



Aging in Community Three-Year Action Plan

2023-2024 Progress Report



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Introduction

The Village of Mount Prospect launched the Aging in Community Initiative in 2019. The mission of the initiative is to strengthen community infrastructure and systems that enhance the lives of older adults. The Village convened a Task Force composed of community partners and residents with expertise and interest in age-friendly policy and programming to develop a three-year Action Plan. The Task Force prioritized five areas based on review of multiple data sources and identified goals and objectives for each priority area. The Action Plan lays out concrete goals and objectives that will enhance age-friendly features of the community and advance Mount Prospect as an accessible, inclusive community where older adults thrive and have the tools to navigate the aging process.

AGING IN COMMUNITY MISSION, VISION, VALUES

MISSION

Strengthen community infrastructure and systems that enhance the lives of older adults.

VISION

Mount Prospect is an accessible, inclusive community where older adults thrive and have the tools to navigate the aging process.

VALUES

Intergenerational • Accessible • Respectful
Collaborative • Adaptable

Work groups, comprised of Village team members, community stakeholders and Village residents, were formed to lead the work for each priority area. These work groups launched in August 2023. This report provides a summary of progress to date for each of the five priority areas which include housing, transportation, social engagement, information & communication and health and wellness.

FIVE PRIORITY AREAS

Housing

Transportation

Social
Engagement

Info /
Communication

Health /
Wellness

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HOUSING

Work Group Members

Antonia Lalagos- VOMP Development Planner

Bill Schroeder- VOMP Director of Building & Inspection Services

Jim Whittington- Lifeway Mobility Business Development / Accessibility Specialist

Kyle Enderle- VOMP Combination Building Inspector

Paula Bush- Northwest Housing Partnership Executive Director

Rafi Sahakian- Coldwell Banker Realty Realtor

Richard Bondarowicz- SMART Construction Group Ltd Developer

Goal 1

Enable older adults to remain in their homes through physical modifications to the structure.

Objective 1.1: Create a network of contractors and handymen available to modify homes for older adults.

The Housing Work Group is discussing the best way to identify contractors and handymen that can perform work for older adults who wish to modify their homes.

Objective 1.2: Market the network to the public via automated voice response (AVR), newsletter, website, and social media, and through partner organizations.

This objective is contingent on completion of Objective 1.1.

Objective 1.3: Increase awareness of accessible design and universal design among consumers and builders.

The Village is raising awareness of accessible home design through a partnership with the School District (SD) 214 Practical Architectural Construction (PAC) Program. The PAC program provides hands-on experience in residential design and construction to approximately 70 local high school students per year. Students work with PAC instructors, architects, and tradespeople to design and then construct a single-family home in one of the communities served by the school district. The students work at the construction site in shifts and execute any tasks that they can do safely (e.g., framing, insulation, plumbing). The students observe as professionals complete tasks that students cannot perform themselves (e.g., foundation, electrical).

In November 2023, SD 214 acquired a residential property in Mount Prospect for its next PAC project and is now working with the Community Development Department to plan and execute rehabilitation of the single-family residence. The Department will support the PAC program by providing connections to educational resources; guidance to meet Village code; instructional support through the inspection process; and promotion of the program to the community. Accessible home design

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will be a component of the PAC program instruction and students will have the option to incorporate accessible design elements into the plans. When the home is finished, the school district will host an open house to celebrate the accomplishments of the students. The open house would also provide an opportunity for the community to tour and see accessible home design in action.

The Village also participates in the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus (MMC) Age-Friendly Communities Collaborative. MMC collaborated with AARP Illinois to publish a guide entitled, "Accessible and Universal Home Remodeling." The Village participated in meetings to give feedback on the document and will share the guide with the community.

Goal 2	Enable older adults to remain in their homes by connecting them to affordable and reliable home maintenance services.
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Objective 2.1: Compile a list of handymen / maintenance companies for simple home maintenance.

The Housing Work Group will work on this objective in 2024.

Objective 2.2: Compile a list of programs, volunteers, and charities to assist with simple home maintenance.

The Housing Work Group will work on this objective in 2024.

Objective 2.3: After lists and networks are created, use newsletter, automated voice response (AVR), website, social media, and partner organizations to market these services.

This objective is contingent on completion of Objectives 2.1 and 2.2.

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TRANSPORTATION

Work Group Members

Amy Gall- Connections to Care
Antonia Lalagos- VOMP Development Planner
Jessica Rybarczyk- Pace
Julie Kane- VOMP Director of Human Services
Luke Foresman- VOMP Project Engineer
Miriam Hererra- Elk Grove Township
Steven Andrews- Pace
Walter Szymczak- MP Resident

Goal 3

Decrease barriers to transportation for older adults in Mount Prospect.

Objective 3.1: Host annual transportation resource fairs in conjunction with educational transportation program for older adults, persons with disabilities, and their families and friends to increase both awareness of and enrollment in existing transportation programs.

In August 2023, the AIC Initiative hosted a Transportation Resource Fair at the Mount Prospect Public Library with presenters from Connections to Care, Wheeling Township, Elk Grove Township, Pace, and the Right at Home Lyft Program. The agencies reviewed free and reduced-cost transportation options that older adults can use instead of driving personal vehicles or relying on friends and relatives for trips outside the home. Following the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to visit agency tables to ask questions and complete applications for services. The event was recorded and is available for viewing on the Village website at mountprospect.org/departments/human-services/aging-in-community-3849. 48 older adults attended the event, and as of April 24, 2024 there were 150 views of the recording. The verbal feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. The 2024 Transportation Resource Fair is scheduled for August 14, 2024 at Mount Prospect Public Library. Staff will implement a system to track the number of new transportation applications generated by attendees of the event.

Objective 3.2: Host an educational program on a quarterly basis for older adults, persons with disabilities, and their family and friends to educate residents on various transportation options and how to navigate these options.

The Transportation Resource Fair is “on the road” in 2024 to bring this event directly to older adults living in senior facilities. The quarterly events kicked off in March with a visit to Centennial Apartments. Wheeling Township, Connections to Care, PACE, Right at Home, RTA, and VOMP Public Works provided a short presentation to the 44 attendees. Following the presentation, attendees met with agencies to ask questions and complete applications. The Village partnered with

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Hanul Family Alliance to assist Korean-speaking residents with translation. The next event will be in May 2024 at Huntington Towers. Two more events are planned for July and October at Kenzie Senior Residences and Mount Prospect Horizon.

Objective 3.3: Develop a mechanism to educate and accompany older adults on their first public transportation ride.

The Transportation Work Group will work on this objective in 2025.

Goal 4	Increase access to all of Mount Prospect via public and other transportation programs.
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Objective 4.1: Host a transportation discussion with all transportation stakeholders regarding transportation for older adults and persons with disabilities.

The AIC Transportation Work Group is comprised of representatives from Connections to Care, Elk Grove Township, PACE, VOMP Public Works, and two Mount Prospect residents. The group first convened in August 2023 and has had 8 meetings thus far. In addition to planning and carrying out the activities of the action plan, the members share transportation updates from their respective agencies. A Pace transit study kicked off in November 2023. A consultant will conduct the internal analysis and then external outreach to the public will occur in mid-2024.

Objective 4.2: Hire independent firm to conduct a transportation study in Mount Prospect to identify gaps in service and barriers to accessing transportation for community members with a focus on older adults and persons with disabilities.

The Village has set aside \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds to conduct a transit study that will identify gaps in transportation for the community at large as well as with a focus on the senior population. The purpose of conducting this study is to produce data that the Village can use to validate the need for expansion of transportation options. Data will be reviewed by Pace as well as Wheeling and Elk Grove Townships. The hope is that this data will result in either an expansion of Dial-A Ride into all of Mount Prospect or other options that would address current barriers for residents without vehicles and seniors who can no longer drive. The anticipated timeline for the study is as follows:

- April 2024: Draft RFP
- May 2024: Release RFP
- June 2024: Proposals due
- July 2024: Designation of consultant
- January 2025: Project completion

Objective 4.3: Implement the recommendations from the transportation study to eliminate gaps in transportation services for older adults.

This objective is contingent on completion of Objective 4.2.

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SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Work Group Members

Mark Bechtold- Mount Prospect Police Department
Beth Corrigan-Buchen- Mount Prospect Public Library
Ginny Thomas- VOMP Senior Services Social Worker
Justin Slade- River Trails Park District
Mike Azzaretto- Mt. Prospect Park District
Nicole Cooper-Ffrench- VOMP Public Health Nurse
Steve Samuelson- Frisbie Senior Center

Goal 5	Increase social engagement opportunities for older adults.
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Objective 5.1: Create a decentralized model for senior activities.

- a. Senior Program Coordinator hired
- b. Frisbie Senior Center Open House for MP residents held in May

Objective 5.2: Increase the number of older adult-led social events and activities.

The work group has focused on increasing awareness of social events and activities to date. Assessment will begin third quarter of 2024 and will be completed prior to addition of new programs and activities.

- a. Created ongoing excel spreadsheet of community social engagement opportunities for older adults.
- b. Expanding marketing and promotion of activities through Senior Hub, Senior Buzz newsletter and Senior Connections program.
- c. Senior Connections March 2024 program included presentations D214 Continuing Education, Frisbie Senior Center, Mt. Prospect Park District and River Trails Park District.
- d. Mt. Prospect Park District to launch an older adult specific page in their program guide as early as fall of 2024.
- e. River Trails Park District created a packet containing programming for older adults for distribution in the Senior Hub.
- f. Resource fair which will include food and entertainment scheduled for April, 2025.

Objective 5.3: Increase the number of intergenerational programs in the community.

- c. Created Partnership with Rotary Club of River Cities – Interact Club at Prospect High School for future intergenerational events
- d. Intergenerational event – 4 Legacy Interviews completed

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Goal 6	Decrease social isolation in older adults.
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Objective 6.1: Research best practices, legislation, and funding for addressing social isolation.

Work to begin on this goal in third quarter of 2024.

Objective 6.2: Implement findings from research in objective 6.1.

Contingent on completion of objective 6.1.

Objective 6.3: Develop list of places that offer congregate meal opportunities and organizations that offer meals-on-wheels programs for home-bound older adults.

- a. Senior nutrition program resource list created which includes sources for meals-on-wheels programs. Available in Senior Hub and in the Human Services Department.

Additional Work Group Activities

Additional accomplishments and activities of the Social Engagement work group include work group member participation in the Mt. Prospect Citizen Task Force to ensure older adults voices were represented, the 1st annual Senior Appreciation event held in May 2024, ongoing Senior Buzz Newsletter promotion and outreach at community events which has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of older adults signed up to receive the newsletter electronically or by mail, and a focus on making community events such as the Celebration of Cultures more accommodating for older adults who may need parking close to the venue and seating.

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INFORMATION / COMMUNICATION

Work Group Members

Ginny Thomas- VOMP Senior Services Social Worker

Howard Kleinstein- VOMP Director of Digital Communications

Julie Kane- VOMP Director of Human Services

Kate Fago- Mount Prospect Public Library Marketing Assistant

Kylie Cerk- VOMP Director of Marketing and Public Relations

Maddy Moon- Mount Prospect Park District Community Relations and Marketing Coordinator

Ruth Yueill- Mount Prospect Park District Director of Community Relations and Marketing

Goal 7

Reduce barriers for older adults to access information and resources.

Objective 7.1: Assess existing methods of communication between local community partners and older adults.

Work group members created an inventory of existing methods of communication which included communication methods from Village of Mount Prospect, Mount Prospect Public Library, and the Mount Prospect Park District. Once the list was completed, a discussion took place to identify strengths within existing communication methods as well as gaps in communication. Cross sharing of information via social media was addressed and procedures were developed for cross sharing marketing communications to increase dissemination of information. Additionally, a community Public Relations group was formed and will meet quarterly to improve stakeholder communication regarding scheduled events and activities to avoid major events being scheduled on the same date when possible and to improve cross marketing of events. An internal calendar will be maintained and information regarding events relating to older adults will be shared in the Senior Buzz newsletter.

Objective 7.2: Identify older adult populations with barriers to accessing information and resources and prioritize barriers to address.

Work group members identified known barriers older adults face in accessing information and resources. Two of the primary barriers identified include technology barriers for older adults who do not have access to the internet and/or struggle with use of technology and those with language barriers. The work group will host a roundtable discussion in September of 2024 and will invite representatives from cultural agencies that serve residents of Mount Prospect as well as residents that represent diversity in the community and can speak about barriers from a personal lens. Data collected from the roundtable discussion will provide additional information and help with prioritizing barriers to address.

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Objective 7.3: Reduce the digital divide for older adults by increasing familiarity with smartphones and computers.

Work group members identified two potential programs that will be considered in 2025; internet safety training for older adults and an intergenerational program utilizing teens as technology mentors for older adults.

Goal 8	Enhance existing methods of communication to connect older adults and their caregivers to resources and events.
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Objective 8.1: Develop an easy to use older adult guide book in digital and print formats.

This objective will be addressed in 2025. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Age Friendly Collaborative is working on a resource guide template which could be used by all municipalities. The work group will evaluate this template once it is available.

Objective 8.2: Identify the most efficient way to notify older adults about community events.

The work group members participated in a walk through and discussion about the Senior Hub in 2023. Ideas were incorporated into the work done to create this space which is intended to be a space where older adults can access a wide range of information about activities, events in the community and services for older adults.

An Information and Communication survey has been developed by work group members and will be targeted to older adults attending community events and programs in 2024. The purpose of this survey is to collect information about how and where older adults get their information and to identify missed opportunities for communicating with this population. Work group members and volunteers will attend community events and programs and collect data from attendees willing to participate. Data will be reviewed, and action steps identified to improve communication with older adults.

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HEALTH / WELLNESS

Work Group Members

Crissy Castillo- Kenneth Young Center
Gale Young- Northwest Community Hospital
Ginny Thomas- VOMP Senior Services Social Worker
Kellie Weber- Ascension Behavioral Health, Older Adult Liaison
Lynne O'Malley- Right at Home
Laurie Moran- VOMP MPFD
Nicole Cooper-Ffrench- VOMP Public Health Nurse
Steve Samuelson-Frisbie Senior Center

Goal 9	Increase older adult access to health and wellness resources.
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Objective 9.1: Increase physical activity among older adults by offering more free events throughout the week.

- Created ongoing Excel sheet of health and wellness programming/ resources available in the immediate community for seniors.
- Fit 4 Life added two new instructors with new fitness programs.

Objective 9.2: Increase awareness of health and wellness topics among older adults by offering workshops and broadcast content.

- Work group member participation in Citizen Task Force for Mt. Prospect Park District.
- Senior Buzz Newsletter content geared towards health and wellness opportunities in the community and their information: Fit 4 Life Programming, free indoor walking opportunities, senior fitness classes at Mount Prospect Park District and River Trails Park District, Frisbie Senior Center article, Silver Sneakers information article, health related articles written by Nicole including healthy eating as we age and sun safety tips.
- Frisbie Senior Center Open House for Mount Prospect residents.
- Preparation of July 2024 Event for Health and Wellness at MPPL- Aging in Mount Prospect: What Families Need to Know.
-Bringing in 14 community partners/ resources to present and have a resource fair to follow for seniors and their loved ones.
- Flyer created with Health and Wellness Programming available in the community for Mount Prospect seniors which is available in the Senior Hub.

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Goal 10	Increase awareness of mental health issues among older adults.
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Objective 10.1: Reduce stigma about mental health issues through educational events.

- Addition of new members to work group including representatives from Frisbie Senior Center and Ascension Older Adults Behavioral Health.
- Public Health Nurse launched Alzheimer's Foundation of America memory screening clinics.
- Program scheduled for July 2024 on Aging includes behavioral health information and resources.

Objective 10.2: Identify "dementia-friendly" practices that can be implemented in Mount Prospect.

- Nicole, Ginny, and 2 other work group members attended the 2024 Northwest Dementia Conference

Objective 10.3: Increase the number of older adults and stakeholders who are certified in mental health first aid.

- Nicole and Ginny attending Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults 5/8/24 and 5/9/24.

Additional Work Group Activities

Additional accomplishments and activities of the Social Engagement work group include work group member tours of local senior center, presentation at Senior Connections which included information about Silver Sneakers program, and File of Life program, intended to assist first responders in an emergency, was promoted at several events and programs.

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Conclusion

The Aging in Community Initiative will enter its second year with several objectives accomplished and other objectives underway. Some objectives are deferred to years two and three of the Action Plan. Goals and objectives will be adjusted as work groups encounter challenges and opportunities during implementation.

The collaboration and coordination of so many key aging partners is evidence of strengthened community infrastructure and systems that enhance the lives of older adults. More aging events and resources are now available to the community due to the efforts of the work groups. One of the key challenges will be sustaining this work over the long term. The continued aging of the population will increase demand for an age-friendly mindset across all sectors of society.

The AIC Initiative will continue to work towards the vision of Mount Prospect as an accessible, inclusive community where older adults thrive and have the tools to navigate the aging process.

