



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 16, 2018

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of Approval of the of the Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community 2019 to 2021.

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**ISSUE:** City Council's Consideration of Approval of the Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community 2019 to 2021, drafted by the Commission on Aging.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council approve the Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan ("Plan") for a Livable Community 2019 to 2021.

**BACKGROUND:** In June 2017, the City of Alexandria applied to and was accepted in the World Health Organization/AARP network of Age-Friendly Communities. Alexandria was the first community in Virginia to be accepted in the network. As part of the network, the City gained access to a national forum for the exchange of information and an abundance of ideas and programs. Alexandria then had two years to develop an Age-Friendly Plan. In 2012, the City adopted a *Strategic Plan on Aging, 2013 to 2017, The Alexandria of Our Future: A Livable Community for All Ages*. This Age-Friendly Plan is a follow-up and the draft Plan is now ready for City Council approval.

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 to 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.

**DISCUSSION:** Over the past two years, the Commission on Aging has conducted a variety of activities as part of developing 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 many listening sessions

with members of the public, older adults who participate in various programs, and DCHS staff who serve older adults and adults with disabilities. AARP developed a “Livability Index” that scores neighborhoods and communities across the U.S. for the services and amenities that impact life the most. With that Index as a reference point, Virginia AARP conducted a 500-person phone survey of Alexandrians age 50-plus focusing on the domains of livability.

In November 2017, the Commission on Aging secured the assistance of AARP Virginia and Just Partners, Inc. to host a day long workshop to elicit participants’ assessment of needs and priorities in housing, transportation, health and civic engagement. The workshop participants included representatives of service providers, non-profit organizations, transportation officials, residential facilities, members of faith communities, local government staff. These data gathering efforts informed the selection of goals and objectives identified in the Plan. The Social Determinants of Health serve as an underlying perspective for this Plan. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) explains these Social Determinants of Health as the life-enhancing resources, such as food supply, housing, economic and social relationships, transportation, education and health care that determine length and quality of life. According to the CDC, the social determinants of health account for over 50 percent of an individual’s health status.

Based on the various needs assessments, the Commission selected several goals and objectives within each of the six domains of livability. They are as follows:

#### Social participation and respect and social inclusion

- **Goal:** People of diverse cultures, 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.
  - **Objective:** Minority communities have increased knowledge about and access to City services and are involved to a greater extent in civic life.
- **Goal:** Create inclusive services for LGBTQ Older Adults.
  - **Objective:** One lead agency is recruited and provides cultural competency training for other agencies providing services to Alexandria’s older adults.

#### Housing

- **Goal:** Determine prospective benefits and challenges regarding Accessory Dwelling Units, ADUs.
  - **Objective:** The City and community stakeholders study the feasibility of adding accessory dwelling units to existing housing as an option to increase the stock of affordable and accessible housing in the City, and complete a report for submission to City Council.
- **Goal:** Develop public and private mechanisms to enhance availability of affordable assisted living in Alexandria.
  - **Objective:** Develop consistent developer contribution and concept plan.
- **Goal:** Work with key organizations and individuals to incorporate “housing for a lifetime” features in both new and redeveloped housing.
  - **Objective:** Establish guidelines for the inclusion of accessibility features in new affordable multi-family development that receives City funding support.
- **Goal:** Prevent the unnecessary and/or unwanted institutionalization of those who could and would prefer to remain in their homes for as long as possible.
  - **Objective:** Residents of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and others

have increased awareness of available programs and services supportive of older adults and adults with disabilities.

### Transportation

- **Goal:** Assist the City to attain its Vision Zero goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028 through attainment of interim year benchmarks.
  - **Objective:** Apply the Complete Streets Design Guidelines to roadway projects through FY21 in locations where safety issues for vulnerable populations have been identified.
- **Goal:** Those who walk, drive, and ride a bicycle in Alexandria can do so safely.
  - **Objective:** Nine walkability audits and review of Safe Routes to School audits are completed and reports sent to the Complete Streets Team.
- **Goal:** DASH and WMATA provide safe, reliable, and frequent transit service for people who live, work, and play in Alexandria.
  - **Objective:** Participate in the development of the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan - a study being undertaken to improve the City's current transit network and better serve future travel needs.

### Communications

- **Goal:** 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.
  - **Objective:** Increase outreach by 20 percent through various media and educational events on programs and services available to older adults and adults with disabilities in Alexandria, with a focus on minority communities.
- **Goal:** The Senior Ambassador Program is implemented in communities throughout the City.
  - **Objective:** Increase the number of ambassadors from 24 to 50 by 2021.

### Health and community services

- **Goal:** Older Alexandrians, and adults with disabilities, including those in minority communities, understand the health and community services available to them.
  - **Objective:** Use of information about programs and services for older adults and adults with disabilities is increased.
- **Goal:** Alexandrians with dementia and their caregivers are accorded respect and comfort, and are integrated into City life.
  - **Objective:** Alexandria has taken significant steps to become a dementia-friendly City and to ease the burdens on those with dementia and their caregivers
- **Goal:** Alexandria's older adults and adults with disabilities know how to prepare for an emergency.
  - **Objective:** Increase outreach about emergency preparedness by 20 percent through media channels and other communications vehicles.
- **Goal:** Enhance the availability of mental health case management services for older adults.
  - **Objective:** Increase the number of specialized case managers for older adults with serious mental illness and co-occurring medical diagnosis from one to two.
- **Goal:** Enhance the availability of mental health therapy and emergency assessments, including capacity assessments, for older adults.
  - **Objective:** Increase the availability of therapists with specialized geriatric experience and increase the Division's ability to provide capacity assessments for older adults.

Civic participation and employment

- **Goal:** Encourage volunteerism and recruit volunteers to support programs for older adults.
  - **Objective:** Highlight volunteer opportunities each month, identify needs for additional volunteers serving older adults, and fill gaps.
- **Goal:** Older job seekers in Alexandria have dedicated support.
  - **Objective:** The Workforce Development Center is assigned a full-time employee to support employment and training opportunities for older job seekers.

The draft Plan was submitted to the City Manager and City staff for their review in early April 2018. This edited version includes all comments received from City staff reviewers from the Departments of: Community and Human Services; Health; Housing; Planning and Zoning; Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; and Transportation and Environmental Services. The Plan includes City staff review to be sure the Plan is in agreement with the plans and activities of those departments and the City. The Work Sheets in each of the sections of the Plan include specific actions and the assignment of responsibilities that are also consistent with current City staff activities and plans.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There are recommendations for actions that have fiscal implications within the Plan. Plans such as this are intended to be aspirational, and any additional resources articulated as need by the Plan are subject to budget prioritization, as well as are subject to subsequent appropriation decision making by City Council.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Age-Friendly Plan

**STAFF:**

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager

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

Carol Layer, LCSW, Director, Center for Adult Services, DCHS

Terri Lynch, Director, Division of Aging and Adult Services, DCHS

Debbie Ludington, Long-term Care Coordinator, DCHS