



Salem for All Ages: An age-friendly action plan

Prepared by the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging
Gerontology Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston

In partnership with The City of Salem

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Acknowledgements

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Council on Aging, St. Patrick's Day Lunch
Peter Vanderwarker, Peabody Essex Museum
Jared Charney, Haunted Happenings' Medusa
City of Salem, Rendering of Mayor Jean Levesque Community Life Center
Salem State University, Sullivan Building



CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Kimberley Driscoll
Mayor

The priorities represented by the Age-Friendly designation are reflective of Salem's values as a whole. The goals of a livable, safe, and vibrant city serve to lift up all our residents, no matter their age or ability.

The Salem For All Ages Action Plan focuses on supportive community and health services for all, civic engagement and participation, employment and volunteer opportunities, respect and social inclusion, appropriate housing in a range of affordability, vibrant outdoor spaces and public places, and effective, sensible transportation options.

These are the elements of a working Salem for all ages, but they also provide the roadmap toward one that is especially prepared for the changing demographics that we clearly see in our community's future. While one out of every five Salem residents are over the age of 60 today, that figure is expected to climb to one in four by 2030, increasing from around 8,000 individuals today to as many as 12,000 people in fourteen years. Many of these individuals are moving to Salem, attracted by our cultural and historic amenities, our active waterfront and downtown, our walkability, and our numerous community, social, and health care service providers. Many more, however, are already living here in Salem today. They are the population of rising seniors who are mobile, active, and love the community where they live. They want to age in place – perhaps not in the exact house, condo, or apartment where they are living today, but definitely right here in Salem.

Our senior population and those who will become seniors over the coming decades are a dynamic group. They want to be active, civically engaged, and to have their voices heard. This action plan and accompanying data report are a culmination of a public process over a year that included public meetings, surveys, and focus groups. It involved community stakeholders, local organizations and non-profits, neighborhood groups, service providers, businesses, residents, and elected officials. It sought as many perspectives as practical, so that the recommendations it puts forth can be as diverse and as forward-looking as the people who live here.

In Salem we are thoughtful about how we approach the future. Great cities do not happen by accident. They take careful planning, public input, and meaningful action. I am so pleased to present the Salem for All Ages Action Plan because I believe it meets all those standards. And because I believe it will truly make Salem an even greater City for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberley Driscoll".

Kimberley Driscoll
Mayor City of Salem

Salem for All Ages: An age-friendly action plan

In Partnership with the
City of Salem

October 2016

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Background

Salem is a city rich in history, culture, and natural amenities. Salem was founded in 1626 and is named from the Hebrew word meaning "Peace". The city is situated on the Massachusetts sea coast and occupies approximately eight square miles. It is the shire city of Essex County and has a population of approximately 41,000 people. Salem is most famous for the Witch Trials of 1692, its rich maritime history and its extraordinary architectural and historic treasures. The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), founded in 1799, is one of the oldest continuously operating museums in the United States. Upon completion of an upcoming expansion project to be finished in 2019, PEM will rank in the top 10 North American art museums in terms of gallery space, operating budget, and endowment. Salem residents enjoy free admission to PEM and many other historic and cultural sites. More than 1 million tourists from all around the world visit Salem annually.

Salem offers other amenities as well, including outstanding healthcare services, benefits available through Salem State University, and ready access to the City of Boston. North Shore Medical Center (NSMC) is the North Shore's largest healthcare provider. For the last five years in a row NSMC has been ranked a top regional hospital by US News and World Report. As a member of Partners Healthcare, NSMC provides patients with access to some of the most talented specialists in the world through clinical collaborations. The City of Salem is also home to Salem State University, which was founded in 1854 as Salem Normal School. Its purpose then was to prepare young women as teachers and was only the fourth such institution in Massachusetts and the tenth in America. Today the University offers close to 40 academic programs and majors and annually serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education students. The City of Salem and Salem State University have a long standing and mutually beneficial partnership that continues to thrive to this day. Residents of Salem enjoy the art, cultural, and educational opportunities that the University has to offer. Salem is a commuter city, approximately 26 miles from Boston. Boston is only a short car, commuter rail, bus or Salem Ferry trip away, making Salem a popular place to both live and work.

Both tourists and residents enjoy Salem's mix of important historic sites, higher education, regional medical services, and a walkable vibrant downtown with more than 60 restaurants, cafés, and coffee shops. Salem is a diverse and active community that is fast becoming home to a growing population of "empty nesters" and long-time residents who want to age in place and enjoy all this remarkable historic waterfront city has to offer.

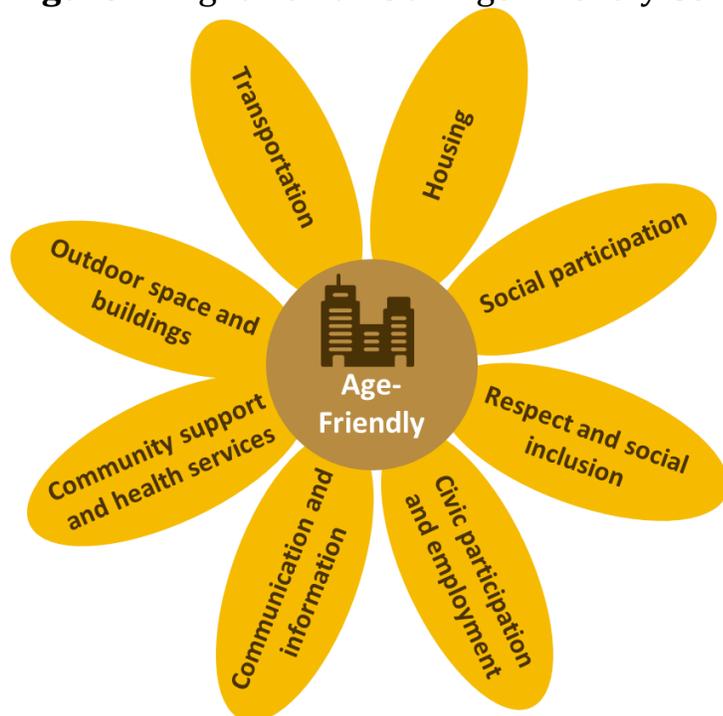
The City of Salem is also dedicated to being an ideal place for people of all ages and abilities to live, work, learn and play. Towards this goal the City applied, and was accepted, to the World Health Organization's Network of Age-Friendly Communities in 2015. Almost entirely directed by passionate resident leaders from Salem and with the support and enthusiasm of Mayor Driscoll and participating City Departments, a series of activities was undertaken to assess the needs of Salem's older adult population. In June 2016, the City of Salem invited collaboration from the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging in the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston to guide the development of

an Age-Friendly action plan. The contents of these efforts, the action plan, are described in detail in this report.

The Salem’s Age-Friendly Initiative, *Salem for All Ages*, builds on concepts developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one in which people participate, are connected, remain healthy and active, and feel they belong—no matter their age. Through planning, taking action, and evaluating progress, communities all over the world are taking steps to improve their social and physical environments as a strategy for promoting health and well-being throughout the life course. The Age-Friendly model includes a conceptual framework (domains) for describing areas for communities to focus on. It also lays out a process intended to ensure repeated consultation with the community, collective reflection, action and evaluation. As well, the WHO hosts an Age-Friendly network, established in 2010 as a means of facilitating the exchange of information among communities. This network currently includes 302 cities and communities in 33 countries, including Salem (<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/who-network/>).

Domains. The Age-Friendly framework includes eight domains of community life that intersect with livability, accessibility, and the ability to thrive within the community. Within each domain, elements are identified by communities that are relevant to affordability, appropriateness, and accessibility (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Eight Domains an Age-Friendly Community

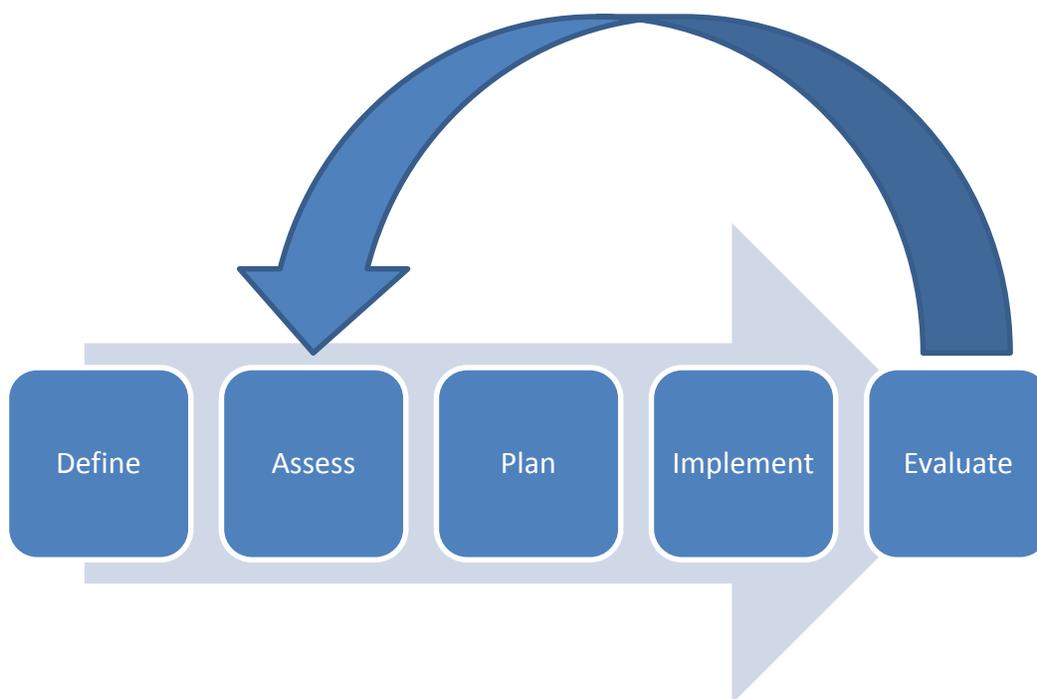


Source: Sandra Harris, *Design For Aging Committee, BHA*

Process. The WHO describes five components of an age-friendly initiative, and indicates that these components will be pursued sequentially over a period of five years. These steps

involve assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating processes; at the end of each five-year cycle a new phase begins, during which new goals are set, innovations put in place, and progress evaluated (see **Figure 2** below). Briefly, in step one local principles are defined in conjunction with building partnerships, creating a vision, and recruiting community members for involvement. Through these efforts, goals of the initiative are prioritized. In Salem, this step has been in process since joining the network in 2015. In taking a grass-roots approach to achieving early success, Salem will build momentum for an ongoing commitment to effecting change that will make Salem an age-friendly place to live. Step two involves generating a needs assessment, focusing on environmental and population-based features that reflect age-friendliness, as well as those that pose a challenge to this goal. This step has been completed and is described in the current report. The third step includes developing an Action Plan, which may be thought of as a “road map” to define programs and interventions that will be pursued in the process of becoming an Age-Friendly community. This third step has also been completed and is described in the current report. The final steps involve implementing promising interventions, broadly speaking; these may include programs (such as evidence-based health promotion activities) as well as environmental modifications (such as expanding traffic-calming features at key intersections). As programs and modifications are put in place, evaluations focus on assessing outcomes (e.g., were the proposed modifications implemented appropriately?) as well as impacts (that is, have well-being, health, and quality of life been improved by the improvements put in place?)

Figure 2. Process of Developing an Age-Friendly Community



The description of age-friendly features, and the experiences of communities throughout the world that are using the Framework, make clear that each community will conceptualize this effort in a somewhat unique way. Local conceptualizations will shape the initiatives, programs, and partnerships put in place; they will also shape the research and measurement used in support of the effort. Ultimately, the Age-Friendly Framework requires that environmental features are defined and evaluated relative to the characteristics and resources of residents actually living in the community. An initial task of any community's effort is therefore to identify elements that residents feel are "age-friendly."

The contents of this report are informed by results of a community needs assessment effort taken up by the City of Salem, the results of which can be found in a separate document. Elements of this needs assessment include a demographic profile of Salem, a series of 3 focus groups and a systematic review of existing documents in Salem, all of which were conducted by researchers at the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging within the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston. In addition, the results of a community survey are included in this additional document, a survey that was administered by community organizers and was completed by over 400 residents age 50 or older.

This *Salem for All Ages* Action Plan is organized by each of the eight domains. Within each domain, a vision statement for the future of an Age-Friendly Salem is described followed by a series of recommendations and corresponding specific action steps to be taken are displayed.

Action Plan

The Action Plan was developed by a Leadership Team comprised of the Mayor of Salem, the Council on Aging Director, the Superintendent of Park, Recreation and Community Service, and two resident leaders in coordination with researchers at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Drawing on results of the needs assessment efforts, this group generated and refined a list of action items to be taken on by the *Salem for All Ages* initiative. These action items are outlined below and categorized under broader recommendations for how Salem can become a more Age-Friendly Community.

Age-Friendly Salem: Housing

Our Vision

In order for adults to remain living in their communities as they age, housing must be available, affordable, and designed to accommodate a range of physical abilities. Moreover, homeowners must be able to adequately maintain and repair their homes in order to stay in them safely. We envision a city that provides a continuum of safe, affordable and healthy housing options that provide the services and accessible design necessary to allow residents, regardless of income or housing type, to age in place.

Current Condition

A July 2015 report prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), *Salem Housing Needs and Analysis Report*¹, provides data on current housing stock, projects housing needs, and examines the critical issue of cost burden for residents associated with housing. In this Report, it is stated that, “The rate of household growth is projected to be higher than population growth due to continued declines in average household size, driven largely by the increasing number of senior households who are much more likely to have only one or two people per household.” According to the community survey, 83% of respondents reported owning their place of residence and 12% reported renting. An additional 5% reported living in someone else’s residence or an “other” type of arrangement.

The Salem Housing Authority manages a total of 465 public housing units designated for elderly/disabled residents. In addition, Salem has three assisted living facilities and two skilled nursing facilities. The provision of supportive services, including meals and laundry, in one of the largest public senior housing buildings in Salem has been turned over to the North Shore Elder Services agency.

According to the MAPC report, Salem’s count of subsidized housing inventory is almost 13%, compared to the 10% affordable housing target put in place by the Commonwealth. However, the deed restrictions on many units are set to expire, and if they do, Salem would fall below the 10% subsidized housing inventory (SHI) target. Over the next five years, the city stands to lose up to 777 affordable units due to expiring deed-restrictions. Several of the developments set to expire are primarily occupied by elderly adults. There is a cause for concern if the current number of affordable housing units drops in years to come when clearly there already is a lack of affordable options.

Currently there are approximately 872 individuals on a waitlist for affordable senior housing through the Housing Authority. Approximately 400 of these applicants are Salem residents. Though waiting times vary, the wait time for Salem Resident applicants is about one year or more. The conversion of rental units to condominiums poses another threat to the availability of affordable housing. As reported by the MAPC, “The conversion of a residential unit to a condominium signals the removal of rental units from the market based on the assumption that condominiums are typically owner-occupied and not leased to those in the rental market.” This type of redevelopment burdens the affordable housing market as rental units are absorbed into the higher-end of the housing market.”

In addition to issues of housing development, there are concerns about home maintenance, repair and a strong desire to age in place. Eight-nine percent of survey respondents reported that it is “extremely important” for them to be able to live independently in their own home as they age and 54% reported that it is “extremely important” for them to remain living in

¹ Salem Housing Needs and Demand Analysis. prepared for the City of Salem Department of Planning and Community Development by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), July 2015
<http://www.salem.com/sites/salemma/files/uploads/salemhousingneeds.pdf>

Salem as they age. That being said, only 15% of survey respondents reported that their home is “accessible such that it will be possible for [them] to stay there as [they] age”, 56% reported that their home may need minor renovations and 30% reported that their home would need major renovations in order for the home to be appropriate for them to remain living there as they age. This need for home renovations or repair is echoed by the finding that the community services deemed most important to survey respondents included contractors for major home repair (89%) and affordable handyman-type services (89%).

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Create supports to assist seniors with the maintenance of their homes to enable aging in place	
a. Develop and promote programs designed to support older adults with raking leaves, seasonal removal of air conditioning units, snow shoveling or other outdoor maintenance tasks	b. Evaluate outcomes of the housing-with-supports model being undertaken by North Shore Elder Services at one public senior housing development in Salem. If successful, consider opportunities to replicate this model at other housing complexes
c. In order to streamline the permitting process for home modifications needed by seniors, create a separate “express permit line” for home modification permits	d. Generate, and make public, a list of local contractors or persons looking for work doing small jobs to provide low-cost home repair (repairing a leaky faucet, installing a ceiling fan or new toilet) or modification services (grab bars, ramps etc.) to seniors in Salem
e. Generate a Master Plan for the maintenance of all Salem Housing Authority-operated units to ensure quality and up-to-code living environments	f. Evaluate funding opportunities for the expansion of the COA’s existing medical equipment loan program to include larger items like beds or chair-lifts
g. Connect persons looking for work doing small jobs to seniors for the purpose of providing low-cost home repair (repairing a leaky faucet, installing a ceiling fan or new toilet) or modification services (grab bars, ramps etc.) to seniors in Salem	

2. Incentivize and promote development of housing that appeals to Salem seniors wishing to age in place, and allows them to remain in Salem as they age

<p>a. Promote and encourage developers to use universal design in newly proposed housing units</p>	<p>b. In order to accurately understand the housing options available to those Salem seniors who wish to downsize, commission a study of all types of housing units (public, private and subsidized) to establish a comprehensive need for housing, with a particular emphasis on middle-income Salem residents</p>
<p>c. Research options for home-sharing models for intergenerational housing but also sharing among adults age 50+</p>	<p>d. In order to reduce waitlist time and length, connect with neighboring communities to evaluate the concept of a regionally-shared-waitlist for housing</p>
<p>e. Advocate for the continuation of the deed restrictions in order to maintain a high volume of subsidized housing in Salem</p>	<p>f. Investigate, and consider revising, the zoning laws in Salem to determine regulations around the construction of accessory apartments as an alternative housing option for seniors. Review zoning laws in other communities for feasible models</p>

Age-Friendly Salem: Transportation

Our Vision

Accessible and affordable transportation options are necessary for active aging. When transport is available and adapted to the needs of seniors, both in terms of access and destination, it enhances mobility and facilitates social participation and a sense of belonging to one’s community. Our vision for the City of Salem includes coordinated intra-city travel options for people of all ages and public transportation that is accessible to people of all abilities.

Current Condition

Although 81% of survey respondents reported driving as their primary mode of transport, there are many alternative options available to Salem residents. Salem is fortunate to be connected to the MBTA commuter rail train, bus and paratransit services. There is also seasonal ferry service to downtown Boston available from Salem, for a discounted rate to seniors, and a free trolley service for all Salem residents to downtown Salem available June through September. The Council On Aging (COA) and the North Shore Elder Services agency (NSES) provide transportation to medical appointments and limited transportation to grocery stores. Taxi services and ride-sharing services (e.g., Uber and Lyft) are also available in Salem.

Although there are many transportation options in Salem, accessibility of these services could create barriers to use for residents of Salem who have mobility impairments or financial constraints. For example, many bus stops do not have benches and residents often lack information about senior rates. To address some of these issues, Salem has a nationally-recognized *Complete Streets* policy and has committed to implementing this policy in its programs and roadway projects to maintain safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians alike. It is important to note that Salem is considered a walkable city. All action items related to walkability and bicycle transport are addressed in the Outdoor Spaces & Building section of this action plan.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Investigate ways of improving the use of existing intra-city transportation options in Salem

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| <p>a. Commission a feasibility study of connecting the existing intra-city transportation options (COA van service, seasonal trolley service, SSU shuttle and school busses) together to identify gaps in service and streamline access to the amenities of living in Salem. This study should include examples of other communities' systems, like the Lexpress in Lexington, MA²</p> | <p>b. Evaluate ways in which taxis in Salem can become more affordable and accessible to seniors in Salem. For example, Salem could consider expanding the taxi voucher program in order to serve a wider proportion of Salem's older residents</p> |
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² <http://www.lexingtonma.gov/lexpress>

2. Improve access to public transportation options available in Salem

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| a. Ensure that benches are available at all bus stops throughout the City | b. Make signage with cost information, including discounted senior rates, visible to riders at all bus stops throughout the City |
| c. Review all information outlets regarding public transport in Salem to identify that all necessary information is available in both English and Spanish | |

3. Expand senior transportation options to include travel to cultural and social events in addition to medical appointments, grocery stores and the COA

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| a. Commission a feasibility study to examine the expansion of the existing trolley system to run year-round | b. Convene a series of informational events about accessing alternative transportation options like ride-sharing services (e.g., Uber or Lyft), obtaining discounted Charlie cards, and existing volunteer driver programs |
| c. In order to fill existing gaps in senior transportation options provided by the COA, develop a relationship between the COA and a ride-sharing service to arrange additional transportation availability for seniors | d. Investigate the feasibility of a volunteer car-sharing program such as Génération Mobilité in France ³ . A program such as this could organize car sharing between seniors who no longer use their car very much and students who may be living in Salem without a vehicle |

4. Increase availability of transportation options to and from medical appointments

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| a. Establish a relationship with local health service providers, including home health agencies and hospitals, to identify points of possible collaboration around transportation for medical care | e. Investigate liability requirements of existing senior transportation options to determine loopholes for door-through-door pick up to and from local hospitals |
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³ <http://www.age-platform.eu/good-practice/intergenerational-car-sharing-france>

5. Promote driver safety for seniors.

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| a. Communicate information about resources for driver education and refresher options available to seniors in Salem. For example, the COA could host sessions in their computer lab to assist residents with completing the AAA Roadwise Course ⁴ or the MA RMV Mature Driver Links course ⁵ | b. Host additional CarFit ⁶ events for Salem seniors City-wide to have their vehicles reviewed for “fit” |
| c. Invest in larger signage on streets and at major intersections | d. Assess the progress and future work of the Salem Complete Streets Initiative started in 2014 |

Age-Friendly Salem: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Our Vision

Salem’s natural beauty is recognized as a strength of the City by many residents. Nestled on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean and home to some of the most notable historic places in America, outdoor spaces and buildings are key amenities for residents of all ages. As a vision for the future of an Age-Friendly Salem, creating more opportunities for seniors to engage in activities in outdoor spaces and parks as well as improving accessibility to public buildings are goals of the *Salem for All Ages* initiative.

Current Condition

Salem is home to 45 parks and playgrounds some of which include access to the Atlantic Ocean. The most recent park and recreation Master Plan in Salem has made maintaining and updating these parks a priority and steps are being taken toward this goal. For example, lighting has been transitioned to LED and the availability of benches and outdoor seating is being improved through this plan. Results of the document review and Age-Friendly Salem survey also highlight the advantages of ample outdoor amenities in Salem. Most Salem senior residents engage with outdoor spaces. For example, 91% of the Age-Friendly Salem survey respondents report that they regularly engage in physical activity like walking more than once per month. Moreover, when asked, “If you were considering a move to a new home during your retirement, which of the following factors would impact your decision?” the number one factor selected was the ability to walk to stores or parks (55%). In September 2014 WalkBoston conducted a “walk-audit” of the downtown district of Salem and in 2015

⁴ www.roadwisedriver.aaa.com/ma

⁵ <http://www.massrmv.com/rmv/seniors/links.htm>

⁶ <http://www.bidmc.org/Centers-and-Departments/Departments/Neurology/Cognitive-Neurology/Drivewise.aspx>

a senior transportation study was conducted by the Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC) and Mass in Motion. Using www.walkscore.com, this study assigned Salem a score of 63 which is considered “somewhat walkable” and indicates that only some errands can be accomplished on foot. Specifically, this study indicates the most walkable parts of Salem include the downtown area, Federal Street and Salem Neck. Interestingly, according to the Tufts Health Plan Foundation’s Healthy Aging Community Profile, Salem scored a 98% on walkability for seniors compared to a statewide score of 52%⁷. These differences may highlight the variability in walkability across different areas of Salem.

When asked how important it is to have natural areas nearby, 91% of survey respondents answered “very important”, 99% reported that well maintained streets and safe intersections were also important features of their outdoor community and 95% of respondents reported that well-maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different physical abilities is important to them. Taken together, these findings emphasize that an accessible and walkable Salem is desired by its older residents. A majority of survey respondents (71%) reported that they do not encounter accessibility issues in public buildings like the library or city hall; but 29% of respondents reported that they encountered these challenges sometimes or more frequently. As outlined in the vision statement, accessibility of buildings and outdoor amenities are crucial priorities of making Salem a more age-friendly city.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Implement the 10-year parks and recreation master plan as well as monitor this process to ensure features and programming meet the needs of seniors in Salem	
<p>a. Enlist a senior advocate or senior center staff person to participate in implementing the master plan to ensure programming is made available to seniors. For example, community garden beds that are waist-high could be constructed to make them accessible by wheel chair or without stooping</p>	<p>b. Conduct more outreach to older adults about existing programming taking place in parks. Suggest that events targeting seniors are hosted in public parks and playgrounds</p>
<p>c. Determine ways in which beaches and waterfront amenities can be made more accessible to older adults and persons with mobility limitations, and those who use assistive devices like walkers or wheelchairs. For example, create</p>	<p>d. Develop a campaign to encourage bench donations to be located in areas of Salem that currently lack adequate public seating, including in playgrounds</p>

⁷ https://mahealthyagingcollaborative.org/wp-content/themes/mhac/pdf/community_profiles/towncode258.pdf

a publicly available beach wheel chair loan program or devise a beach access system that includes paved ramps with railings. See Brewster, MA for an example⁸

- e. Encourage the installation of public exercise equipment in Salem parks, and ensure that the installed equipment is accessible for seniors and people with disabilities

2. Evaluate the safety and walkability of sidewalks and intersections throughout Salem

- a. Expand the previous walk-audit to be city-wide by recruiting a team of existing pedestrian advocates. Charge this group to maintain the documentation of curb cuts, tactile strips and cross-walk timers beyond the downtown area of Salem and generate a list of walkability updates necessary to sustain Salem's place as a walkable city for all residents
- b. Determine if there are improvements that can be made to the long-term use of bricks for sidewalks. For example, explore brick alternatives like red concrete that is stamped to look like brick. Target areas outside senior housing buildings or the COA to pilot these sidewalk modifications
- c. Identify the public buildings that are not accessible to persons with mobility impairments due to the absence of an elevator or ramp, and schedule modifications to create full accessibility to City buildings by 2020
- d. Promote awareness of the existing protocol that coordinates between Salem State University (SSU) and Salem Police Department (SPD) among neighborhood residents. Encourage resident attendance at existing monthly neighborhood committee meetings to discuss issues as they arise
- e. Through the Community Impact Unit of SPD, create community policing so that each neighborhood has a police officer that they know and trust. The Public Safety Strategies Group's organizational evaluation can guide specific staffing and scheduling decisions for this move towards community policing
- f. Identify areas in Salem where the LED light fixtures cause a glare for drivers at night. These problem areas can be adjusted by the Electrical Department as they are identified

⁸ <http://brewster-ma.gov/beach-info>

3. Educate the public on pedestrian rules

- a. Create an educational campaign geared towards pedestrians and drivers as a refresher to the rules of the road. Use City Hall to Go as a mechanism for this public education campaign

Age-Friendly Salem: Community Supports & Health Services

Our Vision

An Age-Friendly Salem will include a continuum of services and supports that meet both the health and the social needs of its older adult population. Community supports include access to health services like home health care, hospitals and physicians; but also to services like nutritious food, opportunities for physical activity and caregiver support services that enable older residents to age securely in the residence of their choosing.

Current Condition

The holistic scope outlined for the health and community support system in Salem is an important vision as previous research uniformly suggests that nonmedical factors play a substantial role in health status.⁹ North Shore Medical Center (NSMC) is the North Shore's largest healthcare provider and one of its largest employers. Headquartered in Salem, NSMC includes multiple hospitals, ambulatory care sites and a wide array of primary and specialty care physician offices, as well as a commitment to exceptional quality, safety and kindness. As a member of [Partners HealthCare](#), founded by Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, NSMC provides patients with access to some of the most talented sub-specialists in the world through a range of clinical collaborations. These factors contribute to the health of Salem's older residents. According to the Tufts Health Plan Foundation Healthy Aging Community Profile, Salem's older residents have lower rates of congestive heart failure, osteoporosis, hospital stays, nursing home stays and emergency room visits compared to Massachusetts's state averages.

In addition, North Shore Elder Services (NSES) provides a vast array of social and community-based health services to seniors in Salem. For example, they provide case management, information and referral services for nursing homes, adult day health programs, legal services, Meals on Wheels, money management and caregiver support. The local Council on Aging also serves as an informational resource for some of Salem's most vulnerable seniors. Eighty-one percent of Age-Friendly Salem survey respondents reported that it is very important to them to have a senior center or community center with programming for seniors as a public facility in Salem.

⁹

http://bluecrossfoundation.org/sites/default/files/download/publication/Social_Equity_ExecSumm_final.pdf

When asked, “which of the following services would you turn to if you, a family member or a friend needed information about services such as care giving services, home delivered meals, home repair, medical transportation or social activities?”, 73% of respondents said they would go to the local Council on Aging in Salem and 50% reported they would go to elder services (e.g., North Shore Elder Services) for information about these community supports. In addition, 20% of survey respondents reported attending the local senior center for activities but 30% of respondents reported that they “would like to participate” in the local senior center. This finding suggests that there is potential for the local senior center to be more heavily used in the City of Salem than it currently is.

According to Age-Friendly Salem survey respondents, the most important community-based supportive service to have in the community was “affordable home and personal care services in your own home” (86%). The location of health and social services was also important to survey respondents; 91% of the sample reported that “conveniently located health and social services” were important to have in their community. In addition, many survey respondents in Salem have social support nearby. A majority of survey respondents (88%) report having friends or family in the area on whom they can rely for help in an emergency. In addition, 70% of survey respondents reported having respite caregivers available or adult day care services is important to have in their community.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Promote and support the COA as a focal point of information and support to Salem’s senior population and their families	
<p>a. Continue plans for building a community center to include specific space and programming for Salem’s growing population of older residents</p>	<p>b. Encourage the COA to initiate discussions with area home health service and social service organizations like NSES and NSCH to identify new and innovative ways to coordinate local health and social services for seniors in Salem with a particular focus on homebound seniors. For example, see the Community-based Care Transitions Program at Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley¹⁰</p>
<p>c. Continue to promote and expand free health screenings and exercise opportunities currently offered through the COA to a wider audience of Salem residents</p>	<p>a. Consider the development of an Are You OK (RUOK) program in Salem as a partnership between the COA and the Salem Police and Fire Departments to stay connected to Salem’s more vulnerable senior</p>

¹⁰ <http://www.esmv.org/programs-services/community-care-transitions-program/>

	residents. See Bristol County, MA for an example ¹¹
b. Expand the social work capabilities at the COA. For example, hire a licensed social worker, which allows for the mentoring of social work interns	c. Support the COA in expanding their capacity to reach the older Latino residents of Salem by hiring bilingual speakers to assist with outreach and support to the Latino population in Salem

2. Support family caregivers as a crucial component of home and community based care for seniors in Salem

a. Enlist a group of local businesses to offer discounted or free admission to area recreational and cultural attractions for caregivers accompanying persons requiring assistance	b. Host a social event for persons of all ages at the COA to inform families about the programs and services offered through Northshore Elder Services, the COA and other area providers
c. Recognizing the value and importance of pets to families and older residents, it is important to make veterinary care accessible to all residents of Salem. In partnership between the COA and local veterinarians, create a mobile healthcare van for animals. See the Mid-State Mobile Veterinary Clinic in Leominster as an example ¹²	

3. Create additional sources of specialized medicine to meet the needs of the aging population in Salem

a. Discuss the establishment of a Geriatric Medicine division within NSMC. For example, discuss barriers to recruiting Geriatricians to the NSMC and identify possible solutions	b. In tandem with the re-furbishing of the Spaulding Rehabilitation building, initiate discussion about a mental health center with specialization in aging and senior issues. Specifically, acknowledge depression as a condition that affects many older adults
c. Review existing models of home-based medicine to reach home-bound seniors and those with difficulty accessing the area medical centers. Encourage the uptake of such programs at NSMC. For example, Mount Auburn hospital in Cambridge facilitates such a program ¹³	

¹¹ <http://www.bcs0-ma.us/AreYouOK.htm>

¹² <http://www.midstatemobilevet.com/>

¹³ <http://www.mountauburnhospital.org/care-treatment/geriatric-medicine/house-calls/>

Age-Friendly Salem: Communication & Information

Our Vision

The City of Salem envisions a municipal communication strategy that includes multiple streams of media to inform residents, including seniors, about emergencies, resources and services available to Salem's residents as well as events and other activities happening in Salem. This is to be achieved through the continued use of electronic media as well as the targeted preservation of printed communication materials is an important component to making this communication plan accessible by *all* of Salem's older residents. In addition, the vision for an age-friendly communication plan includes a public outreach campaign that generally promotes positive messaging about age and makes clear how to attain information and about the services and resources available to support themselves and their loved ones in Salem.

Current Condition

Salem residents have robust communication and information resources made available to them. Salem has at least 5 local websites, including the municipal site (www.salem.com), a site for tourists and visitors to Salem (www.salem.org) and local business (www.salem-chamber.com). In addition, The Mayor's office, and many Salem organizations and groups, are active on social media. Other media outlets in Salem include a local cable channel, a system of optional email notifications regarding current events in the City and there is a system in place to make automated calls from Salem City Hall during times of weather or other types of emergent situations for those with publicly listed telephone numbers. In Salem, there are multiple newspapers, including one local daily newspaper, the COA publishes a monthly newsletter and a calendar of events is published bi-annually by the Department of Park, Recreation and Community Service. When asked why, many survey respondents wrote-in that the reason they do not participate in the available programs for seniors in Salem, nearly one-third (29%) of write-in responses referred to being unaware of the services and programs available to seniors in Salem (e.g., the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, the local senior center or eldercare attorneys). Among respondents of the online survey, 94% report using the Internet once a day or more; but when contrasted with those who completed a paper-version of the same survey, only 73% reported using the Internet once a day or more. Salem is taking full advantage of online communication resources; but it is important to also preserve opportunities for print communication to reach the residents of Salem without regular Internet access.

1. Improve access to information among all of Salem's older residents

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| <p>a. Using an existing data-gathering mechanism such as the City census, conduct a city-wide mailing to obtain email addresses of all residents of Salem age 60 and older for the creation of an online database of older residents</p> | <p>b. Create volunteer and services opportunities for younger residents by encouraging them to host social media skills sessions at publicly available computer stations like the library and COA. Partnerships with Boy and Girl Scout groups or even the Salem Young Professionals Group could be formed to execute this action item</p> |
| <p>c. Increase access to technology for older by increasing the number of publicly available computers and areas with free access to Wi-Fi Internet access</p> | <p>d. Designate a committee or hire a consultant to craft a communication plan for Salem, with a specific emphasis on communicating with older residents of all language abilities and to include a strategy for preserving the printing of specific information sources</p> |
| <p>e. Develop additional strategies for using local cable television programming to reach senior citizens with information about events and resources available to them in the community. See the Senior Navigator on Cape Cod as an example¹⁴</p> | <p>f. To make information about senior services more accessible in off-hours, develop a volunteer telephone hotline with the COA or North Shore Elder Services for evening and weekend hours that features a directory of services, agencies, and other resources geared toward the needs of older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers. See the Silver Line for an example¹⁵</p> |

¹⁴ <http://capemedia.org/>

¹⁵ <https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/>

Age-Friendly Salem: Social Participation

Our Vision

Salem offers a wide variety of recreational programs, historical and cultural activities and events that encourage social participation of residents. An overarching vision for an Age-Friendly Salem is to improve the inclusivity of these programs and events to the older segment of Salem’s population, specifically those older adults at risk for social isolation due to geographic dispersion of families, socioeconomic status, English language abilities, physical or mental health impairment or other social factors that increase the risk of social isolation.

Current Condition

Results from the document review and community survey indicate that Salem is a place rich in history, the arts and educational opportunities including those offered through Salem State University. Indeed, 59% of survey respondents reported that there are enough social activities and events in the community; and 74% of survey respondents report participating in cultural events such as theater, music or lectures. Further, data from the Salem Tourism Office (n=254) indicates that 47% of visitors to Salem included at least one member of their party age 55 or older. These points illustrate that a number of opportunities for social participation exist for senior residents of Salem. However, when asked to evaluate the sufficiency of such social programs, nearly one-third (27%) of community-survey respondents reported that they were “not sure”. This uncertainty suggests that improved access and awareness about such social activities is needed.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Support social participation opportunities for older residents in all of Salem’s neighborhoods

- a. Engage with neighborhood associations to create additional social activities for neighbors to engage with each other
- b. Create a partnership between the COA or a nonprofit organization and a local animal shelters to create a ‘Pet-Pal’ program. Volunteer dogs and cats can be registered as ‘friendly visitors’ to visit local senior housing buildings to spend time with seniors at risk for isolation. See FriendshipWorks Inc. in Boston for an example¹⁶

¹⁶ <http://www.fw4elders.org/our-programs/petpals/>

- c. Engage the religious communities of Salem to create a peer-connection program that provides outreach to home bound seniors of Salem through matching individuals to exchange support and foster friendship

2. Work with local arts and culture organizations to create specific opportunities for seniors to be involved in their programming

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Host opportunities for older residents to document their oral histories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Encourage local museums to sponsor exhibits or lectures that focus on issues of age in art or host art classes taught by older artists, see Artful Aging as an example¹⁷ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Encourage museums or other cultural attractions in Salem to provide staff training for hosting tours for persons with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia See the <i>here:now</i> program at the Frye Museum in Seattle, WA as an example¹⁸ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Partner with SSU to offer discounted or free tickets to sporting events for seniors. The SSU shuttle is available to members of the public, so seniors attending a sporting event can park in a SSU lot and take the shuttle to the door |

Age-Friendly Salem: Respect & Social Inclusion

Our Vision

For Salem to be a community that is friendly for people of all ages, a shift in thinking about a more age-less community is required. At a time when Salem – and the rest of the world – is aging and diversifying, it is critical to identify opportunities to integrate older residents of all backgrounds into activities and communities in a meaningful way, both to prevent social isolation and its deleterious effects as well as to combat ageism through positive messaging about age.

Current Condition

Survey respondents from Salem report having strong social ties. In fact, 86% of survey respondents reported interacting with friends, family or neighbors on a daily or more frequent basis and 88% reported that they have friends or family from the area upon whom they can rely in an emergency. However, only 37% of survey respondents agreed that “the opinions and thoughts of older adults are valued” in Salem. To that same question, 43% of respondents reported that they are ‘not sure’ about whether or not they feel that “the

¹⁷ <http://nextavenue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Artful-Aging-How-Creativity-Sparks-Vitality-and-Transforms-Lives.pdf>
¹⁸ http://fryemuseum.org/program/here_now

opinions and thoughts of older adults are valued” in Salem. This point suggests that additional work must be done to integrate older residents into decision-making processes and create a community environment in which age is perceived more as a value rather than a detriment. Interestingly, when asked “How important is it to you to have the following health and wellness services in your community?”, 98% of respondents reported that “respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff” is important to them. This highlights the importance of how seniors are treated by service providers and the staff of business and city departments alike. Taken together, these data points indicate that many residents have relatively robust social networks to draw upon, but illustrate a desire for more respect for older adults in Salem with particular regard to staff of businesses and municipal offices as well as other service providers.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Promote “Age-Friendly” business environments	
<p>a. Drawing on existing relationships of the Salem Chamber of Commerce and Destination Salem, educate local Salem businesses about creating an “Age-Friendly Business” designation. For example, involve senior consumers and other consultants to develop customer service metrics by which a business can be deemed ‘age-friendly’. See the Age Friendly Business pilot initiative happening in Washington D.C. as an example¹⁹</p>	<p>b. Coordinate with the Dementia-Friendly model to encourage businesses and organizations to also align themselves as Dementia-friendly. See Wisconsin’s toolkit as a resource for creating Dementia Friendly Communities²⁰</p>
<p>c. Encourage restaurants to offer low-sodium or low-sugar options for seniors and residents with dietary restrictions</p>	<p>d. Incentivize local restaurants to offer discounts to seniors or to allow seniors to split meals without an added fee</p>

2. Generate sufficient opportunities for Salem’s senior residents to voice their concerns and ideas about aging and living in Salem	
<p>a. Ensure that a senior resident or advocate is included in all city-wide planning processes and initiatives</p>	<p>b. In partnership with the COA, offer support to the organization of senior advocates in Salem by hosting regular meetings of this group or sponsoring events</p>

¹⁹ <http://wdcep.com/become-an-age-friendly-business/>

²⁰ http://www.alz.org/documents/scwisc/Dementia_Friendly_Toolkit_WI.pdf

- c. Create a space in one of the local newspapers for “Seniors Speak Out” and encourage older residents to write opinion pieces on a selected topic. This space can also be used as way of keeping the broader public engaged with the progress of the *Salem for All Ages Initiative*

3. Promote reciprocal intergenerational interaction to offset negative stereotypes and stigma related to aging in Salem.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop more partnerships between Salem State University and the COA to create local opportunities for intergenerational mentorship. For example, enlist SSU students to host ‘Cyber Senior’ events at the COA to familiarize older adults with Internet sites like Facebook, Skype or Ancestry.com | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Create opportunities for language conversation tables between seniors and youth in Salem. Connect Spanish speaking seniors with students studying Spanish at Salem State University or connect English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students at SSU with English-speaking senior volunteers to have conversation. For example, see 8Centric²¹ as an example from Boston |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Create opportunities to partner with the Salem School District about Age Friendly Salem and highlight ways that older volunteers can be involved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Promote community pride and impact the perception of age in Salem by creating a “Salem Senior Service Award” to recognize seniors in the community who are formally or informally making a difference in their neighborhoods |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Activate the existing faith communities in Salem to create a larger, more secular, group with opportunities for activities among seniors and younger generations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Get local high school kids involved by creating a volunteer group to help with small household tasks for senior residents (changing lightbulbs, removing AC units or other minor chores). Drawing on the Rotary Interact club at Salem High School²² may be an avenue for developing such a service program |

²¹ <http://www.8centric.org/english-conversation-program/>

²² <https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/learning-reference/learn-topic/interact>

4. Sensitize and educate city personnel about older adult issues and especially underserved older adult issues

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| a. Create mechanisms by which Spanish language interpreters are accessible in municipal buildings | b. Working with emergency response personnel, provide 'Senior Awareness Training' to make City employees aware of the issues seniors face (falls, dementia, first aid or CPR training). Expand training to include local transportation drivers as well |
| c. For the purpose of improving inclusion of the Latino population in Salem, require professional development training in cultural competency to be obtained by City employees with direct contact with residents. Engage Latino residents of Salem in the identification and administration of such a training program | |

Age-Friendly Salem: Civic Engagement & Employment

Our Vision

In order for Salem to become a vibrant and engaging place to grow old, opportunities to be involved in the civic process are necessary. Older residents are a growing resource in Salem and thus an opportunity to draw on this resource for the continued economic growth of Salem should be a priority. Further, some share of Salem residents of all ages and abilities wish to find quality, gainful employment. Part of this vision for an Age-Friendly Salem is to create a community in which older residents are given the opportunity to contribute substantially to the economy of Salem through paid employment, consultancy or mentorship and have the ability to innovate and become successful entrepreneurs.

Current Condition

Many seniors in Salem work for pay. For example, 35% of community survey respondents reported working full-time and 21% reported working part-time. This compares to American Community Survey data which indicates that 57% of Salem residents age 45+ are in the labor force (ACS, 2010-14, Table B23001). In addition, a majority of these same survey respondents (57%) reported participating in volunteer work or civic engagement in Salem. According to a survey conducted by the City of Salem, 63% of members serving on municipal boards, committees, authorities, task forces, and commissions are over the age of 50 and 38% are over the age of 60, suggesting that older residents are already well represented in City leadership positions. Further, there is enthusiasm for volunteering in Salem, with 84% of survey respondents reporting that they felt that having a range of volunteer activities and easy to find information about volunteer opportunities were among the most important opportunities to have in their community. The most frequently reported priority for job related opportunities was having a "range of job opportunities for older adults" (85%)

followed closely by “flexible jobs for older adults” (83%). Thus, creating additional opportunities for Salem’s senior residents to be involved in business and civic leadership positions is a promising course of action.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Enhance opportunities for older residents to be civically engaged	
<p>a. Encourage public groups and municipal departments to review accessibility and inclusion practices for public meetings. The dissemination of information about using age-appropriate language and the principles of “people first” language could be used as resource to improve inclusion and accessibility. See the Inclusion Project for examples of these resources²³</p>	<p>b. Encourage these entities to remove barriers for vulnerable segments of the older adult population (e.g., those with disabilities or limited English proficiency and low-income seniors) to attend public meetings and from receiving access, participation, and benefits from the City</p>
<p>c. Continue to explore ways to expand eligibility or availability of tax work-off positions in Salem</p>	<p>d. Create incentives for local organizations or businesses to offer stipend volunteer programs for seniors in Salem to engage in productive activity</p>

2. Educate businesses on the value of older workers and debunk stereotypes and myths that may exist	
<p>a. Engage North Shore Young Professionals, Salem Chamber of Commerce or other professional organizations to include older residents and learn from their experiences or to provide opportunities for part-time paid work or volunteer opportunities that include a stipend</p>	<p>b. Host informational sessions for City departments and local businesses about the age redistribution of the workforce to include topics like: how to manage millennials and boomers in the same department or how to maximize the value of older workers</p>

²³ http://www.inclusionproject.org/nip_userfiles/file/People%20First%20Chart.pdf

3. Create a centralized location for the posting of available volunteer opportunities for all Salem residents

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| <p>a. Through a partnership between the COA and local libraries, make this information available in a way that seniors and other residents can easily learn more about these opportunities</p> | <p>b. Drawing on the Explorers Lifelong Learning Institute at SSU, create courses that include a ‘service learning’ component to generate additional volunteer opportunities</p> |
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Implementation Approach

The next steps for the *Salem for All Ages* initiative include the prioritization and implementation of the action items outlined in this report. Led by the Mayor’s Office, a team of City staff, community leaders, stakeholders and decision makers will be invited to participate, in varying capacities, in a *Salem for All Ages* Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will be charged with ensuring that the public, nonprofit and private sectors continue to collaborate to implement these actions towards improving Salem as a place for people of all ages and abilities. Further, this group will also be asked to identify measures of success for the initiative moving forward. In addition to this Advisory Board, specific community leaders will be tapped, as needed, to execute action items outlined in this report.

Specific items have been identified as priorities for Year 1 of the implementation phase. These tasks are outlined in **Table 1**. In subsequent years, priorities and actions will be outlined by the Advisory Board as each domain is addressed.

Table 1. Salem for All Ages, Year 1 Priority Actions

YEAR 1
1. Commission a city-wide communication plan focused on senior residents of Salem
2. Administer a mass-mailing of Salem’s residents age 50+ to be included in ongoing communications from the Salem for All Ages Initiative
3. Pilot-test a sidewalk improvement method on a small section of sidewalk and solicit feedback from residents
4. Generate a renovation and maintenance plan for the existing senior housing units in Salem
5. Request a feasibility study of an intra-city transit system
6. Review all bus-stops in Salem and ensure that benches are available at each stop