

Elevating Aging-in-Community *in* Richton Park

A Strategic Guide

Content developed by Planning/Aging
in partnership with the Aging in a Changing Region
program of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus

November 2022



Executive Summary

Richton Park participated during 2022 in the “Aging in a Changing Region” (*AiaCR*) program, funded by a grant from the RRF Foundation for Aging, and led by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Planning/Aging. Planning/Aging developed strategies for Richton Park to elevate its support of Aging-in-Community. The following recommendations are divided into three broad categories: Coordination; Collaboration; and Communication Recommendations.

Coordination Recommendations

- Commit to taking a ‘whole of government’ approach to supporting Aging-in-Community
- Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal conversations and initiatives
- Review municipal operations and programs for their Aging-in-Community consistency
- Establish an Aging-in-Community Commission to play an ongoing policy and review role
- View Richton Park’s housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens
- Consider an overall Housing Plan to link and augment Richton Park’s recent successes
- Leverage public realm improvement opportunities as important to Aging-in-Community

Collaboration Recommendations

- Better collaborate with the network of existing service-providing stakeholders
- Continue and increase the level of collaborations with Rich Township Senior Services
- Establish a new working partnership with

Area Agency on Aging AgeOptions

- Incorporate the faith community into the overall Aging-in-Community effort
- Increase Aging-in-Community involvement with the Library and Park District
- Explore potential mutually beneficial partnerships with local schools
- Continue to be opportunistic seeking out Aging-in-Community partnership opportunities
- Regularly attend the MMC’s Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and other regional Aging-in-Community activities

Communication Recommendations

- Elevate and promote Richton Park’s commitment to Aging-in-Community
- Designate Village staff in multiple departments as Aging-in-Community point-persons
- Establish a one-stop Aging-in-Community Resource Center for information on existing older adult services and programming
- Consider developing an “Aging-in-Community Handbook”
- Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior

The recommendations are fleshed out in this document. It is up to the Village and community to review, select and prioritize from this list of recommendations and develop implementation plans going forward. As Richton Park’s conversations are at an early stage, additional ideas, and strategies for supporting Aging-in-Community can and should be added to this list.

WHAT IS AGING IN COMMUNITY?

Aging-in-Community refers to a coordinated municipality-wide effort to support the evolving needs and interests of its aging population.

Aging-in-Community is inclusive of the narrower term “aging-in-place” which focuses on one’s dwelling, using a broader, community-level lens to identify a set of plans, programs, procedures, and services that in combination help support its older residents.

Aging-in-Community is an important component of ‘livable community’ efforts that address the needs and interests of residents throughout their lifespans.

Communities that support **Aging-in-Community** are by definition ‘age-friendly’ and ‘dementia-friendly’ communities.

Study of **Aging-in-Community** programs throughout the United States identifies key indicators of likely success of a municipality’s **Aging-in-Community** program:

- Issue champions among (but not overreliance upon) elected officials, staff leadership, and the overall community
- Dedicated human and financial resources
- Collaborations with key aging network and other community stakeholders
- Coordination between **Aging-in-Community** and other municipal priorities

The “Aging in a Changing Region” Program

Municipalities throughout the metropolitan Chicago region – like regions throughout the country – are experiencing substantial growth in the number and percentage share of their older adult populations and are looking for strategies to help address these shifts.

Three partner organizations – the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (*MMC, serving the Chicago region’s 275 cities, towns and villages*), the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (*CMAP, the regional planning organization for Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties*), and Planning/Aging (*a consultancy focused*

on the intersection of city planning and the growing aging population) – received funding from the RRF Foundation for Aging to assist municipalities’ support of Aging-in-Community. This program – “Aging in a Changing Region” (*AiaCR*) – builds upon the idea that wherever a municipality is currently in its support of Aging-in-Community, strategic guidance can help elevate its support going forward.

In 2021 and in 2022, MMC invited municipal participation in the AiaCR program. Interested municipalities submitted applications that combined an assessment of their Aging-in-Community goals and work

to date, and assistance they envisioned to help advance these goals. The 2022 Cohort of municipalities – Bellwood and Broadview (*participating jointly*), Highland Park, Maywood, Richton Park, and Yorkville – reflects the region's diversity in terms of geography, socio-economic factors, community type, and Aging-in-Community experience.



One of Richton Park's welcoming gateway signs



WHAT THIS DOCUMENT ISN'T

- ✘ **ISN'T** a detailed physical plan document with specific infrastructure or other capital projects identified and costed out, with their implementation details outlined
- ✘ **ISN'T** a compendium of 'best practices' from other local or non-local municipalities – while identifying certain approaches from elsewhere can be valuable as references, anything planned for Richton Park should be tailored to the specifics of Richton Park
- ✘ **ISN'T** a write-up of a rigorous, data-driven assessment and planning process with a precise schedule for future evaluations and updates, as Richton Park's involvement with the AiaCR program was a qualitative assessment of current conditions and potential future efforts and strategies



WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

- ✔ **IS** a practical strategic guide tailored to Richton Park on how to elevate its current support of Aging-in-Community – designed to be used as an ongoing resource, not to gather dust on shelves due to its unreadability or impenetrability
- ✔ **IS** specific topical recommendations of further actions Richton Park may choose to take, either through utilization of its existing resources, joining with other entities in collaborative activities, or by engaging external partners
- ✔ **IS** a working framework of specific action steps that Richton Park can take to elevate its support of Aging-in-Community, and which can be modified, adapted, or augmented at any point to even better meet evolving community needs

Richton Park's Aging-in-Community Context

Richton Park's Demographics

Richton Park is a typically aging municipality, and this is likely to continue. Richton Park's broad population buckets are similar to Cook County's overall: its 65 and Over population is 11.5 percent vs. Cook County's overall 13.9 percent, its 35 to 64 population is 42.2 percent vs. Cook County's 38.5 percent, and its 34 and Under population is 46.3 percent vs. Cook County's 47.7 percent. Richton Park's 65 and Over population has increased in recent decades (*it was 8.5 percent in 2010 and 7.6 percent in 2000*), and with 22.2 percent of its population currently in the 50 to 64 age range, it appears likely to continue to do so.



*Richton Park lives its motto
"A proud past and a bright future"*

Richton Park is Steadily Aging

	Richton Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
19 and Under	3,769	27.7%	1,285,493	24.6%	2,191,110	25.7%
20 to 34	2,543	18.6%	1,204,516	23.1%	1,807,984	21.2%
35 to 49	2,729	20.0%	1,037,641	19.9%	1,713,974	20.1%
50 to 64	3,025	22.2%	971,339	18.6%	1,641,420	19.3%
65 to 74	886	6.5%	409,962	7.8%	669,758	7.9%
75 to 84	548	4.0%	217,767	4.2%	337,105	4.0%
85 and Older	138	1.0%	97,001	1.9%	149,681	1.8%
Median Age	39.6		36.6		37.2	

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Richton Park \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov/cmap)

Richton Park's Housing Stock

Richton Park's housing stock, however, is significantly different from Cook County's overall housing stock. Richton Park consists much more of detached single-family homes (64.9 percent vs. 45.5 percent in Cook County overall), and it has many moderate-sized buildings containing 2-4 dwelling units (5.4 percent vs. Cook County's overall 20.4 percent). This suggests that the majority of Richton Park's approximately 1,572 older adult residents live independently in dwellings scattered throughout the community, as opposed to a smaller percentage who live or will live in identifiable older adult residences

(including non-age limited Richton Park Carriage Creek Apartments/Residences at Carriage Creek's 226 units, Cedar Ridge's 150 units, Landmark of Richton Park's approximately 170 residents, plus the under-construction Town Center Pointe's 55 units).

Richton Park is a community of neighborhoods, whose high percentage of single-family homes scattered in neighborhoods that show a diversity in terms of home types and sizes, and whose Home-owners Associations representing these neighborhoods play an important role in civic affairs.

	Richton Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Single Family, Detached	3,118	56.0%	881,012	40.3%	1,707,038	50.2%
Single Family, Attached	495	8.9%	114,543	5.2%	252,166	7.4%
2 Units	35	0.6%	212,985	9.7%	238,040	7.0%
3 or 4 Units	266	4.8%	234,651	10.7%	269,766	7.9%
5 or More Units	1,649	29.6%	729,244	33.3%	906,352	26.7%

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey five-year estimates

*Excludes mobile, boat, RV, vans, etc.

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Richton Park \(illinois.gov\)](http://illinois.gov)



Richton Park combines older, traditional neighborhoods on gridded streets...



...with newer, suburban-feeling neighborhoods on curving streets



Leveraging Richton Park's Metra station into a mixed-use town center is a key civic goal



Town Center Pointe Apartments will bring another affordable housing option for Richton Park's older residents

Richton Park's Goals & Guidance Documents

Richton Park's current 2014 Comprehensive Plan (*adopted in 2015*) points out the "need (*for*) better housing options and services for senior citizens (*i.e. "aging-in-place"*) and includes goals (*such as establishing a true Town Center, and diversifying housing options to meet evolving demand, and filling accessibility gaps in existing neighborhoods*) that are consistent with Aging-in-Community, it does not make specific references to Aging-in-Community as a broader, more-integrated community goal.

Similarly, Richton Park's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan references in its Mission

Statement a goal to "improve the quality of life" to help yield "a sustainable and vibrant community" where (*as its Vision Statement notes*) "people want to live, work and play" – again laudable goals consistent with support for Aging-in-Community.

It is envisioned that this engagement, and the following recommendations to elevate Richton Park's current support of Aging-in-Community, are entirely consistent with these existing municipal goals and guidance documents.

AiaCR's Municipal Workshops

A key component of AiaCR is a pair of educational and strategic workshops, planned in coordination with a Core Team of key municipal and stakeholder contacts. At each workshop, Planning/Aging provided a brief educational background to explain Aging-in-Community, framed in an intergenerational “livable communities for all ages” manner, as values held by older adults – appropriate and affordable housing options, transportation options, convenient goods and services, safe places to gather, and access to information and engagement opportunities – are consistent with those held by younger adults.

Planning engagements often include an assessment of a community's assets and challenges. The limited AiaCR scope required an informal streamlined assessment process, in which Planning/Aging spoke with community stakeholders, reviewed guidance documents such as the community's Comprehensive, Housing,

Transportation or other plans, and other available, relevant municipal information. In addition, residents and key internal and external stakeholders were asked to complete brief input/assessment forms on which residents shared their experiences living and aging in the community, and stakeholders assessed how well they felt the community currently supported Aging-in-Community.

The highlights from this collected resident and stakeholder input were presented, following facilitated discussions that were the core of the workshops: engaging residents to share their lived experiences and ideas as to how they think the community would be able to support them in the future; and internal and other key stakeholders to consider ways they might be able to augment or modify their services and strategies to better support Aging-in-Community going forward.



President Reinbold welcomes attendees to Workshop #1



There was a lot of neighbor-to-neighbor engagement at Workshop #2

Richton Park's Public Workshops

- Richton Park's Workshop #1 was held on Tuesday, August 16th, and Workshop #2 was held on Monday, October 17th. The focus audience at both workshops was residents (*primarily, but not exclusively, older adult residents*), and key internal and external stakeholders
- The attendance at Workshop #1 was approximately 15 people (*about half residents, and the other half stakeholders and Core Team members*), and attendance at Workshop #2 was approximately 20 people, with a similar breakdown as at Workshop #1. Village President Rick Reinbold attended and actively participated in both workshops.
- The highlight of each workshop was a facilitated discussion in which residents shared their experiences living and aging in Richton Park, as well as their observations of opportunities and challenges. Attending stakeholders – representing Richton Park's municipal government, sister agencies such as the library and partner stakeholder organizations who serve Richton Park and its older adult residents – participated as well in these spirited discussions.

Key Input

- The older adult residents in attendance represented a range of tenures living in Richton Park – some only a few months, while others several decades – but all appreciated its access to amenities and services, its strong sense of community, the many free festivals and



What is Aging-in-Community?

special events, the available older adult discounts on vehicle stickers water bills, and everyone expressed a strong desire to be part of Richton Park's future

- Cited challenges to living and aging in Richton Park included: the lack of certain key retail amenities (*notably grocery stores*) within Richton Park, forcing some residents to shop in nearby communities, difficulties engaging more older adult residents, a shortage of affordable older adult housing and transportation options, the need for affordable older adult home and building maintenance



Where Richton Park's older adults live now, and where they might live in the future, was a big discussion point at the workshops

and upkeep assistance, and safety risks due to unsafe drivers

- Attendees get both their general and their older adult-specific information from a variety of formal and informal sources, and rely on both printed and electronic/digital sources for timely or comprehensive information
- Most attendees currently live in single-family homes, with a smaller number living in apartments in older adult buildings. Attendees were split on whether they anticipate being able to continue aging in their current dwellings, with some expecting to do so, making modifications to their homes and/or their lifestyle patterns to support this, and others expecting to downsize to smaller, lower maintenance, and potential service-providing residences in the future. Those anticipating a move at some future points were uncertain as to whether an affordable and appropriate future housing option currently exists in Richton Park
- Most workshop attendees (*and presumably Richton Park's older adult residents in general*) rely on private cars for their required trips, and they make very limited use of available public or private transportation services, in part due to the limited hours of service
- Attendees indicated that they feel it is easy to get around their neighborhoods and Richton Park in general when walking or using non-vehicular/assistive devices such as walkers, wheelchairs, bicycles, or strollers. They did point out gaps due to certain neighborhoods lacking sidewalks, and some maintenance and upkeep needs to the existing sidewalk network
- Attendees expressed the need for more services for socially isolated and limited income older adult residents and caregivers
- Representatives from local and regional stakeholder organizations (*Rich Township Senior Services, In His Hands, and Area Agency on Aging AgeOptions*) outlined the range of support, housing, food and other service that they currently provide, and agreed that additional services – including financial, home assistance, and congregate meals and other nutritional services – would be beneficial

Resident Input Forms

In addition to the two public workshops, residents of all ages were invited to complete and submit a short informal survey document that gave them an opportunity to share their lived Richton Park experience. The Resident Input Forms were made available at Village Hall, at older adult group residences, and elsewhere and around town, including at many of Richton Park's events and festivals throughout the summer of 2022.

65 Resident Input Forms were completed and submitted, of which approximately 1/3 were from respondents younger than 60-years-old, while the other approximately 2/3 were split between respondents in their 60s & those in their 70s. Approximately 1/3 of respondents indicated that they had lived in Richton Park more than 20 years, while approximately 2/3 of respondents lived in Richton Park fewer than 20 years. Approximately 2/3 of the respondents live in single-family home residents, while the other approximately 1/3 primarily lived in apartments, which included some in specifically older adult buildings.

In general, the written input received from submitted Resident Input Forms matched up very well with the input received at the public workshops, as did their suggestions and recommendations for additional Aging-in-Community support.

Stakeholder Assessments

In addition to seeking input from residents, key municipal staff leaders were asked for their views on how Richton Park is currently supportive of Aging-in-Community. We received and reviewed written input from five key internal stakeholders, who indicated that:



Residents from throughout the community shared their lived experiences by submitting completed Resident Input Forms

- They and older residents share a moderate knowledge of existing older adult services
- Getting feedback from older residents on existing or lacking services or programs is often a challenge as many are not comfortable with digital communication methods
- What feedback they have received from older residents has been mostly positive, with some concern about there being a general shortage of information and/or programs
- The stakeholders' most consistent area of concern was for a need to expand transportation options for Richton Park residents
- Richton Park's key municipal issues were seen as economic development, additional older adult housing options, and improved older adult access to health care

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR ELEVATING AGING-IN-COMMUNITY IN RICHTON PARK

✔ COORDINATION

Commit to taking a 'whole of government' approach to supporting Aging-in-Community

Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal conversations and initiatives

Review municipal operations and programs for their Aging-in-Community consistency

Establish an Aging-in-Community Commission to play an ongoing policy and review role

View Richton Park's housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens

Consider an overall Housing Plan to link and augment Richton Park's recent successes

Leverage public realm improvement opportunities as important to Aging-in-Community

✔ COLLABORATION

Better collaborate with the network of existing service-providing stakeholders

Continue and increase the level of collaborations with Rich Township Senior Services

Establish a new working partnership with Area Agency on Aging AgeOptions

Incorporate the faith community into the overall Aging-in-Community effort

Increase Aging-in-Community involvement with the Library and Park District

Explore potential mutually beneficial partnerships with local schools

Continue to be opportunistic seeking out Aging-in-Community partnership opportunities

Regularly attend the MMC's Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and other regional Aging-in-Community activities

✔ COMMUNICATION

Elevate and promote Richton Park's commitment to Aging-in-Community

Designate Village staff in multiple departments as Aging-in-Community point-persons

Establish a one-stop Aging-in-Community Resource Center for information on existing older adult services and programming

Consider developing an "Aging-in-Community Handbook"

Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior

Recommendations for Elevating Aging-in-Community in Richton Park

The following recommendations have been grouped into three broad categories of **Coordination** (*between Richton Park's various programs and goals*), **Collaboration** (*with existing and potential partners*), and **Communication** (*and knowledge-sharing, both internal and external*).

COORDINATION

Commit to taking a 'whole of government' approach to supporting Aging-in-Community

Experience elsewhere indicates that a key success factor for building a robust Aging-in-Community program is positioning it within a whole of government framework, wherein diverse governmental departments, sister agencies and external stakeholder partners coordinate in addressing shared issues or challenges, rather than delegating Aging-in-Community to a single staff person, department or agency. While this applies to any municipality, it is particularly important for a village like Richton Park that must utilize its human and financial resources creatively and efficiently. At a minimum, all department heads should participate with the new Aging -in-Community Commission described above and attend the annual presentation of the 'State of Aging-in-Community in Richton Park' to the Village Board.

Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal conversations and initiatives

Aging-in-Community should become an important lens through which proposed or existing Village projects, programs or strategies are viewed and evaluated – whether the initiatives are seen as primarily benefitting Richton Park's economic re/development, infrastructure, sustainability, public safety, or other key municipal agendas. This evaluation should ask: how do or how would these plans, programs or strategies impact the older adult population, and how would they advance Richton Park towards being a livable community that supports residents of all ages? In doing this, the Village will find that impacts on older adults will often be consistent with impacts on the overall population – this underscores the notion that support for Aging-in-Community is an important component of being a livable community for all ages. An obvious high-profile opportunity is the planned mixed-use Town Center, much of the land for which is already under village control.

One way this could be done is by developing an Aging-in-Community overlay plan (*or as the 2014 Comprehensive Plan suggests setting up an "Action Agenda" linked with the Capital Improvement Program*) to incorporate Aging-in-Community into future projects.

Review municipal operations and programs for their Aging-in-Community consistency

Village department and sister agency staffs should conduct a review of their operations, plans and programs to identify any wording or requirements that explicitly or unintentionally undercut support for Aging-in-Community, and work with the Aging-in-Community Commission (*see below*) to remedy any findings. Even if this review does not unearth barriers, it may reveal opportunities for enhancements to foster broader community (*not limited to just older adult*) participation.

Establish an Aging-in-Community Commission to play an ongoing policy and review role

A wide swath of Richton Park should collectively “own” Aging-in-Community, and establishing a new, ongoing Aging-in-Community Commission would be invaluable to helping embed this commitment into Village practice and insulate it from potential future electoral changes. Ideally, the Commission – which could build upon the existing Senior Citizen Advisory Committee -- would include a range of members including residents, primarily -- but not limited to – older adults, and key public and private sector stakeholders such as faith communities, the Park District, the Public Library, and social services, health care, housing and community development organizations currently supporting older adults in Richton Park. With staff support, the Commission would be charged with setting its own operational rules; meeting regularly to provide an ongoing forum for coordinating Aging-in-Community activities; reviewing significant development/redevelopment proposals as to their impacts on Aging-in-Community; helping establish an Aging-in-Community resource center (*discussed*

below) and preparing and presenting to the Village Board a ‘State of Aging-in-Community in Richton Park’ annual update.

View Richton Park’s housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens

Richton Park’s older residents speak openly about housing-related concerns, such as their ability to navigate multiple-story single family houses, affordability, and upkeep challenges. With most Richton Park’s older adults living independently throughout the community, viewing issues about the condition and affordability of Richton Park’s housing stock in part through an Aging-in-Community lens will better identify older-adult related housing needs, help quantify gaps, guide housing-related policy decisions, and inform potential development and/or redevelopment planning.



Addressing gaps and maintenance deficiencies in public walks will support both Aging-in-Community and overall community connectivity



Richton Park is a community of neighborhoods

Consider an overall Housing Plan to link and augment Richton Park's recent successes

With the impending opening of the Town Center Pointe, Richton Park has made strides in augmenting its housing stock options supportive of Aging-in-Community. As there are a variety of other sizable development and redevelopment opportunities throughout the Village, Richton Park should consider securing outside resources to establish an overall Housing Plan to help ensure that the current, planned and potential new housing meets Richton Park's needs, including providing an appropriate range of housing options to support Aging-in-Community.

Leverage public realm improvement opportunities as important to Aging-in-Community

Richton Park's public realm and its walkability and accessibility are important elements of a livable community for all ages and its support of Aging-in-Community. Workshop attendees pointed out sidewalk connectivity gaps and maintenance concerns in certain areas and neighborhoods. Richton Park is committed to a vision of a connected community as articulated in the 2017 Active Transportation Plan, which lays out a thorough set of recommendations for projects to further this vision. These and other municipal infrastructure projects should be reviewed in their design stage as to their Aging-in-Community impacts, and enhancements should be made as needed to leverage the projects' benefits to supporting Aging-in-Community.

COLLABORATION

Better collaborate with the network of existing service-providing stakeholders

Among the positive outcomes of this engagement was having key internal (*Community Engagement Coordinator Kenneth Jones and Senior Citizen Advisory Committee co-chair Gloria Cox*) and key external (*Rich Township Senior Services Director Mayme Buckley*) stakeholders actively collaborate on the Core Team and having other key external stakeholder organizational partners attend and participate in the Workshops. These collaborations are an important part of chipping away at the gap that exists between some of Richton Park's staff and elected officials and the network of external stakeholder organizations that

currently supports Richton Park's older adults and their caregivers with a range of support services and should be kept up and built upon. Efforts (*such as the new Aging-in-Community Commission discussed above*) should also be made to help elevate awareness of existing service-providers to better collaborate with them, and to increase the volume of referrals to appropriate older adult Richton Park residents and caregivers who might benefit from these services and programs.

Continue and increase the level of collaborations with Rich Township Senior Services

In particular, Rich Township Senior Services RP/Richton Park collaborations plays an important role in coordinating or providing a wide range of services that benefit Richton Park's older adults and their caregivers. Richton Park and Rich Township Senior Services have partnered in the past, and this engagement has provided or identified additional opportunities to continue to partner in the future. Every effort should continue to be made to be strong partners with Rich Township in support of older adult residents.

Establish a new working partnership with Area Agency on Aging AgeOptions

AgeOptions is the state-designated and federally-funded agency designated to coordinate and sponsor services in suburban Cook County to assist older adults to remain in their homes and communities. Richton Park staff connected with key AgeOptions staff at Workshop #2 and began discussions of establishing nutrition services, caregiver support, and other services within Richton Park. Aggressively continue these discussions, as AgeOptions resources are spread thin throughout the region, and their funding decisions factor in municipal support and partnerships.



Beautiful parks are a wonderful asset for residents young and older

Incorporate the faith community into the overall Aging-in-Community effort

Richton Park's extensive faith community was virtually absent from this engagement, although churches certainly play a substantial role supporting the community's older adults and their caregivers. Faith community representatives might be invited to participate in the new Aging-in-Community Commission. In addition, Richton Park may want to inquire with AgeOptions about its "Caring Together, Living Better" program that provides resources and education to caregivers, and has partnered with several South Suburban churches previously.

Increase Aging-in-Community involvement with the Library and Park District

Consistent with taking a 'whole-of-government' approach to Aging-in-Community, the Library and the Park District – neither of which played a particularly active role in this engagement – should be brought more into the ongoing Aging-in-Community effort going forward. Both the Library and Park District already maintain facilities and offer some older adult-serving programs and activities, and their roles should be leveraged to play even more integrated and significant roles in supporting Aging-in-Community.

Explore potential mutually beneficial partnerships with local schools

To date, the local schools do not appear to have been involved in Aging-in-Community discussions, however Southland College Prep Charter High School and Rich South High School might be interested in exploring a range of potential partnership opportunities, including service-learning placements, internships, technical support, mentoring, etc. that could not only provide benefit to younger adults,



Partnerships with local schools could provide mutually beneficial intergenerational learning opportunities

but would allow older adults to function as resource-providers rather than be seen solely as resource-users. Several workshop attendees expressed a desire to share their knowledge and the skills accumulated over their decades of living and working and indicated they would be interested both in sharing knowledge with older adult peers, as well as inter-generationally with younger adults or high school age students.

Continue to be opportunistic seeking out Aging-in-Community partnership opportunities

Richton Park recently participated in a proposal for Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) funding under its Home Repair and Accessibility Program and was recently a joint recipient of an AARP Community Challenge award and SafeLIGHT Foundation funding for a new older adult ride-share program. Building upon these successes, Richton Park should continue to enthusiastically search for Aging-in-Community funding partnership opportunities, as many such funding opportunities will require a strong municipal component.



A well-integrated “whole-of-enterprise” approach will convey Richton Park’s commitment to Aging-in-Community

Regularly attend the MMC’s Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and other regional Aging-in-Community activities

The quarterly Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative meetings typically include representatives of several dozen regional municipalities involved with Aging-in-Community activities and provide topical knowledge and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Richton Park’s experiences with and lessons learned from the AiaCR program during 2022 will likely be of interest to other municipalities. Involvement with the Collaborative also serves as a good portal to other regional Aging-in-Community activities sponsored by a range of stakeholder entities, such as the bi-monthly American Society on Aging topical roundtables (*see the Appendix for further resource information*).

COMMUNICATION

Elevate and promote Richton Park’s commitment to Aging-in-Community

Richton Park needs to express its support for Aging-in-Community more visibly, as it is very difficult to find commitment to Aging-in-Community in many of Richton Park’s communications, including but not limited to the Village’s website. A clear statement such as “*Richton Park actively support Aging-in-Community!*” could set

the tone that the Village takes a “whole-of-enterprise” approach towards Aging-in-Community, whereby support of older adult residents is purposefully integrated into the work of all municipal departments and sister agencies, and not isolated to any one entity.

Designate Village staff in multiple departments as Aging-in-Community point-persons

The Village website suggests alternative ways to express concerns or request services, including using the “SeeClickFix” smartphone app, by contacting the Community Engagement Department, engaging the E-Services webpage, or by going through the Forms available on (*or embedded within*) multiple departmental webpages, depending upon the issue or concern. It is likely that some residents – including but not limited to older adults – find this confusing or overwhelming. Designating and publicizing a specific staff liaison in each key public-facing department as their ‘Aging-in-Community point-person’ would make Richton Park’s government more efficient and more accessible to older adults. The departmental Aging-in-Community liaisons should meet periodically to learn from one another and identify ways to address common issues proactively and in a coordinated manner.

Establish a one-stop Aging-in-Community Resource Center for information on existing older adult services and programming

The public workshops showed that key municipal stakeholders and residents lack knowledge of the existing older adult services and programming available to Richton Park residents. This lack of knowledge restricts the ability of older adult residents and their caregivers to avail themselves of valuable resources and hampers the ability of municipal stakeholders to make referrals to these resources. An important response would be the establishment and maintenance of a one-stop Resource Center at which residents and stakeholders could learn about and access existing resources. This resource center could initially be established by the new Aging-in-Community Commission with staff assistance, with provisions for its ongoing maintenance and updating established and agreed upon upfront. Hard copy resource information should be made available at the Resource Center within Village Hall with electronic information made available on the Village website.

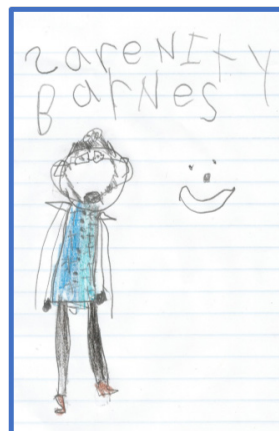
Consider developing an “Aging-in-Community Handbook”

Workshop attendees decried the scattered nature and difficulty of accessing necessary information for older adults on their caregivers. This concern was consistently raised in almost every workshop in all AiaCR municipalities. To address this need, AiaCR partner CMAP worked with 2021 AiaCR Municipality Park Forest to develop an “Aging-in-Community Handbook” as a replicable template that could be used in other communities. In addition, CMAP developed a ‘how-to’ document that is intended to guide interested municipalities in developing and maintaining their own

handbooks. Richton Park may wish to contact CMAP to explore the idea of developing such a handbook. In addition, due to Park Forest being a contiguous municipality, many of the resources included in Park Forest’s handbook may be reasonable to include in a Richton Park handbook. Also, a Richton Park handbook could build upon existing efforts such as the “Senior Citizen Guide” developed and distributed by State Representative Debbie Meyers-Martin.

Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior

Ageism is discrimination against older people due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes. Just as anti-racism is the practice of actively identifying and opposing racism, anti-ageism identifies, calls out, and looks to change anything that perpetuates ageist ideas or behavior. Consciously ensure that all references to Richton Park’s older adults characterizes them as civic assets and resources to be leveraged, rather than viewing them solely through a needs-based or a medical lens. As most of Richton Park’s older adults live independently among the general population, rather than in buildings that specifically cater to and support older adults, they should be celebrated for their independence and contributions to Richton Park rather than seen as solely dependents.



*Brad Winick
conducting
Workshop #1
(sketch courtesy
of the artist)*

Aging-in-Community Resources

Some excellent resources and document repositories at which to find Aging-in-Community information are listed below – Richton Park is likely already familiar with many of them. There may be some redundancies as certain documents may be included in multiple repositories. Some of these repositories will provide links to additional resources. Carefully evaluate any resources found for their applicability to Richton Park's specific interests and needs.

Aging in a Changing Region Partner Organization Resources

[Aging-in-Community - Mayors Caucus](#)

The Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and Aging in a Changing Region are the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' two programs focused on helping municipalities issues related to their growing older adult populations.

[AFCC REPOSITORY - Google Drive](#)

This data repository is maintained by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and includes both resource materials and documents developed for its Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative.

[Home - CMAP \(illinois.gov\)](#)

The Chicagoland Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the seven-county metropolitan Chicago region, and develops and provides plans, programs, and other initiatives. Inquiries about CMAP's "Aging-in-Community Handbook" should go to Enrique Castillo – ecastillo@cmap.illinois.gov – or Dominick Argumedo – dargumedo@cmap.illinois.gov.

[Aging in Place - CMAP \(illinois.gov\)](#)

CMAP developed this Aging in Place white paper in 2016.

[Planning Aging-Supportive Communities](#)

This 2015 American Planning Association (APA) Planners Advisory Service report was primarily authored by Brad Winick of Planning/Aging. APA members can download the report for free, others are required to purchase it for \$25.

Local/Regional Aging-in-Community Aging Network Organizations Serving Richton Park

[Home - AgeOptions](#)

AgeOptions (*formerly known as the Suburban Cook County Area Agency on Aging*) is designated by the federal Older Americans Act and the Illinois Department on Aging as the planning and service agency for the 30 townships surrounding Chicago and supports partner agencies to provide a wide range of aging-in-community services.

[Senior Services | Rich Township, IL](#)

Rich Township provides a wide range of supportive services for Richton Park's adults, including operating the Rich Township Senior Center in nearby downtown Park Forest. Core Team member

and Rich Township's Director of Senior Services Mayme Buckley is the key point of contact – Mbuckley@richtownship.org

<https://www.catholiccharities.net/GetHelp/OurRegions/Cook-SouthSouthwest.aspx#About-this-Region-128>

Catholic Charities South Suburban Senior Case Management Services have been recently merged into the new South-Southwest region, and still serves as the central access point for older adults throughout southern and southwestern Cook County including those who live in Rich Township – and it provides a wide range of home and community-based services.

<https://ihhresources.com/>

In His Hands Resource Center is a local non-profit organization that provides various food service, energy assistance, case management, housing and other services for older adults and others in need in south suburban Cook County.

Ageing-in-Community General Resources

ASA Roundtables

The local chapter of the American Society on Aging stages free bi-monthly topical Roundtables, often on aging-in-community topics. Currently being staged virtually due to COVID-19, they had previously been presented at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Bonnie Ewald (Bonnie.Ewald@rush.edu) serves as the roundtable coordinator.

[AARP Livable Communities Publications and Resources](#)

This repository is the best location at which to explore AARP's many resources, including its Livable Communities and Public Policy Institute initiatives and publications, and the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities.

[AARP Illinois](#)

The AARP-Illinois state has a number of staff persons involved with advocacy and community engagement, and who may be able to provide linkages to AARP's extensive data resources or provide connections with AARP's national resources.

[Resources for Age-Friendly Communities | The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation](#)

The New Jersey-based Taub Foundation includes aging-in-community as one of its primary focus topics, and maintains a comprehensive and well-organized aging-in-community library.

[Age-Friendly Resources | Grantmakers in Aging \(giaging.org\)](#)

New York City-based Grantmakers-in-Aging is the preeminent membership organization for philanthropies focused on aging issues. It maintains a resource center full of GIA-funded and other resources.

[Publications \(usaging.org\)](#)

Washington DC-based US Aging (*formerly the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging – "n4a"*) maintains an extensive searchable database of primarily n4a-sponsored reports and other documents.

[Research \(ncoa.org\)](#)

The Washington DC-based National Council on Aging (*ncoa*) provides research articles and other materials for older adults, caregivers, aging professionals and advocates, primarily developed by ncoa staff and its partners.

Planning Resources

[Search \(planning.org\)](#) (*American Planning Association resources search results for "aging-in-community"*)

The American Planning Association maintains a resource library searchable by topic, including this link to aging-in-community resources.

Transportation Resources

[Aging and Disability Transportation Overview | NADTC](#) (*National Aging and Disability Transportation Center*)

The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (*NADTC*) is a program initially funded in 2015 by the Federal Transit Administration and administered by Easterseals and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (*n4a*). Its resource center provides information on transportation for older adults and people with disabilities.

[Home - National Center for Mobility Management](#)

The National Center for Mobility Management is a program of NADTC that focuses on and maintains resources on person-centered transportation services.

Housing Resources

[IHDA - Illinois Housing Development Authority](#)

This state agency's mission is "to finance the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Illinois" and administers numerous programs to support lenders, developers, local government, nonprofits, community groups, homeowners and renters in delivering and maintaining affordable housing.

[Southland Development Authority](#)

The Southland Development Authority is a non-profit business organization designed to grow the economy of the South Suburbs. Launched in 2019 by business, civic and political leaders across the Southland, the Authority brings the resources and capacity necessary to achieve transformative and inclusive economic growth for the region. It focuses on investment in industry, workforce, housing, and communities.

[Home - CEDA \(cedaorg.net\)](#)

CEDA offers a variety of programs and services in the areas of community and economic development, education, emergency assistance, employment and training, energy conservation and services, health and nutrition, and housing, and has long worked with municipalities in Southern Cook County.

[Missing Middle Housing: Diverse choices for walkable neighborhood living](#)

Opticos Design founder Daniel Parolek coined the term "Missing Middle Housing" to convey the range of house-scale buildings with multiple units -- compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes -- located in a walkable neighborhood. This link provides examples and resources for consideration.

[Aging in Place Resources | Aging In Place Resources for Seniors Living at Home](#)

Aginginplace.com is maintained by its Oregon-based founder Patrick Roden, a nurse by training, and it maintains a comprehensive set of resources dedicated to supporting older adults aging in place.

[Welcome - HomesRenewed™ Resource Center](#)

HomesRenewed was founded by Maryland-based contractor and aging-in-place advocate Louis Tenenbaum and its website provides various aging-in-place materials and resources.

[Aging in Place: Growing Older at Home | National Institute on Aging \(nih.gov\)](#)

The National Institute on Aging is a program of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and has developed a database of aging-in-place resources.

Ageism Resources

[Home \(reframingaging.org\)](#)

The Reframing Aging Initiative began in 2012 as a shared initiative of eight national aging organizations to find out how the American public perceives of aging, and once it was determined that this perception was negative, developing an infrastructure of strategies and techniques to convey more positive and supportive messaging. This website offers many tools and resources.

[Old School: Anti-Ageism Clearinghouse](#)

This clearing house was established by anti-ageism activist Ashton Applewhite and her colleagues, and it provides free and vetted resources to help educate people about ageism and how to dismantle it.

Intergenerational Resources

[Resources - Generations United \(gu.org\)](#)

Generations United is the preeminent national advocacy and informational organization supporting intergenerational collaborations, programs, and policies. Established by a group of organizations that focused on different portions of the lifespan, it maintains a resource library.

Acknowledgements

Richton Park Resident Workshop Attendees

Gloria J. Cox (*Core Team member*) • Darnell Langston • Helen Coleman • Becky Peeples • Danny Wilson • Val Baxter • Mia Carter • M. Horton • Carol Deany • Jerry Deany • Jenny Slater • Bonnie Jones • Brian • Louetta Thomas

Richton Park's Bright Future

Serenity Barnes • Iyah Harmony Buckley

Representatives from Stakeholder Organizations

Mayme Buckley, *Rich Township, Director of Senior Services (Core Team member)* • Karissa Davidson, *Richton Park Public Library* • Fanny Surreal, *Carefree Management* • Pamela Kerr & Philip Lanier, *AgeOptions* • Nykoa Farmer, *In His Hands Resource Center, Founder/CEO/President*

Village of Richton Park Elected Officials & Staff Participants

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document itself was produced to be supportive of aging-in-community. All of the graphic details – font selection, a minimum 12-point font size, page layouts, the inclusion of graphics, avoiding the use of reversed-out text on light colored backgrounds, etc. – were made to make this document easily legible for anyone with visual sensitivity issues. Just as the body of this document makes the case that municipal decisions supportive of aging-in-community are innately supportive of livable communities for all ages, this document itself should be seen as innately supportive of readers of all ages.

One final aging-in-community recommendation is that all municipal documents, websites, social media postings, etc. should consciously strive to be easily legible for all viewers, including – but not limited to – older adults.