

Elevating Aging-in-Community *in* Aurora

A Strategic Guide

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

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Executive Summary

In 2023, Aurora participated in “Aging in a Changing Region”, funded by the RRF Foundation for Aging, and led by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Planning/Aging, which developed strategies to elevate Aurora's Aging-in-Community support. Recommendations were divided into categories: the **Services, Social/Informational, and Physical Environments**.

Services Environment Recommendations

- An Aging-in-Community Commission to play a coordination & policy review role
- Take a ‘whole of government’ approach to supporting Aging-in-Community
- Review municipal operations and programs for their Aging-in-Community consistency
- Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal programs and initiatives
- Continue to think broadly & expand the network of Aging-in-Community partners
- Maintain partnerships with AgeGuide and other aging network partners
- Engage all taxing bodies to establish and promote Aging-In-Community programs
- Expand the faith community’s involvement with the Aging-in-Community effort
- Ramp up the business community’s role within the Aging-in-Community effort
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational partners
- Continue to attend the Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative & related activities

Social/Informational Environment Recommendations

- Amplify Aurora’s commitment to & engagement with Aging-in-Community
- Designate departmental staff as Aging-in-Community point-persons
- Augment the Resource Guide with an Aging-in-Community Resource Center
- Establish a centralized Volunteer Center
- Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior

Physical Environment Recommendations

- Review municipal facilities for their Aging-in-Community consistency
- Establish working groups to assess neighborhood-level Aging-in-Community
- Add informal gathering places for older residents throughout Aurora
- Ramp up Community Development’s integration with Aging-in-Community efforts
- View housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens
- Continue to partner with the Housing Authority and other housing providers
- Explore adding “Missing Middle Housing” options to the housing stock
- Update the Comprehensive Plan or develop a Plan with an Aging-in-Community focus

The recommendations are fleshed out herein. The City and community should review, select, and implement recommendations – which can integrate into potential future Dementia-Friendly and/or Age-Friendly Community applications. As Aurora’s Aging-in-Community conversation is ongoing, additional ideas, and strategies 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 diverse aging population.

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

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.

Two partner organizations – the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (*MMC, serving the region’s 275 cities, towns, and villages*), 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 in its support of Aging-in-Community, strategic guidance can help elevate its support going forward.

In 2021, 2022, and 2023 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 AiaCR municipalities – including the 2023 Cohort of Aurora, Carol Stream, Schiller

Park, South Elgin, and South Holland – reflect the region's diversity in terms of location, socio-economic factors, community type, and Aging-in-Community experience.

In each selected AiaCR municipality, Planning/ Aging works with a self-designated Core Team of key municipal staff and partner stakeholders, which makes the key decisions on how the AiaCR program will be tailored to their community's specific circumstances, goals, and challenges.



Welcome to Aurora!



WHAT THIS DOCUMENT ISN'T

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



WHAT THIS DOCUMENT IS

- ✓ **IS** a practical **strategic guide** focused on how Aurora can 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 recommendations of further actions Aurora 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 Aurora 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

Aurora's Aging-in-Community Context

Aurora is unique amongst the AiaCR municipalities. Size-wise, the other AiaCR municipalities' populations have ranged from as low as just under 8,000 to as high as around 55,000, with the average size approximately 23,000. Only a handful of the other AiaCR municipalities have populations above the 25,000-figure needed to qualify as a home rule community giving them more ability to self-govern and having more local control over the day-to-day operations of their communities.

More importantly, as compared to the other AiaCR municipalities which all feel like suburbs – be they inner ring, outer ring, or exurban suburbs – Aurora is a large, complex, and diverse city. The other AiaCR municipalities' boards or councils don't utilize geographic ward representation; none of them are divided between four counties, as is Aurora (*portions of it are in DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will Counties*); and do not have populations just a little over half of which speak English exclusively at home.

Aurora is described as having three regions: the West Side, west of the Fox River; the East Side, east of the Fox River to the DuPage County line; and the Far East Side, the portion of Aurora east of the DuPage County line. Doing strategic planning for such a large complex city is quite different than doing so for smaller less complex suburban municipalities and allows Aurora to draw from a broader set of examples when designing and implementing its strategies.



[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)

Aurora's Demographics

The makeup of Aurora's population helps explain the importance of taking a strategic approach towards Aging-in-Community. As shown below, Aurora's 65+ population is 9.8%, lower than Kane's 13.7% and the Region's 14.4% (*this comparison is used due to the largest portion of Aurora being in Kane County*). Aurora's 50 to 64 years-old cohort is 15.8%, also lower than Kane County's and the Region's. But both Aurora's 65+ and 50 to 64 years-old cohorts have grown by ~50% since 2010. Also, all of Aurora's younger population cohorts are larger percentagewise than Kane County's.

General Population Characteristics, 2020

	Aurora	Kane County	CMAP Region
Total Population	180,542	516,522	8,577,735
Total Households	60,103	180,374	3,266,741
Average Household Size	3.0	2.8	2.6
Percent Population Change, 2010-20	-8.8	0.2	1.7
Percent Population Change, 2000-20	26.3	27.8	5.3

Source: 2000, 2010, and 2020 Census

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)

Age Cohorts, 2017-2021

	Aurora		Kane County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Under 5	12,140	6.6%	31,939	6.2%	502,928	5.9%
5 to 19	44,136	24.1%	113,311	21.8%	1,662,052	19.4%
20 to 34	34,966	19.1%	94,012	18.1%	1,774,853	20.7%
35 to 49	43,990	24.0%	105,360	20.3%	1,724,098	20.1%
50 to 64	30,113	16.4%	102,183	19.7%	1,659,323	19.4%
65 to 74	11,762	6.4%	44,171	8.5%	746,030	8.7%
75 to 84	4,799	2.6%	20,400	3.9%	347,665	4.1%
85 and Over	1,541	0.8%	7,272	1.4%	153,584	1.8%
Median Age	35.2		38.0		37.9	

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey five-year estimates

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)



One of Aurora's many
single-family
home neighborhoods

Age Cohorts, Over Time

	2000	2007-2011	2017-2021
19 and Under	34.5%	33.9%	30.7%
20-34	26.8%	23.4%	19.1%
35-49	22.3%	23.1%	24.0%
50-64	10.1%	13.1%	16.4%
65 and Over	6.3%	6.5%	9.9%
Median Age	29.3	30.7	30.735.2

Source: 2000 Census; 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey five-year estimates
[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)

Putting all this together suggests that Aurora's 65+ population will continue to steadily grow and could easily be in the ~35-40% range by 2040. Assuming that the absolute numbers of older adults will be in this range, the only thing that may lower the overall percentage of Aurora's future older adult population would be a significant influx of younger families.

This data also clearly indicates that Aurora has become increasingly diverse over time, as shown below, with both the Hispanic and Asian populations increasing sharply, the Black population remaining rather steady, and the White population decreasing.

Race and Ethnicity, Over Time

	2000	2007-2011	2017-2021
White (Non-Hispanic)	52.1%	41.1%	34.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race)	32.6%	40.9%	41.5%
Black (Non-Hispanic)	10.8%	9.4%	10.5%
Asian (Non-Hispanic)	3.0%	6.3%	10.2%
Other/Multiple Races (Non-Hispanic)	1.6%	2.3%	2.9%

Source: 2000 Census; 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 American Community Survey five-year estimates
[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)

Aurora's Housing Stock

Like many suburban communities whose housing stock was largely built over the past fifty years, over 3/4 of Aurora's housing stock consists of single-family detached or attached homes, 2/3 of which have two or three bedrooms. While typical of the

young family-dominated population which characterized Aurora in earlier years, as its population ages, this begs the question of how well the existing housing stock meets the needs and preferences of Aurora's growing future older population.

Housing Type 2017-2021

	Aurora		Kane County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Single Family, <i>Detached</i>	37,677	58.9%	129,947	69.2%	1,745,022	50.0%
Single Family, <i>Attached</i>	10,706	16.7%	22,359	11.9%	259,184	7.4%
2 Units	2,795	4.4%	6,660	3.5%	239,727	6.9%
3 or 4 Units	2,558	4.0%	6,370	3.4%	274,341	7.9%
5 to 9 Units	2,370	3.7%	5,849	3.1%	270,594	7.8%
10 to 19 Units	3,503	5.5%	5,216	2.8%	155,969	4.5%
20 or More Units	4,242	6.6%	9,910	5.3%	513,327	14.7%
Mobile Home/Other*	85	0.1%	1,541	0.8%	29,598	0.8%

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey five-year estimates

*"Other" includes boats, recreational vehicles (RVs), vans, etc.

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)

Housing Size 2017-2021

	Aurora		Kane County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
0 or 1 Bedroom	6,755	10.6%	15,025	8.0%	566,228	16.2%
2 Bedrooms	18,305	28.6%	45,960	24.5%	973,190	27.9%
3 Bedrooms	24,241	37.9%	65,388	34.8%	1,156,700	33.2%
4 Bedrooms	12,011	18.8%	49,163	26.2%	612,171	17.6%
5 or More Bedrooms	2,624	4.1%	12,316	6.6%	179,473	5.1%
Median Number of Rooms*	5.7		6.3		6.0	

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey five-year estimates

*Includes living rooms, dining room, kitchens, bedrooms, etc., that are separated by built-in, floor-to-ceiling walls. Excludes bathrooms, porches, balconies, foyers, halls, and unfinished basements.

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)



Bloomhaven replaced the former Copley Hospital with residences for older adults and people with disabilities, along with a medical & wellness center

Aurora's Guidance Documents – *Including its Comprehensive Plan*

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

Aurora's most recent official City-wide Comprehensive Plan – and its related Land Use and Circulation Plan, and its Plan Physical Development Policies – was last adopted in 1984. Aurora has undertaken more focused strategic community led plans focused on geographic areas or on specific topics. Recent plans have been completed for the Downtown (led by CMAP), the Route 59 Corridor, and the Wolf's Crossing Subarea as well as numerous neighborhood plans. Topical plans and studies have included housing, sustainability, bicycle and pedestrian, and complete streets. In 2024 the City will be pursuing Commercial Corridor Master Plans that will focus on key corridors throughout the City that will include recommendations

for future land use, zoning, transportation, parks and open space, and design guidelines..

A goal of a community's Comprehensive Plan is to articulate a vision for its future, with Aurora's most recent Comprehensive Plan being nearly 40 years old, and its reliance on topical and area-specific plans, it is worthy of consideration that the City of Aurora should consider a new specific Plan that places specific focus on its aging population and an intentional consistency with the community's recent commitment to supporting Aging-in-Community..

Aurora is also required – as a condition of receiving federal housing and community development funds – to prepare, execute and report on its execution of a five-year Consolidated Plan, which helps identify and determine affordable housing and economic development decisions. The current Consolidated Plan runs through the end of 2024, and it does include as one of its goals to “promote long-term, community-based housing options for older adults and persons with physical and developmental disabilities to age in place”.

Aurora's Aging-in-Community History

Beyond its geographic and population differences from all other AiaCR municipalities, one other key element differentiates Aurora from the others: Aurora is the only AiaCR municipality which employs a full-time management-level point person for older adult services, Katrina Boatright, Manager, Senior and Disability Services within the Community Services Department. Having such a point person, and that point person having already designed and implemented a range of programs, services and activities supporting older adults in the community puts Aurora well ahead of most other communities, including the AiaCR communities, in supporting Aging-in-Community.

Throughout 2021, the Senior and Disability Services Department conducted 11 community tours and meetings, engaging with approximately 250 older Aurora residents. The City heard their input and responded with solutions, including:

- A Senior Resource Guide was developed and distributed in English and Spanish.
- A Senior Database was developed to help improve communications.
- Operation Senior Shovel and the Lawn Mowing Support Program have been developed.
- The City of Aurora Ride Solution (C.A.R.S.) Transportation Program has been developed.
- A new City-wide older adults only golf event – Senior Swing Scramble – for men and women 60 and over.

In addition, Aurora has indicated interest in applying for recognition as a Dementia-

Friendly Community under the Dementia-Friendly America protocol, and as an Age-Friendly Community under the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, an affiliate of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Participation in both the Dementia-Friendly and the Age-Friendly Networks require completing a multiple stage and multi-year cycle during which municipalities conduct community assessments, develop an action and implementation plans, implement the plans and track progress, evaluate the plan's impact, and repeat the cycle.

In recognition of Aurora's interest in eventually joining the Dementia-Friendly and Age-Friendly Community Networks, the Core Team requested that Planning/Aging conduct its AiaCR work and develop recommendations that would seamlessly fit into potential future Dementia-Friendly and Age-Friendly Community Network planning work. Planning/Aging agreed to this request, and therefore everything in this document is designed to support Aurora as it transitions from the AiaCR engagement into the Dementia-Friendly and/or Age-Friendly Community Network programs.

The attendees at Workshop #1 came ready to share their opinions



AiaCR Community Engagement

A key component of AiaCR is community engagement, for two reasons. First, no one knows more from a lived or professional perspective what it is like to live and age in Aurora than its residents and its engaged stakeholders, and listening and learning from their input is invaluable. In addition, the AiaCR team passionately believes in the concept of “nothing about us without us,” in other words, the need to craft strategies informed by the people these strategies will impact.

This AiaCR engagement entailed a shorter and less rigorous process. A major element of the engagement was a pair of public workshops planned and staged in coordination with the Core Team. At each

workshop, Planning/Aging provided a brief presentation on Aging-in-Community, framed in an intergenerational “livable communities for all ages” manner, as values held by older adults – such as appropriate and affordable housing options, transportation options, convenient access to goods and services, safe places to gather, and informational and engagement opportunities – are generally consistent with values held by younger adults.

The AiaCR Workshops were designed and presented to specifically link to the “Senior Listening Tour 2021” and was promoted on the City’s website as “Senior Listening Tour 2023” with the slogan “We Are Still Listening”.

Introducing the Core Team at Workshop #1



Public Workshops

- Aurora's Workshop #1 was held on the evening of Monday, October 2nd, with residents being the focus audience. Workshop #2 was held on the morning of Thursday, October 19th, with stakeholders being the focus audience. The Core Team determined the scheduling, focus audience, and format of each Workshop.
- Workshop #1 consisted of approximately 50 residents representing the range of the community. Workshop #1's highlight was the spirited facilitated discussion during which the resident attendees shared their experiences living and aging in Aurora, their observations of opportunities and challenges, and their suggestions for possible improvements.
- To be inclusive of all Aurora residents, Workshop #1 was bi-lingual, with simultaneous translation provided via headsets throughout the presentation

and discussion, and with translators translating the questions to/from Spanish. The Core Team was committed to the AiaCR engagement being performed in a manner consistent with the City's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative. All engagement documents (including this one) were produced and are available in both English and Spanish.



Workshop #1 was bi-lingual & welcoming to all attendees



Katrina Boatright framed key issues at Workshop #2

- Workshop #2 consisted of approximately 40 invited stakeholders who represented the diverse range of municipal departments, and many of the partner organizations committed to helping support Aging-in-Community in Aurora. The highlight of Workshop #2 was an enthusiastic facilitated discussion and a "grading" exercise, during which the stakeholder attendees shared their perspectives on Aurora's current support of Aging-in-Community within the physical, social, and service environments.



The Workshop #1 highlight was the vibrant facilitated discussion

Key Resident Survey & Workshop #1 Input

Residents of all ages were invited to complete and submit a short informal survey document that gave them an opportunity to share their lived experience. The Resident Surveys were available online and throughout town from during the summer and fall of 2023. Over 80 Forms were completed and submitted, and the written input received from the Resident Surveys matched up well with the verbal input received from the diverse group of resident attendees at Workshop #1:

When asked to share some of the best things about living and aging in Aurora, the attendees offered many responses, such as:

- They feel generally supported by the City;
- There is broad appreciation for the Police and Fire Departments; and
- Residents from different wards and neighborhoods benefit from residents knowing, helping, and getting along with one another.

The attendees offered mixed input on several topics, including:

- Property taxes, which some attendees felt were reasonable, while others suggested were too high;
- Official usage of multiple languages has improved in recent years, but exclusive use of English in some cases still impedes some residents with getting information or assistance; and

- While appreciative of the Police, some attendees indicated that they want more Police patrols.

Specific challenges to living and aging in Aurora cited included:

- Financial issues, as people without wealth and connections struggle to find resources;
- There were several concerns raised about some older residents not qualifying for income-based programs or services;
- Several housing-related issues were mentioned: the shortage of affordable, smaller, and more easily maintained options; and the need for better home maintenance repair references or assistance;
- Specific sidewalk & building accessibility challenges throughout Aurora were cited – with frequent references to City Hall and the Metra station;
- A general need for more: bathrooms in parks; informal gathering spaces; and older adult parking; and
- Some attendees indicated they felt marginalized by being called “seniors,” and asked for less population segmentation, and more intergenerational engagement opportunities.

Key Stakeholder Input from Workshop #2

Workshop #2 was populated by an energetic group of multi-sectoral stakeholders, many of whom appeared to be rather familiar with others in the room. After background discussion about the concept of Aging-in-Community, the AiaCR program, and community input received to date, the attendees were asked – based upon their experiences – to assign letter grades (*with an 'A' being the highest and an 'F' being the lowest*) in recognition of how well Aurora current supports different elements of Aging-in-Community, including:

- **Services Environment**

The range of existing and needed support services;

- **Social/Informational Environment**

Opportunities for social engagement, volunteerism, and community events and activities, including how well general or older adult-targeted information is disseminated and received; and

- **Physical Environment**

Housing, public spaces and overall community walkability and accessibility, parking, and transportation – both public and private non-auto options.

Services Environment

The attendees gave a blend of A, B and C grades. They cited lots of general social events, and good inter-connectivity between distinct groups; noted a shortage of educational services, and that most events are too English-focused, making it difficult for non-English speakers to participate. Aurora was lauded for a sizable number of places, volunteers, and opportunities to help people in need to overcome barriers and access issues. Specific additional points offered were that:

- Food insecurity needs to be more of a focus in the Aging-in-Community discussion;
- The discussion should better include dementia sufferers, non-English speakers, and grandparents raising grandchildren; and
- The new United Way 211 24/7 social services hotline data shows that 43% of Kane County calls are from Aurora, and most of them are housing-insecurity related.



Stakeholder attendees at Workshop #2 gave grades to Aurora's environments

One of Aurora's numerous multi-family housing developments



Social/Informational Environment

Most of the grades were mid-range, primarily B and C grades. Attendees cited the lack of assistance for older adults who get City notices and don't know how to respond; and the Special Needs Aurora Police Program (SNAPP) for individuals who have special needs, so Police Department dispatch or mobile response units know how to better respond to that individual. However, it was also pointed out that the Police Department's "Senior Liaison" roles are currently unfilled.

Specific additional points offered were that:

- Social isolation is critical, and needs to be a focus of all Aging-in-Community efforts;
- There should be better coordination between the various community surveys (*including the AiaCR Resident Survey*);
- There needs to be better outreach to low-income people of color, and leverage East Side churches is an under-utilized strategy; and
- Medical providers and Managed Care Organizations could also be better leveraged to connect with the low-income clients that they serve.

Physical Environment

The stakeholder attendees gave a wide range of grades: an A, a lot of Cs, and a D, suggesting that this realm was a complicated one to evaluate. The Aurora Housing Authority representatives shared that five years ago, its housing occupancy

level was low enough that senior housing was changed from senior-only, which led to a drop in the number of older adults housed. But now they have long older adult housing waiting lists, so any new senior developments will be for seniors-only.

Specific additional housing and physical environment points offered included:

- After the expiration of the COVID-related moratorium, there have recently been lots of evictions;
- The general unavailability of affordable housing means many Aurora residents must move elsewhere to find any; and
- The lack of or condition of many sidewalks – particularly downtown and on the East Side – plus a lack of street lighting, makes the pedestrian environment unsafe for older adults and others.

Comments on Public Transportation:

Attendees gave public transportation very mixed grades: an A, lots of Bs, Cs, and Ds, and one F, suggesting that this realm was particularly difficult to assess in an overall way, and that grades might reflect specific individual experiences. Specific comments included that: the lack of staffing is a big problem on public transportation overall; and that the new CARS program currently in its pilot phase is great.

When attendees were asked their thoughts on the appropriate scale to address Aging-in-Community in a large complex city such as Aurora, the response was mixed, with some stakeholders suggesting that a City-wide focus is better than a Ward-focus as some alderpeople are better tuned in to the relevant issues than are others, while other stakeholders suggested that working at a neighborhood scale is likely to be more effective at reaching residents who may not attend larger scale events or programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR ELEVATING AGING-IN-COMMUNITY IN AURORA

✓ SERVICES ENVIRONMENT

An Aging-in-Community Commission to play a coordination & policy review role

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

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

Incorporate Aging-in-Community into all key City programs and initiatives

Continue to think broadly & expand the network of Aging-in-Community partners

Maintain partnerships with AgeGuide and other aging network partners

Engage all taxing bodies to establish and promote Aging-In-Community programs

Expand the faith community involvement with the Aging-in-Community effort

Ramp up the business community's role within the Aging-in-Community effort

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational partners

Continue to attend Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative & related activities

✓ SOCIAL/INFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Amplify Aurora's commitment to & engagement with Aging-in-Community

Designate departmental staff as Aging-in-Community point-persons

Augment the Resource Guide with an Aging-in-Community Resource Center

Establish a centralized Volunteer Center

Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior

✓ PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Review municipal facilities for their Aging-in-Community consistency

Establish working groups to assess neighborhood-level Aging-in-Community

Add informal gathering places for older residents throughout Aurora

Ramp up Community Development's integration with Aging-in-Community efforts

View housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens

Continue to partner with the Housing Authority and other housing providers

Explore adding "Missing Middle Housing" options to the housing stock

Update the Comprehensive Plan or develop a Plan with an Aging-in-Community focus



Some of the magnificent older houses in the Tanner Historic District

Recommendations for Elevating Aging-in-Community in Aurora

The following strategic recommendations are divided between three broad realms: the **Services Environment** (*which focuses on coordinating and collaborating between all of Aurora's various social service providers, and their various programs, events, and activities*); the **Social/Informational** (*which focuses on knowledge, information and resource sharing*); and the **Physical Environment** (*which focuses on Aurora's built infrastructure, including housing,*

transportation, accessibility, and key civic facilities and amenities). There are obvious and potential overlaps and connections between specific recommendations from the three realms, and leveraging such connections is intrinsic to taking a 'whole-of-government' approach to supporting Aging-in-Community.

SERVICES ENVIRONMENT

As identified in the Workshop #2 stakeholder grading exercise described above, Aurora has to-date focused on the Service and Social/Informational components of supporting Aging-in-Community and has developed a host of important multi-sectoral partnerships both within & outside of government. This provides a strong basis for a 'whole-of-government' approach to supporting Aging-in-Community.

Specific strategic recommendations on how to leverage many key multi-sectoral partners are offered below.

An Aging-in-Community Commission to play a coordination & policy review role

Aurora sees itself, in part “as an accessible and inclusive city, that is age-friendly.” Fittingly, a wide swath of Aurora should collectively “own” Aging-in-Community, and a new, ongoing Aging-in-Community Commission would be invaluable to helping embed the City’s commitment to integrating Aging-in-Community into ongoing City practice. Ideally, the Commission would consist of a range of residents, including – but not limited to – older adults, and key public and private sector stakeholder members, many of whom participated in the AiaCR Workshops and expressed interest in ongoing participation. If appropriate, this Commission could be linked to one or more of Aurora’s existing Commissions. With staff support, the Commission could be charged with setting its own operational rules, and performing functions such as: meeting regularly to provide a forum for coordinating Aging-in-Community activities; reviewing significant development/redevelopment proposals as to their impacts on Aging-in-Community; helping establish and maintain an Aging-in-Community resource center (*discussed below*) and preparing



Aurora's City Hall on the banks of the Fox River

and presenting to the City Council a 'State of Aging-in-Community in Aurora' annual update.

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

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. Aurora already has taken some important steps in the direction of 'whole-of-government' involvement with Aging-in-Community, but this should be expanded to all corners of government. At a minimum, key department heads should participate with the new Aging-in-Community Commission described above and attend the recommended annual presentation of an annual 'State of Aging-in-Community in Aurora' to the City Council.

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

Linked to the above recommendation about a 'whole-of-government' approach towards Aging-in-Community, City 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 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.

Incorporate Aging-in-Community into all key City programs and initiatives

Aging-in-Community should become an important lens through which proposed or existing Aurora projects, programs or strategies are viewed and evaluated – whether the initiatives are seen as primarily benefitting economic development, municipal infrastructure, sustainability, public safety, or other key municipal agendas. This evaluation should ask: how do these projects, programs or strategies impact the older adult population, and how could they advance Aurora towards being a livable community that supports residents of all ages? 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. In doing this, the City may 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 a key component of being a livable community for all ages.

Continue to think broadly & expand the network of Aging-in-Community partners

The stakeholder attendees at Workshop #2 represented a range of organizations whose work with older adults, and people with physical, developmental, intellectual, and/or mental health challenges. Notable was the fact that the represented organizations included some focused on each three realms – Services, Social/Informational, and Physical – key to supporting Aging-in-Community. Taking this broad approach suggests that there should be room in Aurora's Aging-in-Community conversation for all potential and interested partners and is fitting for a large complex City.

Maintain partnerships with AgeGuide and other aging network partners

AgeGuide is the state-designated and federally-funded agency designated to coordinate and sponsor services provided by partner agencies in DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will Counties (*such as Senior Services Associates in Kane and Kendall Counties*) to assist older adults to remain in their homes and communities. Aurora already has strong partnerships with AgeGuide and Senior Services Associates, and should maintain and expand these partnerships, as AgeGuide's and their partner agencies' resources are spread thin throughout the region, and their funding decisions factor in municipal support and partnerships. AgeGuide and their aging network partners can also provide a wide range of specific services such as Dementia-Friendly training.

Engage all taxing bodies to establish and promote Aging-In-Community programs

Civic facilities such as libraries, parks and open space play important roles for a community's residents, and this certainly



Aurora benefits from a combination of large regional and smaller local parks

includes older adults. Consistent with taking a 'whole-of-government' approach to Aging-in-Community, the Aurora Public Library District, the City of Aurora Parks & Recreation Department, and the Fox Valley Park District – all of which played limited or no roles in this engagement – should be encouraged to become more active in the ongoing Aging-in-Community effort going forward, which could include expanding upon the programs, events and services which they each currently provide.

Expand the faith community involvement with the Aging-in-Community effort

Aurora's faith community played a limited role in this engagement, although those members who did engage stated a strong interest in playing an enhanced role going forward. As Aurora churches, mosques, synagogues, and other places of worship play such a substantial role supporting the community's older adults and their caregivers, specific outreach should be made to all faith communities – potentially via the Aurora Interfaith Alliance – and

faith community representatives might be invited to participate in the new Aging-in-Community Commission.

Ramp up the business community's role within the Aging-in-Community effort

Aurora's business community played a very limited role in this engagement, but as a critical contributor to the quality-of-life throughout Aurora, the business community should be encouraged to be involved going forward, and business representatives should be invited to participate in the new Aging-in-Community Commission. This involvement could be coordinated through the Aurora Development Services Department, which assists with business-related coordination and cooperation among City departments, or one or more of Aurora's three Chambers of Commerce. Several residents spoke of their desire to be better engaged with and supported by local retail and commercial businesses, and the business community is constantly looking for the same, so this involvement should be seen as mutually benefitting.

Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational partners

As Aurora envisions support for Aging-in-Community as a municipality-wide initiative, it may wish to explore potential partnerships with its community educational institutions, some of which might provide human, facility, and transportation assets. Aurora is served by six public school districts – Aurora East District 131 on the East side; Aurora West District 129 on the West side; Indian Prairie District 204 on the Far East side; Batavia Public District 101 on the Far Northeast Side; Oswego Community Unit District 308 on the Far Southeast side; and Kaneland Community Unit District 302 on the Far Northwest side –and various private schools some of which might be interested in intergenerational partnership opportunities, including service-learning placements, internships, technical support, and mentoring that could not only benefit their students, but would allow older adults to provide resources rather than be seen solely as resource-users. In addition, Aurora is home to three schools of higher education – Aurora University; College of DuPage; and Waubesa

Community College – which offer a range of community-supportive facilities and services and may be amenable to growing partnerships.

Continue to attend Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative & related activities

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' quarterly Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative meetings typically include representatives of several dozen municipalities involved with Aging-in-Community activities and provide topical knowledge and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Aurora's experiences with the AiaCR program during 2023 will 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 Resources section for further information*). Aurora may also wish to participate in MMC's Housing & Community Development Committee which addresses Missing Middle Housing, Universal Design, and other relevant Aging-in-Community considerations.



A small playlot located within one of Aurora's multi-family communities



The local parks are well-appointed & well-maintained

SOCIAL/INFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Aurora is already doing much excellent work here, and the following recommendations are designed to help publicize and clarify, streamline, and leverage its ability to utilize its resources to promote Aging-in-Community.

Amplify Aurora's commitment to & engagement with Aging-in-Community

Aurora's broad, municipality-wide commitment to supporting Aging-in-Community is not particularly noticeable on the City's website, as the City's commitment to supporting Aging-in-Community is manifest largely as a set of programs and services that are found on the Senior & Disability Services division's webpage, with specific links from there. A new, all-inclusive Aging-in-Community landing page, promoted on the City's homepage with a clear statement such as *"Aurora actively support Aging-in-Community!"* could set the tone that the City takes a "whole-of-enterprise" approach towards Aging-in-Community, whereby support

of older adult residents is integrated into the work of and promoted by all municipal departments and partner agencies – including those who work primarily within the physical environment sector – and is not isolated to any one department or entity.

Designate departmental staff as Aging-in-Community point-persons

Aurora is like many municipalities, where residents or other stakeholders need to navigate multiple departmental webpages, depending upon their issue or concern. It is likely that some residents – including but not limited to older adults – find this confusing or overwhelming. While some departments already have an identified point-person, designating and publicizing a specific staff liaison in every public-facing department as their 'Aging-in-Community point-person' would make Aurora's government more efficient and more accessible to older adults. The departmental Aging-in-Community liaisons should meet periodically – perhaps in conjunction with the proposed Aging-in-Community Commission – to learn from one another and identify ways to address common issues proactively and in a coordinated manner.

Augment the Resource Guide with an Aging-in-Community Resource Center

The AiaCR resident input showed that residents and their caregivers often lack knowledge as to existing services and programs available to Aurora's older adult residents, which restricts their ability to avail themselves of valuable resources. To address this need, the Senior & Disability Services division recently developed the Senior Resource Guide, available in hard copy in both English and Spanish. Another response to this need would be the establishment and maintenance of a one-stop Resource Center – likely located at the Senior & Disability Services office at City Hall – at which residents and stakeholders can learn about and access hard copy information on existing resources provided by the range of municipal and partner stakeholder organizations. The Resource Center might be initially established in coordination with the new Aging-in-Community Commission.

Establish a centralized Volunteer Center

Resident and stakeholder input at the Workshops suggested potential for better leveraging Aurora's human asset of volunteerism. While it is likely that various organizations currently maintain narrower volunteer efforts, a centralized, and the City's website already includes a "Volunteer Opportunities" page with a small number of specific volunteer options, a broader Volunteer Center might better harvest the currently unrealized capacity of many retired older residents who may wish to continue to contribute without "working". This Volunteer Center should be coordinated with the Aging-in-Community Commission, might be linked to an existing stakeholder partner, and should kept current with the City's website and other outreach platforms.

Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior

Ageism is discrimination against older people, often due to negative and inaccurate stereotypes, and Aurora has a strong commitment to stand up for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. 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 Aurora's older adults is anti-ageist and characterizes older adults a diverse group of civic assets and resources to be leveraged, rather than viewing them a monolithic group to be perceived solely through a needs-based or a medical lens.



Well-kept lawns and sidewalks in a single-family neighborhood



The magnificent Paramount Theatre is an Art Deco landmark

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATIONS – Planning/Housing/Transportation/Accessibility/Public Spaces

The physical environment is where Aurora has the most work to do to integrate various ongoing efforts into a 'whole-of-government' approach to supporting Aging-in-Community. Since Aurora aspires to becoming an Age-Friendly Community, many of these recommendations address tactics to developing a set of walkable, livable, and Age-Friendly neighborhoods within an overall Age-Friendly Community.

As Aurora is a large complex City, some of these strategic recommendations reflect Portland, Oregon's recent "Age and Disability Inclusive Neighborhoods

Action Plan." What separates this new Portland plan from others is its focus on neighborhoods (*referred to as "centers" in the Plan*). Most other such plans assess conditions and make recommendations at the scale of the entire community for which they are prepared, while this Portland Plan looks at the physical, service and social environments at the smaller neighborhood scale as they are "places where people can age in their homes and communities and have the ability to meet most of their daily needs within their local community, regardless of age or disability". While Portland is a larger city than Aurora, with a population of ~640,000 vs. Aurora's ~180,000, having crested at ~198,000 in 2010, its focus on the neighborhood scale is valuable, and appears to be a good model for Aurora in its efforts to become an Age-Friendly Community.

Below are several strategic recommendations within the physical environment:

Review municipal facilities for their Aging-in-Community consistency

In tandem with the programmatic review recommended above – and as part of Aurora’s ‘whole-of-government’ approach towards Aging-in-Community – City department and sister agency staffs – notably including the Parks – should conduct reviews of their facilities to identify any conditions or implicit physical ability assumptions that explicitly or unintentionally undercut support for Aging-in-Community and the taking of an “all abilities” approach, and work with the Aging-in-Community Commission to remedy any findings. Even if this review does not unearth barriers, it may reveal opportunities for physical enhancements to foster broader community (*not limited to just older adult*) participation.

Establish working groups to assess neighborhood-level Aging-in-Community

Aurora could establish Ward or neighborhood-level teams of residents, stakeholders, and City and sister agency staff – in conjunction with the Aging-in-Community Commission – to assess existing community housing, streetscape, transportation/accessibility, parks, public realm, open space, gathering space and other municipal assets and challenges. Aurora can utilize the AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit, the AARP/Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) Enabling Better Places: A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods, and other available resources in the AARP Livable Communities Resource depository (*see the Resources section*). Ward or neighborhood-level assessments can then be incorporated into City-level plans and capital improvement budgets and implementation schedules. These plans and implementation plans would blend with future Age-Friendly Community planning.



A good example of Aurora's diverse commercial inventory



The homes and the tree canopy are both mature and varied

Add informal gathering places for older residents throughout Aurora

Some residents and stakeholders spoke to the importance of providing informal opportunities for older adults to continue to engage with the broader community, partly as a strategy to combat social isolation and identify safe spaces for residents to interact. This effort need not require significant investment, and a valuable first step might include performing an inventory of existing and potential informal gathering places throughout the City or neighborhoods, and noting gaps and opportunities for new or enhanced ones. This effort could be done as a City-wide effort, or on a neighborhood basis as part of the neighborhood assessment effort described above, and could potentially engage the business and faith communities and other community-based organizations. The effort should also be coordinated with the new Aging-in-Community Commission.

Ramp up Community Development's integration with Aging-in-Community efforts

It was an excellent sign that Community Development Director Chris Ragona was an active Core Team member, and this engagement can provide a pathway for

Aging-in-Community to become even more integral part of the Community Development Department's work – including in the development of the next Consolidated Plan – which will go a long way towards helping put an Aging-in-Community lens on Aurora's broad housing, economic development and capital infrastructure decision-making.

View housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens

Many of Aurora's older residents speak to their current or potential future housing-related concerns, such as their ability to navigate multiple-story single family houses, affordability, and upkeep challenges. Even accounting for the Aurora Housing Authority and other non-profit organizations' older-adult targeted housing in the community, most of Aurora's older adults live independently, viewing issues about the condition and affordability of Aurora'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.

Continue to partner with the Housing Authority and other housing providers

The Aurora Housing Authority, under City control, receives federal funding and provides affordable housing for nearly 2,000 households through the Low-Income Public Housing Program, the Project Based Voucher Program and Housing Choice Voucher Program. As housing was one of the most pressing issues identified by residents during this engagement, the City should continue to maintain close working and strategic partnerships with the Housing Authority and other housing providers to ensure that all entities are consistent in their 'whole-of-government' support of Aging-in-Community.

Explore adding “Missing Middle Housing” options to the housing stock

The phrase “Missing Middle Housing” refers to a spectrum of creative house-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods, some of which might fit Aurora’s housing needs and support Aging-in-Community. It would be a valuable exercise to utilize the Missing Middle Housing framework and determine whether Missing Middle Housing types would be allowable under Aurora’s existing

Development Ordinances and Zoning District requirements. If barriers are identified, they should be addressed in coordination with the new Comprehensive Plan effort discussed below.

Update the Comprehensive Plan or develop a Plan with an Aging-in-Community focus

Aurora’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1984 and is quite outdated, and it has recently focused more on topical and area-specific Plans, none of which place specific focus on Aurora’s aging population and commitment to Aging-in-Community. Since Comprehensive Plans typically are updated every 10-20 years, Aurora could develop an updated Comprehensive Plan with a focus on Aging-in-Community, or it could develop a specific Aging-in-Community topical Plan. Ways a new Comprehensive Plan can support Aging-in-Community by including Aging-in-Community standards for future projects, or by identifying features that could be added to existing neighborhoods or shopping districts. Examples of Comprehensive Plans that focus on Aging-in-Community may be found in the Resources section.



One of many well-maintained modest single-family neighborhoods

Aging-in-Community Resources

Aurora has developed and maintains an information-rich Senior Resource Guide, which is an excellent repository of local information. Listed below are some additional resources, including some of the better centralized document repositories at which to find broader or national Aging-in-Community resources.

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 here for their applicability to Aurora's specific interests and needs.

Aging in a Changing Region Partner Organization Resources

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

Aging-in-Community is one of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' signature initiatives, and it has developed and assembled resource materials and documents both for its Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and as part of this Aging in a Changing Region program.

[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.

[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.

Aging-in-Community General Resources

[AARP Livable Communities Publications and Resources](#)

This 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. Once it registers as an Age-Friendly Community, Aurora will have complete access to these and other members-only resources:

- [AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit](#)
- [Free Publication: A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods \(aarp.org\)](#)
- [Free Publication: Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing \(aarp.org\)](#)

[AARP Illinois](#)

The AARP-Illinois office has a number of staff persons involved with advocacy and community engagement and can serve as a local link to national AARP programs.

American Society on Aging (ASA) Roundtables

The local chapter of the American Society on Aging stages free bi-monthly topical Roundtables, often on Aging-in-Community topics. Now being staged virtually since 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.

[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 USAging (*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

[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.

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Aurora \(illinois.gov\)](#)

CMAP has assembled Census and other data over time into data snapshots for each municipality in the region.

[94b4305c-4586-4bd3-acf1-e177194f8820 \(illinois.gov\)](#)

CMAP developed this Aging in Place white paper in 2016.

[Exploring the 15-Minute City Concept and Its Potential for Communities of All Sizes - National League of Cities \(nlc.org\)](#)

Increasing numbers of cities are taking a "15-minute City (*or Neighborhood*)" approach to planning, which is very consistent with Aging-in-Community.

[Communities for All Ages | MARC](#)

The Kansas City region's "Communities for All Ages" and "First Suburbs Coalition" programs are two of the country's preeminent regional and municipal Aging-in-Community programs. The program and its participating municipalities have developed a wealth of valuable resources.

[Grandview 2030 by grandview1 - Issuu](#)

Grandview, Missouri's 2020 Comprehensive Plan update specifically calls out throughout the document plan elements that meet Communities for All Ages specific recommendations for helping Grandview better support Aging-in-Community. This is one of the clearest examples of linking Aging-in-Community and a Comprehensive Plan.

[Building a Community for All Ages | City of Raymore, MO](#)

In 2017, Raymore, Missouri developed and adopted this fine standalone Aging-in-Community plan in part to achieve the highest (Gold) level recognition in the Communities for All Ages program. This plan specifically links to the city's previous plans.

[Community for All Ages Plan by City of Lees Summit - Issuu](#)

In 2018, Lee's Summit, Missouri developed and adopted this multi-sectoral plan that informs its Comprehensive Plan and other plans.

[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/ Accessibility 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 former National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). Its resource center provides information on transportation for older adults and people with disabilities.

[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.

[Sidewalk Accessibility Tools \(uic.edu\)](#)

The University of Illinois at Chicago's Applied Health Sciences' Disability and Human Development department has partnered with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and other partners to provide a suite of Sidewalk Accessibility Tools and can help support communities to access and improve their existing sidewalk networks.

Housing/Aging-in-Place Resources

[North West Housing Partnership - Affordable Housing, IL \(nwhp.net\)](#)

This northwest metropolitan Chicago area suburban five-town collaborative runs several housing programs, including their Handyman Program which helps support aging-in-place and aging-in-community.

[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.

[Home Sharing | Center of Concern](#)

Des Plaines-based Center of Concern provides a broad range of services to support its mission "...to provide housing solutions, support services, and counseling for older adults, people with disabilities, and others in need, enabling them to live with dignity and independence." It manages a longstanding home sharing program throughout Cook County.

[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.

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

Opticos Design founder Daniel Parolek coined the term "Missing Middle Housing" to convey the provision of enhanced housing options for sustainable, walkable communities. This link provides many examples and resources. Opticos maintains a Chicago office and is associated with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

[Universal Design | RL Mace Universal Design Institute \(udinstitute.org\)](#)

The Ronald L. Mace Universal Design Institute is a non-profit organization based in North Carolina dedicated to promoting the concept and practice of accessible and universal design. Its founder Richard Duncan has worked with communities to help support Aging-in-Community, and is associated with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

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

Aurora Residents

Many Aurora residents participated in this engagement, including those who submitted Resident Input Forms, those who attended and participated in the resident-focused Workshop #1, or both. All of their input was invaluable to this engagement.

Aurora Stakeholder Organizations

Representatives from many important stakeholder organizations participated in this engagement, including 40 who attended and participated in the stakeholder-focused Workshop #2. Their input was invaluable to the project.

Stakeholder Organizations Represented at Workshop #2

Rebuilding Together Aurora • Santa Maria Health • Fox Valley United Way • Plum Landing Independent Living • Aurora Police Department • Riverwalk Adult Day Services • Dragonfly Senior Navigation Services LLC • Oak Street Health • Pastor Dallas Scott, Main Baptist Church • VNA Health Care • RUSH Copley Medical Center • Association for Individual Development (AID) • Complete Health Service • Trustwell Senior Living • Hessed House • Three Oaks Hospice • INC Mental Health Alliance • Jennings Terrace • Promedica Hospice • Senior Services Associates Inc. • Aetna • ESSE • Xilin Association • Aurora Housing Authority • Pastor Matthew DeCola, Highpoint Church • Fox Valley Special Recreation Association • Pastor Gregory Jones, Greater Mount Olive Church of God in Christ • Prairie State Legal Services • Twin Benefits and Financial • Dance Fuze Studio • Dream Dance Studio

Aurora Elected Officials, Staff & Core Team members

Alderman Bill Donnell, *Ward 4* • Williams Catching, *Aurora Township Supervisor* • David Guevara, *Crisis Intervention Unit Officer, Aurora Police Department* • Bridget Damschen, *Social Worker Coordinator, Aurora Police Department* • Anna Pace, *Fire Inspector, Aurora Fire Department* • Ralph Jordan, *Executive Director, Aurora Housing Authority* • Katrina Boatright, *Manager, Senior and Disability Services (Core Team member)* • Michele Clark, *Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (Core Team member)* • Chris Ragona, *Community Development Manager (Core Team member)* • Ruthy Harris, *Property Standards Manager (Core Team member)* • Viviana Ramirez, *Director of Community Services (Core Team member)* • Martin Shanahan, *Chief Community Services Officer (Core Team member)* • Gina Salamone, *Director, Huck-Bouma PC (Core Team member)* • Micki Miller, *Executive Director, Senior Service Associates (Core Team member)* • Karina Suarez-Darden, *Neighborhood Outreach Specialist*

Aging in a Changing Region Team Members

Neil James, Crispina Ojeda-Simmons, Nancy Firfer & Ben Schnelle, *Metropolitan Mayors Caucus* • Brad Winick, *Planning/Aging*

Report Designer

Kathrine Nichols

Some document photos provided by the City of Aurora

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.