



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017

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 Age Friendly Community Action Plan was adopted by the Commission on Seniors at the July 2016 regularly scheduled meeting. The Commission also recommended amendments to Imagine Austin to include the needs of seniors in city planning. This plan is necessary for Austin to continue its designation as an Age Friendly City by the World Health Organization. The Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of the Age Friendly Action Plan

Working Group testified before several boards and commissions, and Council, in support of the plan. The Age Friendly Action Plan and Imagine Austin amendments were endorsed by the Joint Inclusion Committee, the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, the Hispanic-Latino Quality of Life Commission, the Asian-American Quality of Life Commission and the Planning Commission, as well community groups including AARP, AustinUP and the Texas Alliance of Retired Americans. Council adopted the Imagine Austin amendments and the plan in October and November of 2016. **Austin City Council Resolution No. 20161103-049**

The Commission on Seniors recommended a direction for the Council to prioritize Commission's previous recommendations outlining mobility and transportation related services when finalizing the projects to be included in the \$720 million 2016 mobility bond package. **Recommendation No: 20160511-003A**

The Commission on Seniors recommend that the City Council fund in the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 City of Austin budget health and human services projects including the addition of \$500,000 to address the shortfall for existing social services contracts and the Health Equity Outreach Team staff, as well as any necessary infrastructure and support necessary to ensure the success of the aforementioned items, consistent with goals included in the Age Friendly Action Plan. **Recommendation No: 20160810-03b**

While representing the interests of older adults, **and supporting the goal of the City of Austin to implement equity strategies, the** Vice Chair Varteressian acted on behalf of the Commission on Seniors on the interview panel for the City of Austin Chief Equity Officer (August 2016).

To support the development of an Equity Assessment Tool, in conjunction with the goals of the Age Friendly Action Plan, the Commission on Seniors recommends that age be included as a demographic variable. **Recommendation No: 20170412-3B**

The Commission submitted comments on the FY 2017- 18 Housing Community Needs Assessment identifying the housing needs of seniors. **Resolution No. 20170412-3C**

The Commission adopted recommendations for the City FY 18 Budget that would serve to implement the Age Friendly Action Plan. **Resolution No. 20170614-3B**

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 formed Working Groups to study, analyze and evaluate major strategies identified in the larger strategic Age Friendly Plan. Community partners and interested seniors were invited to participate in the working

groups. The Age Friendly Action Plan 8 Domains were collapsed into 5 work groups listed as follows (July 2016):

Transportation Working Group

- Discussions with the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities to develop innovative plan for seniors that may look at using a transportation network company (TNC) model for people that are seniors or disabled.
- Discussion of need for expanded senior transportation services, including need to balance individual vs congregate services; more vans are needed at Parks and Recreation to fulfill this need.
- Discussed the Parks and Recreation recommendation for an additional van and staff. Discussed opportunity for Capital Metro to provide periodic community outings to support older adults in applying for reduced fares at community sites.
- The working group discussed 53 Formula Funding: funds for projects that go beyond traditional para-transit services to benefit individuals with disabilities and older adults. Discussed different ideas and innovations surrounding this. The call for proposals was announced July 24, 2017 and the information and application packet were sent to the Parks and Recreation Department for the department’s consideration.

Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Working Group

- Presentation on RBJ building and recent efforts to add additional units for low income seniors. Discussed potential options for the city-owned property, such as for multi-generational services.
- Discussed the Boomer’s Collaborative with Carol Lilly.
- Using the “Conversation Corps” model for discussions about affordable senior housing. Meetings held in Districts 6 and 10.

Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion Working Group

- Developing an asset map for seniors looking for facilities and services including parks, libraries, schools, health services, etc. Identifying funding sources at state level; working group members participated in a training on Asset Mapping software, which is user-friendly and can be used to help achieve strategy identified in Domain 4. It can also be used to support achieving the goals across all the Domains.

- Looking for opportunities for community engagement for seniors; Google My Maps may be an option for mapping resources for residents in Austin. With the recommendation from the Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion Working Group identify all services available for seniors with the help of City personnel to build on mapping the resources.

Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information Working Group

- Initial focus on employment issues for seniors; discussion about issues facing the LGBTQ aging community; Working toward tightening goals; setting up Chair meeting to prioritize how to implement plan and develop budget recommendations
- Citizen Communication from Teresa Ferguson representing AustinUP, Discussion regarding existing services for workforce development for older adults already occurring through Austin Community College.

Community and Health Services Working Group

- The Working Group has prioritized navigation center and dental care access as big challenges for seniors
- The Working Group proposed a budget request for a data analyst to support City Demographer dedicated to planning for increased senior population growth and services and supporting the data needed to better define the Age Friendly Plan.

Age Friendly Action Plan Working Group

- The Working Group drafted the Age Friendly Action plan, coordinated activity around the plan, and participated in the Imagine Austin Speakers series.
- The Working Group coordinated a draft set of metrics for measuring the Age Friendly Action Plan implementation and impact.

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

- Held commission meetings in community settings to capture feedback from older adults living in surrounding Austin neighborhoods. August 10, 2016 meeting held at the Shoal Crest Senior Activity Center. September 14, 2016 meeting was

scheduled to be held at the Dottie Jordan Senior Recreation Center on Loyola Lane but was cancelled because there was not a quorum.

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

Teresa Ferguson presented an update on the work in the community as Executive Director of AustinUP including: • 55+ job fair to be held February 21st at Westminster Senior Living • Aging Seminar to be held on May 4th at Dell Medical School in the HEB Auditorium and offered that Commissioners could sign up for AustinUP Newsletter to stay up to date on similar community events

Invited presentations on issues of interest to the Commission including:

City Manager's Office presented an update on the recruitment process and hiring progress for an Equity Officer and provided background about the Equity Office also. (Ray Baray, Chief of Staff, Office of the City Manager) Equity Office created in Fiscal Year 2016-16 budget process including \$183,000 in funding; project team tasked with developing methodology for assessing equity practices in other cities; Equity Officer recruitment is anticipated to have a final candidate selected in late August (July 13, 2016).

City of Austin Health and Human Services Department Budget Process for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 (John Miller, COA HHSD Financial Manager) Background and progress on funding sources and uses of fy 2017 proposed 99.2 million dollar budget. General fund represents 66% or 65.7 million dollars of the budget, 32% comes from grants and 2% from expense refunds. Concerns is that there is a chronic disease epidemic and now 3 out of 4 deaths are because of chronic disease. (August 10, 2016)

Austin UP, Angela Atwood, AustinUP Board Chair and expert in housing, presented a detailed picture of the challenges older adults are facing in order to age in place in the community. There has been a dramatic migration of older adults moving into Austin and Travis County. Residents 65+ years old in Travis County increased 29% from 2010-2014 (October 12, 2016)

- Many struggle with costs of home repairs, replacements, and modifications.
- Almost two out of five Austinites are low-income.
- 14 properties or 1,264 units are designated for seniors but remain at 100% occupancy with 1-2 year wait lists.

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, Draft Strategic Housing Plan presented by Jonathan Tomko, which looked at affordability issues of housing in Austin. Obtained feedback from residents on the website, using surveys, in community meetings where identified concerns focused on residents moving out of the Austin area because it is too expensive, increasing property taxes, and a lack of affordable housing. Low income residents are spending a higher percentage of income on the cost of housing. In order for low to moderate income older adults to age in place, and afford a home that costs less than \$250,000, they would need to live northeast, south or south east of Austin. Increase housing choices for those who want to age in place and those with disabilities. Goal is to build 75,000 units in 10 years with 35,000 designated as affordable and 40,000 units designated as “market rate.” Potential adoption in winter 2016-2017. (November 9, 2016)

Austin Transportation Department, presentation by Liane Miller, Project Coordinator, on the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan; Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) will update Austin Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan (AMATP), which was adopted in 1995 and does not currently reflect the vision of Imagine Austin; the vision to be a city that is mobile and interconnected. Austin is one of the top five metro cities in the Country with the worst traffic (Austin Business Journal 6/4/2014) (December 14, 2016).

Austin Public Library presentation by Sharon Herfurth, Division Manager, provided a briefing and discussion regarding programming and services provided for seniors by Austin Public Library and identified unmet needs for seniors; Discussion regarding available resources: unmet needs for seniors. Library staff is looking for resources to fund the book mobile, want to be able to offer up to 300 WIFI hotspots available for checkout for those that don't have access which would benefit seniors and low-income residents • Would cost approximately \$300,000 (January 11, 2017)

Briefing and discussion regarding media relations provided by Bryce Bencivengo, Public Information Specialist Senior, **City of Austin Communications and Public Information Office**, the Public Information Office is available to give guidance and recommendations for Commissioners if members would like to discuss any issues before returning media calls (January 11, 2017).

Presentation from **the Austin Public Health Department** by Maria Allen, Manager for Neighborhood Services, Austin Public Health and Natasha Ponczek Shoemake, Homeless and Basic Needs Services Coordinator, APH regarding programming and services provided for seniors. Services provided cover basic needs, public health services, and case management. The department identified key needs for seniors:

- Support and expand neighborhood center services that help seniors meet their basic needs, prevent chronic disease and link them to needed community resources
- Workforce development initiative with focus on soft skills training such as computer literacy, job readiness training,
- Support and expand current social service investments for programs specific to seniors
- Community-based services that focus on physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being of elderly people, includes health education, resources, and social support to promote healthy outcomes (February 8, 2017)

Presentation by the **City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department** David Crabb, Recreation Program Manager for Senior Services, including services provided to older residents and identified unmet needs for seniors. Parks and Recreation has 50+ enrichment programs and services for seniors. (February 8, 2017)

Presentation by Lawrence Deeter, Senior Planner, **Capital Metro**, on the Connections 2025 plan, to the Joint Meeting with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities. (February 10, 2017)

Briefing and discussion on the FY 2017-18 Annual Action Plan, the City of Austin's application to receive formula grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Presented by Erika Leak, **Neighborhood Housing and Community Development** and Jonathan Tomko on behalf of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (March 8, 2017). City receives four formula block grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help address affordable housing, community, and economic development needs. The City is required to submit a 5-year consolidated plan, action plans (annually) and End-of-Year Reports called CAPER (annually) (March 8, 2017)

Presentation of priorities and strategies of the **City of Austin Equity Office** and the development of an equity tool presented by newly hired Brian Oaks, Chief Equity Officer, City of Austin Equity Office. Mission: To provide leadership, guidance, and insight on equity to improve the quality of life for Austinites and achieve the vision of making Austin the most livable city in the nation for all. Focus is to operationalize: Racial equity tools; data to develop strategies and drive results. (March 8, 2017)

City Demographer, Ryan Robinson presented information on the demographics and factors impacting seniors. The senior (age 65 and older) and pre-senior (age 55 to 64) populations are the fastest growing age cohorts in the Austin MSA (2020 to 2025). By 2040 people aged 65 and older will make up 18% of the area population, with African

American, Hispanic-Latino, Asian and other non-white racial and ethnic groups making up more than 50% of the senior population. The median household income for seniors (2010) is \$44,251 compared to an overall median household income of \$55,744. (April 12, 2017)

Presentation and discussion regarding **St. David's Foundation's** New Strategic Plan for Aging in Place, Andrew Levack, Senior Policy Officer, St. David's Foundation (May 10, 2017).

Presentation by **Diana McIver, of DMA Companies, on the redevelopment of the RBJ Tower** to increase the amount of affordable senior housing. (June 14, 2017)

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

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 created a recognition for Austinites who have had a positive impact on the senior community and have reduced burdens on seniors; serve the need of seniors in the Austin Community; and/or contribute to the cultural, economic, and/or historic value of Austin. The first such recognition honored the years of community leadership, dedication and advocacy on behalf of low income vulnerable populations that defined the work of Dan Pruett, as President and CEO of Meals on Wheels Central Texas, who retired in March. Mr. Pruett has served as the Mayor's appointee on both the Mayor's Task Force on Aging and the Commission on Seniors. **Recommendation no: 20170308-03C** (March 8, 2017).

The Commission held a joint meeting with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities on February 10, 2017, during the regularly scheduled meeting for the MCPD. There were presentations on two topics of mutual interest; the Connections 2025 Draft Transit Plan (Lawrence Deeter, Senior Planner, Capital Metro), and a discussion regarding developing recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2017-18 City of Austin budget.

Chair Briesemeister serves as the Commission's representative on the Joint Inclusion Committee and attended meetings throughout the year.

Chair Briesemeister, Vice Chair Varteressian and Commissioner Van Sickle attended a meeting with Assistant City Manager Bert Lumbreras and Department Directors from

Austin Public Health, Austin Public Libraries, and Austin Parks and Recreation to identify mutual issues and unmet needs impacting older adults.

Commissioner Nicola volunteered and was selected to represent the Commission on the Equity Action Team formed by the Equity Office to help develop the equity tool (December 14, 2016).

Chair Briesemeister, Vice Chair Varteressian and Commissioner Van Sickle attended and testified before other Quality of Life Commissions, the Planning Commission and City Council to promote support of the Age Friendly Plan.

Scheduled Commission meetings at the Lamar Senior Activity Center and Dottie Jordan Recreation Center (Dottie Jordan meeting cancelled due to lack of quorum).

Members participated in a gathering on September 13th at St David's Foundation to present to the original members of the Mayors Task Force on Aging an update about the Commission's work including the Age Friendly Community Action Plan to get their feedback.

Commissioner Garcia-Pittman participated as an Imagine Austin Speakers Series Panelist with Council Member Kitchen and Dr. Huang from Austin Public Health on a panel entitled An Age-Friendly Austin: Supporting Vibrant Intergenerational Communities, November 2016.

Commissioner Garcia-Pittman participated in a panel discussion Age-Friendly Austin: Creating the Age-Friendly Action Plan at the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry. 2017 Annual Meeting, March 25, 2017 in Dallas.

Commissioners Briesemeister, Varteressian, Van Sickle, Lugo, Kareithi, and Cagle participated in a meeting organized by the city's manager of community engagement Larry Schooler with city staff working on programs serving seniors. March 2017

The Commission's Housing Working Group used the "Conversation Corps" model for discussions about affordable senior housing in meetings held in Districts 6 and 10.

Chair Briesemeister serves on the Capital Metro Project Connect/Austin Strategic Mobility Plan Multimodal Community Advisory Committee representing the Commission.

Chair Briesemeister gave a presentation on the Age Friendly Action Plan and the activities of the Commission to the Austin chapter of the Texas Alliance of Retired Americans, April 2017.

Chair Briesemeister gave a presentation on the Age Friendly Action Plan and the activities of the Commission at the “Day of Aging” event at IBM Austin, May 2017.

Chair Briesemeister, Vice Chair Varteressian and Commissioner Grampp met with staff from Austin 311 to learn about their services and the training received by staff in serving older callers.

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 2017-June 2018:

- Promote and implement the Age Friendly Action Plan and other policies and programs to benefit Austin’s senior population by working with City of Austin Departments, other planning and Quality of Life commissions, working groups, and community members.
- Monitor the recommendations made in Recommendation 20160511-003A
- 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 maintain relationships with AustinUp, AARP and other community groups.
- Monitor development of the City Equity Office and provide active participation in the development of the goals and strategies of the office.
- Comment on Code Next to address the issue of affordable housing for seniors
- Meet jointly with the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities
- Participate in advisory groups and working groups as requested to represent the interests of Austin seniors.