



# City of Palo Alto

## City Council Staff Report

(ID # 7886)

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**Report Type: Consent Calendar**

**Meeting Date: 4/3/2017**

**Summary Title: Age Friendly Community Initiative**

**Title: Adoption a Resolution to Join the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Global Network and the Santa Clara County Age Friendly Initiative**

**From: City Manager**

**Lead Department: Community Services**

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that Council approve the following actions:

- 1) Adopt a resolution to join the World Health Organizations Age Friendly Global Network. (Attachment A – WHO Age Friendly Global Network Resolution)
- 2) Approve a request that Palo Alto join the Santa Clara County Age Friendly Initiative and move toward becoming more age-friendly over the next 5 years.

### **Executive Summary**

One of the seven objectives of the City's Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities Initiative's implementation plan is to "Develop actions to enroll Palo Alto as an Age Friendly Community." The concept of an Age Friendly Community was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to help cities consider and implement policies and services to support older adults as they grow older to live healthy and vibrant lives. To that end; a local task force (a sub-committee of the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities Initiative) was identified and has been working towards completing all the actions needed to submit an application with the WHO to join its Age Friendly Global Network. On a local level, the Seniors Agenda of the Santa Clara Department of Aging Services has been spearheading an effort to have all cities in Santa Clara County (SCC) receive the Age Friendly designation from the WHO by July, 2017 so that SCC can become the first county in the

country to have each of its cities become active members of the WHO's Age-Friendly Network of Cities and Communities.

## **Background**

In 2006, the WHO recognized two major global trends: rapid aging and increasing urbanization. A major study was launched in 33 different cities around the globe to determine what amenities optimize and enhance the quality of life for residents as they age. Focus groups composed of individuals ages 60 and above from lower and middle-class backgrounds participated in helping the WHO compile a list of services that influence a resident's quality of life as they age. Eight key elements were identified through this process as areas that require a conscious effort to create an age-friendly community: housing, transportation, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services, and outdoor spaces and buildings. These results launched WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities initiative.

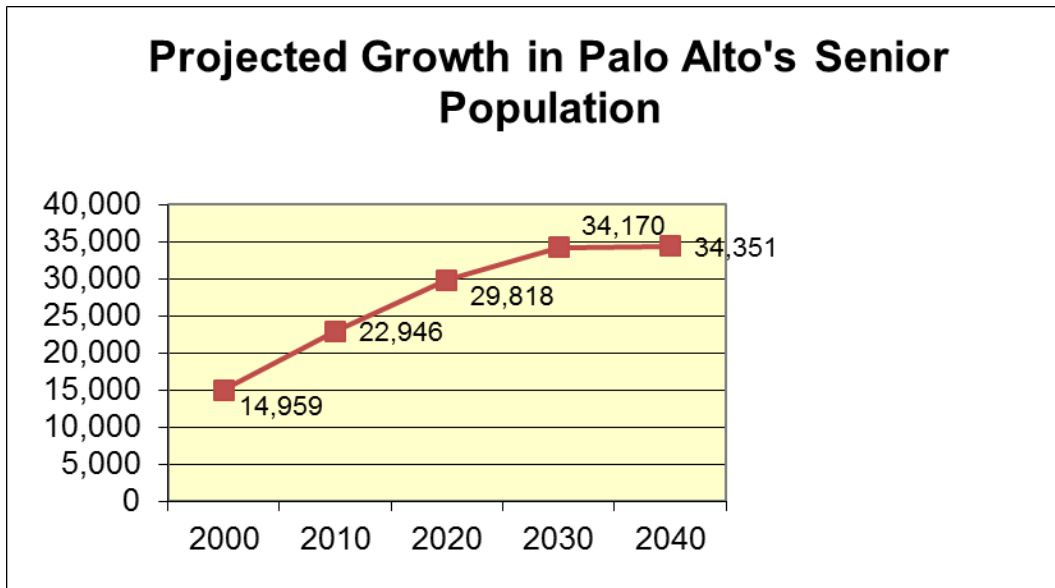
Age-Friendly ideals optimize opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age. In the past nine years, hundreds of cities from around the world have embraced Age-Friendly ideals and are creating programs to incorporate the goals developed by the WHO. Currently in the United States over 150 cities have been accepted into the WHO Age-Friendly City Network.

AARP (American Association of Retired People) facilitates the process for cities in the United States in the enrollment of WHO Age Friendly Network through their Network of Age Friendly Communities and gives assistance to cities in the implementation and assessment process.

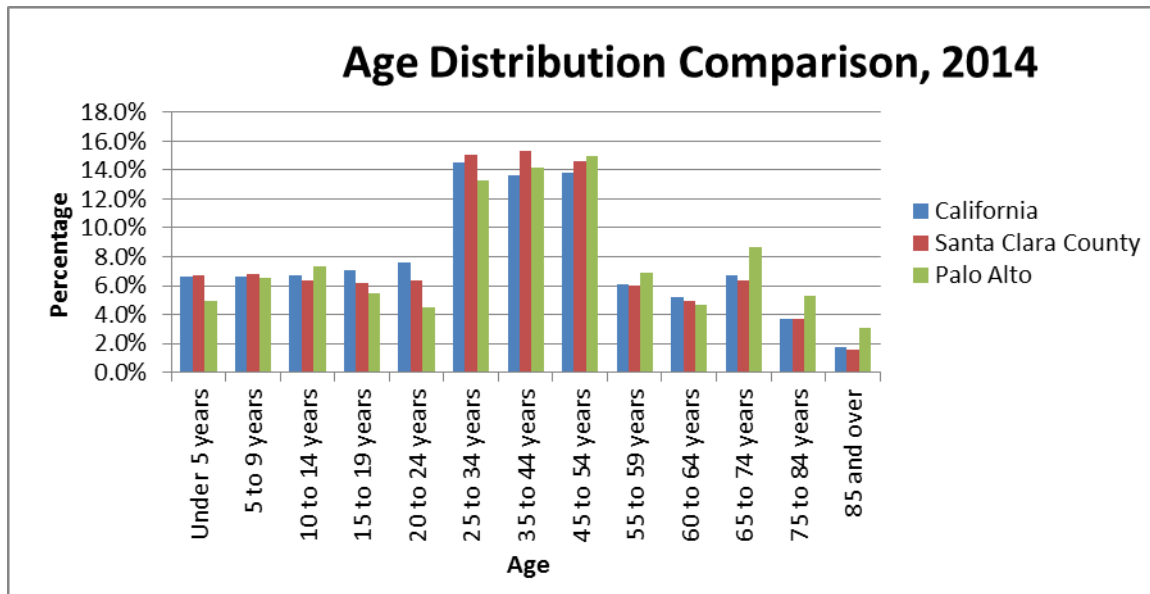
In the United States a number of large cities (Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco) have been accepted by WHO as Age-Friendly Cities. In Santa Clara County (SCC) six cities have already been accepted by the WHO as Age-Friendly Cities; San Jose, Los Altos, Mountain View, Morgan Hill, Saratoga and Los Altos Hills. Each of the other 9 cities is at some stage of working on the process, with a goal of all cities in SCC earning this designation by July of 2017. An Age-Friendly City has not only structures and services that are accessible and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities, but also the eight key elements support an urban environment that improves the quality of life for all its residents. For example, a sidewalk curb cut-out benefits an elderly person who has difficulty walking, an individual in a wheelchair or a parent pushing a stroller.

In regards to population trends, the US Census Bureau estimated that in 2013 12% of the population in Santa Clara County was 65 and older, and that by 2020 older adults are expected to make up 20% of the county residents.

The following graph (provided by Avenidas) illustrates the projected senior growth in Palo Alto through 2040.



This next graph illustrates that Palo Alto has a higher percentage of total residents age 65 and over than the County or State. (Source – American Communities Survey 2014.)



The City has long been anticipating this increase in the older adult population in Palo Alto. In 2006, the Community Services Department (CSD) initiated a task force of community leaders and service providers to “understand the impending impacts of a rapidly changing demographic environment driven by the aging of the Baby Boom Generation” and produced a “white paper” documenting their observations. Key survey and focus group results from that effort indicated the following results:

- Boomers want to live independently as they age and the concept of a “senior friendly” environment, especially with regards to mobility, is especially important. There is a deep desire to be engaged in community and social activities and have a variety of learning opportunities.
- Palo Alto Boomers want to stay involved, for either lifestyle or financial reasons, through volunteerism or continued part or full-time employment.
- Our Boomers want to remain physically and mentally active and healthy, well into their elder years.

Finally, in 2015, the Human Relations Commission hosted a Senior Summit of over 40 aging services providers to identify older adults most pressing unmet/chronic needs and the barriers to addressing them. Key needs identified were in the areas of housing and transportation and the attendees underscored the need for collaboration in the provision of services to older adults in Palo Alto.

## Discussion

Palo Alto has been working on the process to become an Age Friendly City as it is one of the seven objectives as part of the Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities Initiative. A task force of aging professionals, Human Relations Commissioners, and city staff has been working on this process with the assistance of the Center for Age Friendly Excellence (CAFÉ), Age-Friendly Cities Collaborative Silicon Valley, and Santa Clara County.

The process of being designated an Age-Friendly City has included:

- Identifying a task force to oversee the Age-Friendly Process (sub-committee of Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities Initiative)
- Conducting a series of four focus groups to assess the baseline “Age-Friendliness” of Palo Alto in the following areas or domains - Mobility/transportation, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and employment, Communication and information, Community and Health Services with the following. Focus groups were held at Avenidas, Senior Friendship Day (a weekly activity co-sponsored by the City/Palo Alto Adult School/Avenidas), The Sheridan (a senior housing residence operated by Palo Alto Housing) and with a diverse group of aging services professionals. A survey was also given to forum attendees and forwarded to aging related agencies in Palo Alto. Focus groups were structured to encourage participation by diverse racial and ethnic groups.
- Task force re-groups to review the results of the focus groups and survey results based on an assessment by CAFÉ and recommends a three year action plan for Palo Alto
- Identify indicators so progress can be monitored against the action plan.
- Age Friendly application is completed and includes a letter of intent signed by the Mayor.

As a member of the Age-Friendly City world network the City would support the ideals of building a healthy community for all ages.

The effort to become Age Friendly is a community-wide effort that will involve both the public and private sector. The Age Friendly Task force met to review the preliminary results of the focus groups and identified some areas of focus that it will be discussing and refining in the near future.

Specific programs and policies will be approved by the Council or the City Manager as required by local law and procedures.

There is also a nationwide movement called Dementia Friendly America which seeks to support those who are living with dementia and their families and care givers. While we are not actively seeking to become a Dementia Friendly City as this time, the task force will actively work to incorporate elements of these efforts into Palo Alto's actions plan and goals.

### **Resources Impact**

There are no additional resource requests as part of the recommendations of this report.

### **Policy Implications**

The following areas of the Comprehensive Plan are pertinent to this report:  
Policy C-18: Support and promote the provision of comprehensive senior services in coordination with senior service providers.

#### **Attachments:**

- 0140178 WHO Age Friendly Global Network Reso

RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF PALO ALTO TO JOIN THE  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S AGE-FRIENDLY  
GLOBAL NETWORK

WHEREAS, the global population of people aged 60 and over is expected to grow from 600 million in 2000 to almost 2 billion by 2050, and

WHEREAS, in the United States, the population of people aged 65 and over is expected to grow from 35 million in 2000 to 88.5 million by 2050, taking the total share of the 65 and over population from 12 percent to 20 percent of the total population, and

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Clara currently has over 361,500 residents over the age of 65 and this will increase by 2060 to 25 percent of the total county population will be over the age of 65, and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has developed a Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities to encourage and promote public policies to increase the number of communities that support active aging and thereby improve the health, well-being, satisfaction and quality of life for older adults, and

WHEREAS, active aging is a life-long process, whereby an age-friendly community is not just "elder-friendly" but also intended to be friendly for all ages, and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has developed eight domains of community life that influence the health and quality of life of older adults:

1. Outdoor spaces and building
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and Social inclusion
6. Civic Participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services

WHEREAS, the Seniors' Agenda for the County has been coordinating community collaboration and plans of action around these eight domains and shows the county's commitment to the older adult population, and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization recognizes that towns, cities and communities have different needs, resources and varying capacities to engage their resources to take action to facilitate active aging,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Palo Alto hereby supports initiatives and opportunities to engage in the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Communities Network by encouraging and promoting public policies and projects in support of healthy and active aging.

SECTION 1. The Council finds that the adoption of this resolution does not meet the definition of a project under Public Resources Code Section 21065, thus, no environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act is required.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

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City Clerk

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Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

APPROVED:

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City Attorney

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City Manager

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Director of Community Services

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Director of Administrative Services