

## **Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) ... Housing Position Paper**

### **Overview**

In 2020, JCOA with the financial and technical support of CBJ conducted a survey of residents 55 and older. It clearly identified affordable, senior-friendly housing as a dominant concern that was inextricably connected with health care and cost of living concerns. Housing is defined not just as a roof overhead, but also as a home that meets the physical and financial needs of the elders living within it. Our goal is to have governing agencies, developers and individuals work to make Juneau have well-designed, age-friendly housing that allows elders to continue to spend their remaining years in Juneau.

### **Recommendations**

- A. CBJ needs to work with local developers and contractor to create programs that will encourage development of more senior-friendly housing using incentives, not regulations.
- B. Recognize that the senior population needs in Juneau includes all economic levels of home ownership. Support housing diversity at all price-points, both rentals and condos, as well as more innovative types of small housing that are appropriate for seniors as well as younger individuals buying their first home.
- C. We urge Juneau to look at new ideas for senior housing that could diversify options for all Elders and the community in general. : co-housing, Tiny Homes and micro-housing, college dorm-sharing, senior “village-to-village” organizations, and multigenerational housing, cottage style housing, etc. CBJ needs to support these new approaches by removing regulatory obstacles to their development.
- D. The city needs to have the overriding view that all housing approved in Juneau, whether starter homes for members of the workforce or seniors who want to downsize to age in place, meets the basic requirements for anyone regardless of a person’s age or physical ability. This is universal design adopted as a construction best practice. This means integrating age-friendly features into the design, regardless of the age of the targeted buyer today. Small single level homes are ideal for some, but the 2020 Survey also indicated a strong desire for single level condos and/or ones with elevators.
- E. Whatever your role in government, look for ways to facilitate age friendly housing, homes that are attractive to 1st time buyers as well as those residents who need to downsize ... universal design. Ask this question “What kind of housing do you imagine needing and wanting for your well-being as you move towards Elderhood?”

*(For more detail, see attached two detailed position papers, one for CBJ and the other for developers.)*