



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** April 22, 2024

Approved

Date

5/2/24

**SUBJECT: AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN PROGRESS AND OLDER  
ADULT/SENIOR SERVICES UPDATE**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Accept the 2023-2024 Older Adults/Senior Services and Age-Friendly Initiative report.

## **OUTCOME**

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE) will be informed of the current Older Adults Services service delivery of continued in-person programs and services; accomplishments of the Older Adults Services Team (Team, the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP)); and updates on the status of ongoing Older Adult programming. Staff will also provide NSE with an update on the continuing of the Age-Friendly Initiative implementation.

## **BACKGROUND**

Data has shown that San José's older population is growing rapidly. Approximately 13% of San José residents (121,000) are now over age 65, a percentage estimated to grow to well over 20% by 2030. The California's Department of Aging 2023 report illustrates the following for Santa Clara County:

- The population estimate of residents over 60 years of age will grow by over 200% from 2010 to 2060, with the number of people over 85 years old projected to increase by 605% during that same period;
- In 2023, Santa Clara County population for residents over 60 years old is 448,001;

- Population for residents over 75 years old is 144,773;
- Population of minority residents aged 60 or older is 250,425;
- Number of people 60 years or older living alone is 60,600; and
- Number of people 60 years or older on Medi-Cal is 88,433.

Recognizing these trends, in 2016, the City of San José joined the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, following the City Council's unanimous approval of the initiative in October 2015. A Three-Year Action Plan ("Action Plan") was developed based on meetings with representatives from multiple City departments and offices to discuss supporting existing Age-Friendly initiatives and identify additional related efforts. The Action Plan was comprised of data from community focus groups, a 2018 health and wellness survey of older adults, and a 2019 roundtable on the social isolation of older adults.

Under WHO and AARP Age-Friendly guidelines, the next step in the process was the submission of a Three-Year Age-Friendly Action Plan. The City Manager's Office designated the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) as the lead in working with City departments and partners to prepare the San José Age-Friendly Three-Year Action Plan, which was completed and unanimously approved by the City Council on October 20, 2020. Based on the current service delivery models and the initiatives identified in the Action Plan, the Older Adult Services Team (The Team) continues to align its work with the following long-term participant and community outcomes:

- Increase civic and social engagement among older adults and decrease social isolation and loneliness;
- Increase awareness and access to community resources available to older adults to address food insecurities, transportation barriers, legal issues, housing needs, etc.;
- Increase access to digital devices, broadband connectivity, and improved digital literacy skills; and
- Improve physical health and safety of older adults through participation in evidence-based programs such as Enhance Fitness and the Stay Active & Independent for Life (SAIL). Both programs focus on fall prevention for older adults.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Team continues to strive to increase healthy outcomes and reduce social isolation among older adults through a variety of older adult programs (ages 50+), civic engagement opportunities, and access to community resources. As PRNS has returned to in-person program models, staff continues to adapt to health and safety practices to reduce participants and staff's risk of exposure to COVID-19. Through SNP and the Team, meals are provided to older adults experiencing food insecurity and act as a resource hub of information. Additionally, in the past year, staff has transitioned from virtual services and programs to in-person services and

programs. The Team continues to evaluate opportunities to not only bring back pre-pandemic programs but look for new opportunities to provide programs consistent with the Age-Friendly Action Plan.

The Team continues to assess the transition back to in-person programming for both the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) and Older Adults ages 50+ programs while continuing to build off the success of digital and virtual programming. The Team continues to support civic engagement by collaborating with the community center senior advisory boards and staffing the Senior Citizen Commission. The Team focuses on the priorities of reducing social isolation amongst our older adults, improving physical abilities through activities and social engagement, and improving the quality of life for older adults through the programs and services they receive at our community centers. PRNS will continue with this focus while using the Age-Friendly Action Plan as a guideline.

### **Senior Nutrition Program (SNP)**

Through a partnership with Santa Clara County's Social Services Agency, SNP continues addressing food insecurity among adults aged 60 or older. Prior to the pandemic, the program operated at 13 centers and at Alviso Older Adult Program located at Alviso Branch Library as a congregate meal model serving on average 800 daily participants throughout the City of San José. As programs continue to change and return to in-person, SNP has again shifted operations from hybrid back to the in-person model. The return to the in-person model started September 6, 2022.

SNP experienced a growth in output that peaked at nearly 1,600 daily meals during the height of the curbside (Drive up meal pick-up) model and 1,475 daily meals during the hybrid model (Drive up meal pick-up and dine-in options). As of September 2023, daily meals averaged over 800, which was an increase from an average of 700 the previous year. Participation rates continue to increase by an average of 15%+ each month since returning to in-person SNP. Mobility and transportation challenges that were highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be a challenge. The Team coordinates with the County on re-implementing the Mobility Management Program to SNP participants providing monthly VTA bus passes and gas cards for program participants. The City of San José continues to manage and provide VTA bus passes (Gap Passes) for the first two months that it takes for the County of Santa Clara to process the Mobility Management application. In the last year, the City provided 100 Gap Passes to older adults. The City of San José also continues to provide taxi service to SNP participants unable to ride the bus resulting in over 3,800 taxi rides to older adults this past year. Additionally, staff connect participants with resources to support older adults that are homebound, needing home delivery services such as Meals on Wheels and Get Food (Second Harvest's to-go ready to eat meals available throughout the County).

Various Senior Health and Wellness Grantees distributed information regarding housing, legal advice, free dental care, and caregiver support. Staff supporting SNP also placed wellness calls, completed risk assessments, provided information on heat and cold related events, and other emergency related notifications. The current SNP sites include the following:

<b>City of San José– SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAM (SNP)</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY CENTER</b>	<b>District</b>
Alma Community Center (NCP)*	District 7
Almaden Community Center	District 10
Alviso Branch Library	District 4
Berryessa Community Center	District 4
Camden Community Center	District 9
Cypress Community & Senior Center	District 1
Evergreen Community Center	District 8
Gardner Community Center (NCP)*	District 6
Mayfair Community Center	District 5
Northside Community Center	District 3
Roosevelt Community Center	District 3
Seven Trees Community Center	District 7
Southside Community Center	District 2
Willow Glen Community Center	District 6

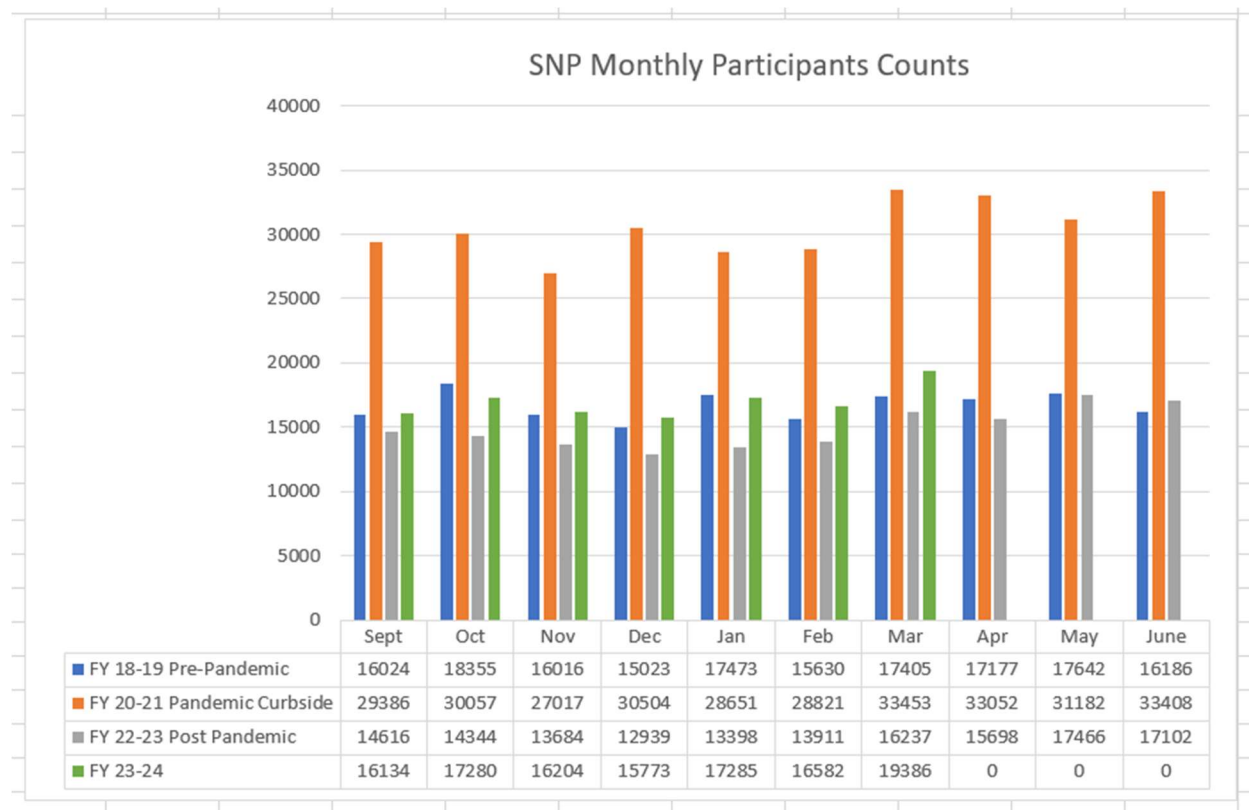
\*Neighborhood Center Partnership Program (formerly Reuse)

The following graph represents SNP participation rates from pre pandemic to current. The data shows monthly year-over-year participation, comparing data from when the program reopened for Dine-In services, September 6, 2022, with the same monthly ranges for other periods when alternative service delivery models were in place, including Pre-Pandemic; Pandemic Curbside; and Post-Pandemic, this data includes participation numbers listed to-date for months already passed in fiscal year 23-24.

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**Active Adult 50+ Program at Community Centers**

The pandemic lock-down and subsequent health precautions created an increased reliance on digital platforms to receive news along with valuable information and access to community services and resources. As a result, Older Adult Services expanded its efforts to reach older adults lacking digital connectivity to mitigate further isolation. PRNS shifted back to in-person programming and looked for new ways to bring back digital programs with the shortage of instructors and volunteers willing to come back and instruct. Through initial pilot programs, staff identified effective areas of focus to reduce barriers to engagement. As staff continues to bring back more programs and services, the Team will work to align with the Age-Friendly Action Plan to support a balanced and effective program model including active programming, technology-based programs, and activities to reduce social isolation. In the past year, the team continued to add Digital Technology workshops leveraging a grant the County of Santa Clara received to provide Digital Technology Programs for Older Adult Programs by partnering with Non-Profits in Santa Clara County. Staff were able to partner with Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) to run Digital Literacy/Technology workshops through a grant AACI received from the County to increase Digital Literacy to Older Adults. AACI was able to run at least two workshops at all 14 of the Older Adult Program locations.

One of the most popular social activities are the dance socials which support older adults in improving their mobility and physical and brain health. All active older adult programs are bringing back their social dance programs and activities, that vary by location.

The Team has expanded special events and/or activities from ice cream socials to larger events with over 100 older adults attending. These programs included performers who interacted through dance, socialization, and cultural awareness. Examples of some of these events are Moon Festivals, Lunar New Year, Resource & Wellness Fairs, Homecoming, Holiday celebrations, and Ballroom Dances. To support socialization, each Older Adult Program is hosting at least one special event each month to increase the engagement of the older adult population.

Staff continue to resume fitness and exercise programs throughout the 14 Older Adult program sites. Examples of these programs include aerobics, badminton, low-impact exercises, chair exercise, gentle yoga, Tai Chi, and Yuai Chi. There is a new exercise that is rocking Older Adults at Almaden Community Center, the Drum Cardio Exercise class. Additionally, Deputy Director Maria De Leon leads Cumbia Fitness classes which target older adults with mobility issues to move and dance to Mexican folk songs and cumbias at their own pace. These services provide the older adult population with resources and support to encourage staying active, increasing their mobility, and creating social opportunities while having fun.

Some of the most popular physical sports programs for active older adults are pickleball and table tennis/ping pong groups. Given the continued growth and popularity, the Team developed an annual Citywide Table Tennis/Ping Pong Tournament at multiple sites. The second annual tournament took place at Seven Trees Community Center on Saturday, September 23, 2023. The citywide Table Tennis/Ping pong tournament has provided an opportunity for active older adults from other community centers to socialize and interact while staying active.

The Team continues to offer enrichment and social programs to improve and support mental health that include activities such as bridge, creative writing, hand work for others, quilting, exploring literature, and English and Spanish classes. These programs are critical to supporting a healthy and independent lifestyle for older adults. The Team also resumed group exercise and fall prevention programs that help older adults at all levels of fitness become more active, energized, and empowered. These programs include 50+ Fitness, Enhance Fitness, and in collaboration with the City of Sunnyvale the SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life), a grant program. The Team continued to be creative, providing digital technology education to participants so that they can stay connected with family. This included classes on how to use smartphones, send emails, take pictures, and attach them to either texts or e-mail. Staff will continue to look at new and innovative ways to support older adults in accessing and using technology safely and effectively.

**Senior Health and Wellness Grant Program (SHW)**

PRNS awarded \$498,212 to 9 agencies in fiscal year 2022-2023 and plans to administer \$526,434 to 10 agencies in FY 2023-2024 through SHW. The program continues to reduce social isolation and improve the health and wellness of individuals ages 60+ through supportive services, Age-Friendly programming, health and wellness promotion, and educational classes. As with other City programs, the delivery model of the SHW programs provided by grantees were adjusted to align with COVID-19 safety standards. PRNS worked with grantees to transition their services and programs back to in-person, consistent with PRNS programs and services. The services under the previous cycle ended on September 30, 2023. The current SHW cycle began October 1, 2023, and will end September 30, 2024.

**Age-Friendly City Initiative**

Santa Clara County is the only county to have all 15 cities within the county be part of the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Global Network, an affiliate with the AARP's Livable Communities. PRNS utilizes the San José Age-Friendly Initiative and Action Plan as a guiding document and resource in all the programming offered. PRNS continues to utilize the Age-Friendly Initiatives to guide and support the program planning, implementation, and evaluation of success through various initiatives. In the past year, the following has been realized:

- **TRANSPORTATION**

- a. **Current:**

- i. The County of Santa Clara Mobile Management Program offers 3 types of transportation (paratransit, gas cards, and bus passes), supporting Older Adults' efforts to attend SNP. Participants are required to attend SNP at least 8 times a month to receive these benefits.
    - ii. The City of San José provides transportation benefits through taxi services for seniors that are unable to use VTA or do not have someone to drive them to SNP. Over 3,800 taxi rides were provided to seniors.
    - iii. Gap passes through VTA are purchased and distributed. These passes offset the 2 months that it takes the County of Santa Clara to process the Mobility Management application for the participants ensuring continued access to senior nutrition services. A total of 100 passes were provided to Older Adults this past year.
    - iv. PRNS and the Department of Transportation (DOT) staff resumed Vision Zero coordination in 2021 through zoom presentations at all Community Center SNP sites. PRNS and DOT will continue to collaborate moving forward with in-person opportunities to engage our older adult clients.
    - v. Santa Clara County expanded Reach Your Destination Easily (RYDE) program services to additional San José zip codes as well including 95118, 95119, 95122, 95123, and 95139.

- b. Next Steps:**
    - i. PRNS will continue to work and collaborate with DOT and the Public Works Department to support, evaluate, and implement additional efforts described in the Age-Friendly Action Plan related to Transportation.
- **OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS**
  - a. Current:**
    - i. PRNS facilitates the Senior Safari at Happy Hollow Park and Zoo. This program continues to be a popular and well-attended activity that spans multiple months throughout the year. Attendance has consistently grown this past summer with 537 in May, 687 in June 2023, 653 in July 2023, 602 in August, 587 in September, and 855 in October 2023. With each month doubling from the attendance from the previous year for the same time period. Santa Clara County continues to be a valuable partner in providing resources at the Senior Safari for older adults.
    - ii. Viva CalleSJ continues to be an avenue for older adults to get out and become active in new environments and areas of San José they may not have previously explored. During each Viva CalleSJ, the Team supports a booth at one of the bustling Activity Hubs with resources and activities to engage current and new participants throughout the six-hour event.
    - iii. BeautifySJ works collaboratively with residents to address blight, beautify neighborhoods, and improve residents' livability and quality of life throughout the city. Thousands of volunteers, including those over the age of 50, volunteer to support BeautifySJ's goal of clean, safe, and engaged neighborhoods.
  - b. Next Steps:**
    - i. PRNS continues to coordinate the return of Age-Friendly walks with City Council offices.
- **HOUSING**
  - a. Current:**
    - i. Support of older adults with aging in place, as well as safe, affordable, and accessible housing, continues to be a priority as these needs were highlighted during the pandemic and continue afterwards.
  - b. Next steps:**
    - i. PRNS continues to partner with Housing and Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement (PBCE), as defined in the Age-Friendly Action Plan.
    - ii. PRNS will work with Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing and PBCE to develop a resource list of affordable and reliable home repair services for older adults.



- **COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

- a. **Current:**

- i. PRNS ensures its communications, website, and social media are engaging and supportive to all clients including older adults. This includes:
      - 1. Use of QR codes on collateral such as information material with instructions on how to scan a QR code.
      - 2. Daily website management to ensure accessibility, relevance, and accuracy of content on both desktop and mobile devices.
        - a. Adding alternative texts to all links and pictures online.
        - b. Establishing a clean HTML code with visible hierarchy of text to make the website accessible for those viewing using a screen reader.
        - c. Monitoring webpages with program staff monthly to confirm all information is correct and current.
      - 3. Older Adults Services Notices (Citywide flyers) translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog.
      - 4. Library Marketing Plan: All Library promotional materials are developed in the main languages spoken in the city – English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese. Promotional materials are also available in hard-copy and electronic forms, including a Biblioevents<sup>1</sup> flyer for Older Adult programming.
    - ii. Continue to develop culturally relevant digital literacy programming and one-on-one trainings in multiple languages for older adults at libraries, community centers, and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Example of efforts include:
      - 1. Literacy Programs and Partnerships
        - a. The Library collaborated with PRNS to launch “Tech Time for Active Adults,” a program offered at the Alum Rock Branch Library and in virtual form. The program builds key tech skills for older adults including using Google Suite, computer basics, and tutorials on Library e-resources. In FY 2022-23, this program included 606 participants.
        - b. The Library offers weekly one-on-one tech consultations at various library branches. Staff and volunteers establish appointments and drop-in hours for individuals to ask basic technology and/or computer device usage questions. The Library also offers ongoing digital literacy courses in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. In FY 2022-23, the Library offered 1,500 tech support and digital literacy programs for adults over 60, with 3,441 total attendees.
        - c. Get Tech Savvy Class at Mayfair and at Willow Glen– Recreation staff facilitated a class on basic phone functions; Emergency function presets on phones, email basics, online

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sjpl.bibliocommons.com/v2/events?audiences=5d65e368eb2cac50006a08ab>

usage, and messaging basics on different apps to virtually communicate with family members. Settings usage: Notifications, ringtone adjustment, language change, and making text larger.

- d. The County of Santa Clara received a grant to provide Digital Technology Programs for Older Adults including Senior Nutrition Program participants through partnering with Non-Profits in the County. Staff were able to partner with Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI). AACI ran Digital Technology workshops at all 14 Older Adults Program locations throughout the City.

**b. Next Steps:**

- i. PRNS and Library will continue to look for new and creative ways to communicate and engage older adults in collaboration with City Manager's Office (CMO) Communications, and Civic Innovation as described in the Age-Friendly Action Plan.

**• COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES**

**a. Current:**

- ii. PRNS continues to support SNP with in-person congregate meal service. Through SNP, and in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management, PRNS not only provides nutritious meals in a social environment, but also uses this program to inform older adults of resources and support during an emergency. Efforts include:
  1. During heat-related emergencies, staff informed older adults that community centers operated as Cooling Centers to ensure that community members had a safe and cool place to gain respite from the heat.
  2. PRNS has continuously been requested to support wellness calls and communications for older adults during emergencies. These calls are conducted by staff to confirm the wellbeing of the older adult and inform them of available resources they may access based on the activation/situation.

**b. Next Steps:**

- iii. PRNS will continue to work and collaborate with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) on strategies and resources to support older adults in preparing for an emergency, during an emergency, and after an emergency.

- **SOCIAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

- a. **Current:**

- i. The Library conducts an annual Feedback Survey to determine the overall volunteer experience at the Library. The findings of the survey help the Volunteer Services Unit build a more robust volunteer program. In the Spring of 2023, 67 adult volunteers (ages 55+), completed the survey. These volunteers primarily serve as Partners in Reading Adult Literacy Tutors, Friends of the Library, and lead various programs and activities at libraries across the city.
    - ii. Adult volunteers, ages 55+ report having positive experiences with the Library. In the Spring 2023 Volunteer Feedback Survey:
      - a. 97% of adults ages 55+ reported that they would recommend the Library as a place to volunteer.
      - b. 94% feel that their volunteer roles are well-suited to their skills and talents.
      - c. 95% feel comfortable asking for assistance from a staff member.
      - d. 92% felt adequately prepared for their volunteer role.

- b. **Next Steps:**

- i. PRNS and the Volunteer Management Unit will develop and identify age friendly collaborations and opportunities.
    - ii. PRNS is seeking Gen2Gen options as pandemic restrictions ease to support Gen2Gen options at all community centers.
    - iii. Continue to collaborate and partner with Office of Economic Development (OED) and Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) on initiatives identified in the Age-Friendly Action Plan.
    - iv. Library will work with the City of San José's Human Resources Department and PRNS to communicate volunteer and other opportunities to retired City employees through the Federated Retirees Association and Police and Fire Retirees Association.

- **EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL SECURITY**

- a. **Current:**

- i. PRNS continues to provide services and programs within the SHW, specifically around tax preparation and legal advice. PRNS will continue to support these efforts but also look for additional resources to support older adult employment and financial security in the upcoming year.

PRNS takes the feedback from the Senior Advisory Councils and the Senior Commission, and in alignment with the Age-Friendly Action Plan, incorporates that feedback as staff implements programs and services. Additionally, staff continues to engage previous, current, and new partners for support in advancing these efforts.

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The Age-Friendly San José Action Plan will continue to be used as a framework to ensure PRNS and other City Department programs and services support the City's age-friendliness. The result is a cross-departmental and multi-jurisdiction collaboration that results in San José being more livable for people of all ages while adaptive to the City's evolving demographics.

## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Budget Office, and the San José Public Library.

/s/

Jon Cicirelli  
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Recreation and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Maria De Leon, Deputy Director PRNS, at [Maria.DeLeon@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Maria.DeLeon@sanjoseca.gov).