



Center 50+

CITY OF SALEM

Age-Friendly Salem Assessment 2018

AGE-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT TEAM, CENTER 50+

Contact: Marilyn Daily | MDaily@cityofsalem.net
503-588-6303 | 2615 Portland Road NE, Salem, OR 97301
Website: www.cityofsalem.net/pages/age-friendly-initiative.aspx

**What Does A City
for All Ages
Look Like To You?**

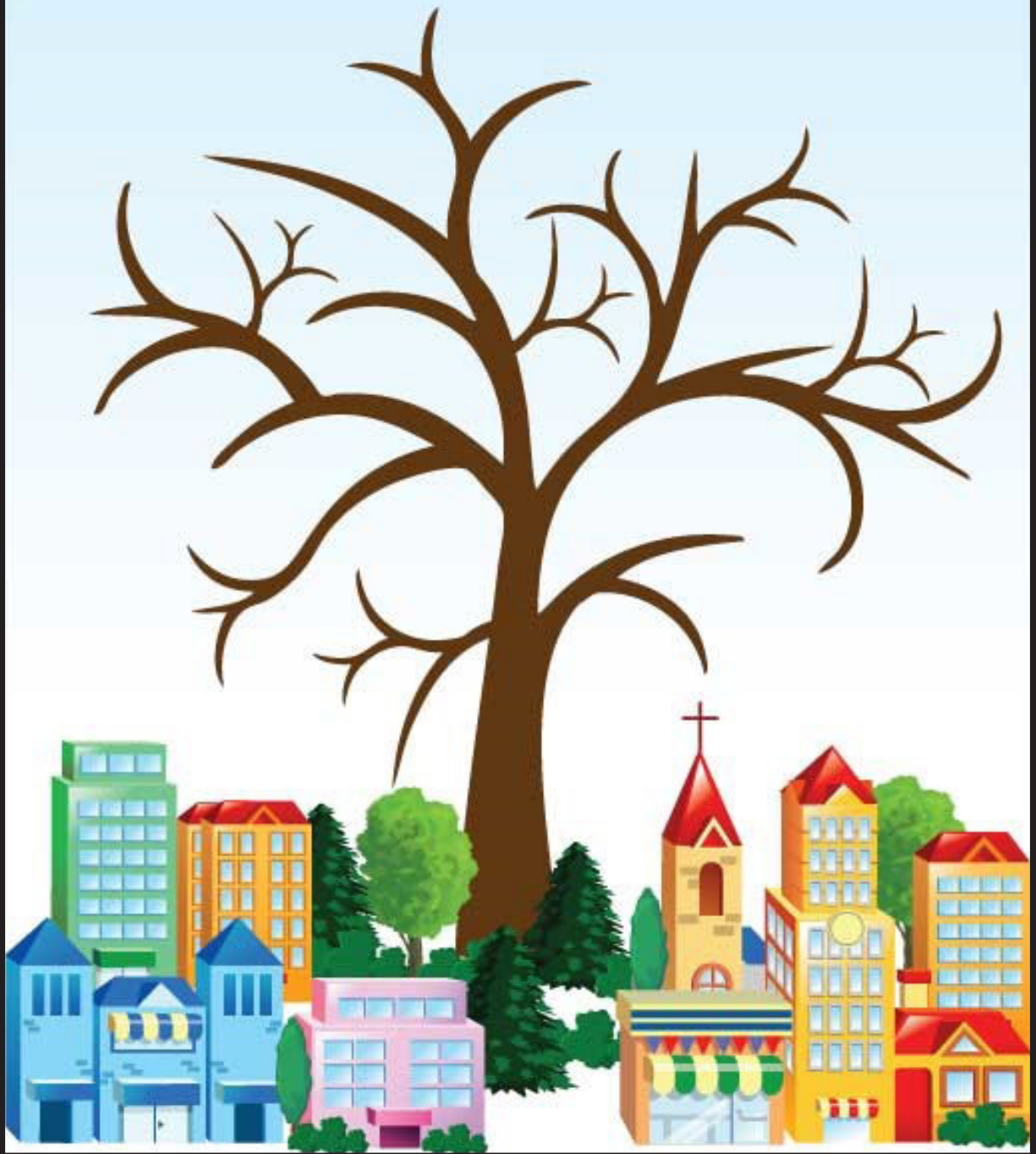


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ASSESSMENT TEAM PARTNERS

Leona Albin	Beth Jackson	Steve Patterson
Kanoe Barth	Allen Jakobitz	Myra Paul
Karen Bolliger	Lesley Johnson	Mary Quinn
Melissa Cannon, PhD	Tonya Johnson	Karen Randall
Janet Carlson	Bonnie Katich	Charles Richards
Phyllis Cook	Lauren Katich	Judy Richards
Suzanne Cook	Sandy Kinney	Nancy Ross
Ashley Carson Cottingham	Robert Krebs	Ron Rubel
Sue Davis	Billie Larson	Meg Rowe
Ginny Dickinson	Alise Liepnieks	Alvin Scott
Patricia Feeny	Katie Lively	Betty Sledge
Mel Fuller	Joan Lloyd	Rebekah Smith
Cynthia Gaffney	Ruth McEwen	Jenny Stallings
Paula Hilgers	Richard McGinty	Ted Stang
Sandy Hoefling	Carol Moeller	Marcia Wendall
Anne Hoffman	Tracy Morgan	Bettie Wennevold
Jenifer Hood	Dr. Jennifer Neahring	Bev Wilson

LETTER FROM YOUR MAYOR

The goals set forth by the AARP Livable Communities Initiative and the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Communities Guide are reflective of Salem's values as a whole. We value a community where age and ability do not impact one's access to a livable, safe, and vibrant community—making Salem a place where one can live and thrive for their lifetime.

A dedicated group of more than forty agency partners, neighborhood representatives, bike and pedestrian groups, nonprofits and faith communities, business owners, city, county, and state representatives, and seniors from throughout our community committed to working together in tackling this important subject. Over the course of a year, this team, now referred to as the "Age-Friendly Salem Assessment Team," focused on understanding how Salem measures up to other communities in the following areas: access to transportation and community-wide mobility; accessible, appropriate, and affordable housing; supportive community and health services for all; opportunities for civic engagement, volunteerism and employment; safe and appealing outdoor spaces and accessible public buildings; and social connections, inclusion, and respect.

The assessment team led eight community forums, three focus groups, six online surveys, thirty one-on-one interviews, four walk audits, a resource fair, a "Working After 50" employment fair, a tech conference, and twelve bus-rider experience surveys. The advertising, scheduling, and location for these events encouraged participation from as many perspectives as possible.

As you will see from the results of the assessment, Salem is a great place to live and age. However, as the number of seniors in the community continues to grow and change, intentional planning will be required to help this dynamic group remain healthy and engaged.

The percentage of people age 60 and over is expected to increase at twice the rate of the entire population by the year 2030. In 2017, 20 percent of Salem residents were age 60 and over. At current population growth rates, that number will increase to 23 percent by 2030. That percentage increase may not seem that significant, but the raw numbers mean an increase of 33 percent in the number of people age 60 and older.

People are choosing to live in Salem. According to the 2018 Residential Satisfaction Survey, nine in ten residents are generally satisfied with the services the City provides. This survey includes seniors that are movers and shakers, active, mobile, and love the community where they live. We also have those that are

struggling to stay in their homes and remain connected to the community due to health and mobility concerns. People at both ends of this spectrum need to be considered as we look forward. What remains true for both groups is that they want to live in Salem for their lifetime. As a forward-thinking community, it is an easy solution to stop and consider the needs of these elder community members as we create policy, add programs, build neighborhoods, recruit businesses, build parks, or plan new bus routes. As the assessment demonstrates, however, it takes everyone engaged in this effort to be a community for all ages. This assessment gives us the foundation to start building upon.

I am proud to be a part of a community that recognizes and values older adults and makes a conscious and deliberate effort to help everyone live and thrive where they choose—we hope that continues to be our hometown Salem.



Mayor Chuck Bennett

Eighty-five percent surveyed reported that it is important they are able to remain in their home as they age.

WHAT ELSE MAKES SALEM SPECIAL?

Throughout the livability assessment process, from the initial launch party in September, 2017, to the final Community Forum and Listening Session in October, 2018, participants consistently reported that connections to the community were the most significant thing they love about living in Salem. Those connections take many forms: the friendliness of the people; the wide-ranging services available; a historic and revitalized downtown district, and the variety of things to do, from recreational activities and the arts, to a wide variety of educational, cultural, and social events.

8 LIVABILITY DOMAINS

Mayor Chuck Bennett and the Salem City Council have made a commitment to actively work toward making our city a great place for people of all ages. Center 50+ has accepted the challenge of developing an action plan to establish Salem as an Age-Friendly Community. The World Health Organization (WHO) conceived this idea in June, 2005. WHO realized that communities need to prepare for the rapid aging of our population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic, and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults. By doing so, these communities are better equipped to become great places, and even lifelong homes, for people of all ages.

AARP recognized the need for cities in the United States to be more focused on addressing elements identified by WHO, so AARP partnered with WHO and is driving the Age-Friendly Livable Communities concept in the United States.

For all eight identified livability domains the Age Friendly Assessment Team followed a similar review process. The process consisted of a community forum, a survey tool, and a support activity. At the conclusion of each, forum participants created a list of community strengths for each domain followed by a list of barriers to being age friendly in that same domain. Many elements of the Social Inclusion and Respect domain were addressed during the Social Participation Forum, so to reduce redundancy those two domains are combined for this report.

- Transportation
- Social Participation
- Communication and Technology
- Housing
- Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings
- Civic Engagement, Volunteerism, and Work After 50
- Health and Community Resources
- Social Inclusion and Respect

The process all began with a launch party at Broadway Theater on September 19, 2017. This event involved over 100 community members and included live polling and viewing of the film documentary *Old*. The live polling was simply used to get a sense of stereotypes and feelings about aging.



Transportation

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Availability
- Affordability
- Reliability and frequency
- Travel destinations
- Age-friendly vehicles
- Specialized services for older people
- Priority seating and passenger courtesy
- Transport drivers
- Safety and comfort
- Transport stops and stations
- Taxis
- Community transport
- Information
- Driving conditions
- Courtesy towards older adults

PUBLIC FORUM

The Transportation Public Forum on November 8, 2017, included 67 community participants and featured a panel discussion of organizations involved in transportation and pedestrian connectivity options. The panel was comprised of City of Salem Public Works, Marion County Public Works, Salem-Keizer Cherriots, Lyft, and Safe Routes to Schools.

The City of Salem Transportation System Plan provides the guiding principles and comprehensive policies for the City's transportation plan for the next 25 years. The preface of the plan states: "Mobility means more than just providing basic infrastructure, it means developing a multifaceted transportation system with sufficient capacity to move people and goods efficiently and conveniently. A vibrant community such as Salem should not strangle in its own congestion nor choke on its own air." Another key concept acknowledged: "Recognizing mo-

bility is the result of careful community planning that prudently builds needed infrastructure, respects the livability of neighborhoods, reflects fiscal realities, and realizes that the development of land uses and transportation systems are forever linked. Mobility means never being overly dependent on any one mode of travel.”

The Salem Transportation System Plan outlines criteria and refinements to typical street requirements, and incorporates collaborative service elements and shared responsibilities with the key stakeholders. Other key elements, definitions, and strategic plans include:

- Street design
- Pedestrian systems
- Transit system
- Parking management
- Intercity and commuter passenger travel
- Neighborhood traffic
- Local street connectivity



Key stakeholders were included in the panel discussion and given the opportunity to share their roles, responsibilities, upcoming plans, and primary barriers. The represented municipalities spoke to budgetary limitations and the challenges of balancing needs/demand with budget.

FORUM FEEDBACK

All presenters stated they consider older adults in their planning documents. Lyft representatives believe their flexibility and individual ease complements public transportation. Safe Routes spoke to the need to educate, encourage, and design communities which encourage non-motorized transportation (walking and biking).

Barriers Identified by Agency Partners:

- Paperwork and process connecting seniors to transportation can be a challenge.
- Not all seniors have access to technology.
- Agencies have a lot of pressure to utilize technology for cost and efficiency—this may prevent older adults or low-income individuals from gaining information if they do not have access to technology.

- Limited transportation in rural communities—seniors challenged to get to medical appointments or needed services.
- Need volunteer programs to assist with transportation to medical appointments.

Barriers identified by older adults:

- Bus routes and schedule (no weekend or night service).
- Bus system not always quick or convenient.
- Advanced technology difficult to navigate for some.
- Sidewalks (condition and location).
- Bus shelter locations (not all accessible).
- Bus shelters (not all have places to rest or sit and wait).
- Lack of awareness of bike and pedestrian connections.
- General perception that biking around Salem is not safe.

SURVEY SUMMARY

- Use of private vehicle was the clear preference of survey respondents, with over 90 percent reporting driving themselves.
- Over 40 percent report walking. Comments related to walking were primarily associated with recreational/leisure activity, and walking from where the vehicle was parked to the destination. Most other comments related to general safety—primarily sidewalk maintenance and lighting.
- Fewer than 15 percent report using public transportation. Responses were fairly evenly split on the question of accessibility and convenience; 45 percent responding favorably, and 40 percent responding unfavorably.
- Most comments related to public transportation were also tied to accessibility and convenience: distance to the bus stop, and amount of time—with transfers—it takes to travel to their destination. Perceptions about reliability and safety were also noted.
- Most of the bicycling (15 percent of respondents) comments offered were related to personal safety in traffic.
- Older respondents and those self-identifying with disability commented more frequently about distance to bus stops from home and common destinations, and about sidewalk accessibility and repair.

TRANSPORTATION DOMAIN SUMMARY

Where we live significantly influences our perception of transportation availability, affordability, safety, and access. Where we live also affects our ability to seek appropriate healthcare, participate socially, and have access to information technology. Those who most depend on public transportation are most affected by limited routes and current lack of evening and weekend service. Similarly, sidewalk access and maintenance varies by neighborhood throughout the city. In neighborhoods of lower socio-economic status, public transportation and sidewalk maintenance is particularly critical to Salem's seniors.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN

1. Community education on public transportation, walking, biking, and carpool options.
2. Agency and municipal partner education on potential barriers to current services for seniors:
 - Sidewalks
 - Lighting
 - Benches/bus stop shelters
 - Technology options
3. Senior-friendly mobility event
 - Educate seniors about public transportation options and costs.
 - Include how to use schedules, buses, Cherry Lift, etc.
 - Walk audits.
 - Consider generating centralized directory or map of relatively flat areas; well-lit, well-maintained sidewalks; bus stops with seating and shelter; and other resources.



Social Participation

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Accessible opportunities
- Affordable activities
- Range of opportunities
- Awareness of activities and events
- Encouraging participation and addressing isolation
- Integrating generations, cultures, and communities

The Social Participation Forum and Community Social Resource Fair was held on January 17, 2018. The event included organizations that provide entertainment, membership, activities, and more to encourage social connections for older adults.

Participants included Travel Salem, YMCA, Elsinore Theater, Northwest Senior and Disability Services, Center 50+ Friendly Caller and Otago in-home fitness program, Salem Public Library, State of Oregon Talking Books, Art from the Heart, and Salem-Keizer Public Schools.

Salem has many opportunities available for individuals looking for social interactions. Many more organizations exist than was practical to include at this event. The breadth of types of organizations represented, however, served to solicit generalizable information.

In addition to the Fair, the Age-Friendly Assessment Team provided a free spaghetti dinner. During that time the Assessment Team visited one-on-one with guests and inquired about their social connections with community agencies. Also during dinner, representatives from the community agencies were able to share how they serve older adults, how they identify barriers to participation, and successes they have experienced serving the older adult population.

FORUM FEEDBACK

Barriers Identified by Community Organization Partners:

- Many social activities are not senior exclusive, but seniors are welcome.
- People do not always recognize that inter-generational activities are healthy and can be rewarding for all involved.
- Those who utilize technology to meet the demands of the younger generation may be creating a barrier to some low-income individuals or older seniors.
- It would be helpful to have suggestions on how to create an “age-friendly” event, since event organizers and the community may simply not know how plan and execute such an event.

Barriers identified by older adults:

- Health and physical issues.
- Lifelong social phobias (e.g. never liked a crowd).
- Lack of inclusion at events because of physical inaccessibility, including parking, transportation, restrooms, seating, poorly maintained sidewalks/paths, etc.
- Advertising does not make older adults feel welcomed.
- Cost.
- Ticket purchasing is done using advanced technology.

SURVEY SUMMARY

45 percent Reported that at least one person in their household had some chronic condition that prevented them from fully participating in community activities and social opportunities.

80 percent Reported that if they had their preferred transportation, they would participate in more social events.

65 percent Interact with friends, family, or neighbors at least once per day.

20 percent Report interactions occur several times per week.

10 percent Report even fewer interactions, and no one reported interactions less than monthly.

70 percent Reported attending educational or personal enrichment activities at a university/community college.

60 percent Reported participating through a Senior Center.

25–40 percent Reported their educational courses and personal growth and enrichment came from local organizations or businesses, the faith community, a community center, offerings through work, online programs, and the Department of Parks and Recreation.

We used the list of potential community activities from the AARP Survey, and for each we asked if that activity was important and if our community has that activity.

The list of potential activities included:

- Conveniently located venues for entertainment.
- Activities specifically geared to older adults.
- Activities that offer senior discounts.
- Activities that are affordable to all residents.
- Activities that involve both older and younger people.
- Accurate and widely publicized information about social activities.
- A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations.
- Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities.
- Continuing education classes.
- Social clubs such as for books, gardening, crafts, or other hobbies.

In all but two categories, the majority of respondents agreed that Salem provides these opportunities. In the following two activities, more participants responded “No” or “Not Sure” than “Yes:”

- Activities that are affordable to all residents.
- Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Many free and low-cost opportunities for social participation exist in Salem. But getting information to seniors who may not regularly access technology means that event organizers must employ multiple communication strategies. Transportation to venues, parking, accessible entrances and sidewalks/walking paths

are all necessary. Lack of intentional attention to these kinds of essential access details means that seniors are not benefiting from social interaction with other community members, and organizations are not benefiting by participation of the senior community.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN

1. Community education on how to create an age-friendly event— such as a tool box.
2. Evaluate and plan infrastructure *and maintenance* at parks and event venues to meet mobility issues, restroom demands, and parking limitations.



Communication and Information

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Widespread distribution
- The right information at the right time
- Will someone speak to me?
- Age-friendly formats and design
- Information technology: boon and bane
- A personal and collective responsibility

The Communication and Information Public Forum was held on February 21, 2018. During the two-hour session, agencies discussed their communication methods and techniques used to better communicate with the older adult population. Panelists included members from the Northwest Senior and Disability Services, 211info, and Marion County Emergency Management, who identified barriers to effective communication with the public, and how they are working to address those barriers.

FORUM FEEDBACK

Barriers identified by older adults:

- Overloaded with too much information.
- Overwhelmed by the abundance of mailings.
- Cultural expectations/differences/information sources.
- Possible mistrust—may not trust news.
- Aging population may misinterpret or have misinformation due to vision, hearing, or cognitive changes.
- Difficulty with websites.
- Do not identify with programs or services ("not for me").
- Generational differences in accepting services.
- Unable to accept government help—generational attitude.
- Feeling able to "handle it" on your own.
- Do not want to inconvenience people.
- Isolated—more able to accept help through social groups that are perceived as less threatening (church, activities, etc.).
- Photos and language do not reflect the target audience.
- Font size—with the suggestion to use lots of white space. ("Just the facts, please!")
- Not sure if young professionals "get it."
- Telephone barriers (phone trees, confusing options, etc.).
- "Speak slower and without judgment."
- Inability to hear due to lack of volume (which is why some avoid the phone altogether).
- Communicate appropriately and with respect.

- Target audience not feeling like they are being heard the first time and will not try again.
- Cell phone confusion—how to receive alerts.
- How to communicate preferences.
- People do not identify with senior groups even though they all have seniors in their lives.
- Word of mouth is number one.
- Peer-to-peer is also very effective.
- Convincing agencies that advertising/communication is challenging when finances are tight for nonprofits or municipalities.

Follow up: Communication survey, one-on-one community member interviews. Tech Con 50+, Technology Fair.

SURVEY SUMMARY

Respondents ranged in age from 50 to 90+ years, and 75 percent were in the 60-80 year age range.

How do you source information?

We asked what sources respondents were most likely to turn to for information about various service categories. The most popular sources were:

- Local seniors
- Local nonprofit organizations
- Doctors or other health care professionals
- Family and friends
- Internet

How do you use the internet?

The online activity categories we asked about were:

- Social media
- Making appointments (doctor, hair, etc.)
- Tracking public transportation schedules/routes
- Support groups
- Booking travel
- Using rideshares
- Continuing education or self-improvement
- Entertainment (Netflix, etc.)
- Shopping
- Online banking

Over 65 percent reported using social media at least once a week. About half reported using online entertainment, and around 40 percent reported banking online at least occasionally. The remainder of potential activities were used less frequently.

About 70 percent of respondents use online search engines to search health and wellness information, and local events, while only about 25 percent searched housing or transportation information.

About 85 percent of respondents access the internet from home.

Almost 80 percent indicated they would use technology more if they could overcome obstacles—the two most common of which were a lack of computer knowledge and the cost of electronics.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SUMMARY

Successfully communicating information to seniors who may not regularly access technology means that all organizations must employ multiple communication strategies to meet a full range of levels of physical and cognitive abilities.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN

1. Start actively seeking senior feedback by asking what would make things more user-friendly.
2. Value and build on “word of mouth,” peer-to-peer information sharing.
3. Educate community partners and municipalities on how to effectively communicate with older adults—generate a communication tool box.
4. Create informal and formal leaders to facilitate communications.
5. Utilize current events and opportunities to disseminate age-friendly communications.



Housing

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Affordability
- Essential services
- Design
- Modifications
- Maintenance
- Access to services
- Community and family connections
- Housing options
- Living environment

The Housing Forum was held on March 21, 2018. A representative from AARP introduced and framed the topic with national data regarding housing for older adults. Local perspectives were provided by representatives from Arches (homeless day center), a Northwest Senior and Disability Services ADRC Specialist, and a planner from the City of Salem Community Development Department.

Topics addressed included affordability and accessibility of housing options for older adults, older adult homelessness, and circumstances that lead to older adult homelessness. The panel also identified several housing options available as people age, including remaining in their personal homes, securing necessary in-home services, independent living senior housing, assisted living, skilled nursing homes, and adult foster care. City of Salem housing development policy is focusing on creating neighborhoods that are walkable and near services such as healthcare, food, parks and open spaces, and bus lines.

FORUM FEEDBACK

Barriers identified by older adults:

- Apartment complexes may not be accessible or have elevators.
- Fear retaliation from landlords if they ask for improvements or accommodations.
- Not enough appropriate and affordable housing.

- Resource navigation can be confusing and overwhelming.
- Long waiting lists for subsidized housing.
- Paperwork can be overwhelming for individuals when faced with cognitive decline, or living under toxic stress.
- Maintaining personal residence may be too expensive.
- Home may be too big to maintain, but cannot afford current market pricing.
- Not enough advocates.
- Most services are reactive not proactive.
- The transition from one living situation to another such as from hospital stay to skilled care facility is not always smooth. The “hand-off” from one agency to another is “clunky.”

SURVEY SUMMARY

Eighty-five percent responded that it is important to be able to live independently in their own home as they age. Just over half own their primary home, and 33 percent rent.

Of those that plan to remain in their current home, 37 percent anticipate needing home modifications, while 56 percent reported not anticipating needing modifications. It is not known if home modifications would not be required because the actual need is not anticipated, or if potential modifications already exist in the home.

Of the respondents that anticipate needing home modifications, 70 percent indicated that they would be able to afford the modifications, and 10 percent indicated that they would be unable to afford the modifications.

Responses to the question of type of living arrangements anticipated when respondents do move covered the full spectrum. Condo/apartment was the most common response, at 30 percent, with house/townhome at 15 percent. Other responses were fairly evenly distributed among the remaining potential choices, which included living with a family member, a retirement community, and an assisted/supportive living residence.

Of those who anticipate needing to change living situations at some point almost 50 percent responded that the change would likely occur in the next ten years. Half of those respondents, or 25 percent of the total respondents, indicated that a change within 5 years was likely. One-third of respondents said a move would occur in ten or more years, and 20 percent do not plan to change.

When the move occurs, one-third of the respondents indicated it would be in Salem. Just over 20 percent reported that it would not be in Salem, and just over 40 percent were not sure.

Among all respondents, 75 percent think it is important that their new accommodations are in close proximity to public transportation and other essential services, while 15 percent reported that it was not important.

We asked a series of questions related to what housing-related topics were most important and whether each of those were available in our community. Following the AARP survey, our survey asked about home repair contractors, suitable housing availability, home repair services, seasonal services, availability of housing with age-friendly features, and affordable housing.

Each of these was rated as important, but in every instance a majority of respondents was unsure if those particular services were available in our community. Gender demographics may be one possible explanation. Women comprised 80 percent of our survey responses, and among all respondents—both women and men—70 percent reported being either single or widowed. It may be that traditional gender roles among respondents are reflected in this result. That is, that women in this age group traditionally have not had to address the services identified in this portion of the survey. Another potential explanation is that all respondents, regardless of gender, face issues learning about potential services that were not previously needed.

HOUSING SUMMARY

The ability to remain in one's home as they age is important to Salem seniors, and affordability and accessibility are key features valued by the senior community. Accessibility as used in the survey has a couple of definitions. The first is access to affordable housing – because if there is not housing available to people of all income levels, housing is not accessible. The second definition pertains to home alterations necessary as people age, such as modifications to entrances and hallways to make them accessible by wheelchair, wider doorways, grab bars in bathrooms, etc.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN

1. Explore education on housing options and planning targeting people who are 50+ and currently employed.
2. Explore offering classes/workshops on universal design to local builders/developers.
3. Conduct community discussions on affordable and accessible housing.



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Pleasant and clean environment
- Importance of green spaces
- Somewhere to rest
- Age-friendly pavements
- Safe pedestrian crossings
- Accessibility
- A secure environment
- Walkways and cycle paths
- Age-friendly buildings
- Adequate public toilets
- Older customers

The Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Forum on April 18, 2018, included 31 community participants and involved a panel discussion of organizations who work to improve outdoor spaces and accessibility in public buildings. The group assessed Salem in the areas of clean environment, green spaces and walkways, appropriate outdoor seating, well-maintained pavements, and well-designed roads that create safe connections for pedestrians. Following the panel presentations the attendees asked questions and identified the positives and negatives of Salem's outdoor spaces and public buildings.

FORUM FEEDBACK

Barriers identified by older adults:

- Parking at parks and public buildings is limited.
- Park equipment is made for children.
- Perception that parks may not be safe, i.e. crime and accessibility; dark, unpopulated, "scary" little parks.
- Not enough public restrooms.
- Trails to the park prevent mobility (pavement issues, do not have adjoining

sidewalks for walkers etc.).

- Inadequate seating or benches.
- No process for complaints. (“Give us a call directly.”)
- Neighborhoods without sidewalks.
- Lack ongoing input avenues. (“How can we express our needs?”)

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS SUMMARY

The City of Salem and the State of Oregon have numerous public buildings and an abundance of parks and other outdoor spaces. Accessibility – both in terms of getting to parks and buildings, and upkeep and maintenance – are primary considerations for utilization by seniors.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN:

1. Conduct walk audits in all city parks.
2. Conduct walk audits in popular and high-traffic public spaces and buildings.
3. Explore designing spaces with recreational equipment that is intentionally senior-friendly.





Civic Participation and Engagement

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Volunteering options for older people
- Better employment options and more opportunities
- Flexibility to accommodate older workers and volunteers
- Encouraging civic participation
- Training
- Entrepreneurial opportunities
- Valuing older people's contributions

The domain of Community Engagement, Volunteerism, and Work After 50 forum was held on May 16th, 2018. It included 56 participants and involved a panel discussion from individuals and organizations who work to encourage civic engagement throughout Salem. Participants included County Commissioner Janet Carlson, City of Salem Human Rights and Relations Coordinator Gretchen Bennett, and City of Salem Public Information Manager Kenny Larson.

FORUM FEEDBACK

Barriers identified by older adults:

- Physical barriers—change in physical stamina.
- Transportation.
- Behind in technology.
- Feel uncomfortable talking about disability.
- Age discrimination.
- Great skills but can't figure out where they fit.

Barriers identified by presenting organizations:

- Some seniors are behind in technology.
- Challenge recruiting their expertise—connecting.
- Transportation.
- Some lack job-search skills—things have changed in resumes, interviews, etc.

VOLUNTEER FAIR

- Marion County Dog Shelter
- Alzheimer's Association
- Center 50+ Friendship Brigade
- Oregon Department of Justice
- Oregon State Hospital
- Museum of Mental Health
- United Way
- Center 50+ Friendly Caller program
- Union Gospel Mission
- Salvation Army
- American Red Cross Blood Services
- Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- CASA of Marion County
- Marion-Polk Food Share
- Center 50+ Fix-it Brigade
- Oregon State Legislature
- Start Making a Reader Today (SMART)

The Volunteer Fair was an opportunity to connect seniors who are looking for volunteer opportunities with organizations who value older adult volunteers. The relationship between senior volunteers and community organizations is mutually beneficial. Seniors volunteer for a variety of reasons, including giving back to their community by sharing their time, skills, and/or passion; exploring a “second career,” or other personal area of interest; and gaining a “sense of purpose.” Volunteering can also lead to social connections and new friends.

Organizations eagerly seek and welcome senior volunteers to their “volunteer corps.” Community organizations use the senior volunteer fair to identify volunteers who are motivated, experienced, reliable, passionate, and committed.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Seniors are a segment of the community most invested in the success of the community, whether they are longtime residents or have recently relocated. Se-

niors invest their time and expertise through volunteerism and paid employment. Organizations and agencies that utilize senior citizens gain value through seniors' participation, and long-term benefits from their insights and contributions.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN

1. Educate community agencies and organizations on identifying and communicating employment, volunteer, and civic participation opportunities and the benefits of hiring seniors.
2. Develop promotional messages and materials to educate agencies and municipalities on hiring seniors.



Community Support and Health Services

Topics provided as a framework to group conversations:

- Accessible care
- A wider range of health services
- Aging well services
- Home care
- Residential facilities for people unable to live at home
- A network of community services
- Volunteers wanted
- Other issues

The Community Support and Health Services Domain Forum was held on May 16, 2018. The program featured two main presenters: Amy Schmidt, creator and owner of Retirement Connection, and Nancy Baldwin, Health Educator from Salem Health. Representatives from 10 other community organizations also made brief statements about their organization's mission and primary focus.

Community Support and Health Services are an integral part of an age-friendly community. Retirement Connection is a printed guide and website resource designed specifically with community information for Boomers, seniors, caregivers and providers.

As the main hospital and one of the major health care providers in the greater Salem area, Salem Health is central to a conversation about health information in Salem.

Complementing the presenters were representatives from Willamette Valley Hospice, Home Instead, Senior Helpers, Center 50+, Elder Law, Northwest Senior and Disability Services, Alzheimer's Association, Meals on Wheels, Senior Health Insur-

ance Benefits Assistance, and Salem Electric. In addition to brief introductions, each organization offered a table where participants were able to get more information. Participants then made their way around the room to the various representatives, and added comments to flip chart pages posted around the room that noted Good News and Barriers.

FORUM FEEDBACK

- This is a supportive community in terms of formal and informal help available.
- Many service providers try to work together—there is recognition that this is important.
- Access to services and quality of these services is generally good.
- Salem Health and Keizer hospitals have a long-term plan to better serve the community.
- Plethora of in-home care.
- The Community Health Education Center (CHEC) at Salem Health—strong educational resource.
- Income eligibility is limiting. People with resources need case management help too.

Barriers identified by all forum participants:

- Isolated seniors might not be aware of health and community based services.
- Funding—never enough.
- Poor “hand-off” from one agency to another – i.e. in discharge from hospital to home, or hospital to nursing care – there are often issues with missed information, timing, and continued care.
- Poor pay, lack of caregiver training, small staffs, higher needs, and insurance regulations impact quality of care and seniors options.
- People are less informed about “preventive health options.”
- Not all community services and resources network well with others.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SUMMARY

Salem is a large enough city that a full range of services and health care providers are readily available to the senior community, and health care offerings are

continually expanding. Affordable and reliable services, and affordable clinics at locations throughout the community would help to meet the growing need for increased access.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN ACTION PLAN

1. Explore feasibility of creating a system of neighborhood clinics.
2. Explore creating a master list of a variety of types of service providers who have committed to making services easily accessible, senior-friendly, and affordable.



October Community Listening Session – Final Forum

The final forum was a Community Listening Session on October 17, 2018, and was designed to bring together the sentiments from previous sessions.

1. WHAT YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

When asked what people love about their community, the overarching response was that it is large enough to offer many services, but still small enough to retain a strong sense of community. People in the community were the first thing highlighted, because they are friendly, considerate, and diverse. Another major emphasis was on the variety of things to do, and public places were high on the list: the Public Library and Senior Center, public parks and other places to walk, farmers markets, arts and theater offerings, and lifelong learning opportunities through the local community college and universities. In addition to walking, the community is generally accessible—bike-friendly with public transportation for people with disabilities. The existence of numerous free and low-cost events is a favored characteristic.

Tree-lined streets and the comfortable regional climate are highly valued, as is the proximity to the mountains, the ocean, and other outdoor venues and recreational opportunities. A growing downtown district adds to the feeling of things to do, as does Salem as the location of the state capitol and state government offices.

As Salem has grown, and the senior population has increased, the City has responded with infrastructure enhancements, and the community has responded in a variety of ways to meet increasing service needs—particularly related to health care and housing.

The overall population growth has led to developing ways to improve traffic flow, a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Willamette River between the east and west sides of town, a revitalized downtown district, and a planned relocation of the Salem Police Department to a new building designed to withstand earthquakes.

Community-based care and health and wellness programs have expanded. Salem Health's expanding role as a comprehensive regional health care system that includes a Level II trauma center and emergency room, and smaller health clinics, including free clinics, all mean better access to health care. More home care agencies and options and better care options have replaced stereotypes of "old style nursing homes," and are now the norm.

Other community offerings also serve seniors: additional low income housing options, the Kroc Center, Marion/Polk food youth farm, and educational offerings through Salem-Keizer Public Schools' Career-Technical Education Center (CTEC), the Chemeketa Center for Business and Industry, and Center 50+.

As more people understand the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), people with disabilities feel more widely welcomed and valued in the community. In particular, the deaf and blind communities are generally better understood and embraced.

- Variety of activities and places
- Diversity
- Accessibility
- Large enough to have a wide variety of services, but small enough to have a strong sense of community
- Half hour rush hour—traffic gridlock
- Willamette University—Institute for Continued Learning
- Minto-Brown Island Park
- Salem as the State Capitol—inclusive state program
- Friendly
- Arts and theater (Elsinore Theater)
- Many places to walk
- People are considerate
- Senior centers
- Bike-friendly

- Neighborhood involvement
- Growing downtown district
- Access to skiing and surfing—outdoor recreation and spaces
- Free events
- Easy-to-live-in weather
- Marilyn Daily—Center 50+
- Salem's trees
- Cherry Lift
- Access to fresh fruits and veggies—Saturday Market
- Pushing back homelessness
- Salem Public Library
- Bush's Pasture Park
- Salem Art Show

What does Salem have today that we did not have 5 to 10 years ago?

- Pedestrian bridge
- Legalized marijuana
- UBER
- Revitalized downtown district
- Understanding and embracing deaf and blind community
- Variety of education available to all
- Broadway Commons—free clinic
- Salem Police Department—withstand emergency
- Low income housing additions



- Salem Health—emergency room and full-service clinic
- Good health and wellness programs
- Public Works improvements—traffic flow
- Kroc Center
- Home care agencies and options
- Community-based care
- Marion/Polk food youth farm
- Career Technical Education Center (CTEC)
- Chemeketa Business and Industry
- Center 50+
- Better care options—no “old-style” nursing homes

2. WHAT YOU NEED NOW AND IN THE FUTURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The discussion transitioned to the future, and participants focused on future living arrangements. The comments reflect a recognition of the range of potential living scenarios; from living alone in a one-story ranch style home, to “mother-in-law” units (accessible dwelling units) with a caregiver space, to retirement homes. Participants also noted potential modifications – like wider doorways, larger bathrooms, and grab bars near toilets – that would be important.

Regardless of the specific living arrangements, important features of where they live included living in a community where pedestrians are protected, where more people help each other, and where there are intergenerational programs.

As people talked about living arrangements, discussion naturally progressed to transportation, where affordability was a common theme. We know from the surveys that most people anticipate being mobile, either by driving themselves or riding with family and friends.

Alternatives to using a personal vehicle included “first mile – last mile,” where a person walks to the store, but needs affordable transportation home with groceries. Expanded bus service, with added evening and weekend service, and “hop-on” bikes that are free to use throughout community were also offered as alternatives.

- Creative outlets like the wood shop to learn something new
- Evening and weekend bus service

- Better wheelchair accessibility
- Affordable senior care
- Affordable house maintenance—for honey-do lists
- Driverless cars
- Having all needed services within a 5-mile radius
- Improved sidewalks and street lighting; for example, Four Corners—Dividing lines between city limits and outside city limits (“Who do we talk to?”)
- Contrasting berm color in parking lots
- Audio pedestrian signals (no bird calls)
- City to prune back vegetation to improve visibility of street signs and stop signs
- Bring Social Security office back by Salem-Keizer Transit Mall
- Affordable housing
- More WIFI hot spots
- Reduce downtown traffic congestion at rush hours by improving connectivity to West Salem (bridge issues)
- New bridge or expansion of existing bridges
- Local college program (student lives with older adult and provides assistance in exchange for free room)
- More accessible
- Commuter rail to Portland
- “Mother-in-law” room/suite and caregiver space



- Ranch-style house—all one level and by myself
- Bigger bathrooms and doors
- Public bathroom that is more comfortable
- Toilet grab bars
- Retirement home
- In a community where pedestrians are protected
- More people helping each other
- Intergenerational programs
- First mile – last mile affordable transportation
- Longer hours and more days of transportation (buses, etc.)
- “Hop-on” bikes
- Keep pricing affordable overall
- Rehabilitation needs to be increased (as we are aging)
- Affordable caregiving robots

3. WHAT WOULD ADD TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Finally, we focused the conversation on adding to the quality of life in the community. Regarding feeling safe outside, it is not surprising that sense of safety depended on the neighborhood. People who felt safe reported characteristics like having a list of neighbors’ phone numbers from National Night Out, having multiple generations living in the neighborhood, street lights, and using the “Next Door” app.

Those who did not feel safe reported that homelessness and mental health issues of many of those who are homeless contribute to the sense of being unsafe. They also reported the need for improved street lighting, the lack of a neighborhood watch program, and sidewalk disrepair as contributors to not feeling safe outside.

Pedestrian safety, especially additional education regarding stopping for pedestrians, would enhance safety. Police efforts to communicate crosswalk rules via the neighborhood e-mail system have been very effective, but additional education needs to occur.

- Addressing homelessness and associated mental health issues
- Expanded Neighborhood Watch programs

- Improved sidewalks and lighting
- List of neighbors' phone numbers from National Night Out
- Multi-aged neighborhoods
- Add street lights
- More use of "Next Door" app
- Front porch living
- Walk home at night
- Police in neighborhood
- Homes for the homeless
- Advocates—City employee cross-training
- More affordable and expanded public transportation
 - Advertise on buses
 - Use smaller buses
- Create a permanent open market at Salem-Keizer Transit Mall
- Create tree barriers in middle of four-lane roads—e.g. Commercial Street and Lancaster Drive—helps slow traffic down and creates a more pedestrian-friendly crossing
- Electric transportation
- Create aging-in-place villages
- Virtual Villages to engage community volunteers
- Work with Salem/Keizer School District (Two separate bus systems cost a lot of money. Why can't Cherriots provide student transportation? Combine monies. Some would pay \$25.00 a month for a bus pass.)
- Uber taking cash if passenger has no credit card
- Uber having vans or SUV available on weekends when buses don't operate
- Educate drivers—stop for pedestrians
- More bike routes and connectivity
- Police efforts to communicate crosswalk rules have been very effective (via the neighborhood e-mail system)
- Open minds



Salem's Livability

During public forums and surveys, we did not ask participants about their income or current financial status. Part of the reason is that we did not want to discourage participation because people felt uncomfortable in responding. But the other part of it is that, to truly be a city for all ages, this information should not matter. In a city for all ages, age, ability, and socioeconomic status should not be determining factors in whether people are able to live their best lives.

The clear top priority that contributed to livability was **connections to the community**. Community connections led all comments above and beyond even housing and transportation. Affordability and accessibility were also consistently identified as factors that either promote or restrict the ability of seniors to actively engage.

- Social Participation: lifelong learning was a high priority, as was participating in community events.
- Civic Engagement and Volunteerism: seniors want to be active and engaged.
- Housing: remaining in one's home and neighborhood was a clear priority, as was living near transportation and services.
- Transportation: the ability to move freely around the community without the use of a personal vehicle, and accessibility and affordability dominated the conversation.

In the interest of efficiency, providing programs and services for the majority of the community tends to dominate community conversations and decision-making. Seniors, being one of a number of minority sub-communities, are often an afterthought. In a community for all ages, agencies and organizations would make the needs and interests of seniors integral to event and service planning and implementation.

The AARP Public Policy Institute developed a Livability Index that yields an overall livability score, as well as a score for each of seven major livability categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. Individual neighborhoods within the city received livability scores that contribute to Salem's overall Livability Index.

Salem's livability is rated in the average range for all seven categories. The engagement, transportation, environment, and neighborhood categories scored at the higher end of the average range, and opportunity, health, and housing scores placed Salem in the middle of the average range.

The AARP Index reaffirms what we learned through our own assessment process. We do not know where in Salem all of our forum participants live, or where all of our survey participants live. It is significant, though, that there is consistency between several sources of assessment information.

A livable community is one that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to age in place; and foster residents' engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life.

– The Policy Book: AARP Public Policies



**What Does A City
for All Ages
Look Like To You?**

