



Commission on Aging

INFORMATION CALENDAR
July 26, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Commission on Aging
 Submitted by: George Porter, Chairperson, Commission on Aging
 Subject: 2022 Commission on Aging Work Plan

SUMMARY

The Commission on Aging strives to enhance the quality of life for people 55 years and older in the Berkeley Community, and to increase public awareness of their contributions and needs by actively promoting their health, safety, independence and participation in our community.

Having built both a policy-focused and service-focused framework of senior needs in Berkeley, the Commission on Aging has adopted a set of priorities to advance to the City Council which will serve to organize and direct the Commission's work in the coming years:

- Referrals from Council
- Support Berkeley Age Friendly Initiatives
- Advocate for the needs of older citizens in the implementation of alternative & senior-friendly transportation modes in conjunction with "Safe-Streets" and parking issues
- Advocate for Affordable Housing for older adults as well as other housing policies that are consistent with Berkeley's commitment to encouraging "Aging in Place" and/or "Aging in Community"
- Identify and examine the emerging issues and policies regarding public health and safety that are of particular concern to the older adult population and propose policy recommendations that address these specific concerns.
- Examine the work-plans and agendas of other commissions for elder relevant items

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Commission on Aging has focused much of its energy on identifying the spectrum and intricacies of senior needs within the city. The Commission has worked to establish a broad knowledge base of City projects, services, and resources which it can use to best address these needs and meet policy and service shortcomings which affect daily life for Berkeley seniors. Given the Commission's consistent work and communication with City commissions, City task forces, the Aging Services Division, and Berkeley's

citizenry, the Commission plans to use this information and knowledge to construct a cohesive set of priorities through which it will hold itself accountable to the needs of the public.

Finalization of Work Plan 2022

Motion/Second: Porter/ Collins

Ayes: Porter, Collins, Cochran, Futran, Acampora

Noes: None

Abstain: None

PRIORITIES

1. Referrals from Council

- a. Staff time will be used to gather the needed official documents for the commission and, when necessary, coordinate presentations from and communications with the relevant City departments and Commissions regarding these referrals
- b. Commission will take up these issues during regular meetings and, when necessary, create sub-committees to examine these in greater depth.
- c. Reports to Council will be submitted when asked to respond to the specific request in order to reinforce the practice of ensuring that the needs of Seniors are taken into consideration during the development of municipal policy and additional staff time to assist in research and preparation of recommendations to Council, preferably during commission meeting hours.

2. Support Berkeley Age Friendly Initiatives

- a. Staff time will be used for coordination of Age Friendly “town halls” when necessary, for coordination of presentations to the commission from guests relevant to Age Friendly issues and for assistance in the preparation of recommendations to Council.
- b. If and when needed, the commission will hold “town halls” to better inform the public of the progress of Age Friendly Initiatives in relation to “The Age-Friendly Berkeley Action Plan”. The commission will also seek public input and discussion regarding that Action Plan. Commission will identify key issues in the Age Friendly Initiatives strategic plan and communicate with relevant commissions urging support for the policies that reflect these, including examining the funding needed to implement the Age Friendly plan and policies.
- c. Increased awareness of and communication regarding “The Age-Friendly Berkeley Action Plan” will be maintained as well as recommendations to City Council regarding Age Friendly Initiatives. Short-term desired change is broader community and municipal consideration of age-friendliness. Long-term desired changes are Age-friendly concerns being reflected in the development of all, relevant, city policies.

- d. Enhancing broad participation, public policy engagement, and involvement of the community in Commission meetings.
- 3. Advocate for Needs of Older Citizens in the Implementation of alternative & senior-friendly transportation modes in conjunction with “Safe-Streets” and parking issues.**
- a. Staff time will be used for coordination of presentations to the commissions from guests relevant to the changes in both emerging transportation options and the public policies surrounding these.
 - b. Commission will seek public input from Berkeley citizens regarding this changing landscape. The Commission will also designate two commissioners to research the ramifications of these changes specifically as regards Berkeley’s growing senior population. When necessary, the commission will send liaisons to Transportation Commission to directly communicate any concerns we might have.
 - c. The Commission will make recommendations to other commissions regarding these concerns. Commission will develop recommendations for City Council regarding these transportation and associated issues as regards the elder population i.e. senior-friendly shuttle system, parking issues, and sidewalk safety.
 - d. Short-term desired needs and concerns: more public awareness of the senior specific concerns surrounding these issues and how these concerns apply to making changes to our current situation. Long-term desired changes: to ensure that these concerns are taken into account as the situation changes resulting in new policy proposals. To report to council about these and make suggestions as to how any senior-specific negative effects can be mitigated and/or positive effects be enhanced.
- 4. Advocate for Affordable Housing for Older Adults as well as other housing policies that are consistent with Berkeley’s commitment to encouraging “Aging in Place” and/or “Aging in Community”**
- a. Staff time will be used for coordination of presentations to the commission from guests with information relevant to these issues and to give aid in communication with Council and other City entities.
 - b. The commission will designate two commissioners to identify relevant City Council agenda items and report back to commission. When necessary, the commission will send liaisons to other commissions to address concerns during public comment. The commission may form a subcommittee in order to better prepare any recommendations it may have for council. The commission will invite relevant speakers to present on key issues related to housing policy at commission meetings.
 - c. Commission will actively seek input from Berkeley’s aging citizens regarding housing, will actively seek a clearer understanding of the range of housing concerns facing Berkeley’s increasing older population as well

as encouraging better communication between the City, its various departments and the elder population itself regarding the issue. Recommendations to Council addressing policies that will enable our elder citizens to remain in Berkeley will be made if necessary.

- d. Short-term desired changes are that current housing policies do not discourage, but instead encourage our older citizens to remain in Berkeley. Long-term desired changes are that any changes to our housing policies not only support the current living situations of elder residents when possible, but also allow for changing residence while still remaining in Berkeley.

5. Identify and examine the emerging issues and policies regarding public health and safety that are of particular concern to the older adult population and propose policy recommendations that address these specific concerns.

- a. Staff time and assistance requested when necessary.
- b. The issues we will focus on, but not be limited to, are physical safety (sidewalks, pedestrian safety, wildfire risk, crime, physical abuse, etc.) as well as economic (scammers and other predatory business practices, etc.) and psychological safety (emotional abuse, systemic ageist attitudes, etc.)
- c. Commission will actively seek input from Berkeley's aging citizens regarding their safety concerns in order to identify that demographic's unique vulnerabilities and as well as determine priorities.
- d. Short term desired change change is a better, general awareness on the part of Council and various City Departments of these elder specific concerns.
- e. Long term desired changes is that these concerns be better addressed in municipal policy and that these concerns always be taken into account from the outset when any new policies are being considered.

6. Examine the work-plans and agendas of other commissions for elder relevant items.

- a. Individual commissioners (with some assistance of staff) will be encouraged to examine the work-plans and agendas of certain, other commissions of their choice for items that may affect the health, well-being, and community participation of the aging population and report back to the full commission regarding these.
- b. When deemed helpful, the CoA will send liaisons to these other commissions to state our position on relevant items. In other cases, we will simply communicate via email with these other commissioners.
- c. Timely input given to other commissions regarding policies early in the process of development. These liaisons will seek timely input regarding policies early in their development. When necessary, communication to

City Council regarding those elements of other commission's policy development and/or planning that we deem relevant to senior concerns.

- d. Short term desired changes are other commissions considering the needs of elders as these relate to specific items on their calendar and ensure that the concerns of our elder community are reflected in all phases of the policy making and planning process.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley's Commission on Aging is naming the advocacy categories described above as "Commission Priorities" on which its members will focus their collective efforts. The Commission will prioritize policy and programming in these priority categories in order to impact and benefit the lives of older adults in a Berkeley whose senior population continues to grow. Each category includes a sampling of priority projects on which the Commission will focus subsequent Commission meetings and discussions.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Commission's work plan does not directly affect the environmental sustainability of the city, yet many of our priorities may lead to a more economical use of City land and commercial/residential spaces. Our work plan may positively impact City expenditures by reducing numbers of homeless individuals and reducing the physical and mental health needs of our seniors that may require emergency attention.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Based on Commission research and public hearings, the Commission will draft and submit recommendations and communications to Council when necessary.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The Commission's work plan does not itself have any fiscal impact. The execution of many projects outlined in the work plan, however, may require the allocation of existing City funds and services.

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