

Date: June 15, 2022
To: Los Gatos Town Council
From: Los Gatos Senior Services Committee

Subject: Council Approval of Senior Services Roadmap Goals

Roadmap Goals

1. Communications & Information Access

Older adults and caregivers need ways to learn information about available services, resources and events in multiple formats. Our survey and workshops point to this area as a critical need to solve problems, participate in community activities and enhance one's quality of life. Our benchmark results for other cities indicated that we can do a much better job. This goal helps residents age in place. Areas addressed would include:

- Availability of resources, activities, programs (clubs, local centers and government -supported services, etc.)
- Presented in the form of an Information Hub (trusted, well-curated content on services availability, activities pointer, events calendar, etc.) - short term. Includes web, mobile, and social network capabilities. Phone feature with live senior services and volunteer coordinator - longer term
- Navigation to services tools (medical, maintain physical health)
- Promote county mental/behavioral health offerings and services
- Promote food security and options
- Information included from our other goals on transportation, volunteering and housing (stay in home support options, wellness calls, assistive devices)

2. Appealing and Inviting Facility (Renovate or Build)

Renovate or build a community facility including older adult space/services. Age-friendly communities have spaces that are welcoming where residents can come together to engage in social, educational, and enriching activities. Community centers which either include or are dedicated to the needs of older adults provide an important focal point for residents and are found in all our benchmarked cities. Approaches to building or refurbishing facilities are many, but in every case have required a concerted, long-term effort with deliberate planning. This area would address:

- More welcoming building with adequate multipurpose space than currently exists. A portion of the facility dedicated to meet the needs of older adults
- A funding strategy, fund-raising mechanisms and a 501(c)(3) Friends of Seniors to provide long-term support

- Coordinated community strategy and support for development of senior facilities
- Intergenerational space for meetings, clubs, community events, recreational, cultural, educational, learning, health education and information services
- Deliberate evaluation of effectiveness and value of investment in existing facilities
- Evaluate multiple use options and how Town assets might be utilized in the creation of a community facility

3. Increase Engagement in Social, Educational and Healthy Living Activities

Productive activities outside of work promote quality of life and contribute to active aging. Finding and engaging in social activity and volunteering in activities of interest becomes increasingly challenging as people age. Opportunities to participate and socialize with others, volunteer in meaningful and productive activities and engage in the community in which one lives contribute to a feeling of belonging and personal satisfaction. Efforts to increase engagement and participation would consider:

- Consistent availability, coordination, engagement, and age-friendly accessibility of weekly activities and monthly social events
- Promotion ranging from print to in-person engagement by going to where older adults live (ambassadors, volunteers, etc.)
- Finding ways to subsidize existing programs to expand reach to seniors - medium to short term
- Enlisting local organizations and expertise to help enhance programming
- No or minimal fees except for specific services
- Highlight special events and make them age-friendly
- Funding and expanding essential services for all stages of aging including adult day care and nutrition programs
- Training and classes to enhance marketable and/or new skills
- Personal safety, scam avoidance, legal assistance awareness, etc.

4. Enhance Transportation Options for Older Adults

Livable communities facilitate transportation options for older adults, including auto, bicycling, walking and public transportation. Older adults consider the need for flexible transportation options to be especially important as they age, including:

- Better information distribution on mobility options (e.g., VTA Senior Mobility Guide)
- RYDE awareness and enhancement
- VTA and VTA Access awareness

- Lyft/Uber supplemented programs
- In-Town shuttle provided by Town
- Last minute rides through volunteer network
- Options for mobility-challenged older adults

5. Volunteer Support and Engagement

Vibrant communities provide opportunities for older members to become volunteers and/or to find needed assistance from volunteers. Promoting and supporting volunteerism allows the community to marshal the expertise of seniors and to increase engagement of older adults for the benefit of the entire community. This effort would include:

- Develop and coordinate volunteer opportunity exchange (aggregated Town page of opportunities)
- Support connections between service providers, clubs and those interested in volunteering (consider holding volunteer fair)
- Support equitable and inclusive processes to engage senior volunteers
- Consider a 'Community Unity' bulletin board approach for two-way volunteering as promoted in the past by former Mayor Wasserman

6. Develop integrated governance, funding, and accountability for senior services

Currently our Town has a distributed model of senior services with minimal central planning, measurement, coordination or accountability for maintaining and advancing services. Benchmarking results show that most cities have a more integrated governance model which can result in greater support, more successful funding initiatives and greater transparency of senior services operations. This area is challenging but could result in increased efficiencies, enhanced senior services and long-term stability of programs. Successful governance models by other cities will be examined to determine the best model for Los Gatos:

- Different models (role of nonprofits, city administration, etc.)
- Coordinated management model (accountability, metrics, oversight, etc.) versus distributed model
- Funding mechanisms to help support older adult programs and services
- Sustainable financial plan, including pro forma budgets for consideration by deciding bodies
- Methods for measurement, accountability and maintaining transparency
- Approaches to maintain Town oversight

7. Senior Housing - Information on Approaches and Options

Many older residents expressed a desire to continue to live in Los Gatos after retirement and to enjoy their community and friends as they age. Needs change as people age, requiring a knowledge of and advice on a wide range of senior living options. Mixed-use neighborhoods with nearby opportunities to eat, shop, work/volunteer and receive services can enhance the quality of life for seniors. The Town can support senior living by encouraging such developments and providing education, information and opportunities for mutual learning on housing including:

- Types of housing, facilities and options for senior living
- Personal safety devices, scam avoidance, legal assistance awareness, etc.
- Help with transitional housing opportunities (including mental health)
- Promote new urbanism emphasizing walkable spaces where people can live close to places where they can eat, shop, work and receive services