

Age-Friendly Report



Report submitted by The
Commission on Aging

2019-2023



Welcome

When this Age-Friendly Plan was written to take effect by 2021, no one could have expected the enormous upheaval that loomed in the form of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The effects of COVID-19 were devastating, killing millions and affecting billions worldwide.

It laid bare many needs of the community and exacerbated the isolation that many older adults were already experiencing. It also served as an incubator for innovation, showing that many things we assumed weren't possible are now best practices.

Older Alexandrians rose to the occasion, volunteering at record clips, maintaining one of the highest vaccination rates in the Commonwealth, and adopting technology at an increased rate. The efforts of COVID-19 allowed us to implement the Age-Friendly Plan in ways that we never anticipated, but implemented nonetheless. It showcased the importance of partnerships and the value of cooperation. The Commission on Aging members did a wonderful job of writing and implementing the plan, coordinating various stakeholders with diligence and equity in mind to ensure that Older Alexandrians were considered in all the ways that make our City a community.

As we approach the next Age-Friendly Plan, we trust that the spirit of the previous plan will remain and be enhanced with the lessons learned over the past four years. The Division of Aging & Adult Services stands in partnership with the Commission on Aging and looks forward to enhancing Alexandria as an Age-Friendly City.

Yours in Service,

Christopher Moore, Sr.
Director
Division of Aging & Adult Services

Michael Schuster
Chair, Commission on Aging

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Executive Summary

To enhance its efforts, in June 2017, the City of Alexandria applied to and was accepted into the World Health Organization/AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Alexandria was the first community in Virginia to be accepted into the Network, and the City thereby 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 – 2017, The Alexandria of Our Future: A Livable Community for All Ages”.

Planning for older residents encompasses the needs of the entire community. What is good for older adults also benefits the young and everyone. Although its attention is directed to aging, the Age-Friendly Plan focuses on a livable community for all ages.

The Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community: Alexandria, Virginia (2019-2021) (“Age-Friendly Plan”) was approved unanimously by the Alexandria City Council in 2019. An advisory committee of forty members was formed, including the mayor, a city council member, agency representatives, and community leaders, to guide the plan’s development. In preparation for developing the Age-Friendly Plan, the Commission on Aging conducted various activities over two years to assess the needs of older adults and adults with disabilities.

The Commission and Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) conducted listening sessions with the community, older adults participating in various programs, and Department of Community and Human Services staff serving older adults and adults with disabilities. In addition, AARP conducted a 500-person phone survey of Alexandrians aged 50 and over, focusing on the domains of livability. In November 2017, the Commission 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. Based on these various assessments, the Commission selected goals and objectives within the six domains of livability: Social Participation and Respect and Social Inclusion; Housing; Transportation; Communications; Health and Community Services; and Civic Participation and Employment.

Highlights

The Commission exceeded most of the Age-Friendly goals. It assisted in the passage of an ordinance allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right; Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) recruited and trained more than 130 Senior Ambassadors; and the Commission successfully advocated for a full-time employee in the Workforce Development Center (WDC) focusing on helping older adults find employment.

Through Senior Ambassadors, Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) created over 20 Senior Information Corners in libraries, recreation centers, and faith organizations. SSA also sponsors an annual Senior Academy, offering older Alexandrians a comprehensive view of Alexandria's agencies and interaction with the City's leadership; and 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.

During the pandemic, the Senior Ambassadors, in collaboration with the Department of Health, distributed information about COVID-19 and other city programs to keep older Alexandrians safe and engaged while staying at home.

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 in 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.

The Commission completed walkability audits with AARP; the City also reported it completed 13 walk audits in the period 2016-2021.



Program Description



The Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan focused on seven of the eight AARP/WHO Domains of Livability: Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Housing, Transportation, Communications and Information, Health Services and Community Supports, and Civic Participation and Employment. **The COA created five committees to develop and implement the goals and objectives under each of the seven domains:**

- **Outreach**
- **Housing**
- **Transportation**
- **Health and Dementia Friendly**
- **Economic Development & Employment**

The committees regularly reported their activities under their domains to the full Commission at monthly meetings. At the end of the year, the COA submits an annual report to the Alexandria City Council of its progress under the Age Friendly Plan.

Program Implementation

Similar to other commissions on aging and Age Friendly communities, Alexandria's commissions and boards had to adapt to the COVID-19 restrictions and meet virtually through the pandemic. The COA did not meet from March through June 2020. Nonetheless, these restrictions did not limit community participation in the Commission on Aging meetings, as well as Senior Services of Alexandria's programs. The Senior Ambassador virtual trainings and briefings continued non-stop. The annual Senior Law Day also continued virtually. Moreover, the Commission's liaison agency representatives were more likely to attend full Commission meetings, since they did not have to travel to in-person meetings. The COA's committees met virtually, often with city officials, to discuss the implementation of Age Friendly goals. The committee chairs gave virtual monthly updates to the full COA.

Nor did the COVID restrictions impede the COA's advocacy efforts. For example, the COA Housing Committee held virtual meetings with City officials to discuss enacting an ordinance on accessory dwelling units; the committee chair provided virtual testimony before the City Council in support of the ordinance. The COA Chair testified at the City Council's Budget Public Hearing on March 9, 2020, requesting that the employment training specialist dedicated to older workers be upgraded from half to full-time, that DASH bus fares not be increased, and that there be an increase in the Rent Relief program budget allocation to address the waiting list.

Senior Services of Alexandria and the COA strengthened their partnership with the Alexandria Department of Health during the pandemic. They conducted outreach to older Alexandrians on COVID-19 vaccines, assisted with over 600 vaccine appointments, and coordinated free transportation. At each COA meeting, commissioners received updates on COVID-19 outreach and statistics.



Program Implementation (cont)

The COA Transportation Committee was instrumental in implementing free rides on DASH buses. The committee chair was also the Chair of DASH's Board of Directors.

DAAS successfully implemented the Grandpad program, in which forty-plus older Alexandrians received a pre-programmed iPad to enable them to stay in touch with family members, schedule medical appointments, and enjoy social interaction with others. COA assisted in the marketing and outreach of this program. SSA continues to assist in managing this program.

The COA was active in promoting social inclusion. Commission members organized and attended workshops at the City of Alexandria's Annual Pride Fair. In 2020 and 2021, they organized successful workshops for Pride Month, entitled "Older LGBTQ Adults – We're in This Together!" at which they and the DAAS director served on related panels.



Program Evaluation

The evaluation and assessment of the Age Friendly Plan has been a continuous and thoughtful process. Each committee chair reported monthly to the Executive Committee, on which they all served, and to the COA their progress on their domain goals and emerging issues. In addition, the COA received monthly reports from its liaison agencies concerning their Age Friendly activities. Annually, the COA submits a report to the Alexandria City Council detailing its progress on age-friendly activities and emerging issues affecting older Alexandrians.

General inputs throughout the Plan implementation included:

- COA committee and Commission programs and activities, with regular meetings featuring subject matter experts relating to the Age-Friendly Plan Domains
- Information on available aging programs through the Senior Ambassadors, Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) and the Alexandria Division of Aging and Adult Services
- Surveys and listening sessions conducted by SSA, COA committees, and individual COA members
- Extrinsic data collection (e.g., the 2020 U.S. Census, the Alexandria Office of Housing, AARP's multiple portal digests, the Princeton Eviction Lab, and the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Service (DARS) surveys).

Program Evaluation

(cont)

Outputs included:

- Reporting and information disseminated to the COA and City Council, including annual reports to the Council.
- Policy development, for example, membership in the Developer Affordable Housing Contribution Workgroup and the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC).
- Events and activities with other organizations, such as SSA and the Alexandria Commission on Human Rights.
- Direct participation in community discussion, advocacy and written comments on Age Friendly issues (e.g., oral testimony before the City Council of the impact of the city's budget on older Alexandrians).
- Participation in regional-age friendly collaborations, such as the Age Friendly Ecosystem Summits hosted by the George Washington University Center for Aging, Health, and Humanities.
- Urgent service changes, such as the City's vaccination program, in collaboration with the Alexandria Department of Health.
- Increased participation on citywide committees as the main advocate for older Alexandrians, such as the Reform Committee of the Alexandria Fund for Human Services
- Increased engagement with community partners such as the Senior Services of Alexandria and At Home in Alexandria

The Domains of Livability



This first cycle of Age Friendly planning and implementation has exceeded COA’s expectations as demonstrated in the following tables. One unexpected benefit of the pandemic has been the extensive use of technology such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. This technology has permitted the COA and its community partners to include a larger number of older Alexandrians in their meetings and programs.

The Age-Friendly goals, desired outcomes, and actual outputs and outcomes are described in the tables on the following pages.

Social Participation and Respect & Social Inclusion

Goal:

People of diverse cultures, races, colors, nationalities, genders, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, 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.

Responsible Parties

- **Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), Department of Community and Human Services**
- **Commission on Persons with Disabilities**
- **Non-profit organizations serving minority communities**
- **Senior Services of Alexandria**
- **Faith-based communities**

Outcome Desired

- **Minority communities are aware of and have access to services available in the City and are engaged in civic life.**

Results Anticipated

- **Significantly increased outreach to diverse communities demonstrated by attendance at listening sessions, reports of Senior Ambassadors, and accounts of information distribution by various media.**
- **Information translated to multiple languages**
- **Increased use of City services by diverse communities and additional needs identified and resources identified.**



Social Participation and Respect & Social Inclusion

Outputs and Outcomes

- Created information-sharing articles of special interest to older Muslims in Alexandria and Arlington County
- Attended a virtual panel on racial disparity in health services for older persons sponsored by the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).
- Collaborated continuously with the Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) Senior Ambassador program
- Engaged in outreach with various faith-based community leaders and their representatives to devise means of assisting older adults within their congregations
- Attended a virtual workshop sponsored by the Mayor's Anti-Bullying Taskforce
- Continued listening sessions in senior centers, residential senior, and condominium buildings throughout Alexandria



Social Participation and Respect & Social Inclusion

Goal:

Create services inclusive of LGBTQ adults.

Responsible Parties

- COA Diversity Committee
- DAAS

Outcome Desired

- DAAS is assisting other agencies in reinforcing their commitment to diversity and welcoming clients regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results Anticipated

- The DAAS' non-discrimination policy is prominently posted on all websites and print materials.
- Partnerships with, or outreach to, the LGBTQ community are highlighted or displayed.
- Agencies co-sponsor LGBTQ events or programs with local LGBTQ groups.
- Current programs are modified for LGBTQ clients.



Social Participation and Respect & Social Inclusion

Goal:

Create services inclusive of LGBTQ adults.

Outputs and Outcomes

- Alexandria and Arlington County Commission on Aging members hosted a listening session entitled, “Do You Know What Services are Available for LGBTQ Adults” at the Fairlington Presbyterian Church, Alexandria
- COA members helped plan the Alexandria Pride Fair, and met with “Welcoming Congregations” to discuss joint outreach efforts
- Reviewed and commented on the new Alexandria LGBTQ training module for newly hired city employees
- Facilitated a connection between DAAS, and the national organization, Advocacy and Services for LGBTQ+ Elders (SAGE)
- Organized and attended workshops at the City of Alexandria’s Annual Pride Fair
- In 2020 and 2021, organized successful workshops for Pride Month, entitled, “Older LGBTQ Adults – We’re in This Together!” at which they and the DAAS director served on panels



Communication

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 diverse venues.

Responsible Parties

- Commission on Aging
- Division on Aging and Adult Services
- Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA)
- At Home in Alexandria (AHA)

Results Anticipated

- Increased participation by underserved communities in opportunities (educational meetings, listening sessions) to receive information about services and programs.
- Five community/civic groups recruited to help educate older residents and adults with disabilities in minority communities.
- Increased outreach and media attention to age-friendly activities and accomplishments that inform residents about ways to enhance their welfare.

Outcome Desired

- Alexandria's older adults and adults with disabilities know about the supportive programs and services available to them.



Communication

Outputs and Outcomes

- **Media outreach plan developed.**
- **Enlisted support of various groups in communicating about programs and services available to older residents.**
- **COA members and DAAS staff participated in SSA's monthly cable program – "Senior Living in Alexandria" – on Comcast channels 69 and 70.**
- **Collaborated with the Office of Housing on identifying and distributing information on housing specifically for older adults.**
- **Conducted educational classes on Age-Friendly principles.**
- **Partnered with SSA and DAAS to develop monthly articles relating to issues relevant to older adults for distribution to over 60 Alexandria religious congregations.**
- **Used social media, radio, and news articles to bring attention to important activities and resources for older adults – including the Alexandria Times, Gazette Packet, and Zebra.**
- **SSA contributes a news article each month.**
- **SSA volunteers stocked over 20 Senior Information Corners at local libraries, and recreation and community centers with literature about programs and services for older adults offered by the City and non-profit agencies.**
- **The SSA's Senior Academy provided a four-week program to introduce older persons to city agencies and nonprofits, encouraging civic engagement.**
- **SSA sponsored a monthly speaker series, as well as Senior Law Day in partnership with the Alexandria Bar Association.**



Communication

Goal:
The Senior Ambassador Program is implemented in communities throughout the City.

Responsible Parties

- Senior Services of Alexandria
- Division on Aging and Adult Services
- Commission on Aging
- Faith communities



Outcome Desired

Older adults and their families are aware of the services and programs available in the City.

Results Anticipated

- Increased capacity of persons served to understand the resources, programs, and services available to them.
- Increased number of Senior Ambassadors trained.

Outputs and Outcomes

- SSA conducts Senior Ambassador training quarterly.
- Based on weekly SSA updates, senior Ambassadors share information about programs and services with their respective communities.
- During the pandemic, the Ambassadors distributed information about COVID-19 and other city programs to keep older Alexandrians safe and engaged while staying at home.
- The COA and DAAS partnered with SSA to promote the Senior Ambassador program.
- The Senior Ambassador program is operated through SSA and was created to expand SSA's outreach to residents about services available to older adults and their caregivers.
- SSA recruited over 130 Senior Ambassadors by 2022, over twice as many as its target of 50 Senior Ambassadors.

Community and Health Services

Goal:

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

Responsible Parties

- Division of Aging and Adult Services
- Commission on Aging
- Senior Services of Alexandria
- At Home in Alexandria

Outcome Desired

- Alexandrians have an increased understanding of the resources available to them and make plans for their long-term care preferences.

Results Anticipated

Increased information available to minority communities about health and community services. Over three-year period, evidence shows increased use of services by individuals in minority communities. Attendance increases in events sponsored for minority communities, indicating increased engagement in the community..



Community and Health Services

Goal:

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

Outputs and Outcomes

- **Actively supported further dissemination of Grandpads until the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), which supports broadband to, among others, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients.**
- **To help thwart social isolation in seniors, discussions held with the City's Commission on Information Technology, explored Cyber-Seniors and socializing technology with older members of the community.**
- **Explored using funds from the Universal Services Fund (USF) for further Grandpad deployment, and is active with funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).**
- **Represented the COA in the City's Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan (CHIP) working groups.**
- **Actively disseminated information about community vaccination and the form that needs to be completed prior to being vaccinated – SSA scheduled over 600 vaccination appointments with the Alexandria Department of Health. DAAS provided free transportation to those who needed it.**

Community and Health Services

Goal:
Alexandrians with dementia and their caregivers are accorded respect and comfort and are integrated into City life.

Responsible Parties

- Commission on Aging
- Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)
- Senior Services of Alexandria
- At Home in Alexandria (AHA)
- AARP Virginia
- Leading Age Virginia
- Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Results Anticipated

- Development of a team.
- Consistent media attention.
- Increased participation in support groups.
- Increased activities for those with dementia and their caregivers: café time, arts, music, other activities.
- Memory café is launched in Alexandria.

Outcome Desired

- Those with dementia and their caregivers know Alexandria is an increasingly dementia-friendly city.



Outputs and Outcomes

- With Goodwin Living, developed Dementia Friendly Alexandria, a group whose mission is to enhance the lives of those with dementia and their families and to increase understanding of dementia by Alexandria residents.
- Continue collaborating with Goodwin Living on content for the Dementia Friendly website that was recently reactivated.

Community and Health Services

Goal:

Develop and execute a communication plan to reach older adults and adults with disabilities with information that enables them to prepare for emergencies.

Responsible Parties

- Office of Emergency Management
- Commission on Aging
- Division of Aging and Adult Services

Results Anticipated

- Increased numbers of older adults and adults with disabilities are enrolled in SMART 911.
- Increased participation by many organizations increases opportunity for older adults to learn about emergency preparedness.
- Engagement of RSVP volunteers increased.

Outcome Desired

- Older adults and adults with disabilities are prepared to manage emergencies.



Outputs and Outcomes

- Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) conducted an information session on SMART 911.
- Information regarding the COVID emergency was widely distributed by the Health Department, with strong outreach support by SSA and the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS).

911 
CALL IF YOU CAN
TEXT IF YOU CAN'T

Community and Health Services

Goal: Increase the availability of Mental Health [MH] Case Management Services for Older Adults with serious mental illness [SMI] and one or more co-occurring chronic medical conditions by 100% by adding a bilingual Family Services Worker II position (dedicated to MH Case Management with the Older Adult Clinical Services Team).

Responsible Parties

- **Division of Aging & Adult Services**
- **Commission on Aging**

Results Anticipated

- **This position would increase Targeted Case Management Services for Older Adults with SMI and co-occurring chronic medical diagnosis by 100%. The program's current capacity is 22 persons. It will increase to 44 persons with SMI and co-occurring, complex medical diagnosis being served.**

Outcome Desired

- **Reduces the wait list for Persons with SMI and cooccurring medical diagnosis.**
- **Increases support to other DCHS programs in the CAC needing assistance with SMI.**

Outputs and Outcomes

City Council approved this position in DAAS and staff has been hired with the support of the Commission on Aging and the Age-Friendly Plan.



Community and Health Services

Goal:

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

Responsible Parties

- Division of Aging and Adult Services
- Commission on Aging

Results Anticipated

Increased ability to provide mental health therapy services to those requesting, and increased availability for emergency and capacity assessments as well as providing the support needed to address state hospital discharge planning requirements.

Outcome Desired

Mental health therapy services will be more available for older adults and the wait list will be reduced. Older adults needing semi urgent capacity assessments or therapy will be served in a timely manner.

Outputs and Outcomes

City Council approved this position in DAAS and staff has been hired with the support of the Commission on Aging and the Age-Friendly Plan.



Housing in Alexandria



Accessible Dwelling Unit



Mixed Income Affordable Assisted Living Facility

HOUSING IN ALEXANDRIA

- Average rent for one-bedroom apartment: \$2,186
- Income needed to rent a two-bedroom apartment: \$96,520
- Average single-family home value: near \$1 million
- No Moderate Income Assisted Living Facilities
- Housing Cost Burdened: (Households with incomes below \$50,000, paying 30% or more of their income on housing): 93% (of renters); 80% (of homeowners)
- New affordable units since 2014: 1,378
- Number of committed affordable units in development: 1,720

Housing

Goal:

Determine prospective benefits and challenges regarding Accessory Dwelling Units

Responsible Parties

- Office of Housing
- Department of Planning and Zoning

Results Anticipated

Report shared with City Council and the community.

Outcome Desired

Recommendation made to City Council to allow for ADUs.

Outputs and Outcomes

- The Commission and its Housing Committee held several briefings on the proposed ADU ordinance with the City's Office of Housing and Department of Planning and Zoning. The Housing Committee chair testified in support of the proposed ordinance at the Council's public meeting on January 23, 2021.
- On January 23, 2021, the Alexandria City Council approved a new ordinance allowing for the creation of ADUs.



Housing

Goal:
Develop public and private mechanisms to enhance the availability of affordable assisted living in Alexandria.

Responsible Parties

- Office of Housing
- Department of Planning and Zoning

Results Anticipated

Meetings of study group completed enabling development of policy.

Outcome Desired

- Policy in effect for acquiring contributions for affordable assisted living development; concept plan for moderate and affordable assisted living facilities created and shared with city officials.



Housing

Goal:

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

Outputs and Outcomes

- The Office of Housing convened a Developer Contribution Work Group, which met in the early Spring and summer of 2019. The Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC) adopted recommendations for developer contributions in September 2019, which the Commission on Aging (COA) supported. The City revised the recommendations, which the COA also supported.
- On December 12, 2020, the Alexandria City Office of Housing approved this policy, allowing developers an increase in density in exchange for a commitment to include a certain amount of affordable housing (60% of Average Median Income (AMI) or lower) within the development.
- Although there has been a 62% decrease in affordable (households earning 60% of the AMI) housing units from 2000 to 2021, due to the pandemic, there was a substantial increase in the past year – a total of 6,977 affordable units.
- A concept plan for a mixed income, affordable assisted living facility (MIAALF) was completed in 2019. City officials are supportive of the concept.
- Two COA Housing Committee members met with the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation director and the directors of the City Departments of Housing and Planning and Zoning, all of whom are supportive of the MIAAF concept. COA members also met with City Councilors to explain the concept.

Housing

Goal:

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

Responsible Parties

- **Commission on Aging**
- **Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS).**

Results Anticipated

Guidelines drafted and approved by Department of Housing and the Department of Planning and Zoning; education sessions held with stakeholders.

Outcome Desired

Guidelines are approved and used as advisory for new construction of affordable multi-family housing that receives City funding.

Outputs and Outcomes

This goal was completed in 2019 when the Commission recommended, and the City ultimately adopted, the Universal Guidelines that the VA Housing Development Authority (VHDA) uses in its tax-credit application process for developers.

This solution provides consistency for developers who apply for city funds to develop new affordable housing in Alexandria.



Housing

Goal:

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

Responsible Parties

- Commission on Aging
- Division of Aging and Adult Services
- At Home in Alexandria (AHA)

Results Anticipated

Inventory and publicize services that help individuals stay in their homes, list of NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) created, Senior Ambassadors recruited and trained in accessing support services, and community meetings held for NORC residents.

Outcome Desired

Information and resource persons are available to Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NOR)C residents, as well as to others working with older adults and adults with disabilities.

Outputs and Outcomes

Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) recruited and trained over 130 Senior Ambassadors, exceeding the goal of 50 recruits. The Ambassadors provide information to their respective communities concerning programs and services available within Alexandria to assist older residents in remaining in their own homes for as long as possible.



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 benchmarks.

Responsible Parties

- **Vision Zero committed departments, including Transportation and Environmental Services (TE&S) and Police Department.**

Results Anticipated

- **Right-turn-on red restrictions were installed at ten intersections, and pedestrian countdown signals were installed at five intersections.**
- **Twenty crosswalks were enhanced with high visibility laddered markings.**
- **Lead pedestrian intervals were installed with heavy turning traffic**
- **Two major pedestrian intersections were improved, and improvements were made at ten high-crash sites.**

Outcome Desired

Initial steps taken to enhance traffic safety in Alexandria.



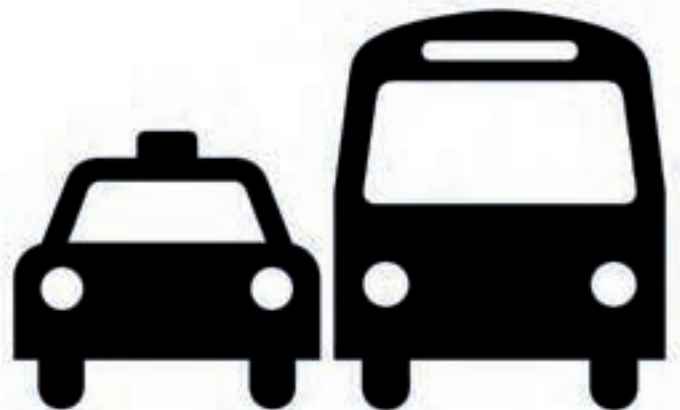
Transportation

Goal:

Assist the City to attain its Vision Zero Goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028 through the attainment of interim benchmarks.

Outputs and Outcomes

- **COA members participated in the activities of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Alexandria Families for Safe Streets (AFSS).**
- **DASH installed Mobile Eye (a camera that identifies pedestrian or bicycle obstacles within a blind spot) on some of its buses using grant funding.**
- **COA and BPAC successfully advocated for the addition of a third staff position in the FY 2023 budget to manage projects for the Complete Streets program.**
- **The City issued a progress report on Vision Zero in 2021, showing the implementation of improvements such as roadway marking upgrades, pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, Rectangle Rapid Flashing Beacons, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons, and Leading Pedestrian Intervals citywide.**



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 benchmarks.

Outputs and Outcomes

- COA completed its own walkability audits with AARP; the City reported it completed 13 walk audits in the period 2016-2021.
- COA members participated in BPAC-sponsored bike rodeo to teach children bike safety skills.
- The Virginia General Assembly changed the yield to pedestrians in crosswalks to require a full stop.
- In 2018, the League of American Bicyclists awarded Alexandria a silver rating for being bike-friendly; in June 2022, Walk Friendly Communities recognized Alexandria with a silver rating for its Complete Streets program.
- A COA member served on the City Scooter Task Force, which made recommendations on a micro-mobility program allowing private companies to deploy rented electric scooters and bicycles in the City; advocated for reducing conflicts on sidewalks between scooters and pedestrians, providing for dedicated on-street parking for scooters, and ensuring the City dedicates appropriate enforcement resources.



Transportation

Goal:

Assist the City to attain its Vision Zero Goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028 through the attainment of interim benchmarks.

Outputs and Outcomes

- A COA member is the chair of the DASH Board of Directors.
- New DASH Network provides significant benefits for older adults, people of color and low-income communities, with more frequent all-day bus services in these communities.
- DASH eliminated fares, further improving equity and transit access; Alexandria received a state grant under the TRIP program, which provides state support for four years of free fares.
- DOT Paratransit is free within city limits.
- 95% of pre-pandemic ridership was attained on DASH in January 2022, with some individual routes exceeding pre-pandemic ridership.
- At COA's recommendation, a DASH Rider Advisory Council was established in 2020, and meets quarterly to provide input to DASH staff on improvements to the system.



Transportation

Goal:

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

Responsible Parties

- Commission on Aging
- Division of Aging and Adult Services
- Alexandria Complete Streets Team
- AARP Virginia
- Alexandria Families for Safe Streets (AFSS)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

Outcome Desired

The goals of Vision Zero for pedestrian safety for 2021 are met.

Results Anticipated

- Walkability audits made to Complete Streets Team.
- COA reports the outcome of audits to City Council if necessary to support Vision Zero.
- resident safety is enhanced where audits are completed, and City acts.
- areas of speeding as noted in audits are reported to the police.
- repeated safety messages regarding pedestrians and drivers enhance healthy behaviors.



Transportation

Goal:

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

Responsible Parties

- **Transportation and Environmental Services**
- **Department of Planning and Zoning**
- **Alexandria Transit Company (DASH)**

Outcome Desired

Improved transit network and service to meet the current and future needs of the city and region.

Results Anticipated

Development of a plan that accurately captures the transit needs of the community; approval of the plan by the City Council with a commitment to provide funding to begin implementation.



Civic Engagement & Employment

Goal:

Encourage volunteerism and recruit volunteers to support programs of older adults.

Responsible Parties

- Commission on Aging
- Senior Services of Alexandria

Results Anticipated

- Increased participation by volunteers in programs identified.
- Benefits include greater opportunities for socialization and community involvement and reduced isolation.
- Adequate support for volunteer-based programs serving older adults.
- Increased participation by youth volunteers.
- Non-profits that serve older adults can expand programming and improve support.



Outcome Desired

More active older adults who volunteer, intergenerational involvement in volunteering to serve older adults, and stronger support for volunteer programs and services

Outputs and Outcomes

- Senior Services of Alexandria and the Division of Aging and Adult Services have trained more than 130 Senior Ambassadors – they continue to receive weekly emails and updates to share with their communities and to provide feedback on issues and concerns relating to older adults.
- Senior Services of Alexandria annually sponsors the Senior Academy for Older Alexandrians and encourages interaction with the City's senior leadership.
- Senior Ambassadors shared information about the new Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps).

Civic Engagement & Employment

Goal:

Older job seekers in Alexandria have dedicated support.

Responsible Parties

- Commission on Aging
- Division of Aging and Adult Services
- Senior Services of Alexandria
- Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC),
- AARP
- National Council on Aging (NCOA).

Results Anticipated

- Older job seekers utilize services that remove language and cultural barriers.
- Media attention to benefits of employing older adults.
- Increased number of Alexandrians aware of services of the Work Development Center (WDC).
- Support from the Department of Community and Human Services and City Manager.
- Continued conversation and encouragement to reduce operating silos but coordinate efforts through a one-stop system.

Results Anticipated (cont)

- Number of job seekers identified cultural and language barriers and sought assistance.
- Increased number of annual events conducted.
- Increased number of businesses that attend.
- Increased number of businesses committed to be part of the initiatives.

Outcome Desired

- Full time employee position reinstated to support older job seekers in obtaining employment and mature workers accessing services through the one-stop system.
- Increase in business interest in employing older Alexandrians.

Civic Engagement and Employment

Goal:

Older job seekers in Alexandria have dedicated support.

Outputs and Outcomes

- The City Council approved a Full-Time Employee (FTE) to support older job seekers in obtaining employment
- The full-time Work Force Development Center (WDC) program administrator organizes various Career Readiness Workshops weekly.
- The WDC offered services to approximately 200 individuals
- Twenty older adults received intensive case management, job search support and or training and permanent job placement
- Nine older adults were enrolled in the ADC's Work-Based Learning Program (WBL), earning on average over \$18 per hour; six of the nine participants were placed in permanent jobs following their work experience, earning an average wage of \$25.56 an hour.

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA

RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT

HIRING EVENT THURSDAY, AUGUST 17 5-7 P.M.

REGISTER TO ATTEND ONLINE EVENT  or visit alexandria.gov/hr

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S RECREATION, PARKS, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES TEAM IS HOSTING A HIRING EVENT FOR ITS OPEN POSITIONS ON THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME TEAM

LOCATED AT
4050 MARK CENTER DR., 6TH FL.,
ALEXANDRIA, VA

City of Alexandria | Department of Community and Human Services | RPCA

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT [HR@ALEXANDRIA.GOV](mailto:hr@alexandria.gov) OR 703.746.5000, VIRGINIA 22304

Conclusions

Program Strengths and Accomplishments

In most areas, the Age-Friendly Plan met or exceeded its goals. The aging community succeeded in developing acceptance of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and obtaining the City Council's approval of an ordinance allowing them. The COA also participated in the successful adoption of a developer policy on affordable housing contributions, leading to more affordable housing units for older adults. In transportation, DASH approved free fares for the foreseeable future and installed safety features, such as the Mobile Eye. Moreover, Virginia law now requires motor vehicles to stop at crosswalks when pedestrians are in them rather than merely yielding to them. Concerning civic engagement and employment, aging advocates succeeded in obtaining full-time positions to support older workers, and SSA recruited and trained over 100 Senior Ambassadors, twice the number the COA set as its target. In social inclusion and outreach, we made great strides in involving the LGBTQ community in aging issues and distributing information about services available to LGBTQ elders. Moreover, as reflected in the program description, the COA succeeded in involving city officials and non-profits in its activities.

Needs Not Yet Met

Although we had many successes, further attention to enhancing livability for all residents, especially older residents of the City is necessary, particularly in housing. While Alexandria is generally an affluent community, too many older, lower-income residents must struggle to cover the costs of their homes. There has been a 62% decline in market-affordable rental units in the City of Alexandria between 2000 and 2021. More than 80% of low-to-moderate-income Alexandrians (14,023 households) spend 30% or more of their income on rent or mortgage payments. According to the AARP Livability Index, housing costs (including taxes, rent, mortgage fees, and utilities) for existing Alexandrian residents is getting worse, well above the national average - \$1,846 (2015), \$2,156 (2023), \$1,052 (national average). New renters and home buyers may have to pay even more. Although the COA was able to advocate successfully for approximately 12 Auxiliary Grant assisted living units in new facilities, it has yet to make progress in obtaining firm commitments for a mixed-income affordable assisted living facility in Alexandria. Nonetheless, one is part of the city's master housing plan.

Glossary and Acronyms

AARP - Formerly the American Association of Retired Persons, which changed its official name to reflect that it does not focus only on retired persons. It is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization that engages in various advocacy and educational programs. It is the joint sponsor of the Age-Friendly network with the World Health Organization.

AARP Virginia- AARP's state office in Richmond, Virginia, focuses on advocacy and educational programs in Virginia. AARP has state offices in each state, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

AARP Foundation - AARP's charitable affiliate sponsors free programs such as the Tax-Aide national IRS program and workforce programs under Title V of the Older Americans Act. It is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

ADUs – Accessory Dwelling Units are independent living arrangements, either attached to or detached from a single-family dwelling, such as one-family and two-family homes or townhouses. They are now permitted by right in Alexandria as long as they comply with the zoning ordinance for ADUs, Section 7-203.

AHA – At Home in Alexandria. It is a 501(c)(3) member-driven non-profit that builds and sustains a 55+ community to navigate aging successfully. Together, AHA members share activities, programs, and services, including access to needed assistance.

AHAAC - The Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee. The Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee advises the City Council on issues regarding the maintenance and promotion of affordable housing, makes recommendations for policies governing the City's Housing Trust Fund monies' expenditures, and oversees the Trust Fund's administration.

AFSS - Alexandria Families for Safe Streets focuses on bringing an end to pedestrian and cyclist fatalities and injuries caused by motor vehicle drivers. It is part of Northern Virginia Families for Safe Streets.

AMI - Average Median Income. This measurement determines eligibility for many housing programs within a geographic area.

Glossary and Acronyms

Assisted Living Facility - or ALF. Assisted living facilities, which care for four or more adults, are licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services to provide a room, meals, laundry, and assistance with activities of daily living (bathing, eating, toileting, transferring, personal hygiene, dressing), medication management, and 24-hour supervision. Limited spaces exist for very low-income individuals who qualify for Auxiliary Grants.

ARPA- The American Rescue Plan Act provided state and local governments funds to address COVID-19 funding gaps caused by the pandemic.

AG - Auxiliary Grants are Virginia's only public support for affordable assisted living. In 2024, the Auxiliary Grant benefit amount is \$2363 for Northern Virginia – far short of the amount needed for assisted living that exceeds \$6,000 a month in most assisted living facilities.

BPAC – Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Committee is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization that promotes walking and biking, and infrastructure and policy changes that create a safe, accessible, and livable city for all.

COA - Alexandria City Commission on Aging. The Commission is the advisory group for the Division on Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), which is the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the City of Alexandria. AAAs were created by the federal Older Americans Act to disburse funds and manage programs for older Americans within their locality.

DAAS - The Division on Aging and Adult Services within the Department of Community and Human Services.

DARS - The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Its mission is to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families.

DASH – The Alexandria Transit Company which operates buses throughout the City of Alexandria. It is a non-profit corporation organized under Chapter 1, Title 13.1 of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of providing mass transportation services as a public service corporation. The City of Alexandria owns the entire capital stock of the corporation.

Glossary and Acronyms

DCHS - The Department of Community and Human Services, which is responsible for administering the city programs for Alexandrians in the most social and economic need.

DOT -The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

FCC - The Federal Communications Commission.

LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning acronym.

MIAALF - Mixed Income Affordable Assisted Living Facility. The City of Alexandria has incorporated MIAALFs into its current Master Housing Plan. The local model is Chesterbrook Residences in Mclean, Virginia.

NCNW - National Council of Negro Women. The Council's mission is to lead, empower, and advocate for women of African descent, their families, and communities. The Council is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

NORC- Naturally Occurring Retirement Community. A NORC is a community of older adults. They work to ensure older adults can age in place with the support of the local NORC members.

SAGE - Otherwise referred to as Advocacy and Services for LGBTQ+ Elders. SAGE is a national organization that provides advocacy and education on issues that impact the LGBTQ+ communities. <https://www.sageusa.org/>

SMART 911 - The Smart911 App provides 9-1-1 and first responders information in an emergency and receives targeted alerts from the National Weather Service. The free Smart911 service allows individuals and businesses to create online safety profiles with home, workplace, and mobile phone numbers, along with additional information that would be valuable to dispatchers and first responders during an emergency.

SNAP - the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly called "Food Stamps").

SSA - Senior Services of Alexandria, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that provides a variety of services to older Alexandrians, such as the essential Meals on Wheels program. It sponsors impactful programs such as Senior Ambassadors and Senior Law Day.

VHDA - Virginia Housing Development Authority or Virginia Housing.

WDC - the Alexandria Workforce Development Center. The Center administers work programs for all Alexandrians.

WHO - World Health Organization.

USF - the Universal Services Fund.