing options.

- 9. The village and township should expand opportunities for home care and assisted living type services by educating the public about available services and establishing a local registry of licensed/certified providers. Alternatively, the village could participate in a regional registry of these services and publicize the registry to River Forest residents.**

- 10. The village should amend its zoning code to permit River Forest residents to add, with minimal administrative barriers, an accessory dwelling unit as long as the older adult owner of the property lives in the main home or the accessory dwelling. [Note to committee: It is critical to include the final part of this recommendation in order to stay laser-focused on the reason for allowing accessory dwelling units and to address one of the reasons there is opposition in River Forest to accessory dwelling units, namely that they will be turned into mini-dorms or speculative multi-family rentals.]**

- 11. The village should amend its zoning and building codes to adopt universal design in new home construction to enhance safety for all ages and train home builders and contractors in universal design to expand housing opportunities in River Forest for older adults.**

- 12. The village should retain experts to review the village code to identify provisions that impede or prohibit the establishment of a full continuum of housing options for seniors to age within River Forest.**

- 13. The village should amend its zoning ordinance to replace those zoning provisions that impede establishing assisted living facilities small enough to emulate a family and other community residences for people with disabilities with provisions that comply with the nation's Fair Housing Act. [Note to committee: Let's be realistic. While nobody really wants to have to live in a nursing home or even a group home, our survey reveals that nearly a third of respondents voiced interest in such living arrangements. In their answers to question 60, 32.61 percent of survey respondents ranked a group home as their second or third choice of the "types of home they would consider moving to next in River Forest." That puts this housing option well above the threshold the committee established to include in the report/plan. Accessory dwelling units were the first, second, or third choice of fewer respondents with 26.8 percent — lower than group homes and we've included that in the report. Retirement homes were the second and third choice of 31.75 percent of respondents; nursing homes were 18.92 percent.]**

- 14. In exchange for increases in density beyond that allowed as of right in new developments and redevelopments, the village should amend its codes to require the inclusion of affordable middle-class housing that broadens the economic and racial**

diversity of older adults in River Forest in accord with the aims of the village’s Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity initiative.

15. The village should promote and facilitate the conversion of seniors’ conventional housing ownership to mutual housing associations or low–equity cooperatives to enable seniors to affordably age in place and in community. [**Note to committee:** This is an example of informing our recommendations with solutions that work. Despite efforts of the real estate industry to suppress low equity cooperatives and mutual housing associations, they have been the most successful way to keep ownership housing affordable to the middle class in this nation’s history.]

[Alternative language to the above recommendation]

The village should look into amending village codes to facilitate the development of age–friendly “missing middle housing” that provides age-appropriate ownership opportunities through low–equity cooperatives and mutual housing associations.

TECHNOLOGY

- No major concerns with technology for villagers
- Findings demonstrate the 96% of households have Internet and large number of people have and do use comfortably use technology

Recommendations

1. Consider creating public WIFI hotspots throughout the Village of River Forest for more people to access the Internet.

Essential Activity: Create a RF Village Wide Wi-Fi program and eliminate the need for any resident to pay a provider for Internet

Conclusions

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This preliminary report serves to inform the Village of River Forest Board on the data gathered and how that shaped the recommendations. Further exploration may be needed on various recommendations to develop an action plan. The Age-Friendly Advisory Ad Hoc Committee conducted this work in an unprecedented pandemic and that provided a unique lens to inform this work.

Age-Friendly River Forest is about making critical investments that will help older adults live healthier and more fulfilling lives as they age in place, and continue to contribute in myriad ways to making River Forest a better place to grow up and grow old. An Age Friendly River Forest strives to be a community where people can live in place where they are respected and included, that are free of barriers based on a person's age, and where they are recognized for what they have done and added to our state. People of all ages should feel they and their families can live good lives as they grow old.

The Age-Friendly Advisory Ad Hoc Committee developed recommendations in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic. This experience suggests there may be a need for emergency preparedness as a unique and 9th domain of livability.

SECTION X: APPENDICES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Appendix A – Survey
- Appendix B – Village Ordinance

SECTION X: REFERENCES

AARP (2019). AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities: The member list. Retrieved from <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/member-list.html>

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