



# LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

## FACT SHEET: VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

*Brought to you by the Village of Arlington Heights's Senior Citizens Commission's Age Friendly Initiative*

### What are Livable or "Age-Friendly" Communities?

Livable, or "age-friendly" communities support efforts to be great places for people of all ages and Arlington Heights is currently one of six Designated AARP Livable Communities Network members in Illinois. The Village is committed to providing safe and walkable streets, age-friendly housing, transportation options, access to needed services, and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life.

### Why Age-Friendly?

Arlington Heights has a growing number of adults aged 65 and older and the Village's population mirrors demographic shifts in the larger Chicago Metropolitan Agency. According to population forecasts, the percent of population 65 years and older is expected to more than double, going from 917,616 in 2010, to 1,866,215 in 2050.

### What Are the 8 Domains of a Livable Community for ALL Ages?

- 1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.
- 2. Transportation:** Driving shouldn't be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit nondrivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from the large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to the small (taxis, shuttles or ride share services).
- 3. Housing:** AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so *is* possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages.
- 4. Social Participation:** Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.
- 5. Respect & Social Inclusion:** Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.
- 6. Work & Civic Engagement:** Why does work need to be an all or nothing experience? An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.
- 7. Communication & Information:** We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.
- 8. Community & Health Services:** At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that assistance and care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.



# LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

## FACT SHEET: VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

*Brought to you by the Village of Arlington Heights's Senior Citizens Commission's Age Friendly Initiative*

### History of the Arlington Heights Age-Friendly Initiative

In 2017, the Arlington Heights, IL, Senior Citizens Commission (AHSCC) acted at the direction of the Arlington Heights Board of Trustees by applying for membership in the rapidly expanding AARP Network of Livable Communities (ALCN). Efforts were made to utilize the ALCN template to evaluate how Village of Arlington Heights measured up relative to AARP's Eight Domains of Livability. The process included assessing resident evaluations of available programs and services, identifying areas of improvement for future development, and creating an action plan. A subcommittee of the Senior Citizens' Commission was formed to file an application that accompanied a letter of intent signed by Mayor Thomas W. Hayes. The application was accepted into the AARP Livable Community Network.

In December of 2018, a Steering Committee, under Chairperson George Motto, M.D. was established. The Committee included lay volunteers, members of the AHSCC, and Village staff, as well as representatives of the Senior Center's tenant agencies, the private center, Wheeling Township, and other representatives of local government. In 2019, the AARP Livable Community survey was made available to all residents, aged 45 and older.

### Livable Community Survey Priority Outcomes

The AARP Livable Community survey was available online or in-person at various locations throughout the community, including a kiosk inside the Senior Center from October 20 - November 24, 2019. In order to be statistically valid, a minimum of 600 survey responses were required and 880 surveys were completed. The respondents determined the below areas of priority focus with the top three items in bold.

- 1. Access to Safe Affordable Housing\***
- 2. Increase in Affordable Transportation Options\***
- 3. Central Source of Community Information\***
4. Increase Use of Senior Center Activities
5. Access to Affordable Home Health Care Providers
6. Install Audio/Visual Pedestrian Crossings
7. Job Opportunities for Older Adults and Individuals with a Disability
8. Civic Activities that are More Affordable
9. Create Separate Pathways for Bikes vs. Pedestrian
10. Involving Older Adults in School Events

\*To help address these top concerns, the Commission has created sub-committees to create action plans. If you are interested in learning more, please contact the Senior Center at 847-253-5532.