

Presentation to Northfield City Council

FiftyNorth Future Planning

May, 14, 2019

Introductory

Our inception as a center, some 47 years ago, began with the simple need for a senior congregate dining program and help with transportation. Over the decades, acting on input and observation with trial and error, we've gained knowledge, wisdom, and experience. Our success and failure was and will always be an investment in what we are. Each year brings opportunities to seize: information to learn and share; new horizons to explore. We are an organization whose course is to continually transform the center in ways that reflect and serve the values and needs of older adults in the community. A center that is alive and in the moment. Vital. Vibrant. Present. Open.

FiftyNorth has evolved from an organization, Northfield Senior Citizens, Inc. that has historically had people involved in the organization that have recognized when change is needed, identified it, and have had the tenacity to successfully implement a plan to institute the change. This tradition continues today.

When the center located to the NCRC in October, 2000, the membership was 600. Today there are 1946 members. There are 350-400 people that are at the center daily. At this point, the center's space is at capacity during its most frequented times. The parking lot is filled to over capacity during each day. In order to start new programs or to expand current ones, more space is needed. The board of directors recognizes this need and has formed a Future Planning Committee to determine what programs should be offered and what kind of space will be needed for those programs.

To gain member's input, the committee has held listening sessions, offered paper surveys, and conducted one-on-one conversations about what will be needed in the next five to ten years. Members have willingly stepped up to offer their opinions.

The committee considers its work to be accomplished in four phases: 1. Fact finding; 2. Space design; 3. Capital campaign and partnerships; 4. Construction and reconfiguration. In September of 2019 the committee will provide a report to the board of directors and the city council on the recommendations from the first phase.

Why we're doing future planning:

- To identify space needs to meet the needs for our increasing membership
- To increase the flexibility of our space to allow for quick changes to programming and members' needs
- To determine the programs wanted in the future to meet members' needs.

- To identify gaps in meeting members needs in current programming, i.e. transition teams, referral & information center, and community advocacy.
- To evaluate staffing – Is it adequate? Is it appropriate? Are we utilizing volunteers while not becoming dependent on volunteers?

Goal & Objective:

- Goal is to fulfill the mission of FiftyNorth - Inspiring and empowering our members and community users to engage in activities that nourish the mind, body and spirit - and serve area population over age 50.
- Objective is to formulate and present a recommendation of action to address future programming and space needs using information, data and projections available at this time.

Project Assumptions

- Membership will continue to grow
 - Membership has consistently netted 50 new members each year. In 2016 and 2017 the net was 100 new members.
 - Northfield demographics predicts an increase in population age 55-85 through 2030.
The people age 55-85+ in Northfield in 2020 will be 5736. This is 27% of the 20,531 population. This number is predicted to continue to increase until 2030.
- Existing space is inadequate and/or inflexible
 - There are 60 fitness classes held in the Fitness Studio each week. Due to space constraints, there are additional fitness classes that are scheduled in carpeted rooms in the building; this space is not as conducive to the needs of the participants.
 - The Fitness Room does not have adequate floor space to offer room for floor workouts.

The circuit training class in the Fitness Room is at capacity for the room size.
 - Each of the hallway links are being used for programming.
 - Every classroom space is considered to be multi-purpose and flexed to the max as most days there is a full schedule in each room.

- Many of the spaces have been reconfigured to accommodate programming.
 - In 2009, leases were secured for additional classroom space;
 - in 2011 the original activity room space was redesigned into the Fitness Studio;
 - in 2014 the men's locker room was remodeled to add more lockers and dressing space;
 - in 2018 staff offices were moved to create a space for an Art Studio; the far link was equipped with tables and chairs to accommodate further meeting and class space.
- Program emphasis areas – fitness, the arts, lifelong learning, social, and community engagement are flourishing. Participation numbers show increase each year. Quality programs are offered, but space is limiting the ability to offer other programs beyond what is currently being offered.
- The Fitness Room is maxed out for equipment, as well as the showers and locker rooms. The lap lanes in the pool consistently have a wait line. In some fitness classes there are 30 people, which is the capacity of the room. The women's locker room was designed and built when there were 2 aqua classes scheduled per week with maybe 10 people in a class. Today there are 15 classes each week with up to 30 people in a class, all using the locker room at the same time.
- Transportation issues, most notably parking, will continue to be an issue and may affect use of the facilities
 - Members mention to staff every day that the parking lot is full. People are parking on the grassy areas and along the curbs. It is difficult to convince members to park in the North parking lot. If the parking continues to be full, will members stop coming to the center due to frustration?
 - Use of transit is limited due to hours and routes offered.
- Members have a sense of pride and ownership in the center. They want to participate at the center with their peer group, their friends, in space that is familiar to them, and where they have a comfort level of acceptance.
- There are gaps in current programming
 - FiftyNorth is considered by people to be the place to inquire about aging services that are available in the community. Staff can provide information and referral regarding services available in the community but do not have the expertise in social services to provide details. A community advocate is needed to provide and enhance the breadth of helping people navigate aging issues.
 - The Personal Training program has highly qualified trainers that work 1:1 with people that are rehabbing from surgeries, injuries, etc. Currently we partner with local physical therapy groups to provide a continued fitness program for people

that are past the insurance coverage and want to continue working on their rehab. We believe that we can grow and enhance this program if we had a larger fitness area.

- There are trends in fitness that we cannot explore and/or offer because of the limits in space in the fitness room and the on-going schedule of the Fitness Studio.
- City financial decisions in 2024 are uncertain
 - The lease with the City terminates in March, 2025. Under the terms of the current lease, the operating expenses for the Wellness center (fitness and pool) is split 50-50 between the City and FiftyNorth. Should this lease not be extended, all of the expense will be shifted to FiftyNorth. The financial implications are an anticipated 10% increase in budget or approximately \$100,000 per year.
 - The operating budget needs to be supported to finance the current expenses plus any additional leased space acquired.
- Future needs and interests of our membership will continue to change.
 - The next group of members are from the Baby Boomer generation. They have different expectations than the current members. Programs need to expand to meet their expectations.

Anticipated Outcome:

- Positioning FiftyNorth for now and future – now, 2024, 2030
 - To accommodate increased membership,
 - To meet changing needs of members, and,
 - To grow partnerships.

Deliverables:

- Recommendation that addresses space needs, fund raising, city issues
 - 1 – Written report
 - 2 – Presentation to FiftyNorth board of directors, FiftyNorth membership, and Northfield city officials and city council

Actions done or to be done:

- Information and data gathered and to be used to formulate a recommendation regarding future programming space use and needs
- Various methods used to gather that information and data including:
 - Utilization of data already available from other initiatives
 - Listening groups comprised of
 - Stakeholders
 - Community people who don't belong to FiftyNorth yet – various ages
 - Random samples of active members
 - Table in lobby with info and questionnaires available to interested members
 - Informal small group meetings at volunteer's homes
 - One on one discussions with targeted community members
- Investigation into feasibility and value of forming additional outside partnerships.

What we have learned so far:

- Members value opportunities to come together in small & large groups for conversation, support and learning.
- There is a desire for small and large gathering spots, for quiet areas for reading or one-on-one conversations, and for areas set aside for activities like book clubs or grief support groups.
- We need to serve all types of members – the older, more traditional long-time members and the not-yet-retired younger new members and all those in between.
- Members want a larger lobby area for check in and socialization.
- More physical activities are needed – more classes for current offerings, new activities such as pickleball, a walking track, fitness rooms with more room and more machines and an additional fitness studio.

What we are asking the council:

- How do we move forward in a city-owned building?
- How do we do this together to ensure that FiftyNorth continues to be successful?

What we are asking for from the council:

- Input into the process
- Support for our effort

Project Team

Char Carlson
Pat Jorstad, Chair
Gordon Kelley
Elaine Meyers
Rita Olson
Lynne Pederson
Craig Swenson