

Charlottesville Area Alliance

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Chair's Welcome

MARTA M. KEANE, JABA CEO

As you each know, 2021 continued to be a challenging year. Dealing with the new variants of the COVID-19 virus has meant no relief for our partner agencies as they navigate new ways to support the community. This has provided an opportunity to re-assess our action plans, holding fast to the three goal areas of Housing, Social Engagement and Transportation. COVID-19 just amplified the impact these three elements have on seniors. All three contribute to isolation, which negatively impacts physical, social and emotional health, for all ages, and especially for seniors. We knew that we had chosen wisely on ways to help the community move forward in an age-friendly manner.

It was an honor to be chosen by AARP Livable Communities national office as a Key Community, allowing the region and particularly the City of Charlottesville and County of Albemarle access to more support and information. Charlottesville and Albemarle signed the AARP Charter several years ago, committing to promoting an age-friendly community. AARP provided a seminar by a national consultant, Transportation for America, on "Transportation for Livability in Albemarle County". The City and County Housing Planners were provided registration for the Virginia Governor's Conference on Housing. We had representatives on the national Rural Lab, where ideas and best practices were shared for addressing the unique needs of rural communities. And we continue to participate in state and national meetings of other AARP age-friendly community leaders to share ideas and challenges.

The Alliance is thankful to AARP Livable Communities for their support. And especially thankful to all the Partners who have contributed their time and energy to moving the Alliance closer to achieving the goals for an age-friendly community, and continuing to support our place in the community.

We are pleased to share our activities for 2021, and look forward to more involvement in 2022.

Sincerely,

Marta M. Keane
Chair

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Advocacy/ Public Relations: Liz Horton, Chair.

This work group created a plan for Older Americans' Month in May to promote the positive impact of seniors on the community, as well as the challenges that need to be addressed. Radio interviews, newspaper articles, and internal communiques carried the message. At the end of the year, Senior Statesman of Virginia invited the Alliance to present a panel on the efforts to its members.

Assessment/ Planning: Kristin Miller, Chair.

This work group is focused on determining how to measure success for each goal that the teams are addressing. What outcomes are we trying to achieve, and what impact will they have on seniors and the community as a whole.

Engagement: Kim Volker, Chair. This work group has developed guidelines for inviting and training Citizen Advocates, to assist the Alliance in responding to requests for feedback in various community comprehensive plans and regional visioning and planning efforts.



HOUSING TEAM

Housing Team: Ginger Dillard, 2021 Chair; Ian Baxter 2022 Chair. Members: Lucinda Shannon, Ian Baxter, Debbie Cash, Ron Lauziere.

The Housing team has been attending webinars and reviewing articles on affordable housing. They are an ad hoc member of the Regional Housing Partnership and participate in their meetings and educational events. Information from the Virginia Governor's Housing Conference was brought back, sharing initiatives and challenges from across the state. This has been a formative year, in preparation for the Charlottesville and Albemarle Comprehensive Plan reviews. The goal is to be a part of the RHP and influence the inclusion of senior issues into an entity that is already addressing affordable housing issues, rather than creating a separate organizational structure.



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Social Engagement Team: George Worthington, Chair. Members: Genevieve Baer, Annette Clark, Sue Friedman, Joe Jamison, Joanna Jennings, Angela Keating, Emily Kilroy, Richard Lindsay, Sunshine Mathon, Jeanne Snyder, Kim Volker, Gordon Walker.

A survey was developed in the spring, in conjunction with an intern, Ava Purcell, from the University of Virginia Internship Accelerator program, who assisted with development, dissemination, and analysis of the survey. This survey comprised 8 questions so it could be completed quickly, and through several modes (paper, online, phone). It was disseminated through community organizations.

Key Findings:

- **Most people use email notices, print media, or social media to find out about what is happening in the area, but there was a huge range of sources.**
- **Shopping was the most popular leisure activity, followed by eating out and exercising. Education and entertainment were the most desired new activities.**
- **Lack of information was the largest barrier cited to social participation, followed closely by physical disabilities and transportation.**
- **The largest attitudinal barrier to participation was an unwillingness to try new activities on one's own. Ageism and social anxiety were noted by 1 in three.**

Recommendations:

- **Deliver information about community activities through email, newsletter, and social media.**
- **Implement Action Plan recommendations for a Senior Activity Fair, joint educational programs with TRIAD, Dementia Friends, and other community education programs.**
- **Tap into a new audience by scheduling activities in mid-to late-afternoon combined with accessible information, transportation, venues.**
- **Implement a 'buddy program' as recommended in the Action Plan to help people feel more comfortable trying something new.**

TRANSPORTATION TEAM

Transportation Team: Peter Thompson, Chair. Members: Jessica Hersh-Ballering, Michelle Harper, Mary Honeycutt, Kris Miller, Curtis Putnam, Jody Saunders, Lucinda Shannon.

The Transportation Team was invited to have a non-voting member on the Regional Transportation Partnership (RTP), and Peter is representing the Alliance on that working group. This has given the Alliance great visibility and credibility while ensuring age-friendly dimensions are considered in transportation planning.

As part of the RTP visioning, a discussion has re-emerged for developing a Regional Transportation Authority.



A goal on bus stop improvements is linked to Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) and they are awaiting approval and funding. Once that occurs, the Alliance will be involved in advocating for their vision of improving bus stops with shelters, benches and solar-powered lighting. A goal on improving transportation options for rural areas focused on identifying volunteer driver programs and encouraging people to provide private on-demand services in rural areas. Albemarle is considering pilots on micro-transit and that could help move some of these ideas forward in other areas.

Peter is also representing the Alliance on the Piedmont Mobility Alliance, which focuses on developing a vision for a better-connected community for walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation in Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

CLOSING STATEMENT

This organization continues with the support of volunteers from the agencies listed below. Their commitment above and beyond their regular workday is appreciated. Together we all believe in an age-friendly approach that creates an incredible livable community. This is what we envision for our Charlottesville Area region.

Albemarle County - Alzheimer's Association (Central and Western Virginia Chapter) - Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP) - The Charlottesville Area Association of REALTORS® (CAAR) - Care is There- City of Charlottesville - Cville Village - EcoVillage Charlottesville - Fluvanna County - Here to Stay Wintergreen - Hospice of the Piedmont - Home Instead - JAUNT - JABA - Legal Aid Justice Center - Meals on Wheels (Charlottesville) - The Osher Lifelong Learning - Institute at the University of Virginia (OLLI) - Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) - Region Ten - The Center - Senior Statesmen of Virginia - Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital - The Thomas Jefferson Health District (Virginia Department of Health) - The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) - United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area - University of Virginia Health System -VisitAble - Westminster-Canterbury of the Blue Ridge- iTHRIVE (Integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia) - The Lindsay Institute

