



## BLCP CONNECTIONS

*An E-newsletter to keep you connected to the Burlington Livable Community Project.*

**February 11, 2008**

### **Let's Get Behind Burlington's Senior Centers!**

"Our senior centers are vital to our community and need our support!" That was the message of a report submitted to the Burlington City Council in December by the council's seven-member ad hoc committee on senior centers. Burlington's Heineberg Senior Center in the New North End and Champlain Senior Center in the Old North End, have struggled over the years to fund ongoing operations and both are facing fiscal crises.

The report identifies multiple community benefits that flourishing senior centers can provide and advocated for greater levels of annual support from the city. Committee members surveyed ten senior centers across the state and learned that while there are a number of different models, most received a substantial level of financial support from the municipality (an estimated 30 to 90%), in the form of free facility space, municipal employees providing programming, and/or municipal appropriations. Municipal funding is particularly important because there is no state or federal funding available for senior centers and private funders prefer to fund programming rather than operations.

The committee encouraged city councilors to include a half-penny dedicated tax on the March ballot to establish a Burlington Senior Trust Fund that would partially support the senior centers. Dozens of seniors turned out to a City Council meeting on a snowy December evening to support the report's recommendation. In response, Mayor Kiss and Council leaders committed to a sizable increase in city funding for the coming year for the two senior centers in lieu of supporting the half-penny tax recommendation. This will help in the short term, but does not provide a financial foundation for on-going sustainability. Given

that the percentage of residents over age 50 continues to expand in Burlington, wrestling with long-term viability of the senior centers needs to remain a priority for city government.

See the full report at:

[http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org\\_/articles/sk/vt\\_livable/SeniorCenterReport.doc](http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org_/articles/sk/vt_livable/SeniorCenterReport.doc)

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

## **Should Burlington get "NORC"ed?**

What in the world is a NORC? Is it the name of a new Burlington rock band, the latest hairstyle craze, or the sound an aardvark makes? Hardly, but one could be evolving in Burlington's New North End. NORC stands for Naturally Occurring Retirement Community and is a short way of describing a geographic region like a neighborhood where a significant percentage of the population residing there are older and would like to continue to live in their current homes or apartments as they age. By intentionally designating Burlington's New North End as a NORC, the community would begin to focus on what kinds of support residents need to stay in their homes and how to deliver and pay for these services. This could range from help getting groceries or shoveling out the car to more significant in-home health services.

Gail Moreau, Director of the Heineberg Senior Center, is excited about the idea and sees the senior center as one logical focal point for the NORC. "Heineberg Senior Center has been in the community since 1971 and is a hub for service, activity, and community within the NNE. It makes sense to continue to expand our services and add others to keep this community vibrant and livable." The Burlington Livable Community Project is convening stakeholders to explore the NORC model and how it might enhance the New North End neighborhood.

More on NORCs:

<http://www.norcs.com/page.html?ArticleID=126319>

<http://health.usnews.com/articles/health/2007/11/05/aging-at-home-with-government-help.html>

## **We're Having an Impact:**

## ***CCTA Enhances Passenger-Friendly City Transportation***

Thanks, in part, to encouragement from BLCP, CCTA purchased several new, low-floor buses last year. Not only are the new buses more environmentally-friendly, they are also more passenger-friendly. All of the new buses have front-door wheelchair access and the ability to lower to curb level, which makes boarding easier and more convenient.

In addition to the 17 fixed routes, CCTA also has three shopping shuttles that travel from senior housing complexes to local supermarkets. The service is sponsored by the University Mall and Price Chopper and runs every Tuesday. For these and all other route and schedule information, visit the CCTA website at [www.cctaride.org](http://www.cctaride.org) or call 864-CCTA (2282).

Using the bus is a safe and convenient transportation option in and around Chittenden County. With service to Burlington, Essex, Shelburne, South Burlington and Winooks, as well as Link Express routes to Middlebury, Montpelier and St. Albans, CCTA allows for extra mobility and the freedom to get where you need to go. Discounted fares for seniors age 60 and over, Medicaid card holders and riders with a CCTA Disabled and Senior ID is 60 cents per ride, \$5 for a ten-ride ticket and \$21 for a monthly pass.

Check here for more info: [www.cctaride.org](http://www.cctaride.org)

## **We're Moving!**

On March 17, AARP Vermont's offices will officially open in our new location in Courthouse Plaza on Main Street in downtown Burlington (the building that houses Kinko's and Senator Leahy's office among others). While staff e-mail addresses will remain the same, phone numbers will change and those are to be announced. Here's where to find us.

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*Stop by for a visit...*

***See us on the Web!***

**Check out the Burlington Livable Community website at [www.blcp.org](http://www.blcp.org). Find a local activity calendar, project materials and news, partner and resources listings, and ways to get involved in the Burlington community.**

**If you would like to be removed from this e-mail list, please e-mail us at [vt@aar.org](mailto:vt@aar.org).**