



**Department of Disabilities, Aging and
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Agency of Human Services

March 26, 2021

Dear Members of the Burlington City Council Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee,

This letter is to express the support of the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) for the creation of a Burlington "Council on Aging." DAIL's mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or live with a disability - with dignity, respect and independence. DAIL oversees the development and implementation of the Vermont State Plan on Aging, and we work collaboratively with a multitude of partners in the Aging Services Network, including Area Agencies on Aging, long-term care facilities, home health agencies, SASH, senior centers and many more, to ensure that older Vermonters' voices are heard, their many contributions are valued, and their needs for safety, care and support are met in the setting of their choice.

We also recognize that the work to make Vermont an age-friendly state requires engagement and investment at the local level and across all sectors. Every Vermont city and town has a critical role to play to ensure older Vermonters are treated equitably and that our communities are welcoming and inclusive places for people of all ages. By creating a council on aging with a focus on supporting older residents of Burlington, the city has an opportunity to make Burlington a more livable community for all and become a model for other municipalities across the state.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of having a strong network of support for older Vermonters who were more vulnerable to serious illness and death. Now is the time to build on the good work done in Burlington to protect older residents during the pandemic and strengthen the community even further through ongoing, dedicated focus on aging well via a council on aging.

DAIL is supportive of this proposal and looks forward to working with the council in the future to further align statewide and local efforts.

Sincerely,

Monica White

Monica White, Interim Commissioner
Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living