



RECOMMENDATION

Commission on Seniors

Recommendation Number: 20171011-4D Supporting the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment of the Rebekah Baines Johnson Center (21 Waller St) to Increase Affordable Housing for Seniors and Recommending the City of Austin Study the Feasibility of Providing Multi-generational Programming and Services at the adjacent City-owned building

WHEREAS, the Commission on Seniors serves as an advisory board to the Austin City Council concerning the quality of life for senior citizens in the Austin area and to help ensure older adults are productive, independent, and healthy; and

WHEREAS, according to information provided by the City Demographer, the fastest growing age group in the Austin area are people aged 55 and older, increasing from 8 percent of the area population in 2010 to nearly 20% of the population in 2040. Seniors are often among the poorest in Austin, with the median household income for seniors aged 65 and older \$44,251 compared to \$55,744 for all households; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Age Friendly Action plan adopted by Council in November of 2016 calls for innovative models to serve the needs of Austin's senior population, increasing the amount of affordable housing for seniors, increasing multigenerational programs in parks and city facilities, and developing health outreach programs and community care clinics in neighborhoods with dense populations of older adults; and

WHEREAS, on October 19 the Council will conduct a public hearing and consider a resolution for an application to be submitted to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs by the Austin Geriatric Center, or an affiliated entity, for the rehabilitation of the senior housing units in the Rebekah Baines Johnson Center and the development of additional new affordable senior housing at the site, located at 21 Waller Street.

WHEREAS, the proposed rehabilitation and redevelopment of the RBJ Center will improve existing housing units and increase the number of affordable units available to seniors, including low income and disabled seniors; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin owns 8.98 acres adjacent to the RBJ Center, including dedicated parkland and a 5-story building housing the RBJ Health Center (Austin Public Health offices), Austin-Travis County EMS offices and a Sexually Transmitted Diseases Clinic.

WHEREAS, in conjunction with the redevelopment of the RBJ Center the City of Austin has the opportunity to establish an innovative public-private partnership at the city-owned building that is both adjacent to the RBJ Center and located in an underserved neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, A University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs Policy Research Project led by Professor Jacqueline Angel (a member of the Commission on Seniors) is developing a public-private operational plan for a RBJ-Holly Neighborhood Clinic and Community Center that would provide an integrated care model that consists of geriatric primary care as well as a multi-generational care program and wrap-around services, and this study is supported by St. David's Foundation and pending from Central Health, as well as other organizations that express interest in results.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission on Seniors

- Supports the application to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for rehabilitation and redevelopment of the RBJ Center;
- Recommends the Council direct staff to explore using some or all of the city-owned building to provide a range of social services and health care, including multi-generational services, to residents of the RBJ Center and surrounding neighborhoods; and
- Recommends the Council direct staff to consider the RBJ Health Center for a potential public-private partnership to establish a Neighborhood Clinic and Community Center and collaborate as appropriate with the Policy Research Project at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, the neighborhood and other stakeholders.

Date of Approval: October 11, 2017

Record of the vote: 13-0-1 abstaining (Garcia-Pittman)

Attest:

