



## **Annual Internal Review** **COMMISSION ON SENIORS**

**This report covers the time period of 3/12/2014 to 12/31/2014**

**The Board/Commission mission statement § 2-1-131 is:**

- (A)

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.
- (B)

The council shall appoint 15 commission members:

  - (1) the mayor may nominate two commission members and each council member may nominate one commission member;
  - (2) the Travis County Commissioners Court shall appoint one commission member;
  - (3) the Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area shall appoint one commission member;
  - (4) the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority shall appoint one commission member.
- (C)

The commission should include members who are representatives of or sensitive to the needs of the senior population. Members should have substantive knowledge on issues concerning senior citizens including but not limited to health, affordable housing, basic needs, transportation, social engagement and inclusion, and caregiver support. The commission as a whole should strive to represent a diversity of ethnicity, race, and gender; and include older adults who are representatives of the senior population.
- (D)

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.
- (E)

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.**

Recommendations to the City Council regarding:

- Board and Commission Transition Taskforce created recommendations in a published Taskforce Report in May 2014.
- Commission on Seniors unanimously opposed the recommended Option 1 merger and formation of a new Commission called the People with Disabilities and Seniors Quality of Life Commission. The Taskforce Report Option 2 recommended that the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and the Commission on Seniors remain separate but hold joint meetings on a quarterly basis.
- The Commission on Seniors submitted a recommendation that the two Commissions remain separate and hold bi-yearly meetings to discuss common issues.
- Researched and reviewed the Impact of Property Tax Burden on seniors and will submit to Council an unbiased analysis of tax relief options to advise the Council on the strengths and weaknesses of the different options.

The Commission on Seniors has worked to connect with community groups and City Departments to gather information and evaluate City of Austin programs, policies and best practices to determine the impact on older adults. Please refer to the following list of presenters:

- Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) HUD office – to discuss affordable housing and availability to seniors.
- Austin Transportation Department – Introduction to Complete Streets.
- Austin Energy - regarding utility assistance to help the elderly and individuals with low income.
- City of Austin Health and Human Services Budget Department – funding for services.
- Chair Ann Kitchen and Commissioner Jacqueline Angel – Tax proposal options.
- Capital Metro – transportation and services.
- HACA- Housing Authority of the City of Austin – Affordable housing options
- Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) HUD office – to discuss affordable housing and availability to seniors.
- Parks and Recreation Department – Senior centers and transportation programs.
- Rebekah Baines Johnson (RBJ) Center – update on expansion and affordable housing for low income seniors.
- Aging Services Council – information on services and support for aging in place.
- Work group – Customer Services Practices and Working with Older Adults.

- AARP – Age Friendly Initiative is to help people live easily and comfortably in their homes and communities as they age.
- Aging Services Council – information on services and support for aging in place.
- AustinUp – engaging the community to help solve the issues facing older adults and their caregivers.
- Pedestrian Advisory Council, City of Austin Planning and Development Review Department- creation of Vision Zero to address traffic safety for all road users with the aim to achieve zero fatalities and zero serious injuries.
- Asian American Quality of Life presented an overview of the purpose of the advisory group and recommendations related to the Asian American’s Health Assessment
- African American Quality of Life Unit-City of Austin Health and Human Services Department- Presentation and overview of goals to increase knowledge and awareness of health conditions, recommendations to improved health status and healthier lifestyles.

**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.

The commission also recommended a review of the Austin Energy Customer Care Department staff training because Austin Energy is one of the largest current and future providers of services to low income older adults. The current, ongoing staff training program encompasses best practices and incorporates reliable and valid social service principles and practices. Bringing expertise from AGE, the Area Agency on Aging and Meals on Wheels and More, a work group formed to look at the physical communication challenges that seniors face when advocating for themselves over the phone or on a website.

A PowerPoint presentation was presented to both the Commission on Seniors and to the Staff Development Manager, Mr. Chad Leath, who was supportive and receptive to incorporating the recommendations into the ongoing training received by staff. After the presentation to the Commission, Commissioner Martin Kareithi recommended to inform Mr. Leath about additional resource information from the local non-profit agency, Knowbility, whose mission is to provide equal access to technology for people with low vision and other accessibility needs.

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

The Commission on Seniors is continuing to connect with community groups, non-profits, Central Health and City Departments to gather information and evaluate City of Austin programs, policies and best practices to determine the overall impact on older

adults. The Commissioners have requested that the following groups, organizations and non-profits be invited to present to the Commission during upcoming meetings.

Hispanic and Latino Quality of Life 2013 Report – Presentation

Drive A Senior

Budget Presentation by the City of Austin Health and Human Services Department

Organizations providing services to older veterans

New Goals in 2015

1. Hold upcoming meetings in a community setting to increase citizen input.
2. Connect with AustinUp and their public forums.
3. Further address the issue of affordable housing and the impact of renovation on existing homes.
4. Improve understanding of transportation needs in our community.
5. Link into comprehensive social service models like the PACE Program to learn more about comprehensive, holistic programs that work for older adults.
6. Examine the challenges facing veterans who are aging in our community.

See Work Plan for 2015-2016



## **COMMISSION ON SENIORS 2015 WORK PLAN**

**Charge:** The Commission on Seniors shall:

- (1) Advise the council on issues related to the senior population in the Austin area;
- (2) evaluate and recommend programs to the city council on age-inclusive policies, and practices that create a positive impact and reduce the burden on seniors;
- (3) explore and develop, for recommendation to city council, cooperative arrangements with area governments in the area for affordable housing;
- (4) develop, for recommendation to city council, strategies encouraging individuals and agencies to continually improve the quality of their services and integrating Seniors into civic life.

### **Goals**

- A. To organize and make recommendations to city council, county commissioners, city and county HHS agency officials. Advocate to:
  - (1) Communicate on regular basis with City Council, County Commissioners Court, and agency officials with written memos as well as visits.
  - (2) Research and analyze the impact of property tax deferrals/caps and utility cost subsidies on seniors and present an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of each option.
  - (3) Continue involvement in the AARP/World Health Organization Age-Friendly communities' initiatives, working with AustinUP which is leading the local effort to connect organizations.
  - (4) Review the City of Austin Affordable Housing Options and funding.
  - (5) Expedite permitting process for secondary apartments for seniors.
  - (6) Promote the contributions of seniors to the cultural, economic and historical value in Austin.

### **Policy and Finance**

Review policies and financial impact of community plans and programs to ensure the need of older adults and their families are included in City of Austin strategies and planning.

Ranking	Goals	Collaborations	Resources	Date	Obstacles	Solution	Progress Made
1.	Affordable Housing: Research and analyze Senior Tax Exemptions		<b>Commissioner Jacqueline Angel</b>	3/11/2015  4/8/2015	Variety of different options submitted for Council review	Submit 3 options out of 4 for Council review and consideration	Analysis to Council in May 2015
2.	Affordable Housing Options including funding and home modification	Gather information and resource exchange with numerous City Departments, community collaborations, social service and non-profits and citizen communications that serve senior interest	Increase outreach and solicit more community involvement and home citizen communication	Upcoming meetings			
3.	Age-Inclusive Policies	Information and resource exchange with numerous City Departments, community collaborations and citizen communications that serve senior interest	Planning and Development Review Department-Vision Zero  Healthcare challenges of immigrant elders  Asian American Quality of Life  African American Quality of Life  Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life	February 11 presentation by Robert Anderson  March 11 Presentation by Shubhada Saxena April 8 <sup>th</sup> presentation by Vince Cobalis and Shubhada Saxena April 8 <sup>th</sup> presentation by Adrienne Sturup  To be invited			Increased knowledge of polices best practices and financial impact on the community; best interest of seniors

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Collaborations</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Obstacles</b>	<b>Solution</b>	<b>Progress Made</b>
<b>4.</b>	Transportation - Review and analyze options for older adults in our community	Gather information and resource exchange with numerous City Departments, community collaborations and citizen communications that serve senior interest	Increase outreach and solicit more community involvement and citizen communication  Non- Profit: Drive a Senior to be invited	Upcoming meetings		Drive a Senior to present to the Commission	Increased knowledge of polices best practices and financial impact on the community; best interest of seniors
<b>5.</b>	Veteran Services - Review and analyze resources and available services for retired, older veterans	Gather information and resource exchange with numerous City Departments, community collaborations and citizen communications that serve senior interest	Increase outreach and solicit more community involvement and citizen communication	Upcoming meetings		Connect with other community organizations in a public forum	
<b>6.</b>	Social Services Models- Review and analyze successful comprehensive models that serve the needs of older adults	Gather information and resources from numerous City Departments, community collaborations and citizen communications but also community, regional and national models that serve senior interest	Increase outreach and solicit more community involvement and citizen communication by meeting in more accessible public venues	Upcoming meetings		Connect with other community organizations in a public forum	Increased knowledge of polices best practices and financial impact on the community; best interest of seniors