

Age-friendly Austin: A Plan of Action

In September 2015, Austin's Commission on Seniors formed a working group comprised of representatives of members of the Commission, AARP, AustinUP and other local service organizations, to bring to fruition recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Aging, including the development of an Action Plan for Austin as an Age-Friendly City.

In developing the Action Plan, the working group is reviewing existing systems that support Austin's senior population and identifying where there are gaps, both in relation to the Task Force recommendations and the AARP/World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Livability:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and social inclusion
6. Civic participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services

Background

The Mayor's Task Force on Aging convened by Mayor Lee Leffingwell in 2012 recommended that Austin be designated an "age-friendly" community under the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, an affiliate of the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program. The recommendation was a clear recognition that Central Texas was, and remains today, among the fastest-growing areas for people between 55 and 64, and has the second fastest-growing population of people 65 and over.

Since 2012, important accomplishments have been achieved as a result of the work of the Task Force, including the formation of Austin's Commission on Seniors and AustinUP. Austin, however, has not yet implemented several recommendations outlined in the final Task Force report, nor has it developed the action plan required of an Age-Friendly City. Consequently, Austin currently is at risk of losing its age-friendly designation and is lagging behind other U.S. cities.

Goal

The goal is for the working group to perform this assessment, gather input from the community and full Commission on Seniors, and present the plan to Mayor Adler and the entire City Council by June 2016.

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What is an age-friendly community?

Our partners in the network of age-friendly communities are challenging Austin to do more to prepare for the rapid aging of the U.S. population:

- Recognize the wide range of capacities and resources among older people
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences
- Respect older persons' decisions and lifestyle choices
- Protect those who are most vulnerable; and
- Promote older persons' inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life

Resources

Elements of the Age-friendly community action plan:

<http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/?intcmp=DSO-AE-SEARCH-AARPSUGG-LIVABLE>

Mayor's Task Force on Aging: Report

[http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Council/Mayor/Mayor's Task Force on Aging Full Report.pdf](http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Council/Mayor/Mayor's_Task_Force_on_Aging_Full_Report.pdf)

Mayor's Task Force on Aging: Recommendations

<http://www.austinup.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Task-Force-on-Aging-Final-Recommendations.pdf>