



JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING AGENDA

May 16, 2023 at 10:30 AM

Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/81491760970?pwd=bkFwWk42Mllmazl0aFdMS3ArTG5qZz09>

Or Call In: 1-253-215-8782

Meeting ID: 814 9176 0970 Passcode: 858248

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. 2023-04-25 Juneau Commission on Aging Minutes - Draft

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

E. AGENDA TOPICS

2. Drafting JCOA Annual Report to the Assembly

3. JCOA - Standing Agenda Topics - Main Projects/Subcommittee Updates

A.) Housing for Seniors

B.) May Listening Sessions

C.) Improving Volunteer Database

D.) Creating Senior Fitness & Social Opportunities

E.) Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition

F.) 2020 Senior Needs Survey - [website link to full survey](#) (Executive Summary included in packet)

F. ASSEMBLY LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

G. NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 - JCOA/AARP Listening Session 4:30pm at Mendenhall Library

Tuesday, May 23, 2023 - JCOA/AARP Listening Session 4:30pm at Douglas Library

Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 10:30am via Zoom - Regular JCOA Meeting

H. ADJOURNMENT

ADA accommodations available upon request: Please contact the Clerk's office 36 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made for closed captioning or sign language interpreter services depending on the meeting format. The Clerk's office telephone number is 586-5278, TDD 586-5351, e-mail: city.clerk@juneau.gov.

JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING MINUTES

April 25, 2023 at 10:30 AM

Zoom Webinar



<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/81491760970?pwd=bkFwWk42Mllmazl0aFdMS3ArTG5qZz09>

Or Call In: 1-253-215-8782

Meeting ID: 814 9176 0970 Passcode: 858248

- A. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL** - Emily called the meeting to order at 10:32. Present: Emily Kane, Deb Craig, Linda Kruger, Kathleen Samalon, Jennifer Garrison, Jenn Carson, Carol Ende, Sue Warner, Ann Stepetin, Michelle Hale.
- B. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - There were no objections or changes
- C. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - There were no objections or changes
 - 1. **2023-03-21 Juneau Commission on Aging Minutes**
- D. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**
 - 2. **Public Comment Received for the JCOA** - One letter was received, and Emily will respond.
- E. **AGENDA TOPICS**

Some items listed below have been tabled for future discussion.

a.) Drafting JCOA Annual Report to the Assembly - Emily will begin drafting a report. She will focus on housing, outdoor fitness, and success of SREC. Michelle offered her support for the JCOA. The report should be submitted to the Assembly by the end of June.

b.) Create Process for Responding to JCOA Public Comments Received- Emily will receive letters to the JCOA from DI. Deb, Emily and Linda will build on the template developed by Carol and Kathleen so that letters have both some standard language and also respond to the specific questions or comments submitted. Linda suggested that JCOA or the AARP-CAT invite people who submit comments to help work with the Age-Friendly Initiative subcommittee.

c.) Initiate Research on Feasibility to Expand Pioneer Home ([SOA/Dept. Family & Community Services](#))- Kathleen and Carol reported that there are no plans to expand the Pioneer Home. We will continue to explore options for Senior Housing.

d.) Guest Speaker from Catholic Community Services (CCS) - tabled until June or July. We did discuss the possibility of having a Navigator at the Senior Center or The Bridge. We can talk more with CCS when we meet with them at a future meeting.

3. JCOA - Standing Agenda Topics - Main Projects/Subcommittee Updates

A.) Housing for Seniors -discussion of any future expansion of the Pioneer Home. Probably no future expansion. We can focus on supporting their mission and goals. Kathleen encourages review of the two documents in today's packet that recommend building age-friendly housing and a focus on seniors. Use these ideas as talking points. One is for developers one is focused on local government. Housing options are explored. What kind of housing can we imagine for seniors in Juneau? Letter should go to contractors **after acceptance by CBJ**. Age-Friendly Housing. Include comments from Senior Survey. What can CBJ do to support innovative senior housing? Move the conversation forward.

B.) Age-Friendly Listening Sessions - poster was in the packet. JCOA and AARP members will be present at all three meetings. Meetings are: May 9 Downtown Library 4:30 - 6:00 PM; May 16 Valley Dimond Park Library 4:30 - 6:00 PM; and May 23 Douglas Library 4:30 - 6:00 PM.

C.) Improving Volunteer Database - tabled

D.) Creating Senior Fitness & Social Opportunities - Sue - will initiate a sub-committee

E.) Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition - Deb - SREC has funding for a fulltime position as a Navigator. Will be housed at SAIL. No MOA with JEDC laying out roles and responsibilities. Hoping to have a signed MOA soon. SREC would like JCOA to support SREC. Deb asked the JCOA for a letter of support for SREC and a MOA with JEDC. Sue requested a copy of the letter and it will be sent to all JCOA members. Letter from JCOA on CBJ letterhead is ok. SREC and JEDC worked to try to come to an agreement but JEDC has been unwilling to sign a MOA with SREC. The project has been on hold. The JCOA voted to send a letter of support.

F.) 2020 Senior Needs Survey - [website link to full survey](#) (Executive Summary included in packet) - tabled for a future discussion. The needs survey will be included in the analysis for the Age-Friendly Plan.

F. ASSEMBLY LIAISON COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS - COW meeting - Lands, Housing and Economic Development meeting - renewing Accessory Dwelling Unit Incredible work - ask Chair Lands, Housing and Economic Development Committee to give a presentation. Alisha Hughes-Skandis. Michelle would help bring this to that committee. Michelle is personally interested in building a tiny home. Zoning doesn't allow it. She would love it to enable her sister-in-law to live here. We need new homes! Accessory Dwelling Grants - don't require accessory dwelling and often become Air B&Bs. There is a restriction. CBJ-COW will be looking at accessory dwellings. Some people have gotten City funding for Accessory Units and then don't use the accessory unit. Hard to enforce. Deb has demographic info about the changing demographics in Juneau that she could share....if we are interested.

Emily asked Michelle how to sort out CBJ Lands Committee, CBJ Planning Commission and CBJ Community Development Department. Michelle recommended asking Lands Committee about proper process for input and questions...and be patient because nothing will happen quickly. Currently they are looking at Accessory Dwelling Units. Kathleen, Carol and Emily will work to get on the agenda and develop what to move forward.

The City Manager and Finance Director are leaving. The current City Treasurer will become Finance Director. Christine Woll will lead a special committee to select a City Manager.

Tax relief for seniors - sales tax exemption for food, hardship rebate for sales tax - form is onerous, property tax - relief for seniors-- \$150K unfunded mandate from the state, hardship real property exemption - lots of people qualify and don't apply. Michelle will talk with City Manager and Finance Department. Finance Department knows the forms need to be revised. Michelle will reach out to gain improvements. Linda has spoken with Ruth Kostik in the Finance Department and they are aware of the complicated and confusing forms, programs, etc., and they want to simplify and streamline the forms and processes for seniors. Almost anything they want to change will require Assembly action. It is nice to have Michelle as our Liaison to help us support these changes. The Finance Department is sending someone to answer questions and help people understand the senior exemption and relief programs at each of the public listening sessions.

G. NEXT MEETING DATE

Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 10:30am via Zoom - Regular JCOA Meeting

Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 10:00am at UAS Egan Library Rm 211 - JCOA Housing Subcommittee Meeting

H. ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 am.



JUNEAU COMMISSION ON AGING (JCOA)

Section E, Item 2.

C/O Office of the Municipal Clerk

155 S. Seward St., Room 202

Phone: (907)586-5278

City.Clerk@juneau.gov

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.

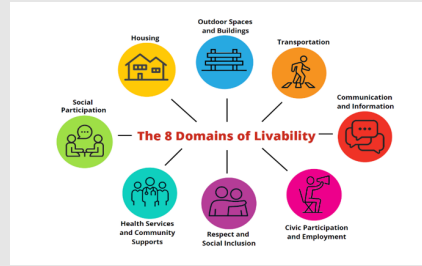
The JCOA has a housing subcommittee which has been laser focused on influencing the Assembly, CDC, Planning Commission and our local builders to adopt "universal design" principles both by carrot (grants, CBJ incentives, easements, increased density etc) and sticks (building code -- no traction here 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!).

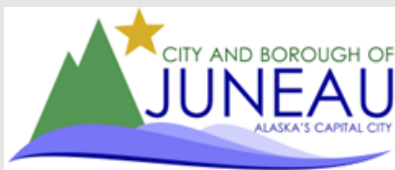
JCOA, in partnership with our local AARP Community Action Team (CAT) held a series of "Listening Sessions" and a total of X seniors attended. These seniors were able to get information from CBJ staff about the 4 major tax relief programs the borough offers, and also gave us feedback in 8 domains of "livability" 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)**

You are invited to share Age Friendly Input!



Join the AARP AK Juneau Community Action Team and Juneau Commission on Aging at one of our "Listening Sessions" on Juneau as an Age Friendly/Livable Community.

Share your thoughts on what makes Juneau inclusive for seniors and community members of all ages and abilities and ways to improve Age Friendly inclusivity and Livability.



Tuesday, May 9th - Downtown Library
Tuesday, May 16th - Valley Library
Tuesday, May 23rd - Douglas Library
All Sessions are 4:30 pm - 6 pm

Executive Summary 2020 Senior Needs Survey

Introduction

Beginning in the spring of 2019, the Juneau Commission on Aging conducted a survey of Juneau residents aged 55 and older. This survey was the fourth in a series of similar surveys conducted at approximately ten-year intervals beginning in 1989. Although the members of the JCOA are local volunteers, CBJ allocates a budget for the creation, analysis, and distribution of the survey. The 2020 Senior Needs Survey budget was \$23,809. As in prior years, the general intent of this survey is to provide data to the Juneau community and assist the City and Borough of Juneau in making informed decisions when planning for senior services and infrastructure changes in the coming years. This Senior Needs Survey was the first to collect responses electronically. There were 1,845 survey responses, 256 of which were manually entered from hard copy surveys. Note that this survey was conducted from June through November in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

One benefit of conducting these surveys is it prompts participants to revisit assumptions, review organizational structures, and learn more about the valuable services that already exist. Since the surveys have been conducted at approximately ten-year intervals, the results of this and prior surveys now provide points of comparison for future surveys as you will see in the details of this document. Thus, we hope this survey can provide present and future policy makers with valuable insights not only into existing services and gaps in services but also of demographic trends over long periods of time. Providing real-time data to inform policies that improve the lives of seniors residing within CBJ is the purpose of our efforts.

Background and Methodology

This report generally analyzes responses question-by-question. The discussion examines the trends of responses over the four surveys (1989, 1998, 2010 and 2020) and takes a more in-depth look at the snapshot of attitudes, situations, and suggestions of the senior population based on responses to the 2020 survey open-ended questions.

In addition to meeting the basic intent of informing the planning process, this survey and the associated analysis provides other, perhaps less well-known or understood benefits.

Conducting a survey with this much detail elicits a wealth of diverse ideas and opinions.

The City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) and its assembly, which commissions this survey every 10 years, are motivated to keep seniors in Juneau and in their homes when desired and feasible. Seniors contribute enormously to CBJ’s economy. They also provide an immeasurable number of hours of volunteer support and creative problem-solving experience to non-profit organizations.

Demographics

The most notable difference in results from prior surveys is the number of respondents living in “Downtown Juneau” compared to the number living in the Valley. The Valley has seen a dramatic increase in its senior population while Downtown Juneau has seen a sharp decline in its senior population over the past 10 years.

Compared to results in 2010, there is a shift in the last decade toward more home ownership and less rental. Seventy-six percent of respondents now live in houses compared to 65 percent in 2010. While the majority of respondents, 84 percent overall, own their home, seniors ages 75 and older show a transition away from home

ownership to rentals. This further supports the idea that younger seniors are aging in place in the homes they purchased in the Valley when they first moved to Juneau.

Eighty percent of respondents have lived in Juneau 20 years or more. Almost one quarter, 24 percent, have lived in Juneau 31 to 40 years, and 22 percent have lived here 41 to 50 years. There are few that move to Juneau as seniors. The majority of seniors in Juneau have aged in place having grown up here or moved here for work.

In 2020, just under half of all respondents, 46 percent, indicated that they have executed an advanced directive. Sixty-three percent of respondents provided estimated household income, with 44 percent of these seniors indicating income over \$100,000 and 11 percent indicating income under \$50,000.

Findings

Four themes came up consistently in the analysis of this survey of current CBJ seniors (ages 55 and older), all relating to how Juneau's senior population feels about their ability to continue to live in Juneau – to age in place.

1. Housing and in-home care
2. Specialty medical care
3. Cost-of-living
4. Support Services

It is important to note that topics that don't come up frequently can still be important to address. For example, about 7 percent of respondents reported they cannot afford dental care. While that means the majority of seniors are not in need, having 7 percent of seniors not able to afford dental care is not ideal. Lack of dental care will likely create requirements for more expensive procedures in the future, increasing the burden on government programs and nonprofits.

Housing and In Home Care

Housing was the most mentioned topic in this survey and is a pivotal issue when making the decision to stay or leave Juneau. Availability of affordable assisted living housing, affordable independent senior housing, and services to help residents continue to live in their own homes were identified as the top senior priorities that need work in Juneau.

The increase in fees at the Pioneer Home was unanimously condemned. Respondents indicated they could not or would not be able to afford the fee increases and will have to find alternative housing and care elsewhere, more than likely outside of Alaska. Having affordable housing that can accommodate the needs of seniors is absolutely essential for them to continue living in Juneau. It is important to note that the survey questions did not specifically ask about the fee increases at the Alaska Pioneer Homes meaning those seniors who shared their opinion likely felt strongly about the increased fees and are not necessarily representative of the survey population.

The greatest percent, 29 percent, anticipated a need for a more accessible/lower maintenance home, a need that could be met by adaptations to one's current home as opposed to living elsewhere. Although Juneau's senior

population was not knowledgeable of many nationally growing alternative housing programs (Integrated Resident Communities, The Village to Village Network, etc.), the "Tiny Home" concept showed the most familiarity with 13 percent saying it would be a good fit in Juneau.

Affordable senior independent housing was the top answer for Question 45 "What do you think

Juneau residents aged 55 or older need that is not now adequately and/or readily available in Juneau?”

Specialty Medical Care

The need for medical services outside of Juneau is spread among many medical conditions, but the greatest stated need among this age group was for cataract surgery. (Note: since the survey data gathering was closed, in December of 2019, a monthly visiting ophthalmologic surgeon now rotates to Juneau who provides this service.) Dental care and dentures, hearing aids and eyeglasses were mentioned more than the other services, such as wheelchairs, likely because Medicare and many insurance plans do not cover these services.

Respondents were asked if they have ever gone without medication because it was unaffordable. Only two out of 1,665 answering this question said that was the case. Very few seniors have been denied medical or other senior services. Written comments indicated a problem finding providers who accept Medicare or Medicaid patients. Over 60 percent of the 63 explanations about being denied health care services were about providers not accepting Medicare or Medicaid.

A few of the medical needs that respondents felt they couldn't get or couldn't get at a quality level include long term pain management, respite care, rheumatologist, urologist, dermatologist, internist, periodontal care, ophthalmologist, and allergist. A shortage of physicians trained to deal with and treat senior citizen's medical and mental health problems was identified. In-home elder care, including managing, scheduling, and administering medications, was also identified as a need.

Cost-of-Living

Forty-eight responses identified the cost of living in Juneau as an issue in the additional comments question. The costs of health care, local taxes and housing were the most mentioned expenses, with the lack of affordable housing being the most mentioned concern.

The cost of travelling to and from Juneau is important to seniors, especially to those with family out of state or who need to go out of state for specialized medical care. The Alaska Marine Highway System is used by a large percentage of respondents (77 percent) and is highly valued by Juneau's senior community.

The reduction of the senior sales tax exemption from all purchases to just “essential” items was strongly condemned. There were 66 responses that addressed this topic, nearly all of which voiced support for keeping or expanding the senior sales tax exemption to all purchases. Some respondents expressed a feeling of betrayal when the sales tax exemption was reduced to “essential” purchases. While most responses indicated support for a full reinstatement of the exemption, some provided more specific suggestions such as adding phone/internet bills to the list of exempt purchases by seniors. Responses also indicated that one of the problems with this change is it impacted all seniors, including those who have already done their financial planning and counted on the full exemption. Several respondents pleaded for the city to leave the senior property tax exemption at the current level or raise the deducted amount. It is important to note that the topic of sales tax exemptions was not mentioned in the survey questions. This means those who mentioned this topic are likely those who felt strongly about it and do not necessarily represent or summarize the views of Juneau's senior population.

Support services

“Which of the Following Services in Juneau Do You Use?” was a new question in the 2020 survey. Forty-six percent of the respondents said they don’t use any of the services listed. AARP is used by 25 percent of all respondents; CBJ pools are used by 24 percent; and CBJ Parks and Recreation programs are used by 19 percent.

Results show that more than half of all respondents use five Juneau agencies: State of Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles, CBJ, Alaska Marine Highway, State of Alaska Fish and Game, and the U.S. Social Security Administration. The America the Beautiful Senior Pass and UAS are the next most selected.

The percentage of respondents that use one of the Senior Centers located within CBJ dropped significantly from 14 percent in 2010 to 5 percent in 2020. The Valley has seen a dramatic increase in its senior population while Downtown Juneau has seen a sharp decline in its senior population. The closure of the Valley Senior Center and decreased population around the Juneau Senior Center (located downtown) likely had some influence on the decrease in usage of senior centers. Douglas has its own senior center and the Douglas Island population has stayed relatively flat since 2010.

Thirty-four percent of all respondents were interested in attending a community meal in 2020. In 2010, only 25 percent were interested in using a communal meal service. Comments indicated that seniors were interested in not only a meal service, but also in the opportunity to get out and socialize with other seniors. Furthermore, seniors 75 and older were much more interested in this option than younger seniors, 42 percent compared to 29 percent. Sixty-one percent of the respondents said they would be willing to pay between \$5-10.

About 34 percent of the respondents use the city bus system. Overall, for the seniors who ride the bus, not enough protection from the weather at bus stops, no place to sit and no service beyond Auke Bay rose to the top as unmet needs. However, looking only at seniors 75 and over, the greatest need was for bus stops to be closer to their homes.

In 2020, respondents were asked how often they do volunteer work. Only 37 percent report never doing volunteer work, compared to 51 percent in 2010 and over 60 percent in prior surveys. There appears to be a trend of increasing rates of volunteerism over the decades. Only small differences are seen in rates of volunteer work across age cohorts.

Seniors from ages 55 to 74 ranked nature/outdoor opportunities as the most important aspect of the decision to live in Juneau. By far, all age groups chose walking as their preferred activity. Winter safety (slipping and physical snow barriers) was identified as an issue.

Question 45 of the survey asked ““What do you think Juneau residents aged 55 or older need that is not now adequately and/or readily available in Juneau?”

Reading and understanding the responses provides an insight into the diversity of needs of Juneau’s senior community. Some of the stated needs are easier to address than others. Hundreds of write-in comments were submitted, with a sampling provided here and additional comments provided in Appendix 1.

- gym-activity access, weight trainers, pickleball
- financial planning and assistance
- more medical care housing options than Wildflower Court or Pioneer Home
- Senior retirement complex with separate 1 or 2-bedroom apartments with dining facilities, exercise, hobby, and community areas

- More dementia care facilities
 - Companion surrogates
 - Volunteer or lower rate pay handymen/women to help with house maintenance
 - inexpensive assistance with big household chores, like moving things and big cleaning jobs
 - In home safety installation program to help install necessary grab bars and ramps as mobility declines;
- to stay safe at home
- social activities, dances, events for Seniors that are also active/independent
 - snow cleared off sidewalks
 - I hope the city stops adding taxes and fees to the seniors. They help the homeless but not the seniors on fixed incomes.
 - Stop escalating home valuations that drive up property taxes
 - Condos one level, affordable single level housing
 - Tax exemptions to include food for in-home pets (dog & cat only)
 - Financial grants and advice to help with accessibility issues like ramps and stairs
 - Therapy pool
 - Internet services and education, problem solving