

# Elevating Aging-in-Community *in* Schiller Park

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*A Strategic Guide*

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

**December 2023**



# Executive Summary

In 2023, Schiller Park participated in the “Aging in a Changing Region” (*AiaCR*) program, funded by the RRF Foundation for Aging, and led by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Planning/Aging, which developed strategies to enhance Schiller Park’s Aging-in-Community support. Recommendations are divided into three categories – Coordination and Collaboration; Communication; and the Built Environment.

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## Coordination and Collaboration Recommendations

- An Aging-in-Community Commission to play an ongoing support role.
- Deepen collaborations with AgeOptions, Aging Care Connections and other partners.
- Collaborate with existing service-providers to reduce knowledge gaps.
- Think broadly and expand the network of Aging-in-Community partners.
- Involve the faith and business communities with the Aging-in-Community effort.
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational partners.
- Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal programs and initiatives.
- Take a ‘whole of government’ approach to supporting Aging-in-Community.
- Provide more coordination/support for the Village’s Aging-in-Community effort.
- Coordinate the Library and Recreation Department’s key Aging-in-Community roles.
- Review operations, programs, and facilities for Aging-in-Community consistency.
- Expand Village volunteerism opportunities to better attract older adults.
- Attend the Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and other related activities.

## Communication Recommendations

- Amplify Schiller Park’s commitment to and engagement with Aging-in-Community.
- Coordinate Schiller Park’s existing older adult information sources.
- Establish an Aging-in-Community Resource Center.
- Designate specific Village departmental staff as Aging-in-Community point-persons.
- Explore possible inter-generational communication opportunities.
- Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior.

## Built Environment Recommendations

- Update/replace the Comprehensive Plan with a strong Aging-in-Community focus.
- Feature Aging-in-Community transportation and accessibility improvements
- Perform a community-wide walkability/accessibility assessment.
- View housing issues in part through an Aging-in-Community lens.
- Track and engage with efforts to establish a Suburban Cook home preservation program
- Explore adding “Missing Middle Housing” options to the housing stock.

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These recommendations are noted in more detail in this document. It is up to the Village and community to review, select and prioritize recommendations, and develop implementation plans. This should be seen as a living process: as Schiller Park’s Aging-in-Community conversation is still at a relatively early stage, 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 a critical 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 geography, 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 Schiller Park!*



## 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 Schiller Park should be tailored to the specifics of Schiller Park
- ✗ **ISN'T** a write-up of a rigorous assessment and planning process with a precise schedule for future evaluations and updates, as Schiller Park'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 Schiller Park 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 Schiller 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 Schiller 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

# Schiller Park's Aging-in-Community Context

Schiller Park may be fairly new to addressing Aging-in-Community as a coordinated concept, but it is not at all new at developing and providing programs and services intended to help support older adult (*amongst other*) residents in heavily inter/multi-generational community.

Schiller Park is ahead of many communities in recognizing that older adults are not a monolithic group, and that they possess a wide array of interests and needs. Some of these differences can be seen by the fact that the Recreation Department deals

mostly with active older adults, while Village Hall deals more so with needy or home-bound older adults.

The challenge and opportunity at this point is to develop strategies by which Schiller Park can expand its current set of older adult services and programs – most of which focus on individuals' social and emotional wellbeing – into a more holistic approach to supporting older adults by engaging the entire municipal government and addressing the built environment as well.

*Multi-family housing  
along Leland Avenue*



# Schiller Park's Demographics

The makeup of Schiller Park's population helps explain the importance of taking a strategic approach towards Aging-in-Community. As shown below, Schiller Park's population is currently slightly older than Cook County's overall population. Schiller Park's current 65+ (its 'older adult' population) makes up 16.5% of the total population, compared to 14.6% in overall Cook County. In addition, Schiller Park's current 35 through 64 (its 'middle aged' population) cohorts constitute 43.9% of the total population, again somewhat more than Cook County's 38.3% 'middle aged' population. This suggests that as its current 'middle aged' population transitions into older adulthood, joining many of those remaining in this cohort, Schiller Park's 65+ population share may reach 30% by the mid-2030s, and could conceivably reach up



**Engaging with Stakeholders at Workshop #1**

to 50% by the early 2040s. The only thing that could lower the overall percentage of Schiller Park's older adult population in the next couple of decades would be a significant influx of younger families. The bottom line here is that Schiller Park is an aging community, and this aging is an ongoing – not a transitory – phenomenon.

## Age Cohorts, 2017-2021

	Schiller Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Under 5	680	5.8%	312,408	5.9%	502,928	5.9%
5 to 19	2,446	20.9%	964,227	18.3%	1,662,052	19.4%
20 to 34	2,143	18.3%	1,176,731	22.3%	1,774,853	20.7%
35 to 49	2,133	18.3%	1,056,786	20.1%	1,724,098	20.1%
50 to 64	2,497	21.4%	980,976	18.6%	1,659,323	19.4%
65 to 74	1,203	10.3%	455,547	8.7%	746,030	8.7%
75 to 84	423	3.6%	218,495	4.1%	347,665	4.1%
85 and Over	155	1.3%	100,237	1.9%	153,584	1.8%
Median Age	38.2		37.3		37.9	

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

[CMAP Community Data Snapshot | Schiller Park \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov/cmap-community-data-snapshot)



*John F. Kennedy Elementary School on Wehrman Avenue*

Schiller Park is ethnically very diverse. According to recent data, in only about 36% of Schiller Park homes is English the only language spoken, well below over 65% in Cook County overall. This tells only a partial picture, as young people, or school-age children in many of those homes may

not speak English as their first language. But it suggests that Schiller Park may need to provide municipal communications in multiple languages to help ensure that residents can receive and understand important information

## Languages Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English, 2016-2020

	Schiller Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
English Only	3,960	36.3%	3,155,257	65.0%	5,459,244	68.7%
Spanish	1,752	16.0%	998,229	20.6%	1,449,991	18.3%
Slavic Languages	2,834	26.0%	205,096	4.2%	278,826	3.5%
Chinese	95	0.9%	66,708	1.4%	90,255	1.1%
Tagalog	313	2.9%	45,091	0.9%	71,472	0.9%
Arabic	395	3.6%	47,786	1.0%	62,859	0.8%
Korean	0	0.0%	25,127	0.5%	35,656	0.4%
Other Asian Languages	130	1.2%	64,677	1.3%	110,907	1.4%
Other Indo-European Languages	1,442	13.2%	200,781	4.1%	326,948	4.1%
Other/Unspecified Languages	0	0.0%	45,397	0.9%	56,515	0.7%
<b>TOTAL NON-ENGLISH</b>	<b>6,961</b>	<b>63.7%</b>	<b>1,698,892</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>2,483,399</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Speak English Less than "Very Well"	2,782	25.5%	657,991	13.6%	925,362	11.7%

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey five-year estimates.  
 \*For people who speak a language other than English at home, the ACS asks whether they speak English "very well," "well," "not well," or "not at all."



**Townhomes along Soreng Avenue and Garden Court**



**Multi-family housing at River Street and Michigan Avenue**

## Schiller Park's Housing Stock

Like many working-class inner-ring suburban communities that were largely built shortly after World War II, Schiller Park's housing stock consists primarily of (56.7%) single-family detached or attached homes, 55% of which have three or more bedrooms. Schiller Park's housing stock also includes a rather high percentage (28% as compared to the overall Cook County average of 14.5%) of moderate-sized multi-family buildings. Over 59% of Schiller

Park's occupied housing units are owner-occupied, a figure slightly above the Cook County overall figure. While its housing is typical of the young family-dominated population which characterized Schiller Park in earlier years, as its population continues to age, it is reasonable to question how well the existing housing stock will meet the needs and preferences of this older population.

## Housing Type 2017-2021

	Schiller Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Single Family, Detached	2,240	48.9%	907,611	40.3%	1,745,022	50.0%
Single Family, Attached	359	7.8%	118,796	5.3%	259,184	7.4%
2 Units	273	6.0%	215,305	9.6%	239,727	6.9%
3 or 4 Units	289	6.3%	237,198	10.5%	274,341	7.9%
5 to 9 Units	672	14.7%	221,214	9.8%	270,594	7.8%
10 to 19 Units	563	12.3%	106,604	4.7%	155,569	4.5%
20 or More Units	184	4.0%	429,026	19.0%	513,327	14.7%
Mobile Home/Other*	0	0.0%	18,182	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 | Schiller Park \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov/cmap)



## Housing Size 2017-2021

	Schiller Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
0 or 1 Bedroom	788	17.2%	458,099	20.3%	566,228	16.2%
2 Bedrooms	1,272	27.8%	696,022	30.9%	973,190	27.9%
3 Bedrooms	1,957	42.7%	715,259	31.7%	1,156,700	33.2%
4 Bedrooms	382	8.3%	284,956	12.6%	612,171	17.6%
5 or More Bedrooms	181	4.0%	99,600	4.4%	179,473	5.1%
Median Number of Rooms*	5.0		5.2		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 | Schiller Park \(illinois.gov\)](#)

## Housing Age 2017-2021

	Schiller Park		Cook County		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Built 2000 or Later	243	5.3%	239,893	10.6%	509,505	14.6%
Built 1970 to 1999	1,313	28.7%	589,387	26.1%	1,189,334	34.1%
Built 1940 to 1969	2,873	62.7%	783,686	34.8%	1,048,502	30.1%
Built Before 1940	151	3.3%	640,970	28.4%	740,421	21.2%
Median Year Built	1965		1960		1969	

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

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

# Schiller Park's Guidance Documents

## Comprehensive Plan

“Guidance documents” are the primary strategic documents which articulate a municipality’s vision for its future. For many communities, the Comprehensive Plan is the primary document in which the community lays out future goals and strategies for achieving those goals. In Schiller Park, however, the Comprehensive Plan appears to serve more as a general roadmap than a visionary document. In fact, Schiller Park’s current Comprehensive Plan is officially an Interim Plan. The 1997 Interim Plan is a thin document, with generalized aspirations, and no projection as to the future aging of Schiller Park’s population.

Adopted in 1997, the Interim Plan was – according to its approval ordinance – intended to serve until “a more detailed final Comprehensive Plan was prepared” but to date no final Plan has been developed. A Comprehensive Plan Update was begun in 2017, but it was not completed or adopted, so the 1997 Interim Plan still represents to be official guidance as to Schiller Park’s future. And while the Interim Plan is referred to on the Village’s website, the Plan itself cannot be found for review.

## Mission Statement

Schiller Park appears to express its municipal vision in the “Mission Statement” that is prominently featured on the Village’s website, stating that:

“Our mission is first and foremost to serve the citizens and visitors of Schiller Park. We work for you. To provide residents,

visitors, and the business community with the highest quality municipal services in an efficient, courteous manner and to enhance the quality of life through planning and visionary leadership. To provide a safe, livable, and sustainable community for our present and future citizens.

We value leadership, innovation, creativity, and initiative. We strive to be fair, friendly, and helpful and stress excellence, integrity, accountability, and honesty. We recognize our most valuable resource, our people, and businesses.”

As “providing a safe, livable, and sustainable community for...present and future citizens” is completely consistent in vision and scope with Aging-in-Community, the Mission Statement provides a wonderful opportunity by which the Village can incorporate its Aging-in-Community commitment with its broader community goals.



*Irving Park Road streetscape*

# Community Engagement

A key component of AiaCR is community engagement. No one knows more what it is like to live and age in Schiller Park than its residents, and listening and learning from their input is invaluable. The AiaCR team also 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.

A major element of the AiaCR community engagement is a pair of educational and strategic workshops staged in each Cohort municipality, planned in coordination with the Core Team. At each workshop, Planning/Aging provides 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 generally consistent with values 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, and reviewed key guidance documents such as the community's Comprehensive Plans and other relevant municipal information. In addition, residents were asked to complete brief input surveys sharing their experiences living and aging in the community.



*Mary Maltese welcoming attendees to the Lunch N' Learn/Workshop #2 event*



*The Allegra Ballroom was packed for Workshop #2*

## Workshops

- The AiaCR program includes two workshops to be presented in each participating municipality, with the dates, Times, and target audiences determined by the Core Team.
- Schiller Park's Workshop #1 was held immediately following the Older Adult Health and Resource Fair midday Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, and Workshop #2 was held as part of the Lunch N' Learn Event on Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. The Core Team determined that Workshop #1 would be targeted to an invited group of key community stakeholders, many of whom participated in the earlier Fair, and that Workshop #2 would be an open public session targeted to community residents.
- Workshop #1 – The Core Team developed a list of two dozen stakeholder attendees for this Workshop, which was held at the Community Center. The highlight was a facilitated discussion during which the attending stakeholders (*some of whom were also residents*) introduced themselves to one another, explained their existing services and programs, and shared their perspectives about Schiller Park's current support of Aging-in-Community, as well as identified potential opportunities for elevating this support.
- Workshop #2 – As is always the case at Lunch N' Learn events, the hall at Allegra Banquets was packed with well over 100 residents, who had been asked to register in advance. While it is fair to speculate that many or most of the attendees came because they are regular Lunch N' Learn attendees rather than because they anticipated being asked specific questions about Aging-in-Community, many willingly participated in a hand-raising exercise giving their input and perspectives on living and aging in Schiller Park. This type of input exercise was used since the size and layout of the hall did not readily facilitate a verbal question-and-answer format session.

# Stakeholders' Workshop #1 Input

- This informed group of stakeholders was surprised to learn about many of the existing services already offered in the community, and agreed that if they were surprised, most residents would also be.
- There was much discussion on ways to better get the word about existing programs and services out to older adults, and how to increase the impact of these programs and services.
- “Shut-ins” and socially isolated older adults are the most difficult ones to reach, and likely the ones most in need of available programs and services. Wellness checks are invaluable.
- Sporadic knowledge leads to fewer “connectors” and an incomplete referral network.
- There should be better connections with medical services so that knowledge can be shared with caregivers and others when a person is discharged from a hospital.
- “Smart 911” is new to Schiller Park. It collects emergency contact, medication information, doctor contact, so that first responders have information about an individual's needs and know what providers will be needed to triage a situation. The Sheriff's office also keeps data on known at-risk older adults.
- Stakeholders need to communicate in ways that older adults access information – often using old school methods – such as refrigerator magnets with key contact information, newsletters, etc. There is a need to coordinate the various information streams.
- The potential need for a comprehensive resource directory was mentioned. Existing ones such as from ElderWorks.org are said to be difficult to navigate, and other informal lists are a challenge to maintain.
- In-person health and information fairs – such as the Village's new Annual Older Adult Health and Resource Fair – are helpful for spreading knowledge, letting older adults know about available programs, and providing in-person services such as inoculations.



*One of Schiller Park's lovely tree-lined residential streets*

# Resident Survey and Workshop #2 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 made available at Village Hall and throughout town from the spring into the fall of 2023. The Survey was also included in the September 2023 Newsletter which was distributed to all residents.

Almost 100 Forms were completed and submitted, with respondents ranging from 20-year-olds to 90-year-olds, with the majority evenly spread through their 60s, 70s and 80s. Their tenure living in Schiller Park ranged from about 2 years to over 75

years, with the average about 30 years. The written input received from the Resident Input Forms matched up well with the input received from resident attendees at Workshop #2:

- Most older adult respondents get their Village information via a combination of 'old-school' means such as newsletters, mail and word-of-mouth. A much smaller number indicate that they also get their information via digital means.
- Approximately 2/3 of respondents use or attend older adult programs or services, with the most commonly cited being Bingocize, Essentrics and/or Wii Bowling. Various other programs and services were cited, including those by Leyden Township, miscellaneous classes, meals, meetings, and concerts.
- About 1/3 of respondents offered ideas for new programs or services to further support older residents, including more outings and trips, activities such as trivia, computer, or gardening classes, and exercise classes such as water aerobics and chair yoga.
- About 2/3 of respondents live in single-family homes, with the rest split approximately 15% condos, approximately 10% apartments, and the rest a mix of townhomes and duplexes.
- While about ¾ of respondents indicated that their housing meets their current needs and that they envision staying put, about ¼ of all respondents indicated that they envision that they will want or need to move at some future point. Those who anticipate a future desire or need to move will generally look for single-story, smaller, more affordable housing, possibly offering some in-house services.



*A piece of Schiller Park's prominent civic infrastructure*

- A large majority of respondents indicated that they rely on private cars – either self-driven or driven by others – to get around town and take care of their needs, while a much smaller number indicated that they also sometimes walked, rode bikes, or used Leyden Township older adult transportation, PACE bus, Metra rail, or on-demand transportation services.
- Getting around Schiller Park was judged to be generally easy. A large majority – even those who use assistive devices – indicated that getting around via walking or other non-vehicular means is generally easy, and it was almost unanimous amongst respondents that Schiller Park’s public spaces and buildings are easily accessible and adequate for their use.
- Not surprisingly, those who participated in a Workshop or completed a Resident Survey generally considered themselves to be adequately engaged in community life. They wondered – and it stands to reason – whether those older adults who do not participate in events or surveys are not particularly engaged. Social isolation is a major concern with respect to many older adults, particularly those who live alone.
- When asked about possible interest in additional volunteering opportunities, again, not too surprisingly, only a few Workshop #2 attendees indicated they would like to be made aware of additional volunteer options, perhaps since they may define themselves as already active and keeping busy. This may be less the case for some other older adults in the community.
- When given an open-ended opportunity to share community-level ideas or concerns about enhancing Aging-in-Community in Schiller Park, slightly more than 25% of Resident Survey respondents offered thoughts, ranging from: extending/improving Dial-a-Ride and other public transportation; making specific street crossing safety or specific park improvements; adding more affordable and other older adult housing options; and providing tree removal services.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR ELEVATING AGING-IN-COMMUNITY IN SCHILLER PARK

### ✔ COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

*An Aging-in-Community Commission to play an ongoing support role*

*Deepen collaborations with AgeOptions, Aging Care Connections and other partners*

*Collaborate with existing service-providers to reduce knowledge gaps*

*Think broadly and expand the network of Aging-in-Community partners*

*Involve the faith and business communities with the Aging-in-Community effort*

*Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational partners*

*Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal programs and initiatives*

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

*Provide more coordination/support for the Village's Aging-in-Community effort*

*Coordinate the Library and Recreation Department's key Aging-in-Community roles*

*Review operations, programs, and facilities for Aging-in-Community consistency*

*Expand Village volunteerism opportunities to better attract older adults*

*Attend the Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and other related activities*

### ✔ COMMUNICATION

*Amplify Schiller Park's commitment to and engagement with Aging-in-Community*

*Coordinate Schiller Park's existing older adult information sources*

*Establish an Aging-in-Community Resource Center*

*Designate specific Village departmental staff as Aging-in-Community point-persons*

*Explore possible inter-generational communication opportunities*

*Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior*

### ✔ BUILT ENVIRONMENT

*Update/replace the Comprehensive Plan with a strong Aging-in-Community focus*

*Feature Aging-in-Community transportation and accessibility improvements*

*Perform a community-wide walkability/accessibility assessment*

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

*Track and engage with efforts to establish a Suburban Cook home preservation program*

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





*The local parks are well appointed and well maintained*

## Recommendations for Elevating Aging-in-Community in Schiller Park

The following recommendations are divided into three broad categories: **Coordination and Collaboration** (*which focuses on coordinating and collaborating effectively and efficiently*); **Communication**; and the **Built Environment** (*which focuses on Schiller Park's physical infrastructure and resources*). There are obvious and potential overlaps and connections both between specific recommendations and the three recommendation categories.

To be efficient with Schiller Park's human and fiscal resources – and to provide appropriate recommendations for consideration and potential implementation, rather than propose new unfunded mandates – most of the recommendations are rather easy (*and inexpensive!*) to implement.

## COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### An Aging-in-Community Commission to play an ongoing support role

A wide swath of Schiller Park should collectively “own” Aging-in-Community, and establishing a new, ongoing Aging-in-Community Commission would be invaluable to helping embed the Village’s commitment to supporting Aging-in-Community into ongoing Village practices. 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 have already provided input to this AiaCR engagement. 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 and presenting to the Village Board a “State of Aging-in-Community in Schiller Park” annual update.

### Deepen collaborations with AgeOptions, Aging Care Connections and other partners

AgeOptions is the state-designated and federally-funded agency designated to coordinate and sponsor services provided by partner agencies in Suburban Cook County to assist older adults to remain in their homes and communities. Aging Care Connections provides a range of care coordination, caregiver support, adult protective, informational, and other critical services – many of which are funded by AgeOptions – to older adults living



*The Older Adult Health and Resource Fair was held before Workshop #1*

independently in Schiller Park. Pursue partnership opportunities with these and other aging network stakeholder organizations, as these agencies’ resources are spread thin throughout the region, and their engagement and funding decisions factor in municipal support and partnerships. AgeOptions, Aging Care Connections and other aging network partners are also generally receptive to new, community-incubated program ideas.



*Schiller Park's ethnic diversity is reflected in its businesses*

### **Collaborate with existing service-providers to reduce knowledge gaps**

As demonstrated at Workshop #1, significant knowledge gaps appear to exist between Schiller Park's municipal staff and the local/regional aging network and other external stakeholder partners that support older adults and their caregivers with a range of support services. Efforts such as the new Aging-in-Community Commission and the Resource Center discussed below, along with ongoing collaboration and cross-training, would help elevate overall staff awareness of existing service-providers and their ability to refer older adult Schiller Park residents and caregivers to such resources. This collaboration would dovetail well with existing programs and events such as the staging of comprehensive older adult information and health resource fairs.

### **Think broadly and expand the network of Aging-in-Community partners**

The attendees at the AiaCR Workshops included a range of stakeholder organizations whose work focuses on supporting local older adults. In addition to these already-engaged stakeholder partners, other community-based or service organizations provide various older adult-focused programs and services and should be viewed as potential partners for Schiller Park's ongoing municipality-wide Aging-in-Community efforts. But don't leave it to these potential partners to find Schiller Park's Aging-in-Community efforts – proactively identify and reach out to them.



*One of Schiller Park's condominium communities along Lawrence Avenue*



*Looking east past an old-world deli on Irving Park Road*

### **Involve the faith and business communities with the Aging-in-Community effort**

Schiller Park's faith and business communities did not play roles in this engagement, although churches and other places of worship, as well as businesses, play potentially substantial roles supporting the community's older adults and their caregivers, specific outreach should both of these community sectors, and they might be invited to participate in the new Aging-in-Community Commission.

### **Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational partners**

As Schiller Park grows support for Aging-in-Community as a municipality-wide initiative, it may wish to explore partnerships with its educational institutions, some of which might provide human, facility, and transportation assets. Schiller Park is served by Public School District 81, East Leyden High School District 212 and various private schools who may be interested in potential mutually beneficial

intergenerational partnership opportunities, including service-learning placements, internships, technical support, multi-lingual services, and mentoring that could not only provide benefit to their students, but would allow older adults to function as resource-providers rather than be seen solely as resource-users. In addition, Schiller Park benefits from nearby Triton College which sponsors the AmeriCorps Seniors Retired and Senior Volunteer (RSVP) Program which pairs older adults with community organizations for volunteer service including tax preparation assistance. Triton may be open to exploring additional partnerships with its other community-supportive facilities.

### **Incorporate Aging-in-Community into key municipal programs and initiatives**

Aging-in-Community should become an important lens through which proposed or existing Schiller Park's 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 Schiller Park 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 Village 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.



*Part of Schiller Park's municipal campus located on Irving Park Road*

### **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. While the Recreation Department played the lead role with the AiaCR engagement, bringing other departments into active roles would provide a multi-sectoral and more impactful approach to supporting Schiller Park's older adults. At a minimum, key department heads should interface with the new Aging-in-Community Commission described above and attend the recommended annual presentation of a "State of Aging-in-Community in Schiller Park" report to the Village Board.

### **Provide more coordination/support for the Village's Aging-in-Community effort**

While it is wonderful that the Recreation Department currently includes a part-time Senior Services Coordinator, and that this individual works diligently to develop and maintain a robust group of older adult-serving programs and activities within this department, committing additional resources to also support the Aging-in-Community effort – perhaps within Village Hall – would likely facilitate a more coordinated 'whole of government' approach.

### **Coordinate the Library and Recreation Department's key Aging-in-Community roles**

Schiller Park's Recreation Department manages and operates a range of activities and programs at the Recreation Center, Community Center and 9 Village parks, including the Anna Montana Water Park/Memorial Pool, and offers classes and

activities targeted to older adults. The Recreation Department houses the part-time Senior Services Coordinator, who plays a pivotal role in the Village's Aging-in-Community effort. Similarly, the Public Library provides several programs and activities for older adults. As the Library and all the Recreation Department's facilities and activities play key civic roles and in the lives of older residents, their older adult-focused activities should be well-coordinated and cross-promoted in ways befitting their significant roles in supporting Schiller Park's village-wide Aging-in-Community effort.

### **Review operations, programs, and facilities for Aging-in-Community consistency**

Village department and sister agency staffs should conduct a review of their operations, plans, programs and facilities to identify any physical barriers, wording or other 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 any unintentional barriers, it may reveal opportunities for enhancements to foster broader community (*not limited to just older adult*) participation.



*Another example of handsome single-family housing*

### **Expand Village volunteerism opportunities to better attract older adults**

Resident input evidenced potential for better leveraging the largely underrealized capacity of many retired older residents who wish to continue to contribute without "working." It is very likely that the local service organizations all welcome volunteer efforts. While some older adults already serve as volunteers to help support events and activities, there does not appear to be a specific entity or program that spearheads volunteerism on an ongoing basis. The Village could develop and maintain a centralized, well-publicized Volunteer Center program to serve as the hub for community volunteerism. This effort might be coordinated with an existing community organization or the proposed Aging-in-Community Commission.

### **Attend the Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative and other related 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. Schiller Park's experiences with and lessons learned from the AiaCR program during 2023 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 Resources section for further information*). South Holland may wish to also participate in MMC's Housing and Community Development Committee which addresses Missing Middle Housing, Universal Design, and other relevant Aging-in-Community considerations.

## COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Amplify Schiller Park's commitment to and engagement with Aging-in-Community

Schiller Park's overall commitment to supporting Aging-in-Community is scattered throughout the Village's website, and this can be fairly easily remedied with a new, all-inclusive Aging-in-Community landing page, promoted on the Village's homepage with a clear statement such as "*Schiller Park actively supports Aging-in-Community!*" with links to all older adult supporting programs, services, or activities. This would help set a tone that the Village takes a "whole-of-enterprise" approach towards Aging-in-Community, whereby support of older adult residents is integrated into the work of all municipal departments and partner agencies, and not isolated to any one entity.

### Coordinate Schiller Park's existing older adult information sources

Schiller Park already does a better job than many larger communities in gathering and organizing information on many of the available programs, services and activities tailored to its older adult residents in one place on the Village's website: the Senior and Disabled Services webpage. But there are many other information sources and platforms that partly or wholly target older adults in Schiller Park – some are put out by Village departments such as the Village's newsletter and the Recreation Department's seasonal brochures, and others are from partners such as the library's bi-monthly newsletter, Leyden Township's periodical newsletter, and other stakeholder agencies' communications. An inventory and evaluation of the existing information sources to determine how effective and coordinated an information stream they

provide for Schiller Park older residents would be a good first step, followed by potential actions on how to coordinate or modify them as needed into a unified Aging-in-Community communication strategy.

### Establish an Aging-in-Community Resource Center

The AiaCR community input suggested that many residents and key stakeholders lack knowledge as to existing services and programs available to Schiller Park's older adult 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, which exacerbates the existing level of social isolation in the community. One response to this issue might be the establishment and maintenance of a one-stop Resource Center – likely located at Village 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. In parallel, electronic information could be made available on a well-located digital webpage. The Resource Center might be initially established by the new Aging-in-Community Commission with staff assistance, with provisions for its ongoing maintenance established and agreed upon upfront.

### Designate specific Village departmental staff as Aging-in-Community point-persons

Schiller Park is like other municipalities in that residents and 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



*Schiller Park's geography lends itself to a fair number of cul-de-sacs*

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 Schiller Park's government 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.

### **Explore possible inter-generational communication opportunities**

Considering the high percentage on “non-English only” speaking households in Schiller Park, one might expect to find multi-lingual communications prominently featured on the Village website and elsewhere, but this does not appear to be the case. It might be a valuable exercise to engage with the diverse population to

evaluate whether the Village's non-English speakers are in fact missing important municipal communications. If modifications or augmentations to the Village's communication protocol are suggested – specifically with respect to Aging-in-Community efforts – this may suggest possible inter-generational opportunities.

### **Practice anti-ageism in all municipal communications and behavior**

Ageism is discrimination against older people, often 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 Schiller Park's older adults characterize them as civic assets and resources to be leveraged, rather than viewing them solely through a needs-based or a medical lens.



## **BUILT ENVIRONMENT – Planning/Housing/ Accessibility – RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Update/replace the Comprehensive Plan with a strong Aging-in-Community focus**

As discussed above, Schiller Park's current Comprehensive Plan in an "interim" plan that was adopted in 1997 and is a rather thin expression of the community's generalized aspirations. Since Comprehensive Plans typically are updated every 10-20 years, Schiller Park's is overdue for an update or replacement. When Schiller Park begins to focus on updating or replacing its Comprehensive Plan, the next one should include a more specific focus on its evolving and aging population, and a municipality-wide approach to supporting Aging-in-Community, as discussed throughout this document.

Ways a new Comprehensive Plan can support Aging-in-Community throughout Schiller Park include developing Aging-in-Community standards for future projects, and by identifying specific features that could be added to existing neighborhoods or shopping/commercial districts, and in future redevelopment projects. Examples of Comprehensive Plans that focus on Aging-in-Community may be found in the Resources section.

### **Feature Aging-in-Community transportation and accessibility improvements**

Schiller Park does not appear to have a free-standing transportation plan, and its most recent transportation overview appears to be the single page devoted to "Transportation" within the 1997 Interim Comprehensive Plan. While this page touched upon some of the challenges



*The very prominent underpass at Irving Park Road*

and needed improvements to Schiller Park's transportation, pedestrian, and non-vehicular environments, the next Comprehensive Plan should review the progress made to date and take an even broader view of how a range of transportation and accessibility enhancements would help support Schiller Park's whole-of-government Aging-in-Community approach.

### **Perform a community-wide walkability/accessibility assessment**

As residents cited many examples of walkability and accessibility challenges within the public right-of-way throughout the Village due to dangerous street crossings, missing or under-maintained sidewalks or curb cuts, and other physical infrastructure issues, Schiller Park may wish to conduct a walkability/accessibility audit, which could be performed by the Aging-in-Community Commission or a specially convened body of residents and municipal staff. Many such assessment tools exist and be accessed at little or no cost (*see the Resources section*). Identified gaps should be prioritized into Schiller Park's Capital Improvements program.



**Anna Montana Water Park & Memorial Pool located on Scott Street**

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

Most of Schiller Park's older residents live independently, and many speak of current or potential future housing-related concerns, such as their ability to navigate multiple-story single family houses, affordability, and upkeep challenges. Viewing issues about the diversity, condition and affordability of the Village's housing stock in part through an Aging-in-Community lens will better understand older-adult related housing needs, help quantify gaps, guide housing-related policy decisions, and inform potential development and/or redevelopment planning. An openness to explore other housing-related support options such as home sharing programs, and universal design modifications may further provide appropriate older adult housing stock options.

### **Track and engage with efforts to establish a Suburban Cook home preservation program**

As an outgrowth of early AiaCR Suburban Cook County municipal engagements, the AiaCR team, AgeOptions, and local housing sector partners convened a conversation about the demand for and established a pilot home preservation

program in Suburban Cook County, funded with AgeOptions funding. While the pilot stage funding has been exhausted, AgeOptions and its partners are exploring future program phases, which would likely include additional communities. Schiller Park should engage with these stakeholders and look to become involved with future program phases. *(A factsheet on this program is included at the end of the Resources section of this document.)*

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

The phrase "Missing Middle Housing" refers to a spectrum of creative smaller-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods, some of which might fit some of Schiller Park's housing needs and support Aging-in-Community. It might be a valuable and proactive exercise to utilize the Missing Middle Housing framework (see the Resources section of this document) and determine whether Missing Middle Housing types would be allowable under Schiller Park's existing development ordinances and zoning requirements. If barriers are identified, they should be addressed in coordination with the future new Comprehensive Plan effort discussed above.

# Aging-in-Community Resources

Listed below are some of the better centralized document repositories at which to find 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 Schiller Park's specific interests and needs.

Schiller Park already maintains relationships with numerous resource-providers – many of whom may be on this listing, others which may not be. This listing is intended to augment Schiller Park's current relationships.

## 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.

### [Housing Planning - Mayors Caucus](#)

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and its partners have engaged in many projects to help area municipalities achieve a balanced and healthy housing stock. The Homes for a Changing Region program helps municipalities identify solutions to their most pressing housing challenges, create a balanced mix of housing types, and serve the needs of multiple generations of residents and workers.

### [Housing + Community Development Committee - Mayors Caucus](#)

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus' Housing and Community Development Committee works to develop policies and programs to assist the region's municipalities in addressing local housing challenges. With oversight from the Committee, the Caucus maintains a Municipal Resource Guide of housing programs, to help decode the myriad programs available to municipalities, developers, homeowners, and renters: [MMC Housing and Community Development Resource Guide \(mayorscaucus.org\)](#)

### [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.

## Ageing-in-Community Ageing Network Organizations *Local/Regional*

### 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. A factsheet for AgeOption's relatively new home preservation counseling program that helps older adult homeowners throughout Cook County can be found at the end of this Resources section.

### Senior Programs: Leyden Family Service and Mental Health Center

Leyden Family Service provides a wide range of home-based programs and services – many of which are funded by AgeOptions – intended to support older adults aging-in-community, including informational, health, energy, transportation and assistance applying for benefit services.

### Senior Services: Leyden Township, IL

In addition to the services provided by the Leyden Family Service and Mental Health Center, Leyden Township provides or coordinates a wide range of traditional township-based services for older residents, including: benefits and general assistance; a home handyman service; tax and insurance assistance; wellness checks; meals on wheels; and chore housekeeping services.

### Making A Difference For Older Adults: Aging Care ([agingcareconnections.org](http://agingcareconnections.org))

Aging Care Connections provides a range of care coordination, caregiver support, adult protective, informational and other services – many of which are funded by AgeOptions – to older adults living independently in Schiller Park.

## Ageing-in-Community General Resources

### **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](mailto:Bonnie_Ewald@rush.edu)) serves as the roundtable coordinator.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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](http://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 \(usaging.org\)](http://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 \(ncoa.org\)](http://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 \(illinois.gov\)](http://illinois.gov)

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: Schiller Park \(illinois.gov\)](http://illinois.gov)

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

### [CMAP Aging in Place Whitepaper](#)

CMAP developed this Aging in Place white paper in 2016.

### [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](#)

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](#)

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

### [Search \(planning.org\)](http://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. 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.

### [AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit](#)

AARP's national website offers a host of easily usable walkability and walkability-related tools and resources, many of which are free to interested municipalities.

### [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.

### [Dial-A-Ride / PACE | Leyden Township, IL](#)

Leyden Township subsidizes PACE's Dial-A-Ride service, which offers transportation services both to the general public and to older adults and disabled persons at a reduced rate.

### [Senior Programs – Leyden Family Service and Mental Health Center](#)

Leyden offers transportation for medical appointments and necessary errands to help enable older adults to reduce isolation and live independently. Drivers provide door-to-door service.

## Housing/Aging-in-Place Resources Local/Regional

### [NHS Chicago: Empowerment Through Homeownership](#)

Since 1975, Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) teams have worked to stabilize and revitalize low and moderate-income communities throughout the greater Chicago region. NHS has worked with AgeOptions funding on a pilot program to provide small home repairs and modifications, which an initial focus on one suburban Cook County municipality. While the initial funding has been exhausted, AgeOptions is exploring additional funding. Future funding would likely involve additional municipalities.

### [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. NWHP has indicated interest in securing funding to expand this service to other regions within 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.

### **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.

## **Housing/Aging-in-Place Resources *National***

### **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 and Human Services and has developed a database of aging-in-place resources.

### **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 partnering with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to produce in 2024 a Universal Design Guidebook to assist local municipalities better incorporate universal design into their housing stocks.

## **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.



## Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options

### Home Preservation Project Pilot

AgeOptions, the Area Agency on Aging of suburban Cook County since 1974, innovates, partners, and advocates to improve systems and services in order to strengthen communities so people thrive as they age. For people to thrive as they age, we believe they should have the ability to stay in their homes or communities as long as they want and are able to do so safely. Our mission and this belief led us to the Home Preservation Project Pilot.

#### What is the Home Preservation Project?

The purpose of this program is to address the housing needs of adults 60 years or older so they can live safely within their communities. With our community partners, we assess individual needs and connect homeowners, renters or people experiencing homelessness to repairs, legal assistance or other local resources, such as homeless prevention. The Home Preservation Project includes three components: information and referrals from aging service community agencies, legal assistance and a small, localized pilot handyman program. A secondary goal of this pilot is to enhance and build the capacity of these agencies and our broader network to respond to the housing needs of the older adults across suburban Cook County.

#### Who is eligible?

Any person over the age of sixty whose home is in suburban Cook County. A person may be a homeowner, a renter or experiencing homelessness.

#### Why Focus on Housing and Home Preservation?

A clear concern from our community partners and a noted trend has been the increase in housing insecurity and homelessness among older adults in our area. More than half of the evictions the Cook County Sheriff's Office served were to older adults. Rents were increasing while income stayed the same. The COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn continues to have rippling impact.

#### How long will this program last?

Our Home Preservation Project is funded by American Rescue Plan Act dollars via the Illinois Department on Aging. This funding ends on September 30, 2024, making this a time-limited pilot project. We hope to learn valuable lessons and build meaningful infrastructure and partnerships to continue the impact of this pilot beyond that date.

#### How can I get help?

If you or someone you know who is 60 or older, lives in suburban Cook County and needs assistance with housing needs, see the next page of a local community partner. You can also find your local aging service agency at <https://services.ageoptions.org/> or call AgeOptions for help (800)699-9043.

**AgeOptions.**

1048 Lake Street, Suite 300  
Oak Park, IL 60301-1102

phone (708)383-0258  
fax (708)524-0870

(800)699-9043  
[ageoptions.org](https://ageoptions.org)



## From Home Preservation in Your Area, Contact a Local Agency

The following are our Home Preservation Project partners by township:

North Suburbs	West Suburbs	South Suburbs
<p><b>Barrington, Hanover, Palatine, and Wheeling Townships</b></p> <p>Center of Concern (847)823-0453</p>	<p><b>Berwyn, Cicero, and North Proviso Township</b> (excluding Brookfield and LaGrange Park)</p> <p>Solutions for Care (708)447-2448</p>	<p><b>Bloom, Bremen, Calumet, Rich and Thornton Townships</b></p> <p>Cornerstone CDC (708)758-2565</p>
<p><b>Elk Grove and Schaumburg Townships</b></p> <p>Kenneth Young Center (847)524-8800</p>	<p><b>Leyden, Lyons, Riverside, and Norwood Townships</b> (Including Brookfield and LaGrange Park)</p> <p>Aging Care Connections (708)354-1323</p>	<p><b>Lemont, Orland, Palos and Worth Townships</b></p> <p>Pathlights (708)361-0219</p>
<p><b>Evanston, Niles, Maine, New Trier, and Northfield Townships</b></p> <p>North Shore Senior Center (847)784-6040</p>	<p><b>Oak Park and River Forest Townships</b></p> <p>Oak Park Township Senior Services (708)383-8060</p>	<p><b>Stickney Township</b></p> <p>Pathlights (708)361-0219</p>
<p>Check out AgeOptions' referral portal:  <a href="https://services.ageoptions.org/">https://services.ageoptions.org/</a>                      to find resources near you!</p>		
Legal Assistance for Home Preservation		
<p>Center for Disability and Elder Law (CDEL) 312-376-1880 <a href="https://www.cdela.org/legal-help">https://www.cdela.org/legal-help</a></p>	<p>Legal Aid Chicago 312-341-1070 <a href="https://legalaidchicago.org/get-help/">https://legalaidchicago.org/get-help/</a></p>	

*STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION* AgeOptions does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call AgeOptions at (800)699-9043 or (708)383-0258.

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**AgeOptions.** 1048 Lake Street, Suite 300 phone (708)383-0258 (800)699-9043  
Oak Park, IL 60301-1102 fax (708)524-0870 ageoptions.org

# Acknowledgements

## Schiller Park Residents

More than 220 Schiller Park residents participated in this engagement, including approximately 100 who submitted Resident Input Forms, and the over 120 residents who attended and participated in the public workshops. Their input was invaluable to this project.

## Schiller Park Elected Officials and Staff Participants

Nick Caiafa, *Village President/Mayor* • Russ Klug, *Village Trustee* • Joan Golembiewski, *Village Trustee* • Rosa Jos, *Village Clerk* • Chris Klug, *Interim Deputy Village Clerk* • Marjorie Manchen, *Mayor's Assistant* • Brett Kryska, *Village Manager* • Mitch Anderson, *(Former) Village Zoning, Planning, and Development Coordinator* • Tom Fragakis, *Director of Police* • Mike Cesaretti, *Fire Chief* • Renee Kornau, *Office Manager, Schiller Park Recreation Department* • Zach Stewart, *Parks and Facilities Supervisor, Schiller Park Recreation Department* • Patricia Trampas, *Instructor, Schiller Park Recreation Department* • Randy Splitt, *(Former) Director of Parks and Recreation (Core Team member)* • Mary Maltese, *Senior Services Coordinator, Schiller Park Recreation Department (Core Team member)*

## Representatives from Stakeholder Organizations

Christi Rocha, *Supervisor of Senior Programs, Leyden Family Services (Core Team member)* • Wioletta Chodnicka, *ADRN Advocate/Benefit Specialist, Leyden Family Services (Core Team member)* • Joanna Lukis, *Schiller Park Public Library (Core Team member)* • Laura Williams, *Schiller Park Public Library (Core Team member)* • Gretchen Walleth, *Schiller Park Public Library* • Pat Inendino, *Chairperson, Schiller Park Recreation Board* • Desiree Scully, *Executive Director, Aging Care Connections* • Colleen Pelikant, *Director of Social Services, Aging Care Connections* • Jessica Haines, *Caregiver Support Supervisor, Aging Care Connections* • Katie Walsh, *Cook County Sheriff's Office* • Kathy Hilton, *Cook County Commissioner Sean Morrison's office* • Luis Carrizales, *Chief of Staff, U.S. Representative Delia Ramirez's office* • Magda Herroi, *Outreach Director, U.S. Representative Delia Ramirez's office* • Laurie Carr, *Community Relations, State Representative Brad Stephens' office* • Beth Sanfillippo, *Triton College RSVP Program (and resident)* • Richard J. Harrison, *Executive Director, Home Instead Senior Care* • Timothy Stofko, *Outreach Executive, Oak Street Health* • Rebecca Drennan, *Community Relations Manager, Ascension Living Casa Scalabrini Village, Northlake* • Jared Clinuil, *Community Outreach, Greater Family Health* • Kim McCahill, *Vice President, AgeOptions* • Megan Buckley, *Health Promotions Specialist, AgeOptions* • Jacquelyn Dantis, *Community Health Educator, AgeOptions* • Jaime Pena, *Health Promotion Program Coordinator, AgeOptions* • Ron Gross, *Executive Director, Municipal Consolidated Dispatch* • Mariola Biel, *Municipal Consolidated Dispatch*

## Aging in a Changing Region Team Members

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

**Report Designer:** Kathrine Nichols

*Some document photos courtesy of the Village of Schiller Park*

## 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.*