



City of Seattle
Mayor Edward B. Murray

March 14, 2017

Honorable Bruce Harrell
President, Seattle City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Harrell:

Attached for Council consideration is a resolution expressing the City of Seattle's commitment to being a more age-friendly community.

On August 31, 2016, I announced the City's new official designation as a member of the AARP/World Health Organization (WHO) network of Age-Friendly Communities. Becoming a more Age-Friendly Seattle is critical, given the following context:

- According to King County, in the next 20 years, its population of people over the age of 60 will grow from 15 to 25 percent.
- Although it is true that many of those moving to Seattle tend to be younger, King County population data show approximately 18 percent of King County's population is over 60 years of age and one-third of seniors living in King County live in the City of Seattle.
- Basic needs, such as food, housing, health, social support, are going unmet for too many of our older citizens, particularly people of color.
- Housing costs for older residents, especially those on fixed incomes, can be a hardship when property taxes rise, utility costs increase, and home repairs require attention.
- Transportation costs can limit transportation options and access to convenient options such as on-demand and wheelchair accessible services.
- Transportation alternatives can be limited for those no longer wishing to drive and an unfriendly pedestrian environment can limit mobility.
- Transportation provides critical linkages for seniors to their communities for social interaction and to their networks for services and care.
- As people grow older, their greatest unmet need is the need for social interaction. Social isolation diminishes mental health, physical health and civic participation; and increases private and public costs for health care, long-term care, and mental health.

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As Seattle and other cities experience these demographic shifts, the need for age-friendly design and policy is becoming ever more critical. From urban planning, growth, and development to housing, transportation, and services, Seattle's polices should recognize the needs and participation of the elderly. As Seattle grows, it is important that it do so equitably. Age-Friendly Seattle provides a clear policy framework to help us strengthen this commitment and make equitable access a reality for people of all ages and abilities

Seattle has a long history of supporting older adults by investing in services and supporting policies that enable people to age in their communities. I look forward to working with the Council, Seattle elders, and community partners to elevate this work and ensure that Seattle is a great place for everyone to grow up and grow old.

Sincerely,



Edward B. Murray
Mayor, City of Seattle

cc: Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council