

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Randy Recklaus, Village Manger

**FROM:** Charles Witherington-Perkins  
Director of Planning and Community Development

**DATE:** January 3, 2022

**SUBJECT:** **Senior Center Utilization, Modernization, & Programming Study Update**

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As part of the Village Board's 2020-2021 Business Plan, a strategic priority included *Update the Senior Center - Conduct Feasibility Assessment based upon facility changes to meet future generation senior age cohort needs.*

The Village retained the services of BKV Group in partnership with Lifespan Design Studios who specialize in Senior programming needs across the country and Jill Jackson Ledford who provides leadership and specialty in senior center designs and community partnerships. Lifespan Design Studio has completed over 75 senior center planning and design projects, and Jill Jackson Ledford has conducted over 21 senior center planning needs assessments.

In July 2021 a virtual public information session was hosted to overview a wide variety of Senior Centers and programs around the country.

In September 2021 at the Committee of the Whole meeting, the consultants presented an overview of the project approach, initial physical assessment summary, and general observation of the Senior Center. The presentation also focused on the findings of the Senior Center survey that was completed. 634 responses were received to the survey, which is an important part of assessing the Senior Center Feasibility Need Study.

## *Current Phase*

Since the September 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting, the consultant team has moved forward with the Space Planning Needs Assessment and Facility Programming. Each existing space has been evaluated on its function and square footage, as well as identifying the square footage of future needs, based upon input of all the community partners and stakeholders, as well as the surveys and needs of future users of the facility.

A preferred conceptual floor plan has been developed to best fit the future needs and program areas for the Senior facility, as well as addressing the numerous physical deficiencies within the structure that were presented at the September Committee of the Whole meeting. The project team, along with the consultants also engaged in meetings with the key stakeholders, including the Arlington Heights Park District, the Arlington Heights Memorial Library and the nonprofit agencies that operate out of the existing Senior Center.

One of the major goals of the space planning has been to accommodate future needs of seniors that would utilize the facility, as well as accommodating uses and agencies that interact on a regular daily basis with seniors. For the most part, agencies such as the Arlington Heights Park District and the Arlington Height Memorial Library, their needs have been provided through maintaining existing square

footages or expanding, and through a function of utilization of shared spaces. Individual meetings are being held with these agencies as well as other non-profit agencies whose space with the proposed concept may ultimately end up being reduced in size.

One agency in particular, Catholic Charities has a sizable space within the existing Senior Center, much of that space is occupied by general staffing, file cabinets and storage needs. They currently have a Staff of approximately 35, which not only utilizes a significant amount of space for general office, but also is a significant parking user. Discussions have begun with Catholic Charities regarding downsizing their operation at the Senior Center in the future plan. The modified plan does incorporate a small office suite for Catholic Charities social services for the aging and Disabilities Resource Network. It also accommodates through a combination of individual space and shared space, the room for continued home delivered meal assembly, operated by that agency. Since the onset of COVID-19, the Catholic Charities had most of their Staff working virtually. More recently, approximately 3-5 Staff have been attending and operating out of the Senior Center.

Another significant program change outlined in the space needs is a move from a more cafeteria/full meal service to a more contemporary café.

It is important to keep in mind that this study is just the first step regarding modernization alternatives for the existing Senior Center and full implementation is subject to funding and will take several years to accomplish.

#### *Next Steps*

The next steps in the process will be to continue discussions with the agencies as noted above and BKV Consultants will present these options and the space needs programming in more detail to the Village Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting on January 10.

C: BVK Group Consultant Team  
James McCalister: Director of Health & Human Services  
Tracey Colagrossi: Manager Senior Center  
Cris Papierniak: Director of Public Works  
Nora Boyer: Housing Planner

*CW-P:Imp*