



JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING (JCOA)
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May 16, 2023

TO: Assembly Human Resources Committee Chair Greg Smith

FROM: Juneau Commission on Aging Chair Emily Kane

cc: Juneau Commission on Aging Committee Members

RE: Juneau Commission on Aging July 2022 – June 2023 Annual Report

Since publication in 2021 of the fourth decennial Senior Needs Survey (data mostly gathered pre-pandemic in 2019) the Juneau Commission on Aging (JCOA) has been focused on the top contenders for senior need in our community, namely senior friendly housing and access to personalized healthcare. A close third, and favorite focus of JCOA, is improving options for senior fitness, with an eye to outdoor activities in particular.

The JCOA has a housing subcommittee which has been laser focused on influencing the Assembly, CDC, Planning Commission and our local builders to adopt "universal design" principles both by carrot (grants, CBJ incentives, easements, increased density etc) and sticks (building code -- no traction here yet, alas). Attached is a basic list of the largely non-cumbersome elements of universal design, with the top 5 in bold. As an example, retro-fitting a bathroom with ADA-height toilet and reinforcing walls to support grab bars will run into the thousands of dollars. Setting up the bathroom with these features may add \$250 in upfront cost, which would be immediately reimbursed to the builder upon sale (or longer term rental) because of the increased value. **(attach Kathleen's most updated list)**

To begin to tackle the lack of healthcare personnel, in particular non-physician providers who can help seniors in their homes, a coalition (Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition) was formed with JCOA members and community stakeholders (including CCS, SAIL, SERRC and the Department of Labor) to recruit, train, and place trained eldercare workers in our community. Another important initiative for SREC is wage supplementation for agencies which already employ eldercare workers because unfortunately there is a great deal of turn-over due to non-competitive wages. **(attach intro to SREC that Deb made)**

JCOA also has a new subcommittee focused on increasing opportunities for senior recreation and we are looking forward to working with Parks and Recreation to help them move along some of their senior-focused projects (such as the elevator at Dimond Fieldhouse -- thank you for funding this!).

JCOA, in partnership with our local AARP Community Action Team (CAT) held a series of "Listening Sessions" and a total of X seniors attended. These seniors were able to get information from CBJ staff about the 4 major tax relief programs the borough offers, and also gave us feedback in 8 domains of "livability" which help make a community safe and easy to navigate for citizens of all ages. Juneau was recently awarded a place in the national AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. Anchorage received this recognition in 2022. This is not just an honor, but a responsibility, and the JCOA will continue to partner with Juneau AARP CAT to increase the age friendliness of our community. **(attach poster for Listening Sessions and image of AARP award)**