

Commission For The Senior Community
1685 Main Street
PO Box 2200
Santa Monica, California 90407-2200

City of
Santa Monica

December 29, 2008

The Honorable Ken Genser, Mayor
Santa Monica City Council
P. Lamont Ewell, City Manager
City of Santa Monica
1685 Main Street, Room 200
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Dear Mr. Mayor, Council Members and Mr. Ewell:

At our December 17, 2008 meeting the Commission for the Senior Community unanimously approved our budget priorities for the City Council's consideration. These priorities were developed during Commission meetings at which key issues and needs pertaining to seniors were identified, discussed and assigned to Commission sub-committees. These sub-committees have researched their assigned topics, and made recommendations for appropriate interventions and actions approved by the Commission.

Specifically, the following are the Commission's budget priorities submitted for the City Council's consideration:

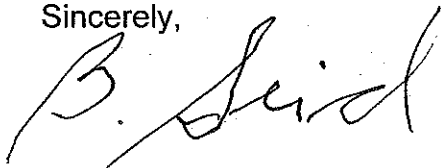
1. Transportation: As a result of community input, we are requesting additional funds be allocated to WISE & Healthy Aging's Dial-A-Ride Program to broaden services. The Commission supports an escort service that will be piloted in FY 2009-10, currently being studied. If the outcome of the feasibility study is favorable, the Commission will return with additional requests for increased funding during FY 2010-11. Additionally, the Commission asks that the City Council direct staff to review provision of taxi vouchers as an alternate or complementary service.
2. Outreach and Access to Services: Many seniors through out the City are not aware of, or do not know how to access available services. To address this situation, the Commission has been involved in the development and distribution of the Life Long Learning Older Adult Task Force's *Community Connections for Older Adults, Quick Reference Guide*. This publication reference serves seniors living in Santa Monica and explains how to access them. We request that the City assists in printing additional copies of this reference guide by providing approximately \$1,000 to the project.

3. Health /Mental Health Services and Education: Research by the Commission has revealed that health/mental health services for low income seniors living in Santa Monica are generally inadequate. The Commission requests the City Council further study gaps in health and mental health services for seniors with a view toward further supporting these programs. We will return next year with specific recommendations for FY 2010-11.

4. Safety and Accessibility: Responding to the concerns of many seniors and people with disabilities, the Commission has focused on specific hazards in the community that threaten their safety such as breaks in sidewalks, access to sidewalks during construction and crosswalks that do not leave enough time for a slow moving person to cross. These and other barriers to accessibility block the ability to access assistance for many. These hazards have been discussed with City staff (Engineering Division and Transportation Management primarily) several times during calendar year 2008; we request that additional staff and resources be dedicated to addressing these issues. In addition, the Commission will continue to support and promote the pedestrian and driver education programs that the City is already funding.

On behalf of the Commission for the Senior Community I want to thank you for your consideration of our priorities.

Sincerely,



Barry Seid, Chair
Santa Monica Commission for the Senior Community