

## Staff Report

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, City Manager  
**FROM:** Center 50+ Advisory Commission

**SUBJECT:**

Center 50+ Advisory Commission Age-Friendly Initiative Update June 2018.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

**ISSUE:**

The Center 50+ Advisory Commission launched the Age-Friendly Initiative Assessment process in September 2017.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Information only.

**SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:**

The World Health Organization (WHO) conceived the idea of Age-Friendly Communities 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.

The WHO has identified eight domains of livability that influence the quality of life for all residents. These are:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation

- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Community Support and Health Services

The Age-Friendly Assessment Team is comprised of a diverse make-up including local seniors, executives from non-profit providers, policy makers, funding agencies, and County, City and State representatives and academia.

Project updates, calendar, and surveys can be found at:  
<https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/age-friendly-initiative.aspx>

## **FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

Salem is one of Oregon's largest cities and has an ever increasing older adult population. The population of those age 65 and older saw an increase of nearly 3 percent from 2010 to 2015, and now represent 16.4 percent of the total population. With 7,100 people turning 65 each day in the United States we can conclude we will also see a continued annual increase of those aged 65 and older in Salem for many years to come.

Following is a summary of Assessment Team activities since September 2017.

### **September**

The launch party at Broadway Theater on September 19, 2017, involved over 100 community members and included live polling and viewing of the documentary *Old*.

### **November: Transportation**

The Transportation Public Forum on November 8, 2017, included 67 community participants and involved a panel discussion of organizations involved in transportation and pedestrian connectivity options.

**Panel:** City of Salem, Salem/Keizer Transit, Marion County, Safe Routes to Schools, and Lyft

### **Identified Barriers**

- Bus routes and schedule (no weekend or night service)
- Advanced technology difficult to navigate
- Sidewalks (condition and location)
- Bus shelters (location-not all accessible)

**Follow up Activities:**

- Online Transportation Survey:  
<https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/age-friendly-initiative.aspx>
- Bus Rider Experience Survey
- Volunteer led neighborhood walkability assessments
- One-on-one community member interviews

**Next Step:**

The group will continue to gather more information for the remainder of the evaluation process with the primary goal of assessing: How does the community support people moving freely around Salem to connect to goods and services without the reliance on personal automobiles?

**January: Social Participation**

The Social Participation Public Forum on January 17, 2018, included 62 community participants and involved a panel discussion of organizations helping seniors connect socially. Following their discussion each agency staffed an information table and hosted a spaghetti dinner.

**Panel:** 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.

**Identified Barriers:**

- Health and physical issues
- Lifelong social phobias
- Lack of inclusion at events because of physical inaccessibility, parking, or transportation issues

**Follow up Activities:**

- Social Participation Survey
- One-on-one community member interviews

**Next Step:** The group will continue to gather more information for the remainder of the evaluation process with the primary goal of assessing: How does the community engage older adults in social activities? Why do some older adults not participate in social opportunities-what are the barriers to full social inclusion?

**February: Communication and Information (Technology)**

The Communication and Information Public Forum on February 21, 2018 from 2 to 4 p.m. involved agencies discussing their communication methods and techniques used to better communicate with the older adult population. Agencies provided a list of barriers to good communication and how they are addressing these barriers. The assessment team held a technology fair open to the public to both teach and listen.

**Panel:** Northwest Senior and Disability Services, 211, Marion County Emergency Management.

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**Identified Barriers:**

- Newspapers getting smaller, going to more internet
- Not all seniors have access to computers
- Print materials may meet ADA but still not easy to read
- Resources being placed on internet for efficiency, however loses human touch

**Follow up:** Communication survey, one-on-one community member interviews.

**March: Housing**

The Housing Public Forum on March 21, 2018, included 54 community participants and involved a panel discussion of organizations helping seniors connect to housing or identify service options which support seniors remaining in their homes. Following the discussion, each agency staffed an information table and answered additional questions.

**Panel:** Breezy Aguirre, Coordinated Entry Specialist ARCHES Project; Cassandra Hutchinson, NWSDS; Bandana Shrestha, AARP; and Bryan Colbourne, City of Salem.

**Identified barriers:**

- Apartment Complexes-may not be accessible, no elevators
- Fear retaliation from landlords if they ask for improvements or accommodations
- No response from landlords
- Not enough housing
- Resource navigation can be confusing and overwhelming
- Home may be too big to maintain, but can't afford current market pricing
- Not enough advocates
- Most services are reactive, not proactive

**Follow up activities:**

- On-line Housing Survey
- One-on-one community member interviews

**Next Steps:**

The group will continue to gather more information for the remainder of the evaluation process with the primary goal of assessing: What types of houses are older adults living in? Are people prepared when it becomes desirable or necessary to move? What types of housing do older people move to; what are their options? How are private developers and Community Development working to create a livable community? What barriers prevent people from accessing the type of housing they need or desire? What incentives and support are needed?

**April: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

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 was assessing Salem in the areas of clean environment, green spaces and walkways, appropriate outdoor seating, quality of pavement maintenance, and road design relative to pedestrian safety. Following the panel presentations, the attendees asked questions and identified the positives and negatives of Salem's outdoor spaces and public buildings.

**Panel:** Sheri Wahgren, City of Salem Downtown Revitalization Manager; Patricia Ferrell, Parks Planning and Resources Manager; and Tonya Johnson, Family & Community Health Faculty/OSU Extension Service, Marion County.

**Identified Barriers:**

- Parking at parks and public buildings is limited
- Park equipment is made for children
- Perception that parks may not be safe - crime, accessibility, dark, unpopulated "scary" little parks
- Not enough public toilets
- Trails to the park prevent mobility - pavement issues, lack of adjoining sidewalks for walkers
- 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

**Next Steps:**

The group will utilize several survey tools to ask community members: How well do Salem parks / outdoor spaces and buildings commonly used by the public contribute to livability for seniors and people of all ages? What makes a place age-friendly?

**May: Civic Engagement, Volunteerism, and Work After 50**

The domain of Community Engagement, Volunteerism, and Work After 50 forum was held on May 16, 2018, and included 56 participants. The domain involved a panel discussion from individuals and organizations who work to encourage civic engagement throughout Salem.

**Panel:** County Commissioner Janet Carlson; City of Salem Human Rights and Relations Coordinator Gretchen Bennett; City of Salem Public Information Manager Kenny Larson; President of Salem City Club Alan Pollock; AARP Volunteer Dr. Carlos Romo; Goodwill Industries Educational Specialist Donna Ames; Mid-Willamette Volunteer Manager's Association President Ashley Erb; and Marion Polk Food Share Volunteer Manager Allen Pfeiffer.

**Identified Barriers:**

- Physical barriers-change in physical stamina
- Transportation

- Behind in technology
- Some lack job search skills - things have changed in resumes, interviews, etc.
- Feel uncomfortable talking about disability
- Age discrimination
- Great skills but can't figure out where they fit
- Caregiver responsibilities interfere with work
- Volunteering can be expensive-not all people have time or resources
- Some organizations not prepared to manage volunteers

**Next Steps:**

The assessment team will be attending local fairs, festivals, and public areas to conduct surveys. The group will also partner with Goodwill Industries to hold an educational event on working after 50. During this event the guests will also provide feedback on some of the barriers to finding fulfilling and practical work as a senior.

Center 50+ Manager, Marilyn Daily, will provide the Mayor and City Council with an Age-Friendly Salem progress report again in October.

**Attachments:**

1. None