



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

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 – 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: Elijah Bebora at ebebora@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 ebebora@vrf.us by 4:00 PM on September 14, 2022.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes
4. Committee Member Updates: Dementia Friendly River Forest (DFRF) and Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative (AFCC)
5. Old Business
 - a. Discussion of Findings and Proposed Actions
 - b. Preparation & Drafting of the Age Friendly Report - Discussion
6. New Business
7. Next Meeting: October 12, 2022
8. Adjournment

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
AGE-FRIENDLY AD HOC COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Age Friendly Ad Hoc Committee was held on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, 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 6:05 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

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

Absent: None

Also Present: Management Analyst/Deputy Clerk Elijah Bebora

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Committee Member Lauber made a motion, seconded by Committee Member Mirel, to approve the July 13, 2022, meeting minutes.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

4. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES: DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY RIVER FOREST (DFRF) AND AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES COLLABORATIVE (AFCC)

Committee Member Manning stated that she has no updates at this time.

Chairperson Vazquez stated that he has no updates from the Mayor’s Metropolitan Caucus Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Preparation and Drafting of the Age Friendly Report – Discussion

The Committee had a discussion on the preparation and drafting of the age friendly report.

Committee Member Mirel stated that she performed a comparison with the seven domains and 61 indicators. Her draft makes sure that she matches the domains and indicators to questions that were asked to survey recipients. She analyzed what she thought was important to pull out of what the data showed. Her draft gives all the data from AARP as well as from the survey with an additional correlation that she performed.

Member Lauber shared with the Committee an outline of timelines for completing various stages of the age-friendly report.

Chairperson Vazquez requested that the Committee Members send their proposed findings and action items by September 7th so that they may be included in the packet for the September 14th meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. None

7. NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

8. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Member Flanagan made a motion, seconded by Committee Member Manning to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Elijah Bebora, Secretary

Elijah Bebora

From: Debbie Frederick <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, September 6, 2022 7:46 AM
To: Elijah Bebora
Subject: Re: AFC Reminder for September Meeting

Elijah,

1. The draft says that AARP scores show that RF has ample public transit, and AARP scores and surveys show “that RF is a walking city,” and a “minority (20-25%) would like better lighting and time to cross the street.”

-The majority surveyed don't use public transportation/rideshare. The walkers surveyed maybe walk for exercise or enjoyment and have no issue with sidewalks and lighting.

-Given these facts plus the fact that the only public comment our committee received was regarding street safety this should be a priority. He stated “the streets of the NE quadrant” aren't safe, lack signage, have high speed car and truck traffic, and little enforcement.”

-Improvement of all these factors would contribute to making RF a walkable, safer city.

2. AARP metrics show we are worse than the national median in Housing costs and Housing cost burden, and those surveyed appear most to prefer to age in place at home.

-Challenges show Home modification while possible is not attractive to most, and we discussed that most didn't have an idea of the cost of such modifications so the weight this position has in our results might need to be adjusted.

7. Most of those surveyed said they don't know what senior services are available, and we discussed that is often because we don't search for them until we need them.

-Senior Services information is valuable for all RF residents as a resource along with all of the other village information. Electronic communication is efficient, but printed information for the seniors is a sure way to having it more easily readable.

Jim Flanagan
September 7, 2022

The Age Friendly Ad Hoc Committee conducted a survey to determine the needs of River Forest as they relate to the AARP indicators of livability. Those indicators are as follows:

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

Key findings identified by the River Forest Age Friendly Survey

River Forest needs to address the domains of Opportunity, Engagement, Neighborhood and Housing. Overall River Forest does a good job in all domains but is rich in resources for the domains of Transportation, Environment and Health.

Opportunity

River Forest needs to do a better job communicating with the older adult population about resources available in the village.

Engagement

River Forest needs to do a better job of creating opportunities for community engagement and social participation. Residents expressed an interest in more opportunities to engage socially to further develop feelings of inclusion.

Neighborhood

Residents expressed an interest in making River Forest more walkable. Sidewalk improvements, streetlighting and additional benches are examples of such improvements.

Housing

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.

Village of River Forest AARP Age-Friendly Report

Key Findings

Results from the River Forest Age Friendly Survey (see Appendix A) indicated four critical areas of focus for age friendly efforts moving forward. Overwhelming, residents in the Village of River Forest reported wanting to age in their community. Five of the eight domains need attention.

Housing

An essential part of being able to age in a community is the ability to age in place. This necessitates the demand for age-appropriate and affordable housing and dwelling structures that enable people to optimize their agency and abilities. Respondents were asked if they would consider modifying the property to accommodate others or living in an accessory dwelling unit. Nearly 25% of respondents indicated they would be willing to modify to live in age friendly space.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Older adults in River Forest feel strongly that there needs to be adequate street lighting for wayfinding, walking, and driving at night. Additionally, respondents indicated the desire for more seating and places for stopping to sit and rest are needed throughout the Village.

Social Participation and Civic Participation

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. Survey results suggested that older adults in the Village were eager for more opportunities for civic engagement.

Communication and Information

Respondents indicated the need to receive information from the Village in various media forms (print and electronic). 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 salient interest in having the Village be a place that is supportive for people living with dementia.

Village of River Forest AARP Age-Friendly Action Plan

The needs of Village residents in all Eight Domains of Livability are important. Based on the findings of the AFRF Survey and other community assessments and reports, the Age Friendly Ad Hoc Committee these immediate priorities:

Built Environment

Housing

Outdoor Spaces

Social Environment

Communication and Information

Social Participation and Civic Participation

Throughout 2022, the committee developed goals, strategies, and actions to address each of the prioritized Domains. The Action Plan presented here represents the committee's efforts with 4 goals and 18 action items.

Included in each section of the AFRF Action Plan is the analysis constructed from the AFRF Survey.

Key Findings for Four Domains Identified as Areas to Address Using Survey Findings

1. Housing

Goal: Provide housing opportunities that are accessible, innovative, and affordable (and affordable housing?) dedicated to older adults.

To create more age friendly housing options that will allow River Forest to remain in their homes as they grow older below are strategies and action items that will make this possible.

Action Items:

1. Create housing options that will broaden economic diversity of older adults in River Forest (affordable housing)
2. Increase home modifications and age friendly design in existing residence for older adults to make existing housing stock more age friendly
 - 1a. Educate residents about options
 - 2a. Support residents in accessing home modification resources (builders, products and funding)
3. Permit River Forest residents to erect accessory dwelling units if needed to remain in homes
4. Expand Home Sharing opportunities
 - 4a. Design and pilot programs
 - 4b. Educate villagers about the options for home sharing
5. Expand opportunities for home care and assisted living type services (subsidies or vouchers?)

AARP indicator of livability: Housing that is affordable and accessible

2. Outdoor Spaces

Goal: – Enhance and Improve Public Spaces for Safety, Quality of Life and Community Access

Action Items:

1. Improve streetlighting in the village
2. Provide more opportunities of sitting and resting via benches throughout the village
3. Assess all public spaces for accessibility and ability (sidewalks, signs and wayfinding)

AARP indicators of livability:

Neighborhood (proximity and security)

Environment (clean air and water)

3. Communication and Information

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

Action Items:

1. Further refine network of communication channels in River Forest for receiving and sharing information such as community events and services
2. Work to eliminate digital divide by providing more information on the form of mailings
3. Establish and maintain public posting sites, including additional kiosks in strategic locations
4. Host village wide informational session or create a speaker's bureau on Age Friendly River Forest and related information and opportunities
5. Develop a River Forest Age Friendly Brand (logo and website) to promote and bolster Age Friendly Efforts in the Village
6. Create an Age Friendly Rubric and Checklist that is incorporated in all Village work/decision-making and planning

AARP indicators of livability: Health (Prevention, Access, and Quality)

4. Social Participation and Civic Participation

Goal: Create opportunities for more expansive community engagement

Action Items:

1. Provide more opportunities for social activities and no-cost-to-seniors events
2. Improve communication about events
3. Host Age Friendly/Seniors Appreciation Day Town Hall Event
4. Provide enhanced programming at the libraries and community centers/places for people to convene
5. Encourage Age-Friendly Business Practices through education and development of business certification program where older adults volunteer to train and certify
6. Support a database of volunteer opportunities for older adults

AARP indicators of livability: Opportunity (Inclusion and Possibilities)

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

Proposed findings and actions for RF Ad Hoc Committee (Mirel)

Incomplete – not all sections filled in

Social Participation – meet people, access events, activities, learn about events, range event

Positives

65% Agree/strongly - Activities and events in River Forest are organized in places that are accessible to me.

Challenges

Range of events currently offered is not convincingly satisfying. Needs more inquiry and likely Village attention: **I find the range of events and activities offered throughout River Forest is sufficiently varied. 37% Neutral, 32.3% Agree/strongly; 22.6% Disagree/strongly.**

AARP scoring for extent of belonging to organizations places River Forest well below the national median. Related survey questions – having opportunities for meeting people, feeling valued, learning about social events, interacting with younger generations are pretty “lukewarm” – have agreement just barely hovering around 50% or a little less.

Possible actions

Civic and Social Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities includes valued too

Positives

Challenges

This is a big gap in feedback from respondents. 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 their 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.

Over 2/3 of the people who were neutral about opportunity for social involvement were also neutral about civic opportunities. Almost ¾ of the people who were neutral about civic opportunities were neutral about RF having opportunities for volunteering.

Neutrals for opportunity for social involvement make up 45% of all 60-64 year old. And a third of all 65-74 year olds. Neutrals for opportunities for volunteering make up 42% of all 75-84 year olds. Neutrals for opportunities for civic engagements are equally distributed across ages.

Actions

Conduct additional inquiries that are very targeted. Dig into reasons for neutrality by further investigating residents' feelings and desires for social involvement, civic involvement, opportunities for volunteering, desired range of events. Find out if there is something that can be done/offered to capture the participation of the people who answered neutral or negatively about such involvement? See if there are ways to identify specific needs with specific age ranges of residents who are 55+ years old

Respect and Human Inclusion

Positives

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 age-ist comments.

Of the 21 who do not feel valued have lived 11+ yrs in RF. Clearly they have remained in RF despite this feeling.

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.

Actions

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

Housing

Positives

Feel safe in my home and believe my home is in a safe neighborhood (95% agree and 89% agree respectively). Caveat – AARP rates RF low on crime rate – above the national average based on violent and property crime/10,000 people.

A large majority agree that they do not want to live in "identifiable older-adult housing."

A large majority do not live in or want to live in multi-family units.

A large majority want to stay in their own homes. Those who own their own residences now project that if they move it would be into someplace they still owned (e.g. move from their current 2 story house to a one-story house or condo or townhouse). Only 10% of respondents had a desire for rentals.

Challenges

A good quarter 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 have 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). 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.

Circumstances may necessitate moving to "identifiable older-adult housing" despite current preferences, and since the majority of respondents want to stay in River Forest, the Village should be offer at least some options (based on assessments and "actuarial-type" projections).

AARP rates River Forest above the national average in crime.

Actions

Responses suggest that one's ownership of successive residences as aging occurs is important. Condos and townhouses or ADUs as next-step purchases appeal more to respondents than rentals, assisted living, etc. The survey did not ask if residents would rather leave the Village if they could only economically purchase next-step housing elsewhere or rent within the Village.

Create an older adult housing plan that accounts for residents' actual preferences as well as actuarial-type projections of future needs for aging-supportive housing. The plan should include concrete action steps, responsibilities across relevant groups (e.g. development, zoning, building codes, realtors, etc), and timelines. The plan might include high tech as well – creating and implementing systems that could connect seniors with available info on who's thinking about selling and buying within River Forest.

Assess relevant codes, ordinances and rework as necessary to assure that they do not impede aging supportive housing plans.

Develop and communicate evidence-based arguments for the benefit of attracting as well as keeping current older residents from moving out of the community to build a shared sense of commitment across the Village.

Look into AARP rating of high crime rate and if it is higher than people perceive, get info out to residents about staying safe and protecting property.

Technology

Communication and Information

Positives

Challenges

Responses show that respondents are not convincingly satisfied with being able to learn about events being offered. The sold

Actions

Community Support and Services

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Positive

Sidewalks are perceived as safe by 81% of respondents

Challenges based on survey responses

Street lights are not bright enough for walking at night – only a slight majority think that they are, which is not a high enough to feel confident that the current lighting safeguards against harm. Improved lighting would also help driving at night (with almost 20% of respondents finding inadequate lighting for driving at present).

Not enough places to sit. 27% of respondents do not think seating is adequate and 22% are neutral). Age-supportive communities need to plan for the reduced stamina that comes with age by providing seating of pedestrians

Questions:

If 20% of respondents don't feel that lights are bright enough for driving at night and don't have enough time to cross the street, is that a large enough percentage to a large enough percentage and driving at night
Time enough to cross the street

Actions

Conduct a lighting assessment and plan for and implement street lights where they are most needed.

Assess the distribution and placement of seating throughout the Village. With an eye on the importance of "third places" for residents, cross check with assessments of where people currently congregate and where they may like to congregate but currently don't have enough seating for it. Put in new seating and be sure to have enough shade cover. Partner if needed with local businesses in expanding seating.

Transportation Access

Positives

A large majority (91%) drives themselves places.

Challenges

AARP rates River Forest low in accessibility of transit stations. The Metra stop is not accessible.

Actions

Offer driving training locally, including training

Ease the task of driving and reduce driving times by assuring clear 2 way passage on side streets by minimizing parking on both sides of a narrow side street.

Construct accessible means for getting to and from the metra station platform.

Financial Situation

Positives

Two-thirds of RF survey respondents say they can easily meet their housing costs. Survey results show that 87% of respondents find that their incomes can cover their basic needs.

Challenges

17% cannot meet their monthly housing costs. Age groups with the largest proportion of these people are 60-64 and 85+ . in each age group they make up a considerably larger proportion than their 17% response rate.

Demographics

Comments:

Blacks are underrepresented in survey respondents (see table breakdown of race/ethnicity by gender). The respondents 65-74 are overrepresented compared to census data.

Supporting Data

Response Rate: # Respondents: 196 (6% of survey age group population)		Responses by age: (Census % of only 55-84+)	
By Race/ethnicity Asian: 3.8% (AARP 4%) Black: 2.7% (AARP 6%) White: 93.4% (AARP 85%) Hispanic: 3.2% Other		55-59 = 17.9% (22%) 60-64 = 16.5% (22%) 65-74 = 47.4% (33%) 75-84 = 13.8% (16%) 85 + = 5.73 (6.5%)	Male = 40.5% (45%) Female – 59.47% (55%)
Age	Black + 1 no age)	Asian	Hispanic
55-60 2 no response	0	1 F	1 F
60-64	0	0	3 M
65-74 3 no response	2 m 2 F	1 M 4 F	2M
75-84 1 no		1 M	
85+			

No age specified	1 F		
Total/5 of survey	5 (2.7%)	7 (3.8%)	6 (3.2% total)

Race left blank		Hispanic Left blank	
55-59	Male	65-74	Female
55-59	Female	65-74	Male
60-64	Male	55-59	Female
60-64	Female	60-64	
60-64		65-74	
65-74		65-74	
65-74		65-74	Male
65-74	Male	75-84	Female
75-84	Female		
75-84	Female		

Date: September 7, 2022

To: Age-Friendly Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee

From: Daniel Lauber

Subject: Rough Draft Suggested Findings

By no means do I suggest that these are the only findings from our survey and research. These are just the ones I've identified and they are not complete.

I've structured these in terms of the finding and the basis of the finding. I'd like to suggest that this approach will give our report greater credibility by guiding readers to the factors that lead to each finding.

I did not get to all sections of the survey. I've put about 6 or 7 hours into this and have run out of time to get this in to Elijah by today's deadline.

I want to emphasize that findings are not a popularity contest. It doesn't matter if the study shows that most seniors are satisfied with the concept surveyed. I suspect that most times when at least 20 to 25 percent of respondents indicated an issue, it may be worthy of our attention and reporting.

And I strongly suspect that we most certainly need to include demographic data about River Forest from the census and American Community Survey to provide greater context for our findings and eventual recommendations.

I realize that this is all time consuming, especially since we do not have professional staff with expertise on this — so committee members have to undertake all of this detailed work. But given all the time and effort we've all devoted to this project — as well as the time and effort Elijah and Sara have so gratuitously put into this project — we owe it to the village to take the time to produce thoughtful findings based on the survey and research available, as well as recommendations that provide a framework for actions the village and sister governing entities to implement that actually achieve the goals we adopt/recommend. There is no need to rush completion of the report to meet an artificial deadline.

Housing and Finances

Finding

River Forest seniors wish to continue to live in River Forest (“age in community”) and to remain in their current homes (“age in place”).

Basis

Nearly 68 percent of those responding agreed or strongly with the statement “It is important for me to age in River Forest.”(Survey Item 48)

Almost 79 percent of those surveyed reported they wished to continue to live in River Forest for at least six more years. Over 61 percent wish to live here for 11 or more years. (Item 59)

Similarly, nearly three quarters desire to remain in their current abode for at least six years with 56.7 percent inclined to continue to live in their current home for 11 or more years. (Item 58)

These survey results for River Forest seniors are very much in line with seniors nationwide. A 2018 survey conducted for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) found that 77 percent of adults 50 and older wish to age in community and 76 percent wish to age in place.¹

[SUGGESTION: Given this overwhelming desire to age in community, we should be looking very closely at the recommendations for fostering aging in community in *Planning Aging-Supportive Communities*, PAS Report 579, summarized in a table on pages 83-86. This really is a thorough laundry list of what a village like River Forest can actually do. I don't know that we'd want to do everything in the table, but it sure gives us a solid compilation of things the village could undertake and it would behoove us to share this information with the village board and the community in our document.]

Finding

There is substantial interest among River Forest seniors to add an accessory dwelling unit to their property. Accessory dwelling units offer the opportunity to facilitate continuing to age in place or in age in community within River Forest.

Basis

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)

¹ National Opinion Research Corporation, *2018 Home and Community Preferences Survey: A National Survey of Adults Aged 18-Plus*, (Washington, DC: American Association of Retired Persons) 8. See also pages 9-11,

More than nine in ten River Forest seniors 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)

Accessory dwelling units and home sharing with another person enhance the ability of seniors to age in place and age in community, especially those who cannot easily meet their monthly housing costs. These proportions of River Forest seniors interested in accessory dwelling units or home sharing are substantial, especially for a community that has not generated much publicity or conducted extensive conversations about these possibilities, even though they are a bit lower than the 33 percent interested nationwide.² Currently River Forest's zoning ordinance does not allow accessory dwelling units. Even if the village does amend its zoning to facilitate creation of accessory dwelling units, nobody pretends that everybody who expressed an interest will actually build them. But this level of interest strongly suggests that if allowed, a fair number of River Forest seniors would avail themselves of the opportunity to enhance their ability to age in place with an accessory dwelling unit or home sharing with another person

Nationally, half of seniors report that they already share or would consider sharing their homes as they age. Keep in mind, however, that River Forest seniors, like the rest of River Foresters, tend to be wealthier than the nation as a whole. Consequently, one of the three major reasons for home sharing nationally — to generate extra income³ — may not be a motivation for most River Forest seniors.

Social participation (items 2-5)

I'm not quite sure how what we've learned here and I hope we can discuss this section of the survey results. On the one hand, the responses to items 2-5 suggest that no widespread issues exist except perhaps that more than one in five report it's not easy to learn about social events in River Forest (item 4) and think the range of events and activities here is not sufficiently varied (Item 5). But what does that mean, especially since we live in a large metropolitan area where most social events and activities occur outside River Forest? How do we report on these five items? What does the survey actually reveal?

² Ibid. at 14. Reasons for building an accessory dwelling units are presented on page 16. The River Forest survey did not inquire into the reasons one might build an accessory dwelling unit.

³ Ibid. at 17. See also pages 18-19.

Technology (Items 6-8) and Communication and Information (Items 16-27)

Findings

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.

Basis

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.

With nearly three in ten River Forest seniors preferring to receive their village information in print, it behooves the village to identify them and provide that information via the United States Postal Service. It is very likely that while seniors report they are comfortable using their electronic devices and the Internet, this significant proportion may not be as skilled as one might hope to use the Internet effectively. They may not know how to download, save, and open files. It is safe to say that a significant proportion of seniors prefer printed material to reading a computer screen.

Senior services

Findings

River Forest seniors are largely unaware of the social services offered within the village.

Basis

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)

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)

Being located in a large metropolitan area, there is little reason to expect River Forest seniors to limit their use of social services to those available in River Forest. However, it is clear that those River Forest entities that furnish such services need to enhance their efforts to make River Forest seniors aware of what they do offer.

It is also vital to remember that, for a variety of reasons, *few people actually seek out senior services before they actually need them*. So the challenge is how to make residents aware of the senior services available *before* they actually need them — while keeping in mind that many of these services are also available outside River Forest.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Finding

There is a need to upgrade River Forest’s street lighting to promote nighttime pedestrian and driver safety.

Basis

Of those expressing an opinion in the survey, 31 percent disagreed with the survey statement “Street lights in River Forest are bright enough for me to safely walk at night.” (Item 32)

Of those expressing an opinion in the survey, 21 percent disagreed with the survey statement “Street lights in River Forest are bright enough for me to safely drive at night.” (Item 33)

These results show that at least one in five River Forest seniors report that our street lights are inadequate for safe driving and pedestrian mobility. This is not surprising given that the American Planning Association reports that “traffic safety issues are a primary concern in planning for older drivers.” While there are a number of interventions available at other levels of government to improve mobility safety for seniors, the primary tools at the local level revolve around improving *street lighting*, signage, signalization, and road conditions.⁴ Glare is often cited as a “perceptual constraint” for older drivers. Strategies that reduce the contrast between headlights and ambient lighting can ease this problem — strategies that increase ambient light on the roadways and sidewalks to a level that makes nearly all seniors (and others in River Forest) feel safer when driving or walking within the village.⁵ Brighter lighting can be 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.

One characteristic of older pedestrians is a fear of using all or part of a route due to inadequate lighting. Adequate street lighting reflects a town’s commitment to good urban design and helps drivers avoid accidents involving pedestrians.⁶

Consequently, the American Planning Association recommends that local communities “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.”⁷

Finding

More than a third of River Forest seniors expressing an opinion report that there are not enough places to sit and rest in the village

Basis

More than one in four River Forest seniors report that there are not enough places to sit or rest throughout the village. Excluding the nearly 30 percent of respondents who were neutral or felt the question was not applicable, 36 percent report that there are not enough places to rest or sit within River Forest. (Item 31)

It will take a coordinated effort by the village, park district, and other entities to meet these needs.

⁴ Bradley Winick and Martin Jaffe, *Planning Aging-Supportive Communities*, PAS Report 579 (Chicago: American Planning Association, June 2015) 6.

⁵ Ibid. at 42. This concern is equally applicable to cyclists.

⁶ Ibid. at 46-49.

⁷ Ibid, at 55, 85. The American Planning Association also recommends improved lighting as part of a community’s efforts to promote safe bicycle travel throughout a village at 55, 85.

Jim and Barbara,

Are those disagreeing with the statement skewed toward older residents? This is one of those questions where it would really help if the answers were broken down by age cohort. Did either of you break Item 31 down by age cohort? (Sorry, I'm rushing to get this in on time and don't have time to search all the great work you both assembled.)

Finding

There is general agreement that the sidewalks within the village are safe and seniors have enough time to safely cross streets.

Basis

Just 14 percent disagreed with the statement that "sidewalks in my neighborhood are safe for me to use" while more than 80 percent agreed. (Item 29)

Only 10.6 percent disagreed with the statement that they "usually have enough time to cross streets safely in River Forest" while more than 89 percent agreed. (Item 30)

It is very likely that River Forest's street design and traffic signals provide safe passage to seniors crossing streets here, at least in daylight.

Access to Transportation

Sorry, I ran out of time

Civic/Social Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities

Sorry, I ran out of time

Demographics

We should report on the age breakdown and ownership breakdown – and compare both to the nation (the ownership breakdown is very different than nationally where far fewer seniors own a home). We should also report on items 54, 55, 56, 57, 60 (with a grain of salt), and other

demographic characteristics while noting what the figures are for the Chicago metropolitan region and possibly as well as nationally and in Illinois.