



## **YEAR 4: 2020**

*“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 of our residents, no matter their age or ability.” -Mayor Kim Driscoll*

**City of Salem**

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93 Washington Street  
Salem, MA 01970

[www.SalemForAllAges.org](http://www.SalemForAllAges.org)

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*“In Salem, we’re thoughtful about how we approach the future.”*

*-Mayor Kim Driscoll*

## About Salem for All Ages

### How We Got Here

In November 2016, the City of Salem formally submitted its age-friendly action plan, *Salem for All Ages*, to the AARP and the World Health Organization. The process of preparing that plan started earlier that year, when the City was accepted into the AARP’s national network and WHO global network of Age Friendly communities, becoming the first City on the North Shore to join and only the third in the Commonwealth.

To help prepare the action plan, the City worked closely with experts from the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging at the Gerontology Institute of the University of Massachusetts Boston. Working with a team comprised of City officials, local volunteers, and other stakeholders, the plan was developed based on an exhaustive document review of existing City plans and reports, a community survey completed by over 400 Salem residents over the age of 50, three focus groups, and multiple public listening sessions and convenings throughout the community. In December, AARP and WHO notified the City that they had accepted the plan and that implementation could get underway.

### What Is In The Plan

The *Salem for All Ages* Action Plan establishes a vision, based on the research completed during the study process and public input, that focuses on what AARP and WHO called the “eight domains” of an age-friendly community:



Within each domain, a vision statement for the future of an Age-Friendly Salem is described, following a series of recommendations to achieve that vision. Within

each recommendation there are corresponding action steps for the City and its partners to fulfill the recommendations and achieve the vision for that domain.

Implementation of the action steps falls to the Salem for All Ages Task Force, a group of individuals representing City departments, local agencies, community residents, and nonprofit organizations, which meets monthly to review the status of their work. Guidance for the Task Force's priorities and focus is provided by the Salem for All Ages Leadership Council, comprised of community leaders and elected officials, which meets twice yearly to hear from the Task Force and provide feedback and recommendations.

### **Completion of Year 4**

This report provides the final summaries from the Task Force's subcommittees, which have been working on implementing or preparing for implementation of the action items selected to address in 2020, the fourth year of the Salem for All Ages initiative. Some action items were begun in 2020, but not completed; in those cases, the groundwork that was laid for that item in 2020 will serve as a basis for the continuation of work into Year 5 in 2021. Other action items remain ongoing on a permanent basis for the duration of the initiative.

### **Looking Ahead**

Finally, this report provides a look ahead at the planned goals and action items for Year 5 of Salem for All Ages. While much of the Task Force's efforts in Year 5 will be the continuation of prior years' actions, there are opportunities for new action items to be added to the group's agenda. With input and recommendations from the Salem for All Ages Leadership Council, the Task Force intends to add new action items for 2021 to its work.

## **Salem for All Ages Task Force**

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### **Task Force Co-Chairs and Communications Subcommittee**

- Dominick Pangallo – Chief of Staff, Office of Mayor Kimberley Driscoll
- Patricia Zaido – former Executive Director, Salem Partnership

### **Health Subcommittee**

- Kerry Murphy, Chair – Health and Wellness Coordinator, Salem Health Department
- Kelley Annese – Nutrition Coordinator, Salem Council on Aging
- Terry Arnold – Director, Salem Council on Aging
- Deborah Colbert – Registered Nurse, North Shore Elder Services
- Sharon Felton – Social Worker, Salem Council on Aging

### **Transportation Subcommittee**

- David Kucharsky, Chair – Director, Salem Department of Traffic & Parking
- Jay Carroll – Assistant Engineer, Salem Engineering Department
- Russell Findley – Mobility Coordinator, Salem Department of Traffic & Parking

### **Respect, Social Participation & Inclusion Subcommittee**

- Tara Mansfield, Chair – Director, Salem Public Library
- Laura Assade – Constituent Services Director, Office of Mayor Kimberley Driscoll
- Amy Everitt – Professor, Salem State University
- Alyssa Jones – Human Rights Campaign
- Ellen Soares – Docent Program Manager, Peabody Essex Museum

### **Housing Subcommittee**

- Deborah Tucker, Chair – Assistant Executive Director, Salem Housing Authority
- Amanda Chiancola – Staff Planner, Salem Dept. of Planning & Community Development
- Diane Moses – Housing Advocate, North Shore/Merrimack Valley Elder Services
- Rosa Ordaz – Resident Services & Community Engagement, Harborlight Community Partners
- Emily Ullman – Director of School & Community Partnerships, Salem Public Schools

### **Accessible Infrastructure Subcommittee**

- Debra Lobsitz, Chair – Chair, Salem Commission on Disabilities
- Deborah Barber – Director, Disability Resource Center
- Patricia O'Brien – Director, Salem Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Community Services

## **Salem for All Ages Leadership Council**

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### **Chairperson**

- Kim Driscoll – Mayor, City of Salem

### **Leadership Council**

- Margaret Brennan – Executive Director, North Shore Community Health Center
- Linda Coffill – Chair, Salem Council on Aging Board
- Jeff Cohen – Chair, Salem No Place for Hate Committee
- Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Salem
- Elizabeth Debski – Executive Director, Salem Partnership
- Rosaleen Doherty – Owner, Right at Home
- Kate Fox – Executive Director, Destination Salem
- Cathy Hoog – Executive Director, Salem Housing Authority
- Judith Kane – Administrator, Brookhouse Home
- John Keenan – President, Salem State University
- Dennis King – Acting Chief, Salem Police Department
- Paul Lanzikos – Former Executive Director, North Shore Elder Services
- Sherry Leonard – Director of Community Relations, John Bertram House
- Christine Madore – President (2021), Salem City Council
- Mickey Northcutt – Executive Director, North Shore Community Development Coalition
- Rinus Oosthoek – Executive Director, Salem Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. David Roberts – President & CEO, North Shore Medical Center/Salem Hospital
- Siddhartha Shah – Director of Education & Civic Engagement, Peabody Essex Museum
- Kylie Sullivan – Director, Salem Main Streets
- Dr. Stephen Zrike – Superintendent, Salem Public Schools

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## Communications Subcommittee Report

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Building on work begun in Year 1 of the initiative, the Communications Subcommittee updated and continued to publish the comprehensive Salem for All Ages Resource Guide, which is mailed to all Salem residents when they turn 65 years old. In 2020 530 copies of the guide were mailed out. The subcommittee continued to maintain and update the initiative's website, [www.salemforallages.org](http://www.salemforallages.org) (5,542 pageviews in 2020), as well as the Salem for All Ages Facebook page. The subcommittee worked with City IT staff to implement recommended changes to the City website based on the 2019 ADA Transition Plan report.

In Year 4 of Salem for All Ages, the subcommittee collaborated with the *Salem News* to continue publication of the monthly column, written by a rotating group of authors among the Task Force membership, focusing on the many programs, accomplishments, and goals of the Salem for All Ages initiative. The column began in Year 3 and will continue in Year 5.

2020 brought many challenges from a communications perspective due to the pandemic. Salem for All Ages was a key part of the Salem Together effort to connect residents in need with important resources to get through COVID-19. Part of that was an innovative communications program, in which dozens of volunteers enlisted to place well-being check-in phone calls to thousands of Salem seniors.

Patricia Zaido conducted numerous presentations throughout Year 4 – as she has throughout the previous three years of the initiative - including to AARP, North Shore/Merrimack Valley Elder Services, North Shore Community Health Network, the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem State University (Health Services, Foreign Languages, and Nursing departments), and surrounding communities, including Swampscott, Marblehead, Peabody, Lynn, Hamilton, and Wenham.

In the next year of Salem for All Ages, the subcommittee will leverage connections made because of Salem Together, to develop a better database of older residents for communications purposes. The subcommittee also plans to better utilize Salem Access TV for regular programming and, once the Community Life Center reopens to the public, begin to create more off-hours programming and events at the CLC. The subcommittee has created a draft style guide for the City, reflecting more inclusive and person-first language, which will be published in Year 5. The subcommittee will work to continue anti-ageism public information efforts, the Salem Age-Friendly Business certification program, and customer service trainings for local employers. Lastly, in the 2021 the subcommittee hopes to support City efforts to expand the number of publicly available computers and free Wi-Fi access points, to improve access to technology.

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## Transportation Subcommittee Report

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### On-Demand Rideshare Service

At the beginning of 2020, City staff completed the Request for Proposal process and selected Via, an on-demand transit service provider, to oversee the management and operations of a ridesharing service for the City. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the execution of a contract and introduction of the service was delayed. City staff worked with Via throughout the year to launch the on-demand rideshare service, called the Salem Skipper, on December 16th.

The Skipper allows residents and visitors to book a trip anywhere within Salem for \$2.00 per ride or less. Users can download an app to their smartphone to book trips like an Uber or Lyft. There is also a customer service number for those without smartphones.

The service is available 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. There are four vehicles in service, two Chrysler Pacificas and two Dodge Caravans. The Dodge Caravans are wheelchair accessible.

The City has also been working with Via to implement various measures to ensure riders and drivers stay safe and are following state and local guidelines. This includes the requirement that all drivers and riders always wear a mask, vehicle capacity has been reduced by 50% and are cleaned daily and partitions have been installed in each vehicle separating the drivers from the riders.

Since launching last month, the service has provided over 800 rides and has seen a 45% week on week ride increase. Staff are continuing to work with Via to market the service and further increase ridership as we move forward into the new year.

### Community Car Share Service

The City is close to establishing a community car share service. Staff are finalizing a contract with Getaround, an online car sharing company, to create an opportunity for residents and visitors to rent a vehicle on an hourly basis. The City has purchased 10 Ford Escape Hybrids that are strategically located throughout the city and will be made available to the public to book trips via Getaround's web-based platform. Efforts to bring on a vendor to oversee the management of the fleet is also being finalized. The service should be available in February.



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## Housing Subcommittee Report

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In April Lynda Coffill, on behalf of the Board of the Council on Aging and the Salem Housing Authority (SHA) as co-applicant, applied to the City of Salem's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for funding for transitional rental assistance for FY20 funding. The CPC awarded the grant in the amount of \$120,000

The Salem Housing Authority manages this program to provide short term funds to assist those low-income renters who may have fallen behind and works with Council on Aging social workers, the Disability Resource Center, the Salvation Army and NSCAP and referrals made by these agencies as well.

The subcommittee has been working to increase the announcement and advertisement of many opportunities and services offered. Some of these have been the meals provided by Root and coordinated by Kerry Murphy, the new Skipper rideshare transportation service, COVID-19 updates and testing, housing opportunities, and more.

Notifications are being made by inclusion on websites for Salem for All Ages, the City, and the Salem Housing Authority. The Salem Housing Authority continues to post flyers and hand deliver and/or mail notices to its residents, and a reverse robocall system can now be utilized for SHA residents, who opt in for the service.

The housing subcommittee reviewed:

- The master plan for maintenance and modernization of its properties. We will continue to apply for all funding opportunities to maintain and improve public housing.
- Housing support models such as those operated by North Shore/Merrimack Valley Elder Services. The programs provide valuable assistance to residents and are operating well.
- COA existing medical equipment loan program, which is operating well and now has sufficient equipment.
- Department of Housing and Community Development has created a more streamlined application process, the CHAMP (Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Programs) system, which allows an applicant to submit 1 application and choose from virtually every housing authority in the state. This mirrors the Section 8 centralized process.
- Supported an easier online permitting process through the City's Building Department. The permitting process is now online.

The SHA recently hired 2 Resident Service Coordinators to assist with the social services aspect of senior living and will work with residents of the SHA.

## **Respect, Social Participation & Inclusion Subcommittee Report**

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The Respect, Social Participation, and Inclusion Subcommittee focuses on reducing social isolation by creating intergenerational relationships, offering training on how to better communicate with older adults, and by encouraging organizations to make their spaces more accessible for older adults.

This year we focused our efforts on creating a “Communicating with Older Adults” training. This general training is designed for anyone who works with older adults and addresses accessibility, bias, and customer service. The training was recently offered to members of the Peabody Essex Museum and was well received.

Our subcommittee also continued work on the Age Friendly Business Certification program. We are reevaluating the form and using the Communicating with Older Adults training as part of the certification process. We hope to reintroduce the program after the pandemic.

We also investigated creating an Oral History project for older adults to share their experiences. We met with Professor Darien from SSU and have a much better understanding of the technology and techniques needed to record a professional oral history. Interest in participating in the project waned during to the pandemic, but we plan to move forward with this project at a later date.

As the pandemic continued, our subcommittee focused on strengthening social connections as isolation is a major issue for older adults during this difficult time. We helped Root with their Garnish for Good initiative by collecting letters for homebound seniors to be delivered with their meals. We also worked on an intergenerational pen pal program to connect older adults with young adults during the pandemic. Participants may communicate by telephone, email, or postal mail.

Finally, we continued working on developing partnerships with Salem State University and Salem High School to facilitate intergenerational mentorships.

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## Accessible Infrastructure Subcommittee Report

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Two years ago, the City of Salem received a grant from the Massachusetts Office on Disabilities to conduct a citywide evaluation of services, programs and properties for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Institute for Human Centered Design was hired to do the study and provide recommendations for a Transition Plan to bring the city into compliance. In January of 2020, the Institute for Human Centered Design finalized their report. It was received with enthusiasm and commitment and is the basis for the city's Transition Plan.

Two fire stations and 8 public schools were included in the 25 city buildings evaluated. In addition, 12 parks and two parking garages were evaluated. The report includes a catalog that lists each facility and detailed element-by-element photos of compliance issues, location and measurements, and recommendations with cost estimates for each accessibility issue. The report can be found at: <https://www.salem.com/adaplan>.

In response, every city department was provided a budget for ADA improvements and the Director of Capital Projects & Municipal Operations designed a tracking tool of all projects involving compliance upgrades. ADA compliance strongly supports all the goals of Salem for All Ages. Some of the work already underway includes sidewalk improvements, better access to city buildings, city website improvements, park upgrades, easier access to programs and services.

Most importantly, the ongoing support and commitment of the Mayor and city employees to this effort ensures that this work will continue into the future.

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## Health Subcommittee Report

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At the beginning of 2020, the Health Subcommittee reported on three initiatives we were hoping to implement that year: a medical escort program to provide volunteer drivers to medical appointments and procedures, a community-wide walking program called Walk with a Doc, and a Food is Medicine initiative, partnering with NSMC.

Unfortunately, these all had to be put on hold due to COVID. The health subcommittee's focus quickly shifted to coordinating meal delivery programs, volunteer grocery shoppers, grab & go farmers markets, wellness check calls and virtual physical and mental health programming. The COA launched an SATV show, Senior Focus, as an additional way to reach members and let them know about available services.

The Community Life Center received grant funding for nutrition outreach, which was used to hire a part-time contractor to coordinate the free farmers markets and meal delivery programs as well as virtual nutrition education and cooking classes. The CLC has applied for additional funding to expand this to a healthy café for when members are able to come back into the building.

We are hopeful our original initiatives will be up and running this year. With the City Solicitor's help, we researched other communities' medical escort programs and created a liability waiver for volunteers. The CLC began doing outreach for volunteers, and the program will launch once it is safe to do so.

North Shore Medical Center had initially committed to partner with the City on the Walk with a Doc program, which is a walking program that combines exercise with health education. Volunteer physicians give a brief health lecture before each walk, then lead the walk and answer questions along the way. This will also be revisited once it is safe to walk in groups and our health care workers have had time to recover.

Our Food is Medicine proposal, which will include prescriptions for healthy food packages and nutrition education for seniors experiencing food insecurity, was expanded to include North Shore Community Health, the Salem Pantry, Salem YMCA, Salem Housing Authority and NSMC. A Letter of Intent was submitted in December to the RWJF to research the impact of multi-sector collaborations on health outcomes using a FIM program for seniors in public housing. We are still waiting for a response, but we are also seeking out other funding opportunities to implement this project.

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## Year 5 Planned Goals

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The **Transportation** subcommittee will continue to be engaged in promoting the Salem Skipper and the launch of Getaround's car share service.

The **Accessible Infrastructure** subcommittee will work with City departments to begin prioritization and implementation of recommendations from the City's new ADA Transition Plan. They will also continue collaborating with the City's Engineering Department on completion of the sidewalk master plan and development of a work order system for sidewalk repairs that takes age/ableness of residents into consideration when prioritizing repair work.

The **Communications** subcommittee will continue to publish the Salem for All Ages Resident Guide updates as necessary and mail the guide to residents when they turn 65. The subcommittee will continue the growth of the SFAA Facebook page and maintenance of the initiative's website. The subcommittee will continue the monthly column in the *Salem News*.

The **Housing** subcommittee will continue its work to advocate for, promote, and support affordable housing efforts throughout the City of Salem and will work in conjunction with the other SFAA subcommittees to provide ideas and services that promote age-friendly initiatives for the citizens of Salem:

- Continue to promote Universal Design concepts to developers and builders for both new construction projects and rehabilitation projects.
- Support the feasibility study being conducted at the SHA's oldest public housing development, Lee Fort Terrace in the hopes that it would support redevelopment and the creation of additional affordable housing units.
- Support the SFAA website listing of age-friendly contractors and businesses who could aid seniors with home maintenance needs.
- Continue to support the SHA and its administration of the Transitional Rental Assistance program to those needing financial aid.
- Follow and support the City's next steps with their housing needs and demands analysis followed by the next Housing Production Plan.

The **Social Participation & Inclusion** subcommittee has identified the following action items for Year 5:

- To create a "Seniors Speak Out" column in local publications. This will allow older adults to express opinions and ideas with a wide audience and will help foster respect and understanding.
- Our second goal is to create a Senior Service Award program that recognizes older adults for their volunteerism. This program will help raise

awareness of how older adults contribute to our community in many important ways.

- Our third goal is to shine a light on age discrimination and ageism. Raising awareness of this issue and bias is important in creating an inclusive community.
- The fourth goal is to work on connecting older adults with volunteer opportunities in the Salem Schools. Older adults have valuable knowledge and experience that can benefit students and foster respect.
- The fifth goal is to connect with neighborhood associations to create additional activities for social engagement. This is part of our ongoing efforts to combat social isolation in our community.

The **Health** subcommittee will continue to grow and strengthen food security and other wellness efforts, including the medical escort program, Walk with a Doc initiative, and the Food is Medicine campaign.