

Salem Activities: Child-Friendly Cities Action Update

UNICEF has developed a child-friendly city framework and toolkit to assist national, state, and local governments in measuring the child friendliness of cities. Child-friendly cities ensure youth have access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation, can walk safely in the city, have places to meet and play, can express their opinions about the City they experience and envision, can participate in cultural and social events, and can contribute to the decisions about their city.

In its direction to staff, the September 25, 2017 City Council Resolution defined the focus of the child friendly initiative as a focus on (1) the role of children in the health of our community, economy, society and the environment, and recognizing the (2) many organizations here who are actively working to improve child health, mental health, and their growth and development. There is also an interest in considering (3) the impact of children of our policies, planning, programs and activities.

Recommendation

No additional action is recommended at this time. Staff will continue existing City polices, programs and practices, which meet the broad intent of the UNICEF framework. If more activity or collaboration with partners in this arena is desired, a shift in responsibilities of existing staff from current priorities would be required, reducing available staff time and resources for other initiatives.

UNICEF Child-Friendly City Framework

Specifically, the City Council resolution directed staff to develop implementation criteria and standards, based on the UNICEF Child Friendly City Toolkit and framework¹. UNICEF's framework is extensive, includes **four foundational principles and a nine step process for building a child friendly city**, and it is intended to benefit from and be informed by a national structure through which local governments can seek accreditation.

Four Foundational Principles These four foundational principles are drawn from the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1. *Non-discrimination*. Salem follows all federal, state and local law pertaining to non-discrimination. The City's policy to "eliminate discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, marital status, familiar status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identify and source of income" is articulated in Salem Revised Code Chapter 97 on Human Rights.
2. *Best interests*, or putting children first. For Salem, the mission, vision, and values of the recently adopted Strategic Plan, gives staff the responsibility or lens through which to evaluate and consider the impact of decisions, at a high-level, on current and future generations as solutions, programs, and plans are

¹ http://childfriendlycities.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/pdf/BuildingCFC_AFrameworkforaction_en.pdf

developed. The City Council has adopted a vision for Salem to be a safe and livable capital city with a sustainable economy and environment that is **open to all** with the intent to **enrich the lives of its present and future residents**. In future reporting to the community on the Strategic Plan, envisioned as an annual activity, could include activity with a specific benefit to children in our community.

3. *Right to life and maximum development* including physical, mental, spiritual, moral, physiological and social development. Salem's current programs, policies and planning activities serving children are listed later in this document under the "*Salem Child-Friendly Activities, Programs and Planning*".
4. *Listening to children and respecting their views* through active participation and engagement on matters affecting them. In Salem, youth participation occurs in the Library Teen Advisory Board and is required on the Human Rights Commission.

Salem Child-Friendly Activities, Programs and Planning

As the City Council considers its annual Policy Agenda, staff prepared a summary of policies, planning, programs and activities in which the City directly engages children and youth directly in our work, and works in partnership with services, organizations, businesses, schools and the broader community to achieve the best possible outcomes for Salem's children.

Youth benefit from many of the activities the City engages in that may not be directly focused on outcomes for youth. This list of activities provides a general summary of activities undertaken by the City that support youth.

Children and youth play, explore and dream in our community's parks and neighborhoods. They use our sidewalks and streets to connect with each other, their schools, and other enriching activities. The City also works in partnership with neighborhoods and many organizations in our community actively working to improve child health, mental health, and their growth and development. There are four thematic qualities to the City's activities, policies, programs and planning efforts.

Responsive, neighborhood driven

- Matching grants to Neighborhood Associations from Salem Parks Improvement Fund
- Neighborhood Partnership Program creates neighborhood-directed focus on community building, usually with a kid lens – like Community and Partners of East Salem (CAPES) Day of Play, Edgewater Walking Tours
- Neighborhood-requested radar to raise awareness of speeds, and phone line to report unsafe traffic locations in neighborhoods

Community programs and partnerships

- With School District for parks properties, basketball scheduling, Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC), and school-based afterschool middle and high school programs

- Halloween Dress Rehearsal, Police and Fire participate in other community-sponsored activities throughout year
- National Night Out
- Bike helmet giveaways
- Life jacket stations
- Social Service funding (General Fund allocations to support organizations providing basic needs/emergency services; and support for affordable housing through HOME allocations)
- Staff directly fund child-serving organizations through our Charitable Giving campaign

Leadership development, career readiness

- Participation in Boards and Commissions, and task forces (required for Human Rights Commission, Library Teen Advisory Board)
- Volunteer opportunities
- Internships
- Youth development, leadership including ILEAD Youth Leadership Summit, Teen Action Team Service Leadership Clubs, mini grants allocation to service leadership community programs, and CAREcorps summer day camp
- Service learning
- Speakers at school-related events

Direct services and spaces

- Programs at:
 - Salem Public Library (such as Summer Reading Club, Discovery Room, Teen Scene, Screens Free Challenge, Spanish Story Time, technology exploration, etc.),
 - Through Recreation Services, in Parks, and
 - Through Youth Development Services (One Thousand Soles and its Shoe Room)
- Through the Capital Improvement Plan, make infrastructure investments (streets, sidewalks, restrooms, parks, pedestrian/bicycle bridges and dedicated pathways)
- Annual budget for roadway, sidewalk maintenance (Safe Routes to School)
- Pedestrian crossings improvements and enforcement
- Bicycle infrastructure Plan: Central Salem Area Mobility Study; Bike/Walk Salem; focused area studies such as Commercial Vista Transportation Growth Management-funded plan for intersection
- Police Department's Crime Prevention unit, School Resource Officers, family room for victims of crime
- Sidewalk investments, pedestrian crossings, bicycle infrastructure investments, Maple Greenway
- In Land use, we require play areas for large multi-family developments, require pedestrian connections to commercial/retail uses and well connected street/sidewalk layouts for new subdivisions, and bicycle parking for development
 - Require play areas in large multi-family developments

- Require pedestrian connection from public sidewalk to door for commercial/retail uses
- Require well-connected street and sidewalk layout in all new subdivisions for convenient walking distances for all ages
- Require bicycle parking for all development, except single family
- Require/promote pedestrian oriented development in certain areas of town (more inviting for all ages to walk)
- Require construction of connections (sidewalks, paths, etc.) to nearby schools

Nine Steps Process To Build a Child Friendly City

To build a child friendly City, UNICEF offers nine steps for a local governance setting. In some countries, to receive accreditation as a child-friendly city, local governments develop a situation assessment in areas such as child health, protection and safety, culture, and participation; build an action plan; staff and fund implementation; and report on progress.

However, UNICEF also recognizes involvement of children actively in a community are most likely to occur in programs, policies and activities at the local or neighborhood level, citing involvement of children in developing play facilities and in traffic and transportation projects.

The nine steps are:

1. Children's participation – promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them, listening to their views and taking them into consideration in the decision-making process.
2. A child friendly legal framework – ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures consistently promote and protect the rights of all children.
3. A city-wide Children's Rights Strategy – developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City with real and achievable targets in relations to the full range of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights for children.
4. A Children's Rights Unit – developing a permanent structure in local government to ensure priority consideration of children's perspective.
5. Child impact assessment and evaluation – ensuring a systematic process to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children.
6. A children's budget – ensuring adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children.
7. A regular State of the City's Children report – ensuring sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights.
8. Making children's rights known – ensuring awareness of children's rights among adults and children.
9. Independent advocacy for children – supporting non-governmental organizations and developing independent human rights institutions.