

Greater Richmond Age Wave Coalition Neighborhood Livability Action Team August 2, 2017 @ 1:00pm-2:30pm

Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
9211 Forest Hill Ave, Richmond, VA 23230
Facilitator: Ken Lantz

Neighborhood Livability Action Team

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Notes: Karen Moeller

Objective: Increase opportunities for affordable housing and home modification services for older adults, increase mobility and transportation infrastructure in order to decrease isolation of older adults and persons with disabilities, improve physical infrastructure including accessibility to housing and public transportation, promote public safety and make disaster planning widely accessible. The Greater Richmond Age Wave Plan

The Meeting

Ken Lantz welcomed attendees and distributed notes from the June 23 meeting, which were approved. He then discussed upcoming GRTC Transit Network Plan Public Meetings which will be taking place August 5-11. The purpose of these meetings will be to announce the rollout of the new route plans. The group discussed the delay and adjustments being made to the Pulse route currently under construction.

The GRTC Care on Demand Program will provide new options for riders. GRTC has partnered with UZURV, and on August 1 began offering same day rides, matching riders with Uber and Lyft drivers, as well as with other services. These will be exclusive rides and the cost is \$6 for the customer, \$15 paid by GRTC, with any excess balance paid by the customer. Bill asked if drivers will be trained, and Ken announced that Travis Snelling, formerly of Van Go, will now be working with UZURV to train drivers. They have created a call center to compliment the ability to make ride reservations with smart phones. Cathy mentioned that UZURV is now contracting with the Veterans Hospital, as well. Bill suggested another idea to provide needed transportation in the region: to have buses transport workers from a central point to the Amazon facility.

Patrick Hickey, representing Thelma Watson, shared details about Senior Connections' series of public comment sessions held in June. Public input was encouraged at sessions held at Friendship Cafes in the East, North, and West regions of the service area. Patrick distributed a summary of questions and feedback gained at each session. As listed in the handout, key issues included:

- Continued efforts to expand affordable, accessible transportation for medical appointments and personal business
- Additional options for getting information about services and resources to older adults and their families, including housing transitions and planning for end of life decisions and financing final funeral arrangements

- Counseling and information sessions about finding and obtaining affordable housing
- Options for affordable home repair services
- Lack of home care providers in rural areas
- Training/classes on use of smart phones and related technology

Senior Connections is considering offering workshops on finding affordable, accessible housing. They currently provide information on end of life matters (not funeral planning). Catherine mentioned that VCU Gerontology students are doing projects pertaining to advance care planning. Patrick noted that both home and transportation were the major areas of concern.

Planning continues on Senior Connections' role of Regional Coordination Entity. They are pursuing grant funding to support this work. The April Transportation Forum attracted 30-40 people, including transportation providers and human services professionals. It included a long discussion focused on transportation needs and solutions in our region. The framework of the Coordination Entity will incorporate the public comment session information and focus on serving the transportation disadvantaged. Like the new GRTC program, the entity will examine the feasibility of expanding call center services as well as technology options for ride requests and consult with UZURV. They will foster volunteer driver programs as there are existing underserved areas. They will seek to boost existing services and develop new ones, all the while seeking opportunities for collaboration. Next steps include following up on their early efforts and reaching out to other organizations, like Resources for Independent Living, for input and suggestions. Senior Connections' Advisory Council is overseeing the entity's development, and Patrick expects to have the first draft of their action plan for the Council's consideration this Fall.

Catherine reported that Age Wave's Business for Life Action Team is organizing a driving tour of Richmond's East End this Fall. The "Innovation Builds Inclusive Communities Tour" will highlight organizations and businesses leading the way in design and resources for all people in the community. It's the organizers' hope that participants will share ideas that can be duplicated in other areas. They are expecting notice in the next few days regarding an AARP grant that will provide funds for transportation and food. The event will take place in either late October or early November. Bill suggested contacting Peter Paul Development Center regarding their Promise Neighborhoods program.

VCU Gerontology students are participating in the Age Wave Scholars Program's Neighborhood Canvassing Project this Fall. They have found that census data, combined with predictors for social isolation, has highlighted areas in our region of great risk for social isolation. Canvassing areas are being considered and projects will be completed by the Gerontology Program's Biology students along with VCU Urban Planning students. They will examine physical needs of older adults as they relate to existing infrastructure. Amy recommended Byrd Park as a neighborhood to examine, and Bill suggested Northside.

In her work as a Realtor and Gerontologist, Cathy Saunders has recognized a great need in the Richmond area for adequate housing for older adults, regardless of income. Cathy is a board member of Virginia Accessible Housing Solutions, a statewide organization promoting the building and renovation of accessible homes. Formerly called Easy Living Homes, the VAHS centers on policy and programs, including tax relief and influencing builders to construct Easy Living Homes (no entry steps, wide doorways, etc.) for all income levels. The organization operates under a grant from the VHDA, and has applied for support from AARP. Cathy mentioned that the Richmond Association of Realtors, with support of President Laura Lafayette, is looking to modify the MLS system to capture info regarding home accessibility features.

Mike Harton introduced RVA Rapid Transit as an advocacy group on public transportation. Started at Richmond Hill by Ben Campbell, the group succeeded in helping pass the Pulse project in Richmond, and now wants to see it expanded to the surrounding counties. They see the expansion of public transportation options as supporting those who wish to age in place. Their new focus is in supporting bus service in the Route 1/Jeff Davis corridor of Chesterfield County. This area needs access to employment centers, but currently has no service and no sidewalks for underserved, low income residents. Mike shared that Matt Thornhill, of SIR, spoke recently at a meeting of the Midlothian Business Association saying that people have an “attitude problem about buses”. Yet, in a survey, they found 78% of Chesterfield County residents favor bus service in the county.

Next Meetings & Events

Tuesday, September 19, 1pm – 2:30pm

Neighborhood Livability Team Meeting

Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, 9211 Forest Hill Ave. Richmond, VA

Age Wave Leadership Meeting

Friday, September 29, 9am -10:30am

Genworth Financial, Bldg 4, 6th Floor, Room 5

6620 W. Broad St, Richmond, VA

ATTENDEES

Name	Organization Affiliation
Ken Lantz	Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
Patrick Hickey	Senior Connections
Cathy Saunders	VAHS, Long & Foster
Tom Harton	RVA Rapid Transit
Amy Marschean	Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
Bill Leipsis	United Way Volunteer
Catherine MacDonald	Greater Richmond Age Wave Coalition
Karen Moeller	Greater Richmond Age Wave Coalition