

# Salem for All Ages: Needs assessment results

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

We acknowledge with gratitude our partnership with the City of Salem and members of its Salem for All Ages Leadership Team including Kimberly Driscoll, Mayor of Salem, Patricia Zaido, resident leader, Christine Sullivan, resident leader, Dominick Pangallo, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office, Meredith McDonald, Director, Salem Council on Aging, Tricia O'Brien, Superintendent, Salem Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services. This effort could not be completed without the guidance and expertise from Mike Festa, Massachusetts State Director at AARP, Kara Cohen, Community Outreach Director at AARP of Massachusetts, and the Jewish Family & Children's Services organization. Specifically, the efforts of Kathy Burnes, Division Director of Services for Older Adults and program coordinator, Kelley Annese, who completed the Salem for All Ages report. The support from North Shore Elder Services has been phenomenal and so we would like to thank Executive Director Paul Lanzikos and Katherine Walsh who serves as Chair of the Board of Director. We recognize the excellence of our research assistance from University of Massachusetts students Molly Evans, Naomi Gallopyn, Maryam Khaniyan, and Ceara Somerville. Most importantly, we are grateful to all of the residents and leaders in Salem who gave of their time to participate in these efforts to maintain Salem as a friendly and vibrant place to grow-up and grow-old.

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Scott Lanes, Orchestra, July 4th

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Salem TV, Mayor Driscoll with residents

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". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Kimberley Driscoll  
Mayor, City of Salem

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In Partnership with the  
City of Salem

November 2016

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## Background

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. Salem shares the position of county seat with neighboring Lawrence 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.

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.

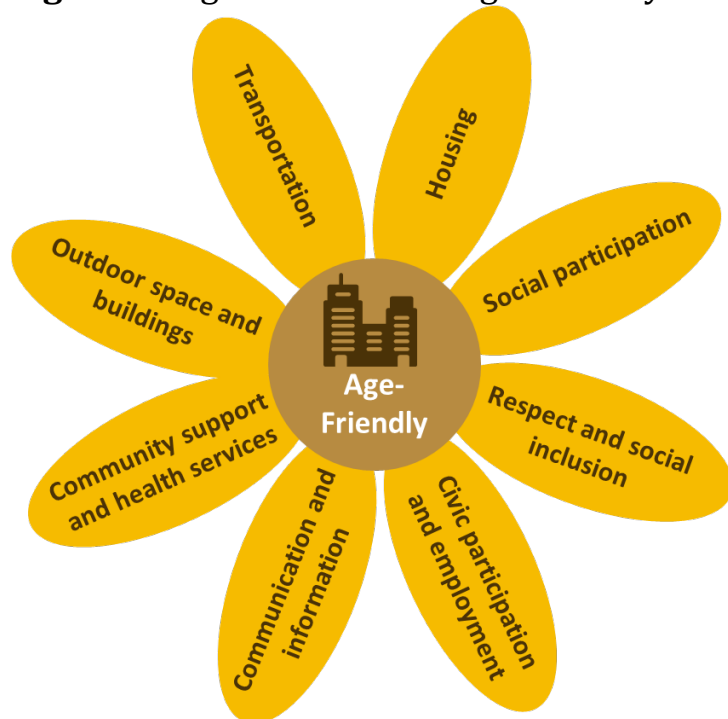
Both tourists and residents enjoy Salem's mix of important historic sites, higher education, regional medical services, and a walkable vibrant downtown with more than 60 restaurants, cafés, and coffee shops. Salem is a diverse and active community that is fast becoming home to a growing population of "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 be 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 Kimberly Driscoll and participating City Departments, a series of activities were 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 needs assessment and 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 relevant to affordability, appropriateness, and accessibility (see **Figure 1**).

**Figure 1.** Eight Domains an Age-Friendly Community

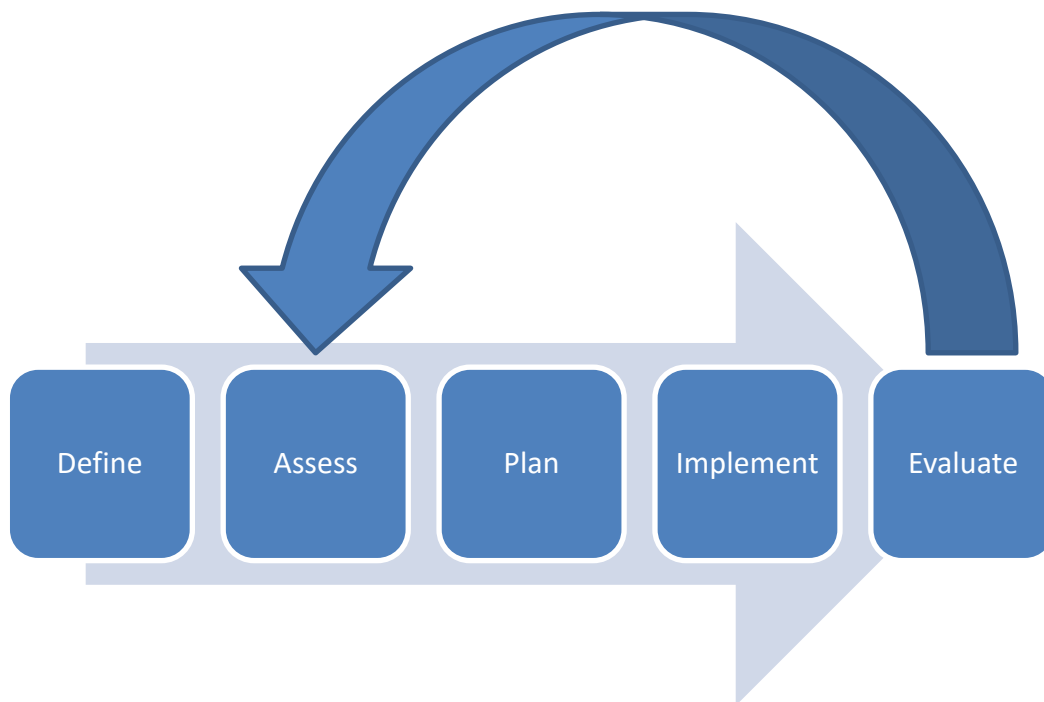


Source: Sandra Harris, *Design For Aging Committee, BHA*

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. 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 include a description of activities undertaken to assess the needs of Salem residents with respect to the 8 domains of an Age-Friendly community and to report the results this community needs assessment effort taken up by the City of Salem. The *Salem for All Ages* Action Plan is outlined in a separate document and includes specific actions towards achieving more age-friendliness in Salem. 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 several public listening sessions and a web-based community survey are included in this separate document, these two efforts were facilitated by leaders in the community and, together, included over 500 residents of Salem.

## Assessing the Needs of Salem Residents

The needs assessment presented here draws on multiple sources of data lending insight to the characteristics of Salem's older residents and perceptions of strengths and challenges for aging in place in the community. Mixed evaluation methods are often used to assess the needs of older residents and to aid organizations in planning and prioritizing the programs and services they provide in the community. Collecting data from multiple sources is a good strategy for converging on accurate and multifaceted representations of community needs from the perspective of a diverse set of stakeholders (Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, 2010). In the current project, we compiled data from the following sources.

## Methods

### Demographic Profile

As an initial step toward understanding characteristics of Salem's older population through quantitative data, we generated a demographic profile of the Town using data from the decennial U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS)—a large, annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. For purposes of this assessment, we primarily used information drawn from the most current 5-year ACS files (2010-2014), along with U.S. Census data for Salem to summarize demographic characteristics including growth of the older population, shifts in the age distribution, gender, race and education distributions, householder status, living arrangements, household income, and disability status.

### Community Survey

Salem resident leaders crafted and administered a web-based survey to the community by, on behalf of the City and in support of its Age-Friendly initiative. The survey was adapted from the AARP Livable community survey<sup>1</sup>. It included 42 questions and was made available primarily online. Approximately 35 surveys were printed and handed-out to older residents at the senior center. The survey was made available online to Salem residents over age 50 and was open for approximately 8 weeks in the Spring of 2016. Topics addressed by the survey included current and future housing plans, social activities and relationships and an assessment of the aspects of a community that are most important to aging-in-place such as walkability, access to healthcare and opportunities for civic participation. Data from the survey were obtained and reviewed by UMass Boston staff (see **Appendix A** for a copy of the survey). At points throughout this report, reference is made to findings developed from that community survey data collection.

## Focus Groups

UMass Boston researchers held three focus groups in Salem with the following groups: 1) city department heads; 2) community leaders from a wide range of organizations; and 3) Salem residents representing various neighborhoods within the City. The purpose of these focus groups was to solicit actionable ideas for how Salem can become a more age-friendly community. A total of 25 individuals participated in one of the 3 groups. The first focus group included representatives from the Salem Police Department, the Council on Aging, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Planning Department as well as the Health and Human Resources Departments. The second group included individuals from local advocacy groups, Salem City Council, health and social services providers, as well as representatives from the disability community and local housing authority. The final group included residents from various neighborhoods in Salem. Focus groups were audio recorded for accuracy and the notes were reviewed for themes and actionable ideas for making Salem more Age-Friendly.

UMass Boston researchers also drew on shared materials that were generated by members of the leadership team including notes from public meetings and drafts of early observations. For example, several existing documents directly related to the *Salem for All Ages* initiative were also reviewed. The purpose of this review process was to understand how the initiative had been developed to-date and to further understand the unmet needs of Salem residents. These documents included notes from a series of 6 listening sessions that were conducted by Salem residents, on behalf of the City. These public meetings offered an opportunity for resident, of all ages, to voice their needs, concerns and wishes for Salem as an Age-Friendly City. Approximately 100 residents participated across these 6 sessions. In addition, 3 engagement meetings were held in Salem in support of this effort: 2 with City Department leaders and 1 with the local business community. These notes were gathered and reviewed for reoccurring themes. Similarly, an existing report conducted by Jewish Children & Family Services was reviewed. This report (see **Appendix B**) was based

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2016/Questionnaire-AARP-Survey-of-Community-Residents-123115.pdf>

on interviews with 209 residents of Salem age 50-90 was also reviewed for common themes.

## Results

### Demographic Highlights

- Currently, one out of five Salem residents are age 60+
- By 2030, this share is expected to increase to about one in four
- Salem is already quite diverse with respect to racial and ethnic diversity, primarily among younger age groups. Substantial increases in the share of seniors who are Hispanic or Latino have occurred in the last 10 years and can be expected to continue
- More than one-third of Salem’s seniors live alone
- Salem seniors have increased risk of disability and of low income relative to their younger counterparts

### Age Structure and Population Growth

According to the US Census Bureau, there were 41,340 residents living in Salem at the time of the 2010 federal census. One third (33%) of the population was age 50 and older (See **Table 1**). Residents who are aged 50 to 59 comprised 14% of the population, and those age 60 to 79 made up (15%). Another 1,674 (4%) residents were aged 80 and older.

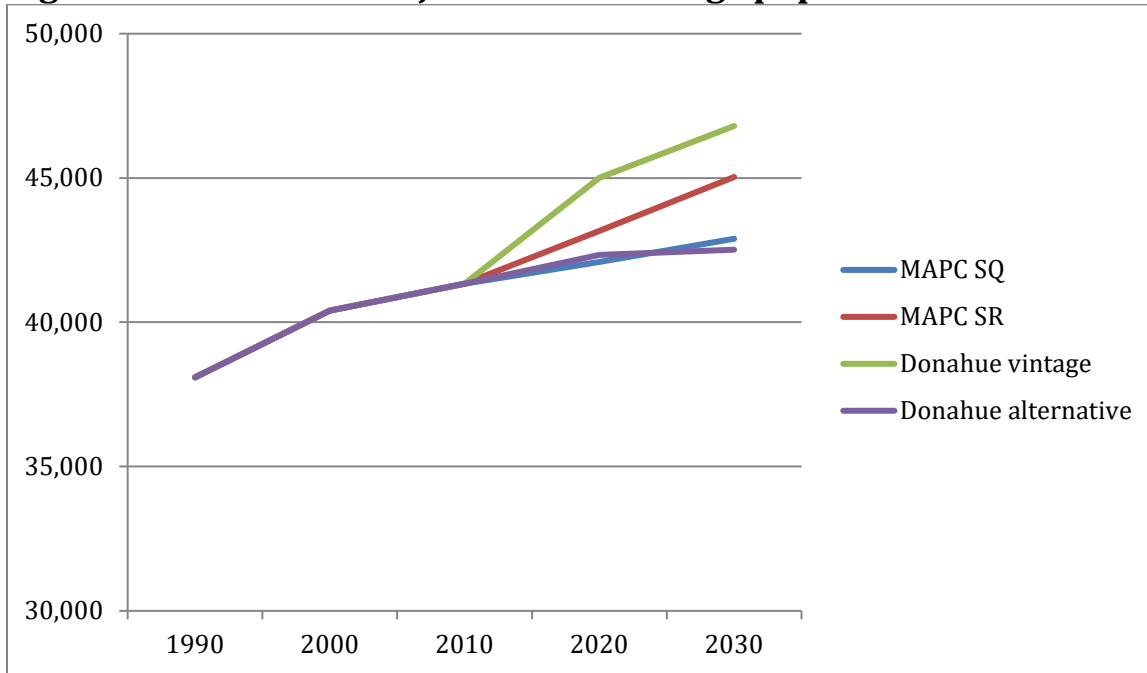
**Table 1.** Number and percentage distribution of Salem’s population by age category, 2010

	Number	Percentage
<b>Under age 20</b>	9,333	22%
<b>Age 20-49</b>	18,565	45%
<b>Age 50-59</b>	5,710	14%
<b>Age 60-79</b>	6,058	15%
<b>Age 80 and older</b>	1,674	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,340</b>	<b>100%</b>

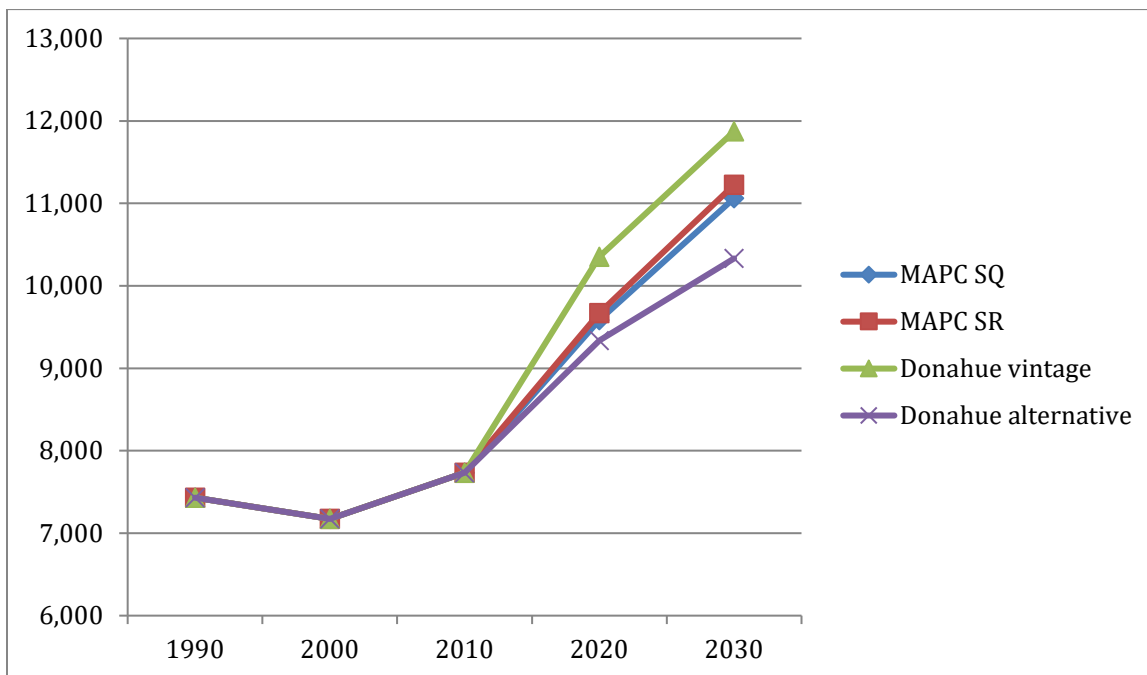
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. Summary File 1, Table QT-P1.

The two figures below show what the four available sets of projections suggest about growth in the total population size of Salem, first, and then in the 60+ population count. The gap from highest to lowest for total is about 4,000 people at 2030; for age 60+ the gap is 1,500 people. Ordering of projections is the same for both (Donahue vintage is highest and Donahue alternative is lowest).

**Figure 3. Alternative trajectories for all age population**

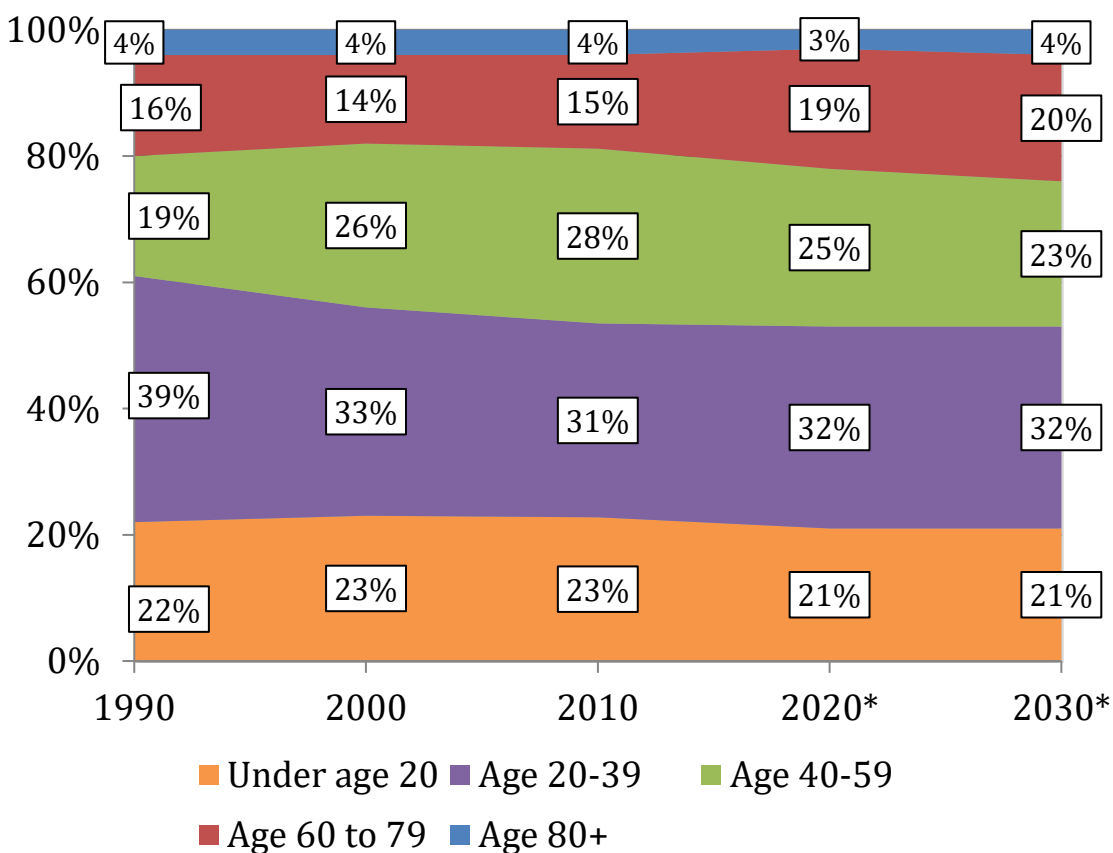


**Figure 4. Alternative trajectories for age 60+ population**



Below the implications of Donahue alternative are shown in % terms (**Figure 5**). The Donahue alternative was chosen because it assumes the slowest growth in both total and 60+ age ranges.

**Figure 5. Recent and Projected Age Distribution of Salem, 1990 to 2030**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population for 1990 thru 2010.

\* Figures for 2020 thru 2030 are projections generated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts: <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/>

The age distribution of Salem’s population across time is shown in **Figure 5**, including Census figures from 1990 to 2010, and population projections to 2030<sup>2</sup>. In 1990, about 20% of the Town’s population was age 60 and older. This percentage is expected to be fairly stable

<sup>2</sup> Population projections are shaped by assumptions about birth rates and death rates, as well as domestic and international in-migration and out-migration. The Donahue Institute projections used here also account for population change associated with aging of the population, which is a strong predictor of future growth and decline of population levels.

until 2020 at which time the age 60+ population is expected to represent about 22% of the population, reaching 24% by 2030.

### Demographic Composition of Salem’s Older Population

The all-age population of Salem is considerably more diverse than the older community with respect to race. For all ages combined, about 81% of Salem residents report their race as White. In comparison, 91% of the Salem’s residents who are age 60 or older report White race (see **Table 2**). Across all ages in Salem, 6% of the residents are Black or African American, and 16% report being Hispanic or Latino (these individuals may report any race). Substantially fewer Salem seniors report non-white race, and just 6% report Hispanic or Latino background.

**Table 2.** Race distribution of Salem residents, all ages, and ages 60 and older

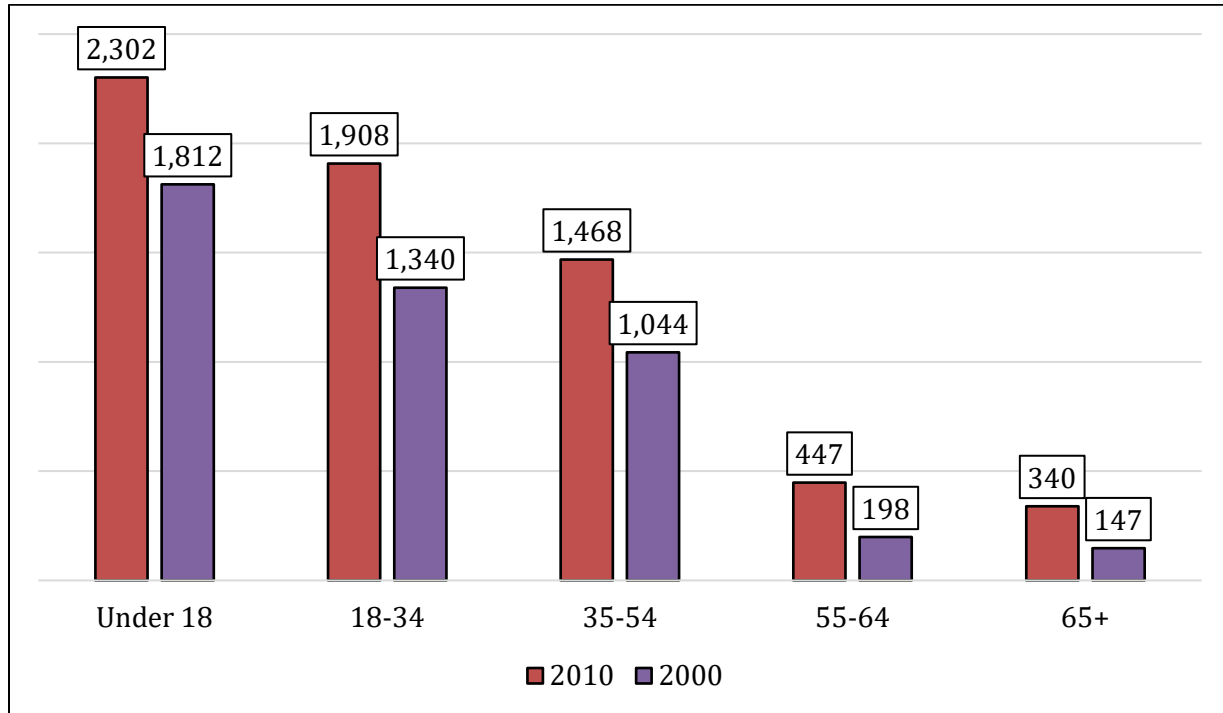
	All Ages	Age 60+
<b>Race</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>White</b>	81%	91%
<b>Black or African American</b>	6%	2%
<b>Asian</b>	2%	3%
<b>Some other race or two or more races</b>	11%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</b>	16%	6%

*Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014, Table S0102. Numbers are calculated from survey estimates.*

In Salem, a majority of residents who are age 60 and older are women (63%), a somewhat higher share than is observed for Massachusetts seniors as a whole (56%) (ACS, 2010 – 2014, Table S0102). The greater number of older women is largely due to longer life expectancies of women compared to men—a demographic disparity that is widely observed in older populations globally.

A sizable share of the older Salem population speaks a language other than English at home. Among residents age 60 and older, 19% speak a language other than English at home (ACS, 2010 – 2014, Table S0102), and 9% speak English less than “very well.” Among those who speak a language other than English at home, languages commonly spoken include Indo-European languages other than Spanish, such as Portuguese and Russian.

**Figure 6.** Growth in the Hispanic population, 2000-2010, by age group



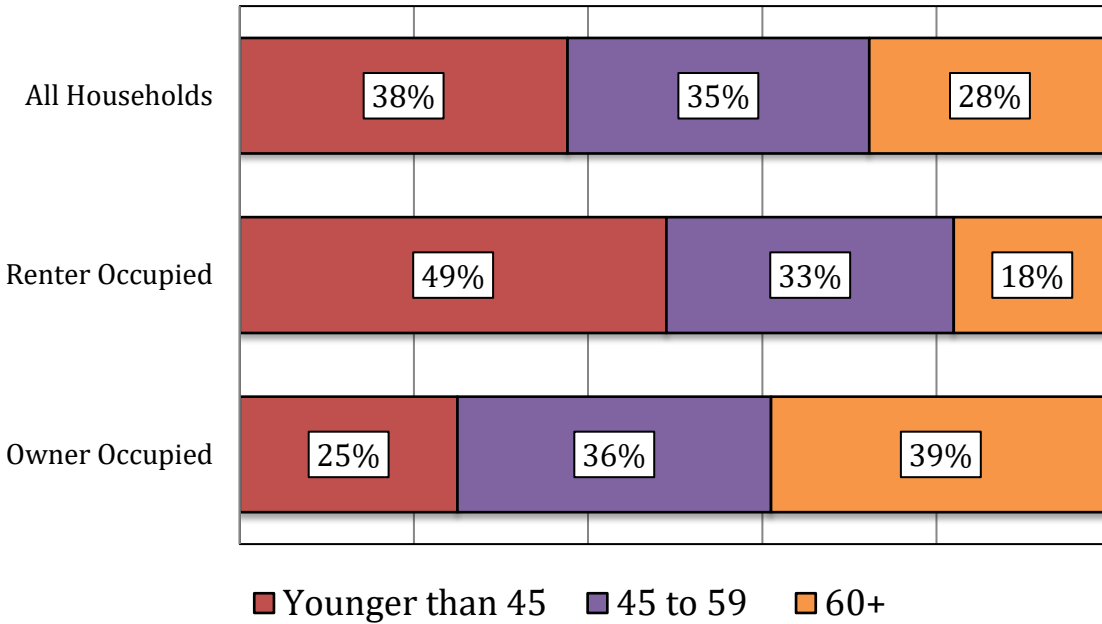
Source: American Community Survey, 2000 and 2010, Tables P12H

Between the 2000 and 2010 decennial censuses, the size of the Hispanic population in Salem grew significantly (see **Figure 6**). Specifically, the share of older (age 65+) Hispanic residents more than doubled.

American Community Survey estimates on education suggest that Salem residents are well educated on average. About 35% of residents aged 45 to 64 have either a bachelor's degree or a graduate/professional degree (*ACS, 2010-2014, Table B15001*). About 25% of residents aged 65 and older have also attained this level of education. This educational profile contributes to the community's vitality and character, which depends on older adults who value opportunities to be engaged in their communities through volunteer and civic engagement activities, as well as late-life learning opportunities— activities that are often valued in highly educated communities (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014).

Similar to older adults living in communities throughout the U.S., a sizable proportion (35%) of Salem residents aged 65 to 74 remain in the workforce; an additional 5% of those 75 and older are also in the workforce (*ACS, 2010-2014, Table B23001*). A sizeable share (56%) of men aged 65 and older in Salem report veteran status, as do a small percentage (<1%) of Salem's older women (*ACS, 2010-2014, Table B21001*). As a result, many of the Town's older residents may be eligible to receive some benefits and program services based on their military service or that of their spouses.

**Figure 7. Age structure of householders by owner status, Salem**



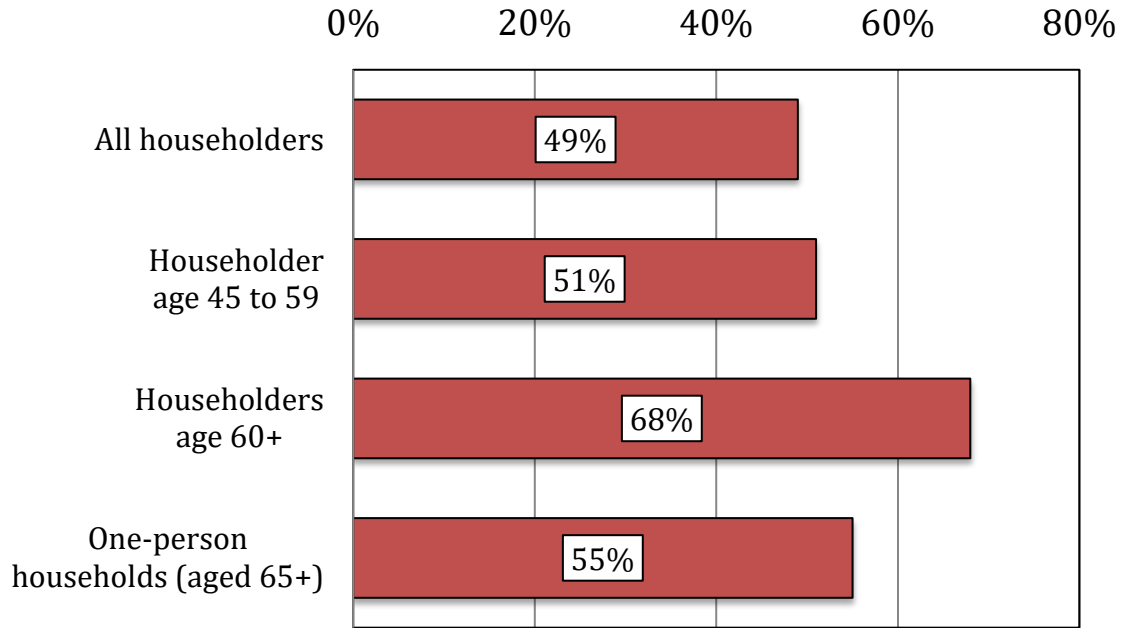
Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014, Tables B25007.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a “householder” is the person reported as the head of household, typically the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. Most of Salem’s households have householders who are middle-aged or older. Residents aged 45 and older are householders of 62% of all households in Salem<sup>3</sup> (**Figure 7**). Among renter occupied households, residents younger than 45 are heads of 49%, with 33% of renters being aged 45 to 59 and 18% of renters being aged 60 and older. Only 25% of owner occupied households are headed by residents younger than 45; 36% of owner occupied homes are headed by residents aged 45 to 59, and nearly four out of ten (39%) by residents 60 or older. The higher number of older homeowners has implications for what amenities and services are likely to be needed and valued by the community.

<sup>3</sup> Many available Census data on the older population of Salem are based on ages 45 and 65 as reference points rather than ages 50 and 60, as are used in the remaining sections of this report.



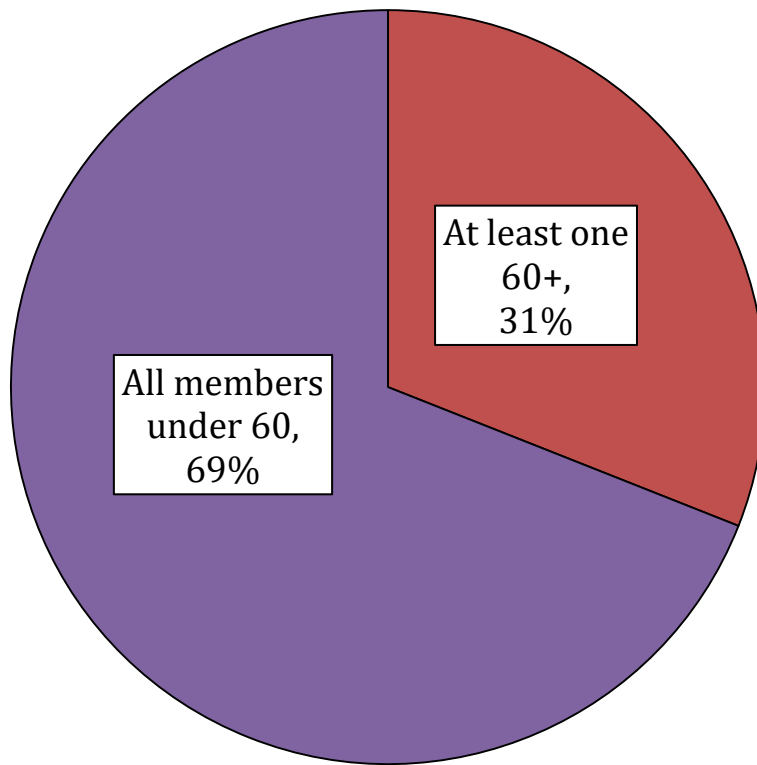
**Figure 8.** Percent of Salem householders who live in owner-occupied housing by age category



*Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014, Tables B25007 and B25116.*

About half of the all Salem residents live in homes that they own or are purchasing (49%; **Figure 8**). About 51% of residents age 45 to 59 own their homes, and 68% of householders 60 and older own their homes. About 55% of Salem residents who are 65 and older who live alone also own their homes. Home maintenance and supports are often necessary for older homeowners—especially homeowners who live alone—to maintain comfort and safety in their homes.

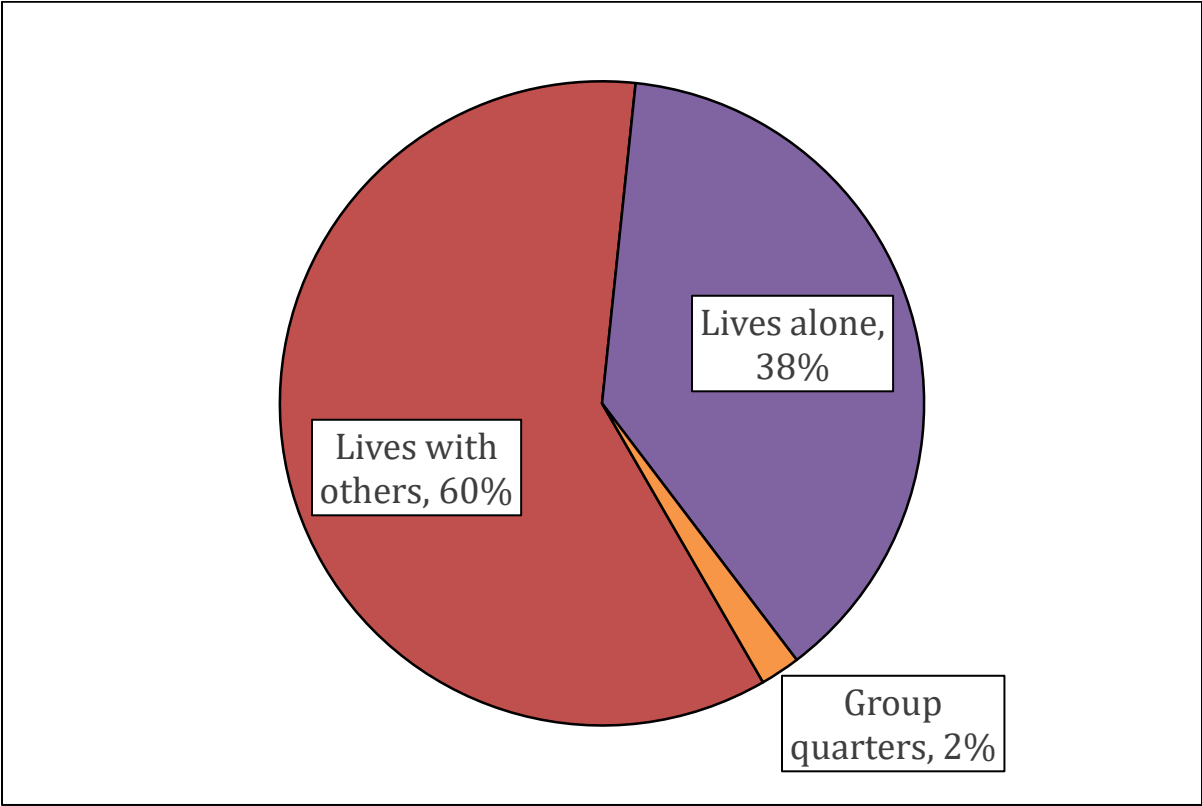
**Figure 9.** Households in Salem with at least one member age 60 or older



*Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014, Table B11006*

An estimated 31% of Salem’s households have at least one individual who is age 60 or older (**Figure 9**). This high proportion, which is likely to increase in the future, may suggest a widespread demand for programs, services, and other considerations that address aging-related concerns, including health and caregiving needs, transportation options, and safe home environments.

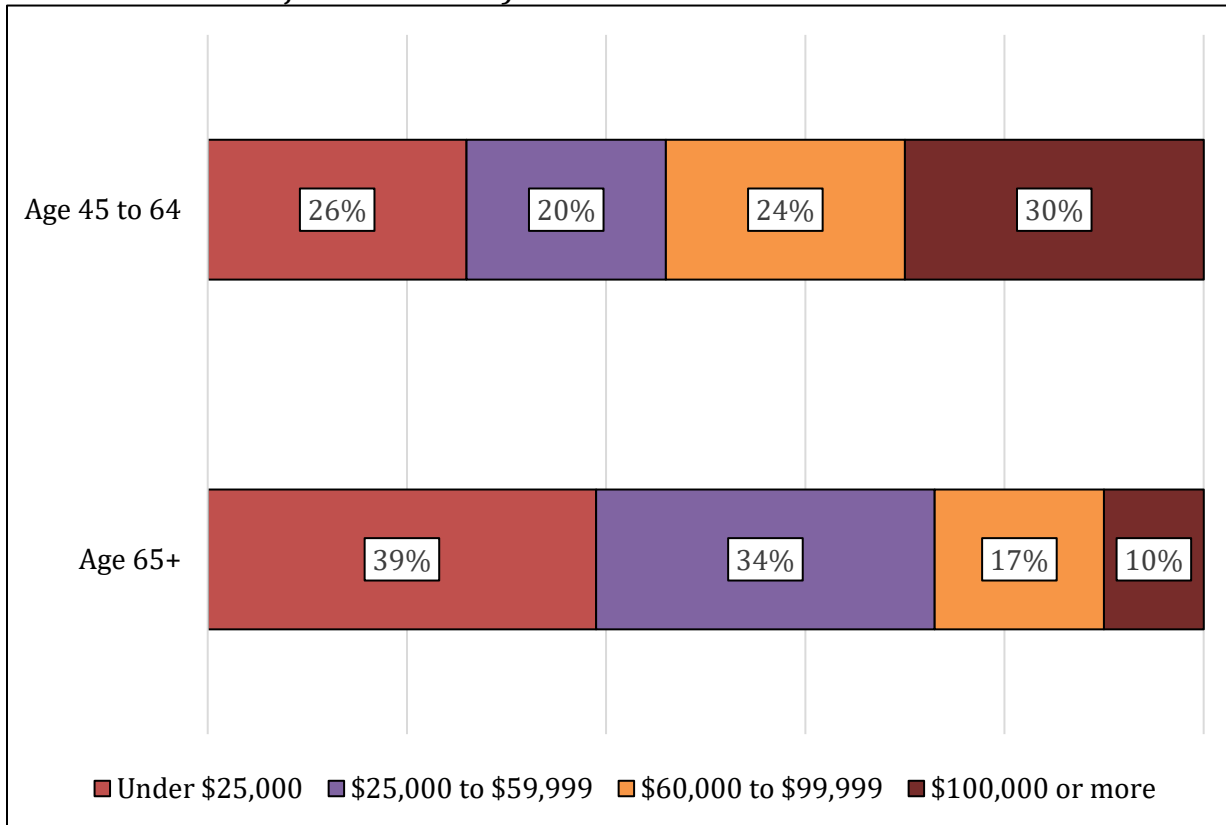
**Figure 10.** Living arrangements of Salem residents, age 65 and older



Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014, Table B09020

Many Salem residents age 65 and older—greater than 1 in 3 (38%) — live alone (**Figure 10**); whereas 60% live in households that include other people, such as a spouse, parents, children, or grandchildren. Just 2% of older Salem residents reside within group quarters. This share of older residents living alone has implications for social isolation and also for the availability of community supports for those without personal support resources.

**Figure 12.** Household income distribution in Salem by age of householder (in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars)



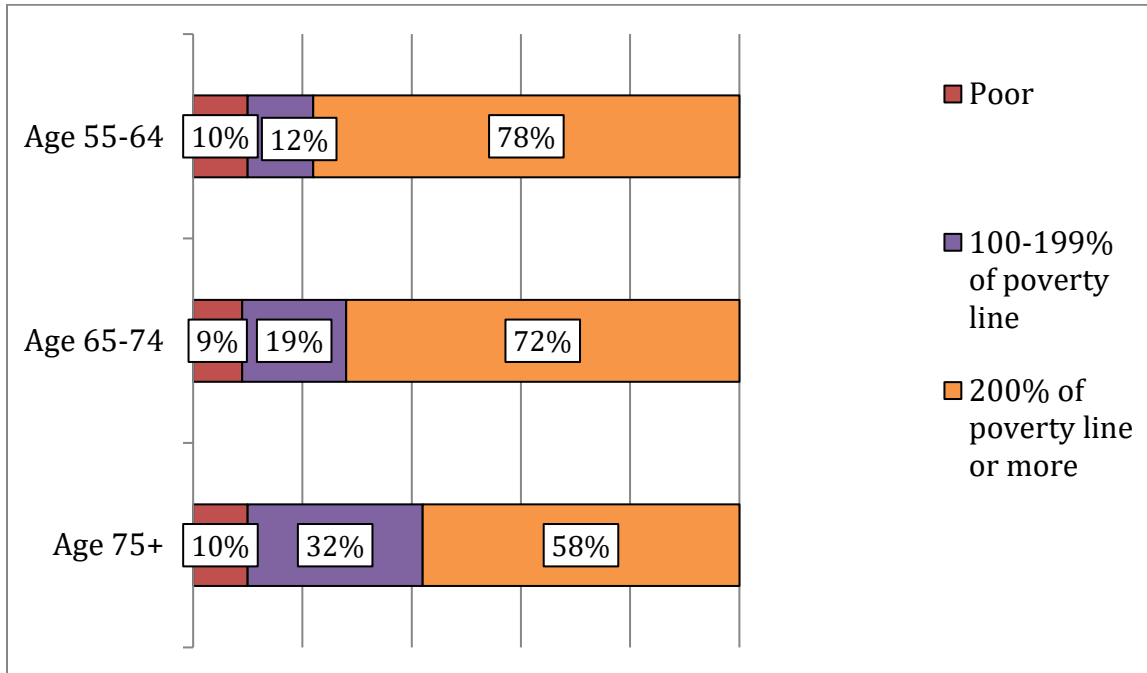
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2010-2014, Table B19037.

Note: Includes only community households, not group quarters such as nursing homes.

The economic profile of older Salem residents relative to younger Baby-Boomers is further illustrated in **Figure 12**, which shows that a many older residents are quite affluent—10% of Salem residents age 65 and older report incomes of \$100,000 or more. By comparison, nearly a third (30%) of households headed by younger residents report this level of income. Nevertheless, 39% of households headed by someone age 65 and older report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with 26% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000. Thus, there is a sizeable segment of Salem’s older population that could be at risk of economic insecurity or disadvantage.

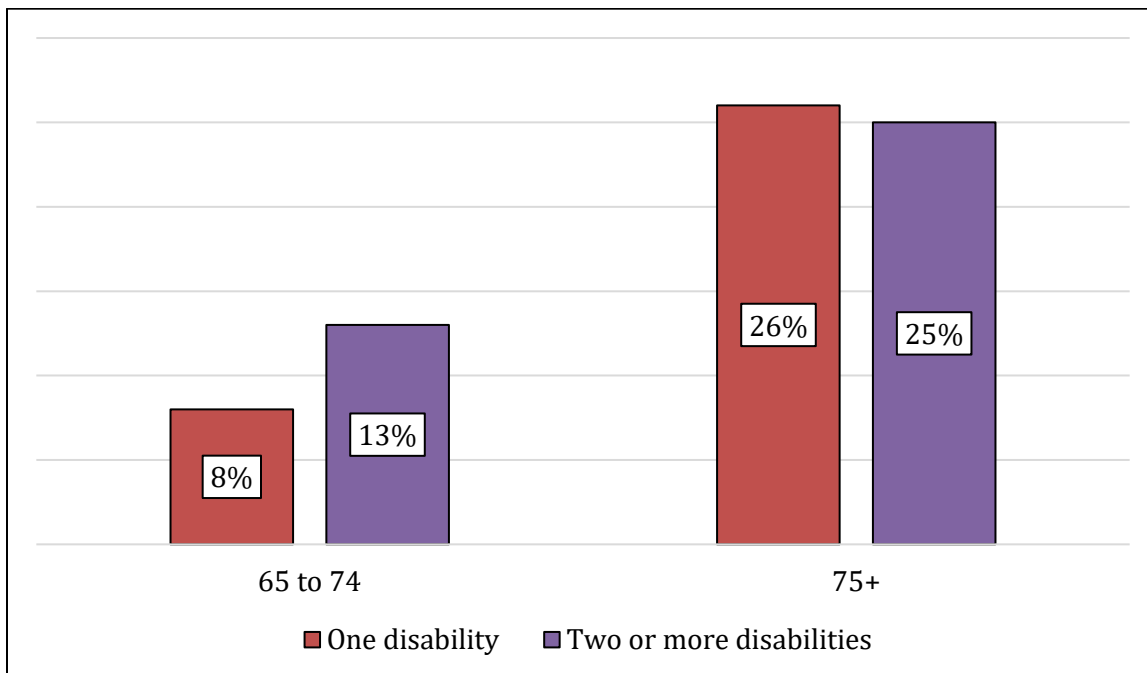
**Figure 13** below shows that poverty rate is about the same across age groups 55+ (at about 10%)—but those age 65-74 and especially those age 75+ are likely to be “near poor” (100-199% of poverty line)

**Figure 13.** Ratio of income to poverty line, by age group



Source: 2010-2014 ACS, Table B17024

**Figure 14.** Percentage of Salem seniors reporting at least one disability, by age group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2011-2013, Table B18108.

The increased likelihood of acquiring disability with age is evident in ACS data. Many older Salem residents age 65 and older experience some level of disability that could impact their ability to function well and independently in their community. **Figure 14** depicts the proportions of older adults who report some level of disability. Among residents aged 65 to 74, about 21% reports at least one disability. The risk of acquiring disability nearly doubles after age 75—in Salem, about 51% of individuals in this age group experience one or more disabilities. These rates of disability are similar to those estimated for Massachusetts as a whole. At the state level, 22% of persons 65 to 74 experience at least one disability, as do 48% of persons 75 and older (not shown).

Among the different types of disability that were assessed in ACS, the most commonly cited by older Salem residents were difficulties with ambulation (difficulty walking or climbing stairs; 24%) and hearing problems (14%); independent living limitations (difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping) reported by 14%; cognitive difficulty (9%); self-care difficulty reported by 9%; and vision problems (4%) (*ACS, 2010-2014, Table S1810*). Individuals who have disabilities may have greater difficulty accessing transportation; thus limiting their ability to participate fully in the community.

### Community Survey—Key Data Points

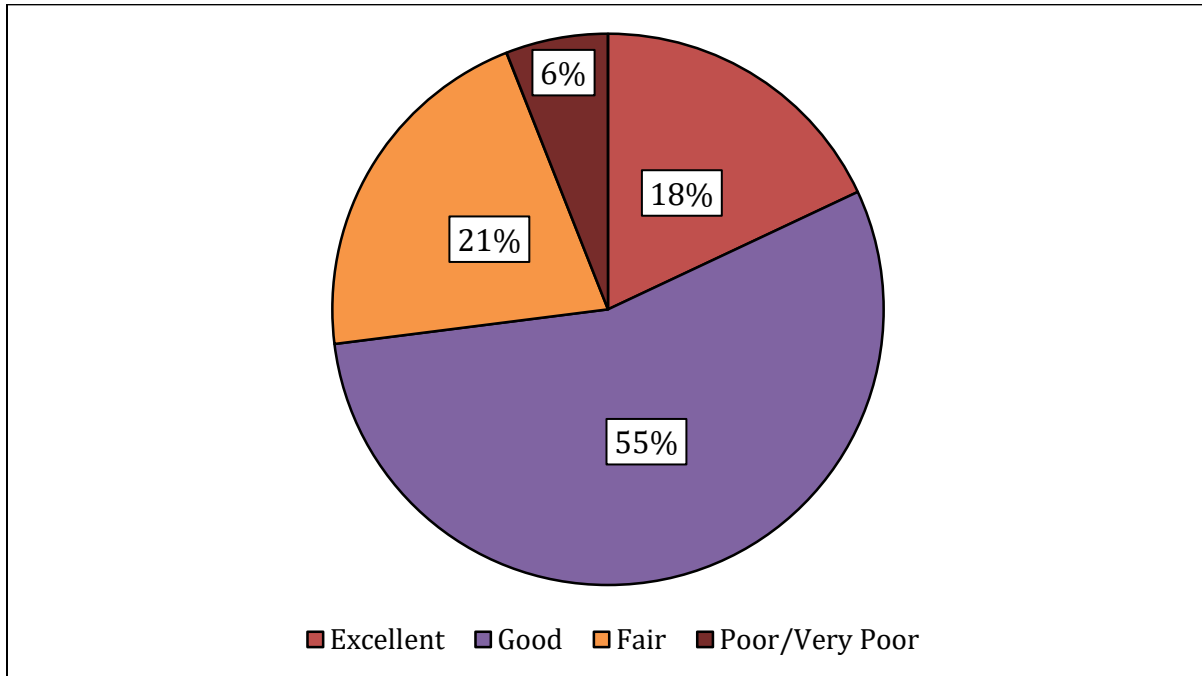
- residents desire to remain living in Salem as they age
- availability of smaller and more affordable housing is important to residents
- many seniors use the Internet regularly to obtain information; but there is an important segment of Salem seniors that do not
- art and cultural programming is of interest to Salem residents; and there is a strong interest in volunteering and being involved in the community
- walkability is an important feature of an age-friendly community for Salem’s seniors

### Respondent Demographics

Over 400 residents age 50+ responded to the community survey, which was conducted by members of the *Salem for All Ages* Leadership Committee (N=443). Nearly 40% of survey respondents reported being age 60 or younger. Most (72%) of respondents were female and over half (52%) reported being married. Many respondents have lived in Salem for long periods of time, in fact, 42% reported living in Salem for more than 30 years and 83% report owning their current residence. Respondents represent a range of income levels, 20% reported annual household income of less than \$40,000 and yet 25% of respondents reported incomes over \$100,000. Although nearly all survey respondents reported using the Internet on a daily basis (94%), among those who completed the survey by-hand, this rate was only 73%. See **Appendix C** for a full report of survey results.

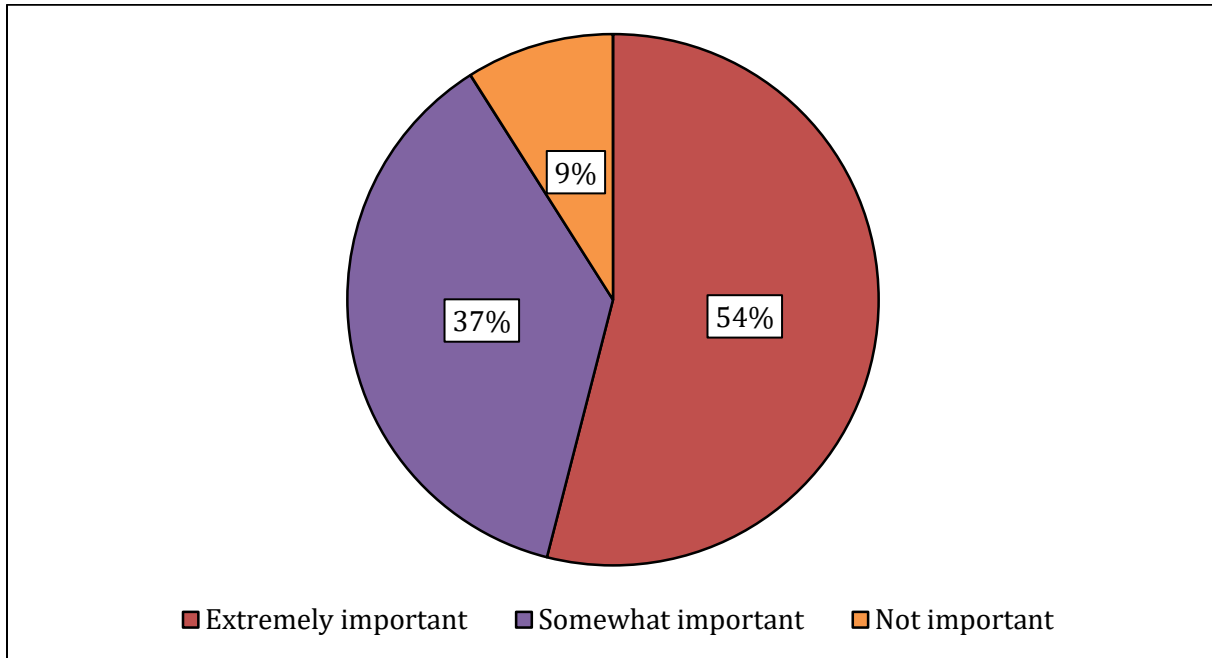
Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents (73%) reported that Salem is an “excellent” or “good” place to live as they age (see Figure 15). This suggests that, overall, Salem is perceived as a good place to age-in-place; but it is important to acknowledge that 27% of respondents rated Salem as only a “fair” or “poor” place to live as they age, which highlights that there is still work to be done in Salem with regards to making it a City that is Age-Friendly for ALL residents.

**Figure 15.** “How would you rate Salem as a place for people to live as they age?”



Over half of survey respondents (54%) reported that it is extremely important to them to remain in Salem as they age (see Figure 16). This result underpins the importance of the *Salem for All Ages* initiative as a mechanism of ensuring that Salem is a safe, engaging and healthy place for residents to remain living in Salem as they desire.

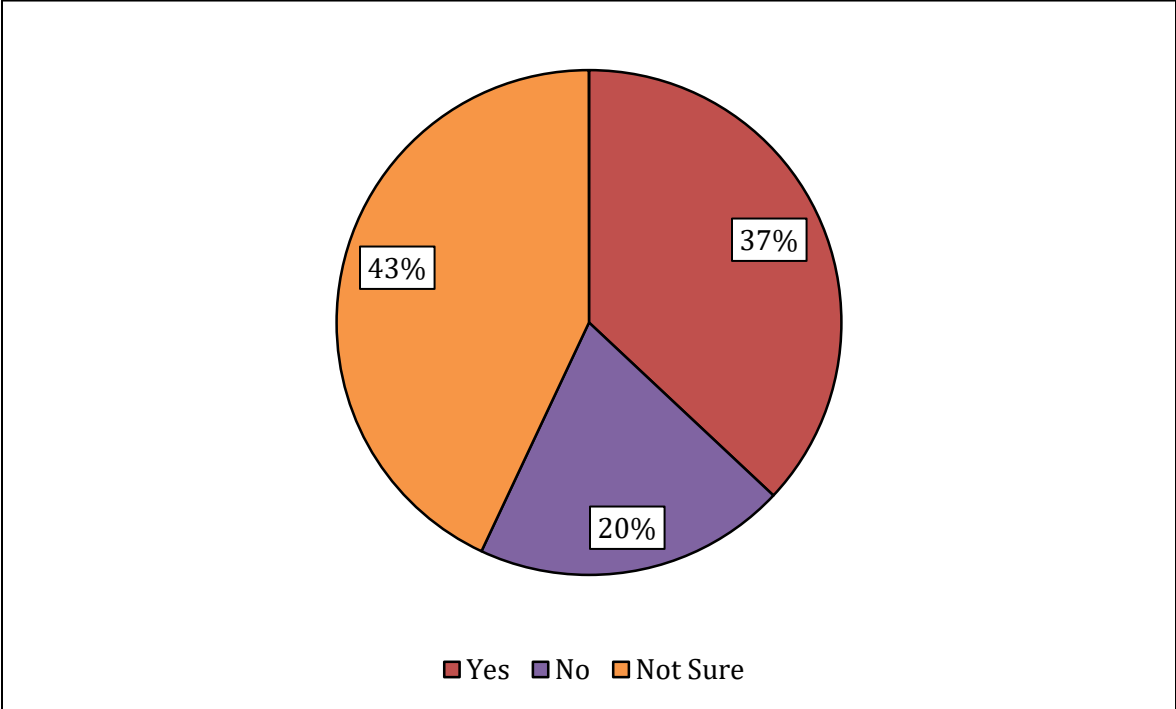
**Figure 16.** “How important is it for you to stay in Salem as you age?”



**Figure 17** displays results from a question about respect and social inclusion among Salem’s seniors. One in every five respondents (20%) reported not feeling that opinions and thoughts of older residents are valued and 43% of respondents felt unsure about this question. Together, these results support the notion that there is a significant fraction of older Salem residents who do not feel confident about their respect and perceived value in the community.

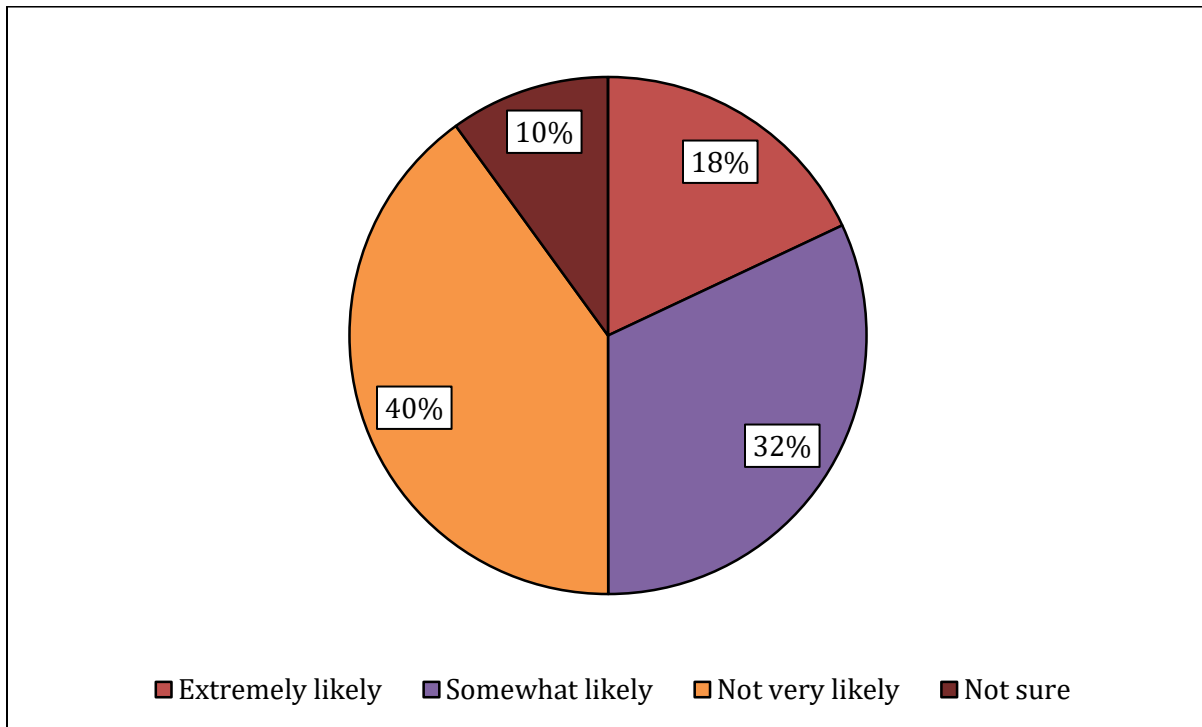


**Figure 17.** “Do you feel that the opinions and thoughts of older adults are valued?”



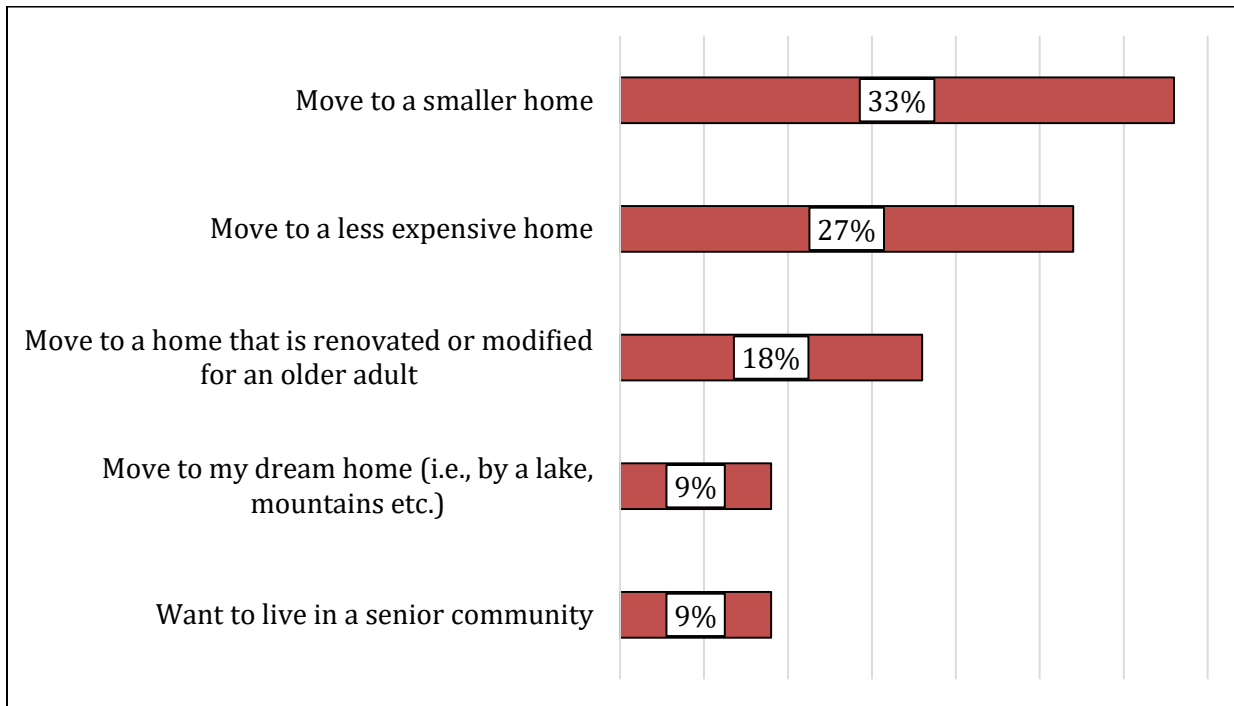
Half of survey respondents reported some likelihood that they would move to a different home in the future (see Figure 18). Specifically, 18% of respondents reported that it is “extremely likely” that they will move to a different home and a larger share (32%) report that a residential move in later life is “somewhat likely”. Considering that 54% of respondents would like to remain in Salem as they age and similarly 50% expect to move to a new home in the future, it is imperative that there are age-appropriate housing options available in Salem.

**Figure 18.** “Thinking about your retirement years, how likely is it that you will move to a different home?”



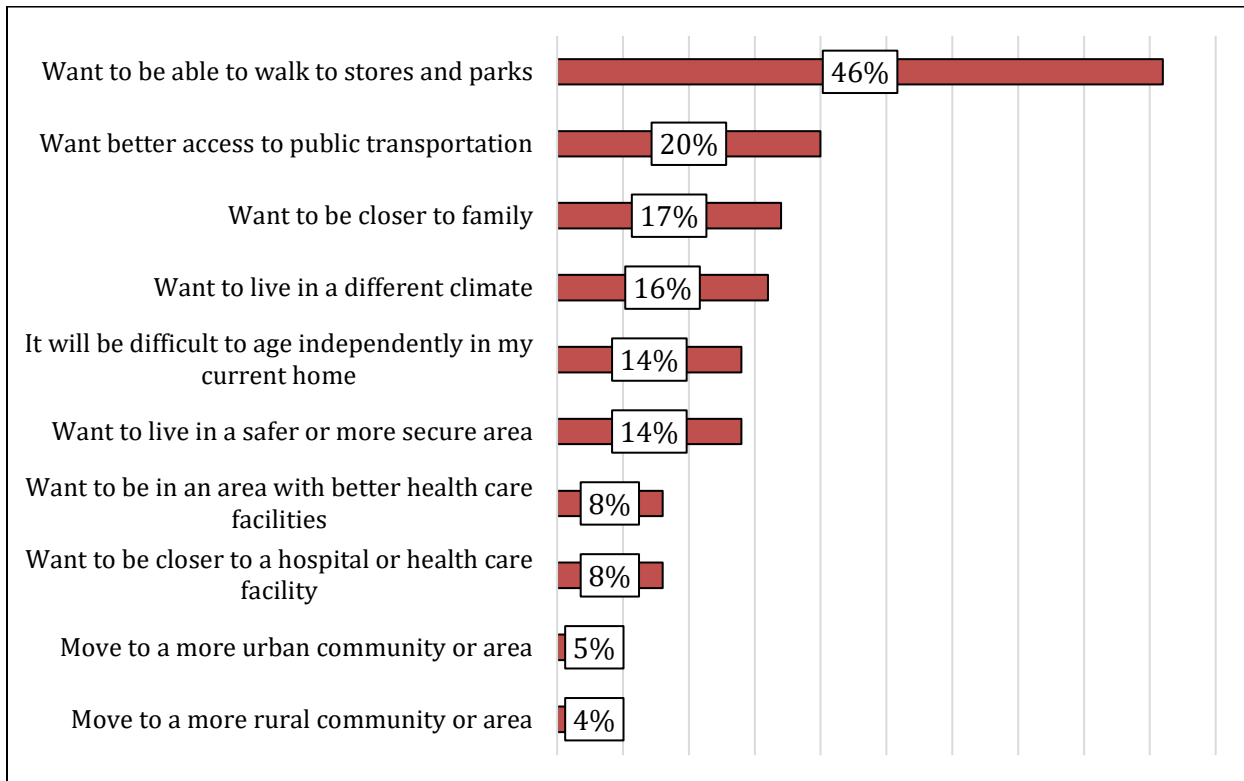
In the same vein, over one-third of survey respondents (33%) report that a desire to move to smaller home would impact their decision and 27% would consider moving to a less expensive home (see Figure 19). This finding further underpins the need for a diverse housing stock in Salem as a way to attract and retain seniors in the City.

**Figure 19.** “If you were considering a move to a new home during your retirement, which of the following factors would impact your decision?”



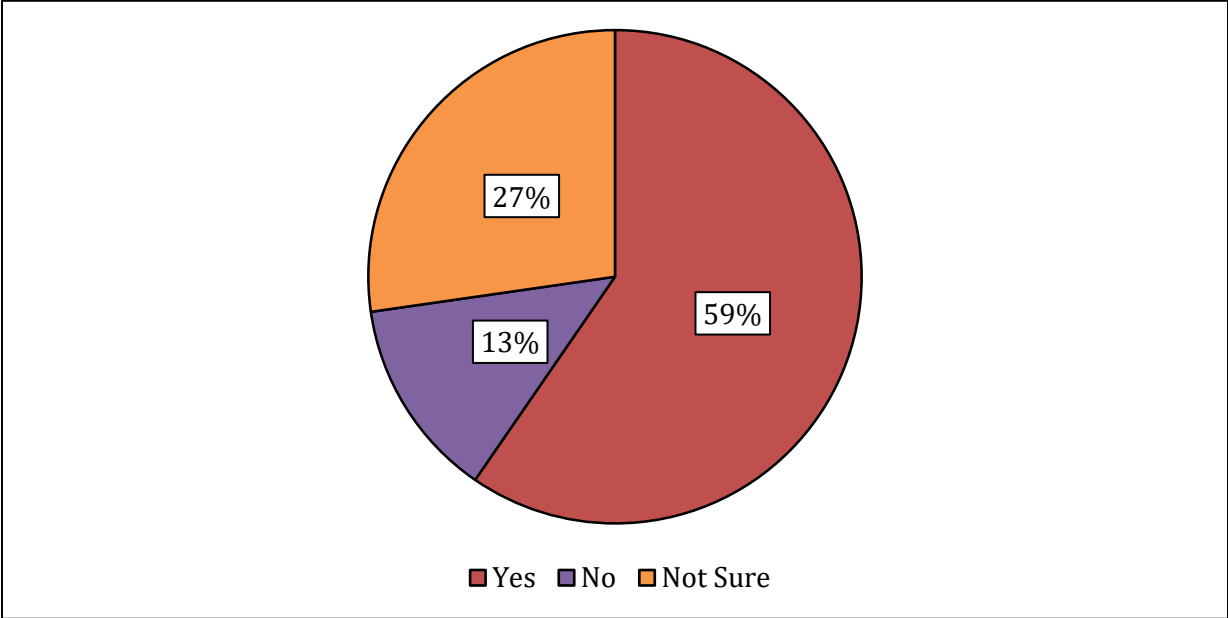
The other factors influencing a residential move in retirement are displayed in Figure 19.1. Salem residents (46%) want to be able to walk to stores and parks if they move to new home in retirement. Access to public transportation is another factor that is important to survey respondents as they consider moving to a new home in later life.

**Figure 19.1** “If you were considering a move to a new home during your retirement, which of the following factors would impact your decision?”



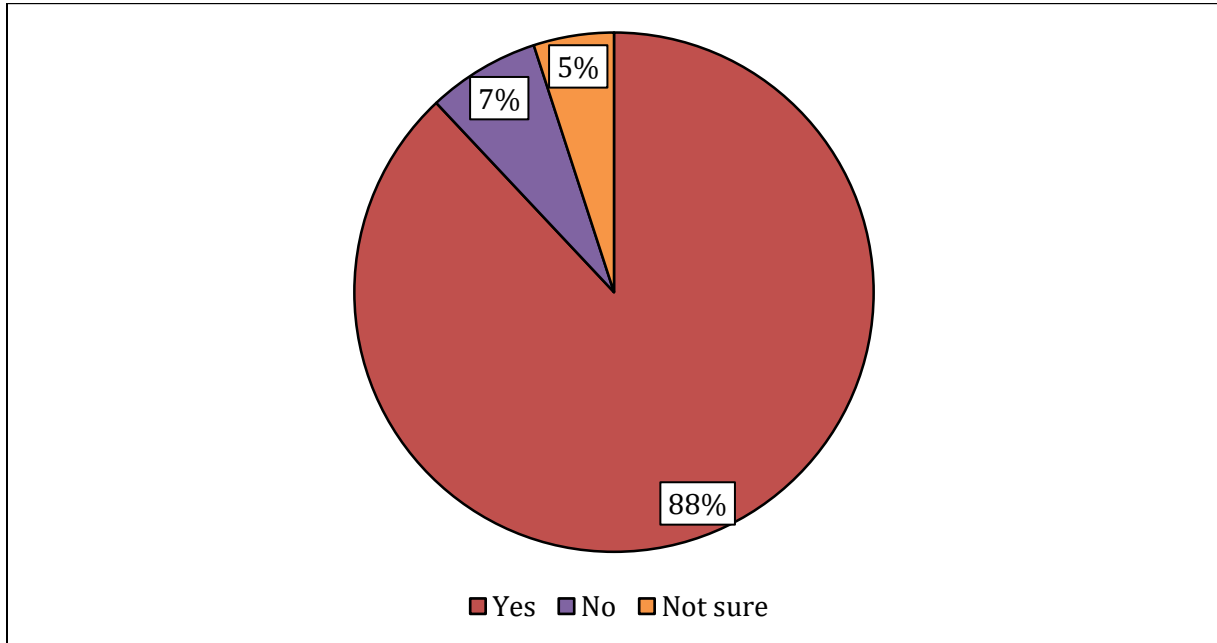
When it comes to social activities in Salem, 59% of survey respondents reported that there are enough social activities (see Figure 20). That being said, 27% report being unsure about the amount of social activities in Salem. One possibility is that information about these activities is not evenly distributed and that instead of creating additional social activities, improving communication about existing opportunities is a more efficient effort within the domain of social participation.

**Figure 20.** “Do you feel there are enough social activities in your community?”



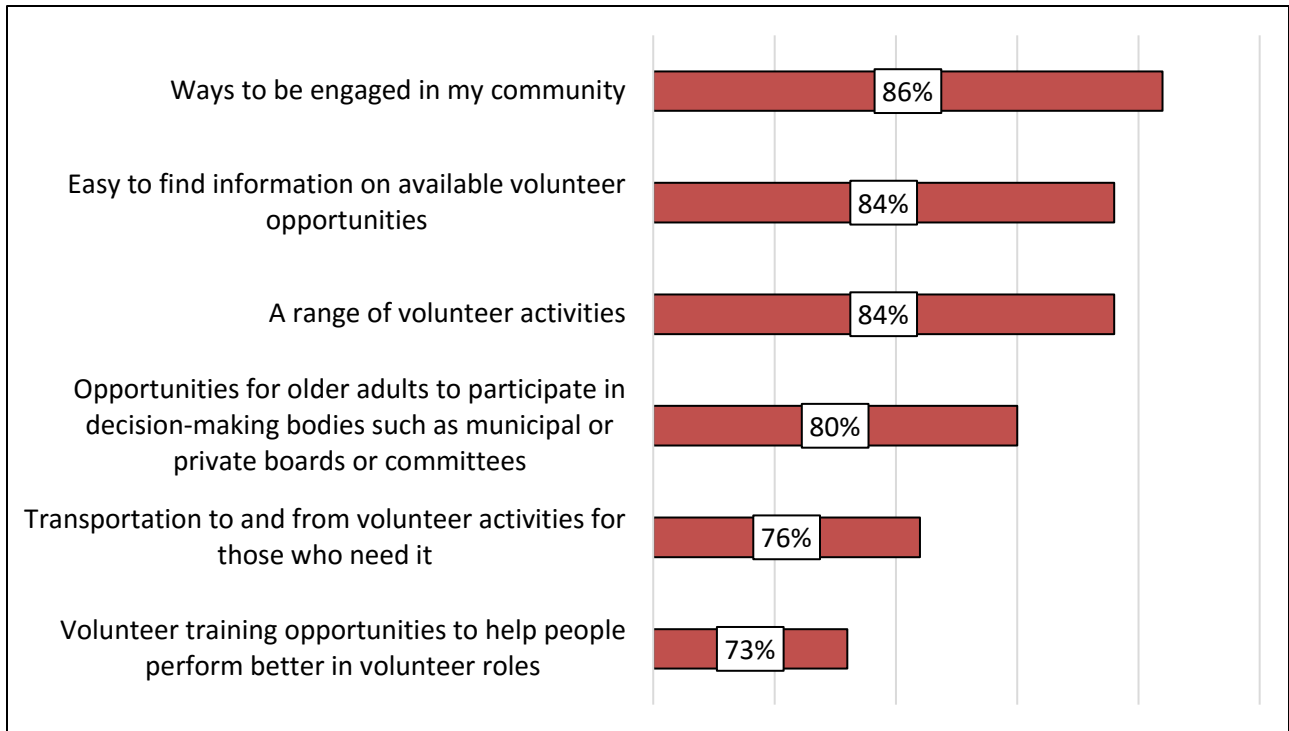
Most survey respondents (88%) reported having someone locally that can be counted on in an emergency situation (see Figure 21). That being said, 12% of respondents reported that they did not have someone to count-on or they were not sure whether they had a reliable social network in the local area. Not only is this an important consideration as the Council on Aging has a particular responsibility to supporting vulnerable and isolated residents of the community; but it is also true that social isolation has a multitude of negative health and well-being consequences (Holt-Lunstad, 2010). Although a small fraction of the population, this group of seniors has a vastly different experience living in Salem as they age.

**Figure 21.** “Do you have friends or family in the area that you can count on in an emergency?”



According to **Figure 22**, there social opportunities related to volunteering and civic engagement are considered important to have in Salem. For example, 84% of respondents report that having a range of volunteer opportunities in their community is important and 80% report that having opportunities to be involved in decision-making in Salem is important to them as residents. These findings indicate that Salem’s seniors are interested in remaining actively engaged in their community and are willing to give their time and talent for the betterment of the community.

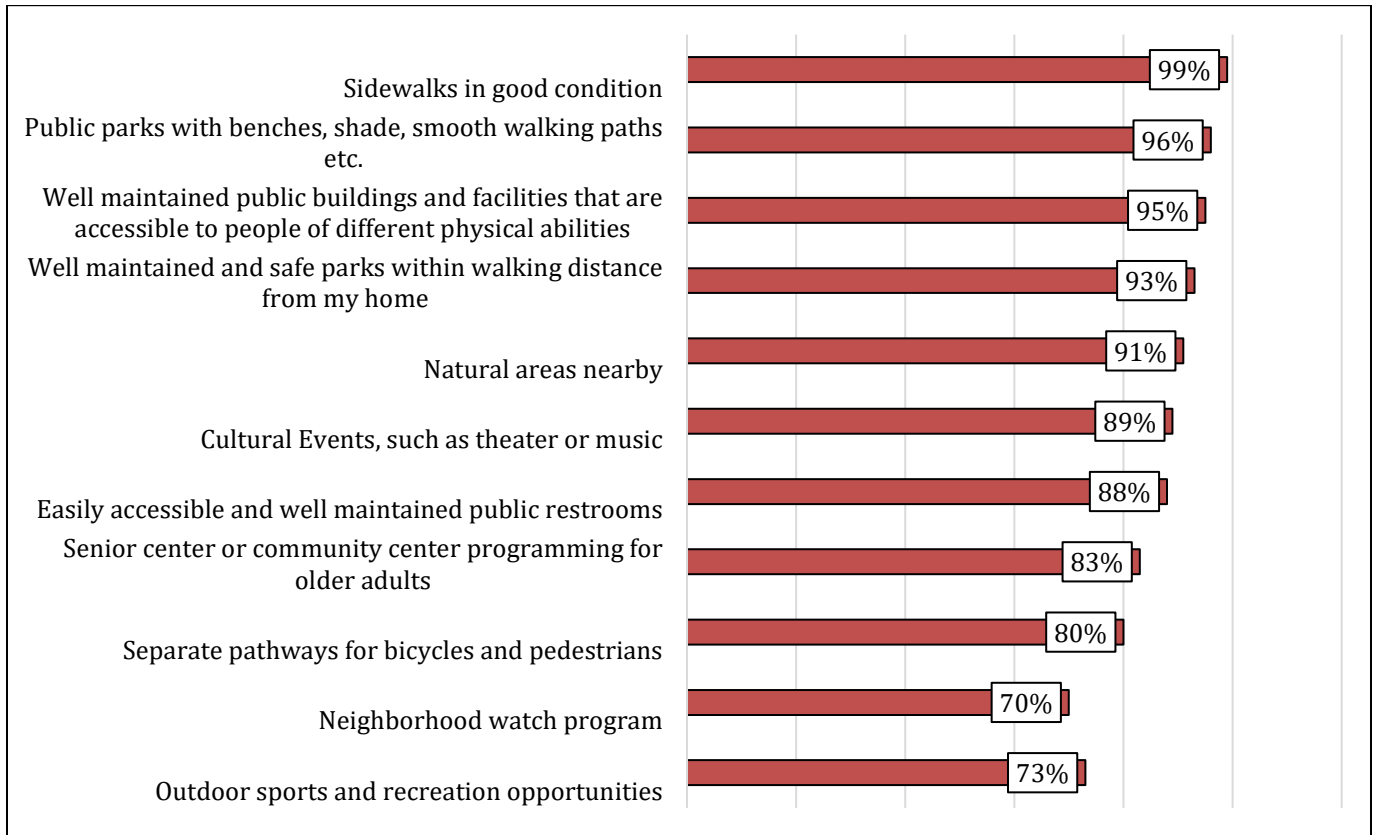
**Figure 22.** “How important is it to you to have the following social opportunities in your community?”



It is clear that outdoor spaces in Salem are not only valued by residents; but that they are also important features of the community to consider in the *Salem for All Ages* initiative. Nearly 100% of respondents reported that having sidewalks in good condition is important to them (**Figure 23**) and 96% of respondents believe that having public parks with benches, shade and smooth walking paths is also an important feature of the community to consider as Salem works to become more This is also supported by **Figure 24** which shows that 99% of survey respondents also place a high-degree of importance on well-maintained streets and intersections. Taken together, preserving Salem’s walkability and expanding walkability to all parts of the City is an appropriate goal of the *Salem for All Ages Initiative*.

Cultural and community programming is also rated as a priority for creating an age-friendly Salem. This includes programming specifically for older adults both within and outside of the COA walls.

**Figure 23.** How important is it to you to have the following public facilities in your community?

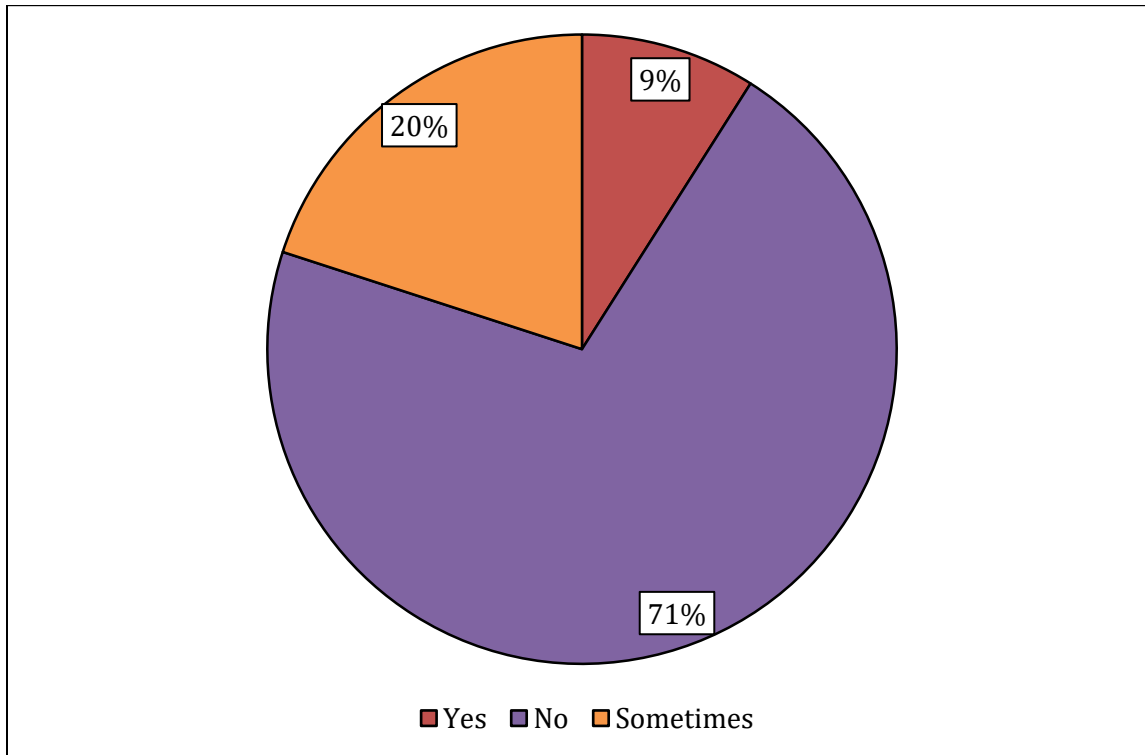


Age-Friendly. Accessibility of buildings for residents of all abilities is considered an important feature by 95% of survey respondents (**Figure 23**).

Age-Friendly. Accessibility of buildings for residents of all abilities is considered an important feature by 95% of survey respondents. When asked about their experiences in Salem, 29% of respondents reported encountering accessibility issues in public buildings (see **Figure 24**).

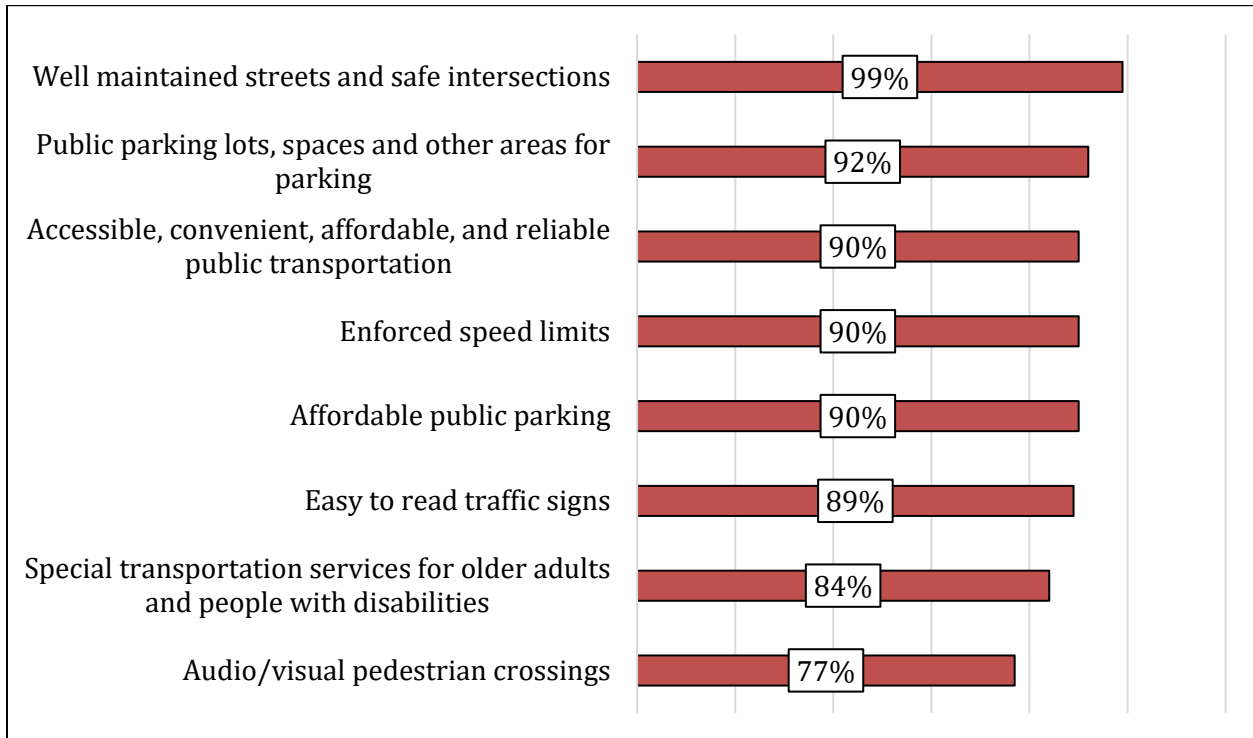


**Figure 24.** “Do you encounter accessibility issues such as no elevator or steep stairs in public buildings like the library or City Hall?”



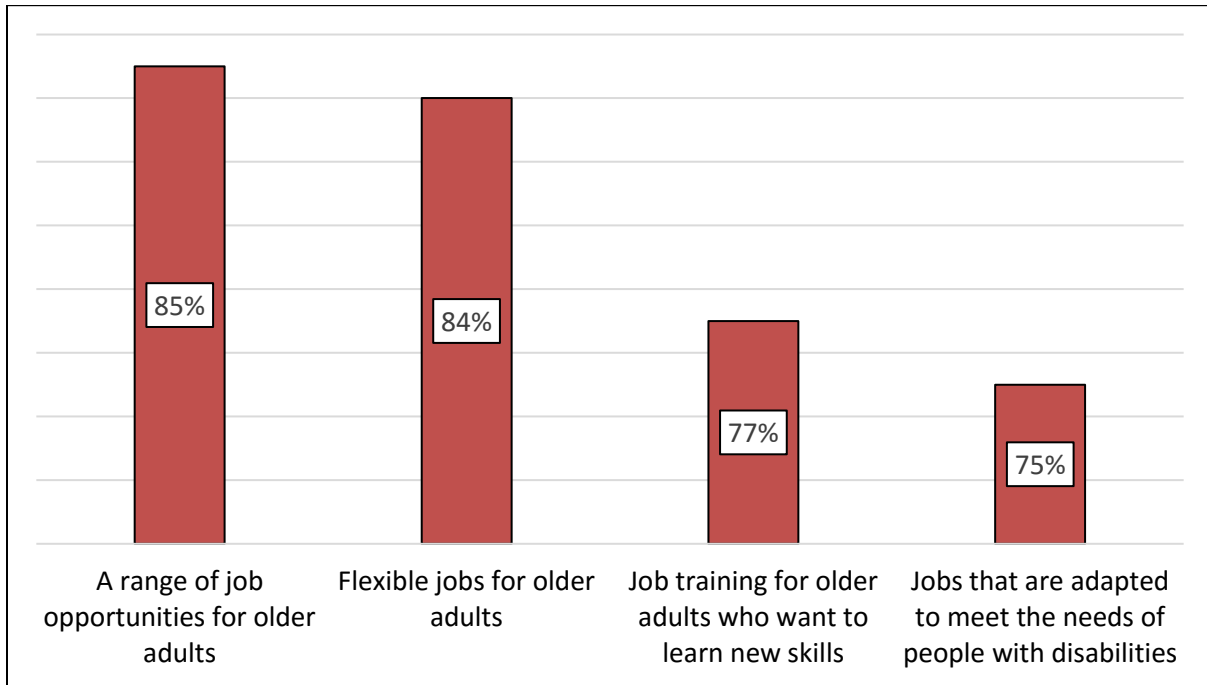
Although 81% of survey respondents reported driving as their primary mode of transport, there are many other aspects of the community that impact transportation. For example, enforced speed limits, affordable public parking and accessible, convenient and reliable public transportation are valued as important features of the community by 90% of survey respondents (see Figure 25).

**Figure 25.** “How important is it to you to have the following transportation services in your community?”



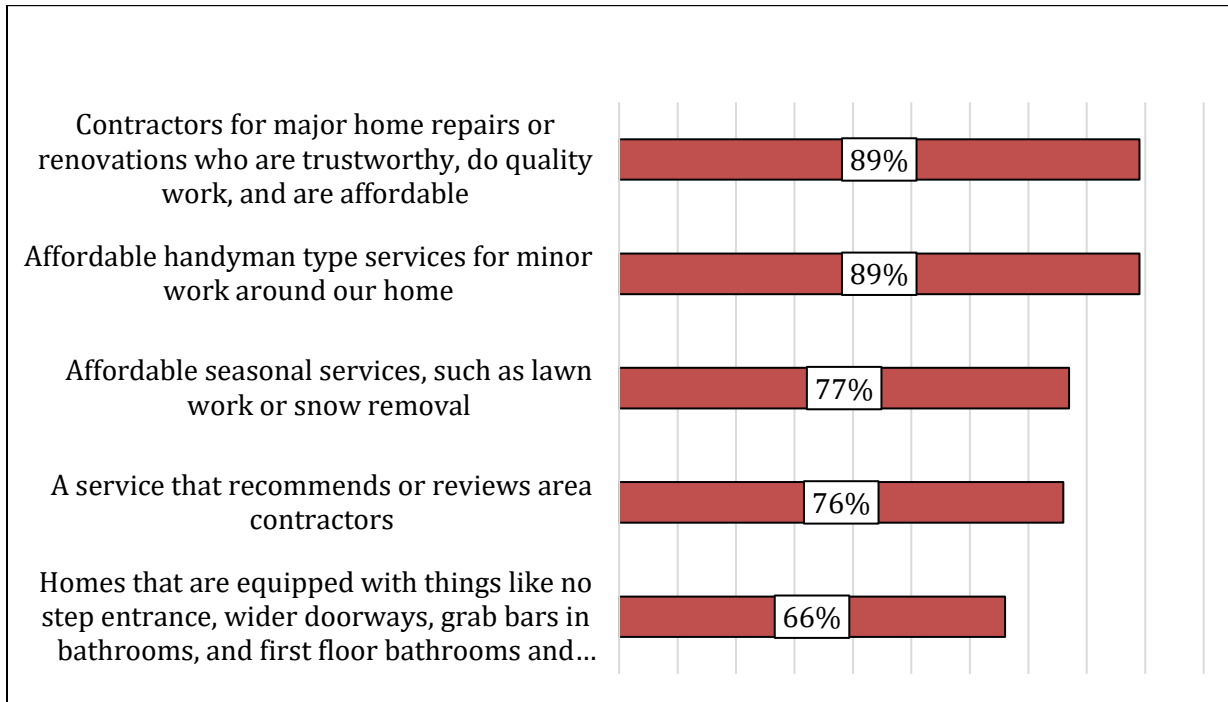
As costs of living in the Commonwealth continue to rise, maintaining some level of involvement in the workforce is increasingly more important to many seniors (see Figure 26). In Salem, 85% of respondents reported that having a range of job opportunities for older adults is important to them and 84% reported that flexibility in these job opportunities is also important. It’s clear that seniors in Salem want to remain engaged and productive and thus creating opportunities that are paid, or come with some other economic benefit, is a natural goal of the *Salem for All Ages* initiative.

**Figure 26.** “How important is it to you to have the following job related opportunities in your community?”



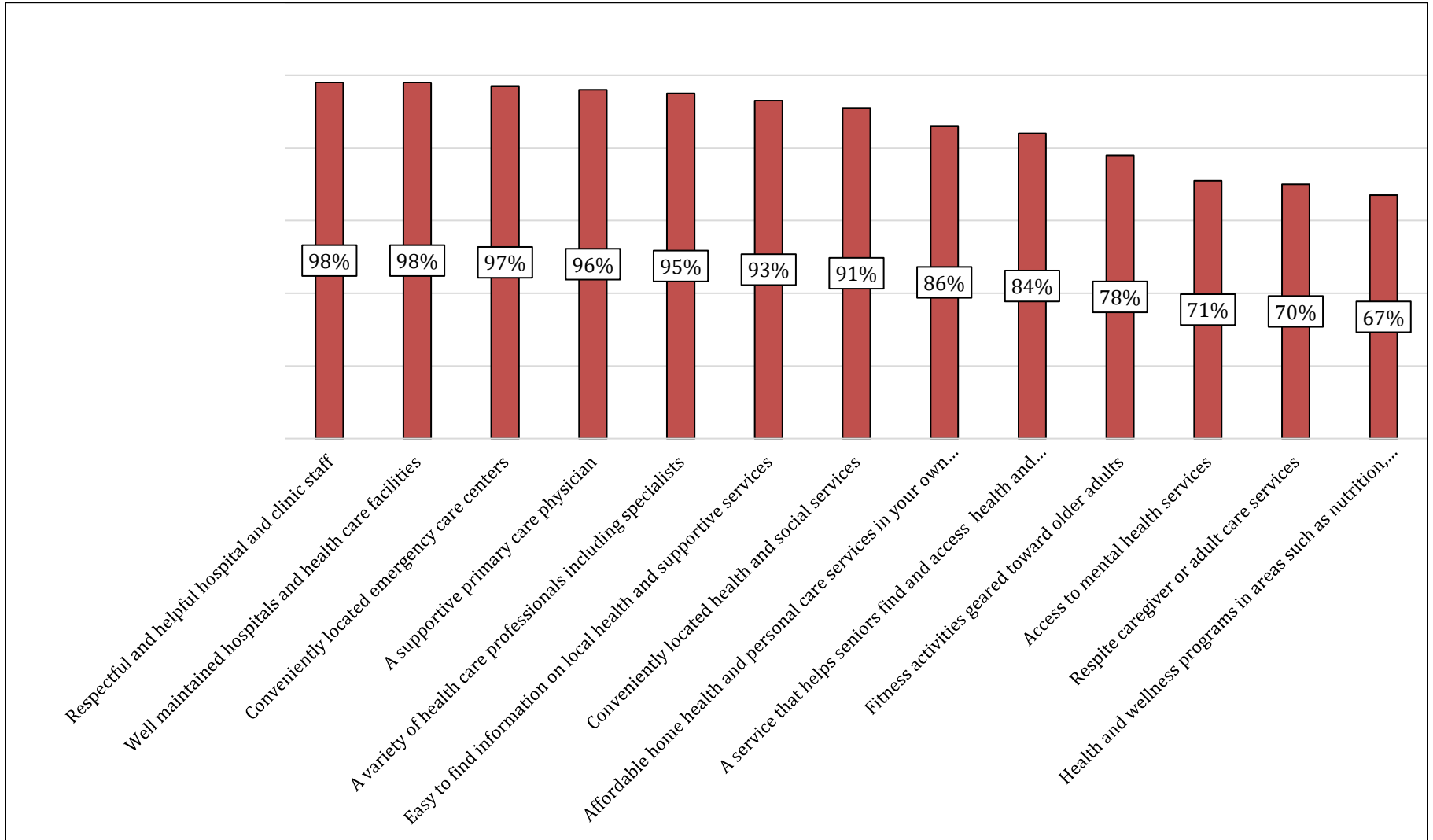
Well-maintained and appropriate housing environments are important features of an Age-Friendly community, and evidence suggests that Salem residents value support in maintaining or modifying their homes in order to age-in-place. Figure 27 indicates that the availability and reliability of contractors and handymen to assist with minor home repair and maintenance is of high importance (89%).

**Figure 27.** “How important is it to you to have the following services in your community?”



Not surprisingly, many aspects of community supports and health services are considered important by Salem residents (see Figure 28). Ninety-eight percent of respondents reported that respectful hospital and clinic staff is important to them as is well-maintained hospitals. Accessibility of these services is also important. For example, information about local services (93%), location of health and social services (91%) and affordable home health services (86%) are among the priorities of Salem residents within this domain of an Age-Friendly city.

**Figure 28.** “How important is it to you to have the following health and wellness services in your community?”



The final survey question was open-ended, “Please use this space to specify an services or other items that you think are important to have in your community as you age, or any other concerns or suggestions you would like planners to think about to make Salem more friendly to older adults”. These responses were reviewed and summarized for major themes (see **Appendix C** for a complete list of responses).

The most acknowledged strength of living in Salem is that it is a wonderful community for its older residents where many people plan to age in place. However, the Age-Friendly domain with the most challenges included Outdoor Spaces & Public Buildings. Within this domain, most participants expressed concerns with Salem’s sidewalks. Out of the 47 recommendations made in this domain, 28 reported the need to improve sidewalks and crosswalks. The second most discussed domain was that of Community Support & Health Services. 26 out of the 45 Community Support & Health Services recommendations reported the need for an updated senior center. Among these recommendations, some participants felt like maintenance of the current senior center was adequate while others thought a new one should be built entirely. Ten out of the 14 recommendations made in the Respect & Social Inclusion domain reported themes of more senior inclusion and eliminating age discrimination. The most common responses about Housing in Salem were recommendations included making housing more affordable, but recommendations regarding Transportation were scattered across three themes of affordability, accessibility and scheduling of Salem’s public transportation system. Four of the 9 recommendations for Communication & Information related to technology, and these responses were divided by the need for increased online outreach and free Internet. All 8 of the recommendations regarding Social Participation reported the need for more senior activities, with half of these recommendations expressing the desire for more intergenerational activities. Lastly, 3 out of 4 recommendations for the domain of Civic Participation & Employment requested more volunteer opportunities and spaces for seniors.

## Focus Group Themes

Focus groups were held in Salem with 1) city department heads, 2) community leaders from a wide range of organizations and 3) a faction of Salem residents representing various neighborhoods within Salem. The purpose of these discussions was to both elicit additional areas of concern for Salem residents as they, and their families, grow up and grow old in Salem as well as to gather ideas for action. Much of the content within these discussions centered on Salem as a place rich in opportunities for involvement and social engagement, including the museums, historical sites, Salem State University and access to Boston. Other themes included evolving safety concerns and accessibility to Salem’s many amenities for older persons and those with disabilities. Key themes, by domain, are outlined below:

Housing: There are limited options for downsizing in Salem. New housing developments are not viewed as affordable or accessible to senior residents. Further, the existing housing stock in Salem is quite old which makes home modifications and repair difficult as well as limits the zoning regulations for things like accessory apartments. The existing public housing for Salem seniors is in need of updates and repair.

Transportation: Although it is easy to get to Boston from Salem on public transportation, it is not easy to get around Salem easily on public transportation. An intra-city transit system was suggested. In addition, driving to Salem is challenging due traffic and parking availability. Discussion of how to leverage taxis and existing ride-sharing services to support seniors' transportation needs was had among the 3 focus groups.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings: The walkability of Salem's downtown and the availability of public parks are a real strength of the City. However, safety and maintenance of sidewalks was a concern voiced by focus group participants. This is particularly true when it comes to snow removal. Finally, issues of public safety were raised by focus group participants with respect to the impact of off-campus college students living in residential areas as well as with the homeless population of Salem.

Community Supports & Health Services: The Council on Aging and local hospitals and health service providers are considered a positive aspect of aging in Salem. Further, the high-quality medical institutions of Boston are accessible. The two themes around unmet need within this domain were the growing need for behavioral health services and creating more linkages between the health and social service systems. For example, focusing on transitional care as a point where the two service systems naturally converge is considered an appropriate starting point for these efforts.

Social Participation: Taking a neighborhood-approach to social participation was suggested as some residential parts of Salem are less connected to the downtown area that is rich with opportunities for recreation and social activity. In addition, to engage older residents who may not venture far from home, this approach provides opportunities for social interaction among neighbors. As far as type of social participation that is needed in Salem, both peer and intergenerational activities were discussed as well as social activities that celebrate the cultural diversity of Salem's residents.

Respect & Social Inclusion: businesses and other service providers are not always attune to the needs of seniors. Generally, American values placed on aging foster ageist views and perceptions among younger generations. The Latino community is an example in which younger generations value their elders and spend a lot their time caring for one another. A consequence is that they are less engaged in the community. Addressing the inclusivity of the Latino population in the *Salem for All Ages* initiative is imperative to addressing this domain.

Communication & Information: Perhaps the most consistent unmet need voiced in all 3 focus groups was the issue of communication. Specifically, a more centralized communication system for seniors was suggested as well as creative ways for promoting the message of Salem as an Age-Friendly community. Making seniors a more visible population in Salem has benefits for the City as a whole.

Civic Engagement & Employment: The volunteer workforce in Salem is viewed as a real asset to the community. Additional opportunities for employment would be useful as well as creating ways for residents to work-off a portion of their property taxes.

## Ongoing Initiatives in Salem

A systematic review of 15 City documents using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) framework was conducted (see **Appendix D** for a complete list of documents included in this analysis). The purpose of this review was to identify areas of action currently taking place in Salem as well as identifying touchpoints by which the *Salem for All Ages* initiative can take hold across sectors of the City and its functions.

A SWOT analysis intended to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats was conducted based on recent reports developed in Salem. Reports reviewed for this analysis include documents relating to community preservation, open space, housing, pedestrian safety, transportation, and other initiatives. The purpose of this activity was to learn from other ongoing efforts about Salem as a community and efforts to improve livability already underway. We also sought to identify points of interface between the age-friendly initiative and other ongoing policy and programmatic efforts.

Through the SWOT analysis we learned that the themes uncovered in our data collection are repeated throughout many local initiatives. An emphasis on protecting the natural amenities and quality of life features is paired with concerns about housing and transportation and communication.

Observations drawn from this document review follow, organized according to the SWOT framework. **Appendix E** outlines these points in more detail. It is important to note that these conclusions are bound by the types of reports included in the analysis and may not reflect a totally complete view of Salem's ongoing initiatives.

### Strengths

- **Parks, beaches, walking trails and outdoor fitness spaces make a positive use of outdoor space and are open to the entire community.** There is ample access to green space, recreational paths, and recreational opportunities. Residents are supportive of projects to beautify and improve existing outdoor spaces and parks.
- **Preservation of historic and cultural resources enhance opportunities for social engagement and continued learning for Salem residents.** The Historic Plan aims to leverage these resources to serve as both an educational tool for fostering greater awareness of Salem's history and culture; but also to understand the role these resources play in future preservation and city-planning efforts.
- **Availability of public transportation to Boston is and surrounding areas is consistent.** Salem's rate of workers commuting to work via public transportation is



higher than the state average, indicating that Salem is a city accessible by public transportation.

- **Local government typically supports people-focused programs; and the city is often characterized by its strong, family-oriented nature.** A wide array of programs and services is available for residents of all ages. Programs available include health clinics, financial counseling, and fitness classes.
- **Local health care facilities provide comprehensive health care services; but also serve as one of the largest employers in the area.** The North Shore Medical Center (NSMC) has two hospital campuses and multiple ambulatory care sites and physician offices, NSMC offers comprehensive care.

### **Weaknesses**

- **Availability of affordable and appropriate housing options in Salem are limited.** Housing represents a cost burden in just over half of elderly non-family households. Over half of Point neighborhood real-estate that has changed ownership since 2000 belongs to non-residents of the Point, and Point neighborhood apartment rentals not only gross an average of 13% less than Salem apartments. New housing development in Salem is primarily market-rate which makes it unaffordable to many Salem residents; and the age of the housing stock also limits the extent to which homes can be updated, modified to added-to in order to become appropriate for seniors to remain aging in their existing homes.
- **Intra-city transportation is scarce and inaccessible by some Salem seniors.** Transportation represents a pervasive need for Salem's seniors, who remain dissatisfied with the current local service provided on the Ride; and there is a lack of information about certain transport services available in Spanish.
- **Information about the availability of programs and supports in Salem is unevenly distributed.** Electronic media is the preferred method of notifications and communications in Salem; but there are segments of Salem's population who do not access online communications or need information translated in other languages.

### **Opportunities**

- **Retail development in Salem creates the potential for growth in the job opportunities in Salem but also in the economic growth of the tourism industry.** Creation of increased retail in the Point neighborhood of Salem comes the potential for more local work, more employees to staff retail spaces, and the potential for

increased tourism. In addition, 47% of visitors to Salem included at least one member of their party age 55 or older.

- **Implementation of supportive housing policies strengthen the social safety net in Salem.** The Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program and the continuation of the Rental Assistance Program will provide opportunities for some of Salem’s vulnerable residents to maintain their places of residence. Reactivation of the Salem Problem Properties Task Force would also provide the opportunity for city inspection of problem properties.
- **Expansion of social participation and inclusion in Salem can be accomplished through reviewing existing social participation opportunities in Salem for their ‘age-friendliness’.** For example, the creation of a Diversity Task Force that addresses issues affecting age, race, ability and sexual orientation can assist with reviewing accessibility of programs and events so that they include people of all ages and abilities.
- **The presence of Salem State University offers a wealth of opportunities for mutually beneficial intergenerational experiences.**

### **Threats**

- **Construction in Salem threatens future development.** through the potential impact of loss of parking, as well as pedestrian safety, due to temporary changes in sidewalk routes which require pedestrians to walk in the street.
- **Access and walkability of Salem is threatened by lack of ADA compliant curbs and the cobblestone and brick pathways.** This is particularly true for adults with mobility impairments and other disabilities.
- **Residents who traditionally drive themselves around Salem may not utilize new transportation options.** If residents are not familiar or comfortable with using public transit, there is a risk that they will not utilize the system, even if substantial improvements are made.

Reflecting on the issues identified through document review in the SWOT analysis indicates that observations made elsewhere in this report align well with ongoing initiatives in Salem. Through this review, it is clear that many opportunities for cooperation exist. Communicating and collaborating around the *Salem for All Ages* initiative can be expected to appeal broadly to numerous coalitions and efforts underway.

## Conclusion

A number of widely shared community goals are evident that Age-Friendly Salem can embrace and support. Improving transportation options is a broadly stated goal that will benefit anyone who cannot drive, does not wish to drive, or requires or prefers a mix of transportation modes. Improving the quality, quantity, and lighting of sidewalks and bike paths will increase livability for all age groups, including older adults, families with children, and virtually every other segment of the population.

Improving housing options across the age span is a clear need in Salem. Study results suggest that additional housing designed for older residents, such as independent living residences, would be welcomed. Increased availability of year-round moderate-rent apartments would benefit any resident who may value or need one-floor living, minimal upkeep demands, or lower housing cost. Wider publicity about programs providing property tax relief, rehab tax credits, and information about home modifications and repairs could be beneficial to residents.

Improving employment options across the age span is widely understood as a goal for the community. Respondents to the survey conducted in Salem understand that the quality of the community for older residents depends in part on the ability to attract and retain younger residents. Increasing the number and quality of jobs that pay wages sufficient to support living in Salem is an important step in stabilizing the age structure of Salem. In identifying this as a goal, Age-Friendly Salem intersects with many other groups and organizations.

The Age-Friendly Salem initiative may also pursue additional goals moving forward. Its framework identifies intergenerational programming as a means of increasing mutual respect across age groups, and part of an effort to enhance livability for residents of all ages. Value is attached to intergenerational programming by other organizations, as shown through the SWOT analysis. Age-Friendly Salem may wish to partner with other initiatives sharing those goals as a means to multiply intergenerational programs and opportunities. These and other partnerships may also be beneficial in continuing to work to offset the “generational equity” concern. Meaningful differences between the older residents of Salem and their younger counterparts were noted throughout this report, including differences in perceived levels of respect, involvement, and engagement. Age-Friendly Salem can take a leadership role in ensuring broad access to information and community assets, leveling the field for residents of different age groups, and alleviating the perception of inequity.

Access to information and communication is highlighted as a key domain in the age-friendly framework, and our study revealed important differences in the extent to which different age groups feel informed, and the ways in which they prefer to seek information. Moving forward, preferences for sources of information may converge; specifically, older adults are expected to be more frequent and proficient users of electronic media in coming decades. For now, disseminating information through print as well as electronic media remains an important goal for which Age-Friendly Salem can advocate. In the community survey, the Salem COA was cited as a trusted resource and source of information for older residents. Continuing to protect this community asset is important moving forward. Expanding

awareness of the Age-Friendly Salem Initiative itself is a valued goal that will support its expanding impact moving forward.

Additional goals that Age-Friendly Salem may wish to consider are drawn from the study results, all of which relate to needs across the life span:

- The Initiative may wish to advocate for more public restrooms. This is a clear need expressed by survey respondents of all age groups; important to older adults as well as younger residents.
- Improving awareness of abuse in the community, along with resources and supports available in the community to respond to abuse, is a potentially important goal for the Initiative. Abuse occurs across all age groups, and a lack of awareness was evident in the community survey.
- Promoting and expanding caregiver support programs could be broadly beneficial to residents. Midlife residents are especially likely to be providing care for an [older adult] but this experience is widely reported across age groups; moreover, it is widely characterized as stressful among participants.
- Additionally, promoting and advertising programs that help people modify their homes could be beneficial. A segment of younger and older residents alike report needing home repairs or modifications; younger residents are especially likely to report not being able to afford needed repairs.

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## **Appendix A. Age Friendly Designation Survey**

(SEE ATTACHED)

## **Appendix B. *Salem for All Ages* Survey Report JFCS**

(SEE ATTACHED)

## **Appendix C. Community Survey Results**

(SEE ATTACHED)

## Appendix D. Documents included in SWOT analysis

Report	Year
<b>1. Community Development Block Grant Action Plan</b>	2016
<b>2. Housing Needs &amp; Demand Analysis</b>	2016
<b>3. Athletic and Recreation Facilities Needs Survey</b>	2015
<b>4. Best Practices: Outdoor fitness parks</b>	2015
<b>5. Consolidated Annual Performance/Evaluation Report</b>	2015
<b>6. Historic Preservation Plan</b>	2015
<b>7. Destination Annual Report Highlights</b>	2015
<b>8. North Shore Medical Center Report</b>	2015
<b>9. Senior Transportation Study</b>	2015
<b>10. Walk Audit</b>	2015
<b>11. Parks, Playgrounds and Open Space Map</b>	2014
<b>12. Commercial Corridors Revitalization Plan</b>	2014
<b>13. Pedestrian Signal Timing Study Report</b>	2014
<b>14. Pedestrian &amp; Bike Access Study</b>	2013
<b>15. Point Neighborhood Vision and Action Plan</b>	2013



## Appendix E. SWOT Matrices, by domain

Housing	
Strengths	Weaknesses
There is a robust rental market in Salem that provides housing opportunities for new and existing residents of all ages.	Housing represents a cost burden in both elderly and non-elderly households.
Opportunities	Threats
Housing policies continue to focus on supporting residents in maintaining their current places of residence. For example, the implementation of the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program in FY17, which provides technical and financial assistance to Salem homeowners who wish to eliminate health and safety violations and the Rental Assistance Programs, which assist low- and very low-income residents pay security deposits or temporary subsidized rents. Developments, and multifamily housing.	Absentee landlords pose a threat to maintaining quality and safety of rental properties throughout Salem.
	Continued development of high-cost or market-rate condominiums creates a barrier to affordable housing alternatives for Salem’s senior population.

Transportation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Salem’s rate of workers commuting to work via public transportation is higher than the state average, indicating that Salem is a city accessible by public transportation. Salem’s COA also provides van transportation on a regular schedule.	Transportation represents a pervasive need for Salem’s seniors, who remain dissatisfied with the current service provided on the Ride; Further, there is a lack of information about certain transport services available in Spanish.
Opportunities	Threats
Transportation recommendations targeted towards Salem’s senior and disabled residents include expanding COA van transportation hours and increasing the number of bus stops to every 30 minutes, while extending the MBTA’s red line into the Point is viewed as an opportunity to boost local development and connect with the rest of Salem.	Walking and driving are the primary modes of travel in Salem—not public transportation.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Salem’s parks, beaches, walking trails and outdoor fitness spaces make a positive use of outdoor space and are open to the entire community;	Maintenance and updating of Salem’s outdoor spaces is an ongoing challenge. For example sidewalk surface imperfections, unpaved walkways, lack of benches, steep sidewalk grades, and insufficient wait time at signalized crossings are among features needing improvement. Similarly, in parks insufficient lighting and water fountains in parks, lack of public restroom facilities, and insufficient park security, especially at night.
The majority of occupied local buildings are perceived to be well-maintained.	
Opportunities	Threats
Current planning opportunities to improve Salem’s <b>outdoor spaces</b> focus on maintaining its existing parks, open spaces and trails instead of creating new ones.	Current construction threatens the availability of parking as well as pedestrian safety, due to construction-related changes sidewalks which require pedestrians to walk in the street.
Building priorities include an indoor recreational facility and improved building structure facades. The Reactivation of the Salem Problem Properties Task Force would provide the opportunity for city inspection of problem properties.	Another threat to safety in Salem is its high crime index value.

Community Supports & Health Services	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Salem’s outdoor fitness spaces provide residents with free fitness equipment, some of which benefit seniors by promoting balance and flexibility, skills that help prevent falls; Salem also receives care from North Shore Medical Center, the area’s largest healthcare provider, as one of its principal communities. Salem’s total cancer mortality rate is significantly lower than that of nearby municipalities and the state average.	Areas of unmet need in Salem appear to be mental and behavioral health care as well as support and resources for caregivers in Salem.
Opportunities	Threats
Many social services exist in Salem. Things like medical and outreach supportive Services, food delivery program; the plethora of Council on Aging programs including transportation and art programs. The creation of a resource or community center could Salem benefit residents of all ages, and the planned building of a local senior center could provide a safe place for Salem’s seniors.	Salem has high rates of premature mortality, age-adjusted cardiovascular mortality, and breast cancer mortality compared to state and area averages, as well as rates of age-adjusted diabetes- and asthma-related emergency room visits that exceed local and state averages; Salem’s uninsurance rates also exceed state rates.

### Communication and Information

Strengths	Weaknesses
Lack of information about senior and public transportation options is available to residents who speak languages other than English.	There is a lack of information about bus service available to Salem residents in Spanish.
Opportunities	Threats
Information should be made more available and accessible to Salem residents in English and Spanish: Transportation information should be available on the Salem webpage, a map of service providers such as COA services, transportation services, and educational opportunities should be created and distributed, and materials listing affordable housing opportunities and resources should be made accessible.	Electronic media is the preferred method of notifications and communications in Salem.

Social Participation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
The Historic Preservation Plan Update distills information about Salem's historic resources into a report which represents a town educational tool to enhance town awareness about its history and a guide for future preservation efforts.	Less than 20% of Salem's parks have community programs available to the public.
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunities to foster social participation in Salem include implementation of additional activities in local parks and open spaces to expand knowledge and access to the Point's natural resources; the setup of fitness clusters in parks in which several pieces of equipment are put together, which gives residents the opportunity to socialize while exercising; and the marketing and publicity of existing Point assets such as local retail and dining destinations.	

Social Respect and Inclusion	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Salem's local government typically supports programs targeted towards both population groups such as senior, disabled, and minority residents, as well as local low- and moderate-income households, and the city is often characterized by its strong, family-oriented nature.	There are significant challenges that affect Salem's accessibility to residents with disabilities, such as crossings that lack audible walk signal tones, a lack of ADA-compliant curb ramps and pathways.  There lacks a systematic effort to reach immigrants and those who do not speak English as their first language.
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunities to increase social respect and inclusion in Salem include the creation of a Diversity Task Force.  The development of a Community Life Center also provides an opportunity for centralized gathering of Salem's residents and serving as a hub of information and outreach for ALL residents of Salem.	The sheer breadth of Salem's racial, ethnic and linguistically diverse population poses challenges to inclusion of ALL persons. In addition, unemployment and poverty among some Salem residents also act as a threat to full inclusion of low-income seniors and young families.  The presence of the University may impose an imbalance of age groups has potential to create a "generational equity" problem in which members of one generation view the other as holding the power/resources in the community.

Civic Participation & Employment	
Strengths	Weaknesses
The unemployment rate for Salem seniors is less than half the rate of any other age group.	
Opportunities	Threats
Increased retail business in Salem brings the potential for more local work for residents of all ages.	Bridging the language gap facing many Salem residents is a critical component to job training.
Additionally, employment and paid volunteer opportunities for seniors is important to residents and serves as an opportunity for action.	