

To: Los Gatos Town Council
From: Community Health and Senior Services Committee (CHSSC)
Subject: Funding of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation 55+Program
Date: May 7, 2023

I. Background

LGSRec has been providing Senior Services to the town of Los Gatos through its 55 Plus program since 2009. Historically, LGSRec subsidized the 55 Plus program from the profits of other fee-based programs. In a letter to the Los Gatos Town Manager dated January 13, 2023, LGSRec stated that this was no longer possible and offered three different scenarios for funding (TOP, MID, LOW), seeking a partnership with the Town to sustain core senior services. On February 21, 2023 the Town Council discussed a potential allocation of \$225,000 to 55 Plus that was below what was required to execute the LOW plan. On March 2, 2023, LGSRec provided a recommendation of what the 55 Plus program could offer for the next 12 months based on a funding of \$225,000. The Town Council on March 7, 2023 directed the CHSSC to meet with LGSRec to review their proposal and determine whether or not it was workable given the goals of the Roadmap developed by the Senior Services Committee. The proposal was a topic of discussion at a meeting of the CHSSC on April 25, 2023 with representatives from LGSRec present. The discussion was spirited. A subcommittee of the CHSSC was formed to determine whether or not the proposal was acceptable to all parties.

II. The Senior Services Roadmap

The Senior Services Committee (SSC) was established by the Town Council in August 2021 to develop a long-term vision and plan for Senior Services provision in Los Gatos. A qualitative assessment of services available in Los Gatos was made and a Senior Services Roadmap was developed. The Roadmap was presented to and endorsed by the Town Council on February 7, 2023. It consisted of seven goals organized into 1 year, 3 years, and 10 years activities and then used these activities to develop specific projects for each goal area. Goal 2, Core Senior Services, called for the town to “ensure continuation of senior adult recreation, social, educational and healthy living provided by the 55 Plus program”. It called for funding and expanding essential services for all stages of aging but did not enumerate those services.

III. The CHSSC Subcommittee Analysis

It was obvious at the meeting on April 25th that the relationship between the Town Council and LGSRec was strained. LGSRec, an independent vendor, had provided the town with a proposal that incorporated less than the “LOW” level of service proposed earlier and the Los Gatos Town Council wanted assurances that “essential” services would be covered by its minimal offering. Since all of the 55 Plus programs are popular, relevant, and deemed important as evidenced by the record number of members and group activities, it is not possible for the CHSSC to either identify which specific activities are essential or conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the proposed offerings.

Each activity, including the maintenance and expansion of the HUB, involves LGSRec staff time and effort, and the CHSSC is not equipped to look at and evaluate what are the best “social/educational” activities in isolation and certainly not in a position to prioritize them.

We do know that the funding of the Staffing Model, a total of 2.0 FTE, for the less than LOW service model is very competitive, but it is not within CHSSC’s purview to negotiate with LGSRec regarding its overall budget.

IV. Recommendations and Conclusions

The CHSSC appreciates LGSRec’s responses to the many questions posed by our committee. Their responses allow us to better understand their operation and can be utilized to improve communications among CHSSC, the LGSRec, and the Los Gatos Town Council.

The CHSSC and the SSC both agree that a Case Manager would be a powerful addition to the 55 Plus service offering and we encourage the Town Council to consider the additional funding necessary to provide that resource. Ultimately, any additional funding is a Los Gatos Town Council budgetary decision.

In conclusion, the CHSSC is confident that whatever support is allocated to LGSRec for Senior Services will be effectively utilized to provide “essential services” via the 55+ program.