



# AGING IN PLACE

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## AGING IN COMMUNITY

Five Year Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD



***“Long life is a remarkable achievement. But our aging society presents challenges every bit as fundamental and pervasive as climate change and globalization. If we address the reality of longevity, we will avoid a crisis — and improve the quality of our lives at all ages.”***

**-Laura L. Carstensen, Ph.D.**

**Director of the Stanford Center on Longevity**

**Time Magazine, 2015, used with permission**

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This document has been printed in 14 point type for readability. The format is designed to be uncluttered by text boxes and graphics for greater legibility. It is available as an audio file on the City’s website or by request by calling the Department of Human Services and Rent Stabilization at 323-848-6471.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of West Hollywood initiated the development of a five-year strategic plan - *Aging in Place, Aging in Community* - to help the City evolve as a community where aging is embraced, and where people can remain in the housing of their choice for as long as possible. This Strategic Plan builds on the City's existing policies and programs, such as arts and cultural events, lifespan-friendly housing, senior services, and other approaches to wellness, while responding to the demographic trend of people living longer and living independently in their homes.

West Hollywood is a caring and supportive city as demonstrated by 31 years of proactive and progressive City policies and services. It now seeks to continue this community-oriented approach as its unique populations grow older. West Hollywood is home to LGBT community members; long-term HIV survivors; Russian-speaking emigrants, many of whom are 80 and 90 years of age; Baby Boomers reaching retirement age; and a large population of single head of household families. What services do these groups have access to? Are their emerging needs being met? What actions need to be taken to create a successful framework that meets these needs? With the Aging in Place, Aging in Community Five-Year Strategic Plan, the City of West Hollywood is working to identify the specific needs, service and program gaps, and as well as opportunities within its older adult communities.

The vision for the Aging in Place, Aging in Community Strategic Plan is to support individuals as they choose to live at home within a community they know where safety and independence are givens, regardless of age, income, or ability level. This approach offers many benefits to adults as they live longer lives, including a stable sense of community, life satisfaction, health, and self-esteem, all of which are central to successful aging.

This vision will be achieved through a combination of:

- Activities that occur organically within the West Hollywood community involving neighbors, family, friends, and other circles of support. Public funds and programs alone will never be able to address all the identified needs.

- Policies and programs established by the City that guide and direct successful aging in place and engage the community in the decision-making process.
- Supports that are provided by other organizations, such as nonprofits, businesses, religious institutions, clubs, and other government organizations.

Initial community engagement for what would become the Strategic Plan began in June 2010 with the *Pathways to Positive Aging: Creating Communities for a Lifetime* symposium. The meeting was held to bring community members together with experts to address topics concerning the aging community. In 2012, City housing staff met with legislative policy offices of both Republican and Democratic parties and brought awareness about aging in place as a nonpartisan issue. Also, the support gathered at the state level provided in-depth information about funding support for age-friendly housing modifications.

In 2013, the City completed a Community Study, which included a demographic analysis of West Hollywood and an extensive public outreach and engagement campaign. The findings of the Community Study echoed the community's goal to age in place in West Hollywood. Throughout 2013 and 2014, staff and Senior Advisory Board members continued discussions with various experts and partners.

In June, 2014, the 2014-2016 City Budget was approved, highlighting aging in place as a key City initiative. The methods and community engagement process for the Aging in Place Strategic Plan project were approved by the City Council on December 14, 2014. Staff moved forward with community engagement in the first quarter of 2015, gaining insight from experts in the field of aging, advisory boards and commissions, small group meetings, meetings with health care providers, social service agencies, Chamber of Commerce, the arts community, and residents. Through this process, the Aging in Place, Aging in Community Five-Year Strategic Plan was created to build on a good foundation of city services to proactively address the needs of older adults in the City.

As a part of the process, the City will evaluate the strategies using a *collective impact* framework for capturing the results of this program. At its core, collective impact is the impact that results from collaboration of members from different

institutions and agencies working together to promote a common agenda to help solve the challenges of an aging population. The implementation plan will be structured over a 5-year period, and evaluated periodically, and goals will be revised along the way.

The plan uses the World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Livability as a framework, which is also used by AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities. These domains state that "City life will influence the health and well-being of older adults." Building on what West Hollywood already does well to serve its community, the goal of this action-oriented plan is to identify needs that should be addressed, and address those needs through innovation, more community connectivity, and incorporating other government or non-profit agency help.



# Background: A Strategic Plan for West Hollywood



## **Why West Hollywood undertook this proactive strategic plan for aging in place**

### **West Hollywood History**

In 1984, Cityhood was proposed by a coalition of LGBT activists, seniors, and renters — these groups came together to form a City like no other with progressive policies and strong tenants' rights protections. Through tireless determination, the City of West Hollywood was officially incorporated on November 29, 1984. Previously, West Hollywood had been an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County.

During its three decades, West Hollywood has become one of the most influential small cities in the nation. No other city of its size has had a greater influence on the national progressive public policy agenda. West Hollywood's story as a city includes countless individual and community stories.

- The first West Hollywood City Council established West Hollywood as the first city in the nation to have a majority openly gay governing body. This was a significant development in LGBT rights in the United States as well as globally.
- The ordinances adopted by the West Hollywood City Council within the first year of Cityhood included landmark legislation such as the City's Rent Stabilization Ordinance (which, upon its adoption, was one of the strictest rent control laws in the country); an ordinance prohibiting discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS; Domestic Partnership Ordinance; and an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation. Today, many of the City's ordinances have been duplicated and have become mainstream policies nationally and globally.
- In 1985, the City Council established its Social Services program to provide much-needed services to residents. Over its history, the City has provided millions of dollars in grants to fund programs for people in need. These services have included services for seniors; people with HIV and AIDS; members of the LGBT community; people with disabilities; alcohol and drug

recovery programs; support programs for Russian-speaking immigrants; services for people who are homeless; food programs; and health care services for people who are uninsured. Today, the City's Social Services Division budgets approximately \$4.3 million per year in funding critical support to programs that have a positive effect on thousands of people in West Hollywood.

The City's outstanding history of proactive and progressive community policy provided a foundation for the development of the Aging In Place Strategic Plan.

## Overarching Themes

The City engaged a diverse stakeholder and community process to provide participation in this strategic plan.

Two overarching themes emerged from the community. As West Hollywood residents look ahead to their futures and think about their own efforts to age in place, their interests, needs, and priorities aggregate into:

- **Where I live** – addressing the nuts and bolts of physical space, accessibility, and affordability.

First and foremost for residents is the desire to have affordable housing options within the City that meet the changing needs of older adults. Residents and professionals alike emphasized the importance of public policy for more affordable housing, physical improvements, and ultimately the availability of assisted living services within the City.

- **How I live** – addressing the many factors that contribute to quality of life.

Residents seek connection with one another, access to the wide variety of services and resources already and available, and support in maintaining their lives within the community they call home.

## Why Age Friendly Communities Matter

As reported on RetiredBrains®, [www.retiredbrains.com](http://www.retiredbrains.com), an AARP study shows that over 80% of U.S. residents 45 years of age and older say they want to remain in their own homes even when they need assistance. Another study, by Clarity and the EAR Foundation shows that 26% of older people fear losing independence and 13% fear moving to a nursing home much more than they fear death. The major factors enabling aging in place according to the AARP report are:

- Convenience of living close to or within walking distance of services needed.
- Transportation: Increased mobility options can reduce reliance on transportation by personal car.
- Affordable and accessible housing.

During their lifetime, people develop connections to a sense of place and form relationships with neighbors, doctors, hairdressers and shopkeepers. They become intimately familiar with the local routes to downtown, the rhythm of summer concerts at park, or the best places to get a coveted burger and personalized greeting. These associations, of value to both the individual and the community, cannot be quickly or easily replicated in a new environment. In essence, they can play a pivotal role in successful aging.

In the next 20 years, the number of adults age 65 and older will nearly double in the United States. Many of these people will reject high-priced institutional care and, instead, will continue to live in the community, even if they have one or more disabilities. The degree to which they can participate in community life will be determined, in part, by how well their physical environment accommodates them and the quality of services provided.

In contrast, unsupportive community design, unaffordable and inaccessible housing, and a lack of access to needed services can thwart this desire. The AARP, Aging in Place: A State Survey of Livability Policies and Practices states that the following issues need to be addressed through federal, state and local entities if older adult community members are to have the opportunity to age in place:

- Integrating Land Use and Transportation Policy

- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- Joint Use Facilities
- Housing Affordability
- Building Standards that Promote Accessibility
- Models to Provide Services at Home

According to the AARP, integrated land use and transportation policies will reduce congestion, increase environmental quality and improve public health. Transit-oriented development will create housing with walkable street environments that offer several easy-to-access transportation options. Joint-use facilities will save taxpayer money by using community facilities for various uses and services for residents. Housing affordability will give comfortable housing options to those living on fixed incomes. Building standards that promote accessibility will allow older Americans to remain in their homes longer. Addressing these issues will improve the overall quality of life of residents and help create a well-designed and livable community for aging adults.

## Demographics for Older Adults in West Hollywood

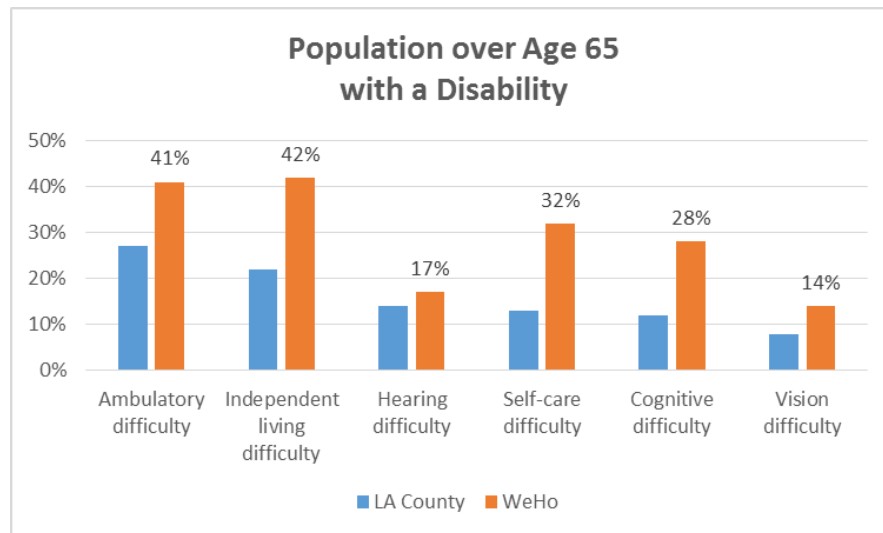
Information from the City of West Hollywood 2013 Community Study combined with 2010 U.S. Census data show the following older adult demographics.

- 15% of the City's population is aged 65 years and older; this is a decrease from 17% reported in the 2000 U.S. Census.
- 5,125 people were over ages 65 to 79 and 1,904 people were over age 80.
- Of those over age 65 and living alone, 945 were men and 1,973 were women.
- Compared to Los Angeles County (35%) West Hollywood older adults were twice as likely to be renters (80%).
- 51% of people over age 65 in West Hollywood reported having a disability, compared to 39% in Los Angeles County.

The Housing Element of the City's General Plan reports that almost 91% of the City's housing stock is at least 30 years old, with about half at least 50 years old. Many of the City's rental housing developments have not had major upgrades.

## Disabilities and poverty

- Though still below the County rate of 29%, the percentage of people living with disabilities age 65 and older in poverty has been increasing in West Hollywood over the last decade and is now 19%.
- When looking at the population over 65 years old with disabilities, there is a striking difference between West Hollywood and Los Angeles County.



## Older adults in West Hollywood living with HIV/AIDS

- In 2015, over 50% of HIV positive people will be over age 50 (2013 HIV Surveillance Report, LA County Department of Public Health).
- Many long-term HIV survivors have lived in the City over 10 years; many have received services from established social services and health providers within the community.

## Russian Speaking Community

- In 2010, 11% of the City's total population identified a former Soviet republic as their place of ancestry, a decrease from 15% in 2000 (2013 West Hollywood Community Study).



# What is Aging in Place?

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## AGING IN COMMUNITY

### **What is Aging in Place?**

*Aging in place is the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, for as long as possible regardless of age, income or ability level.*

According to many current studies and conversations with community members, most adults prefer to stay in their home as they grow older. Referred to as “aging in place,” this approach offers many benefits to adults as they age, including a stable sense of community, life satisfaction, health, and dignity, all of which are central to successful aging. During the aging process, some people who choose to remain in their homes could require a variety of supports and services that will need to change over time as the needs of older adults change.

### **City of West Hollywood Mission:**

“As a premiere city, we are proactive in responding to the unique needs of our diverse community, creative in finding solutions to managing our urban environment, and dedicated to preserving and enhancing its well-being. We strive for quality in all our actions, setting the highest goals and standards.”

--City of West Hollywood, Vision 2020 Strategic Plan

### **City of West Hollywood Aging in Place Vision:**

West Hollywood is a caring and supportive City where aging is embraced. Therefore, it has the vision that adults as they age are supported in ways that help them to remain in their homes for as long as possible . The City, as an age-friendly community, is a place where older adults safely age with health and dignity.

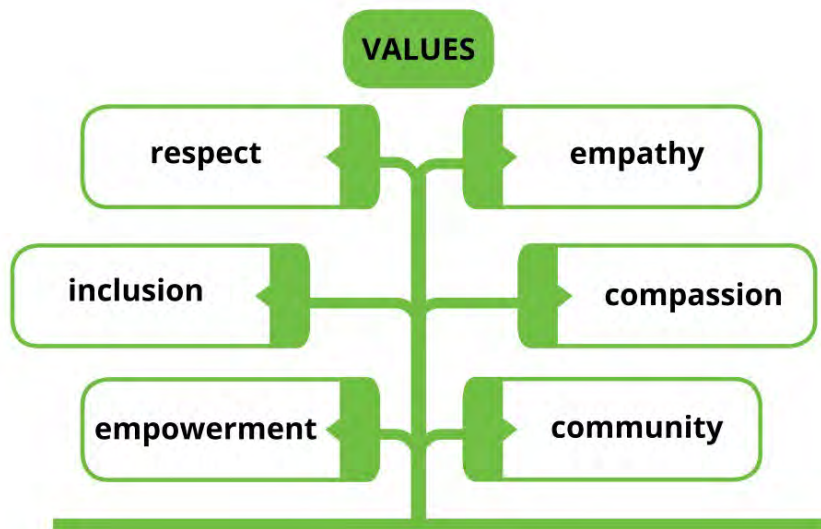
### **This vision will be achieved through a combination of:**

- Activities that occur organically within the West Hollywood community involving neighbors, family, friends and other circles of support. Public funds and programs alone will never be able to address all the identified needs.
- Policies and programs established by the City that guide and direct

successful aging in place and engage the community in the decision-making process.

- Supports that are provided by other organizations, such as nonprofits, businesses, religious institutions, clubs, and other government organizations.

### **Aging in Place Values that will be reflected across the City’s work:**



### **Strategic Focus**

The strategic plan has a West Hollywood perspective in how it includes ways to serve the needs of long-term community members including HIV/AIDS survivors, the Russian-speaking community, LGBT community, and others in culturally competent ways. This plan uses the World Health Organization’s eight domains for an age friendly city as a strategic framework. Building on what the city already does to serve its community, the goal of this action-oriented plan is to identify needs that should be addressed, and address those needs through innovation, more community connectivity, or incorporating other government or non-profit agency help.

### **Developing this Plan**

In the comprehensive Community Survey conducted by the City in 2006, community members communicated that the needs of older adults warranted attention. Soon after, a federally funded Stakeholder Advisory Committee was



formed. This committee identified two Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) at Park La Brea and the City of West Hollywood. The committee found that the City of West Hollywood already offered a large variety of services for older adults and decided to focus on transportation. The 2-year process allowed for stakeholder empowerment and led to a transportation forum. Through this forum, improvements were made to the West Hollywood Cityline bus route. This forum was a pre-cursor to the Connect program that connected volunteers with older adults and adults with disabilities.

In 2010, the City hosted a symposium entitled *Pathways to Positive Aging*, which focused on discussions about age-friendly communities and how to prepare for a rapidly growing aging population in West Hollywood. Further, the West Hollywood 2013 Community Study identified the importance of addressing the needs of community members who are aging in place in the City. This work continued through 2014. The City Council included support for an “Aging in Place Strategic Plan” in its 2014-2016 budget, leading to this report and initiative.

The planning process launched formally in November 2014 with a startup meeting consisting of city staff representing a wide diversity of departments, together with the consultant hired to guide the process. The cross-departmental design of the planning group reflects the City’s vision that the Aging in Place strategies infuse all aspects of its work.

The project was approved at the December 12, 2014 City Council meeting. Staff was ready to move forward with community engagement in the first quarter of 2015 with:

- Over 30 experts in the field of aging
- 12 City advisory boards and commissions
- Eight small group meetings<sup>1</sup>
- 11 individuals who tell their personal stories of aging in West Hollywood
- Over 70 residents in a special study session led by the Human Services Commission
- Public input was invited through EngageWeHo.org

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<sup>1</sup> Long Term HIV/AIDS Survivors, Performing Arts Subcommittee of Arts & Cultural Affairs Commission, Senior Affordable Housing Residents, Architects, Social Services Agency Representatives, Tenants, Chamber of Commerce & an Open Group of Community Members

The intention of this process is to establish a high-level strategic framework to guide the City’s work plans regarding aging considerations over the next five years.

Though not designed to replicate the more comprehensive Community Survey design, this process generated input and guidance from diverse fields ranging from housing to transit to health and human services, while also engaging the voices of individual residents and the perspectives of key affinity groups and populations.

The scope of this project is designed to focus on the needs and opportunities for West Hollywood residents as they age. As was experienced when the City addressed the needs of people with disabilities, for example, the whole community will benefit from these changes. The City will provide leadership to many of the strategies and goals articulated here, while encouraging and welcoming leadership from other organizations and partners when they are best suited for the work.

## Age-Friendly Communities

In 2006 the World Health Organization (WHO), in conjunction with 33 cities in 22 countries, identified **eight domains** of livability that “influence the health and well-being of older adults.” These domains are central to WHO’s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, which report 258 participating cities and communities in 28 countries covering 100 million people as of June 2015. Further advancing its work to promote an age-friendly world, WHO launched a dedicated website in October 2014 with the tagline “adding life to years.”<sup>2</sup>

### What is an age-friendly world?

It is a place that enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities. It is a place that treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy to stay connected to those around you and those you love. It is a place that helps people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages. Finally, it is a place that helps those who can no longer look after themselves to live with dignity and enjoyment. [www.agefriendlyworld.org](http://www.agefriendlyworld.org)

<sup>2</sup> <http://agefriendlyworld.org/en/>

## Definition of Aging

“We don’t think in terms of chronological age; we think in terms of well and not so well.”

June Simmons, Executive Director Partners in Care Foundation (used with permission)

Old age, senior citizen, older adult are all terms that mean many different things. For some, reaching a milestone birthday brings on bragging rights and for others this same milestone is ignored. AARP membership starts at 50 years of age while senior discounts at restaurants, movie theaters and museums begin at a range of ages—50, 55, 62. In addition, different data sources, reports, and programs use different age demarcations in defining older adults. Some reports use 60 years and older and others 65 years and older, while others go the other direction and use either 45 years or 55 years and older.

Aging as used in this strategic plan refers to the chronological age at which people living in America become eligible for services and benefits. This age varies depending on the entity: retirement age is set by employers; Medicare benefits by the Federal Government; housing programs by the developer or by the funding agency.

As used in this strategic plan, “aging” is not intended to be a term that marginalizes or categorizes people. As can be seen in the 11 vignettes presented in this document, West Hollywood has vital women and men, who are actively engaged in their community.

## Aging Terminology<sup>1</sup> (Excerpted from American Planning Association Journal)

A variety of terms are used somewhat interchangeably in the literature on aging and communities. Terms used to describe the process of consciously developing and operating communities supportive of people throughout their lifespans include aging in community, aging in place, successful aging, healthy aging, and smart growth. A number of terms describe communities that are supportive of residents’

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<sup>1</sup> Source: American Planning Association PAS Report 579, June 2015: Planning Aging-Supportive Communities, by Bradley H. Winick, AICP, LEED, and Martin Jaffe – used with written permission of the APA

ability to age within the community rather than moving at some point to a community more supportive of their evolving needs, including aging-supportive communities, age friendly communities, lifelong communities, elder-friendly communities, lifecycle communities, livable communities, lifespan communities, ageless communities, and multigenerational communities. Even terms used to refer to older individuals themselves differ among various stakeholders, with “older adults,” “senior citizens,” “seniors,” and “elders” used somewhat interchangeably, as is the case in this report.

The term aging in community is used often rather than aging in place. To many, this latter term suggests an emphasis on people remaining in their current dwellings and is therefore often overly dwelling-centric rather than community-centric. The only exceptions to these nomenclature preferences are when specifically referencing existing programs, protocols, or institutions. Finally, “older adults” is used frequently.

In the United States, AARP has adopted these domains and encouraged community support and an active role for older adults in shaping livable communities. The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities builds upon the eight domains to “create and maintain great places for people of all ages.”<sup>2</sup>

This strategic plan is structured around these Eight Domains in recognition of the research and experience they reflect, and in alignment with similar efforts around the world. The Domains are consistent with the City of West Hollywood core values, in particular:

- Respect and Support for People,
- Responsiveness to the Public,
- Idealism, Creativity and Innovation, and
- Quality of Residential Life.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/>



## Eight Domains of Livability

The City of West Hollywood began the strategic process by developing an aging in place draft vision statement. Next the team incorporated the City's core values and added guiding principles.

With its vision, core values and guiding principles in hand, the City's team made a 360 degree scan of the existing work being done on aging populations. This led to a connection with AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities, which is an affiliate of the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. Since 1995, WHO has published *The World Health Report (WHR)* the main purpose of which is to provide policymakers, donor agencies, international organizations and others with the information they need to help them make appropriate health policy and funding decisions.

In 2006, the WHR addressed the need for comprehensive public health action on population aging. It developed a report that noted how this will require fundamental shifts, not just in the things that are done, but in how aging is perceived. The *World Report on Aging and Health* outlines a framework for action to foster Healthy Aging built around the new concept of functional ability that is based on the eight domains of livability. Domains in this context refer to spheres of knowledge, influence, or activity. The report concludes that making the investments in the eight domains of livability will have valuable social and economic returns, both in terms of health and well-being of older people and in enabling their ongoing participation in society.

This international effort was launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for increased aging populations and the parallel trend of urbanization. The program has participating communities in more than 20 nations, as well as 10 affiliates representing more than 1,000 communities.

The WHR created a Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities that is intended to be used by individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly. AARP is the designated organization to conduct this work in North America.

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities helps participating communities become places for all ages by adopting such features as safe, walkable streets; better housing and transportation options; access to key services; and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities. Well-designed, livable communities promote health and sustain economic growth, and they make for happier, healthier residents — of all ages.

AARP advances efforts to help people live easily and comfortably in their homes and communities as they age. AARP’s presence encourages older adults to take a more active role in their communities and have their voices heard. Initiatives focus on areas such as housing, caregiving, community engagement, volunteering, social inclusion and combating isolation among older citizens.

AARP works with local officials and partner organizations around the country to identify communities for membership in the Age-Friendly Network. AARP then facilitates the community’s enrollment and guides its representatives through the network’s implementation and assessment process.

The AARP/WHO Domains of Livability can be adapted to suit the needs of each community. West Hollywood adapted these domains as follows:

AARP	City of West Hollywood
1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	1. Open Spaces and Buildings
2. Transportation	2. Transportation
3. Housing	3. Housing
4. Social Participation	4. Social Participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion	5. Respect and Inclusion
6. Work & Civic Engagement	6. Civic Participation & Employment
7. Communication and Information	7. Communication & Information
8. Community and Health Services	8. Health & Community Services

## Eight Domains of Livability



### Open Space & Buildings

An age-friendly community includes public places to gather indoors or out, and places where residents can get some fresh air, such as visiting parks, walking or just sitting on a bench.



### Transportation

An age-friendly community includes ways for older adults and non-drivers to get where they need to go.



### Respect & Inclusion

An age-friendly community listens to, values, and includes its older community members.



### Housing

An age-friendly community has housing suitable for older adults.



### Communications & Information

An age-friendly community helps older adults access the information they need.



### Civic Participation & Employment

An age-friendly community encourages ways older adults can stay involved, such as through volunteer work or paid employment.



### Health & Community Services

An age-friendly community cares for its older adults and provides ways for them to care for themselves and others.



### Social Participation

In an age-friendly community, there are places for older adults to go for fun, enjoyable activities for them to do, and ways to stay socially connected.





# Strategic Goals and Priorities



## Strategic Goals and Priorities in each Domain

*The Eight Domains of Livability provide the framework for this strategic plan. On the following pages, each domain is addressed in turn with the following components:*

- **What the City Currently Offers:** A concise narrative of the resources and strengths found already in West Hollywood related to this domain. Substantial detailed information was collected and compiled through the planning process, and is available in the appendix.
- **Where the City is Headed:** For each domain, the process describes the changes and conditions to be created over the next five years in West Hollywood.
- **Strategic Priorities:** Those high-level priorities that emerged as most important for West Hollywood to foster and sustain under each domain.
- **Strategic Goals:** Specific, actionable goals that will best advance progress toward each Strategic Priority. In many cases, suggestions that arose through the community process are identified as possibilities for consideration and are shown in parenthesis within the relevant goal. For example:

### Domain 1

#### Priority 3: Accessible facilities and Public Thoroughfares

##### 1.3 Goals

- Assess and improve City facilities to encourage gathering (ramps and wide entrances, readable signage, seating that is helpful to older adults, grab bars, railings)



# The 5-Year Strategic Plan

## Domain 1: Open Space and Buildings

*An age-friendly community includes public places to gather indoors or out, and places where residents can get some fresh air, such as visiting parks, walking nature trails or just sitting on a bench.*

### What the City Currently Offers

The City of West Hollywood is described as a “small town surrounded by the big city,” with walkable, clean streets, an inviting pedestrian village, and a treasured collection of accessible parks of different sizes. The West Hollywood Public Library, Community Center and Community Gardens also provide facilities for congregating, connecting, and accessing services. The safe, open, comfortable environment is enhanced by City’s walkability and safe and quiet atmosphere.

### Where the City is Headed

The City, using the existing base-line of a barrier-free environment that includes curb-cuts, wide sidewalks, accessible buildings and outdoor spaces, will move to the next level. The City will encourage the creative use of public space. Efforts in this area will help create safe, age-friendly, accessible gathering places.

## Open Space and Buildings Strategic Priorities and Goals

### Priority 1: Safety and security

#### 1.1 Goals

- Work with Public Safety to expand neighbor to neighbor involvement (emergency preparedness for seniors, Neighborhood Watch, block events, open houses, health and welfare checks)

### Priority 2: Age-friendly gathering places

#### 1.2 Goals

- Redesign the Senior Lounge in Plummer Park to become a space for older adults to share art and culture as well as a sense of positive

community with conversation and activities

- Encourage the creative development of existing, shared open and green spaces for gathering and sense of community (alleyways, rooftops, and raised community gardening beds, partnerships with local businesses for meeting spaces)
- Install seating/places to rest in public areas through Smart Street Furniture and beautify crosswalks and sidewalks

### **Priority 3: Accessible facilities and Public Thoroughfares**

#### **1.3 Goals**

- Assess and improve City facilities to encourage gathering (ramps and wide entrances, readable signage, seating that is helpful to older adults, grab bars, railings)
- Encourage local business to improve accessibility and amenities (entrances, lighting)
- Assess and improve accessibility of parking spaces and walking paths for people with mobility challenges (accommodate scooters, walkers, and appropriate signage and lighting)

## **Domain 2: Transportation**

*An age-friendly community includes ways for older adults and non-drivers to get where they need to go.*

### **What the City Currently Offers**

Residents in West Hollywood enjoy a robust mix of transportation options including Access, Cityline Shuttle, Dial-a-Ride, subsidized Metro Passes, subsidized taxi services, and TLC Door-to-Door.

### **Where the City is Headed**

Isolation is one of the greatest challenges for older adults as physical challenges increase and independent mobility declines. While public transportation is a leading strength within the City, it is also an area that benefits from continual improvement.

Effective change in public transportation systems must consider that transit systems are regional in nature, involving multiple public agencies. A primary solution to some of the City's public transit challenges involves active engagement in regional planning to bring light rail and dedicated bus lanes and services into the City. While this process takes place, the City will focus on activities that can happen within the West Hollywood community.

The City will take an approach that combines support and interaction around transportation options that include pedestrian-friendly environments and the development and distribution of educational materials to increase knowledge of the many transportation resources already available. The City will continue to incorporate the best practices of Complete Streets, described by the National Complete Streets Coalition as, "streets for everyone that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities."

## **Transportation Strategic Priorities and Goals:**

### **Priority 1: Transit options for range of abilities**

#### **2.1 Goals**

- Increase knowledge among potential transit users of existing options by offering educational programs (travel training, workshops, education about using transit apps)
- Consider approaches to ensure that a broad range of transportation needs can be addressed, including a travel concierge for trip planning and triage to the most appropriate service, as well as Bus Buddies for transit learners, and personal support such as door-to-door and enhanced taxi service
- Integrate improvements into existing efforts (scheduling nighttime and weekend outings, longer service hours, shuttle/connectivity to rail system, assistance with transporting belongings)

### **Priority 2: Pedestrian-friendly environment**

#### **2.2 Goals**

- Further accommodate older adults with sight and hearing challenges by improving the number and effectiveness of audible signals at crosswalks, longer crossing times, innovative use of technology such as amplification-using smart phones (survey crosswalks including signalization)
- Increase visibility on pathways; use electronic signs for way- finding and transit navigation
- Reduce bike traffic on sidewalks (shared lanes with sharrows, bicycle boulevards on neighborhood streets)
- Increase pedestrian crosswalk safety (longer walk signals, islands with crosswalk cue buttons, consider adding more no right turn on red rules)

## **Domain 3: Respect and Inclusion**

*An age-friendly community listens to, values, and includes its older community members.*

### **What the City Currently Offers**

In 1985, older residents were leaders in creating the incorporated City of West Hollywood as a haven of respect and inclusion. Current stakeholders praised the City for the many ways it involves multiple voices, including those of older adults, through an ongoing commitment to community engagement and communication. One stakeholder summarized the sentiment shared by many, “City Hall listens to people’s problems and is responsive.”

### **Where the City is Headed**

The City is committed to hearing the voices and meeting the needs of older adults, working to further strengthen its caring and compassionate community. It will continue to foster respectful, culturally competent services so that its diverse residents can age in place. Older adult voices will continue to contribute to City decision making, and through expanded advocacy efforts the community will, together, influence policy at local, state, and federal levels.

## **Respect and Inclusion Strategic Priorities and Goals:**

### **Priority 1: Caring and compassionate community**

#### **3.1 Goals**

- Continue to model respect for older adults in City activities
- Integrate respect for older adults in cultural competency training
- Require service providers to incorporate LGBT cultural competency training for in-home and other service providers who care for older adults
- Expand cultural competency and physical accommodation training to local business owners and employees



## **Priority 2: Older adult voices in City decision making**

### **3.2 Goals**

- Adopt consistent guidelines for large typeface and readable design (on printed materials, online, on signage)
- Ensure adaptive devices are available in all locations (closed captions, assisted listening, reading companions, audible documents)
- Continue to improve meeting accessibility so older people can participate in community meetings (transit, digital access, printed materials)

## **Priority 3: Public policy that supports aging in place**

### **3.3 Goal**

- Continue the City's legislative priority for aging in place and creating age-friendly communities.

## **Domain 4: Housing**

### *An age-friendly community has housing suitable for older adults*

#### **What the City Currently Offers**

The City offers a wide range of housing resources, including senior housing, rent stabilization, and a variety of affordable housing options. Nonprofits and public agencies provide wellness programs, assistance with in-home caregiving, utility assistance, minor repairs, household chores and personal care, tenant rights counseling and just cause eviction protections.

#### **Where the City is Headed**

Many older adults on fixed incomes often face the harsh realities of the high cost of life essentials including food and medical care. Therefore, affordable housing is key to preventing senior poverty and homelessness. Even with the City's commitment to affordable housing, there remains a significant shortage of options that meet the financial, physical, and supportive needs of older adults. Therefore, the City will continue its strong affordable housing programs through addressing accessible neighborhoods and local policy, and by encouraging the best use of and improvements to the existing housing stock.

#### **Housing Strategic Priorities and Goals:**

##### **Priority 1: Age-friendly neighborhoods**

###### **4.1 Goals**

- Institute the concept of land use planning and business development that provides easy access to those products and services used by older adults (supermarkets, hospitals, universities, gyms, hair salons)
- Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of businesses to identify age-friendly goods and services in proximity to where people live (provide mobile app and small printed booklets)
- Encourage new residential construction projects to include shared spaces (laundry, shared kitchens, common space social areas)

- Continue the dialogue on the balance of residential neighborhood needs and business/commercial needs

## **Priority 2: Safe and effective use of existing housing stock**

### **4.2 Goals**

- Preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing, including the possibility of special needs housing (people with HIV who do not need intensive medical care, housing that is adaptable over peoples' life spans)
- Review City ordinances and offer education and incentives for landlords to address the needs of older adults (unit transfers, unit modifications)
- Explore Affordable Living for Aging (ALA) model of self-organizing senior housing options (collectives, shared housing/ co-housing, roommate matching and referral program, intergenerational)
- Conduct home safety checks for older adults (fall hazards, lighting, clutter, smoke and CO<sub>2</sub> detectors)

## **Priority 3: Age-friendly local policy**

### **4.3 Goals**

- Develop an Accessibility Incentive Program (Home Secure) for apartment owners to integrate into rental units older adult safety features (friction patio tiles, curb-less showers, scooter accessible, lighting, exterior ramps, caregiver space)
- Consider including varied housing products such as independent living, assisted living or PACE programs into the City's list of public benefits as a part of the development incentives process (incentivize adding elevators, develop assisted and/or skilled nursing facilities, consider Assisted Living waivers through Department of Health Care Services, memory care facilities, assisted living residences with reduced parking requirements)
- Address issues of an aging housing stock by structuring a program for rehabilitation of residential mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems including ramps, grab bars, lighting, and security

## **Domain 5: Communications and Information**

*An age-friendly community helps older adults access the information they need.*

### **What the City Currently Offers**

In the 2013 City Survey, residents indicated they used diverse ways to obtain information. These include print media, social media, the Internet, and television, although what is used is in transition. The Comprehensive Services Center, City Hall, West Hollywood Public Library, and Adult School all provide both written materials and, where needed, individualized support. The level of civic engagement of older adults in the City is high including involvement in advisory boards, commissions, attending City Council and other public meetings, and as volunteers at various community organizations. This extensive involvement adds to older adults' awareness of the City and the community.

### **Where the City is Headed**

While the use of the internet for accessing information is increasing, printed materials and personal contact will continue to be important methods for communicating with older adults. The City will advance a mix of approaches for sharing information with the community, including the use of nonprofit and community-based organizations, informal networks, and local businesses. While there are multiple ways to find information often, older adults need a personal relationship to effectively use this information. The City's social service providers should maintain cultural competency as well as knowledge of a wide range of programs and services for older adults.

## **Communications and Information Strategic Priorities and Goals:**

### **Priority 1: Culture of receiving help**

#### **5.1 Goals**

- Launch a "We Can Help" media and education campaign to encourage people to ask for and receive help, recognizing the need for respect and confidentiality
- Develop one-on-one support systems that introduce the concept of asking for help in a positive and proactive way. Develop a system to identify needs of those who are socially isolated (in person, remotely,

intergenerational, through social circles, faith-based groups, Neighborhood Watch, TheVillage.com)

- Promote proactive planning for wellness in relation to medical, financial, and support systems that are sensitive to the unique attributes of West Hollywood affinity groups (LGBT, Russian-speaking, single adult)

## **Priority 2: Printed resource information**

### **5.2 Goals**

- Provide and maintain clearly identified, easily accessible, large-font, comprehensive resource guides in multiple languages and a volunteer reader program
- Offer specialized resource guides for caregivers and family members, addressing general challenges of aging, resilience of older adults, available services, options for accessing benefits for same-sex partners; include transgender-sensitive materials (see Domain 7, Priority 1 Care for the Caregivers)
- Distribute written resources throughout the community (hospitals, social service agencies, faith-based organizations) as a part of the “We Can Help” campaign

## **Priority 3: Digital resource information**

### **5.3 Goals**

- Support community members who may not have access to electronic technology or who are not comfortably digitally literate by providing computers at Plummer Park and the West Hollywood Public Library. Develop community-based and vetted in-home assistance via electronic technology capacities
- Provide digital GIS based resource guides for clients, caregivers, family members, and social services providers with culturally inclusive information
- Use digital tools to improve the ability of people with hearing impairment to access information
- Build a group of social media savvy older adults to be peer mentors

## **Domain 6: Civic Participation and Employment**

*An age-friendly community encourages ways older adults can stay involved, such as through volunteer work or paid employment.*

### **What the City Currently Offers**

As one current stakeholder said, “I can be who I am here and serve my city.” West Hollywood residents actively volunteer at dozens of community benefit organizations and engage in civic life through many channels.

### **Where the City is Headed**

Paid and volunteer work provides crucial meaning in older adults’ lives. The City will continue to engage and tap the skills and talents of its older adults as a means of reducing isolation, increasing connectivity, providing service to each other, all benefiting of the community at large.

### **Civic Participation and Employment Strategic Priorities and Goals:**

#### **Priority 1: Volunteer, civic service, and mentoring opportunities**

##### **6.1 Goals**

- Establish WeHo Volunteer Corps and match older adults with volunteer opportunities, leveraging web-based resources (increase knowledge about older adult issues among City staff, boards, commissions and other stakeholders)
- Offer transportation support to help people participate in volunteer activities
- Incorporate volunteer openings information wherever paid employment opportunities are posted
- Create mentoring program so that older adult retirees can offer guidance for high school students, non-profits or others in need (Executive Service Corps consults to non-profits)

## Priority 2: Employment assistance for people over the age of 50

### 6.2 Goals

- Work with the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce to support businesses in hiring older adults
- Promote workshops, services, and websites that support work re-entry and encore careers (websites and services targeted to older adults, and use West Hollywood employment services training programs)
- Connect older adults with programs that assist them with starting a business (“Business in a Box” styled toolkits)

## **Domain 7: Health & Community Services**

*An age-friendly community cares for its older-adults and provides ways for them to care for themselves and others.*

### **What the City Currently Offers**

A wide variety of health and community services are provided throughout the City with a strong network of nonprofit organizations, recreation programs, social groups, sports associations, and neighbors helping each other. As one current stakeholder noted, “West Hollywood has done an impressive job of addressing service gaps for our community members to remain independent in their own homes.” Another reported that West Hollywood “social services are the best in California.”

### **Where the City is Headed**

The City will work with Los Angeles County, nonprofit social services agencies, and the private sector to develop system integration to strengthen connections to existing services, increase awareness across the community of the needs of older adults, and build networks and systems of care and support for older adults as well as their caregivers. As demand for case management and in-home supportive care continue to increase, the City will engage nonprofit agency involvement as well as community members to meet that need.

## **Health and Community Services Strategic Priorities and Goals:**

### **Priority 1: Care for the caregivers**

#### **7.1 Goals**

- Provide opportunities for family and other volunteer caregivers to receive respite care through training of nonprofit agency social work staff to be knowledgeable of respite programs
- Develop and implement an education campaign to help caregivers to recognize their role
- Offer caregivers case management to continue and improve care for their loved one (Family Caregiver Support Center, caregiver classes, Master Caregiver education, digital resources and/or a call-in hotline for questions and answers)



- Develop and implement training for caregivers so they better understand how to provide care as well as how to deal with the stress of the caregiving role in a culturally sensitive context (family, friends, neighbors, and long-distance, paid and unpaid)

## **Priority 2: Physical and mental wellness**

### **7.2 Goals**

- Conduct regular health testing with collaborative social service agencies through City funded health fairs and in collaboration with Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and other innovative providers
- Build on the Health Neighborhood model to create a network of services with a well-coordinated client entry system and health navigation (day care programs, respite for caregivers)
- Encourage healthy exercise and preventative self-care habits that are geared to the level of mobility (higher activity levels for more mobile older adults; gentler pace for more frail older adults, dog walking)
- Identify and engage people who are isolated, homebound or institution-bound, with special attention to LGBT older adults who may be coming out or re-closeted (pet visits, pet companions, shared ownership and expenses)
- Train physicians and other providers in the needs of older adults, including those of LGBT and Russian-speaking community members

## **Priority 3: Social and emotional support**

### **7.3 Goals**

- Support peer-to-peer engagement and support (Jewish Family Service, Being Alive, recreation programs, TheVillage.com)

- Engage neighbors and other informal providers with isolated older adults (volunteers, youth, faith-based groups, neighborhood news apps)
- Provide planning for financial literacy and management; durable power of attorney, wills and trusts, support proactive decision making
- Review the inter-agency coordination for health, wellness and adult education programs (location-based, virtual)

#### **Priority 4: Help in the home**

##### **7.4 Goals**

- Help older adults with services that meet their needs as they move through the aging process including a door-to-door outreach program which would identify isolated older adults and help meet their needs (telemedicine, teledentistry, tele-case management)
- Facilitate the process for accessing in-home supportive services
- Ensure that older adults have access to proper nutrition services and grocery stores
- Develop a West Hollywood-specific model for hands-on assistance for frail elderly (greater teamwork between case manager and resident services coordinator)
- Explore shared services or bartered and group purchasing (TheVillage.com)
- Provide assistance with basic household duties (changing sheets, basic cleaning, shared errands)
- Work with businesses to provide a directory of home delivery for goods and services

## **Domain 8: Social Participation**

*In an age-friendly community, there are places for older adults to go for fun; enjoyable activities for them to do; and ways to stay socially connected.*

### **What the City Currently Offers**

West Hollywood is the Creative City. It is culturally rich, with a sense of connection as a small community, and a wide variety of arts, activities, and events that are accessible to older adults. The high density of the neighborhoods and the longevity of residence thanks to rent stabilization mean that people meet and come to know their neighbors. One current stakeholder indicated that one of the strengths in the City is, “the kindness of friends and neighbors” and another noted, “all my best friends are within walking distance.”

### **Where the City is Headed**

The City is a place of vibrant arts and culture with the historic involvement of all population groups. As many older adults become isolated due to physical limitations, the loss of their partner or other barriers to participation, the City will work with family, friends, neighbors and social service agencies to bring about appropriate interventions. It will continue to support and encourage the integration of older adults into a wide variety of activities through ease of transportation options, welcoming public space, and recognition of the important contributions of older adults to the process.

### **Social Participation Strategic Priority and Goals:**

#### **Priority 1: Social engagement and enrichment**

##### **8.1 Goals**

- Provide inclusive educational, art and cultural activities where people tend to gather
- Create intergenerational opportunities for older adults to share their wisdom and experiences (with youth and 20 somethings)
- Create welcoming opportunities for older adults to engage in physical activity (using technology and virtual events, exclusive time at a gym and other normalized settings)

- Offer social model adult-day programs with opportunities for socialization and therapeutic activities with supervision, if needed, with culturally competent care providers



# Implementation and Evaluation

## Implementing and Evaluating this Plan

The Aging in Place Strategic Plan is a pragmatic action plan that will be used by the City, its community partner agencies, and community members to develop programs and policies and will benefit everyone living and working in West Hollywood. Facing the challenges of living a long life is another opportunity to demonstrate West Hollywood's commitment to its community as people grow older.

Strategic plans need people to bring ideas to reality and proven methods to evaluate these incubators of change. Programs under consideration are as different as: making older adults safer in their homes through added grab bars and handrails; redesigning the Senior Lounge in Plummer Park to offer extensive programming in a welcoming space with a virtual programming capacity; launching a "We Can Help" education campaign; working with the Chamber of Commerce to support the hiring of older adults; engaging isolated people and connecting them to vital services; and more.

The work of the evaluation team will include the development of logic models, a theory of change, specific process goals, short-term goals, long-term goals, metrics at the specific initiative-level, and metrics at the macro city-wide level. Ultimately the project will measure, refine and demonstrate the impact of specific programs and also demonstrate that there has been a collective impact across the community. This vision for capturing community-wide impact in the lives of older adults will demonstrate that, once again, West Hollywood is in a leadership role.

Underway at the same time as the plan is formulated, the program evaluation and implementation work will set the groundwork to kick-off the five-year Plan in July, 2016. The broad range of initiatives, which touch all parts of older adult lives, will be rolled out across the five-year period through leveraging existing operations and community partner relationships, city-wide collaborations and strategic leadership. A vision for this work is that eventually the City will systematically integrate aging issues into its planning and activities. Age-friendliness will have become part of the City's DNA.

The City has contracted Health Management Associates Community Strategies (HMA) to design and carry out the evaluation. HMA is designing ways to ensure that data are used promptly to improve programs, evaluate outcomes, and measure progress toward goals. Based in the premise that the whole of this project's impact will be greater than the sum of its parts, HMA will use a *collective impact* framework for capturing the results. At its core, *collective impact* is the impact from the collaboration of different stakeholders working together – in different ways – to promote a common agenda to address a social problem, such as the challenges faced by an aging population. This framework will provide for evaluating separate programs, but also measure for community-wide impact overall, and it will be done in a rigorous way that establishes to what degree West Hollywood's use of resources is effective.

One example of how that high-level impact will be demonstrated will be studying awareness and attitudes toward aging issues by City board members, commissioners, and staff, in all of their activities, and how it changes over the course of five years. Success in this program will be that, through this important work, City leadership and staff regularly and intuitively consider the needs of older adults in all of their work and activities. The results of this attitudinal research will be compiled with other data and program metrics to demonstrate that the overall initiative has ***increased the ability of older adults to live in their own home and community safely, independently and comfortably.***



# Additional Considerations



## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The *Aging in Place/Aging in Community Five-year Strategic Plan* is a document that provides direction for addressing the important issues related to the City's aging community. The Strategic Plan report is organic and responsive to the West Hollywood community.

The draft Strategic Plan document was presented by the city staff to the key Advisory Boards and Commissions that have been involved in this process. Members of each group engaged in more discussions and provided their feedback on the draft report. This additional round of community input resulted in a further vetting of community-wide issues that inform the *Additional Considerations* presented in the following pages.

Also, Board members, Commissioners and community members provided practical suggestions that have importance for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. These areas are already in the overarching strategies so are not discussed below, but will be considered as program specifics are developed.

### **Housing**

It is important to note - and it cannot be overstated - that throughout the entire review and feedback process it was made clear that safe, affordable and accessible housing is of paramount concern to the West Hollywood community.

### **Public Spaces, Urban Design and Planning for Housing**

There are many aspects to planning for age-appropriate housing, so people can live in the home of their choice. Today an older adult may be living in his or her own home, whether in single-family or multi-family housing, and if this home is safe, accessible, and comfortable, they may choose to remain there for many years. Being in a neighborhood that is accessible and has a variety of options for housing helps to enable older adults to stay in their community and enjoy the important relationships they have built over the years.

Older adults may choose to move into other kinds of housing, which better suits their needs at their particular time of life. This may be a smaller home which requires less maintenance; an apartment closer to family; or a home

environment shared with peers, which may offer nursing assistance. People will continue to thrive if they are able to find affordable, attractive, and well-constructed homes.

Among the types of housing that exist are “lifestyle housing,” whether single-family or multifamily, which provides social and recreational amenities, but without any care or assistance services, and service-enriched housing, which offers a specific set of services to suit older adults’ evolving needs. These include co-housing, continued-care retirement communities, assisted-living communities, and residences with skilled nursing care.

Municipalities must take care to see that housing developments include features for all residents throughout their lifespan. Some specific recommendations for housing policy include:

- Performing an assessment of older adults’ current and projected future housing needs, with a better understanding of where they live, what options exist for them, and what barriers make aging in the community more difficult;
- Reviewing community zoning, building, and other related codes and ordinances, to make sure that they are adequately flexible, promote overall community accessibility, and support older adults aging in community;
- Eliminating from existing codes and ordinances any disincentives or impediments to an aging-supportive community; and
- Embracing new technological and service provision developments that can enhance the aging-supportiveness potential of the community.

Flexible, adaptable dwellings are based on:

- **Inclusive Housing Design**, where homes have accessibility modifications, inclusive universal design, and visit-ability standards, where communities encourage the creation and maintenance of places and spaces that are usable for all regardless of ability, age, or income;

- **Diverse Housing Options** within each neighborhood, to accommodate the changing housing needs associated with populations of various ages;
- **Affordable Housing** with options for people of all means and abilities;
- **Assisted Living and Nursing Homes in Neighborhoods** developed through opportunities for small-group assisted living and nursing homes in residential neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup>

By working with residents, local businesses, and developers, the City of West Hollywood can enhance the process of building a community culture where aging in place occurs naturally and organically.

### Family structure, single households, women

Marital status will look quite different among seniors in 2030 than it does today. The fastest projected rates of growth are among divorced/separated and never married groups. Between 2012 and 2030, the number of married people over age 65 will increase by 75 percent—but the number who are divorced or separated will increase by 115 percent, and the number who are never married will increase by 210 percent.

Another significant change will be in the number of seniors who have children. Those who have never been married are much less likely to have children than those who have been married at some point. As a result, seniors in the future will be more likely to be childless than those today. In 2012, just 12 percent of 75-year-old women had no children. By 2030, nearly 20 percent will be childless. It is known that adult children often provide care for their senior parents. These projections suggest that alternative non-family sources of care will become more common in the future.

By 2030, more seniors are likely to live alone, without family members to care for them. Many seniors will prefer to use services that allow them to remain in their homes for as long as possible. The number of people who will have difficulty

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<sup>1</sup> Source: American Planning Association PAS Report 579, June 2015: Planning Aging-Supportive Communities, by Bradley H. Winick, AICP, LEED, and Martin Jaffe – used with written permission of the APA.

caring for themselves, who have a wide range of needs, from transportation and cleaning services to help with basic tasks such as bathing or eating will grow. The strongest predictors of self-care difficulties are age and marital status, with older seniors and never-married seniors much more likely to experience some type of limitation.

The vast majority of these seniors will not be living in nursing homes. Who is most likely to need nursing home care? The single most important predictor is having difficulty with daily activities—in fact, the study findings suggest that age alone is becoming a less significant factor than self-care limitations. Other important factors include being single—especially if a person has never been married.

In addition, women are more likely to live in nursing homes than men, but that is primarily because they live longer, have more self-care limitations, and are more likely to be unmarried (or widowed).<sup>2</sup>

## **Long-term HIV/AIDS Survivors and Aging**

At the start of the epidemic more than 30 years ago, people who were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS could expect to live only 1-2 years after that diagnosis. This meant that for those with HIV/AIDS, the issues of aging into senior years were not a major focus.

But today, thanks to improvements in the effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy (ART), people with HIV who are diagnosed early, and who obtain and stay on ART, can keep the virus suppressed and live as long as their HIV-negative peers. For this reason, a growing number of people living with HIV in the United States are aged 55 and older. The health needs of the increasing number of HIV-positive Americans who are reaching older ages have become a significant public health issue.

So, the good news is that people with HIV are living longer, healthier lives if they are on treatment and achieve and maintain a suppressed viral load. However, with this longer life expectancy individuals living with long-term HIV infection

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<sup>2</sup> Laurel Beck, Hans Johnson, Research support from Landon Gibson, August 2015 Public Policy Institute of California: Planning for California's Growing Senior Population

exhibit many clinical characteristics commonly observed in aging with long-term medical conditions: multiple chronic diseases, the use of multiple medications, changes in physical and cognitive abilities, changes in the advances of medications and treatments, and increased vulnerability to stressors. These long-term medical conditions include cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorders, and liver disease, among others.

Living with HIV presents certain challenges and older people with HIV may face different issues than their younger counterparts, including greater social isolation and loneliness. Stigma is also a particular concern among older people with HIV. Stigma negatively affects people's quality of life, self-image, and behaviors, and may prevent them disclosing their HIV status or seeking continuous HIV medical care. Psychiatric symptoms such as depression and psychological distress are also common. Many long-term survivors suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as they have experienced the overwhelming loss of friends and loved ones, and rejection by parents and siblings coupled with societal homophobia.

Therefore, it is important for older people with HIV to get linked to HIV care and have access to mental health and other support services to help them stay healthy and remain engaged in HIV care.

## **LGBT and Aging**

The following are some concerns raised by the City's Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board at its meetings in 2015:

- What social supports have historically existed for older people who are heterosexual, which have historically been absent or discouraged for older people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender? What steps can the community take to acknowledge and begin to correct this difference? As they grow older, to what extent do LGBT people feel unsafe in care receiving situations that they consider returning to the closet?
- How do we develop and maintain an active business climate that encourages patronage from older LGBT community members?

- What kinds of special programming could be produced in City parks and public areas, and by the Senior Center, to enhance the health, mental health, and recreational opportunities of older gays and lesbians?
- Are there issues of physical safety that are particular to older gay and lesbian people in the community? How can these be addressed?
- Are there issues of housing, nutrition, and transportation that are particular to older gay and lesbian people? How can these be addressed?
- Are there issues related to caregiver support that are particular to older gay and lesbian people? What health and wellness programs and services are needed that should be specifically to meet the needs of older LGBT people? How would these differ from existing programming and services?
- Is there a need for sensitivity training and education around issues related to sexual behaviors and practices of older LGBT people? How would this information be developed and communicated?

## Transgender People and Aging

Here are some concerns from the City's Transgender Advisory Board raised at its meetings in 2015:

- Increased Internet visibility of the Transgender community...additional organizations with programming and services specifically targeting this community...full range, Social, Social-Emotional Support, Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment, Employment and Legal
- Retirement Planning Trainings/Workshops/Seminars – transgender economic class issues may vary from traditional planning models with the ability to accumulate assets given the medical and transition challenges
- LGBT Cultural Competency Trainings for the Medical Community – be careful to include transgender

## Russian-Speaking Community

The Russian-speaking population of West Hollywood is the most concentrated single Russian-speaking region in the U.S. outside of New York, and consists primarily of émigrés from Republics of the former Soviet Union: Russian Federation, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Latvia, and Uzbekistan. These émigrés arrived at different times, some as early as 1970, with the majority arriving after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

With the influx of this new group into the community, the City recognized the importance of providing support through adopting a culturally competent approach to the special needs of the people that now represented a significant portion of its population. In 2000, these émigrés comprised 15% of the City's population. As reported in the 2013 Community Study, of the total City population of 34,399, 11% or 3,784 people, are from the former Soviet Union republics.

This population group is aging as their children and grandchildren move to other Los Angeles neighborhoods, leaving parents and older relatives in the homes and the community where they feel comfortable and secure. In addition, West Hollywood's Russian-speaking community has medical offices with Russian-speaking doctors, grocery stores, restaurants, bars and many other services and amenities. There has been a substantial growth of such institutions as the Russian game show clubs, social and discussion clubs, Russian language daycare centers, schools, and newspapers.

As these older Russian-speaking immigrants come to the U.S. as adults, many are still in need of translation services when meeting with governmental agencies and social service programs. In addition, they require service programs such as individual advocacy and patient services navigation, assistance with the complication of government, medical or legal forms, information and referrals to different providers, and coordination of services to insure safe and healthy environment. Because many older émigrés qualified for rental units in West Hollywood's rent stabilization program, they have been able to age in place and in their community. As they grow further into their 80s, 90s and 100s, the need for medical care and case management will increase – and the need is ongoing for Russian culturally centered care.



# Vignettes



## Introduction

The following stories provide a snapshot of the lives of several long-time West Hollywood community members. Their stories help us understand the needs of those who look to age in place in our community. These familiar faces represent many of the people of West Hollywood who we may not know, but who are approaching or are living in their more mature years. As we understand the narratives of their lives, we can move forward as policymakers and community leaders in creating a West Hollywood that allows our aging population to remain independent and active, healthy and secure.

These narratives portray a broad list of older adults' living needs, including needs for improved transportation options for the elderly and disabled, community events that engage older adults in art and culture and employment opportunities for retirees. These stories illustrate the many ways in which this strategic plan can assist the City's aging population, and indeed, build on what the City is already doing well.

Most importantly, however, these stories remind us of the individuals who helped build the City of West Hollywood and who have assisted with the City's development since its inception. Today, it is important to remember the needs of these individuals as they age in the City that they helped found and to hear their voices and histories as we look to develop an age-friendly West Hollywood. Their narratives can guide the policies in this strategic plan that will allow future generations of residents to remain happy and healthy in the City of West Hollywood as they experience the many different phases of life.

# **Irving Bonios**

**businessman, activist**



**I**rving Bonios was born and raised in New York City. After graduating from New York University, he came west and has lived in California for fifty years. His two sons grew up here, and they still live nearby.

**Bonios has lived in West Hollywood for thirty-two years. He and his sister got into real estate development together, and for fifty years he was a broker of commercial real estate.**

**Bonios lives in a thirty unit multi-family building. In a place like that, Irving states, one becomes friendly with the neighbors. There is diversity of all kinds, which he enjoys.**

He appreciates that West Hollywood supports tenants, saying, "The City continually shows its interest in having landlords behave themselves. Still, it needs to consider what it does when the owner doesn't take care of buildings and tenant needs. The City should be able to quickly penalize them. It needs to beef up its legal power. Rent control tenants are often afraid to complain, but everyone should be able to have clean, fresh, cheerful surroundings."

Bonios says he's not a bar person, and that thirty-two years ago there were very few good restaurants in West Hollywood. He's glad that situation has changed. "Everything you need is around here," he enthuses. "This City has movies, theatres, museums, and culture. The best library in the country was built here. There's lots of open space, lots of parks. People are interested in health here. I've been going to the same trainer now for twelve years. There are good gyms and healthy eating. I like to say it's 'the good New York City.'"

Still, Bonios is concerned that sometimes people don't know about everything the City offers. He suggests that it could be great to have someone call older people and ask, "What do you need? Individual contact is what a lot of people need," he continues. "Maybe they don't have family nearby, or maybe there's a nephew who only visits once a week. Having someone come in for caregiving twice a week could be a blessing. They could

be volunteers or paid to come in and/or get older people out." He sees that for many seniors isolation can be a problem. "I don't have too many days like that," he says. "But it can creep in."

Bonios likes the walkability of West Hollywood. "This is a friendly walking city. Everything I need is within minutes, and it's convenient for getting around. I do drive, but the bus service is good also. For people who have difficulty getting around there are discounted cab rides too."

Bonios thinks rent stabilization may contribute to the fact that there are lots of different people in the city, with lots of attitudes toward life that meld well. "There are churches of all kinds, and a temple. And I like that the sheriffs and fire department are seconds away."

When Bonios was in his thirties, he started raising Borzoi show dogs. "I don't raise them anymore, but I do judge dog shows locally and internationally. There can be up to 175 dogs a day; so it's strenuous, but I like it."

When asked how he sees his future, Bonios doesn't hesitate. "I'm optimistic about the future. I don't want to leave my comfortable home, so I hope I can have people to come in and help me if I need help. Too many people relocate and then are not happy with strangers around them. I'd like to stay here forever. This wonderful City just keeps getting better and better."

# Ivy Bottini

performer, artist, activist



Ivy Bottini leads a passionate life. A prominent figure in the 1960s feminist movement, Bottini was a founding member of the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women. In 1968 she was elected its president and that same year came out as a lesbian. In 1970 she led a women's demonstration at the Statue of Liberty. As she says, proudly, "We did outrageous things."

Growing up on Long Island, Ivy loved to learn - a passion that has enriched her life in numerous ways. After earning a certificate in graphic design at Pratt Institute School of Art in New York City, she worked for Newsday before deciding to come to Southern California in 1971.

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In Los Angeles, Bottini attended Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, studying improvisational techniques. Some New York producers called and said they'd heard she had a comedy act. She actually had not written one yet but told them she'd be glad to perform her act on a bill with Blossom Dearie and Yoko Ono. That performance led to a two-year period in which she traveled the United States, doing stand up comedy and presenting her concert, "The Many Faces of Women," to receptive audiences, who were eager for comedy about real women's lives and concerns. Since then, she has continued to perform, as one of her several creative pursuits.

Following her one-woman tour, in 1975 Bottini moved to Southern California for good, to live with her partner Dottie, with whom she had "thirty wonderful years." At that time, Ivy says, gay men and lesbians didn't mingle much, but in 1976-77 she joined forces with a gay man to start organizing.

By the mid-80s a new urgency for activism had emerged. Bottini founded the first AIDS organization in Los Angeles, AIDS Network LA, and in 1983 she co-founded AIDS Project L.A. Bottini and the group March On staged huge Die-Ins to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and educate the gay community and the larger public about the epidemic.

In 1997 Ivy and Dottie moved to West Hollywood for good. "I was always over here, anyway," she grins. Around 2000 Bottini joined the Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board for the City to continue her activism. Her first project was to raise awareness of partner abuse, domestic violence within the Lesbian and Gay community. She never wanted to run for public office, saying, "I'm a freelance activist. I like to push from the outside."

Now 88 years of age, Bottini has a new issue - Aging in Place. "There's lots of prejudice against old people," she shrugs. "We encounter so many difficulties that people don't even think about." She understands that it can be difficult to get elderly stakeholders to tell you what's wrong. "Nobody thinks about all the little everyday obstacles of aging until you get old and encounter them. Then people don't want to speak up."

In the face of obstacles Bottini uses creativity and resourcefulness so that she can continue her activism. "I do a lot of work on the phone, and I try to get rides to meetings." To help her cope with the challenges she faces, Ivy paints. Now that her eyesight is failing, her style has changed, from representative work to an abstract style. Currently, she is working on a series of paintings she calls "Emotions". "I have painted my whole life," she says. "It's like air to me."

## **Steven Davis** businessman, activist



**W**hen Steven Davis was growing up, his family moved thirteen times in fifteen years. Now he has lived in the same West Hollywood apartment for thirty years. Before moving to the City, he lived in Los Angeles, and didn't like the immense size of that city. He is glad to have a hometown, a neighborhood, and a home. "I love my city," he says. "I never have to worry about being gay. I can be who I am and serve my community."

Communities were not always so receptive to Steven, who came out to his brother when he was nine years old. While going to graduate school in Phoenix in 1978, Davis came out to the wider world, and that was not well-received. His car was towed, his

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tires slashed, and people seemed generally hostile. Fortunately, Phoenix had a tradition of “coffees,” in which older gays opened their homes to younger ones. Once you were on the list, he remembers, you were welcomed. It was a lifesaver for a young gay man.

Davis attributes much of his success in the world to his parents. His father taught him that, “If you have your ducks in a row, you can do what you want.” His mother taught him to be tough. He has followed those teachings to get things moving, both as an activist, and at the West Hollywood branch of Out of the Closet since 1997. “I’m a schmoozer,” he laughs. “I have a light touch, and I do the work.”

When Davis moved to West Hollywood in 1985, the AIDS epidemic was raging. “We buried so many friends. All the death wears on you after awhile.” In 1993, his then-partner Jose died. Steven has been HIV positive for thirty years, though never ill himself. While Jose was ill, community members helped care for him, and the City provided services. Before he died, Jose urged Steven to repay that debt. Shortly thereafter, Davis joined the Human Services Commission.

In his first years on the Commission, Davis didn’t find the group very effective. He is not afraid to speak up or to ask the tough questions, he says, but his preferred style is to support the process

of change, not to lead it. Fortunately, longtime political activist and Human Services Commissioner Shirley Roberts came along to help Commissioners effect change, and Davis has been on the Commission ever since. “I’m the guy who works to get what we all need. If it affects seniors, housing, feeding, HIV, substance abuse – you name it – I’m the numbers guy. I make sure the money goes where it’s most effective.”

Davis prefers to be anonymous, though that’s difficult. “You have to put yourself out there and be the target, if need be. Praise can make me blush. I like fairness and moving things forward. Everything is about the long term. I don’t think much about the short term.” He sees himself as an old-fashioned businessman, greeting people and talking with them. “I know everybody in town.” Both his mother and his grandmother were nurses, and from them Steven learned how to touch people without being intrusive.

Davis loves the walkability of West Hollywood. He likes to walk around town and talk with people about City issues. He appreciates the fact that those issues are of a magnitude that can be addressed. “This City is rich, and not all residents are. I want to help them, which is what the City needs. About one-third of our City residents use our services, and that’s the third that interests me. The world is a difficult place. How do any of us survive? We need to take care of one another.”

# Clara Denson

fundraiser, activist



**C**lara Denson spent her life encased in an iron lung from the time she was three until she was five. Caught in one of the last pre-vaccination polio epidemics, in Beaumont, Texas, Clara needed the negative pressure ventilator in order to breathe. Despite that experience and the lingering effects of polio, Denson says she never considered herself disabled.

When she was ten, Clara and her mother moved to Southern California to be near family. Things were very different here, says Denson. She lived on 113th Street in Los Angeles and graduated from Lynwood Academy in 1966, one of only ten students of color in her class. She enrolled in



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nursing school, but before she could graduate, her mother died. Consumed with grief, Denson dropped out, which, she says, "I regret to this day."

During the 1960s and '70s, Denson lived in Hollywood and worked in corporate positions. In the 1990s she was living in an old Victorian house near USC and doing fundraising for United Way when she began to fall. At first she fell only when wearing heels, but her condition deteriorated rapidly, and she was diagnosed with post-polio syndrome. Within ten months, Clara had to crawl up and down the stairs to her apartment.

Denson became depressed. She wanted to continue working but couldn't and didn't want to face her reduced circumstances. She started receiving SSI and had to leave the apartment she had lived in for fifteen years. Then in 2001, while still ambulatory, Clara was in a car accident that resulted in both ankles being crushed. She spent a year and a half in casts, with zero weight bearing, and has been in a wheelchair ever since. "My world got small very fast," she says. Her depression spiraled.

Denson credits her Occupational Therapist and other staff at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Downey with helping her turn her life around. The Rancho social worker told her about West Hollywood affordable housing and, "I got lucky and won the lottery for this new building. I get

to open my front door and go out on my own. My life since then has totally changed." Within a month, Clara had a job in customer service, working for the contractor who was making her bathroom accessible. She worked at that company for six years, until the business moved to an area too far away for her to commute.

"I'm living my life in gratitude," Denson says, her eyes filling with tears. "Sometimes I isolate and realize I have to push through that. Once I become aware, it makes the fear go away. Then I can do what I need to do."

Clara feels safe in West Hollywood and likes to go out in the evening, even though she is in constant pain. "I go up and down the street and people know me. I know them, their names, and their dogs' names." In 2007 she was asked to join the board of the West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, where she still serves. "I want to give back. Anything I can do to be of service, I'm there." Denson also speaks at City Council meetings and before other groups when requested.

Denson doesn't let her extremely limited mobility and strength stop her. "In my building I have a good friend who is paralyzed on one side, and we help each other out. It's an inspiring relationship. He helps me laugh, and I advocate for him. You do what you need to do. You laugh to keep from crying."

# **Jeanne Dobrin**

**businesswoman, cat lover, activist**



**J**eanne Dobrin is a cat lover, and cat rescuer. Those last two activities have become considerably more difficult over the past few years, as Jeanne - at 94 years of age - is almost deaf. She has used a hearing aid since she was 28 years old, and has had fifteen ear operations.

Walking has also become a torturous activity for her. Still, she doesn't want to "Just sit at home and be a recluse." Despite her physical limitations, Dobrin says that transportation is her biggest challenge. She works at getting out, going to City meetings, using Dial-A-Ride or the taxi voucher

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program the City provides. Sometimes friends help her out, and sometimes her volunteer from the City's CONNECT program drives her to meetings and appointments.

Unusually, for a woman of her era, Jeanne had a successful career as a realtor, beginning in her thirties. Because her mother wouldn't send her to college, she first worked packaging cosmetics at Max Factor for ten dollars a week, before a boyfriend persuaded her to go to work for a dentist at more than double the money.

Thirty-eight years ago, Dobrin came to West Hollywood, which was unincorporated at the time. Her work as a realtor enabled her to buy a condo, which she points out is on the south side of her building, in order to take advantage of the winter sun. The apartment is filled with colorful mementoes of her long life including the numerous paintings she has produced, several of them featuring cats. "My best friends," she says of the animals.

Although Jeanne feels fortunate to own her home, she worries that when she can no longer fend for herself, she won't be able to afford the costs of belonging to the condo association. "My money will go really fast when I need 'round the clock care, which may happen very

soon," she says. And she is concerned for those who have fewer resources than she does. "The majority of seniors here are very poor. A lot of people are in dire straits. That's why I support efforts to help people who need it."

Dobrin praises the City for providing "the best social services in California" for residents. "Rent control was an initial tenet of the City," she points out. "Streets are clean, and there's good communication with residents. The building permits department is good. Politicians and staff are honest." And, she says, West Hollywood supports women. "Everyone is presumed equal here, and I like that." Straight herself, Jeanne enjoys the diversity of the population, including her gay and lesbian friends and her Russian friends.

While Dobrin is full of praise for West Hollywood and its metropolitan yet small town flavor, she cautions that people must not take this City for granted. "People should vote," she says. "In the last election only 5,000 of the 21,000 people registered actually voted. Learn what's going on in your City to help create the City you want. Become involved, even if it's hard. Appreciate that this City is very kind to those who are less fortunate, and work to keep it that way."

## **Drian Juarez** artist, activist



**D**rian Juarez found her calling and passion in serving the Transgender community after she suffered a personal tragedy. Drian was the victim of a violent hate crime. After healing, she states that this moment was, “a blessing in disguise. It allowed me to find my real mission—helping other Transgender women and men.”

Juarez is an integral part of West Hollywood’s caring community. She works at the Transgender Economic Empowerment Project at LA LGBT Center, a program funded by the City to help its Transgender community members find economic stability.

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Here she sees job discrimination that creates barriers to economic security. These barriers have long-term consequences for aging Transgender women and men who are denied the opportunity to save and build for the future.

As a single woman, Drian is concerned about who will care for her as she ages. While an issue for many single people, Transgender women and men are often completely rejected by their families. This leaves them isolated without an established support network. Ever the problem solver, Juarez has investigated unique congregate living arrangements that build new families. She really likes the model that has the members sharing community space such as kitchens and duties that support other members, while maintaining privacy in their living space.

Emigrating from Mexico at five years of age, Drian faced many challenges. A new city, a new neighborhood, and a new language were only a few. However, she faced a further painful struggle because she was a gender nonconforming child. This resulted in bullying and rejection, something that she had not experienced in Mexico. Elementary and middle school were hostile and unhappy places for her.

Fortunate to enter the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, Drian

talks with a sparkle in her eye about this life-changing opportunity. As she says, “we were all weird there.” She found acceptance that allowed her to grow as a person. For the first time she realized that she was outgoing and friendly and that she need not fear other people. Her artistic talent took her to Otis College of Arts and Design. Again, she was among friends where acceptance allowed her to come out as Transgender. With her college degree, the first in her family, she went into fashion design where she planned to build career. Until fate intervened.

Juarez enjoys her life. To stay healthy and fit, she meditates and practices yoga. In addition, she takes daily walks with her two wonderful little dogs. Drian believes that pets are very important for the health and wellbeing of single people. In love with music, she finds that she can bring happiness to others though her talent as a DJ.

Drian is pleased that the City supports an array of services and programs to meet the current Transgender needs and challenges and she is confident that the City will continue its progressive support in the future. Her experience is that West Hollywood is a place where she can be herself and where she feels warmly received.

# Sofia Komskaya

professor, teacher, activist



**S**ofia Komskaya was born in Russia, earned her Ph.D., and taught literature at the university level. She married and raised her children there. In the 1990s an increase in violent anti-Semitism led Komskaya, her husband, who was a physics professor, and their family to immigrate to the United States. She was 64 years old. “We came here for the children and the grandchildren,” she says, “So they could have opportunities and live safely.”

For four years Komskaya and her family lived in San Francisco, then in 1998 they moved to West Hollywood, partly because the City is known for its Russian community.

"There are many services for Russians here, and other cities don't support seniors as well as we do." She knew to get on a list for Section 8 housing right away, and in 2005, after a seven-year wait, she won the housing lottery. She feels fortunate to have her home, which she calls, "A perfect apartment, with good neighbors." The neighbors have become even more important to Sofia since her husband died seven years ago.

Komskaya initially spoke very little English, but she asked if she could volunteer at Plummer Park Senior Center. At the Senior Center she created the Conversation Café for seniors who want to learn better English. She helped bring in English speaking volunteers to work with classes, and the Café is now in its fifteenth year.

Then in 2001 Komskaya met Councilman Jeffrey Prang, who asked her to help him communicate with Russian speaking seniors. In that position she learned how many of the Russian immigrants had arrived needing jobs and/or housing. "If people are born here and work here, they may live in rent controlled apartments and have savings," she says. "If you're working in this country, you can live. If you didn't work here, you're not in an equal position."

Sofia became a Public Safety Commissioner and got to know people

at City Hall. Later she became a West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation board member. She knows how hard the City works to provide housing. "I see the need of seniors for affordable housing, and I see that there's no more space. Where can we house all the people who need homes? It's easier to say we must build new buildings than it is to do it."

Every day, Monday through Friday, Komskaya works at the Plummer Park Senior Center, alongside her daughter. She praises the Senior Center – "a beautiful place" – and its activities. She accompanies seniors on regularly scheduled excursions, each one at least five hours long, on outings by bus to such places as theatres and museums. There is a Russian movie club and a Russian veterans association. In May each year, for Senior Month, there is a health fair with free health services. It is clear that Sofia's work with seniors is also much appreciated, as she was given the 2014 Charlotte Kamenir Volunteer of Distinction Award by Jewish Family Services.

"I have everything I need here," Komskaya says fervently. "How can we even ask for more? We are so well treated. There is free bus transit for everyone, even if the route is a little crazy. I have good volunteer work that satisfies me. What more could I want?"

# Mark Lehman

planner, activist



**M**ark Lehman was born and raised in Brooklyn. When he was fifteen his family took a cross-country trip, and Mark spent the summer living in Encino, enjoying such quintessentially Southern California experiences as the Hollywood Bowl. For college he chose Duke University because, "I wanted to get out of New York and experience more of the world." But that summer spent in California drew him back for legal studies; and after school, he settled down here to practice law.

In 1983, Lehman moved to West Hollywood and bought a condo just before the City incorporated in 1984.



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John Heilman asked him to be on the General Plan Advisory Committee, and he co-chaired the group, which was, he says, "Like getting an eighteen month planning degree." The Committee met weekly with planning consultants and experts and learned about all aspects of city government and city life. Mark went onto the Planning Commission for two years and has been involved ever since with land use in the City.

One concept Lehman helped bring to fruition in West Hollywood is that of the Pedestrian Village. "Residents want to walk places," he says. "Santa Monica Boulevard is our Main Street." He is proud of the work that has been done and believes more is still needed, particularly with regard to housing for seniors. He would like to see more flexible zoning. "If we don't have higher density, we'll never have more affordable housing."

Lehman also appreciates the level of services available to support residents. When he was involved with Triangle Square, Hollywood's first affordable housing development for gay and lesbian seniors, it was, he relates, "A stark education for me. We knew seniors need social services, but we didn't realize how intense that need is." He would like to see West Hollywood develop even more services to allow residents to age in place, services related to food, caregiving, medical

care, and accessibility to mental health services. He knows that much of the progressive orientation of the city came out of the need to provide for HIV positive people, and he wonders what kind of care Medicare provides for those long-term survivors who are turning 65.

Mark and his husband want to stay in West Hollywood if possible. Palm Springs is a more affordable alternative, but, "I'm a city kid, and I've been here over thirty years. We really like that everything is easy to get to. You can walk or drive, take transit, or use Uber." As he gets older, he realizes that West Hollywood businesses often cater to young people, and he thinks about how his generation, the so-called "Gray Wave," will affect that. "How will we socialize?" he wonders.

Lehman's experience has taught him that it's possible for residents to get involved in civic life. "West Hollywood has given me opportunities to get involved in lots of different ways." He looks forward to continuing to foster the development of City services for seniors. "Let's continue to have senior events, and let's make it easy for people to open the little cafes people want." He knows the word is out about the senior-friendly attitude of the city. "Older people are selling their houses elsewhere and moving into the City," he says. "This is a great place to live."

# Barbara Meltzer

businesswoman, activist



**B**arbara Meltzer was born in the Bronx and raised in Jamaica, Queens. After college she moved to Manhattan, “which young women did not do at the time,” she laughs. “I did it anyway. I was working as a secretary in the garment center and passed NBC studios one day. I decided to see if any jobs were available. There were and I became Assistant to the Producer of the “Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson.”

When Carson moved the Tonight Show to Burbank, Meltzer was not ready to leave New York. However, five years later, Barbara was asked again and answered with a “yes”, eventually becoming Director of NBC’s Network Creative Services Department.

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After NBC, Meltzer made the decision to start her own public relations business, working mostly with nonprofits, authors and events.

West Hollywood has been Barbara's home since she moved west. She saw it as a "sleepy little town" then. "One of the things that I loved about New York was the ability to walk everywhere. While it is not quite the same here, West Hollywood is very walkable. My apartment is twice the size of the one I had in New York, has a wonderful outdoor patio, and is rent controlled. I am very lucky."

Meltzer's parents retired to South Florida and before long she became a long distance caregiver. After her father died, she moved her mother — then in the early stages of dementia — to an assisted living facility near West Hollywood. She was her mother's primary caregiver and ran her business at the same time, which became very difficult. "I started to think about baby boomers and others and the challenges that existed for so many people. I needed to help and joined the LA Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council. The family caregiver problem is very serious and educating people about this issue has become one of my passions."

In 2010, Barbara with then Councilmember Lindsey Horvath, produced a half-day symposium for the city, titled "Pathways to Positive Aging: Creating Communities for a Lifetime." Currently, Barbara serves

as a Commissioner on the LA County Commission for Older Adults. She was appointed to the City of West Hollywood's Human Services Commission and serves on the Friends of the West Hollywood Library Board. "All that and running my business keep me busy, which is great."

As a single older woman, Meltzer also thinks about "solo agers", particularly women. "I often wonder who will help to care for those of us who do not have children or families nearby. Knowing all of the things that I did for my mother, I'm not sure that even close friends would take on those challenges."

Finances are another big concern for aging adults, particularly women. For Meltzer, as for many in West Hollywood, her rent-controlled apartment is, "the kind of deal that will not come around again. I find that even friends who do have money worry that they will outlive their savings. It creates a lot of fear."

One thing Meltzer feels very strongly about is the importance of building community. "We are all interdependent and must do everything we can to help each other. I find it hard to ask for help, but believe deeply that we need to find ways to create circles of care." She also feels that we must find ways for different generations to communicate with and learn from each other. "Fortunately West Hollywood is small, manageable and progressive. We can pioneer ways to successfully age in place."

# David Nash

performer, activist



**D**avid Nash once wore feathers onstage as a dancer in Las Vegas. Now the feathers in his life belong to feathered friends, his budgies. As he plays keyboards for a visitor, one perches on his shoulder, apparently enjoying the music. The birds' friendships are important to Nash, a gregarious man, as his disabilities increasingly threaten to sever his ties to the active social life that has sustained him.

Growing up in Seattle in the 1950s, David knew he was gay at age three. He took dance and piano lessons until he was ten, when he stopped dance because he was teased about it at school.

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By the time he was in high school, Nash was having vision issues that made it difficult for him to complete assignments. He dealt with the situation by befriending his teachers, saying that if they wouldn't mark him down for not doing the homework, he would pay such close attention in class that he would ace his exams; and that's just what he did.

At the University of Washington, Nash studied dance. In his junior year one of his instructors suggested that he could always get a degree but that the clock was ticking on his years as a professional dancer. So David went to Las Vegas, where he danced in the Donn Arden-produced show at the MGM Grand.

After leaving Las Vegas, Nash studied and danced in New York City. Then he returned to Seattle to perform in "Guys and Dolls." In Seattle he started doing choreography, including a season at the Seattle Opera in the mid-1980s. After mastering the synthesizer keyboards that had become a viable musical option in the '80s, David moved to San Francisco, where he played in a campy band and directed the annual gay Halloween bash.

In 1994 Nash learned he was HIV positive. He immediately began adhering to the medical recommendations that have kept him alive for over twenty years, although he says side effects of the medications are becoming increasingly evident. In 1997 he was introduced to the Actors Fund, an organization that provides a safety

net for professionals in the performing arts and entertainment business. Since 1999 Nash has lived in an Actors Fund building in West Hollywood. "They said this could be my home forever," he says, expressing his gratitude.

David continued to entertain as a volunteer for Jewish Family Services, going into assisted living facilities until 2010. He serves on the Resident Advisory Board for his building and works to improve conditions. Having a manager with social service skill sets has helped tremendously.

Nash is now legally blind. He continues to reach out to friends, who include the performer Charo; but it is increasingly difficult to make contact as he can no longer drive. "Having to give up the car is a huge life shrinker," he says. "You can't go anywhere fun." Having been around older people through his volunteer work in assisted living facilities, David says he's seen what can happen to those who need increasing levels of care as they age. "Many of the places you can go are really unpleasant."

Nash feels stuck in his home, for which he remains grateful. He also appreciates the high level of services provided by the City. He loves his neighborhood. "Everything's here." Still, it's difficult to connect with people. "After a lifelong active social life, you never imagine it's going to shrink to nothing. You have to take responsibility for yourself. It takes courage to make new friends, but I have to get up and get out."

# Anny Semonco

administrative assistant, activist



**A**nny Semonco was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and an American GI father, who died when she was an infant. When she was late learning to walk, it was discovered that she had Cerebral Palsy; and when she was very young, her mother immigrated to a small town near Cleveland to be near Anny's uncle and his family. She grew up in Olmstead Falls, Ohio and still goes back yearly to see her mother.

Anny believes she is strong today because her mother always encouraged her to do everything she could possibly manage to do. Initially, Anny was in special education classes, but her mother fought to have her mainstreamed in third grade. It was hard at first. She

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was behind in school, and the kids could be cruel; however, she learned how to cope with cruelty and focused on her studies. Eventually, she went to the University of Tampa and graduated with an art degree and a teaching certificate.

In 1977, Anny came to California thinking she'd be an art teacher. There weren't many art classes left in the schools by then, and after substitute teaching for three weeks, she decided to look for another job. Fortunately, says Anny, she was conscientious and accurate at data entry.

In 1985, Anny was hit by a car and both her legs were broken. In 1987, she was able to move to West Hollywood and buy her condo. "So maybe I'm lucky," she says. "I remodeled my bathroom to make the facilities easier to use, yet I did not want it to look like a handicap bathroom. People don't understand that."

For twenty-two years Anny was a receptionist and did data entry for one company. She earned enough to live on. She's 64 now, and she would still like to work part time, but she has had difficulty finding work. "I've been in a wheelchair since 1995, and there's not a lot out there for me it seems. The kind of jobs I did for years now pay really low wages, and they don't want to train you on the latest data systems."

As Anny talks, it becomes apparent that there are many challenges in life when

you need a wheelchair to get around. The chair itself is heavy, and taxi drivers often don't want to handle it. The city makes vans available, and the bus is also a transportation option; however Anny frequently enjoys going to concerts, and the buses and vans are no longer running by the time most concerts she attends are over. Even if a taxi could be found that would take her chair, there is still a possibility that she would have to wait alone on the street late at night until the taxi arrived.

Anny says she's "a little nervous" about her future. She is getting stiffer and would like to exercise more. She needs higher-level computer skills to get a job. Her early Social Security isn't enough to live on, and she needs to work. Many people 55-65 years old are in the same situation, Anny says. "Online classes don't work for us. We need the human contact."

Anny greatly appreciates the benefits of living in West Hollywood. She has been involved in civic life, working on the Boulevard and Parks Design projects. "I love this city! If I didn't live here I don't know what I'd do. The services make my life easier. I'm fortunate to have friends who help me out some, and I know West Hollywood has people available to help too. My thinking though is that others need help more than I do. Maybe some day I'll ask for help. Not yet."



# Appendix



## What the City Currently Offers: Building on our Strengths

The City recognizes and celebrates the many resources and strengths of our community. If you have questions about any of the resources listed here, or suggest additional information to be included, please contact city staff at (323) 848-6400.

## Important Numbers & Sources of Information



### **West Hollywood Comprehensive Services Center (323) 851-8202**

Community Center at Plummer Park

7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90046

[www.jfsla.org](http://www.jfsla.org)

Information and referral, case management, counseling, telephone reassurance for frail elderly, and senior activities. A good starting place for all questions. Many volunteer opportunities available. Staff speaks Russian.

### **West Hollywood City Hall**

**(323) 848-6400**

TTY for deaf and hard of hearing (323) 848-6496

8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.weho.org](http://www.weho.org)

Information and referral to social services, recreation, cultural programs and educational opportunities. Volunteer opportunities available. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

### **West Hollywood Sheriff's Department**

**(310) 855-8850**

Emergency 9-1-1

780 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.wehosherriff.com](http://www.wehosherriff.com)

Includes home security check. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **211 LA County: Dial 2-1-1**

**(800) 339-6993**

TTY for deaf and hard of hearing (800) 660-4026

**[www.211la.org](http://www.211la.org)**

Information and referral to human and social services throughout Los Angeles County. Multilingual staff operates 24 hours per day and 7 days per week.

## **Aid for AIDS**

**(323) 656-1107**

8235 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 200, West Hollywood, CA 90046

**[www.aidforaids.net](http://www.aidforaids.net)**

Provides financial support to persons disabled by HIV/AIDS for rent, utilities, security deposits, pharmaceuticals, food, and transportation services.

## **AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA)**

**(213) 201-1600**

611 S. Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005

**[www.apla.org](http://www.apla.org)**

Services for persons living with HIV/AIDS including case management, individual and group mental health services, HIV prevention education and treatment advocacy, in-home healthcare, dental care, insurance/benefits advocacy and the Necessities of Life Program. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **Adult Protective Services**

**(213) 351-5401**

Outside California (877) 477-3646

Elder Abuse Hotline (800) 992-1660

**[www.css.lacounty.gov](http://www.css.lacounty.gov)**

Investigates suspected elder abuse and reports of a senior endangering him or herself.

## **County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)**

**(866) 613-3777**

CalFresh/General Relief/Medi-Cal

11110 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90064

**[www.ladpss.org](http://www.ladpss.org)**

## **Health & Nutrition Hotline**

**(877) 597-4777**

[www.ladpss.org](http://www.ladpss.org)

County program provides information and referral services for people who need help obtaining health care. Multilingual staff.

## **In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)**

**(888) 944-4477**

Homemakers for people on Medi-Cal and SSI. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

## **Nursing/Retirement Home Ombudsperson**

**(310) 393-3618**

(800) 334-9473 24-Hour Crisis (800) 231-4024

[www.aging.ca.gov](http://www.aging.ca.gov)

Investigates complaints for persons in licensed nursing homes and board and care facilities.

## **Social Security/Medicare**

**(800) 772-1213**

1122 N. Vine Street, Los Angeles, CA 90038

641 S. La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

## **Suicide Prevention 24-Hour Hotline**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Didi Hirsch –Suicide Prevention Hotline (877) 727-4747

[www.didihirsch.org](http://www.didihirsch.org)

## **Women Helping Women Services**

**(323) 651-2930**

**National Council of Jewish Women**

543 N. Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036

[www.ncjwla.org](http://www.ncjwla.org)

Telephone counseling and referral Talkline, individual counseling, case management, educational workshops and support groups. Diverse volunteer opportunities available.

Program is non-sectarian and non-gender specific. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

**Telephone Talkline** (323) 655-3807 Toll Free (877) 655-3807

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday: 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. - 8 p.m.

24-hour voice mail – all calls returned.

## Employment & Volunteer Opportunities



### California Employment Development Department (800) 300-5616

[www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov)

Vocational referrals and unemployment.

### LA County Senior Community Services Employment Program (213) 739-7386

3333 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90010

Title V Program. Offers part-time training for persons 55 and over.

Senior General Info Line (800) 510-2020

### Retired Senior Volunteers Program (RSVP) (323) 461-4363

6671 Yucca Street, Hollywood, CA 90028

[www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

Helps place persons over 55 in volunteer positions.

### West Hollywood Comprehensive Services Center (323) 851-8202

Community Center at Plummer Park

7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90046

[www.jfsla.org](http://www.jfsla.org)

Volunteer opportunities working with clients, special events, recreation and educational programs. Staff speaks Russian.

### West Hollywood Employment Services & Training (W.H.E.S.T) (310) 652-6378

625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

Located in the West Hollywood Public Library, 1st Floor

Provides career planning workshops, resource library, resume assistance, one stop employment center. Meet individually with counselor to assess career path.

## Financial Assistance

### County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

CalFresh/General Relief/Medi-Cal

**(866) 613-3777**

11110 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90064

[www.ladpss.org](http://www.ladpss.org)



### Jewish Free Loan

**(323) 761-8830**

[www.jfla.org](http://www.jfla.org)

Provides interest free loans up to \$3,000 for emergencies (rent, moving expenses, security deposit, car repair, used car purchase, medical/dental emergencies). Also offers other loan programs for student loans, home healthcare, small business, children with special needs, life cycle events, resettlement and green loan fund (for environmental upgrades).

### Limited Emergency Survival Assistance Funds

**Seniors & People Living with Disabilities:** West Hollywood

Comprehensive Services Center @ (323) 851-8202

### Limited Rental Assistance

**People Disabled by HIV/AIDS:**

Aid for AIDS @ (323) 656-1107

**Other Community Members:** National Council of Jewish Women (non-sectarian and non-gender specific). Access through a call to the Talkline at (323) 655-3807 or (877) 655-3807. Leave a message and your call will be returned.

## Food

### Jewish Family Services – Nutrition Program

**(323) 937-5843**

[www.jfsla.org](http://www.jfsla.org)

#### Home-Delivered Meals

Kosher frozen meals delivered either two times a week or one Friday delivery of seven meals to frail or homebound persons. Program is non-sectarian. Staff speaks Russian.

#### Senior Lunch Sites

Hot Kosher lunch served from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Congregate meal sites are:

Plummer Park/Community Center @ 7377 Santa Monica Boulevard., HUD Buildings @ 1222 N. Fairfax Avenue, 838 N. West Knoll Avenue, & 959 N. Palm Avenue. Program is non-sectarian. Staff speaks Russian.



City of West Hollywood

**AGING IN PLACE**

What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)

## **Project Angel Food**

**(323) 845-1800**

922 N. Vine Street, Los Angeles, CA 90038

[www.angelfood.org](http://www.angelfood.org)

Provides home-delivered meals for people living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other life-threatening illnesses.

## **SOVA Community Food and Resource Program**

**(818) 988-7682**

Provides free groceries to low-income persons at the following locations.

[www.jfsla.org/sova](http://www.jfsla.org/sova)

**Metro – 1140 N. La Brea Avenue, West Hollywood, CA 90038**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month: 9 a.m. – 12 noon

**West – 8846 W. Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90035**

Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month: 9 a.m. – 12 noon

**Valley – 16439 Van Owen Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

All Sundays (except holiday weekends): 9 a.m. – 12 noon

## **St. Vincent's Meals on Wheels**

**(213) 484-7775**

[www.stvincentmow.org](http://www.stvincentmow.org)

Hot or cold home-delivered meals to homebound persons. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

## **West Hollywood Certified Farmers Market**

**(323) 848-6535**

Plummer Park North Parking Lot at Fountain Avenue & Vista Street, West Hollywood, CA 90046

High quality produce, reasonable prices. Monday: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Staff speaks Russian.

## **Health & Mental Health**

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

**(323) 936-4343**

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)



City of West Hollywood

AGING IN PLACE

What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)

## **Cedars-Sinai Medical Center**

**(310) 423-2000**

All Psychiatric Services (310) 423-3411

8700 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048

[www.cedars-sinai.edu](http://www.cedars-sinai.edu)

**Community Health and Educational Program** (310) 423-9581

Lectures, workshops, Senior Strutters walking group at the Beverly Center, Shape-Up fitness programs, Health Fairs and other special programs. Validated parking for participants.

## **Eichenbaum Fitness Center at Freda Mohr**

**(323) 933-0791**

330 N. Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Physical therapy and exercise programs.

## **Leeza's Care Connection at Olympia Medical Center**

**(323) 932-5414**

5901 West Olympic Boulevard., Suite 300A, Los Angeles, CA 90036

[www.leezasplace.org](http://www.leezasplace.org)

Provides an intimate and safe setting where caregivers (anyone actively providing care for a loved one with a memory disorder) and those recently diagnosed with any neurological disorder can gather to prepare themselves for the challenging journey ahead.

## **Los Angeles County Hospitals & Clinics**

**(213) 250-8055**

[www.ladhs.org](http://www.ladhs.org)

Referrals to Los Angeles County hospitals/clinics for uninsured/underinsured individuals. The closest clinic to the Hollywood/West Hollywood area is:

**Hollywood Wilshire Health Center** (323) 769-7800

5205 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038

Open 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. A County Health Clinic offering childhood

immunizations, STD testing, TB tests, Hepatitis A and B tests and other health services.

Staff speaks Spanish.

## **Los Angeles County/USC Hospital**

**(323) 226-2622**

1200 N. State Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033

[www.ladhs.org](http://www.ladhs.org)

Acute care hospital that provides accessible healthcare for all residents of Los Angeles County regardless of ability to pay.

## **Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center**

**(323) 993-7400**

1625 N. Schrader Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90028

**[www.laglc.org](http://www.laglc.org)**

Comprehensive services including individual and group counseling and support groups, health clinic, legal services, job training, a youth program, a senior program, substance abuse counseling, HIV education, special outreach and education programs for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **Maple Counseling Center**

**(310) 271-9999**

9107 Wilshire Boulevard, Lower Level, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**[www.tmcc.org](http://www.tmcc.org)**

Individual and group counseling and crisis response services.

## **Medic Alert (ID Bracelets)**

**(888) 633-4298**

Outside the U.S. (209) 668-3333

**[www.medicalert.org](http://www.medicalert.org)**

## **The Saban Community Clinic**

**(323) 653-1990**

8405 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048

**[www.sabancommunityclinic.org](http://www.sabancommunityclinic.org)**

Provides medical, health, dental and counseling services. Volunteer opportunities available. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **Tingstad Older Adult Counseling Center**

**(213) 740-3493**

University of Southern California

1002 W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street, University Park, MC1491, Los Angeles, CA 90089

Specializing in assessment and treatment of individual and family problems related to aging: depression, anxiety, memory loss, communication, etc. Also provides special counseling for families and caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease by supervised student interns. First and third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



City of West Hollywood

**AGING IN PLACE**

**What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)**

## **UCLA Geriatric Clinic**

**(310) 206-8272**

200 Medical Plaza-UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095

A complete primary health care center operated by UCLA Medical Center.

## **UCLA Neuropsychiatric & Behavioral Health Services**

**(800) 825-9989**

[www.semel.ucla.edu/npbhs](http://www.semel.ucla.edu/npbhs)

Intensive evaluation of emotional or behavioral changes. Good for people who have shown extreme changes in behavior. Treatment by experienced team of psychiatrists, nurses and social workers. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **West Hollywood Prescription Discount Card**

The City of West Hollywood, in collaboration with the National League of Cities (NLC) and Caremark, have launched a free Prescription Discount program to help residents without health insurance, a traditional pharmacy benefit plan, or with prescriptions not covered by insurance. Average savings in the program are 20% off the retail price and 50% on mail service prescriptions. There is no fee for the card, no age or income requirements and no limit on how many times the card can be used.

Ninety percent (90%) of pharmacies nationwide are participating in the program. Cards are available at West Hollywood City Hall and other locations throughout the City.

For more information contact Corey Roskin at [croskin@weho.org](mailto:croskin@weho.org) or (323) 848-6403 or visit [www.caremark.com/nlc](http://www.caremark.com/nlc).

## **Wise and Healthy Aging**

**(310) 394-9871**

[www.wiseandhealthyaging.org](http://www.wiseandhealthyaging.org) and [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)

Provides health screenings and education, counseling services and support groups, and a variety of in-home services and healthy living workshops. Two locations in Santa Monica. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **Women Helping Women Services**

**(323) 651-2930**

**National Council of Jewish Women**

543 N. Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036

[www.ncjwla.org](http://www.ncjwla.org)

Telephone counseling and referral Talkline, individual counseling, case management, educational workshops and support groups. Diverse volunteer opportunities available. Program is non-sectarian and non-gender specific. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

**Telephone Talkline** (323) 655-3807 Toll Free (877) 655-3807

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday: 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. - 8 p.m. 24-hour voice mail – all calls returned.

## Help with Daily Living

### West Hollywood Comprehensive Services Center

**(323) 851-8202**

Community Center at Plummer Park

7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90046

[www.jfsla.org](http://www.jfsla.org)

Information and referral, case management, counseling, telephone reassurance for frail elderly, and senior activities. A good starting place for all questions. Many volunteer opportunities available. Staff speaks Russian.



### A+ Personal Care

**(323) 937-5860**

[www.jfsla.org](http://www.jfsla.org)

Specially-trained aides, low cost, 4-hours/2 days per week minimum.

### Alzheimer's Association

**(323) 938-3379**

24-Hour Helpline (800) 272-3900

4221 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 400, Los Angeles, CA 90010

[www.alz.org/socal](http://www.alz.org/socal)

Main sources of support for people with Alzheimer's Disease and their families. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

### Braille Institute

**(323) 663-1111**

741 North Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029

[www.brailleinstitute.org](http://www.brailleinstitute.org)

Classes and free services, including books on tape for blind or visually impaired individuals. Volunteer opportunities available. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

### California Telephone Access Program

**(800) 806-1191**

Spanish (800) 949-5650

TTY for deaf and hard of hearing (800) 806-4474

[www.ddtp.org](http://www.ddtp.org)

Provides telephone amplifiers for the hearing impaired.

## **Cedars-Sinai Lifeline**

**(310) 423-5468**

8797 Beverly Boulevard, Suite 220, Los Angeles, CA 90048

The Lifeline Program provides 24-hour assistance with the push of a button. Its primary focus is helping the elderly, frail, disabled and those individuals who are at-risk and living alone to stay in their homes with the reassurance that help is just a push button away. It can also be used for orthopedic, cardiac, and at-risk individuals and caregivers of at-risk children.

## **Center for the Partially Sighted**

**(310) 988-1970**

6101 W. Centinela Avenue, Suite 150, Culver City, CA 90230

[www.low-vision.org](http://www.low-vision.org)

Impaired vision clinic, diabetic support, mobility and orientation assistance. Sliding-scale fees. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)**

CalFresh/General Relief/Medi-Cal

**(866) 613-3777**

11110 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90064

[www.ladpss.org](http://www.ladpss.org)

## **Funeral Consumers Alliance of Los Angeles**

**(626) 836-3545**

[www.losangelesfuneral.org](http://www.losangelesfuneral.org)

A non-profit organization that contracts with mortuaries for low-cost burial or cremation. Also offers information and assistance with funeral arrangements to survivors. Monday-Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## **Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center**

**(818) 847-9141 or (800) 540-4442**

3120 N. Clybourn Avenue, Burbank, CA 91505

[www.losangelescsrc.org](http://www.losangelescsrc.org)

Assistance for caregivers of adults with Alzheimer's Disease or other brain impairments. Staff speaks Spanish.

## **PAWS/LA**

**(213) 741-1950**

1150 S. Hope Street, Suite A, Los Angeles, CA 90015

[www.pawsla.org](http://www.pawsla.org)

Assistance with pet care.

## Telephone Reassurance Program (TELECHECK)

**(323) 851-8202**

Daily reassurance check-in phone calls for seniors who live alone and have limited social contact. Staff speaks Russian.

## Westside Jewish Community Center

**(323) 938-2531**

5870 W. Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036

[www.westsidejcc.org](http://www.westsidejcc.org)

Senior activities and Adult Day Care. Volunteer opportunities available.

Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

## Housing



### Affordable Living for the Aging

**(323) 606-7650**

[www.alaseniorliving.org](http://www.alaseniorliving.org)

A local non-profit which operates cooperative living communities and a free roommate matching service for low-income seniors.

### Gay & Lesbian Elder Housing (GLEH)

**(323) 957-7200**

1602 Ivar Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90028

[www.gleh.org](http://www.gleh.org)

GLEH is a non-profit that provides affordable and safe residential communities for LGBT older adults, including Triangle Square, a 104-unit building located in Hollywood.

### Goldrich and Kest

**(310) 204-2050**

[www.gkind.com](http://www.gkind.com)

Developer and management company with housing citywide. List of HUD-subsidized units available. The building in West Hollywood (1222 N. Fairfax Blvd.) has a waiting list. Obtain application at building office.

### Hollywood Community Housing Corporation

**(323) 469-0710**

[www.hollywoodhousing.org](http://www.hollywoodhousing.org)

Provides affordable housing in the Hollywood area for low- and moderate-income seniors. Waiting list.

## **Housing Authority for County of Los Angeles**

**(800) 731-4663**

[www.hacola.org](http://www.hacola.org)

Buildings throughout Los Angeles County for low-income individuals. Three buildings in West Hollywood (838 West Knoll Drive, 959 N. Palm Avenue, and 800-801 N. Kings Road).

Waiting list is currently closed, but will reopen in the future.

## **Menorah Housing Foundation**

**(310) 475-6083**

[www.menorahhousing.org](http://www.menorahhousing.org)

Low and moderate priced housing subsidized by HUD. To be eligible for this program, applicants must be over 62 and low-income or over 50 with a physical disability. Significant waiting list.

## **Santa Monica Community Housing Corporation**

**(310) 394-8487**

[www.communitycorp.org](http://www.communitycorp.org)

Low-income housing in Santa Monica. The waiting list is closed but occasionally available units are advertised to the public if those on the wait list do not meet the specific criteria for the unit available.

Offers one-, two-, and three-bedroom units in Santa Monica.

## **Section 8 – Los Angeles**

**(800) 731-4663**

The Section 8 Program assists low-income families, seniors and persons living with disabilities to obtain affordable, privately-owned rental housing and to increase their housing choices. The waiting list is 7-10 years.

## **West Hollywood Community Housing Corporation**

**(323) 650-8771**

[www.whchc.org](http://www.whchc.org)

A non-profit housing development organization that builds, rehabilitates and manages housing for lower income families, and persons living with disabilities, including AIDS in the City of West Hollywood.

Waiting list is up to two years. Staff speaks Spanish.

## Legal Services & Advocacy



### COURT

[www.superiorcourt.org](http://www.superiorcourt.org)

There is no court in West Hollywood, but the Los Angeles Court system has courts throughout LA County to help with legal matters including small claims, unlawful detainer and traffic cases. Detailed information can be found online or contact the following local courts:

**Small Claims** - Inglewood Courthouse @ (310) 419-5132

**Traffic** - Beverly Hills Courthouse @ (310) 288-1307

**Unlawful Detainer** - Santa Monica Courthouse @ (310) 260-1886

### Bet Tzedek Legal Services

**(323) 939-0506**

**West Hollywood Case Attorney (Alla Chasnik) - (323) 549-5841**

3250 Wilshire Blvd., 13th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90010

[www.bettzedek.org](http://www.bettzedek.org)

Provides legal services for community members, with particular emphasis on benefits advocacy, landlord/tenant issues and Holocaust survivor benefits.

### Elder Abuse

#### Department of Public Social Services

**(877) 477-3646**

<http://css.lacounty.gov/programs/adult-protective-services-aps/>

### Financial Fraud

Information about fraud schemes that target seniors and additional warning signs and preventative steps

**(877) 477-3646**.

<http://da.co.la.ca.us/seniors/financial-fraud>

### Center for Civic Mediation

LA County Bar Assoc., Inc.    Community Mediation Services

**(213) 627-2727**

**(877) 473-7658**

[www.lacba.org](http://www.lacba.org)

[www.centerforcivicmediation.org](http://www.centerforcivicmediation.org)

Provides dispute resolution and mediation services and training.

## Center for Health Care Rights

**(800) 824-0780 or (213) 383-4519**

Free legal assistance and counseling for problems with Medicare, supplemental health insurance, and HMOs. Legal counselors available Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Call the Comprehensive Services Center at (323) 851-8202 to make an appointment with a HICAP counselor at Plummer Park. Volunteer opportunities available. Staff is multilingual.

## Coalition for Economic Survival

**(213) 252-4411**

514 Shatto Place #270, Los Angeles, CA 90020

[www.cesinaction.org](http://www.cesinaction.org)

Advocates for tenants' rights, rent control, and affordable housing in West Hollywood and Los Angeles. Staff speaks Spanish.

## Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center

### Legal Services

**(323) 993-7670**

1625 N. Schrader Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028

[www.laglc.org](http://www.laglc.org)

Provides legal services to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and all other communities. The Anti-Violence Project provides hate crime/incidents documentation and advocacy assistance. The Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Project (DVLAP) provides same sex domestic violence safety planning and advocacy. The Transgender Economic Empowerment Project (TEEP) helps with employment issues, name changes and legal consultations.

## Nursing/Retirement Home Ombudsperson

**(310) 393-3618**

(800) 334-9473 24-Hour Crisis (800) 231-4024

[www.aging.ca.gov](http://www.aging.ca.gov)

Investigates complaints for persons in licensed nursing homes and board and care facilities.

## Recreation, Culture & Education

### West Hollywood Recreation Division

**(323) 848-6308**

8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.weho.org](http://www.weho.org)

Offers a variety of special classes and trips for Seniors.

**Kings Road Park** (323) 848-6308

1000 Kings Road, West Hollywood, CA 90069



**City of West Hollywood**

**AGING IN PLACE**

**What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)**

**Plummer Park (323) 848-6530**

7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90046

Staff speaks Russian.

**West Hollywood Park (323) 848-6534**

647 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

**William S. Hart Park (323) 848-6308**

8341 DeLongpre Avenue, West Hollywood, CA 90069

**West Hollywood Comprehensive Services Center Activities Program  
(323) 876-1717**

Community Center at Plummer Park

7377 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood CA 90046

Provides a variety of social, recreational and educational activities and services. Volunteer opportunities available. Staff speaks Russian.

**Fairfax Senior Center**

**(323) 653-1824**

7929 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046

Community Center open to all seniors. Annual dues entitle members to use all facilities.

Activities include classes, card games, dancing and excursions. Volunteer opportunities available.

**Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center**

**(323) 993-7400**

1625 N. Schrader Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90028

**[www.laglc.org](http://www.laglc.org)**

Comprehensive services including individual and group counseling and support groups, health clinic, legal services, job training, a youth program, substance abuse counseling, HIV education, special outreach and education programs for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities. Staff speaks Spanish.

**Senior Services (323) 860-7322**

**The Village at Ed Gould Plaza (323) 860-7302**

Cultural, social and recreational activities and educational outreach and programs for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities. Staff speaks Spanish.

**Oasis Program (Older Adult Services and Information System)**

**(310) 446-8053**

Macy's Westside Pavilion, 10730 W. Pico Boulevard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90064

**[www.oasisnet.org/losangeles](http://www.oasisnet.org/losangeles)**

Many special classes and activities for persons over 50. Processing fee of \$7 per trimester for classes. No charge for membership.



City of West Hollywood

**AGING IN PLACE**

What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)

## **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**

**(888) PFLAG-88**

[www.pflagla.org](http://www.pflagla.org) email: [info@pflagla.org](mailto:info@pflagla.org)

Support, education and advocacy for the health and well being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender persons, their families and friends.

## **Project Rainbow**

**(213) 694-1832**

Society for Senior Gay and Lesbian Citizens.

## **West Hollywood Branch Library**

**(310) 652-5340**

625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.colapublib.org/libs/whollywood](http://www.colapublib.org/libs/whollywood)

Branch of the Los Angeles County Library system. Staff speaks Spanish.

**Will and Ariel Durant Branch Library** (323) 876-2741

7140 W. Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046

[www.lapl.org](http://www.lapl.org)

Good Russian collection! Books can be delivered by volunteers to homebound persons. Volunteer opportunities also available.

## **West Hollywood Community Gardens**

**(323) 848-6308**

For a nominal fee, 8' by 8' plots are available. You supply the seeds. Call to get on waiting list.

## **West Hollywood Senior Advisory Board**

**(323) 848-6510**

Addresses issues of importance to senior members of the community. Members of the public are invited to attend the meetings, which take place at 2 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Call for more information. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

## **Westside Community Adult School**

**(323) 370-1040**

7850 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046

[www.westsideadultschool.org](http://www.westsideadultschool.org)

Offers a variety of adult education classes at various locations. Some are free. Call for class schedules. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

City of West Hollywood

AGING IN PLACE

What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)

## Westside Jewish Community Center

**(323) 938-2531**

5870 W. Olympic Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036

[www.westsidejcc.org](http://www.westsidejcc.org)

Senior activities and Adult Day Care. Volunteer opportunities available.

Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

## Safety Programs



### West Hollywood Sheriff's Department

**(310) 855-8850**

Emergency 9-1-1

780 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.wehosherriff.com](http://www.wehosherriff.com)

Includes home security check. Staff speaks Spanish.

### West Hollywood Public Safety Division

**(323) 848-6414**

8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.weho.org](http://www.weho.org)

Emergency preparedness and Neighborhood Watch programs. Staff speaks Russian.

### Carrier Alert

**(323) 848-6414**

Provides a sticker that alerts the postal carrier to notify the Sheriff's Department if the mail is not picked up on a routine basis. Deputies will then visit the location to check on the resident.

Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

### Postal Fraud

**Sheriff's Department** (310) 855-8850

**Comprehensive Services Center** (323) 851-8202

If you receive mail that states you have won a contest, you are due money, or requires you to send money, be wary! If mail seems suspicious, call the Sheriff or Comprehensive Services

Center for assistance to help determine its legitimacy. Staff speaks Russian.

### Telephone Reassurance Program (TELECHECK)

**(323) 851-8202**

Daily reassurance check-in phone calls for seniors who live alone and have limited social contact. Staff speaks Russian.

City of West Hollywood

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What We Have: Building on Our Strengths (continued)

## **Emergency Medical Information Form**

**(323) 848-6510**

In the event you become ill or injured and require emergency medical care, the medical information form included in this guide provides emergency health care personnel with your essential medical information. The form (see page 18) is meant to be kept folded in a magnet on the refrigerator.

## **Senior Discount & Rebate Programs**



City of West Hollywood

Department of Rent Stabilization

**(323) 848-6450**

8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069

[www.weho.org](http://www.weho.org)

Rebate for qualified renters. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

LA Department of Water & Power Customers

**(800) DIAL-DWP**

[www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com)

Offers utility discounts for low-income residents.

Southern California Edison Customers

California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) (800) 477-6620

Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) (800) 890-1245

[www.sce.com](http://www.sce.com)

Utility assistance program for low-income residents.

California Lifeline (Telephone)

**(866) 272-0349**

[www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov)

Discounted basic residential (landline) telephone services to low-income households. For more information, call your local telephone company or contact Lifeline directly.

Utility Assistance from State of California

**(866) 675-6623**

[www.csd.ca.gov](http://www.csd.ca.gov)

One time credit made directly to a utility company via the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

## Transportation

*The City of West Hollywood offers a number of transportation programs.  
For more information, please call (323) 848-6510.*



### Access Services

**(800) 827-0829**

TTY for deaf and hard of hearing (800) 827-1359

County transportation service that provides van transportation for people who meet eligibility requirements. An application and interview process is required. Staff speaks Spanish.

### CityLine

**(800) 447-2189**

Free shuttle service around West Hollywood. ADA accessible. Stops every 30 minutes.

Monday – Saturday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

### Dial-a-Ride

**(800) 447-2189**

Free transportation surrounding the West Hollywood area for residents who are 62 or older and people who are disabled of any age.

Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

### MTA Bus Pass Subsidy Program

**(323) 848-6510**

Discounted monthly passes to West Hollywood residents who are 62 or older or people with disabilities of any age.

Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

### Taxi Subsidy Card

**(310) 981-9303**

Subsidized taxi fare card available for purchase by mail to West Hollywood residents who are 62 or older, or disabled residents of any age. Staff speaks Spanish and Russian.

# Acknowledgements

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## West Hollywood City Council

Mayor Lindsey P. Horvath  
Mayor Pro Tempore Lauren Meister  
Councilmember John D’Amico  
Councilmember John J. Duran  
Councilmember John Heilman

## City Manager

Paul Arevalo

## Human Services Commission

Elizabeth Anderson  
Rob Bergstein (2013-2015)  
Sam Borelli  
Ruth Cislowski  
Steven L. Davis  
Barbara Meltzer  
Andrew Oldershaw (2013-2015)  
Jimmy Palmieri  
Patrick Shandrick  
Anne-Marie Williams (2011-2015)

## Commissions and Advisory Boards

Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission  
Planning Commission  
Public Facilities Commission  
Public Safety Commission  
Rent Stabilization Commission  
Transportation Commission  
Disabilities Advisory Board  
Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board  
Russian Advisory Board  
Senior Advisory Board  
Transgender Advisory Board  
Women’s Advisory Board

## Eight Focus Group Discussions

Long Term HIV/AIDS Survivors  
Performing Arts Subcommittee of Arts  
& Cultural Affairs Commission  
Seniors in Affordable Housing (Residents)  
Architects  
Social Services Agency Representatives  
Tenants  
Chamber of Commerce  
Open Group of Community Members

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*APA Guide On Aging*

Alan de la Torre, Portland  
Committee Member

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Eldon Teper, RN MS, Executive Director

*Los Angeles County Metropolitan  
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Westside Central Service Council

*70 participants at the May 9, 2015 Human  
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*22 participants on ENGAGEWEHO.ORG*



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# **AGING IN PLACE**

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## **AGING IN COMMUNITY**

**5 Year Strategic Plan 2016- 2020**

**City of West Hollywood  
Human Services and Rent Stabilization**



**City of West Hollywood  
8300 Santa Monica Boulevard  
West Hollywood, California 90069**

**Telephone: (323) 848-6400  
TTY hearing impaired (323) 848-6496**

**[www.weho.org](http://www.weho.org)**

**   @wehocity**