



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2015 to 6/30/2016

Commission on Seniors

The Commission on Seniors mission statement (per the City Code):

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](#).

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.

Advise the Council on issues related to the senior population:

The Commission supported Mayor Adler's Initiative to end Veteran Homelessness, Recommendation 20150909-003A, and requested that particular attention be brought to older, homeless veterans living on the streets of Austin because at least 45% are age 55 or older. (November 2015)

The Commission responded to Council Member Ann Kitchen's request to review Council Resolution 20160413-03C regarding a tax swap proposal and supported the conclusions in documents prepared by City Manager Mark Ott and Deputy Chief Financial Officer Ed Van Eenoo that Austin Seniors would be negatively impacted by any tax swap change because of different tax exemption rates. As a Commission serving the needs of older adults, we are aware of the negative impact of a property tax increase on seniors, particularly low-income seniors. A growing number fear they cannot stay in their own homes due to rising property taxes. (April 2016)

The Commission adopted Recommendation 20160511-003A related to transportation and mobility. The Commission on Seniors requested that the City Council require the Austin Transportation Department (ATD), Public Works and any other city departments involved in transportation or mobility related services to consider the needs of older adults as they develop plans, programs and/or services. City departments should also proactively seek input from the Commission on Seniors to help inform their activities. The primary focus should be to ensure that all modes of transportation are safe, affordable and accessible for residents of all ages and abilities, particularly older adults. The Commission made additional recommendations on specific topics: Sidewalk Infrastructure and Pedestrian Improvements; Street Signage, Signalization and Lighting; Improved Traffic Conditions; and City Program Funding and Social Service Contracts. This resolution included support for fully funding the Sidewalk Master Plan. (May 2016)

The Chair of the Commission on Seniors met with the Mayor's Representative, Sly Magid, in March 2016, to discuss the accomplishments and direction of the Commission on Seniors.

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

In addition to the actions above:

The Commission on Seniors adopted a resolution to recommend that Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) incorporate Age Friendly criteria into their decision process when adding parkland or spending money on facilities. The Commission on Seniors will also act as a resource in the development of criteria, if needed. (February 2016.)

Formed two Working Groups:

Transportation Working Group– to improve our understanding of transportation needs of seniors in the community; review existing transportation options, identify gaps, and review to make recommendations to City Council.

Presentations by:

- Drive a Senior Transportation Program – presentation of transportation needs by Janet Allen, SW Drive a Senior, and Serita Lacasse East Austin/Pflugerville
- Tiffany Cabin, Parks and Recreation Department
- Vision Zero presentation by Robert Anderson with the Planning and Development Review Department
- Side Walk Master Plan – Public Works Department – presentation by John Eastman
- Office of Mobility Management- presentation by Michelle Meaux, Regional Coordination Planner
- Transportation Empowerment Fund – presentation by Amy Temperly, Chair of the Committee

The recommendations of the Transportation Working Group were adopted by the Commission as Council Recommendation 20160511-003A.

Age Friendly Community Action Plan Working Group-- In September 2015, Austin's Commission on Seniors formed a working group comprised of representatives of members of the Commission, AARP, AustinUP, Meals on Wheels and More and SAIVA to bring to fruition recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Aging, including the development of an Action Plan for Austin as an Age-Friendly City.

In developing the Action Plan, the working group is reviewing existing systems to support Austin's senior population and identifying where there are gaps, both in relation to the Task Force recommendations and the AARP/World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Livability:

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

In April and May of 2016, three community forums were held in different areas of Austin to obtain community feedback to further define what makes Austin an age friendly community.

A request for a presentation to the Asian American Quality of Life Commission, about the Age Friendly City Plan, was approved by the Commission on Seniors and Commissioner Sally Van Sickel presented to the group on May 17, 2016.

In June, the Age-Friendly Austin plan was voted on and approved by the Commission on Seniors for submission to City Council. A second motion that was unanimously passed was to recommend an amendment to the Imagine Austin Plan that the City of Austin create age friendly policies and adopt the Age Friendly Austin Plan into the Imagine Austin Plan.

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

- Formation of two work groups to study, analyze and evaluate two major issues in the City of Austin (see above)
- Held meetings in community settings to capture feedback from older adults living in surrounding Austin neighborhoods. September 2015 meeting was held at the YMCA on Rundberg, and May 2016 meeting at the South Austin Recreation Center.

Commission members attended events and forums related to issues of concerns to seniors sponsored by the LBJ School of Public Affairs, AARP and AustinUp.

Invited presentations on issues of interest to the Commission including:

- Boomer's Collaborative- presentation regarding a new conceptual housing model for older adults that is a residential co-op owned by resident shareholders with rights of tenancy.
- The Austin Office of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development- presentation by Jim Padilla, Senior Research Analyst, who requested feedback on types of housing that is important to older adults.
- Professor Jacqueline Angel, former Commissioner on Seniors' member and her students from the LBJ School Center for Health and Social Policy at The University of Texas presented an analysis of different comprehensive models with wrap around services for low-income seniors living in Austin that focused on existing health and housing issues.
- Bree Williams from ECHO spoke about the Mayor's Initiative to end homelessness and the critical work of ECHO and how it impacts older, homeless veterans.
- Foster Grandparent Program provided by Emily Fankell a representative of the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services
- Imagine Austin by Matt Dugan, Planning and Zoning Department
- Sidewalk Master Plan by John Eastman, Project Manager
- Teresa Ferguson regarding the work of AustinUp
- Jessica Lemann regarding the work of AARP

- Capital Metro Connection 2025 Plan presented by Lawrence Deeter, Project Manager

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

The Commission promotes the contributions of seniors through our participation in community events and participation on the Joint Inclusion Committee.

Joint meetings with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities.

In March 2016, the Commission on Seniors held a joint meeting with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities to determine mutual topics of common interest and to learn about the work of each group, per recommendation 20140515, May 2014.

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.

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

The Commission on Seniors identified the following goals for July 2016-June 2017:

- Transportation – monitor the recommendations made in Recommendation 20160511-003A
- Age Friendly Community Action Plan—work with Council on adopting the recommendation and including the plan as a partner plan with Imagine Austin. Monitor city departments and programs and recommend actions that achieve the goals of the action plan.
- Continue to examine the challenges facing veterans who are aging in our community
- Continue opportunities for Community input and involvement

- Continue to participate in community events; hold meetings in the community and connect with AustinUp, AARP and other community groups.
- Monitor development of the City Equity Office
- Address the issue of affordable housing for seniors
- Make recommendations to Council to promote and recognize the contributions of seniors to the cultural, economic and historical value of Austin.
- The Commission on Seniors will continue 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
Google, Inc.
Texas Veteran's Commission
City of Austin Equity Office
Veteran's Affair Office
State Veterans Services
Foundation Communities
Austin Energy – Weatherization and home repair
Age Well Live Well