

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

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SALA
Senior Adults Legal Assistance

Attachment 3
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October 22, 2014

Suzanne Ise
Katrina Ardina
City of Sunnyvale, Community Development Department
456 W. Olive Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

RE: Priority Needs in Sunnyvale for 2015-2016/2016-2017 Human Services

Dear Ms. Ise and Ms. Ardina,

Senior Adults Legal Assistance (SALA) submits these comments regarding priority Human Needs for the 2015-2016/2016-2017 Human Services Funding Cycle. We thank you for inviting us to submit these comments. We request that our letter be distributed to the Commission and that these written comments become part of that hearing record.

We understand the Commission is interested in information about priority needs for which the City's Human Services funding might be used for the next two year funding cycle. The need for Legal Assistance for seniors who are low income and at-risk is one such area that is currently identified in Sunnyvale's 2010-2015 HUD Consolidated Plan under Goal C, Objective #1 D "*other specialized supportive services as may be requested by the community, such as ...legal assistance for seniors.*"

We support the staff recommendation that the Commission adopt Alternative 1 approving priority human service needs as described in the current 2010-2015 Consolidated Plan, because this includes legal assistance for seniors under the Other Specialized Supportive Services category. However we note that we also deliver critical "safety net" services that assist seniors to meet their basic needs by ensuring their access to public benefits to pay for their necessities or by preventing the loss of their shelter/housing as a result of evictions, housing discrimination, or discharges from care facilities. We hope that the funding targets for each category will allow for flexibility for projects that address needs in more than one category to respond to the number of qualified applicants per category.

We also hope the Commission will support the staff recommendation regarding Alternative 3 to set aside and confirm the annual appropriation of \$100,000 in General Funds for Supplemental Human Services.

The remainder of this letter documents the need for legal assistance for seniors and provides information about the legal services SALA provided to Sunnyvale residents in FY 2011-12, in particular how these services impacted their lives. That information will also demonstrate that legal issues are often imbedded in many areas of service essential to the elder population's daily survival.

THE NEED FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

We preface this section by noting that Legal Assistance provides support to elders across numerous fields of human service, so the need for this service tends to be under-reported and under-ranked as a priority when funders conduct needs assessments. For the foregoing reason, our comments are limited to the need for Legal Assistance by elders. The limitation of our comments to this need area should not be construed as our position regarding the relative merits of any other human service needs in Sunnyvale or as an indication that we believe that they are not important needs as well.

A. Documentation of Need from Local Needs Assessments

Needs reports prepared by Council on Aging Silicon Valley (now known as Sourcewise) and by the County of Santa Clara provide documentation of the critical need for accessible and affordable legal services for local elders, in particular for those seniors that are low income or at risk (SALA's target population), to keep them independent and to prevent their abuse, conservatorship, or premature institutionalization. Specifically, the Council on Aging (COA) Area Plan on Aging 2009-2012 notes that legal assistance is a priority need *"to help older persons to obtain services and benefits including protective services for financial abuse, competence and conservatorship"*. COA's Area Plan on Aging 2012-16 affirms that legal services are a priority service and notes such services *"are crucial in helping keep seniors in their homes"* and *"are absolutely vital to those in need of them."*

Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Indigent Residents of Santa Clara County, a report prepared for the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in August 2001, confirms the findings of the COA and notes: *"legal representation and counsel can be essential to the elderly and their families in gaining access to health, income, and social services."* A Community for Life, the ten year strategic plan on aging completed by the County of Santa Clara and City of San Jose in February 2005, identifies the availability of legal assistance at senior centers as a *"key service need"*. In fact, this needs assessment states that when asked which programs and activities they would like senior centers to offer, legal services was one of three services that was identified by more than one half of the older adults that participated in the telephone survey that was conducted in conjunction with this report.

Most recently, the report entitled Santa Clara County Seniors' Agenda: A Quality of Life Assessment, prepared for the Board of Supervisors in April 2012, identified legal assistance and elder abuse prevention as key service/safety net needs locally, noting SALA *"is the only non-profit elder law office in the county focused on the legal needs of seniors"* and that SALA's target population includes *"seniors who are most likely at risk for abuse, exploitation, and institutionalization"*.

The Senior's Agenda report further states that one of the big challenges to providing free legal services to seniors are the drastic reductions in funding that have taken place and increased over the last several years, noting that two major consequences of reduced funding are an increase in the waiting lists and a decrease in the number of clients to be served. Significantly, waiting times for SALA appointments at many of the agency's community based sites average a minimum of 2 months, with seven sites currently booking SALA appointments well into 2014.

The need for legal services, as well as other supportive services for seniors, will continue to grow along with the older population's growth. United Way's recent Community Impact Report notes that the older population is expected increase from 11% to nearly 27% of the County's population by 2040. It also states that *"the growing number of older adults will undoubtedly require an increase in human services delivered to this population."*

Based upon the sources cited above, we believe there is sufficient documentation that Legal Assistance continues to be a need that is critical to the lives and well being of elders in Sunnyvale, particularly those that are at-risk and/or low-income. We also believe this documentation supports the conclusion that Legal Assistance is a key access service for this population and their families or caregivers. The above-referenced needs reports could also support the interpretation that Legal Assistance is the most critical of access services for older adults because, as the provider of "last resort," Legal Assistance is necessary to enforce elders' rights to services and public benefit entitlements after preliminary access has been denied. These needs reports also identify the critical linkage between Legal Assistance and Protective Services (including prevention of elder abuse and conservatorship), yet another factor that should support the ranking of Legal Assistance as a critical service need of Sunnyvale elders.

B. Documentation of Need from SALA

SALA is the only agency in Santa Clara County designated by Council on Aging Silicon Valley to provide free legal services exclusively to elders under the Older Americans Act. SALA is also the only provider of free legal services with a physical presence in Sunnyvale, making our services accessible locally to Sunnyvale seniors. Specifically, SALA currently provides services at least twice monthly at the offices of Sunnyvale Community Services.

Consistent with the mandate of the Older Americans Act, SALA targets our legal services to elders countywide and in Sunnyvale who have low incomes, are frail, or are at-risk of abuse, isolation or institutionalization. Due to their low-income status, many of SALA's target clients are underserved because they struggle to provide for their basic needs (food, medical, housing, transportation) and cannot pay a private attorney \$500 an hour. Our target clientele is also at higher risk (in Greater Social Need) due to the characteristics (age 75/+ or disabled) many exhibit that are cited below.

Statistics for SALA clients from Sunnyvale provide support for the assessment that Legal Assistance is critical to the lives and well being of the most vulnerable and at-risk elders in Sunnyvale. Specifically, for 2011-11 SALA provided free legal services to **more than 100 unduplicated Sunnyvale residents** age 60 or older. Most had characteristics that put them in great economic need or at some level of being "at risk" of abuse, isolation, conservatorship, or premature institutionalization as noted below:

- **51% were extremely low income** (incomes at or below 30% of the county median)
- An additional **20% were very low income** (incomes at or below 50% of the county median).
- **46% were age 75 or older** (placing them at higher risk according to the Older Americans Act)
- **50% were disabled** (placing them at higher risk according to the Older Americans Act).

The critical role that SALA plays in the lives of elders is also illustrated by the types of legal problems for which they request our assistance. These requests address a broad spectrum of issues including (1) **legal planning for incapacity/end stages of life** to maintain independence and prevent conservatorship, (2) **housing and public benefits** (e.g. Social Security, SSI, Medicare, Medi-Cal) to meet their basic needs, and (3) **prevention of elder abuse**.

We note that **legal planning for incapacity** or later stages in life is a great concern for the Sunnyvale residents we serve, as well as for our clients countywide. This advance planning assists seniors to appoint caregivers of their choice to step in and manage their health care and personal

Comments for October 22, 2014 Sunnyvale Housing Commission
Page 4

care, as well as their financial matters, when they can no longer do so enabling them to age in place for as long as possible and to avoid court ordered conservatorships. This planning is also helpful to their family or caregivers because they can legally step in and manage our clients' affairs when our clients lack capacity to do so without having to petition the court to appoint them as a conservator.

While legal planning for the future is an ongoing client concern, a significant percentage of the clients we see are in crisis. These include seniors whose **basic needs** (housing, public benefits, medical or nursing care) are in jeopardy or who are victims of **elder abuse/domestic violence**. Last year client matters related to **basic needs** (Housing, Public Benefits, Nursing Home/Residential Care) comprised **37%** of the requests for assistance in countywide and **elder abuse** made up another **11%** of these matters.

The low income status for the Sunnyvale clients served by SALA last year, as well as the low income status for our clients countywide, indicates economic security and difficulty making ends meet is also an issue for many, so not surprisingly **debt collection** or assistance with **consumer/finance** matters comprised **10%** of the countywide requests for SALA's assistance last year.

We close this section by noting that the increasing need for Legal Assistance for seniors over the past decade has created a demand that far exceeds the existing service levels of SALA, the sole provider of such services locally. Moreover, funding for SALA's services has not keep up with the demand, creating waiting times for an appointment with SALA at many of our 20+ appointment locations that now average one to two months. The Santa Clara County Senior Agenda report notes that this will only get worse: *"The coming "age wave" will increase the demand for these [legal] services and currently service providers are fighting for their own survival while attempting to advocate for seniors"*

SUMMARY

We believe that we have demonstrated that Legal Assistance continues to be a need that is critical to the lives and well being of elders in Sunnyvale, particularly those that are low income or at risk. The importance of Legal Assistance in the area of Incapacity/End of Life Planning and Elder Abuse is also documented, as is the role of Legal Assistance as a "safety net" service and key access service to ensure elders' adequate income, housing, basic necessities, safety, and independence.

We thank you again for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Respectfully submitted,



Georgia Bacil
Directing Attorney

Dear Housing and Human Services Commission,

I am sorry I am unable to attend the meeting tonight I'm in Sacramento at the Long Term Care Ombudsman Managers meeting.

Good evening, thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the LTC Ombudsman Program at Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, also to thank the City of Sunnyvale for your past and continued support of the Ombudsman Program.

The Ombudsman is the **Advocate** for the most **vulnerable citizens of your city** – those who live in Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. We advocate for the dignity, rights and needs of seniors and disabled in those facilities.

This is an **unduplicated service** in Santa Clara County – no other program has **24/7 access** to residents in facilities. All are required by law to have our posters in their facilities.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) is authorized by the federal Older Americans Act, as well as the California Older Californian Act to advocate for the rights of seniors and disabled residents in long term care facilities. The main function of the Ombudsman Program is to investigate and endeavor to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents related to issues of quality of care and abuse. The LTCOP promotes the interest, well-being and rights of long term care facility residents. Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsmen protect and help improve the quality of care and life for the frailest of our senior and disabled population.

Living in a long term care facility is often not the first choice for anyone. Many seniors and disabled adults have little option but to live in a facility and for this reason it is very important that their rights are protected. Often, long term care residents lack the ability to exercise their rights or voice complaints about their circumstances. The presence of LTC Ombudsmen in itself improves quality of care and life of all residents by giving a voice to those seniors and providing an advocate for their needs and concerns.

We investigate complaints, solve problems, mediate, give referrals and witness Advance Health Care Directives... all our services are **FREE** to residents and their family/friends.

We work with other agencies ie. *SALA, Next Door Solutions, Sherrif Departments, Adult Protective Services, and Licensing for the facilities.*

Number of facilities we serve in the City of Sunnyvale

- 4 Nursing Homes + 34 RCFEs (Assisted Living Facilities + 6-Bed Board & Care)
(total in Santa Clara County - 51 Nursing Homes + 360+ Assisted Living Facilities)
- 1,170 beds in Sunnyvale facilities
- City of Sunnyvale: 1 Staff + 4 volunteers – (last year our volunteer contributed 5,545 hours throughout Santa Clara County)

We are asking that you follow the recommendation from the City of Sunnyvale for \$10,308 (we always exceed our minimum deliverables)

Kind Regards,

Wanda Hale
Program Manager

Dear Housing and Human Service Commission,

My name is Maritza Henry. I am the Director of School Based Services from Family & Children Services. Founded in 1948, we are a private, non-profit health and human services agency offering a range of quality mental health and prevention services.

First and foremost, I would like to thank you and the City of Sunnyvale for supporting continual funding for the counseling services that Family & Children Services provides at Columbia Neighborhood Center in Sunnyvale. These services are offered at **no cost to At Risk and extremely low, very low, or low income level individual youths and families in the residence of Sunnyvale. I am writing to requested that the Housing and Human Service Commission considers continual funding for the Family and Children Services Youth Counseling Program at Colombia Neighborhood Center.**

For the past 11 years Family and Children Services has been providing individual and family counseling; crisis intervention and community resources and referrals for **at risk, very low income and underserved youth and families** at Columbia Neighborhood. The types of issues we have treated include (but are not limited to) depression, anxiety, self-esteem, self harm, acculturation, school-based concerns, teen pregnancy scares, family violence and abuse; substance abuse, gangs; divorce, separation, remarriage, and loss; crisis intervention; lack of basic resources such as food and clothing and conflict resolution. Many of the youth and families' problems are not singular or isolated; they often present with a variety of issues. In order to address the severity and complexity of many of the issues Maria Lara, our Bilingual Spanish speaking therapist intern, continues to partner and collaborate with various staff and partners at Columbia Neighborhood Center to help parents and families access wrap-around services in areas of health insurance, a monthly food program, free immunization services for uninsured, parent education, City's Park & Recreation, support groups for Spanish speaking women involved in domestic violence, childcare resources, churches and mentoring programs to address the needs of her clients. Jennifer also continues to collaborate with other service providers and City staff such as Department of Family & Children Services, Probation, the Neighborhood Resource Officer and Columbia Middle school.

What are some overall cost savings to the City of Sunnyvale which Family and Children Services' counseling services helps contribute to?

- Improving student attendance directly benefits the District budget by increasing the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rate. As noted, school enrollment is increasing during this time of tight funding.
- Increasing student engagement and attendance, thereby reducing the caseload of the Neighborhood Resource Officers.
- Improving family functioning and stability, thereby reducing their reliance on emergency and crisis services.

- Engaging at-risk youth in school and positive community activities, such as recreational programs and mentoring, thereby reducing the risk that they will become involved in gangs, substance use, or crime.
- Increasing neighborhood safety by developing youth assets, building stronger families, teaching conflict resolution skills, and teaching stress management techniques.
- Setting youth on a positive course for the short- and long-term. As noted in the enclosed Truancy Prevention Report (and online at <http://www.promoteprevent.org/publications/prevention-briefs/truancy-prevention>):

“Adults who were chronically truant from school when young are at elevated risk for a host of problems, including poor physical and mental health, poverty and welfare, incarceration, and raising children who themselves exhibit problem behaviors (Baker, Sigmon, and Nugent, 2001).”

“And given that truancy is a risk factor for dropping out of school, it has a long-term effect on public finance. One study estimated that each individual who does not complete high school costs a lifetime average of \$200,000 in public monies over and above similar costs for high school graduates.”

For the past 11 years Family and Children Services has either met or exceeded our units of service and performance measures based upon the contract scope of services and quarterly reports. Please find included a table that illustrates our performance goals over the past three years.

YEAR	Actual Unduplicated Youth Served	YE-Goal for youth served	Actual # of counseling sessions provided	YE-Goal for # of counseling sessions provided
2009-2010	27	27	191	189
2010-2011	33	27	211	189
2011-2012	26	26	224	211
2012-2013	27	27	227	220

In regards to qualitative outcomes for 2012-2013 Family and Children Services used the Community Health Awareness Council measurement tool which includes an External and Internal Asset Inventory. Out of 27 youth 24 completed the pre and post-test External and Internal Assets Inventory, a self rating impact measurement scale that assesses the client’s inventory of 40 developmental assets related to healthy development. Please find included the following results:

- **Support:** 100% of youth reported an increase in feeling supported at home, school, and

in the neighborhood when comparing pre-test with post-test.

- **Empowerment:** 100% of youth reported an increase in his / her sense of safety in their home, school, and neighborhood and reported feeling they were both useful and valued by their community.
- **Boundaries and Expectations:** 63% of youth reported an increase in their sense of having clear rules and expectations set forth at school, home and the neighborhood, parents and other adults followed and reinforced these rules as well as modeled responsible behavior.
- **Constructive Use of Time:** 22% of youth reported an increase in structured use of time, including the arts, sports, and religious activities.
- **Positive Values:** 75% of youth report an increase in their self-evaluation of living by positive values, including honesty, conviction, courage, healthy decision making around sex and drugs, as well as altruism, equality, and humanitarian issues, such as poverty and hunger.
- **Social Competencies:** 91% of youth reported an increase in their ability to plan and make decisions for themselves based on their own values, use positive relationship, conflict resolution and communication skills (empathy sensitivity, active listening) and to feel comfortable with people of varying ethnic cultural backgrounds.
- **Positive Identity:** 100% of youth reported an increase in their sense of purpose, self-esteem, self efficacy and overall optimism about their future.
- **Change in Healthy Developmental Assets:** 65% increase in the overall report of students' developmental assets was reported from the time that they began utilizing counseling services up to the termination of services. The clients received two surveys: Columbia Neighborhood Center Customer Satisfaction Survey and Family and Children Services- School Based Survey.

Family and Children Services looks forward to continuing to provide youth counseling services to the residents of Sunnyvale at Colombia Neighborhood Center. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Thank you for your time,

Maritza Henry,
 Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
 Director of School Based Services
 Family and Children Services
 950 W, Julian Street
 San Jose, CA 95126

From: **Debra Sue Stevens** <DebraS@svilc.org>
Date: Tue, Nov 11, 2014 at 10:23 AM
Subject: For City of Sunnyvale Council Meeting 11-11-14
To: Edith Alanis <ealanis@sunnyvale.ca.gov>
Cc: Nayana Shah NayanaS@svilc.org

Dear Mayor Jim Griffith and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of Silicon Valley Independent Living Center (SVILC), I would like to thank you for your funding award to SVILC in the FY13-14 and FY14-15 grant cycle. SVILC appreciates this new partnership with the City of Sunnyvale to deliver Housing and Emergency Services for Sunnyvale residents with disabilities. The program assists Sunnyvale residents with disabilities, including veterans, and their families to transition from homelessness, health care facilities, unstable or temporary housing to permanent affordable, accessible, integrated housing including: emergency assistance, security deposits, rent, information & referral, other services as available/needed to ensure a long-term sustainable independent living solution.

SVILC asks that when the Council sets the priority needs for Human Services FY15-16 and FY16-17 that you continue to make a priority: Sunnyvale residents with disabilities (any disability and any age) who are considered very-low or extremely-low income by HUD income guidelines. Stable housing continues to be the most sought after service at SVILC by this population. Yet, finding affordable, accessible, integrated housing is like finding a needle in a haystack! Your support helps to staff our Housing services.

SVILC serves and advocates with and for people with all types of disabilities, any age or any culture. Over 25% of those served are seniors; a majority of them receive social security benefits in the form of SSI, Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), or a combination of the two. In most cases, the monthly benefit is between \$800 and \$1000 for SSI, and only slightly higher for SSDI (which is based on prior work history).

Thank you for supporting SVILC and this underserved population in your planning!

Sincerely,
Debra Sue Stevens and the Staff, Board and Consumers of SVILC

Debra Sue Stevens
Director of Development & Communications
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center | 2202 North First Street, San Jose CA 95131
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From: **Francella Stevens** <collectiveduty@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jan 7, 2015 at 9:09 AM

Subject: Re: [scc-collaborative] City of Sunnyvale RFP for Public Service Programs and Capital/Housing Projects under the CDBG and HOME Programs

To: Katrina Ardina <kardina@sunnyvale.ca.gov>

Cc: "scc-collaborative@ctagroup.org" <scc-collaborative@ctagroup.org>, "Ise, Suzanne" <sise@sunnyvale.ca.gov>, Edith Alanis <ealanis@sunnyvale.ca.gov>

I would sure appreciate it if when you are discussing housing if you would mention the fact that most housing complexes are being constructed without recreation areas for children to play and very small parks areas with virtually nothing to do for our children. I understand that housing is important but so is getting and keeping children active. Lastly, if we fail to provide positive things for children to do they will find and or engage in other things that harm our communities.

Thanks for listening,
FS

From: **Beth Leonard** <beth@leonardfamilyvideos.com>
Date: Wed, Jan 14, 2015 at 10:54 PM
Subject: ConPlan Comments
To: kardina@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Hi,

A neighbor forwarded me information that you are soliciting comments about housing plans. My comments are as a resident of Sunnyvale who wants to keep the city looking nice and be a good place to live for residents of multiple income levels.

I recommend that any high-density or low-income housing in the city plan come with at least 4 parking places per unit. Low-income earners tend to save money first by "doubling up" and having multiple families live in the same unit. I have no objections to this -- it makes sense and helps high density housing get even higher density by a person's choice, not the city's. These units tend to have 4 or more income earners each.

Although public transportation and living without a car is a nice goal, it does not fit the needs of a majority of the available low-income workers. Housekeepers, nannies, gardeners, and elder-care workers frequently need to travel far from established public transit lines and need to carry supplies with them.

To keep Sunnyvale looking nice, without tons of cars jammed into available on-street parking as it is in some areas of San Jose, we need to ensure that high-density units are required to provide ample parking – 4 spaces per unit. This parking can be either in multiple floors of parking under the units themselves, in a nearby parking garage, or in a nearby flat lot.

Some nearby cities do their planning assuming that by making it difficult to have a car, residents will abandon having them and use biking or public transportation.

In my opinion, that is wishful thinking, and the smart city will plan for parking and acknowledge the realities of lower-income living in an expensive area. This includes doubling up and having 4 or more cars per unit.

Ordinances limiting the number of people to a household don't work, because what human being will turn away a friend whose husband just left her, even if the apartment is already "full" by city statute?

Increased traffic with increased people is obviously a problem. One solution to consider is having city-provided school busses. When parents have to drop their children off at school, it forces a large segment of commuters to leave for work at the same time, instead of allowing the commute to naturally spread itself out. Everyone who

leaves their house benefits by having children bussed to school.

Obviously busses are expensive, but there are taxes already earmarked for transit improvements, and school buses make much more sense to me than construction along El Camino Real.

Sincerely,

--Beth Leonard

1264 Albion Ln.

Sunnyvale, CA 94087

[408-530-0554](tel:408-530-0554)



April 24, 2015

Katrina Ardina
 City of Sunnyvale Housing Division
 PO Box 3707
 Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3707

Re: Comments on Draft 2015-2020 Consolidated Plan for the City of Sunnyvale

Dear Ms. Ardina,

The Aging Services Collaborative (ASC) is a consortium of organizations and individuals working together to support and improve the lives of older adults and their caregivers. ASC submits this letter in response to your request for comments on the proposed 2015-2020 CON Plan for the City of Sunnyvale.

We understand the Public Comment period ends May 1 and the City Council will be approving the final CON Plan on May 5, 2015. We ask that our comments be considered in any review or revisions related to the plan.

ASC's Policy Agenda

ASC is committed to making Santa Clara County a livable community for all of us as we age. This means the inclusion and sustainability of a continuum of services and support systems that are affordable, coordinated, and easily accessible to enable older adults to maintain optimum health, to live independently and safely, and to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

One of our priorities is to secure and maintain reliable funding for the aging services infrastructure – the continuum of safety net services designed to support older adults to **age in place**. ASC stressed the importance of supporting and increasing these services at community forums and other opportunities for input that took place earlier in the CON Plan process.

The Age Wave in Santa Clara County

According to the 2012-2016 Area Plan prepared by Area Agency on Aging, Sourcewise, in 2010 almost 1 in 6 Santa Clara County residents (15.7%) were age 60 or older. By 2030, more than 1 out of 4 County residents (27.6%) are projected to be 60 or older.

To prepare for this "**Age Wave**", in April 2012 the Board of Supervisors adopted the Santa Clara County Seniors' Agenda identifying 10 key areas of countywide need to keep seniors safe and independent and to help them age in place with dignity and choice:

- Coordinated comprehensive Information services
- Transportation
- Affordable housing
- Senior Center programs and services
- Home based support services
- Mental Health Services
- Caregiver supports
- Food and nutrition services
- Isolated seniors
- Elder Abuse prevention and legal services

Many of these safety net needs are also identified in Sourcewise's 2012-2016 Area Plan for aging services.

Comments on Con Plan Needs Assessment and Priorities

Planning for a growing older population is a priority for ASC, particularly to meet the changing needs of frail, disabled, and homebound seniors. ASC is pleased that the CON Plan recognizes that the needs of the senior population are expected to increase as the Baby Boom generation ages. (Section NA-45).

While the CON Plan does not include statistics for person age 60 or older, the Plan notes in Section NA-45 that persons age 65 or older currently comprise **11%** of the City's population. The CON Plan also notes nearly one third (**30%**) of the City's senior population have a disability, as compared to 7% of the City's population as a whole.

The CON Plan states that elderly residents generally face "*a unique set of housing needs*", largely due to physical limitations, lower household incomes (as they are most likely to be Low/Moderate income), and the rising cost of health care (see NA-45). ASC agrees that this creates a priority need for affordable and supportive housing for seniors as identified in the CON Plan.

That being said, the above factors also establish a **priority** for a continuum of supportive services addressing a full range of needs, such as those identified in the Seniors' Agenda, to help seniors remain independent and age in place. Moreover, seniors in affordable and stable housing situations may need one or more supportive service if they are having problems with other basic needs (e.g., public benefits, transportation, in home services), if they are victims of elder abuse or neglect, or if they have physical disabilities or dementia.

As noted in Con Plan Section NA-50, input from participants at public forums confirms this. In addition to housing issues faced by the elderly, these primary service needs impacting older adults were also identified: accessible and affordable transportation; food assistance and nutrition programs for seniors; health care services for seniors; and supportive services to reduce senior isolation. The local continuum of supportive services for seniors is designed to address such needs either directly or by ensuring their access to benefits, entitlements, and services.

ASC is pleased the CON Plan recognizes that supportive services for seniors are needed to help seniors "*age in place and remain in their homes for as long as possible*" in Section MA-35. We are also pleased that the CON Plan embraces the goal of aging in place in Section MA-35, an outcome that ASC has been promoting since our inception.

Lastly, ASC is pleased that following goal is included in the 5 year Strategic Plan:

Community Development Efforts -- Goal C.1: to support provision of essential human services, particularly for special needs populations.

We are also pleased that the Strategic Plan prioritizes the elderly and frail elderly as special needs populations and recognizes the need for a multi-faceted network of community services to address special populations' basic needs.

ASC supports this goal and priorities because it is imperative that CON Plan priorities and objectives address the full range of housing and supportive service needs of older adults to help them age in place and keep pace with the Age Wave.

We thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Respectfully submitted



Amy Andonian, Co-Chair, Aging Services Collaborative