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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 4, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER *RM*

SUBJECT: RECEIPT OF STRATEGIC PLAN FOR AGING 2012 - 2016

ISSUE: Receipt and consideration of the draft Strategic Plan for Aging: 2012-2016, *The Alexandria of Our Future: A Livable Community for All Ages*

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council:

1. Receive the draft Strategic Plan for Aging at its January 10 legislative meeting (Attachment I); and
2. Docket the draft Plan for public hearing on Saturday, February 25; and adoption on Tuesday, March 27.

BACKGROUND: Changing demographics have created a need to plan for Alexandria's aging population, which is expected to double between 2000 and 2030. In May 2010, City Council recognized this need, authorizing the Department of Community and Human Services' (DCHS) Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) to proceed with developing a plan that would address the needs and aspirations of its aging residents. Council allocated \$74,000 for consultant services, and through a competitive proposal, JustPartners, Inc., (JPI) was awarded the contract. Over the course of six months, JPI worked with the Alexandria Commission on Aging (COA) and DAAS to scan local, state, and national data, trends, strategies, and practices on aging, and to collect extensive community input. To garner public and other stakeholder participation, JPI, Commission members and DAAS staff:

- Created a local cross-sector 23-member Strategic Plan Advisory Group, representing stakeholders beyond the aging network. This group offered initial ideas about constituents' concerns that were considered throughout the Plan's development.
- Convened two meetings of 20 City Departmental Aging Liaisons who provided input about how their work would be shaped by the increase in the senior population. This helped to define the plan's objectives.

- Met with City officials.
- Conducted extensive outreach to solicit community input. Information about town hall meetings and cards for written input were distributed to thousands of Alexandria households.
- Held two town hall meetings (February 23, 2011 and March 3, 2011) attracting almost 400 mostly older participants. They focused on solutions for Alexandria that would advance the well-being of older residents, benefit other age groups or persons with special needs, and protect or support the environment, where applicable.
- Posted a draft of the Aging Strategic Plan on the City's website and distributed email and enews notifications to inform Alexandrians about the plan as well as the means and timelines to provide feedback.
- Held a Commission on Aging public hearing on the draft plan on April 25, 2011, to hear further testimony and input from the community.

The current draft of the strategic plan incorporates, where appropriate, the stakeholder feedback from all of these forums.

City Council held a work session on December 13, 2011, during which the draft Strategic Plan was presented and discussed. Guidance provided by Council members during the work session, as well as input obtained from the public, will be addressed in the final version of the plan, which is expected to be docketed for City Council adoption at its March 27 legislative meeting.

DISCUSSION: Most Americans want to stay in their own homes and communities as they age. Alexandria offers attractive features in abundance that make the desire to age in place especially compelling. Its residents are proud of their City, its diverse and distinct neighborhoods, distinguished history, plentiful restaurants, the Potomac waterfront, many shopping areas, parks and walkable streets, access to mass transit, celebration of the arts, the small town character and a reputation for resident engagement. The vision of the Aging Strategic Plan is: **Residents choose to stay in Alexandria as they age because it is a livable community for all ages.**

The premises on which this Strategic Plan is based are that:

- Older residents are a natural resource whose talents and contributions to the life of the City are fundamental to its health and vitality;
- Many attributes making a community more livable for older adults also enhance its livability for all ages; and
- Government alone cannot create the community that older Alexandrians desire.

Many of the recommendations in this plan address more than one problem simultaneously, suggest the engagement of many partners beyond the aging network, and meet the needs of younger residents and stakeholders as well as those who are older.

This plan proposes seven interrelated goals that must be met to ensure the ability of older Alexandrians to age in place in Alexandria:

- **Goal #1. Communications and Outreach.** Information about services and programs is readily available and accessible in a variety of formats and venues for older residents of Alexandria, their families and caregivers, local organizations and businesses.
- **Goal #2. Housing.** A range of affordable, accessible and supportive housing is available that meets the needs of older residents of the City to be able to age at home.
- **Goal #3. 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.
- **Goal #4. Community Services.** Community services accommodate the expectations and needs of aging Alexandrians and support their caregivers.
- **Goal #5. Economic and Workforce Development.** The important contributions of older Alexandrians to the City's economy are recognized and the innovative entrepreneurship of older residents is encouraged.
- **Goal #6. Quality of Life.** The quality of life of all Alexandrians is enhanced by the many volunteer activities of its older residents and their continued involvement in the social and civic life of the City.
- **Goal #7. Health, Wellness, and Safety.** All residents, with special attention to lower-income, older City residents, optimize their wellness and receive the health care they require.

Many of the Plan's initiatives align with and complement existing City Council approved plans such as the Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan; Alexandria City Council Strategic Plan; Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development; and Eco-City Alexandria (See Plan's Appendix G: Alignment of this Plan with Other City Strategic Plans).

While the draft Plan identifies a phased implementation strategy, upon City Council's adoption of the Aging Strategic Plan, a detailed implementation plan will be developed including specific actions, target dates, and outcome measures. Progress on implementation of the Plan will be reported in the annual report of The Alexandria Commission on Aging.

FISCAL IMPACT: Council's receipt and adoption of the Aging Strategic Plan does not commit any additional City resources to the implementation of specific initiatives. Implementation of some of the initiatives will have a fiscal impact in terms of personnel and non-personnel costs. Initiatives are proposed to be implemented over the course of five years. Staff will explore grants and other non-City funding opportunities where available. Any requests for City funding will be made through the City's regular budget process.

ATTACHMENT:

- I. Draft Strategic Plan for Aging: 2012-2016, *The Alexandria of Our Future: A Livable Community for All Ages*
- II. Addendum 1 – Census 2010 Tracts Age 60 Plus (Replaces Chart on Page 11)
- III. Addendum 2 – Revised Circle Graph (Replaces Chart on Page 19)
- IV. Addendum 3 – PACE Summary (Replaces Summary on Page 54)

STAFF:

Debra R. Collins, Assistant City Manager

Mike Gilmore, Director, Department of Community and Human Services

Suzanne Chis, Deputy Director, Department of Community and Human Services

Carol Layer, Director, Center for Adult Services / DCHS

MaryAnn Griffin, Director, Division of Aging and Adult Services / DCHS

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Dear Mayor Euille and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the City's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), I am writing to express our support for The Strategic Plan on Aging that has been developed by the Department of Community and Human Services. MaryAnn Griffin, Director of Aging and Adult Services, provided an overview of the Plan at AHAC's October 6, 2011 meeting. The Committee was pleased to find an overall consistency of priorities and goals between Aging's plan and the City's Housing Master Plan that is now in the final phases of development.

We believe it is particularly important to note that housing for seniors was given the highest priority within the goals of the Plan on Aging. The need for housing and support programs that foster aging in place in both existing and new residential developments is consistent with the findings of the Housing Master Plan Committee and is critical to allowing seniors to remain active and engaged in their communities.

We recognize the long-standing need for affordable assisted-living within the City and encourage the City to consider opportunities for such development to serve a range of income groups. In addition, we support to expansion and ease of access to information concerning the many local, state and federal assistance programs that can assist older Alexandrians in modifying their homes to meet their changing needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this Plan. We find that this document provides the City an excellent roadmap outlining the housing and supportive service needs of Alexandria's older population. We look forward to reinforcing these findings through the coming release of the City's Housing Master Plan.

Sincerely,



Michael Caison
Chair of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Jackie Henderson

From: BURNHAM MCCAFFREE <mikemccaffree@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 18, 2012 4:32 PM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones; Princetta Williams
Subject: COA Contact Us: Strategic Plan for All Ages
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Sat Feb 18, 2012 16:32:22] Message ID: [37186]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: BURNHAM
Last Name: MCCAFFREE
Street Address: 4800 FILLMORE AVE.
APT. 1551
City: ALEXANDRIA
State: Virginia
Zip: 22311
Phone: 7039312223
Email Address: mikemccaffree@gmail.com
Subject: Strategic Plan for All Ages

To all,

I understand that you will shortly be considering the Strategic Plan for All Ages.

I believe that Alexandria has an obligation to

recognize and to support the elder portion of our population. I am

pleased that the Strategic Plan for All Ages is a comprehensive effort to

Comments: do that, and is a very appropriate way for Alexandria to be a standard setter in that regard in the Commonwealth.

I urge that the Alexandria

City Council approve the Plan and direct its implementation.

Thank

you,
Mike McCaffree
Chair, Residents Council
Goodwin House Alexandria

Jackie Henderson

From: Pierre Shostal <pshks@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 2:41 PM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones; Princetta Williams
Subject: COA Contact Us: Strategic Plan for Aging
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Fri Feb 17, 2012 14:41:02] Message ID: [37172]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Pierre
Last Name: Shostal
Street Address: 4800 Fillmore Ave.
Apt. 514
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22311
Phone: 703-461-3196
Email Address: pshks@aol.com
Subject: Strategic Plan for Aging

Comments: As a senior resident of Alexandria, I was impressed by the quality and thoroughness of the plan and urge the City Council to translate its recommendations into specific plans. The special importance of affordable housing and transport opportunities for seniors should be key elements in these plans. I also liked the plan's stress on seniors as a resource that can help drive the city's development.

Jackie Henderson

From: Faith Olson <feolson@mindspring.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 3:47 PM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones; Princetta Williams
Subject: COA Contact Us: "Strategic Plan for All Ages."
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Fri Feb 17, 2012 15:47:00] Message ID: [37174]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Faith
Last Name: Olson
Street Address: 4800 Fillmore Avenue #930
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22311
Phone:
Email Address: feolson@mindspring.com
Subject: "Strategic Plan for All Ages."
I commend the plan with the following addition.
I recommend an effort be
Comments: made to include in the plan the recruitment of certified gerontologists to practice in Alexandria as the aging population increases.

Jackie Henderson

From: Hebry Lowenstern <hlowenstern@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 10:44 AM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones; Princetta Williams
Subject: COA Contact Us: Strategic Plan for All Ages
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Fri Feb 17, 2012 10:44:22] Message ID: [37167]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Hebry
Last Name: Lowenstern
Street Address: 4800 Fillmore Ave. Apt. 755
City: ALEXANDRIA
State: Virginia
Zip: 22311
Phone: 7038453664
Email Address: hlowenstern@gmail.com
Subject: Strategic Plan for All Ages
Congratulations on your initiative in publishing this draft. I support the
Comments: goals and urge you to implement the plan.

Jackie Henderson

From: Florence Anrud <floanrud@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 8:17 AM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones; Princetta Williams
Subject: COA Contact Us: Strategic Plan for Aging Population
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Fri Feb 17, 2012 08:16:47] **Message ID:** [37164]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Florence
Last Name: Anrud
Street Address: 4800 Fillmore Ave.
Goodwin House #806
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22311
Phone: 703-254-4186
Email Address: floanrud@gmail.com
Subject: Strategic Plan for Aging Population
Comments: Request City Council approval.



700 Princess Street - Mezzanine Level
Alexandria, VA 22314

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SSA Testimony on DAAS Strategic Plan

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United Way #2311

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CVC #8200

The Alexandria of our Future A Livable Community for All Ages Strategic Plan on Aging 2012-2016

Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Council: It is a pleasure to come before you today.

My name is Jennifer Brown, Vice President of the Board of Directors of Senior Services of Alexandria. I am speaking on behalf of Barbara Anderson, Esquire, and President of the Board, who unfortunately is not able to be with us today. By way of a brief introduction, I hold both Masters and Bachelors 'degrees in Psychology, and with over 40 years of experience, started working in the nursing home while in High School, served as the Director of Sales and Marketing at the Fountains at Washington House for over six years and am currently the Director of Admissions and Marketing for The Methodist Home of DC and Forest Side.

Senior Services of Alexandria, a tax exempt, nonprofit organization that was created in 1968 to provide employment services and counseling to older workers in the City. The organization has expanded and changed over the last 44 years and now provides extensive services in nutrition, transportation, money management, education programming, and resources and referrals to senior citizens and their families. Senior Services of Alexandria is a collaborative partner with City agencies, other nonprofits, and private and commercial providers in these efforts to carry out its mission "to foster independence and self-sufficiency, enabling seniors within the City of Alexandria to age with dignity."

We are pleased to share with you today some thoughts about the Strategic Plan on Aging (the "Plan"), and we commend the City Council for its efforts to plan for the needs of senior citizens as they age. With the baby boomers come increased needs and strains on local governments, as well as opportunities to profit financially from the interests and needs of seniors in the business community. There are many new companies and

nonprofits that tend to those needs, and local governments are increasingly aware of their role in meeting expectations of seniors. Each views the aging population from their own perspective and has a vital role to play, but each segment -- government, nonprofits, commercial providers -- meets only a portion of the total needs. We each comprise a piece of the jigsaw puzzle, and we need to work closely together to address the entire picture.

We ask that as you consider the Plan presented you consider how nonprofit organizations like Senior Services of Alexandria are already actively working for and serving the needs of seniors in our City and can assist the Commission on Aging and the Division of Aging and Adult Services through coordination of existing services, and conserve needed funds in the process. For example, while not a legislatively mandated referral service, Senior Services already operates a resource and referral center and helps citizens on a daily basis. It also provides employment services and partners with Senior Employment Resources to counsel those older Alexandrians who are looking for employment. SSA's Speaker Series provides monthly information sessions in conjunction with other nonprofits such as the Alexandria Bar Association, AHA!, the Alexandria Electoral Board, Alexandria's Mentoring Partnership, Volunteer Alexandria, INOVA Hospital and others in a true collaborative effort to get accurate information to our citizens. Our Churches as well are working to develop affordable housing opportunities and partner with City agencies.

For many years SSA has funded the shortfall in the operating costs of Senior Taxi, the operating costs of the Meals on Wheels delivery, and has successfully obtained private funding to extend the Meals on Wheels Saturday and holiday deliveries. Beginning this spring we are grateful that the City will be providing funding for Saturday meals every other week. We have worked diligently to expand the partnership with several City agencies, and will continue to do so.

To further facilitate this partnership, we recommend that all City agencies be directed to expand collaborative efforts with existing nonprofits and service providers to minimize duplication of effort and the attendant costs, and work toward a true "no wrong door" structure for the City where cross-referrals for services become seamless and continuous. Alexandria does not need a feasibility study for creating a new nonprofit corporation to meet these needs, nor does it need a new Speakers Bureau. Our citizens deserve a true collaborative effort between Agencies, the nonprofit community, and service providers to set goals and targets for the future and to ensure that needed services are provided in a cost effective and efficient manner. We cannot afford to do less.

Thank you.

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Statement of Jane King, Chair, Alexandria Commission on Aging
City Council Public Hearing on Alexandria's Strategic Plan on Aging

February 25, 2012

Good morning, Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Kerry, City Council. On behalf of the Alexandria Commission on Aging, I want to thank you for your support for development of a strategic plan on aging, which we have based on the aspiration of creating a livable community for all ages. I also want to publicly thank MaryAnn Griffin, the director of the Division on Aging and Adult Services and Debbie Ludington, the long-term care coordinator for the Division, for their tireless dedication to this effort. Many members of the Commission on Aging also spent countless hours. I also want to thank the over 500 Alexandrians who attended public forums and or shared their views on aging in Alexandria in writing and the plan's advisory committee, which represented a broad range of stakeholders.

I want to emphasize the importance of our first three priorities, communication, housing and transportation.

On communication: The Division on Aging has been assigned the responsibility by the state for providing information and referral for both older adults and adults with disabilities. This has two important implications. The first is that basic information about the Division on Aging and Adult Services and its many services must be much more readily accessible to Alexandrians and caregivers, wherever they live, than it is now. The second is that the Division is becoming increasingly responsible for services for Alexandrians with disabilities. Those 65 and over comprise over 50 percent of Alexandrians (3,563) with a disability. And at the federal level and in Virginia, the agencies responsible for aging and those with disabilities are being combined, because many of the services required are the same. In Alexandria, the Commission on Persons with Disabilities sent recommendations to the Commission on Aging suggesting additional actions pursuant to the seven goals in our plan. Following several conversations with the chair of the Commission and City staff with related responsibilities, we will be forwarding some supplemental recommendations to the Council in our final draft of the strategic plan.

In housing, we face two critical problems, affordability and accessibility, and our Commission expert on housing, Bill Harris, will be addressing those issues.

If we are fortunate enough to live in affordable and accessible housing, we may find ourselves stuck at home if we do not drive. We hope that all City planning will take into

account the need for various modes of transportation that are easily accessible from our homes, to include safe sidewalks, street crossings and easily accessible public transportation. The City's Transportation Master Plan very clearly establishes a vision and principles that account for the needs of those with varied abilities and we hope to work closely with the Transportation Commission and the staff on those issues.

I want to close with four additional thoughts.

Home and community based services help keep people in their homes.

We know that those with moderate incomes will need more options than are available now if they are to be able to age in place.

We must do whatever we can to support the many caregivers with very demanding responsibilities for family members.

We need to keep the expectations of baby boomers ever in mind. While we need to meet the needs of today's seniors, the boomers will have different expectations than the generations that preceded them and the City must be ready to accommodate them.

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City Council Testimony
Docket Item #5
February 25, 2012

Mr. Mayor and members of the City Council. My name is Bill Harris, an Alexandrian for 37 years. I'm Chairman of the Commission on Aging's Housing Committee, and I'm here today advocating Commission support of the proposed "Strategic Plan for All Ages."

I speak to the importance of Goal #2, which calls for the development of housing that is

- affordable,
- accessible, and
- provides elderly people with assistive care services.

Housing was overwhelmingly given as the most crucial need by the 400 participants in our two town meetings.

Accessible or adaptable housing is in very short supply. I recently asked Roy Priest why ARHA didn't make *all* its ground level units accessible. He told me VHDA regulations make it impractical to do so. Such constraining regulations need to be changed.

Alexandria currently has three retirement housing facilities for low-income elderly. None provide in-house assisted care. They do allow meals-on-wheels and companion aids, but such home delivered services are only good to a point. Elderly citizens who are fortunate to live long lives will eventually need in-house care services 24/7 – namely "assisted living". Only one such facility is currently available to low-income Alexandrians, that's Willow Oaks, nearly 40 miles away in Manassas. While better than nothing, its distance makes it far from ideal. Simply put, *Alexandria has no mixed-income affordable housing with assistive care services.*

To be able to age at home our elderly citizens need three things:

- housing that is affordable,
- housing that is accessible or adaptable, and when they need it...
- housing that provides assistance with supportive care services.

If we want our elderly citizens (and our non-elderly disabled) to continue to live in Alexandria we need to provide all three.

This plan was developed with the best efforts of the Commission on Aging, Human Services staff, our experienced consultant, and the input from 400 interested citizens. It provides good and basic guidelines for meeting the future housing needs of our elderly citizens. When it comes time, I urge Council to not only approve the plan, but also to support its implementation.

Thank you.

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Thank you Mayor, Vice Mayor and members of the City Council for giving the Commission on Aging Communications and Outreach Committee an opportunity to emphasize the importance of:

Goal #1 of the Strategic Plan: Communication and Outreach. Specifically, that information about services and programs is readily available and accessible in a variety of formats and venues for older residents of Alexandria, their families and caregivers, local organizations and businesses.

At both of the town hall meetings, residents expressed the need to be more informed about what Alexandria already offers for seniors. Information exists for those who seek it if they know how and where to access it. Not everyone does.

Often, it is the more informal networks seniors rely on – their faith institution, other community organizations, friends, neighbors and adult children. They may find information through their church or synagogue, or temple newsletter or at a program for seniors at their local community center.

Because our older population is becoming increasingly diverse, an effective communication plan must incorporate both traditional methods and modern technology. Boomers may feel confident in utilizing Websites and computerized phones whereas older seniors who may not have “grown up” with computers still prefer talking to a “live” person on the phone.

As someone too old to be a boomer but young enough to know how to search for information on the computer, I appreciate Websites that are user friendly and don't require the use of bureaucratic “speak” to access the information I need. That is why it was so refreshing to find today's Council hearing listed on the City's Website under “Strategic Plan on Aging.” In one click it led me to the Division of Aging and Adult Services Website. I know the Division of Aging and Adult Services appreciated the City placing it so prominently on the front page.

Therefore, I encourage those who develop the City's Website to resist the temptation to add another layer of bureaucracy by using language that may be familiar to those on the “inside” but may befuddle residents who just want to find the information they need as quickly as possible.

And, where possible, provide a human voice on the other end of the phone – at least to direct the caller to the right Department and person. This discourages one from hanging up out of frustration, especially one who may have difficulty hearing or may feel impeded by having to press one, two, three . . . infinity.

Communication is the key – make it open, accessible and helpful to those in need of services.

Thank you.

Carol Downs

Co-Chair Communications and Community Outreach Committee

Commission on Aging

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2-25-12

Public Hearing on the Strategic Plan on Aging 2012-2016
February 25, 2012

Speaker: Mary Anne Weber, chair of the Alexandria Community Services Board

I am MaryAnne Weber, chair of the Alexandria Community Services Board and very definitely an aging citizen myself. Today I would like to address the draft report on the strategic plan on aging through the lens of the people the CSB serves, those with mental illness, substance abuse disorders and intellectual disabilities.

Most of them have much lower incomes than the average citizen, even the average citizen over 65. They also tend to have poorer physical health and often a shorter life span. Nonetheless many are now reaching their senior years and face the same problems all seniors do, but problems exacerbated by poverty and in some cases lack of services or lack of knowledge of how to obtain services.

As the draft report states we need more appropriate housing. There are independent living facilities for upper income seniors, but none for middle or moderate income seniors and not enough for low incomes seniors. There are no assisted living facilities for moderate and middle income seniors and not nearly enough for low income seniors. Many currently living in low income residences need the help provided by assisted living and aren't getting it. In addition we have no facilities to deal with the specific needs of those over 65 with mental illness or intellectual or developmental disabilities. Arlington has recently opened such a facility and we need to do the same.

Most of those over 65 have at least one chronic health condition and many, including our clients have multiple conditions including mental illness. Those fortunate enough to have a primary care physician or access to a clinic can now obtain physicals at no cost, may include a mental health evaluation as more doctors learn what to look for. A truly livable community would see to it that all citizens had access to primary care, particularly preventive care.

There has been a marked increase in the number of overall referrals for geriatric mental health over the last three years, largely consistent with the increase in the number of those over 65 in the city. This includes the number of referrals for competency evaluations which are most important because they are urgent and labor intensive. In Fiscal Year 2010, there were 75 urgent competency evaluations and in 2011, there were 87, a 14 percent increase. In addition a licensed clinician is needed to provide clinical assessments for emergency custody orders, temporary detention orders or crisis interventions. The increase in these types of interventions has meant there are fewer staff available for ongoing outpatient treatments of geriatric clients. This impacts the number of hours currently available for less urgent referrals and those requiring ongoing treatment. In Fiscal Year 2009 there were 118 referrals, 67 urgent; in 2010 131 referrals, 75 urgent and in 2011 142, 87 urgent. Half-way through fiscal year 2012, there have been 78, with 69 urgent, that is 88 percent of all geriatric mental health referrals.

Those requiring our help have various mental illnesses, and may have alcohol or substance abuse disorders, including mis-use of prescription drugs. We currently serve 143 people over 62 in our programs and have 17 on the waiting list. This number will only increase as the population of seniors increases, and to serve them we will need additional staff and resources.

Thank you for the time and effort that has gone into this plan and I urge you to include the statistics I have discussed.

as a member
of the Commission
and in support of

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2-25-12

Mayor Euille, Council members, and fellow citizens, thank you for this opportunity to testify about the proposed Strategic Plan for Aging.

Developed with input from hundreds of Alexandria professionals and residents, this Plan contains four recommendations targeting the Economic and Workforce Development potential of its aging population.

The first recommendation addresses the significant economic opportunities to be gained by better engaging our older population -- as consumers, employees, and entrepreneurs.

Consumers. Alexandria has a substantial untapped population of older residents and older visitors who can contribute more than they do to this community's economy as consumers. A recent national study of Baby Boomers identified specific industries where that consumer growth is expected by Boomers. High growth industries include: travel and tourism, health and health clubs, home maintenance and improvement services, grandparent-friendly activities and products, personal care, beauty and apparel, financial services, and education and learning. Are we maximizing the availability and appeal of these services to our older population?

"Think potential business opportunities folks!"

Entrepreneurs, small business owners, and part-time or episodic workers -- these are some of the new ways older residents would like to contribute to generating business in Alexandria. Think of recently "retired" workers who would like to start up small businesses. Or fixed-income retirees who'd like to do some part-time or episodic work. What about the seasoned professional who has a cutting edge technology or business concept that needs some start-up "incubation" assistance?

Retiring in Alexandria. A related recommendation addresses the desirability of our residents staying in Alexandria after they retire and seeking out others who to choose it as their preferred retirement destination. What about targeting retired federal and military workers? What will it take to make our community a win-win for these potential residents?

Turning Silver into Gold. These recommendations bring into sharp focus the need for Alexandria's leaders to systematically study and craft a plan that maximizes the economic development potential of Alexandria's aging population ^{to} benefit the entire community. The Commission strongly encourages the creation of a short-lived, high-level "think tank" of community thought-leaders and practitioners to accomplish this. Sitting at the table would be representatives from such groups as City Council, the Chamber and Small Business Development Center, local businesses (including those in health care), financial institutions, educational and arts institutions such as NOVA and TC Williams, ACVA, and key nonprofits.

Workforce Development. Knowing the services and products that need to be developed, increased, or modified to better serve our aging population will enable the City to address workforce needs. These may include creation or repurposing of existing manpower. It would definitely include specific educational and job opportunities for high school, technical, and college age young adults, as well as older adults whose jobs are no longer in high demand. The Commission sees especially high demands in the health care and aging services industries.

Age-ism and the Workplace. The final recommendation directs Alexandria employers' attention to the value provided by older workers and need to prevent the illegal practice of age discrimination in employment. How many of us in this room today know of at least one highly skilled older worker whose career was prematurely ended during the recent recession? Could "age-ism" have been part of the decision to let the person go? Many of these older employees still had years to offer and continue to want to work.

The goal of this strategic plan is to make Alexandria a desirable and livable community for all ages in Alexandria. The economic and workforce development recommendations offer specific pathways toward that vision. We thank you for enabling the Commission to work with the Office of Aging and Adult Services in looking at the implications of the age wave now hitting our city and nation. We invite your support and involvement.

Comments by
Janet Macidell
Member
Commission on Aging
February 25, 2012