



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2023 to 6/30/2024.

Commission on Aging

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

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

The commission shall:

- (1) advise the Council on issues related to the older population in the Austin area;
- (2) evaluate and recommend programs, policies, and practices that create a positive impact and reduce the burden on older adults;
- (3) determine the needs of older adults in the Austin community, and advise Council regarding these needs; and
- (4) promote the contributions of older adults 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, 2023 – June 30, 2024, highlights the accomplishments of the Commission on Aging 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 older adult population

The Commission on Aging adopted recommendations on the following topics:

[Recommendation Number: \(20240313-5\): Commission on Aging FY 25 City of Austin Budget](#)

- Outreach for Community Preparedness
- Support for GO Repair Programs
- Gus Garcia Recreation Center Temporary Expansion Space
- Expansion of Emergency Housing and Rental Assistance Program
- Additional Immunization Funding
- Pedestrian Signaling
- Equity Office Funding
- Parks & Recreation Funding
- Budget Reporting

[Recommendation 20230809-008: Resilience Hubs and Relocation](#)

[Recommendation 20231108-007: Additional Reporting Demographics](#)

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

The Commission formed working groups to study, analyze and evaluate major strategies identified in the larger strategic Age Friendly Action Plan. However, in November 2023, the Commission on Aging voted to separate Domain 3 into its own workgroup, separate from Domains 1 & 2. This was done in order to make the volume of work for the groups more manageable. 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 has established five 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, 2023, to June 30, 2024:

Age Friendly Action Plan Working Groups:

Age Friendly Action Plan Implementation and Budget Working Groups

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 Committee and other Quality of Life commissions.

Transportation and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation Working Group (Domains 1-2)

The Working Group received a presentation from the Gus Garcia Recreation Center older adult attendees regarding the need for expansion. There was ongoing input from the Parks and Recreation Department about ongoing and upcoming programs for older adults. Also, City staff from Transportation and Public Works, staff from Capital Metro and staff from the Austin Transit Partnership made presentations, as well as a presentation from City Housing Department staff and ECHO. This workgroup is also reviewing their related goals in Age Friendly Austin and updating to ensure feasibility.

Housing Working Group (Domain 3)

This group was formed November 2023, by separating it out of Domains 1 and 2. This Working Group received presentations from Housing Department Home Repair Programs, Housing Department Displacement Programs, and ECHO.

Working group members also participated in:

- Displacement Prevention Roundtable Discussion, COA Housing Department, Nov. 6, 2023
- HousingWorks Housing & Health Summit, Nov. 17, 2023
- Boomers Collaborative Discussion on Cooperative Housing for Seniors, Dec. 30, 2023
- Housing Program presentation to Commission on Community Development, Jan. 9, 2024
- Housing Affordability in Austin: Progress & Potential sponsored by Austin Community Foundation & St. David's Foundation at Austin PBS, Jan. 30, 2024
- Meeting with Mandy DeMayo, Interim Director Housing Department, May 23, 2024.

Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment Working Group (Domains 4-6)

In coordination with the Age Friendly staff, and Austin Parks and Recreation Varsity Generation Programs, the "It's My Park Day!" clean up event was held on March 9, 2024, at the Roy G.

Guerrero Park at Krieg Fields. It was a great event and Austin's older adults did a wonderful job of making the park beautiful.

This Working Group was responsible for organizing the Older Americans Month event held in May 2024. Along with the help of Age Friendly staff and engAGE Travis County Board, coordinated assembling 150 emergency preparedness starter kits, 100 of which were distributed to attendees at the May event.

Additionally, the working group has planned a conference "Aging is Living" at the Norris Conference Center, for October 8, 2024.

Working group is also reviewing goals to ensure they are quantifiable and progress on them can be measured.

Health Services and Community Supports (Domain 8) Working Group

The Workgroup continued its focus on providing stakeholder feedback related to health access and service capacity building for older individuals and family caregivers. Workgroup members identified strategies related to Age Friendly Plan Domain 8 metrics.

The workgroup members met in March to consider the consolidation of the working group goals and objectives.

Workgroup Members also participated in:

- Livability for Longevity Symposium
- A Better Death , Views and Experiences with end-of-life issues, research presented by St. David's
- The Empowered Caregiver learning series, presented by AARP and the Alzheimer's Association
- Aging Services Council Presentation on Nutritional Needs for Older Adults

Throughout the budget recommendations process workgroup members provided feedback to Commissioners on priorities related to Domain 8 related topics. Ongoing concerns were raised regarding the topics of access to information about available programs and services, eligibility for services and health disparities in access.

Other Commission on Aging Working Groups:

Quality of Life Study Working Group

This Working Group has been monitoring the procurement process and subsequent vendor selection for the Commission on Aging's Quality of Life Study as it progressed, which was

submitted to the Equity Office in February 2023. In April 2024, the Financial Services Department Central Procurement recommended the University of Indianapolis's Center for Aging and Community as the vendor for the Commission's Quality of Life study. This recommendation is slated to go before Council on July 18, 2024. Commission contact with the vendor is not allowed until after Council approval.

Intergenerational Resource and Activity Center Exploration Working Group

This Working Group reviewed the Intergenerational Resource and Activity Center (IRAC) proposal along with supporting documents for the Nash Hernandez location. The Commission's Working Group determined in 2023 that the Nash Hernandez location was not suitable for an IRAC and recommended that the Commission on Aging not support the initiative. In June 2024 the Executive Secretary for the Intergenerational Resource and Activity Center Advisory Group and its Executive Committee issued a letter indicating that "despite many hours of research, fact finding, site visits, and working and re-working the numbers regarding financial feasibility, the Joint Working Group couldn't fit both the Childcare Center and the Senior's Resource and Activity Center into the building without making a major expansion of the building."

Determine the needs of older adults in the Austin community, and advise Council regarding these needs:

Community Engagement on FY 24 Budget:

The Commission on Aging conducted extensive community outreach to inform our budget recommendations. The Commission updated the Age Friendly Austin Community Feedback Survey. The survey was distributed through Age Friendly partners and the commissioner's networks. In addition, several Commissioners participated in the virtual budget forums organized by the Joint Inclusion Committee and the Equity Office.

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

A joint meeting did not occur, due to lack of quorum with the Commission on Aging. However, members of the Commission on Aging were present at the October 13, 2023, meeting of the Mayor's Committee for People With Disabilities. These items were discussed and later shared with the Commission on Aging:

- Common priorities and goals, and opportunities for collaboration,
- Update on the AARP Walkability Audits completed by Age Friendly Austin and Aging is Cool,
- Joint Inclusion Committee support to host an Implicit Bias Awareness Event and drafting a proclamation for an Implicit Bias Awareness Day.

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

August 2023

- Prosper Tax Help | Advancing Economic Resilience Among Adults 50+

through Benefits and Refunds, Gabriela Mordi, MSSW, Senior Project Manager | Prosper Tax Help, Foundation Communities

September 2023

- Gustavo “Gus” Garcia Recreation Center Update on Older Adult Programming and Service Needs, Theresa Jones
- HIV and Aging, Barry Waller

October 2023

- Aging and Unhoused in Travis County: A Snapshot and Strategic Next Steps, Danica Fraher, LMSW, MPH, Healthcare Systems Manager and Kate Moore, VP of Strategy at the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)
- A Better Death: Views and Experiences with End-Of-Life Issues, Andrew Levack and Ellie Haggerty Coplin, St. Davids Foundation

January 2024

- PARD Bond Program Overview, Alyssa Tharrett, Project Management Supervisor and Steven Linett, Capital Improvement Program Manager, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- The Foster Grandparent Program, Diane Rouda, Volunteer Services Coordinator, Foster Grandparent Program

February 2024

- FY 24-29 Consolidated Plan Community Needs Assessment Presentation & Discussion, Chris Duran, Senior Research Analyst, Housing Department; Julie Smith, Community Engagement Specialist; Jamey May, Housing & Community Development Officer

April 2024

- Age of Change: Austin Population and Demographic Trends, Lila Valencia, City of Austin Demographer
- Imagining an Age-Friendly Austin: A Photovoice Project Reflecting on Respect and Social Inclusion with Senior Participants at the Asian American Resource Center, Nirali Thakkar, Cultural & Arts Activity Specialist, Van Doan, Culture & Arts Education Coordinator, Jin Kim, Culture & Arts Activity Leader, and Senior Programming Participants, Asian American Resource Center

May 2024

- UT Austin 2024 L&L Symposium Findings, Alexandra De La Mora, LBJ School of Public Affairs and Lourdes Romañach Álvarez, School of Human Ecology, Human Development and Family Sciences

June 2024

- CapMetro's Community Intervention Program, Holly Winge, Community Intervention Specialist, CapMetro

Promote the contributions of older adults to the cultural, economic, and historical value of Austin:

Annual Community Service Award

The Commission on Aging presented its annual Community Service Awards. The 2024 Community Service Awards recognize members of the community (professional and volunteer) that demonstrated resilience and dedication to enhance the lives of older adults in the Austin area. Current Commission members and APH staff were not eligible. Eighteen nominations were received from commissioners, community organizations and members of the community. Recipients were Barbara Epstein for her professional work and Neomi Delgado for her volunteer work.

Older Americans Month Kick-Off Event

May is Older Americans Month and the 2024 theme was "Powered by Connection." The Commission assisted in planning and volunteered at a kickoff event co-sponsored by Austin Public Health and engAGE Travis County. The theme of the local kickoff event was "Staying Connected During Power or Emergency Events." In addition to substantial contributions of items from Austin Public Health, other City of Austin departments, and local organizations. The engAGE Travis County 501(c)(3) raised over \$3,000 that was used procure additional items for Emergency Preparedness Starter Kits that were distributed to attendees. The event was organized by Age Friendly Coordinator Nicole Howe and Richard Bondi, Commission Chair. The event, emceed by KXAN's Jim Spencer, included live music, information from local aging service providers and City departments, activities, games, and prizes. More than 20 groups tabled focusing on older adult services and emergency preparedness needs. The event was attended by over 100 participants.

Additional Contributions

In addition, the Commission promotes the contributions of older adults 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 Aging was represented on the Joint Inclusion Committee and served as Vice-Chair.
- Members of the Commission regularly attended all of the budget meetings held by the Equity Office
- A member of the Commission on Aging participates in the Aging Services Council and serves as an officer.
- Members of the Commission on Aging participate in the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council and the Aging & Disability Resource Center Steering Committee.

- Members of the Commission on Aging participated in the Intergenerational Resource and Activity Center (IRAC) Advisory Group and its Executive Committee.

Other Applicable Action Items:

- Held a retreat in April 2024 to define clear and quantifiable indicators to measure success of the Age-Friendly Action Plan.
- In cooperation with Aging is Cool, two AARP walkability studies were conducted. Funds for the study were provided by an AARP grant that was awarded to Aging is Cool for the studies. Studies were held and results presented October 2023.
 - Intersection of South Pleasant Valley Road & East Riverside Drive
 - Intersection of South Congress Avenue & East Oltorf Street.

The results showed numerous positive findings, including sidewalks that were wide enough (5 ft) and surfaces were generally smooth. Areas of improvement included additional tactile ground surface indicators, large cracks in sidewalks, and some overgrown vegetation.

The full presentation of findings can be viewed [here](#), using passcode j53ti%*!.

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

The Commission on Aging 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:

- Evaluate and update the Commission on Aging Annual Budget Community Engagement Survey.
- Work with the Joint Inclusion Committee's Budget Engagement & Recommendation events to obtain community input on budget issues.
- Following Council approval of a vendor, support the work for a comprehensive Quality of Life Survey for older adults in Austin with The University of Indianapolis's Center for Aging and Community.
- Co-host with engAGE Travis County the Aging is Living Conference, October 8, 2024, at the Norris Conference Center.
- Improve services to older adults experiencing homelessness.
- Update and maintain asset map listings for Age-Friendly services aligning with AARP domains on the City of Austin Senior Services Hub.
- Work with City Demographer and APH staff to drive improved collection and more granular data regarding how city programs and services are serving older adults in all communities across Austin to include demographics on age, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, persons with disabilities, number, and ages of children in families, and caregivers.

- Working with PARD, enhance and expand recreation programs for the older adult communities.
- Host an Implicit Bias Awareness Event and propose an Implicit Bias Awareness Day, in collaboration with the Joint Inclusion Committee.
- Work with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities to identify common priorities and goals, and opportunities for collaboration.
- Joint Inclusion Committee support to host an Implicit Bias Awareness Event and drafting a proclamation for an Implicit Bias Awareness Day.
- Work with the Transit Empowerment Fund to host a senior transportation summit to convene public and private partners around strategies to improve transportation for our elderly population.
- Partner with the Transportation and Public Works Department as they finalize metrics for the recent Bike, Walk and Roll program to ensure that needs of the elderly population are covered, and that metrics can be added to the Age Friendly Action Plan.
- Identify housing models that can accommodate an older population and enhance their ability to stay in the home of their choice; further identify ways to expand those housing models.

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