



## **Arlington County --- 5-Year Update Elder Readiness Task Force Recommendations March 1, 2012**

### **Background**

The County Board appointed an Elder Readiness Task Force in February 2006, charged with assessing the County's capacity to serve as home to a growing number of older people and to develop a blueprint for strategies to enable Arlington residents to age in place. The Task Force presented its recommendations in December 2006.

The Vision enunciated by the Task Force is:

- Arlington is a community that knows and values its older population, including who they are, where they live, and the characteristics that define their special place in the community.
- Arlington supports and listens to its seniors, as well as to those who care for and support them, through programs, outreach and policies, as part of an overall culture that recognizes and responds to their specialized needs and desires.
- Arlington enables its aging population to have equal access to Arlington's array of housing, transportation, recreation, health care and lifestyle choices so that they can continue to contribute and remain valued members of the community as long as possible.

### **Update**

There has been significant progress in following up on the Task Force recommendations.

There were six categories of Task Force recommendations: Crosscutting, Housing, Supportive Service and Health Care, Transportation, Community Involvement/Civic Engagement, and Legislative. Progress was made in all categories.

### **Crosscutting**

- Enhance Communication and Increase Volunteerism
  - The Interdepartmental Working Group was established; it issued bi-monthly e-newsletters, [A Community for All Ages](#)
  - The non-profit, 501c(3) organization, the Alliance for Arlington Senior Programs was incorporated with the intent of supporting programs and activities and strengthening community connections. For more information, see Community Involvement below.
  - Using social media, the all-volunteer Commission on Aging established a Facebook page and a Twitter account to communicate with the public.

### **Housing**

- A 2-year pilot, "Vertical Village," was established at Wildwood Park. This program is designed to allow elders to "age in the community," by accessing needed services. An evaluation of the pilot project will be conducted.

- The Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence opened in November, 2010. It will serve 52 residents age 55 and over with cognitive impairments or serious mental illness.
- The Zoning Ordinance provides for Accessory Units and Family Suites. In FY 2009 and FY2010, five Accessory Units and 5 Family Suites have been approved.
- Smart Choice Homes, Arlington's signature visitability/universal design material, is available to the public. A website, brochure, and 2-page summary are being distributed widely. <http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/HumanServices/AgingDisability/page70248.aspx>

### **Supportive Services and Health Care**

- A Customer Service Center was established in the Department of Human Services Aging and Disability Services Division to provide 1-stop access to services for residents age 60 and over including a Virtual Resource Center. The Center initiated intensive outreach to diverse neighborhoods, including Nauck.
- An Adult Day Health Center was opened in the new Walter Reed Community Center.
- Enhanced mental health crisis and stabilization services are provided to elders who have been discharged from a state psychiatric hospital or who are at risk of placement in a hospital. This is the RAFT program that serves Northern Virginia; Arlington manages the program on behalf of the region. Most of the clients live in nursing homes or assisted living residences; RAFT staff provides direct service to the clients, and consultation and training to staff of these long-term care residences.

### **Transportation**

- Basic STAR service has been expanded to provide service on a temporary basis for medical appointments for people awaiting MetroAccess certification or who have a short term disability. Subsidies are available for older low-income STAR users for health care appointments. A New Freedom grant is providing "Door-Through-Door" service for Arlington and Alexandria residents (assistance in getting to and from a health care appointment.)
- Bicycle use has been enhanced in several ways. The Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Senior Adult Programs sponsors bike groups, ART busses have bike racks, and by March 2012 26 Capital Area Bike Share stations will be open in Arlington.
- Most ART buses are low-floor and by April 2012, all buses in regular service will be low-floor.
- The ENDependence Center and the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind provide training to people who need help in learning how to use Metrobus, Metrorail or ART.
- Policies support 6-ft minimum sidewalk clear zones in commercial areas, and 5-ft minimum sidewalk width in single family residential neighborhoods.
- Signals are being upgraded to support pedestrian crossing.

### **Community Involvement – Civic Engagement**

- Peer transition counseling service is available; a computer café was established at the Culpepper Garden Senior Center. The Alliance for Arlington Senior Programs funded both programs.

### **Legislative**

- When considering applications from developers for tax credits, the Virginia Housing and Development Authority now awards points for use of universal design features in single family and multifamily construction.