

## Appendix 3 – Focus Group Results

Appendix 3 provides the results from nine focus groups. Each group was asked to provide feedback in regards to buildings and outdoor space, housing, respect and social inclusion, social participation, transportation and communication. Each group was free to answer each section in any format.

### *Albany Care (3/30/16)*

Albany Care is a community for adults with mental health problems. The age of residents ranges from 20s to seniors in their 60s and probably older. There are 350 people living at Albany and about 40 attended the focus group. In general, residents would like to feel more a part of the community. They want to have a communication source they can rely on to give them information about community events and activities. Residents have a very limited income, and would like information about how to get discounts on things like beach passes. They seemed to be satisfied with their housing, but would like to have the option to move to a smaller setting such as a group home. They would like to see a supported living facility in Evanston for low income individuals who need help with activities of daily living. Most feel safe in Evanston and would like to stay here. Many reported success with navigating public transportation but would like to have a shuttle in the community to transport residents to activities and frequently visited locations. The following are specific comments made by residents of Albany Care during the focus group.

#### **Buildings and Outdoor Spaces**

- Residential side streets are very dark.
- The sidewalk along Main Street near the food store needs repair. Tree roots are pushing through in places.
- The area around the Social Security office on Green Bay is very dark.
- Pavement condition and problems with tree roots at Grey Park make walking difficult.
- Access to St. Francis Hospital is good.

#### **Housing**

- Residents seemed comfortable with their current housing. Comments that the food is good.

- Resident would like more small group homes within the Evanston Community.
- Residents would like a place to live for those with low income where they can get help with activities of daily living. (Supportive Living)
- Resident mentioned Trilogy or Thresholds as a way to get connected with housing in a smaller setting. (Also Housing Options)
- Residents feel that Evanston is a safe place to live.
- Residents are interested in information about low-income senior housing in Evanston.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion/Social Participation**

- Residents would like to go to the beach but the daily fee is too expensive. (Residents would be eligible for low income discount).
- Residents do not feel part of the community.
- Residents need to get out more but need to know more about what is available.
- Resident would like to have a neighborhood picnic in Grey Park as was done in past years. (Residents are now bussed out of Evanston to Grant Park for picnics.)
- Residents would like to go to community events as well to the Lincoln Park Zoo, Navy Pier, and a variety of shops.

### **Transportation**

- A number of residents felt comfortable with the available transportation options.
- One problem is the reduced availability of public transportation on weekends.
- Residents felt that having the El just down the street was convenient.
- Many have free ride cards.
- Only two residents have cars. One wanted to know about the availability of discounted parking.
- The bus and train schedule is easy to access.
- When directions are needed, a caseworker maps out routes for residents and then gives them a printout to follow.
- It would be good to have a community shuttle to take residents to various community events.

### **Communication**

- About half of the residents present indicated that it was difficult to access community information.
- One source of information is posters placed on store windows.
- None of the residents present had heard about 311.
- Only two residents present knew about the City of Evanston website and felt that information was difficult to access from the website.
- Only six residents present owned a computer or smart phone.
- Albany has a computer lab with four computers, but it is difficult to get computer time because the demand is high.
- Some residents use computers at the Evanston Library.
- Residents would like to learn how to use technology.
- Residents would like to receive The Roundtable.
- Residents would like a map of Evanston businesses.
- Residents would like to have an Albany newsletter that would list community events, resident birthdays, etc. (Not sure if there is one currently)

### *Greenwood Care (3/15/16)*

Greenwood Care is a community for adults with mental health problems. There are 135 people living at Greenwood, and 23 attended the focus group. Participants ranged in age from the 20s through the 60s. Almost all residents present described the difficulties they have navigating in the community. These problems mainly included not having knowledge about transportation schedules and not knowing how to get to desired locations such as the library, the post office, McDonald's and Burger King. Most residents do not have access to a computer or a smart phone and would like to find a way to get more information about what is available in the community. They would like to participate in community events and be able to use the beach. Most residents have limited funds and so, many options that require a fee are not open to them. There were also some concerns about personal safety. The following are comments made by residents of Greenwood Care during the focus group.

#### **Buildings and Outdoor Spaces**

- Sidewalks are so narrow in places, especially when trees are planted on the street edge, that two people cannot walk next to one another.
- Many sidewalks are broken or uneven on Greenwood and on Chicago Avenue.

- Lighting on side streets is very poor.
- Many cars speed down Chicago well above the limit making it difficult to cross the street.
- Lighting at the lakefront is good.
- Resident does not feel safe in the parks because of the number of homeless people that frequent them.
- Other residents generally feel safe in the community.
- Bicyclists do not follow the rules of the road and often ride on the sidewalk making it dangerous for pedestrians.
- Cars turning right on green at busy intersections are not always careful to watch for pedestrians who are simultaneously crossing the street with the walk sign.

### **Housing**

- There were no specific comments about housing except that a number of residents wanted to find housing in Evanston after they leave Greenwood.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion/Social Participation**

- Resident would like to go to the Evanston Plaza but does not know how to get there.
- Resident does not know how to get to Burger King or McDonalds and needs someone who is willing to help her learn the route.
- Some residents would like to go to the library and the post office, but do not know the route and are afraid of getting lost.
- Other residents do use the library and like the computer access there.
- Resident would like to go shopping at Wal-Mart but do not know how to get there via public transportation. (May have meant Target?)
- Residents would like a “coach” to help them find directions to where they want to go.
- Residents would like to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and the Community Picnic but have no way to get there.
- No one knew where the Levy Center is or how to access their services.
- Residents had no information about beach passes, how much they cost, or how to purchase them.

### **Transportation**

- Buses need to run more frequently (205 bus runs every 30 minutes M-F).
- Better bus service is needed on the weekends.
- The closeness of the CTA is a positive.
- One resident indicated that she uses the transportation provided by Greenwood to get to appointments, etc., and does not use public transportation .
- One resident does not feel safe on the CTA platform and prefers to take the bus.
- Residents need bus schedules so they can reach the bus stops at convenient times.
- Resident would like to take the bus to Jewel on Chicago, but the bus is always too full.
- Residents have difficulty figuring out the bus routes.
- Drivers do not consistently stop for pedestrian crossing signs on Sheridan.
- CTA will take 20 years to make EL stops accessible for those with disabilities.

### **Communication**

- Greenwood does not have computer access.
- Only a few residents have lap tops or smart phones.
- Most residents look at the local paper or ask staff for information about the community.
- Activities staff member indicated that Greenwood would be opening a computer lab soon.
- None of the residents knew about or had ever heard about 311.
- Computers are not affordable for most residents.

## *Jacob Blake Manor (1/15/15)*

### **Buildings and Outdoor Spaces**

#### Strengths

- Beautiful flower garden in front of building maintained by residents.
- Produce garden at back of building available to residents who want to grow vegetables.
- Residents feel safe in the community.
- Not afraid to be out late in the neighborhood if you know the neighbors.

## **Housing**

### Strengths

- Jacob Blake is an independent living community, but if a resident needs extra help can qualify for a personal assistant by contacting social services.
- Social work is the first line of defense. Many seniors do not have trust and because of that, they do not know what is available to them.

### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Affordable assisted living is not available in Evanston.
- Resident would choose to live in a different environment if she had been prudent at saving money.
- Formerly lived in Edgewater. Building had 24-hour security. This is needed at Jacob Blake. People can wander in and out of building.
- Apartment buildings should provide units of affordable and low-income housing.
- Empty condos could be rented out to seniors at an affordable rate.
- The parking lot and park down the street are places that are not safe at night as rowdy groups sometimes gather there, especially in summer. Bus Shelter is needed in front of Jacob Blake. (Pace to do a study this year)
- A curb cut is needed in front of building entrance.
- Seating in the Jacob Blake Lobby would be a good addition.
- Bike paths in Arboretum are dangerous because the gravel has ruts and is slippery when there is standing water.
- The parking lot and park down the street are places that are not safe at night as rowdy groups sometimes gather there, especially in summer.
- The area around Jacob Blake is less safe in summer.
- Police foot patrol is needed in the area around Jacob Blake.

## **Social Participation**

### Strengths

- Socialization within the building is very good. Different groups gather to do different activities.

- Moved back to Evanston after growing up here because of social services. Belongs to Fleetwood Jourdain Foster Senior Club and participates in Levy activities and enjoys them very much.
- There is a strong church community in Evanston (community within a community).
- Having Fleetwood Jourdain in close proximity is a plus.

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Resident does not care to socialize in Evanston. She raised her children here, but now there is too much crime and too many shootings. She prefers to socialize in Chicago where she is very involved in her church.
- Activities in the community are expensive and many cannot participate.
- Activity room at Jacob Blake is not always open, so there is not always a place to gather.
- There are not many building activities at Jacob Blake.
- Internet is too expensive. Only three residents in the group of over 20 had access to the Internet at home.
- Resident has no need to socialize. Indicates that no one comes out of their apartments. She never finds out if someone is sick.
- There is a need for someone to coordinate activities both within and outside of the Jacob Blake residence.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion**

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- There should be community wide activities planned for seniors such as a picnic, an arboretum outing or some other event that brings seniors from all over the community together.
- Need more culturally diverse activities that would interest all the various groups in a very diverse community.
- There should be a bulletin board in a central place at Jacob Blake to announce activities in the community. Central Communication Center.
- Does the Life publication come to residents Jacob Blake? Could activities for seniors be highlighted?
- There are language barriers at Jacob Blake. There are a number of Russian residents who do not speak English and none of them are here today.

- A neighborhood block party hosted by Jacob Blake might be a good activity for summer.

## **Transportation**

### Strengths

- Taxi coupons are the best thing Evanston has done for seniors.
- The free ride pass for seniors is great when traveling outside Evanston.
- Bicycle lanes are great, as they help keep bicycles off the sidewalks.

### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- There are a vast number of activities in Evanston, but accessibility is an issue, so people don't get out enough.
- Transportation is a problem. Assistance in getting to events such as art fairs or 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations is needed.
- Residents are "trapped" in the building on Sunday because the #93 bus does not operate.
- From 6:30 on Friday to Monday can't get to Chicago Ave. – Lack of bus service.
- The #93 bus does not always operate on schedule.
- The bus often stops without pulling over to the side, making it difficult to get on.
- Buses that have the capability of lowering the step up often do not do so.
- Bus routes and schedules need to be available to Jacob Blake residents.
- Only three residents out of 22 in the group have access to a car.
- Cab drivers are often rude to passengers with coupons.
- Direct transportation to Glenbrook needs to be provided. Several transfers are needed to get there by public transportation.
- There are more people with disability placards than there are spaces.
- Time limits for accessible parking slots are not sufficient.
- Seniors should be allowed to ride bicycles on the sidewalk – bike lanes too dangerous.
- Bikers need to signal when passing pedestrians ("On Your Left") but rarely do.
- Transportation is needed so that seniors can participate in City Council meetings.

## *Ebenzer-Primm Towers (3/15/15)*

### **Buildings and outdoor Spaces**

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Many streets and sidewalks need repair and are dangerous to walk on. More curb cuts are needed. One is needed in front of Primm Towers.
- Sidewalk repairs near building are still not completed.
- Traffic signals at the corner (in front of Primm) do not have pedestrian crossing buttons.
- Crosswalk is needed from front of building to other side of Emerson Street.
- The community is less safe than it was 30 years ago.

### **Housing**

#### Strengths

- Primm has a tenant council.

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Residents generally do not attend tenant council meetings except for those who have many complaints.
- Housing should be smoke-free.
- Lower income residents are leaving Evanston because of the cost of housing.
- Low income housing at 10% should be increased to 20%.
- Community needs an assisted living facility (subsidized), which is supportive living.

### **Transportation**

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Three residents in the audience of over 20 have access to cars.
- Residents dependent of public transportation.
- Cab drivers are rude when presented with a taxi coupon and demand tips.
- The only bus on Sunday is the 208.
- The train stations do not have elevators or escalators. Many do not have ramps.

- Transportation is horrible. Resident can't get to the food pantry, as #93 bus does not run on Sunday.
- The #93 bus now stops on Maple. Could the stop be moved back to the front of the building?
- Transportation to activities is needed. Shuttle bus would be great. Community needs senior buses to help people get around.
- Bicycle riders need education as they often present a safety hazard.
- Arrange for PACE Para transit to come to building to give information about their services.

## **Social Participation**

### Strengths

- There are many opportunities to socialize at Levy, at church, and at Family Focus (I think the resident meant Fleetwood.)
- Evanston has fantastic energy when compared with Chicago.

### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Only five out of over 20 group participants have access to Internet.
- Resident does not know anyone in Evanston living outside of Primm Towers. Feels that some people are nice.
- Fun in the building is limited.
- Many activities in the community are too expensive for residents to afford. Need discounts for theater and other events.

## **Respect and Social Inclusion**

### Strengths

- We're not old!
- NU students come to Primm to share activities with residents.

### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Resident interested in volunteering at the animal shelter could not get anyone at the animal shelter to respond.
- Intergenerational activities should be included in planning social participation.

- Activities offered do not match the community diversity. Could park district provide more diverse activities?
- The NU students that come to share activities are all black – why no white students?
- Because transportation/accessibility is so difficult, could some activities be brought to the building?

## *Jane Perlman Apartments (1/15/15)*

### **Buildings and Outdoor Spaces**

#### Strengths

- Residents feel personally safe in the community.

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Parks and open spaces need more benches.
- More available bathrooms are needed.
- Intersection of Ridge, Emerson, and Green Bay is a very dangerous crossing, especially for someone needing to move slowly.
- Need longer countdowns at street crossings.
- Many Evanston streets do not have enough lighting at night.
- Residents would like to access the lake, but there is no easy way to get there.

### **Housing**

#### Strengths

- Evanston has good social services for residents that need support.

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Evanston is very expensive
- Low-income housing was the only option, so resident chose to live at the first building that had an opening.
- More options for care are needed in community besides nursing home. A supportive living option would be a great addition to the community.

- Create a list of affordable and low-income options for housing that residents can use when looking for a place to live.

## **Transportation**

### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Public transportation does not run after midnight
- Transportation options are insufficient.
- Some residents are afraid to use taxi coupons because drivers are rude and use abusive language. One driver indicated that he would never put his mother in a place like this (Perlman).
- Most CTA stations are not accessible. Only Davis and Howard are accessible.
- Stations are in terrible shape with leaky roofs and ice pooled up at the bottom of stairs (Noyes el stop).
- Buses are needed that take people to specific destinations – lake front, parks, library, etc.
- Bicyclists should be required to use a light when riding at night.

## **Social Participation**

### Strengths

- There are many groups to join and activities to do.
- Activities are posted on the bulletin board in the building.

### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Need to reach out to attract friends. Can't wait for them to come to you.
- The building has strict rules about socializing. Can't knock on someone's door without being invited.
- Not much going on in the community room.
- Resident wanted to go to First Night but could not afford the \$20 fee.
- Resident wanted to attend Nutcracker On Ice at Robert Crown, but there was no public transportation to get there.

## **Respect and Social Inclusion**

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Lower the rate of tickets to Northwestern athletic events and other community events for individuals who qualify for a benefit card.
- Improve communication about upcoming events for those who do not use the Internet.

### *Victor Walchirk Apartments (1/22/15)*

#### **Buildings and Outdoor Spaces**

##### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Residents feel unsafe traveling at night.
- Some streets are very dark. Lighting is poor down Ridge, Noyes to Sheridan, and Clark St. between Sherman and Orrington.
- Many sidewalks in bad shape. (By PhilbrickPark, on Maple from Noyes to Emerson, and from 2300 Noyes to 1900 Sherman).
- The Dempster St. el ramp is too narrow.
- Streets are full of pot holes – dangerous for walking and driving.

#### **Housing**

##### Strengths

- Resident indicated that he had a number of low-income housing choices.

##### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Need low-income housing for those who need assisted living, but not a nursing home.

#### **Transportation**

##### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- It would be helpful to provide transportation to specific places in the community such as the hospital, food pantry, grocery stores, etc.
- There is no longer a bus on Noyes and Sherman, which is inconvenient.
- The Foster/Noyes el stop has 35 steps to climb to reach the train platform.
- Davis Street el stop has elevators, but it is difficult to get there on foot.
- There are not a sufficient number of handicapped parking spaces.

- The wait time for a bus can be as long as an hour.
- Need to have copies of bus schedules posted in the building.

### **Social Participation**

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Communication within the building about upcoming events is not good.
- Resident cannot afford to attend most activities in the community.
- Resident does not know where to go to get information about community activities.
- Newcomers to the community should receive a welcome packet with community information.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion**

#### Needs/Problems/Ideas

- Resident has Silver Sneakers card and wants to use a pool, but no pools in Evanston accept Silver Sneakers.

## *The Merion (7/25/14)*

### **Positive Comments**

- Evanston paramedics, fire department, and police do an excellent job.
- Northwestern Health Care clinic on Maple is a great resource.
- Fireworks and Evanston festivals are excellent (if you can get there).
- The Levy bus is great.
- Liquor is sold in Evanston.
- Benches outside Trader Joe's and Pete's are helpful.

### **Problem Areas**

Desirable areas and activities can be very difficult to access.

- The lakefront/beach: Even though it is close to the Merion, walking there is difficult for many. There is uneven ground and sloped sidewalks (especially on Church) that present a challenge (balance issues, stamina).

- Art fairs and festivals are wonderful, but if one has mobility issues and limited ability to access transportation, they are almost impossible to get to.
- Northwestern University has many desirable activities (many free or low cost) and is very close, but if ability to walk is limited, there is no way to get there without transportation.
- Existing bus routes are inconsistent on weekends (no 205 bus on Chicago on Sunday)
- Bus stops do not generally post bus numbers, schedule, and routes as they do in Chicago.
- The Merion does not offer transportation to events. An alternative is needed.
- Bicycles present a real danger to pedestrians on the sidewalks.
- Snow removal on sidewalks is sometimes poor, making it impossible for those with low mobility to go out. This past winter snow removal was especially poor on Benson by the Evanston Athletic Club and North Shore University Health Systems rehabilitation center.
- Snow removal on residential sidewalks is not enforced. Many areas are hazardous all winter.
- Snowplows leave mounds of snow at intersections expecting merchants/residents to remove that snow, which is almost impossible, as it turns to hard ice quickly.
- Sidewalks in business areas that are made with pavers are hazardous to those using a cane or a walker. The tip of the cane and the wheels of the walker get stuck in the ruts.
- Potholes in the streets are hazardous to both drivers and pedestrians.
- Parking Lots with pay stations are very difficult to access because of the pay station itself. It is hard to read the screen when paying, and returning to your car to place the receipt on the dashboard is a sometime a challenge.
- The traffic signal on the east side of Fountain Square is confusing as to which direction it is controlling.
- Pedestrians with cell phones do not look where they are going and cause collisions with other walkers.
- The Dempster St. El stop is in poor condition.
- Lighting is poor in a number of areas making walkers feel unsafe. The Dempster El stop is dark. There are dark storefronts and little light on Chicago Ave in that area. Clark Street by the NU Administration Building and Hinman are both dark. The area around Raymond Park is also dark.

- There are not enough places to rest while out and about. There are no benches to use in front of The Merion while waiting for a cab.
- There is not sufficient access to bathrooms while out and about.

### **Great Ideas**

- Provide a “hop on, hop off” bus to key areas in the city. (Lakefront, NU, business districts, hospitals, etc.) This bus would ideally have a regular route, but it would also run special routes to improve access to events and festivals.
- Start an “On Your Left” campaign for bikers to increase the safety of pedestrians walking in residential areas, business areas, and on walking paths. Partner with NU, ETHS, District #65, Evanston merchants, and the Park District to make it happen.
- Post bus numbers, routes, and schedules at all bus stops.
- Provide golf carts at the beaches to help residents with limited mobility access the beach.
- Remove the brick pavers from sidewalks and replace them with cement. Areas like Davis and Church where bricks were replaced by concrete are now much easier to access for those with canes and walkers. (One Merion resident indicated that she fell and broke her pelvis at (Church and Chicago?) when her cane or walker became stuck between the bricks.)
- Improve lighting in darker areas (Dempster El stop, Clark Street, Raymond Park, parts of Chicago Ave, and others).
- Rejuvenate the Dempster El stop.
- Install more benches in strategic spots.
- Increase access to bathrooms in parks, business areas.
- Have the City remove snow at intersections, especially in residential areas.
- Develop a plan to enforce snow removal by residents in residential areas.
- Ask cell phone users to be aware of their surroundings when using a phone while on foot. (A Merion resident indicated that he has been pushed off balance and actually knocked to the ground a couple of times by cell phone users not showing awareness of their surroundings.)

### *Over the Rainbow (3/9/16)*

Over the Rainbow is an independent living community for people with severe physical disabilities. Fourteen of the thirty-three residents living at Over the Rainbow attended the focus group. Residents' ages ranged from 20s through 60s. All but one resident use a wheelchair for mobility. Almost all residents present described the difficulties they have navigating in the community. These mainly included problems in the areas of transportation, accessibility, safety, and communication as well as social inclusion and participation.

The following are comments made by residents of Over the Rainbow during the focus group.

### **Buildings and Outdoor Spaces**

- Snow removal is very poor at crosswalks, at the foot of driveways, and along curbs making it impossible to navigate while using a wheelchair.
- Sidewalks along Simpson are rarely cleared of snow so residents need to drive wheelchairs in the street to get to Walgreens at Simpson and Green Bay. This is very dangerous as Simpson is a busy street.
- Handicapped parking spots are often buried by snowplows.
- Snow is piled up along curbs and parking meters so it is not possible to exit a car or van.
- Central Street and Green Bay road (northwest side) is not navigable by a person using a wheelchair as there are steps at the crosswalk.
- Steps are also present at Ridge and Greenwood and Culver and Crawford.
- Robert Crown is not fully accessible as there are no automatic doors or an accessible bathroom.
- The ramp at Robert Crown is not fully visible from the front of the building, so a sign indicating the location of the ramp would be helpful.
- When it rains outside, it rains inside Robert Crown.
- Many sidewalks are in poor shape. The sidewalks that are made with pavers have become uneven. One resident reported that he was recently thrust forward from his chair onto the sidewalk when he hit a rut.
- Street lighting is poor in certain areas on Simpson so traveling at night is dangerous. Cars can't see pedestrians.
- There is no lighting by the Social Security office on Green Bay Road.
- There are a lot of problems with uneven pavement at Simpson and Green Bay Road.

- There used to be a wheelchair crossing sign at Brown and Simpson that was removed when the bridge was rebuilt. It needs to be replaced. There is a lot of traffic there during rush hour and drivers need to know that wheelchairs also use that road.
- The curb cut at Sherman and Church by Barnes and Noble is too steep for a wheelchair. There is a similar problem on Lincoln and Green Bay.
- Areas under construction need signs indicating when an area is blocked. (Construction ahead, street closed, etc.) When there are signs they are not placed at the beginning of the block making them visible to a wheel chair user.
- Debris left on sidewalks and street corners (branches, etc.) by work crews are a real hazard when traveling by wheelchair.

### **Housing**

- There were no specific comments about housing.

### **Respect and Social Inclusion/Social Participation**

- Special recreation in Evanston does not offer much programming for people with physical and visual disabilities. They seem more geared to serving people with developmental disabilities. Main/Niles Special Recreation has more programming for those with physical disabilities. It would be good to have a reciprocal agreement with Main/Niles so that residents with physical disabilities could participate in those special recreation programs without incurring the out of district fee. Transportation is provided by Main/Niles. They have been very welcoming to Over the Rainbow residents.
- Many Evanston restaurants are not accessible as the doorways are not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.
- Gang and drug problems in the area of Over the Rainbow make it unsafe to travel in that neighborhood, especially at night. Police are often around, but not all the time.
- It is difficult to get to a grocery store and there are none close by.
- At community events at a place like Centennial Park, there is often a lot of congestion with people, bikes, etc., and all roads lead to the snack bar. Pedestrians are often not willing to yield to a wheelchair and those operating a wheelchair are concerned about hitting a pedestrian.

### **Transportation**

- Residents are concerned that the state budget problems will cut paratransit services.
- Some of the riders using paratransit are ambulatory and are taking the rides of those who need wheelchair accessible transportation.

- Paratransit is never on time and the pick-up is often as much as an hour late. Residents have frequently had to cancel medical and other appointments that they have been scheduled months ahead.
- Paratransit guidelines indicate that passengers should not have to spend more than two hours in the vehicle, yet a number of residents report rides that are three or four hours long. Residents report that part of the problem is that the van will pass right by Over the Rainbow and go to drop other passengers off first.
- Paratransit's call line is only open until 6:00pm on weekdays and 5pm on weekends. Residents are reluctant to schedule rides after 5:00 or 6:00 because there is no one to call if they are not picked up. They are essentially stranded.
- Residents are required to transfer from one paratransit vehicle to another when they need to go somewhere out of a particular zone. It costs \$3 for every transfer and there is often no shelter while waiting for the connecting ride.
- Most of the el stations in Evanston are not accessible.
- Bus service is less available on weekends and many areas of Evanston are not accessible by public transportation. (2300 Noyes Court, Emerson and Chicago on Sundays.)
- Coming from the city there is no transportation from the Purple Line.
- When a group is interested in using PACE to reach a destination, each person involved has to make an individual reservation. They are then often given different pick up times.

### **Communication**

- Residents feel they are not well informed about activities going on in Evanston. Almost all residents have access to the Internet. How can Over the Rainbow residents best connect to sources on information in Evanston?

## *Walking in Evanston (6/18/14)*

### **General Comments**

- Motivation and incentive to walk is a requirement for success.
- Having a network of walkers to tap into is motivating (WOW uses [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)).
- Walking is only one way to be active – consider other activities like gardening, yoga, biking, swimming, etc. for variety.
- Time of day affects the quality of a walk. High traffic times are not very good, school dismissal times can cause congestion, and weekends can increase the volume of bikers, runners, and walkers on walking paths.
- Having a good walking area convenient to your home that does not necessitate driving is a plus.

### **Requirements for a good walking area (Age Friendly Cities and focus group agree)**

- Personal safety and security.
- Accessible to those with limited mobility or other challenges.
- Walk-to destinations throughout the city (stores, restaurants, parks, library).
- Safe pavements, good lighting.
- Available public bathrooms and drinking fountains.
- Places to rest.
- Safe street crossings.
- Separate bike and walking paths.
- Pleasant, clean environment.
- Available parking or good transportation to walking area as appropriate.

### **Problems and Problem Areas**

- Personal safety is a concern in some areas of Evanston, especially after dark.
- Good lighting and safe street crossings are not consistent within the city.
- In many areas sidewalks need repair.

- Public bathrooms in parks are not open unless there is an event at the site. How do other area park districts deal with this?
- The loss of Dominick's at Evanston Plaza limits walking to the grocery store for many residents in that area.
- Walkers, joggers, and bikers share the same paths in many walking areas, which is dangerous.
- The ban on bike riding on sidewalks in business areas is not consistently enforced.
- Where bike lanes exist, cars very frequently drive on them.
- Many bikers who ride at night do not have a light on their bike or their person.
- Many walkers who walk at night do not wear reflective clothing or carry a light on their person.
- Most neighborhoods lack places to rest.

### **Strengths**

- Of the 152 largest cities in Illinois, Evanston ranks second for being walk-able. Chicago is #1 and Oak Park is #3. (<http://www.walkscore.com/IL>)
- Evanston walking areas meet many of the Age Friendly Cities program for Buildings and Outdoor Spaces.
- There are many wonderful and interesting walking areas in Evanston
  - Many neighborhoods are great for walking
  - The Ladd Arboretum and all the Evanston parks east of the channel
  - James Park
  - Lovelace Park
  - Lakefront Parks
  - Perkins Woods
  - Evanston Golf Course
  - Northwestern Campus
  - Westminster Place Campus
  - Merrick Rose Garden
  - Levy Center Garden

- Shakespeare Garden (Northwestern)
- Avenue of the Righteous (Morton Civic Center)  
(<http://www.avenueoftherighteous-illinois.org/background.html>)
- Dempster, Central Street, Main Street shopping areas
- Downtown Evanston

### **Great Ideas**

- Prepare a pamphlet listing walking areas including proposed routes, length of walk, etc., and another listing parks including amenities of each that can be distributed to residents. Perhaps it could be included with the park list in an issue of Evanston Life. Does something like this already exist?
- Establish and advertise indoor walking areas for wintertime or very hot days within the city. This already exists at Levy and Chandler, but hours are restricted at Chandler. Perhaps ETHS has some space. Weber Leisure Center in Skokie has a great indoor walking track.
- Reach out to business owners about the need for access to bathrooms by pedestrians (Perhaps a decal could be posted on the door of a cooperating business. An APP could be developed listing age friendly businesses.)
- Educate children about bike safety and courtesy when they begin to ride. Register bicycles. Is this something that #65 or the park district already does? What is the best way to reach all kids?
- Install more dog drinking fountains in parks to avoid dogs using people fountains
- Assess where pedestrian crossing signs have been installed and determine where others are needed.
- Ask the City reach out to homeowners who have broken and dangerous pavement in front of their homes. Many residents do not know about the 50/50 repair plan.
- Increase signage to explain exercises in fitness areas on walking paths and add more distance markers.