



## **COMMISSION ON SENIORS RECOMMENDATION 20191113-04B**

Date: November 13, 2019

Subject: Proposed Land Development Code

Motioned By: Grampp

Seconded By: Hauser

### **Recommendation**

The Commission on Seniors finds that the proposed Land Development Code does not sufficiently align with the Age Friendly Action Plan and that proposals to completely eliminate parking in some parts of the city will harm older adults and others who cannot use public transportation, cycle or walk and therefore must rely on cars. We recommend both temporary off-street and on-street parking for use by ride share, service providers, delivery, etc. By temporary we mean time-limited. These parking spaces would be in addition to ADA Accessible parking.

The Commission also recommends targeted outreach to older adults, particularly those at risk of displacement in gentrifying areas. We recommend working with the Equity Office and the Commission on Seniors on this effort. Commissioners have heard from advocates that the process has not engaged older adults sufficiently. Additionally, we have heard that developers are targeting older adults who own homes in gentrifying areas and that many older adults are confused about the Land Development Code revisions.

### **Description of Recommendation to Council**

The Commission opposes eliminating all parking requirements. In our comments on the ASMP the Commission recommended inclusion of temporary use parking spaces available for the safe pick up and drop off of riders who may not be able to use public transportation and rely on rides from a friend or family member, ride share, volunteer driver program, shuttle bus, etc. These spaces could also be used for short-term parking for caregivers, meal delivery, grocery delivery, etc. Accessible parking, while crucial, is not the same as having parking available to serve the needs of older adults and others who may need assistance and/or rely on others who may need temporary parking. Caregivers do not qualify for accessible parking, for example. Those in need may not own a car, but rely on ride share or volunteer drivers for access to appointments and the like. A temporary off-street or on-street parking spot is safer for the rider and the driver. If no parking is available, drivers must look for on-street parking, which may not be available or is a distance from the housing unit.

The Commission recognizes the community outreach and engagement efforts on behalf of staff and council members. Nonetheless, we have heard from advocates that they feel the process is moving too fast. Moreover, they report that developers are contacting older adults and these older adults are confused about the process and the maps. We recommend targeted outreach to older adults at risk of displacement to help them understand the process and get assistance in understanding the maps.

**Rationale:**

The Commission on Seniors serves as an advisory board to the council concerning the quality of life for older adults in the Austin area. The Commission drafted the Age Friendly Action Plan which was adopted by Council in 2016. On May 2, 2019 Council provided direction to staff regarding the Land Development Code revisions. Council direction makes specific reference to carrying out recommendations from the Age Friendly Action Plan (4g on p. 2).

The AFA Plan includes goals and strategies related to housing and transportation, including:

- Evaluate transportation needs and options in new home developments and neighborhood planning
- Increase home access for seniors through design modification that improves safety and “visitability.”
- Encourage the development of new and innovative models of affordable housing (multigenerational, co-housing/cooperative housing).
- Increase and prioritize funding for affordable housing for seniors (housing bonds, housing trust fund).
- Advocate that all City programs, services and strategic plans address the needs of seniors.

The proposed revisions to the Land Development Code address both affordable housing and access to transportation, which consistently rank as top concerns for older adults. The idea of “senior housing” is much more than age-restricted housing. The Age Friendly Action Plan calls for a wide variety of housing types across the city to serve older adults at all income levels, including single-family homes, multi-family properties, cooperatives, and multi-generational housing. Moreover, many older adults would like to “age in place” meaning they prefer to stay in their current home, one they may have originally purchased or rented many decades ago when their needs and abilities were very different.

Currently the proposed revisions would eliminate parking in some situations, while other commissions have made recommendations that would eliminate even more parking in residential areas. The Commission is concerned that lack of parking spaces will make it difficult if not impossible for older adults to live in some areas and/or age in place in a home they have been in for decades. Older adults who must get rides in cars need safe places to get in and out of a vehicle. Meal and grocery delivery drivers should have a safe place to temporarily park, rather than potentially blocking access to the street.

Members of the Commission on Seniors have heard concerns from advocates regarding a lack of public engagement with older adults. We have also been told of older adults having difficulty accessing proposed maps. Further, we have been told that older adults in some gentrifying areas are already being contacted by developers interested in their properties.

**Vote**

For: Briesemeister, Varteressian, Bordie, Cagle, Garcia-Pittman, Gramp, Hauser, Jackson, Kareithi, Lugo, Nicola, Spain

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Angel, Sheaffer, Van-Sickle

Attest:

