



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022**

### **Commission on Seniors**

**The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:**

The Commission on Seniors shall serve as an advisory board to the council concerning the quality of life for senior citizens in the Austin area and to help ensure older adults are productive, independent, and healthy.

The commission shall:

- (1) advise the council on issues related to the senior population in the Austin area;
- (2) evaluate and recommend programs, policies, and practices that create a positive impact and reduce the burden on seniors;
- (3) determine the needs of seniors in the Austin community, and advise council regarding these needs; and
- (4) promote the contributions of seniors to the cultural, economic, and historical value of Austin.

The council encourages the commission to hold periodic joint meetings with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

Source: Ord. 20130926-081; Ord. No. 20141211-204, Pts. 17, 18, 7-1-15.

- 1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

This annual report for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, highlights the accomplishments of the Commission on Seniors based on the responsibilities outlined in the mission statement of the Commission, the implementation of the Age Friendly Action Plan, Austin City Council's Strategic Direction, and other important issues facing older adults in Austin.

**Advise the Council on issues related to the senior population**

The Commission on Seniors adopted the following recommendations:

[Recommendation 20210714-04C](#): Recommendations to City Council on Emergency Preparedness and Response

[Recommendation 20220209-04C](#): Cold Weather Shelters

[Recommendation 20220309-04Cvi](#): Rental and Utility Assistance for Older Adults

[Recommendation 20220309-04Cvii](#): Support for Transportation for Volunteer Driver Ride Service for Older Adults

[Recommendation 20220309-04Cviii](#): Permanent Community Health Workers and Strategy Plan for Serving Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness

[Recommendation 20220309-04Ci](#): Age Friendly Austin Community Engagement Specialist

[Recommendation 20220309-04Cii](#): Quality of Life Study of Older Adults in Austin

[Recommendation 20220309-04Civ](#): Expanding Parks and Recreation Department Programs and Services to Older Adults

[Recommendation 20220309-04Cv](#): Community Health Workers for Older Adults

[Recommendation 20220309-04Ciii](#): Maintain Funding for Education and Outreach for Senior Homestead Tax Exemption

[Recommendation 20220511-04D](#): Supporting FY 2023 Joint Inclusion Budget Recommendations

**Evaluate and recommend programs, policies, and practices that create a positive impact and reduce the burden on seniors:**

The Commission formed working groups to study, analyze and evaluate major strategies identified in the larger strategic Age Friendly Action Plan. Working groups allow the Commission to involve interested community members and City of Austin and Travis County staff. Representation from the community informs the work of the Commission and aids in implementation of the Age Friendly Action Plan.

The Commission established four working groups aligning with the eight Domains of the Age Friendly Action Plan and the Council's Strategic Direction 2023. Below are the reports of each working group for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022:

## **Age Friendly Action Plan Working Groups:**

### **Age Friendly Action Plan Implementation and Budget Working Group:**

This Working Group had the primary responsibility for drafting the Commission's budget recommendations. Working Group members met with staff and community partners, attended budget engagement meetings, and meetings with Joint Inclusion and other Quality of Life commissions.

### **Housing, Transportation and Open Spaces Working Group:**

**June 2021**--Listened to a presentation from the Autonomy Institute on Older Adult Transportation for the future. Their representative, Jeff DeCoux, is working with UT's Ted Lehr and the City's Innovation Office manager, Charles Purma. The presentation centered on using technology to power the transportation grid to improve mobility choices for residents.

**July 2021**--We used the meeting to have our Chariot Volunteer Driver Service Group Member outline the transportation service and options for seniors. Chariot is a peer company to Drive a Senior.

**September 2021**--We used the bulk of this meeting getting updates on the RBJ housing renovations and the Boomer Collaborative as well as discussing ideas for budget recommendations for the next fiscal year.

**October 2021**--We received an update from a City of Austin Library Representative on their outreach to seniors for internet literacy. We also heard from representatives from Drive a Senior (volunteer driver service).

**December 2021**--We had a presentation from Mandy DeMayo from the City's Housing and Planning department. She provided updates on the home repair and barrier removal programs as well as a status report on affordable housing projects throughout the city.

**January 2022**--We invited Charles Purma back so he could help better clarify the City's role in the innovative transportation concepts presented by the Autonomy Institute Presentation earlier in the year. His presentation helped break down the concepts that were presented earlier and outline them in a manner that everyone understood. Additionally, we heard from UT professor Sharon Strover who outlined her research project on the privacy aspects of various sensor systems in our growing technologically driven daily life.

**March 2022**--Workgroup member Jessica Lehman discussed the AARP initiative "America Walks". She outlined that AARP was funding 15 Walking College fellowships which would last 6 months. We also discussed in more detail the budget recommendations for the next fiscal year.

**May 2022**--We had a presentation from Edna Parra and Joanna Ortiz from Capitol Metro on changes to the fare structure that will be launched in August. Also discussed was a potential

change to allow open strollers on the bus. We additionally had another update from Mandy DeMayo on affordable housing and racial diversity in housing.

**June 2022**--We received a presentation from Joel Mayer, a city planner working on the City's "Vision Zero" project. This effort aims to provide avenues for reducing traffic deaths in Austin.

### **Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment:**

The workgroup primarily addressed issues within Domains 4-6 that were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the reintegration of programming.

#### **August 2021**

Presenter: Ashley Bischoff, Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention Program Coordinator at Austin Public Health. Information was provided regarding APH's caregiver support toolkit.

#### **September 2021**

Work group members provided updates and opportunities related to domain 4-6 priority areas.

#### **October 2021**

Presenter: Robyn Heid, Family Eldercare presented their Healthy Connections Program, Lifetime Connections without Walls.

#### **December 2021**

Presenter: Claire Irwin, shared employment opportunities for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) along with information about the HHS VISTA project AmeriCorps VISTA members, serving with the Aging Services VISTA Project, worked in departments across Texas HHSC. The Aging Services AmeriCorps VISTA Project strengthens HHSC cross-coordination among offices serving older adults, improves understanding of aging related issues and needs, and increases capacity to provide services for older adults in Texas. Members placed throughout HHSC identified and created resources for programs, campaigns and services that support the growing older adult population.

Emi Johnson, Austin Public Library provided an update on grant-making and employment opportunities. Emi also provided information on the in-person re-opening plan for APL.

#### **February 2022**

Presenter: Tabitha Taylor, Age- Friendly Program Coordinator shared information regarding the FY2023 budget process. Working group members provided recommendations on the Commission on Seniors annual community survey.

#### **March 2022**

Working group reviewed domain priority areas, identified areas of improvement, and provided recommendations for expanding programs and initiatives in the following areas: digital access, communication, inclusion, employment, and library services.



### **April 2022**

Domain 4-6 work group members participated in three planning meeting in support of the Older Americans Month Celebratory event

### **May 2022**

Working group prepared annual review and highlighted next year's priority areas.

### **Age-Friendly Website**

- Age-Friendly Coordinator along with Age-Friendly Intern made updates to the AFA webpage to include information on free home repair, tax relief and other program through the Housing and Planning Department.
- Age-Friendly Intern created an Older Americans Month (OAM) webpage to highlight awareness and local opportunities during OAM.

### **Expanded Community Participation**

- Created taskforce/committee to support Domains 4-6 work group. The first of these was created to plan and implement the first annual Older Americans Months Kick-Off Event. The planning committee met seven times March - May and included seven community organizations.

### **Volunteerism and Civic Participation**

- Presented the first Annual Volunteer Community Service Award. The award recognized a member of the community that demonstrated resilience and dedication to enhance the lives of older adults in the Austin community over the prior year.

### **Older Adult Employment**

- AmeriCorps Vista internship application was completed. This position is scheduled to be filled by fall 2022.
- AFA Program Coordinator continues to share employment opportunities for older adults on all communication networks.
- AustinUp hosted virtual 50+ job fair and online programs to teach job search skills.

### **Communication and Outreach**

- Work on the Age-Friendly webpage dashboard for the Age-Friendly Plan continues.
- Multiple virtual event production (e.g., PARD, AustinUP Age-Friendly Action Plan sessions that remain available via YouTube).
- UT's School of Social Work's GRACE Program Intern worked with Tabitha Taylor, the Austin Age-Friendly Plan Coordinator, to help with Age-Friendly promotion/communication outreach.
- Age-Friendly Program Coordinator was a guest on UT's AMEN Program KAZI radio segment, <https://nursing.utexas.edu/news/helping-older-adults-austin-thrive>.

### **Expanding Programs for Older Adults: Digital Access**

- Austin Public Library through grants from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (ARPA Funds) is providing 1:1 in-person digital navigation services at Travis County housing authority properties and select neighborhood libraries. The digital navigators are assisting residents remotely through referrals received through the Library's Job Portal and Austin Free-Net. The data indicates that the majority of the 24 residents assisted during March 2022 – May 2022 (3 months) are ages 56-70 years old. The oldest adult is 80 years old who is assisted regularly and received more than eight 1:1 sessions. Under this program, several laptops and hotspots were issued to residents. Library Digital Navigators helped three residents enroll in Austin Free Net's Learn & Earn Program and will provide them support in completing their program to own devices to keep and free internet services for one year. The two Library Digital Navigators will begin assisting residents in accessing telehealth services beginning fall 2022. Digital Navigator grant funds end in December 2022.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- PARD, APL, Austin Public Health, Capital City Village, Texas Health and Human Services, AustinUp, and Coming of Age shared strategies on promoting and supporting the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Capital City Village partnered with SAIVA to share information about diversity/equity issues in our community.
- Austin LGBTQIA2+ Elder Task Force and Austin LGBT Coalition on Aging, along with Austin Black Pride, allgo, AGLIFF, Austin Justice Coalition, Chronically Queer, Gender and Sexuality Center, Keep GLSEN Weird, Project Transitions, QueerBomb, Queer Riot Fest, QWELL, TENT, Thee Gay Agenda all partnered with Embrace Austin to build bridges between and advance issues of the LGBTQIA2+ community.
- Age- Friendly Program Coordinator participated in AARP interview on inclusivity.

### **Domain 4-6 FY2023 Priority Areas**

- Age-Friendly Website
- Expansion Community Participation
- Volunteerism and Civic Participation
- Employment
- Communication and Outreach.
- Expanding Programs for Older Adults
- Digital Access
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

### **Health Services and Community Supports (Domain 8)**

Throughout COVID-19 timeframe Domain 8 worked closely with Emergency Operations Center- Social Services Branch staff; Tabitha Taylor and Korey Darling to provide input, asked questions and assisted with community communications where possible.

## **July 2021**

- Formulated recommendations for effective outreach to older adults, their families, and caregivers. Strategies to reach communities of color, those in LGBTQ community, individuals with disabilities and immigrant communities
- Assisted with recommendations for outreach for technology survey (UT School of Nursing, School of Information, Aging Services Council and City of Austin)

## **August 2021**

- Reviewed Nursing Home Resolution regarding reporting of COVID-19 cases
- Attended Climate Equity Plan presentation and provided input

## **September 2021**

APH created IDC Advisory Group to provide guidance on Resolution #41 (2018-10-18): Implementation of an Intergenerational Adult Day and Child Care Resource Center Pilot. The results of this study will identify which site would be the best location for the IDC pilot and insights into desired age groups and activities.

## **October 2021**

- Listened to University of Texas Design Institute Nursing Home Study presentation to assess role of Commission in highlighting findings or advocating for changes.

## **November 2021**

- Formulated recommendations for University of Texas Design Institute Nursing Home Study strategies which may make sense to pursue. Most promising is the suggestion that neighbors connect to facilities in their communities to support both resident and staff needs.

## **January 2022**

Received update on Resolution 41 feasibility study. Provided input and recommendations

Began discussions about restarting focus on Emergency Preparedness with Lisa Sepulveda (ATC/EMS)

## **February 2022**

Discussed workgroup input related to cold weather response recommendations and lessons learned.

## **March 2022**

- Listened to and commented on progress update presentation from Sofia Barbato, Foundation Communities – Community Health Worker Project Update
- Began discussions on Strategies for Emergency Preparedness metric
- Continued discussions on priorities related to unhoused older adults
- Discussed budget recommendations for permanent APH support staff positions

## **May 2022**

- Update from Lisa Sepulveda, ATCEMS Apricot software project for linking social service agencies to EMS teams serving older adults
- Began discussions about website updates needed for Domain 8 of the AFA plan

## **Determine the needs of seniors in the Austin community, and advise council regarding these needs:**

### **Age Friendly Forums**

AustinUP is hosted a series of free online sessions in 2021 that focused on community progress as a result of the Age-friendly Austin Plan. Each half-day forum disseminates local information to older adults about each of the Domains of Livability, e.g., housing, transportation, civic participation / employment, etc. and discussing achievements in the global age-friendly movement. Speakers and panels showcased existing services in our community in addition to “horizon” ideas and plans. The audience included older adults and caregivers as well as representatives from private and nonprofit sectors. Age Friendly Coordinate Tabitha Taylor and several members of the Commission have participated in the forums and moderators and panelists.

### **Community Engagement on FY 23 Budget:**

The Commission on Seniors conducted extensive community outreach to inform our budget recommendations. The Commission updated the Age Friendly Austin Community Feedback Survey. The survey was distributed through partner groups such as AARP, AustinUP, the Aging Services Council and others. In addition, several Commissioners participated in the virtual budget forums organized by the Joint Inclusion Committee and the Equity Office. Commissioner Bordie participated in a tele-townhall on the city budget that was hosted by AARP.



### **Intergenerational Day Center Feasibility Study**

Commissioner Angel serves as Chair of Intergenerational Day Center Advisory Group. The role of the IDC Advisory Group is to review the possibilities of an IDC pilot project based on the [feasibility study](#) completed in July 2021.

### **Joint Meeting with the Mayor's Committee for People With Disabilities**

The annual meeting between our two commissions has been postponed for two years due to the Covid pandemic. We met together on June 10, 2022. Topics included the Disability Quality of Life Study and CapMetro service.

### **Invited and requested presentations on issues of interest to the Commission:**

**July 14, 2021: Presentation:** Age of Central Texas, Adult Day Center (ADC) Feasibility Study, Suzanne Anderson, AGE of Central Texas, Sam Woollard and Katie Ropes Berry, Woollard Nichols and Associates (WNA)

**October 13, 2021: Presentation:** Overview of Civil Rights Enforcement in Austin, Carol Johnson, Civil Rights Officer, City of Austin. **Presentation:** Library Department Initiatives Update, Emi Johnson, Austin Public Library

**November 10, 2021: Update:** Parks and Recreation Department (PARD): Adult 50+ Programs, Kelly Maltsberger, Program Manager, PARD, City of Austin. **Update:** Aging Affinity Group on Persons Experiencing Homelessness, Commissioner Amy Temperley.

**December 8, 2021: Presentation:** Long Term Care Project Update, Rose Lewis and Jessica Murray, Design Institute for Health, Dell Medical School, The University of Texas at Austin.

**February 9, 2022: Presentation:** Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD): Anna Lan from Capital Metro and Laura Keating from the City's Housing and Planning Department will present an overview and answer questions about the equitable transit-oriented development project to plan for equitable outcomes for area residents of all incomes and backgrounds along Project Connect corridors

**April 13, 2022: Presentation:** Community Needs Assessment for the FY 22-23 Action Plan (Max Horstman, Mandy DeMayo, and Helen Howell). **Presentation:** A Decade of Growth: Austin Population and Demographic Trends, Lila Valencia, City of Austin Demographer.

**May 11, 2022:** Presentation on 87th Legislative Session Updates, Brie L. Franco, City of Austin, Intergovernmental Relations Officer

**June 10, 2022:** Presentation by Public Consulting Group regarding the Disability Quality of Life Study. Presentation by Project Connect and CapMetro regarding service updates.

**Promote the contributions of seniors to the cultural, economic, and historical value of Austin:**

**First Annual Community Service Award**

The Commission on Seniors presented its first Community Service Award. The 2022 Community Service Award recognizes members of the community (professional and volunteer) that has demonstrated resilience and dedication to enhance the lives of older adults in the Austin area. Current members of the Commission and staff liaisons were not eligible. Eleven nominations were received from commissioners, community organizations and members of the community. Recipients were:

Mary Sue Clyne: Ms. Clyne volunteers her time, talent, and resources to support older adults and their families who are facing life changes and challenges related to aging. She is the immediate past board chair of Drive a Senior Central Texas, now known as Chariot. Mary Sue spearheaded major improvements in the organization and efficiency of the way non-profit organizations provide transportation services at no cost. With her vision and leadership, she was largely responsible for a city-wide consolidation that led to an expansion of convenient access to senior transportation. Mary Sue sets high standards for herself and others. While active on the Chariot Board, she also keeps herself involved on the ground. On a weekly basis, she drives low-income seniors in East Austin with special health care needs. As a driver for Chariot, she has completed more than 450 rides.

Dr. Nina Mosier: Dr. Mosier created Austin based non-profit, Power for Parkinson's, to help improve the lives of people with Parkinson's. She has created a community of connection and hope providing free fitness, dance, singing, and socialization opportunities helping those with Parkinson's find joy in movement. As Executive Director of Power for Parkinson's Dr. Mosier dreams up exciting new ways the organization can reach those in need of health and wellness. In 2021, she led and inspired the PFP team to grow a global program through YouTube where people from all over the world can find Power for Parkinson's exercise content. The channel is now the #1 Parkinson's Fitness Channel on YouTube with 14,000 subscribers, over 600 on-demand exercise classes, and 8 weekly live stream classes where participants can use the live chat function and socialize with global and local friends while finding joy in movement. The care she gives to our local participants and the needs of the community goes beyond service. She leaves a positive impact in all she does not only for our participants but also for Austin and the entire Parkinson's community.

**Older Americans Month Kick-Off Event**

May is Older Americans Month and the 2022 theme was "Age My Way". Commissioners assisted in planning and volunteered at a kickoff event sponsored by Austin Public Health and organized by Age Friendly Coordinator Tabitha Taylor. The event included music and performances, information from local aging service providers and city departments, activities, games, and prizes. Assistance with applications for Senior Homestead Tax Exemption was

available. Despite a record hot day approximately 105 older adults were present at Conley-Guerrero Recreation Center.

In addition, the Commission promotes the contributions of seniors through engagement with the community, our participation in community events and committees, presentations to other planning and community bodies, and meetings with City staff.

- The Commission on Seniors is represented on the Joint Inclusion Committee and served as chair.
- Members of the Commission regularly attended the budget meetings held by the Equity Office
- Commissioner Bordie participated in an AARP virtual town hall event on the city budget
- Chair Briesemeister spoke at AustinUP's "Age My Way" event for Older American's Month, May 19, 2022.
- Members of the Commission on Seniors participate on the Aging Services Council
- Members of the Commission participated in the Gerontology Symposium on Aging and Homelessness, October 15, 2021
- Commissioner Amy Temperley met with Dianna Grey and other members of the homeless services division to review and respond to questions regarding recent Commission resolutions and budget requests regarding cold weather shelters and services for older adults experiencing homelessness.

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

The Commission on Seniors has acted to fulfill the scope and the responsibilities as outlined in the mission statement as identified in Ord. 20130926-081.

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

The Commission establishes the following goals and objectives for the coming year.

- Add staff to support the Age Friendly Action Plan, with a priority for communication and outreach to older adults
- Collect better and more granular data regarding how city programs and services are serving older adults in all communities across Austin
- Improve services to older adults experiencing homelessness
- Expand affordable housing for older adults
- working with PARD, enhance and expand programs for the senior communities
- identify means to expand transportation options for older adults, including volunteer driver programs
- support the library and other sources increase technological literacy for the senior population

- Develop emergency preparedness strategies to expand awareness and training opportunities as per AFA plan
- Explore challenges as identified by TCEMS and members of Doman 8 workgroup of reaching and supporting older individuals who live alone.

In addition, in May the Commission appointed a working group to consider changing the name of the Commission to the Commission on Aging and making any other necessary updates to the Commission's enabling ordinance. The term "seniors" has fallen out of use nationally and by city departments. For example, PARD has recently re-branded its programming for older adults from "senior programs" to "varsity generation."