



# Juneau Commission on Aging 2024 Annual Report to the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly

*“We need to challenge outdated stereotypes and attitudes about getting older and spark new solutions that help people live better as they age. Today more people are embracing age as a period of continued growth and finding purpose in their lives.” Former AARP CEO Ann Jenkins*

The Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) is charged with advising the Assembly on matters related to our aging population. Seniors over 55 now comprise **30% of Juneau’s population**. Juneau’s elders buy goods and services, volunteer extensively, and provide support to family members in our community. Many are retired with benefits and a desire to remain in our community while contributing to its well-being. The 2020 Juneau Senior Survey clearly indicated that Juneau seniors are healthier and better off than in previous survey years. To that end and in recognition that *we are all aging*, JCOA adopted the byline “Aging! So cool, everyone is doing it!” We began to focus on aging as a natural process that effects everyone and thus is a community wide concern. The JCOA developed a brochure (attached), signage, robust presentations and a website <https://juneau.org/clerk/boards-committees/jcoa>, to bring attention to JCOA’s efforts to elicit community support. In an effort to focus our efforts effectively, JCOA identified our top three priorities in 2024 and will continue to work toward these goals in 2025.

### Juneau Commission On Aging 2020 Senior Survey Findings

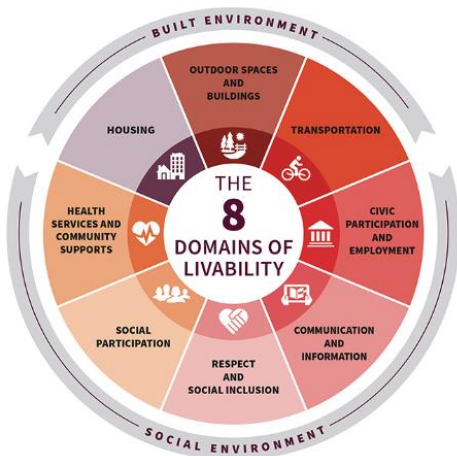
Seniors are healthier and better off than in previous survey years:

- 28.7% of Juneau residents are 55 and older\*\*
- 84% own their own homes and pay taxes
- 80-90% (depending on age) drive their own cars
- 63% volunteer in the community
- 95% over 65 have Medicare Insurance
- 66% over 65 have State of Alaska Retirement
- 40% have Long Term Care Insurance
- 42-46% (depending on age) take continuing education classes (UAS/CS)
- 72 – 84% (depending on age) recreate weekly (walking, hiking, swimming, biking, gyms, skiing)

\*\* AKDOL has updated this figure to 30% in 2023

## Priority One: Sustainable and Age-Friendly Community Planning

*“Master planning is a valid and necessary first step to creating a unified vision that is then represented in the CBJ’s budget. Our city’s amenities continue to be grossly undervalued in economic terms, as well as having impact on the city’s population, school enrollment, demographics, socioeconomic status, employment, business-friendliness, etc. Juneau has a ton to offer and with investments in recreation and community amenities, could attract the households, workers, and tax base we need”.* John S. Juneau Age 35



The CBJ Assembly joined the *Age-Friendly Network* in 2023 and the next step is to engage in the planning process. Age-Friendly Community Planning was developed by the World Health Organization and used throughout the world to define observable, measurable factors that allow comparability with other communities and identify areas of improvement. This planning tool looks at eight (8) domains of “livability” that make a community viable for *all ages*, as well as for those aging in place.

**2025: The JCOA recommends that the CBJ Assembly join the JCOA and AARP Community Action Team Juneau in implementing AARP Age-Friendly Community planning process that is a) driven by data b) in alignment with community values, and c) helps Juneau be more “livable” for people of all ages.**

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### Priority Two: Promoting Community Wellness, Safety and healthy aging *for all ages* by supporting a CBJ Community Center.

*"I am 73 years old and I've lived in Juneau since 1978. I started playing pickle ball about five years ago. It's the first time in my life I've played a sport and it really helps my physical and my mental coordination. Roughly half of the people I play with are seniors but at least half are middle age people and high school students. It's a great venue for intergenerational activity. I think significantly more people would play if there were more playing times available regularly". Mary Alice M, Juneau Age 73*



This year, JCOA actively promoted the concept of a CBJ Community Center using the Marie Drake Complex to provide recreational opportunities, wellness classes, informational courses and other resources to ensure seniors living in Juneau are able to continue to contribute to the community. While the entire Marie Drake Complex remains in question, the concept of a multi-generational CBJ Community Center (gym) remains a viable mechanism to support healthy maturing for people of all ages, while targeting our elders. People of all ages are enabled to continue to contribute by striving to be as healthy as possible.

**2025: JCOA recommends that the CBJ Assembly promote physical, emotional and mental health activities that help all community members attain and maintain good health by dedicating use of the Marie Drake Gym and adjoining classroom space via the Department of Parks and Recreation for the uses outlined above.**

### Priority Three: Housing: Include *Universal Design* as a preferred priority for building age friendly, affordable housing for people of all ages.

*"I am retired, healthy and want to stay in Juneau but the maintenance of my home and yard will inevitably become daunting. I'm not interested in institutional living yet but would move to an accessible, affordable, age friendly dwelling that would allow me to age in place". Lynn C. Juneau Age 72*

#### Elements of Universal Design

- No Step Entry – Flush Thresholds
- One Story Living & Ample Space
- Wide doorways and halls
- Non slip surfaces
- Good lighting/rocker light switches
- Lever door handles

*"I am an almost 52-year-old professional with a decent salary - you would think that I could afford to buy a house here. My 25-year-old son works at the mine and has good income but is contemplating moving to Anchorage because he can't find housing here. I love Juneau, my family is here and I plan to stay here when I retire, but I'm afraid buying a house here is not in the cards with today's prices". Jennifer G. Juneau Age 51*

84% of Seniors own their own homes in Juneau. Many would downsize if more age friendly housing were available potentially opening up more housing units for working age families. The JCOA continues to promote the concept of Universal Design that meets the needs of community members of all ages and abilities, while allowing aging at home and in community with minimal assistance.

**2025: JCOA recommends that the CBJ prioritize elements of Universal Design within the CBJ planning process to encourage building affordable age friendly housing that would attract and retain seniors, while also providing housing options to help attract and retain working age community members.**

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**ATTENDANCE:** Each board shall submit to the Assembly a brief annual report setting forth the activities and accomplishments of the committee and the attendance record of each committee member during the preceding twelve months.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Deborah Craig, Chair	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
Linda Kruger, Secy	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Carol Ende	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A
Jennifer Garrison	P	FM	P	P	FM	P	P	P	P	P	FM	P
Ann Stepetin	M	P	M	M	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	P
Kimberly Atkison	P	A	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P
Jennifer Carson	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	P
Emily Kane, Former Chair	P	P	P	A	P	P	R					
<b>Assy Liaison (no vote)</b>												
Waahlaal Giidaak/B. Blake	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A			
Maureen Hall											P	P

Key: P- Present, A – Absent, FM – Family Medical, M-Personal Medical, R – Resign

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