

# CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

## COMMISSION ON AGING

May 28, 2019



City of Alexandria  
Virginia

# ALEXANDRIA'S VISION

*Alexandria is a caring City that supports an affordable and livable community for all. As an inclusive City, there is no place for intolerance in the community. Further, the City is committed to and values our diversity. Alexandria provides high-quality services to eligible residents to reduce poverty and increase self-sufficiency. The City is welcoming to people in all stages of life and is known as an age-friendly community.*



# TONIGHT'S AGENDA

Who We Are

What We Do

Alexandria Age Friendly Plan for Livable Communities

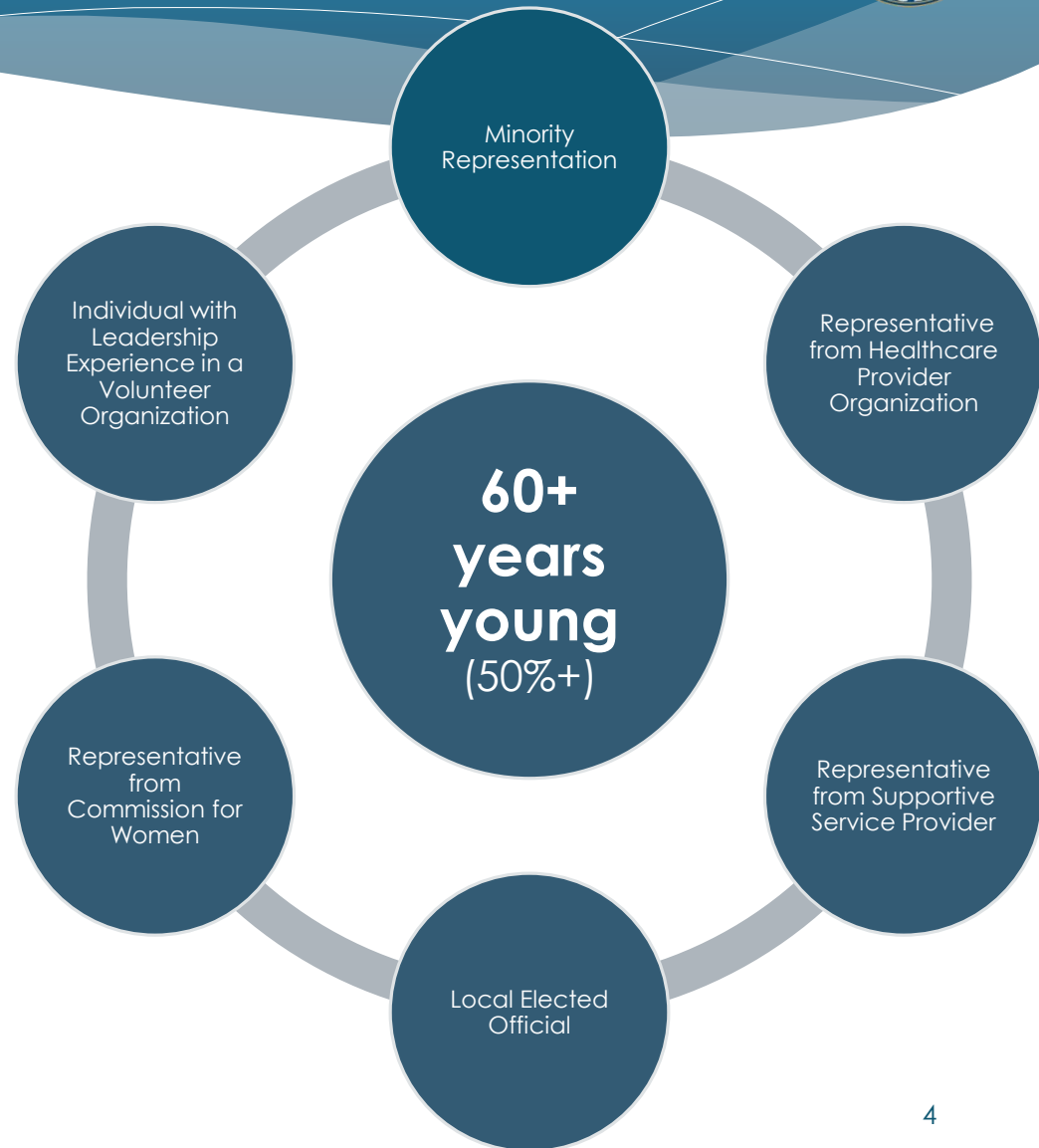
Key Policy Priorities and Actions

# WHO WE ARE—TODAY



# 21 members

Acts as Advisory Council  
to the Area Agency on  
Aging as required by  
federal law



# STRUCTURE → COLLABORATION



## COA Committees

•Advocacy and Legislation

•Economic Development

•Health

•Housing

•Outreach

•Strategic Planning

•Transportation



# ALEXANDRIA AGE FRIENDLY PLAN FOR A LIVABLE COMMUNITY

*“Planning for older residents encompasses the needs of the entire community. What is good for older adults also benefits the young and everyone in between.”*

# OUR FUNDAMENTALS



## **Social Participation and Respect and Social Inclusion**

All Alexandrians are treated equitably, including older adults and adults with disabilities, and are encouraged to participate in the vibrant life of the City and all that it offers.



## **Housing**

A range of affordable, accessible and supportive housing is available that meets the needs of older residents of the City to enable them to age in place.



## **Transportation**

A variety of mobility options, including pedestrian-safe streets, make moving in and around the City and region possible for Alexandrians of all ages and abilities.

# OUR FUNDAMENTALS (CONT.)



## Communications

Information about services and programs is readily available and accessible in a variety of formats and venues for older residents and older adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers, local organizations, and businesses.



## Health and Community Services

Health and Community Services accommodate the expectations and needs of older adults and adults with disabilities in Alexandria and support their caregivers.



## Civic Participation and Employment

Employment services are available for older Alexandrians, a variety of volunteer roles are offered, and innovative programs are developed to engage older residents in the community that also serves their needs as consumers.



# SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



*People of diverse culture, race, color, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and persons with disabilities in Alexandria have information about and access to the range of services available in the City and are engaged in civic life.*

- ✓ Monthly listening sessions in partnership with Division of Aging and Adult Services and Senior Services
- ✓ May 22 joint session with Commissions on Aging in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax



*Create inclusive services for LGBTQ older adults.*

- ✓ Meetings with NoVA LT Care Ombudsman, Arlington/Alexandria Agencies on Aging and Gay & Lesbian Alliance



# HOUSING



***Develop public and private mechanisms to enhance availability of affordable assisted living in Alexandria.***

- ✓ Work with Housing Contributions Workgroup on new policies regarding affordable housing contributions for specific project types, including AL/MC housing
- ✓ Developed a concept plan for developing a mixed-income/affordable assisted living facility in Alexandria

# HOUSING



**Determine prospective benefits and challenges regarding Accessory Dwelling Units.**



**Participate in workgroup to be established in FY20**



**Prevent the unnecessary and/or unwanted institutionalization of those who could and would prefer to remain in their homes for as long as possible.**

- ✓ Monitor and share information on nutrition, transportation, in-home services, financial assistance and other programs available to older Alexandrians



**Study City's Rent Relief Program**

## Senior Services OF ALEXANDRIA

### STAYING CONNECTED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019

Come find out all the ways to get connected in the city of Alexandria to meet new friends, learn about its history and get involved!

There will be representatives from:  
Volunteer Alexandria  
Office of Historic Alexandria  
No. VA Community College  
City of Alexandria's  
Office of Public Information

#### JOIN US!

Thursday, February 14, 2019  
10:00 a.m.-Noon  
(Registration at 9:30)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
2701 Cameron Mills Road  
Alexandria, VA

This event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP online at  
[www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org) or by  
calling (703) 836 4414 ext. 110.







# HOUSING



**Work with key organizations and individuals to incorporate “housing for a lifetime” features in new and redeveloped housing.**

- ✓ Worked with AHAAC to include VHDA's Universal Design Guidelines as recommended criteria for evaluating projects requesting loans from the Housing Opportunity Fund

# TRANSPORTATION



*Assist the City to attain its Vision Zero goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028.*

- ✓ Reviewed implementation of Complete Streets plans
- ✓ Liaise w/Alexandria Families for Safe Streets and Ad Hoc BPAC



*Those who walk, drive, and ride a bicycle in Alexandria can do so safely.*

- ✓ Support Bike Mentoring Program
- ✓ Conducted walkability audits





# TRANSPORTATION



**DASH and WMATA provide safe, reliable, and frequent transit service for people who live, work, and play in Alexandria.**

- ✓ Serve as designated stakeholder in development of bus network concepts



# COMMUNICATION



Communication about programs and services available to older Alexandrians and adults with disabilities is readily accessible to all in a variety of formats and languages and is presented in many and diverse venues.

- ✓ Developing media outreach plan
- ✓ Participated in listening sessions
- ✓ COA members and DAAS staff participated in the SSA's monthly cable program, *Senior Living in Alexandria*, on Comcast channels 69 and 70

## BETTER with AGE

INSIDE:  
City housing resources for older adults  
Pg. 29

### Combatting loneliness in older adults

Help incorporate senior neighbors in your community

BY CELE GARRETT

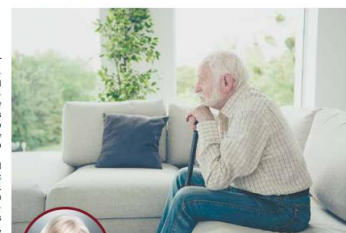
In January 2018, the British government announced the creation of its first Minister of Loneliness. Many people wondered if that was a joke, but those of us who serve older citizens know very well that loneliness is no laughing matter.

Loneliness isn't reserved for our elders, of course, but Baby Boomers in the U.S. are aging alone more than any prior generation. Statistics suggest that the rates of loneliness are increasing, and experts say this is due to fewer social interactions and a decreased responsibility for each other. Loneliness and social isolation among our seniors are public health threats that impact every community, including our own.

Many cities and neighborhoods have relied upon their sleeves in a grassroots effort to help stem the tide of loneliness among seniors and to help them stay safe and independent. That's how the "Village movement" was born 17 years ago. At Home in Alexandria is one of the 350 membership-based nonprofits, "Villages" across the country. Our 228 Alexandria members come together for social activities, information sharing and practical support.

Villages are only one solution, and, fortunately, here in Alexandria there are a number of resources for seniors. However, no single organization or entity can solve the larger problem of social isolation among our seniors. We all can do a much better job of reaching out to our older neighbors to bring them into community with us, but change also must happen with the seniors who may need some help.

A few years ago at a conference, the featured speaker, writer and activist Ashton



CELE GARRETT  
Baby Boomers in the U.S. age alone more than any prior generation.

Applewhite, addressed a topic that hit me like a lightning bolt. She asked the audience the simple question, "What is a true community?"

Community is not just about everybody getting along or a group of people with a common interest. Community is about mutual reliance. As Applewhite said, "The greatest gift is to rely upon someone and to be relied upon to others. One without the other will not work." These words have instructed me in my work. Independence is a double-edged sword, we guard it closely for fear that allowing someone to help us as we age is a sign of weakness. I cannot count

how many times I've heard someone say, "I hate asking for help — it's embarrassing. I've always done this myself." But when we refuse to accept help, we lose the chance to show a younger generation what it truly means to be in community with one another. Anyone who has helped another person knows what a positive and rewarding experience that is. Don't deny someone that opportunity. And while technology has made our lives more and more convenient — for example, by allowing us to order our groceries online and have everything delivered to our homes — it can isolate us further from our larger community. "Convenience kills community more than anything," Applewhite said.

I fondly remember two of our former AHA members, Don and Margaret, who had moved to Alexandria from Boston. They loved city life and had given up their cars. No longer encumbered with the expense of owning cars, they had a healthy budget for taxis, Uber rides and public transportation. Our AHA volunteers provided them with rides to doctor appointments or errands on occasion, but often the couple chose to ride the bus. Not only did they get a good walk in, they enjoyed the challenge of figuring out the bus schedule and meeting people along the way.

Not long ago, one of our volunteers took a member grocery shopping. Afterwards, the member called me to say, "Thank you for sending Carol. We hit it off like old friends." I told her that her kind words had made my day. She said, "Well, Carol made my day." I then called Carol to relay the story. I had to smile when Carol said, "Well, this call has just made my day."

So, don't be afraid to ask for help, as unnatural as it may seem if you need it, and don't be too shy to ask for help, as unnatural as it may seem if you need it. You are helping to build a stronger community. And, you never know when you just might make someone's day.

Cele Garrett is the executive director of At Home in Alexandria.

WWW.ALEXTIMES.COM

APRIL 18, 2019 | 29

### City housing resources for older adults

BY SHARON DANTZIG

Are you an older adult wishing to downsize and stay in the community, but not sure where to begin? The Alexandria Commission on Aging collaborated with Alexandria's Office of Housing to identify features that are important to older adults. Alexandria's 2019 Apartment Survey will include some of those items.

The annual apartment survey provides information regarding Alexandria apartment properties with 10 or more units, including the name and location of the property, year built, management contacts, rent of each unit type (as reported by the property on the date of the survey), whether the tenant pays utilities and amenities offered. For 2019, the survey will include information on accessible units and on-site parking.

The Office of Housing is also developing a map that will show where apartment complexes are located. The survey, which became available in late March, can be found on the

Office of Housing's webpage, [www.alexandria.gov/housing](http://www.alexandria.gov/housing), by clicking "Better Resources" on the sidebar.

In 2019, the Office of Housing will also publish a condominium survey that provides similar information, as well as annual assessment values, as published by the city. The expected publication date for the survey is June 2019. It can also be found on the Office of Housing's webpage by clicking "Homeowner Resources" on the sidebar.

While the apartment and condominium surveys are intended to provide comprehensive information, please note that some rental apartments and condominium associations choose not to participate in the surveys. Nevertheless, the surveys are a good place to start your search, and the Office of Housing will begin publishing all publicly available information for participating complexes as a resource to housing seekers in future editions.

For older adults who wish to stay in their home or apartment, the Office of Housing has two programs that can provide assistance. The city's home rehabilitation loan program helps low-income homeowners repair their homes and make accessibility improvements for mobility-impaired persons. The loan is offered at 0 percent financing and repayment is deferred for 99 years or until the property is sold. To be eligible for the program, the household's annual income cannot exceed HUD-determined income limits, which in 2018 ranged from \$65,000 for a one-person household to \$101,200 for a five-person household.

For renters, under its rental accessibility modification program, the Office of Housing can provide accessibility modifications, including walk-in bathtubs, roll-in showers and handrails for disabled, income-qualified renters. In cooperation with the property owner, the city provides project coordination and grants of up to \$50,000 to complete accessibility modifications to apartments so renters can remain in their homes. The program also offers smaller grants of up to \$1,500 to assist renters who require limited modifications.

The Office of Housing provides a range of other services to homeowners, renters and homebuyers of all ages, as well as landlords and property managers. It collaborates with development partners to preserve and create affordable and accessible housing options across the City of Alexandria. For more information, see the Office of Housing's webpage, [www.alexandria.gov/housing](http://www.alexandria.gov/housing), or call them at 703-746-4990.

The writer is a member of the Alexandria Commission on Aging.



SHARON DANTZIG

At Home in Alexandria is a nonprofit organization that provides a range of services to homeowners, renters and homebuyers of all ages, as well as landlords and property managers. It collaborates with development partners to preserve and create affordable and accessible housing options across the City of Alexandria. For more information, see the Office of Housing's webpage, [www.alexandria.gov/housing](http://www.alexandria.gov/housing), or call them at 703-746-4990.

The Office of Housing provides a range of other services to homeowners, renters and homebuyers of all ages, as well as landlords and property managers. It collaborates with development partners to preserve and create affordable and accessible housing options across the City of Alexandria. For more information, see the Office of Housing's webpage, [www.alexandria.gov/housing](http://www.alexandria.gov/housing), or call them at 703-746-4990.



— AT HOME IN —  
ALEXANDRIA  
A community of support, enrichment and fun for our Alexandria neighbors ages 55+

Connect with us to learn more!  
f @athomeinalexandria.org  
703.231.0824  
www.athomeinalexandria.org  
aha@athomeinalexandria.org

The Office of Housing developed loan programs that allow homeowners to add accessibility improvements to their homes.

FILE PHOTO

# HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



***Older Alexandrians, and adults with disabilities, including those in minority communities, understand the health and community services available to them.***

- ✓ COA and Division of Aging and Adult Services prioritize meeting with community groups to describe available health and community services with a focus on minority outreach
- ✓ Listening sessions include extensive information on health and community services



***Alexandria's older adults and adults with disabilities know how to prepare for an emergency.***

- ✓ Work begun by COA in recent years; plans are underway to continue work.





# HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



***Alexandrians with dementia and their caregivers are accorded respect and comfort, and are integrated into City life.***

- ✓ City awarded designation as Dementia-Friendly Alexandria
- ✓ Co-lead, with Goodwin House, the development of Dementia Friendly Alexandria



***Enhance the availability of mental health case management services for older adults, including the availability of mental health therapy and emergency and capacity assessments.***



**Thank you to City Council, City Manager, and Staff!**

*The additional mental health case manager will greatly benefit those who need these services! Increased availability of mental health therapy and emergency assessments for older adults was sorely needed.*

# CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT



**Encourage volunteerism and recruit volunteers to support programs for older adults.**

**20**

**Multilingual Senior Information Corners set up**

**57**

**Senior Ambassadors trained**

# CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT



***Older job seekers in Alexandria have dedicated support.***

- ✓ Advocated for an older worker employment specialist; half-time position filled in December 2018

**220**

**Older clients served by WDC this year to date**

**48**

**Placements completed**



**Thank you City Council!**

*Your approval in last year's budget of a half-time FTE to provide services for older job seekers is already benefitting them.*

# KEY POLICY PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

- **Housing Contributions Workgroup**—Secure the highest possible level of developer contributions for new assisted living and memory care facilities
- **Mixed-Income Affordable Assisted Living**—Identify a suitable site and owner/operator for a non-profit, mixed-income, affordable assisted living facility in the City
- **Service-Enriched Housing for Older Adults**—Ensure that both new and existing independent living units for older residents include the option of services provided on-site that allow residents to remain in their homes for as long as possible
- **Rent Relief**—Study the City's Rent Relief Program and make recommendations for changes or enhancements

# KEY POLICY PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

- Support for DASH—Ensure that locations with older resident populations have DASH service that meets their needs
- Council Engagement in Dementia Friendly Alexandria—Support an expanded reach of Dementia Friendly Alexandria through Council engagement
- Full-Time Older Worker Employment Specialist—Include in City budget full-time specialist to overcome obstacles older job applicants face

# THANK YOU CITY COUNCIL!

## **Babs Waters, Commission Chair**

Babs Waters, Advocacy and Legislation Committee Chair

Mary Lee Anderson, Economic Development Committee Chair

Carol Downs & Denise Mackie-Smith, Outreach Committee Chair

Jane King, Health Committee Chair

Jane King, Housing Committee Acting Chair

Jane King, Strategic Planning Committee Chair

Alan Dinsmore, Transportation Committee Chair

