



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 24-2171 **Name:**

Type: Other **Status:** Agenda Ready

File created: 5/15/2024 **In control:** City Council Legislative Meeting

On agenda: 6/25/2024 **Final action:**

Title: Submission of the Final Report of the Alexandria Commission on Aging Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community 2019-2023.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. 24-2171_Attachment - AgeFriendlyReportFinal032624 compressed-compressed.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 18, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: KATE GARVEY, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES

DOCKET TITLE:
Submission of the Final Report of the Alexandria Commission on Aging Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community 2019-2023.

ISSUE: City Council’s Consideration of Approval of the Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community 2019 to 2023, drafted by the Commission on Aging.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council:

- (1) Accept the final report for the Age-Friendly Plan 2019-2023.
- (2) Authorize the Commission on Aging to develop a new Age-Friendly Plan, reflecting the progress and changes since the initial plan was approved.

BACKGROUND:

In June 2017, the City of Alexandria applied to and was accepted in the AARP/World Health Organization/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities (Network). Alexandria at the time became the first jurisdiction in Virginia to be accepted in the Network. This opportunity afforded the City access to technical capacity building resources and benchmark program concepts. Following the acceptance, Alexandria had two years to develop an Age-Friendly Plan. In 2012, the City had adopted a “Strategic Plan on Aging, 2013 - 2017, The Alexandria of Our Future: A Livable Community for All Ages”. The first Age-Friendly Plan was an excellent continuation of this work to advance Alexandria’s focus on the needs of its older residents.

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. Although its attention is directed on aging, the Age-Friendly Plan focuses on a livable community for all ages. The plan highlights activities in the following domains of livability: (1) social participation and respect and social inclusion; (2) housing; (3) transportation; (4) communications; (5) health and community services; and (6) civic participation and employment. The plan was submitted to council and approved, again unanimously, in May 2018. AARP approved the plan in June 2018.

AARP/ World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Framework designates eight domains that are crucial components to ensure the well-being of an age-friendly community. These domains are as follows: Outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication, and information and, finally, community and health services.

DISCUSSION: From 2019 through 2023, the Commission on Aging, focusing on the eight domains, conducted a variety of activities as part of developing and implementing the plan. Committees of the Commission worked to assess the needs of older adults and adults with disabilities. The Commission and Senior Services of Alexandria conducted numerous listening sessions with members of the public, older adults who participate in various programs and Department of Community and Human Services staff who serve older adults and adults with disabilities.

Age-Friendly Plan 2019-2023 Report Highlights

The Commission exceeded most of the Age-Friendly goals. Some of the highlights of the work to achieve those goals include:

- The passage of an ordinance allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs);
- Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) recruited and trained more than 130 Senior Ambassadors to provide information to their respective communities concerning programs and services available in Alexandria for older adult residents.
- The Commission successfully advocated for a full-time employee in the Workforce Development Center (WDC) focusing on helping older adults find employment.
- The Office of Housing convened a developer contribution work group, which met in the early spring and summer of 2019. The Commission had a representative on the workgroup. The Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC) adopted the recommendations for developer contributions in September 2019, which the Commission on Aging (CoA) supported. The city revised the recommendations, which the CoA also supported.
- During the pandemic, the Senior Ambassadors, in collaboration with the Alexandria Department of Health, distributed information about Covid-19, and other city programs to keep older Alexandrians safe and engaged while staying at home.
- The Commission completed walkability audits assessing pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort with AARP; the City reported it completed 13 walk audits in the period 2016-2021.

- Senior Services of Alexandria sponsors an annual Senior Academy, offering older Alexandrians a comprehensive view of Alexandria’s agencies, and interaction with the City’s leadership.
- SSA co-sponsors with the Alexandria Bar Association, Senior Law Day, covering a range of legal topics from wills, trusts, and housing options to Medicare and Medicaid eligibility.

The Commission on Aging and its corresponding staff liaisons in the Division of Aging & Adult Services are requesting that the Council accept this final report and authorize the Commission to develop a new Age-Friendly Plan to cover the years 2025-2027.

ATTACHMENTS: Age-Friendly Final Report, 2019-2023

STAFF:

Alethea Predeoux, Deputy City Manager

Kate Garvey, Director, Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS)

Phillip Caldwell, Director, Center for Adult Services, DCHS

Christopher Moore, Director, Division of Aging & Adult Services, DCHS

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