# COMMISSION ON SENIORS RECOMMENDATION  20160608-04iib

Date:          June 8, 2016

Subject:       Age Friendly Community Action Plan Recommendation

Motioned By: Varteressian                    Seconded By:   Cohen

## Recommendation

The Commission on Seniors voted 13-0 to recommend an Age Friendly Community Action Plan, to retain its status as an age-friendly community in the World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities and Communities Program. The Commission has recommended an Action Plan to address key issues and challenges faced by seniors, in each of the eight Domains of Livability identified by the WHO.

## Description of Recommendation to Council

See attached plan

## Rationale:

The senior population in the Austin metro area is one of the fastest growing in the country. In 2012 the Mayor 's Task Force on Aging 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. However, Austin lacks an Age Friendly Action Plan and is at risk of losing its age-friendly designation, as well as lagging behind other U.S. cities. In September 2015, Austin's Commission on Seniors formed a working group comprised of members of the Commission, AARP, AustinUP, and regional aging-related service organizations, to bring to fruition recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Aging, including the development of an Action Plan to transform Austin into an Age-friendly City. An Age Friendly Action Plan is consistent with, and builds upon the goals of Imagine Austin.

## Vote

For: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Cagle, Cohen, Garcia-Pittman, Gray, Kareithi, Lauck, Lugo, McDowell, Pruett, Scott, Van Sickle

Against:    None

Abstain:    None

Absent:  None

Attest:

_Janell Brown_ (signature)

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# Age-friendly Austin Action Plan: Executive Summary



## CoA Commission on Seniors Working Group

**Angela Atwood**
AustinUp Board Chair

**Janee Briesemeister**
Commission on Seniors, District 5

**Teresa Sansone Ferguson**
AustinUp Executive Director

**Erica Garcia-Pittman**
Commission on Seniors, District 7; UT Austin Dell Medical School at Seton Healthcare Family

**David Gray**
Commission on Seniors, District 6

**Jessica Lemann**
AARP

**Carla Penny**
AARP

**Shubhada Saxena**
SAIVA (South Asians' International Volunteer Association)

**Jennifer Scott**
Commission on Seniors; Area Agency on Aging Aging & Disability Resource Center

**Mary Teeters**
Meals on Wheels & More

**Sally VanSickle**
Commission on Seniors, District 9; Capital City Village

**Peter Varteressian**
Commission on Seniors, District 8

> "With the right policies and services in place, population ageing can be viewed as a rich new opportunity for both individuals and societies."
>
> *Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization*

Over the next 50 years, the number of people aged 65 and older is expected to more than double to 92 million; those 85 and older will likely triple to 18 million. These projections, as well as Austin's changing demographics as seen in the 2010 U.S. Census, led to the formation of the Mayor's Task Force on Aging. In 2012, Mayor Lee Leffingwell charged the Task Force with building public awareness, analyzing the current resources and opportunities for growth, and creating a set of strategic recommendations to accommodate Central Texas' fast-growing senior population.

In its final report, the Task Force 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, a non-profit that is working across sectors to raise the profile of our senior population and prepare the next generation for the future of aging. However, Austin lacks a plan for accomplishing several recommendations outlined in the final Task Force report. Consequently, Austin is at risk of losing its age-friendly designation and is lagging behind other U.S. cities.

In September 2015, Austin's Commission on Seniors formed a working group comprised of members of the Commission, AARP, AustinUP, and regional aging-related service

organizations, to bring to fruition recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Aging, including the development of an Action Plan to transform Austin into an Age-friendly City. This working group has met nearly every week to outline a five-year plan, and identify goals and strategies.

## What is an age-friendly community?

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

## Structure

In developing the Age-friendly Austin Action Plan, the working group reviewed existing systems to support Austin's senior population and identified where there are gaps, both in relation to the Task Force recommendations and the AARP/World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Livability, which include:

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

The objective was to perform the assessment, outline goals and strategies, gather additional input from the community, and present the plan to Mayor Steve Adler and the entire City Council.

## Analysis and Input

This document contains the goals and strategies outlined by the working group after considerable analysis, discussion and input from the community during three events held at Anderson Mill Limited District in far Northwest Austin, Gus Garcia Recreation Center on East Rundberg and the *Austin American Statesman* building on South Congress. Mindful of Austin's diverse population, SAIVA and other groups provided feedback to ensure cultural competency, and AustinUP added insight from a focus group made up of LGBT seniors.

## Imagine Austin

The working group also met with City staff who suggested studying the Imagine Austin plan to identify age-friendly overlap. The group found many shared goals with the Imagine Austin plan, which seeks to:

- "develop accessible community gathering places such as parks, farmers' markets, sidewalks, and streets in all parts of Austin, especially within activity centers and along activity corridors…that encourage interaction and provide places for people of all ages to visit and relax"

- "apply high standards of urban design to ensure that 'complete streets' are safe and accessible for all users"

- "encourage people to use alternative forms of transportation that are sensitive to the demands of the Central Texas climate"

- "provide services to a city with a changing demographic profile"

- "increase the availability of continuing education"

- "develop new economic sectors through partnerships between the business community, city government, and institutions to help employ a diverse workforce and expand opportunities for young and old"

> "Cross-sector partnerships can enable seniors to remain independent and productive. The U.S. also needs more age-friendly communities, geriatricians and equitable, accessible care."
>
> *Robin Mockenhaupt, Chief of Staff, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

- "maintain quality standards in recruiting and training new public safety officers and strive for a public safety workforce that reflects Austin's changing demographics"

- "collaborate with area school districts, local businesses, and arts organizations in developing programs that encourage lifelong active engagement and participation in the cultural arts"

- "create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to healthy food, schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options"

- "ensure outreach efforts for the ongoing comprehensive planning program…that are directed toward attracting a diversity of stakeholders including under-represented demographic and socioeconomic groups"

**Next Steps**

Creating an Age-friendly City entails committing to the following:

1. Establishing an advisory committee that includes older adults;

2. Securing a City Council resolution to actively support, promote and work toward becoming age-friendly;
3. Establishing a robust and concrete plan of action that responds to the needs identified by older adults in the community;
4. Publicly posting the action plan;
5. Measuring activities, reviewing action plan outcomes and reporting on them publicly.

This commitment will serve as an example to other communities across the United States. As Austin has demonstrated time and again, when a purpose-filled plan comes together with the energy and creativity of community stakeholders, our city rises to the challenge to do great things. In this case, Austin has what it takes to become not just age-friendly, but a community that is age-progressive in policy and age-positive in spirit for both current and future senior populations. The time is right and the time is now.

**The Plan**

What follows is a collaborative community plan, recommended by the City of Austin Commission on Seniors, to not only serve today's older population, but establish policies and priorities that will benefit Austinites for years to come.

> "Numerous programs demonstrate that bringing older and younger people together benefits both groups and society at large."
>
> *Trent Stamp, CEO, The Eisner Foundation*



*Age-friendly Austin community input session at Gus Garcia Recreation Center.*

# DOMAIN 1
## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

"I'd like to see more rest benches on the Lady Bird Lake Hike and Bike Trail."

*Austin resident*

## Proposed Partner Organizations

CoA Parks and Recreation Department (PARD)

CoA Planning and Zoning Department

CoA Public Works Department

City Council Open Space, Environment and Sustainability Committee

City Council Planning and Neighborhoods Committee

CoA Parks and Recreation Board

**Goal:** Increase access to and utilization of parks, open spaces and public buildings.

**Strategies:**
1. Ensure all residents have access to parks and open spaces within a half-mile of every home.

2. Ensure all residents have access to recreation facilities within a mile of every home.

3. Increase the number of parks and public spaces that are equipped with functional seating at frequent intervals, drinking fountains, shaded resting areas, walkways suitable for wheelchairs/walkers and accessible public restrooms.

4. Convert pre-existing parking spaces into parking spaces reserved for persons with handicapped parking permits in compliance with ADA.

5. Provide multigenerational programs such as yoga, Tai Chi, art in the park, etc. in neighborhood parks.

Transportation

# DOMAIN 2
# Transportation

**Goal:** Ensure all modes of transportation are safe, affordable and accessible for residents of all ages and abilities, particularly older adults.

**Strategies:**
1. Expedite repair, maintenance and construction of sidewalks, curb cuts and street lighting.
2. Remove vegetation adjacent to sidewalks to increase pedestrian infrastructure and safety.
3. Increase seating options, including covered seating and close-by parking at public transit stops.
4. Evaluate and install pedestrian-friendly crossing signals.
5. Provide sidewalk infrastructure in places frequented by older adults.
6. Improve street lighting.
7. Improve visibility of crosswalks for older adults whether walking or driving.
8. Replace missing street signs/traffic signs with easily readable, well-lit signage and address access and functional needs.

**Goal:** Provide residents with the information and tools they need to make informed travel choices.

**Strategies:**
1. Create integrated system for scheduling transportation options.
2. Create a centralized clearinghouse for seamless information for the public.

**Goal:** Create an ongoing dialogue and innovative transportation options and expand models for the future.

**Strategies:**
1. Identify gaps in existing transportation services.
2. Obtain additional funding to support innovative opportunities and models for transportation and expand existing options.
3. Provide public transportation discounts to older adults.
4. Ensure ride-sharing options for older adults using different types of transportation like city vans, neighborhood vehicles, and nonprofit transportation providers.
5. Evaluate transportation needs and options in new home developments and neighborhood planning.

## Proposed Partner Organizations

CoA Commission on Seniors

City Council Mobility Committee

CoA Transportation Department

Capital Metro

Drive A Senior

Area Agency on Aging

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

# DOMAIN 3
## Housing

**Goal:** Expand and promote the development of diverse housing options that are affordable for seniors of different income levels.

**Strategies:**
1. Encourage the development of new and innovative models of affordable housing (multigenerational, co-housing/cooperative housing).
2. Increase and prioritize funding for affordable housing for seniors (housing bonds, housing trust fund).
3. Expedite the City's permitting process and promote flexible zoning.
4. Increase outreach and community awareness about diverse housing options.
5. Increase access to rent and utility assistance programs to keep seniors in their homes.

**Goal:** Support and expand affordable housing options for seniors.

**Strategies:**
1. Fund improvements and renovations of public housing for low-income seniors.
2. Replicate successful models of mixed income senior housing communities and encourage redevelopment.
3. Address the impact of increasing property taxes.

**Goal:** Expand assistance for affordable home repair, maintenance and modification for seniors of all income levels.

**Strategies:**
1. Expand support for the Austin Housing Repair Coalition.
2. Increase home access for seniors through design modification that improves safety and "visitability."
3. Improve access to energy efficiency and weatherization programs.
4. Expand the Village concept to engage volunteers and neighbors to help with simple, preventative maintenance.

**Housing**

## DOMAIN 4
## Social Participation

> "I'd like to see a year-round shuttle service for seniors that, for a nominal fee, will circulate through Austin's main attraction areas (UT, Capitol, shopping districts, parks, theaters, malls, etc.)"
>
> *Austin resident*

**Goal:** Strengthen and develop recreation, leisure and educational activities involving and targeting older adults.

### Strategies:
1. Fund neighborhood programs for senior assistance.

**Goal:** Create a City interagency committee to optimize facilities for senior engagement.

### Strategies:
1. Develop an asset map to identify existing and new opportunities for senior social engagement at public libraries, PARD facilities, HHS facilities and schools.

2. Identify opportunities for co-located services.

3. Develop multigenerational programming at public facilities.

## Proposed Partner Organizations

CoA Parks and Recreation Department (PARD)

Coming of Age

AustinUP

AARP Texas

Capital City Village

Leadership Austin

SAIVA

Prime Timers Austin

**Housing**

# DOMAIN 5
## Respect and Social Inclusion

## Proposed Partner Organizations

CoA Commission on Seniors

CoA Commission for Persons with Disabilities

CoA Commission on Women

CoA Commission on Veterans

CoA Commission on Immigrant Affairs

Coming of Age

Aging Services Council of Central Texas – Neighborhood Ambassadors Program

AustinUP

**Goal:** Expand programs and services that engage and empower older adults.

**Strategies:**
1. Expand activities, services and programs likely to attract older adults (develop survey to determine priorities).
2. Promote age-friendly customer service practices in City departments.
3. Support AustinUP in development of age-friendly business best practices.

**Goal:** Create intergenerational opportunities for seniors.

**Strategies:**
1. Invest in intergenerational education partnerships with colleges, schools, universities, libraries and senior programs.
2. Ensure all City recreation centers provide programs and activities for seniors that are intergenerational and provide dynamic volunteer and co-learning opportunities.

**Goal:** Expand access to services and participation by older adults in diverse communities.

**Strategies:**
1. Recommend to Commission on Seniors to work with other commissions and boards representing diverse communities.
2. Continue Commission on Seniors participation on the Joint Inclusion Committee, which advises City Council on diversity and inclusion issues.
3. Ensure services and programs targeted to seniors respect racial, ethnic and cultural diversity and are welcoming and inclusive.
4. Advocate that all City programs, services and strategic plans address the needs of seniors.

**Civic Participation & Employment**

# DOMAIN 6
# Civic Participation and Employment

## Proposed Partner Organizations

CoA Task Force on Community Engagement

CoA Economic Prosperity Commission

City Council Economic Opportunity Committee

CoA Economic Development Department

Aging Services Council

Coming of Age

Goodwill

Leadership Austin

AustinUP

Speak Up Austin

Encore

SCORE

Senior Community Service Employment Program

AARP Foundation WorkSearch

Workforce Solutions Capital Area

UT Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

**Goal:** Increase employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for older persons.

**Strategies:**
1. Improve awareness and coordination of employment services.

2. Promote home-based, part-time and job-sharing employment opportunities.

3. Distribute brochures on key topics such as age discrimination in the workplace and working while receiving Social Security benefits.

4. Encourage local businesses to hire older persons.

**Goal:** Increase volunteerism and civic participation among older adults.

**Strategies:**
1. Develop a City of Austin internship or fellowship program for older adults.

2. Publicize volunteer opportunities as well as opportunities for civic engagement.

**Communication & Information**

# DOMAIN 7
# Communication and Information

**Goal:** Create a clearinghouse for information about matters related to older adults.

> "Austin needs an information 'clearinghouse,' but that implies a box or building with one way in and one way out. It really needs to be more like an octopus, with many 'arms' representing all modes of communication."
>
> *Austin resident*

### Proposed Partner Organizations

CoA 3-1-1

CoA Communications and Technology Department

Area Agency on Aging/ADRC

Aging Services Council of Central Texas

AARP Texas

AustinUP

**Strategies:**
1. Include information about city and state services, community organizations and other resources on all appropriate City communication channels.

**Goal:** Increase awareness about senior issues and perspectives.

**Strategies:**
1. Broadcast Austin's Commission on Seniors meetings at convenient times for older viewers.

2. Urge City communications staff to include an "age-friendly" perspective in all communications materials and age-inclusive language, messaging and visuals in materials intended for older adult audiences.

3. Provide multi-cultural information and resources, recognizing the diversity of Austin's senior population.

**Goal:** Promote technologies that help older adults connect to their community, friends and family.

**Strategies:**
1. Expand technology training at City of Austin facilities.

2. Encourage education through public-private partnerships.

3. Offer learning opportunities for those seniors without access to technology.

4. Use all appropriate City communication channels to promote training opportunities.

**Community Support & Health Services**

## DOMAIN 8
## Community Support and Health Services

**Goal:** Sustain and enhance investment in affordable, accessible, and holistic care that will build a vibrant and productive senior community.

**Strategies:**
1. Build awareness of public, private and nonprofit low- or no-cost senior health services availability in citywide promotional materials.
2. Create focus groups of city and community representatives with the charge of developing a strategic plan to integrate aging, mental health and wellness programs.
3. Develop health outreach programs and community care clinics, including mobile clinics and mobile food vans, in neighborhoods with dense and growing populations of older adults.
4. Expand opportunities for affordable and accessible health care services not covered by Medicare, e.g., dental, hearing and vision.

**Goal:** Ensure access to proper support services, community resources and information for successful aging environment.

**Strategies:**
1. Expand community outreach and public awareness around caregiver support and in-home support programs, including respite care, palliative care and other home-based supportive services.
2. Support a robust awareness and education campaign focused on SNAP outreach and the benefit of investing in better food choices for better health outcomes.
3. Provide broad access to healthy culturally appropriate foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and corner stores in neighborhoods.
4. Expand culturally responsive family caregiving programs and resources including dementia care, community respite care and home-based supportive services.

> "Let's change the mindset that doing things for seniors takes away resources from youth and families. Helping seniors benefits all because if we are lucky, we all will become seniors."
>
> *Austin resident*

> "We need more culturally responsive care in local medical facilities regarding communication, food, modesty concerns, etc."
>
> *Austin resident*

# DOMAIN 8 (continued)
## Community Support and Health Services

## Proposed Partner Organizations

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area

AGE of Central Texas (Caregiver U)

Alzheimer's Texas/Alzheimer's Association

Family Eldercare

Meals on Wheels and More

CoA Health and Human Services

Central Health

St. David's

Seton

Dell Medical School

Aging Services Council

Chronic Disease Prevention and Control

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

CoA Health and Human Services Committee

Austin Police Department

Austin Fire Department/EMS

CoA Public Safety Commission

Sustainable Food Center

And more…

**Goal:** Provide information, education and training to ensure the safety, wellness and readiness of seniors in emergency situations.

**Strategies:**
1. Provide formalized emergency preparedness training that includes promotion of existing registries to seniors and caregivers at senior community centers, congregate sites, and any other venue deemed appropriate.
2. Ensure emergency responders are trained in age-friendly best practices to be prepared to respond to the needs of this population during emergency events.
3. Provide emergency response, preparedness strategies on the CoA website specific to the needs of the senior population.
4. Add emergency preparedness script with guidance for 311 operators.

**Goal:** Prevent financial exploitation, neglect, and the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of seniors.

**Strategies:**
1. Strengthen elder abuse detection by providing education to law enforcement and other first responders.
2. Provide detection, prevention and reporting strategies on the COA website specific to the needs of the senior population.
3. Create partnerships to provide educational materials related to identifying and reporting senior financial exploitation targeting banking and financial institutions.
4. Add elder abuse, neglect, and fraud script with guidance for 311 operators.