



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

Wednesday, November 9, 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: Matthew Walsh at [mwalsh@vrf.us](mailto: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](mailto:mwalsh@vrf.us) by 4:00 PM on November 9, 2022.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of the August 10, 2022 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: December 14, 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 7<sup>th</sup> so that they may be included in the packet for the September 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

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Elijah Bebora, Secretary

# Village of River Forest AARP Age-Friendly Report

## Key Findings Introduction

(Manning)

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.

(Flanagan)

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.

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## Housing

(Manning)

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.

(Frederick)

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.*

(Flanagan)

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.

(Mirel)

**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.

(Lauber)

## **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.<sup>1</sup>

[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)

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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,

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.<sup>2</sup> 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 income<sup>3</sup> — may not be a motivation for most River Forest seniors.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. at 17. *See also* pages 18-19.

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

(Manning)

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.

(Frederick)

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.

(Flanagan)

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

(Mirel)

### **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

(Lauber)

### **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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>7</sup>

## 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

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

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* at 42. This concern is equally applicable to cyclists.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* at 46-49.

<sup>7</sup> *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.

## **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.

Jim and Barbara, (from Lauber)

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.

## Transportation Access (related to Outdoor spaces, separated from comments in some submissions)

(Mirel)

### **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.

(Lauber)

## **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.

## **Basis**

Two-thirds 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. (Item 34) However, fewer than eight percent usually take public transportation. (Item 35)

Nonetheless, more than nine in ten River Forest seniors report that they usually drive themselves where they need to go. (Item 36)

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. (Items 37-38)

Fewer than four percent need assistance to get from their home to their ride. (Item 39)

## **Finding**

River Forest seniors are largely unaware of the transportation services that River Forest Township provides.

## **Basis**

About 19 percent of River Forest seniors are aware of the transportation services the township furnishes. (Item 40)

Given that more than 90 percent drive themselves to get around, this is no surprise since so few have a need for these services. While the proportion of River Forest seniors dependent on others for transportation is relatively low, local transportation services still need to be provided for those who are dependent.

## Social Participation and Civic Participation

(Manning)

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.

(Flanagan)

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.

(Mirel)

**Positives (Social Participation – meet people, access events, activities, learn about events, range event)**

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.

(Mirel)

**Challenges (Civic and Social Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities includes valued too)**

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.

(Lauber)

### **Findings**

A significant minority of seniors feel there are not enough opportunities to meet people in River Forest.

A significant minority of River Forest seniors have difficulty learning about local social events.

The range of local events and activities is either not sufficiently varied for River Forest seniors or not of concern to them.

Local activities and events are held in places accessible to seniors.

### **Basis**

As a very small community within a much larger metropolitan area, it is no surprise that 26 to 45 percent of River Forest seniors reported they are neutral on social participation issues or that the issue is not applicable to them. This dynamic needs to be taken into account when evaluating the survey responses and in crafting policies and goals on these social participation issues.

While a majority of seniors expressing an opinion feel there are enough opportunities to meet people in River Forest, 30 percent of those expressing an opinion felt there are not enough opportunities. More than a third of all respondents were neutral or felt this issue was not applicable to them. (Item 2)

More than four in ten of those expressing an opinion felt that the range of local events and activities is not sufficiently varied for them. More than 45 percent of *all* respondents were neutral or felt this question was not applicable to them. (Item 5)

While most respondents report that it is easy for them to learn about local social events, 23 percent do not and 26 percent are neutral or feel local social events are not applicable to them. (Item 4)

A large proportion of River Forest seniors clearly do not restrict their social activities to just those in River Forest. Consequently, the availability of social opportunities within River Forest is not of great consequence to them even though it matters to a larger proportion of seniors.

About six percent report that local activities and events are held in places not accessible to them. (Item 3). Given the low levels of mobility-limiting disabilities among River Forest seniors, this small proportion is no surprise. However, it is important to assure that these events are held in accessible locations in accord with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

(Lauber continued, specific to Civic/Social Involvement and Volunteer Opportunities)  
This is another area where it is essential to remember that River Forest is a small town in the midst of a large metropolitan area and that seniors may be involved in civic and social activities outside of River Forest and volunteer outside of the village. This dynamic is likely reflected by the 39 to 45 percent of respondents who responded “neutral” or “not applicable” to an item.

## **Findings**

Most River Forest seniors with an opinion report that they have enough opportunities to interact with younger generations within the village.

Most River Forest seniors with an opinion report that they are satisfied with opportunities for social involvement in River Forest.

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.

## **Basis**

Just 18 percent of respondents felt they do not have enough opportunities to interact with younger generations within the village while 45 percent felt they do have enough. (Item 1) While this information needs to be placed in perspective because River Forest is not an island, there is a possibility that nearly one in five River Forest seniors could be experiencing some social isolation.

Similarly, 23 percent of responding seniors were not satisfied with opportunities for social involvement in the village while 42 percent were satisfied and more than a third were neutral or felt this was inapplicable to them. (Item 2) Again, while

perspective is needed, there is a change that more than one in five River Forest seniors could be experiencing some social isolation.

Nearly half of village seniors are satisfied with opportunities for civic involvement within the village with just 14 percent dissatisfied and 37 percent being neutral or feeling civic involvement is not applicable to them. (Item 3) Perspective is needed to determine if these levels should be of concern. **(I strongly suspect they are not of concern and don't warrant any action – but it would be helpful to have some data with which to compare our results.)**

The proportion of respondents satisfied with volunteer opportunities in River Forest is the same as those for whom local volunteer opportunities are not applicable or who are neutral. Just 16 percent are not satisfied. (Item 4) These data likely reflect the extensive opportunities to volunteer within the larger metropolitan area.

More than half of all respondents agree that they feel they are valued members of the River Forest community with just 11 percent disagreeing. Again, a significant 39 percent were neutral or felt this issue as not applicable to them. (Item 15)

## Communication and Information

(Manning)

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.

(Frederick)

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.*

(Flanagan)

### **Opportunity**

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

(Mirel)

### **Challenges**

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

(Lauber)

### **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.

## **Finding**

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.

## Sections not included in Manning Draft for Findings

(Mirel)

### 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.

(Lauber)

### Finding

Age discrimination against River Forest seniors is not widespread.

There is a low level of ageism in River Forest.

**Actually we need data on levels of ageism nationally and/or in Illinois to evaluate the relative level of ageism in River Forest. I put this finding and basis in as a place holder until we can get that data. I imagine that Lydia and Jim would be able to provide us some data to which we can compare the level in River Forest (assuming that remarks by others is the proper measure of ageism).**

## **Basis**

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)

(Lauber)

## **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.

**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. Data for these other jurisdictions provides important perspective and context for analyzing the River Forest data.**

# Village of River Forest AARP Age-Friendly Action Plan

(Manning)

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?)

(Mirel 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.

AARP indicator of livability: Housing that is affordable and accessible

(Manning)

## **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)

(Frederick)

-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.

(Mirel)

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.

Actions (transportation Access)

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.

(Manning)

### **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