



# **Progress Report**







# Imagine Salem

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## Executive Summary

The initial phase of Imagine Salem has been a process to establish a vision for Salem's future. Setting its sights on 2026, the 400th anniversary of the city's founding, the process engaged the people of Salem to assess what they love and how they would improve their city. Ultimately, Imagine Salem aims to serve as a guide for future decisions.

In order for this vision to reflect the city's many communities, the City of Salem convened a working group, held various on-the-ground activities across the city and had a strong online presence. The process also included a data-driven analysis of existing conditions in Salem, and it considered policies and programs already undertaken by the City to assess if the City's efforts are in line with the community's vision. To focus the analysis, the community was informed about the existing conditions of the following core categories: population, housing, employment, and transportation, and the interplay between these categories. The analysis of the categories was framed around two provisional values that served as the cornerstones for Imagine Salem: equity and inclusivity. After providing the people of Salem an overview of the data-driven analysis, they were asked to reflect on their own lives and experiences.

Throughout the Imagine Salem conversation, numerous community members brought up the importance of k-12 public education. The Imagine Salem conversation purposefully directed comments regarding education to the Salem Public School district (SPS) because the district was in the midst of a community-engaged strategic planning process to build a world-class school district for all Salem students. Nevertheless, given the importance of this critical topic, the guiding principles set forth in Imagine Salem include an overview of the SPS community-developed vision.

Based on the collective input from the community, Imagine Salem proposes the following vision for the future:

**IN 2026 WE ARE A SUSTAINABLE  
AND LIVABLE CITY WHERE  
WE CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSE  
HISTORIES AND WHERE PEOPLE OF  
ALL BACKGROUNDS AND MEANS  
PARTICIPATE AND THRIVE.**

## Guiding Principles

While principles specifically related to the community, housing, employment and transportation are listed, the topics have numerous overlaps and connections among each other and with other topics, such as sustainability. The City recognizes that maximization of positive outcomes for any topic area may negatively impact another. The interplay between policies and programs relating to housing, employment and transportation will be coordinated to support the varied needs of Salem's population with values of equity and inclusivity being prioritized.

### COMMUNITY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*Salem believes in growing and supporting a diverse community, where people have equal opportunity and access to social and economic resources. The people of Salem should be able to participate in their community in meaningful ways, including the direction and intentions of their city government. Conversely, the wellbeing of the public should be at the forefront of the City of Salem's governing objectives.*

**Diversity is a fundamental part of Salem's history and is critical for its continued prosperity.**

Salem recognizes the multitude of voices that shaped its past and that its history cannot be adequately told without addressing the lives and contributions of people of many backgrounds. Today the city must create an inclusive environment for people no matter their race, ethnicity, income or wealth, class affiliation, gender identity, sexual preference, religious or spiritual affiliation, household or family structure, veteran status, nationality or refugee status, and employment or student status. Salem acknowledges that in the 21st century, the city will be neither socially or economically prosperous without inclusivity.

**Equity is a necessary component of any approach to planning.**

Salem should embrace equity of opportunity and basic social needs, such as housing or access to transportation. Without equity, diversity and inclusivity are fleeting. Equity moves beyond a simple equality of opportunity, but takes steps to be affirmatively fair and to rectify historic injustices and remove systemic barriers.



## **Civic and political engagement within and between communities is key to inclusive governance.**

Equity and inclusivity can only advance so far without the robust engagement from everyone involved. Salem should create opportunities for more people of varying backgrounds to become involved in formal political and informal community life, whether through get-out-the-vote campaigns for municipal elections, the provision of additional usable community spaces, or otherwise.

## **Diversity and inclusivity cannot be buzzwords, but must be enacted through legal, social, economic, and symbolic means.**

Salem should continue to advance diversity and inclusivity through ordinances, referenda, and legal interpretations. It should also continue to foster social and economic diversity through policies and programs, many of which are discussed in later sections. Lastly, it should use monuments, public art, festivals, and other means to affirm the historic contributions and present cultures of its many communities.

## **HOUSING GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

*Salem recognizes the community's right to safe, affordable, and life-enriching housing. The City encourages the production housing that meets the varied needs of its population at all price points. Salem also recognizes that quality housing can only exist where there is access to good jobs, transportation choice, and necessary community amenities.*

### **Market rate housing should be affordable to people earning average wages.**

Salem must meet the rising local and regional demand for housing with increased supply, or else costs will continue to rise beyond what is affordable for its diverse population. Though Salem can't act alone to change the regional housing market, it can lead the region with a progressive approach to housing production.

### **Housing for lower income households requires special accommodation to produce.**

Even with broad market affordability, Salem would still need safe and quality housing that is affordable to lower income households. It is unrealistic to assume the market will provide this, given the increased costs and barriers to financing that affordable housing developers face. Salem must help affordable housing developers lower their costs (either through low cost land, as-of-right regulatory processes, or otherwise).

## **Housing should be safe, healthy, and resilient.**

Housing design, siting, and maintenance should ensure that housing is safe to inhabit. Housing should promote healthy choices and healthy communities, and be able to withstand environmental and social shocks, particularly those associated with climate change.

## **Housing designs must meet the varied needs of diverse residents, and there should be real housing choices for all.**

Salem residents and its future residents have different wants and needs. Large families have different needs than young singles. The aging and people with disabilities have unique requirements for their housing and the surrounding areas. Needs and wants vary, and Salem's housing should account for that variation. Furthermore, Salem's housing should not provide any group with only one choice.

## **Housing should be part of a complete neighborhood.**

Housing doesn't work if it is not integrated with other uses like employers, retail, civic and open spaces, a robust transportation system and community spaces like libraries.

## **EMPLOYMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

*Salem's economy should be a system that contributes to opportunity, a high quality of life, and a sense of community for the city's residents, workforce, business owners, entrepreneurs, students, and visitors. The city recognizes its role in a regional labor market and business community, while asserting the primary importance of homegrown opportunities for the people of Salem.*

### **Employment in Salem should provide living wages and opportunities for advancement.**

No one should work full time and live in poverty. While acknowledging that small businesses must sometimes start with lean budgets and that some jobs are designed to begin a career path, jobs that do not provide a reasonable living wage are generally unacceptable. Furthermore, employment should provide formal and informal opportunities for training and advancement, either within that organization or otherwise.



## **Employment should be accessible for people of all education and skill levels.**

Part of Salem's charm is its diverse mix of people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, including education level. Salem should maintain opportunities for work that have low barriers to entry in terms of education, including opportunities for those with technical and vocational training.

## **Salem should bolster core industries, while increasing economic diversification and entrepreneurship.**

Salem should support its core industries like health care, education, food, and retail. Building on these economic clusters will ensure Salem plays a critical role in the regional economy. That said, there should also be robust employment opportunities for people who do not work in those fields, and entrepreneurs should be supported. Economic diversification and entrepreneurship will also mitigate the risk of downturns.

## **Salem should maximize the opportunity to both live and work in the city.**

Compared to the number of commuters coming into or leaving Salem for work, there are relatively few people who both work and live in Salem. Increasing the proportion of people who live and work in the city would reduce traffic congestion, grow employee satisfaction, and grow community ties.

## **Employers should complement and contribute to the wider community.**

Though many organizations rightly focus on their own internal needs and opportunities, Salem should encourage employers to foster relationships with their neighbors, either formally or informally. Reestablishing retail stores as sites of informal community and bonding between business owners, employees, and customers was a prominent part of many Imagine Salem discussions.

## **TRANSPORTATION GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

*Salem believes in an accessible local and regional transportation system that provides alternative modes of transportation and choices. Salem aims to have a true multi-modal transportation system that encourages active and sustainable transportation choices for everyday trips and empowers all travelers to safely use the streets. The City recognizes the crucial role that a sustainable transportation system plays in opening up opportunities for the Salem community.*

## **People should have options when choosing to get around the city regardless of their age and ability.**

People have differing preferences and abilities, and therefore choice should be embedded in all parts of the transportation system. In many places, providing choice entails rebalancing streets after nearly 80 years of automobile-oriented investment. In other places, it means designing streets and sidewalks to be ensure safety and comfort for all users, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities.

## **Elements of the transportation system should connect, so that the system becomes multi-modal.**

It is unreasonable to expect all transportation modes to work for all trips, and creating independent systems for all transportation modes would be redundant in many places. The transportation system should allow travelers to string together different mode choices where appropriate.

## **Streets should be designed to enable active and sustainable transportation modes.**

The transportation system will work best when people who can reasonably walk, bike, or use transit can do so safely, comfortably, and reliably. Making these modes work is especially important for trips taken along existing transit lines and for short trips within Salem and to adjacent communities. By enabling these modes, valuable “real estate” in the public right of way will become free. Allowing people to not use their cars unnecessarily relieves traffic congestion, increases retail foot traffic, fosters community, and ameliorates public health.

## **The transportation system should be design for safety and a “Vision Zero” standard.**

Major injuries and deaths from travelling are largely if not entirely preventable. Improper street designs, including those that incentivize fast travel speeds, can increase the likelihood of casualties. When reconfiguring streets, Salem should design for low speeds and low casualties in its neighborhoods. Ultimately, Salem should aim to have zero deaths and major injuries—a standard called “Vision Zero.”



## **The transportation system should complement neighborhoods.**

Quality of life in Salem's neighborhoods should be bolstered by the transportation system. Rather than communities accommodating inflexible transportation infrastructures, the transportation system should be designed with the unique character of each neighborhood in mind.

## **EDUCATION VISION**

The Salem Public School strategic planning process began in earnest with a multi-stage endeavor and resulted with the following community-developed vision:

**ALL STUDENTS WILL BE LOCALLY  
ENGAGED, GLOBALLY CONNECTED,  
AND FULLY PREPARED TO THRIVE IN A  
DIVERSE AND CHANGING WORLD.**

*See the strategic plan at [www.salemk12.org](http://www.salemk12.org) for more information.*



## Resumen Ejecutivo

La fase inicial de Imagine Salem ha sido un proceso para establecer una visión del futuro de Salem. Usando el año 2026 como punto focal, el 400 aniversario de la fundación de la ciudad, el proceso comprometió a la gente de Salem para evaluar qué les gusta y cómo mejorarían la ciudad. En fin, la meta de Imagine Salem es servir como guía para decisiones en el futuro.

Para que la visión de Salem refleje sus muchas comunidades, la ciudad ha convocado un grupo, ha tenido varias actividades a través de la ciudad y a teniendo una presencia fuerte en las redes sociales y la página de web de Imagine Salem. El proceso también incluye un análisis de las condiciones existentes de Salem, considerando pólizas y programas para evaluar si los esfuerzos de la ciudad están en línea con la visión de la comunidad. Para enfocar el análisis, el público fue informado sobre las condiciones existentes en las siguientes categorías: población, alojamiento, transportación, y la interacción entre estas categorías. El análisis de las categorías fue construido alrededor de dos valores provisionales que sirven como base para Imagine Salem: equidad e inclusión. Después de suministrar el repaso del análisis, les preguntamos a los residentes que reflexionen sobre sus vidas y experiencias.

Durante la conversación, muchos miembros de la comunidad hablaron sobre la importancia de la educación pública. La conversación intencionalmente directo todas preguntas y comentarios, relacionados con la educación pública a el distrito de las escuelas públicas de Salem como ellos estaban en medio de un plan estratégico para crear un distrito de clase mundial para todos los estudiantes de Salem. Sin embargo, sabiendo la importancia del tema de discusión, los principios rectores propuestos por Imagine Salem incluye un resumen del distrito de las escuelas públicas de Salem y su visión para el desarrollo comunitario.

Basado en la participación colectiva de la comunidad, Imagine Salem propone lo siguiente para la visión del futuro:

**EN 2026, LA CIUDAD DE SALEM SERA UN LUGAR SOSTENIBLE Y HABITABLE, DONDE SE CELEBRARA LA DIVERSIFICACION Y DONDE GENTE DE DIFERENTES FONDOS PUEDAN PARTICIPAR Y PROSPERAR.**

## Principios Rectores

Mientras principios relacionados con población, alojamiento, empleo y transportación están listados, los temas coinciden uno al otro y coinciden con temas como la sostenibilidad. La ciudad reconoce que resultados positivos de cualquier tema también pueda tener impactos negativos. La relación entre la póliza y los programas relacionado con alojamiento, empleo y transportación van hacer coordinados para apoyar las varias necesidades de la población en Salem con valores de equidad e inclusión.

### PRINCIPIOS RECTORES DE LA COMUNIDAD

*Salem cree en la cultivación y apoya de la diversificación de la comunidad, donde todas personas tendrán iguales oportunidades y el mismo acceso a recursos sociales y económicos. La gente de Salem debería poder participar en su comunidad en formas significativas, incluyendo la dirección e intenciones de su gobierno. Inversamente, el buen estar del público debe de ser unas de las vanguardias de los objetivos gobernar de Salem.*

**La diversificación es una parte fundamental de la historia de Salem y es crítico para su continua prosperidad.**

Salem reconoce las multitudes de voces que han formado su pasado y que su historia no puede ser contada sin abordar cargo de las vidas y contribuciones de personas diversas. Hoy la ciudad tiene que crear un ambiente inclusivo para todos sin importar una persona raza, origen étnico, ingresos o riqueza, afiliación de clase, identidad de género, preferencias sexuales, afiliación religiosa o espiritual, estructura familiar, estado de veterano, nacionalidad o estado de refugiado y el estado de empleo o de estudiante de su habitantes. Salem reconoce que en el siglo 21, la ciudad nunca será socialmente o económicamente prospera si excluye ciertos miembros de la comunidad.

**La equidad es un componente necesario de cualquier esfuerzo de planificación.**

Salem debe aprovechar la oportunidad que tiene para ser equitativo y ofrecer necesidades básicas y sociales a todos, como alojamiento o acceso a transportación. Sin la equidad, la diversidad y la inclusión serán fugadas. La equidad se mueve más allá de la simple oportunidad para la igualdad, también incluye pasos para ser afirmativamente justo con todos para rectificar injusticias en nuestra historia y remover barreras sistemáticas.

## **Compromiso civil y político, entre y con la comunidad, es clave para un gobierno inclusivo.**

La equidad e inclusión solo puede avanzar Salem tan lejos, sin el robusto apoyo y compromiso de todos involucrados esta meta no será lograda. Salem debe de crear oportunidades para más personas de varios fondos, dándole más oportunidades para involucrarse en política formal e vida comunitaria informal, sea través la campana get-out-the-vote para elecciones municipales, provisión de espacios comunitarios, o de otro modo.

## **La diversidad e inclusión no pueden ser solo palabras usadas por todos en la ciudad, deben de ser promulgadas a través de modos legales, sociales, económicos, y simbólicos.**

Salem debe de continuar el avance de la diversidad y la inclusión usando ordenanzas, referendos, e interpretaciones legales. Debe de continuar el fomento de la diversidad social y económica a través de la política y sus programas, muchos de ellos que serán discutidos en las secciones adelante. Últimamente, debe de usar monumentos, arte públicos, festivales, u otras vías para afirmar la contribuciones históricas y culturas presentes en la ciudad.

## **PRINCIPIOS RECTORES DE VIVIENDA**

*Salem reconoce que la comunidad tiene derecho a alojamiento que es seguro y asequible. La ciudad anima la producción de alojamiento que cumple con las necesidades de su población en todos los puntos de precio. Salem también reconoce que viviendas de calidad no pueden existir en un lugar donde no hay acceso a buenos trabajos, opciones de transporte, y servicios necesarios para la comunidad.*

## **Vivienda de tasa de mercado debe de ser asequible para personas ganando salarios promedios.**

Salem debe satisfacer la demanda creciente local y regional de vivienda con el crecimiento en la oferta, o los precios van a continuar a subir más allá de lo que los habitantes de Salem puedan pagar. Aunque Salem no puede actuar solo en el esfuerzo para cambiar el mercado inmobiliario regional, puede liderar con enfoque progresivo a la producción de vivienda.

## **El alojamiento debe formar parte de un barrio completo.**

Alojamiento o viviendas no funcionan sin la integración de empleo, venta al por menor, espacios libre y civil, sistema de transportación robusta y espacios comunitarios como librerías.

## **Vivienda para esos que ganan bajo ingresos requiere acomodación especial.**

Incluso con el amplio mercado de asequibilidad, Salem todavía necesita viviendas que son seguras y de buena calidad que son asequible para los habitantes de bajos ingresos. No es realístico asumir que el mercado proporcionara este problema, dado el aumento en costos y barreras a de financiación que enfrentan los desarrolladores de vivienda. Salem tiene que ayudar a estos desarrolladores bajar los costos (a través de la adquisición de tierra de bajo costo, proceso regulatorio, o de otra manera).

## **Alojamiento debe de ser seguro, saludable y resistente.**

Los diseños y mantenimiento de los alojamientos o viviendas deben de garantizar la seguridad que personas puedan habitar ahí. Viviendas deben promover elecciones saludables y una comunidad saludable, y debe resistir cualquier choque ambiental o social, particularmente esos asociados con el cambio de clima.

## **Diseños de vivienda deben de satisfacer las necesidades diversas de todos residentes, y debe de ver opciones reales para todos**

Los residentes de Salem y futuro residentes tienen diferentes gustos y necesidades. Familias grandes tienen diferentes necesidades que jóvenes solteros. La comunidad envejecida y personas con discapacidad tienen necesidades únicas para sus viviendas y las áreas cercanas. Gustos y necesidades varían, y los alojamientos en Salem deben de cumplir con esta variación. Además, alojamientos o viviendas en Salem no deben tener solo una opción para sus habitantes.

## **PRINCIPIOS RECTORES DE EMPLEO**

*La economía de Salem debe tener un sistema que contribuye a la oportunidad a una vida de calidad, y a un sentido de comunidad y seguridad para sus residentes, empleados, empresarios, dueños de negocios, estudiantes y visitantes. La ciudad reconoce su rol en el mercado laboral regional y los negocios en la comunidad, mientras afirmando la importancia primaria de ofrecer más oportunidades para personas que viven en Salem.*



## **El empleo en Salem debe proporcionar salarios dignos y oportunidades para el adelanto.**

Nadie debe de trabajar de tiempo completo y vivir en pobreza. Mientras reconociendo que negocios pequeños tienen que comenzar con un presupuesto ajustado y que algunos trabajos están diseñados a comenzar una carrera, trabajos que no proporcionan ingresos adecuados generalmente no son aceptables.

## **El empleo debe de ser asequible para personas de todos niveles de educación y habilidad.**

Parte del encanto de Salem es su diversidad de personas y culturas, incluyendo niveles de educación. Salem debe mantener oportunidades de trabajo que tendrán mínima barreras de entrada en términos de la educación, incluyendo oportunidades para esos con entrenamiento técnico y vocacional.

## **Salem debe maximizar las oportunidades de los que viven y trabajan en la ciudad.**

Comparado a la cantidad de viajeros entrando y saliendo de Salem por razones de empleo, hay poca gente viven y trabajan en Salem. Aumentando la proporción de gente que viven y trabajan en esta ciudad reduciría la congestión de tráfico, resultara en la satisfacción del empleado, y fortalecerá lazos comunitarios.

## **Empleadores deben complementar y contribuir el buen estar de la comunidad en general.**

Aunque muchas organizaciones se centran en sus propias necesidades y oportunidades internas, Salem debe alentar a los empleadores a fomentar relaciones con sus vecinos, sea formal o informalmente. El restablecimiento de las tiendas minoristas como sitios de la comunidad informal y la vinculación entre los propietarios de las empresas, los empleados y los clientes fue una parte prominente de muchas discusiones sobre la Imagen Salem.

## **Salem debe reforzar industrias centrales, mientras aumentar la diversificación económica y el emprendimiento.**

Salem debe apoyar sus industrias centrales como cuidado de salud, la educación, alimentos, y el sector minorista. Construyendo sobre estos conglomerados económicos garantizara el rol de Salem para cambiar la economía regional. Con eso dicho, debe de ver más oportunidades para empleo para esos que no trabajando en estas careras, y empresarios deben de ser apoyados más a menudo. La diversificación económica y el emprendimiento también deben de mitigar los riesgos de la desaceleración.

## **PRINCIPIOS RECTORES DE TRANSPORTACION**

*Salem cree en un sistema de transportación que en accesible localmente y regionalmente para darles a todos más modos de transportación. Salem tiene como objetivo tener un sistema de transportación que es multimodal y que anima sostenibles elecciones de transporte todos los días y que empodera a todos viajeros para seguramente usar las calles de Salem. La ciudad reconoce el rol critico que tiene un sistema sostenible de transportación a las oportunidades disponibles para la comunidad de Salem.*

## **El sistema de transportación debe ser diseñado para la seguridad y un estándar de “Visión Cero”.**

Heridas y muertes por razón de transportación son en gran parte prevenible. Señales de calles inapropiadas, incluyendo esas con incentivos para viajar a rápida velocidad, puede aumentar la posibilidad de accidentes. Cuando reconfigurando las calles de Salem, la ciudad debe de tener diseños hechos para la reducción de velocidad y accidentes en los barrios. Por último, Salem debe de tener como objetivo cero muertes y heridas—el estándar llamado “Visión Cero”.

## **La gente debe de tener opciones cuando escogiendo una manera de moverse entre y afuera de la ciudad independientemente de su edad o habilidad.**

La gente tiene diferentes preferencias y habilidades, y por eso es que el sistema de transportación de Salem debe de garantizar muchas más opciones para todos. En muchos lugares, dando más opciones implica el reequilibrio de calles después de casi 80 años de inversión orientada a la industria automóvil. En otros lugares, se significa diseñando calles y aceras para garantizar la seguridad y comodidad de todos los usuarios, particularmente la comunidad envejecida y gente con discapacidades.

## **Elementos del sistema de transportación debe conectar, para que el sistema sea multimodal.**

Es irrazonable esperar que todos modos de transportación vaya funcionar para todos los viajes. Creando un sistema independiente para todos modos de transportación seria reacio en muchos lugares. El sistema de transportación debería permitir que viajeros usen varios modos de transportación cuando apropiado.

## **Calles deben de ser diseñadas para permitir el transporte activo y sostenible.**

El sistema de transportación trabajaría bien si personas que puedan caminar, andar en bicicleta, o usar otra forma de transitó pueda hacerlo con seguridad y comodidad. Haciendo que estos modos funcionen es importante para todo viaje tomado a lo largo de existente líneas de tránsito y para viajes cortos dentro de Salem y sus comunidades adyacentes. Habilitando estos modos de transportación resultara en un valor gratis de los bienes raíces en vía públicas. En no hacer el uso de caro necesario, congestión de tráfico será relevado, habrá aumentos en ventas por el tránsito de pies, fomentara la comunidad, y mejorara la salud pública.

## **El sistema de transpiración debe de complementar los barrios de Salem.**

Calidad de vida en los barrios de Salem debe ser reforzado por el sistema de transportación. En lugar de poner la responsabilidad de arreglar inflexible infraestructuras de transportación a la comunidad, el sistema debe ser diseñado con un personaje único para cada barrio en Salem.

## **EDUCACIÓN**

El proceso de la planificación estratégica de las Escuelas Públicas de Salem comenzó con esfuerzos de multe-etapa y resultaron en las visiones comunitarias que siguen:

**TODOS ESTUDIANTES SERÁN COMPROMETIDOS LOCALMENTE, CONECTADOS GLOBALMENTE, Y TOTALMENTE PREPARADO PARA PROSPERAR EN UN AMBIENTE DIVERSO Y UN MUNDO QUE SIEMPRE ESTÁ CAMBIANDO.**

*El plan estratégico también identificara los cuatro pilares central (muestreado en la figura a continuación) que el distrito de Escuelas Públicas de Salem trabajara duro para lograr.*

*Para más información sobre el plan estratégico visite la página [www.salemk12.org](http://www.salemk12.org).*



# Acknowledgements

## Working Group

Adam Walsh  
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Carrie Francis  
Rosario Ubiera-Minaya  
John Andrews\*  
Emily Udy  
Patricia Zaido  
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Pam Kentley  
Amy Job  
Anne Sterling  
Dennis Knight  
Erica Thatcher Busa  
Matt Bachand  
Creative Salem  
Figsburry Creative Group

## Imagine Salem Conversation Hosts

Point Neighborhood Association  
Friends of Furlong Park Association  
Salvation Army  
Ward 4 Neighborhood Association  
Salem Common Neighborhood Association  
Chamber of Commerce  
Jolie Tea Company  
Salem Rotary  
Salem Partnership  
Grace Church  
Salem Youth Commission  
Council on Aging  
Bates Elementary School  
Historic Salem  
Salem Housing Authority Residents

## “Did You Know Card” Distributors

Chamber of Commerce  
Front Street Coffee  
Derby Joe  
Bagel World  
Jaho  
Gulu Gule Cafe

## City of Salem

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# Notes

This report was prepared by Utile, in conjunction with the City of Salem and the Imagine Salem Working Group.

Some quotes from the engament process were lightly edited for clarity and/or brevity.

Analysis undertaken for Imagine Salem largely assesses summary statistics and other information published by various government agencies. This analysis did not evaluate the statistical significance of patterns shown in that data.







# *Introduction*

This section first describes the motivations for Imagine Salem and outlines the engagement and analysis process. It then summarizes discussions on the broad questions which shaped the vision: what do people love about Salem, what would they like to change, and what values should motivate the plan. The product of those discussions is the vision statement that follows.

## **Proposed Vision Statement:**

**In 2026, we are a sustainable and livable city where we celebrate our diverse histories and where people of all backgrounds and means participate and thrive.**



# Salem in 2026

In 2026, the City of Salem, Massachusetts will turn 400 years old. What will this city be like? Who will live here? What will we do with our time? What values will we live by? What will we cherish, and what will we be working to overcome?

Salem in 2026 should be a place for all—a place where everyone can come to pursue their dreams, raise their families, and enjoy a shared sense of place.

Less than a decade out from this important date, what will we do now to craft a vision for the future and make that vision a reality? Given the existing conditions in the city and the needs and desires of its people, which potential steps toward such a vision are reasonable and actionable? Imagine Salem is the first step towards answering these questions.

**“Imagine Salem will help us shape the important aspects of our community that are within our control and help us set a collective course forward...with a deadline to achieve what we value.”**

— Mayor Kim Drisoll

## Imagine Salem is the start of a new conversation.

In 1626, Europeans in the so-called New World settled at the site of a Native American Village, a place we now call Salem. In the nearly 400 years hence, the city has forged several distinct roles in the world—both culturally and economically. What began as a farming village for a religious minority soon transformed into a center for fishing and trade. By the 19th century, as shipping declined in the city, Salem became a manufacturing town. Then, in the 20th century, the city grew into its place as a local urban center within a wider metropolitan region. In each iteration, the design and shape of Salem changed accordingly; the urban form was both a byproduct and driver of each new take on Salem. How will Salem transform in the future? What will we preserve, and what will we want to improve upon?

Today, as the city approaches its quadricentennial, Salem must take stock of itself, the conditions in the city, and its role in today's world. The city's people must have a conversation about where their city is today, and how the city should approach its future. Imagine Salem is that start of that conversation. Mayor Kimberley Driscoll and the City's Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) commissioned the Imagine Salem process in the fall of 2016. In November and December of that year, DPCD, in conjunction with urban planning consultants Utile and a working group of residents, business owners, and community leaders, began the process in earnest.

This process of “visioning” is a preliminary assessment of the existing conditions in Salem, as well as a series of conversations—informed by knowledge of those existing

conditions—about the shape of Salem's future. The goal is to articulate a set of values shared by the Salem community, and to develop a shared vision for the city's future. Furthermore, the process is a goal in itself. Through these conversations, the City will raise public awareness of the issues facing Salem, engage more people in the process of governance, and build social capital between participants of varying backgrounds.

To focus this process toward positive outcomes, Imagine Salem developed a framework for understanding the existing social and economic conditions and the future vision of the city. The process reads the existing conditions through the lenses of equity and inclusivity—values that also drive the form of the process itself. To further focus the conversation, the analysis was limited to issues of population, housing, jobs, and transportation (and the interplay between them).

The Imagine Salem process is intended to have a number of outcomes. The Salem community will have a greater knowledge about what different members of that community love and value about Salem. This knowledge, along with the strong social ties forged through conversation, are the groundwork for change. The community, in short, will be better organized to advocate for itself. Beyond that organization, the city will have a stronger understanding of the “facts on the ground,” with which they can make informed decisions. Ultimately, Imagine Salem aims to reshape the city by its 400th birthday in 2026 to better reflect the vision of its people.





Salem Common  
Photo: Robert Linsdell / Wikimedia





Derby Street Wharf  
Photo: Robert Linsdell / Wikimedia

# Process

The Imagine Salem process combines in-depth community input with data-driven analysis.





## Beyond the Traditional Public Process

The Imagine Salem process created low-barrier opportunities for anyone who lives, works and/or plays in Salem. The community was invited to partake in the conversation through a variety of civic engagement opportunities. The engagement opportunities were designed to promote the inclusion of members of the community who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, as inclusivity and equity are the cornerstones of Imagine Salem.

"The people of Salem are what make this city great. Our community's vision should reflect their lives and experiences, and advance our collective hopes and dreams."

- Mayor Kim Driscoll

The process also created new opportunities for deep conversation and active listening for those who could give more of their time. The team actively sought input from a diverse range of community members from various racial and ethnic identities, gender identities, ages, and neighborhoods.

The process was successful due to the dedication of a group of community members. These volunteers leveraged

their networks to bring the Imagine Salem conversation into their own homes and social groups where they engaged people who typically do not get involved in City Planning processes.

### Working Group

The City of Salem organized a working group of residents, business owners, property owners, and community leaders. The composition of this group was intended to balance demographics and voices to get diverse input on the planning process. The group held three meetings in late 2016, early 2017, and late in the summer of 2017. At the first meeting, the group discussed what they love about Salem, and the consultant team presented their initial analysis on existing conditions. The working group responded to both the form and substance of that analysis, and they gave recommendations on how the team should proceed. At the second meeting, the consultants presented updates to their analysis, as well as a plan for the wider engagement process. The working group gave input in response to the strategies presented and suggested additional strategies the Imagine Salem team could employ. In addition to these meetings, an

engagement subcommittee formed. This subcommittee developed outreach strategies, including the on-the-ground engagement, its social media feeds and produced the plan's logo. *(See page 28 for more information.)* That group additionally helped craft the bilingual "Did You Know" cards. *(See "Did You Know Cards" on page 28 for more information.)* At the third meeting the working group reviewed the draft report and finalized the draft vision statement and guiding principles.

### Citywide Forum

In March of 2017, Imagine Salem held a citywide forum at Salem High School. More than 70 people attended the forum, which combined a presentation on existing conditions, small group discussions on the issues presented, and an open house. Attendees were asked what they love about Salem, and how they would improve Salem's housing, employment, and transportation. The open house portion of the event allowed attendees to view the existing conditions data in depth, see responses to Imagine Salem's bilingual online survey *(See "Digital Campaign" on page 28)*, and talk through the findings with the Imagine Salem team. Participants could place



dots on a giant map showing where they live and work, and they could write what their top priority for Salem was on sticky notes placed on a large board.

The working group and citywide forum are traditional public processes in urban planning efforts. Imagine Salem went beyond the traditional process by deploying a number of on-the-ground engagement strategies.

## Activities

Imagine Salem produced a number of activities that were played in schools, cafés, community meetings, and other locations around the city. These included “circle cards,” on which participants recorded what they love about Salem on paper circles that could be combined and displayed. With a different activity, participants marked places they love and places they would like to improve, stated words that come to mind when thinking of Salem, and shared their thoughts on housing, jobs, transportation, and more. Nearly 400 participant responses were recorded.

## Coffee klatches

Community members, participants in the working group, and City staff led a series of “coffee klatches”—in-depth conversations with individuals and small groups. The coffee klatch was an easy to administer and versatile activity that was facilitated by a few dozen community volunteers. The conversations took place in a variety of settings. For example, conversations took place with a YMCA group, a church group, in private homes over wine, by Historic Salem Inc., and at Bates Elementary School etc. In these conversations, community members discussed what they love about Salem and how they want to improve the city

in the future. The conversations were semi-structured and flexible enough to dig deep. Because of the community members involved, this unique and inclusive engagement activity gathered input from many people who typically would not be involved in a planning process.

## Did You Know Cards

Imagine Salem produced a series of bilingual post cards. These cards contained illuminating facts about Salem’s housing, employment, and transportation. The cards served dual purposes, it was a marketing tool to get the work about Imagine Salem out on the street. The cards included the online information (website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). They also provided the community an opportunity to provide written feedback directly on the card which could then be returned to a box at several locations.

Did You Know cards were distributed at the train station, Salem State University, Salem Public Housing and at several different businesses including Planet Fitness, Laundromat at Boston/Bridge, Bagel World, Jaho, Derby Joe, Front Street, Gulu Gulu, and IHOP.

## Digital Campaign

Imagine Salem also included a digital outreach campaign. ImagineSalem.org became a hub connecting the various parts of the planning process, as well as a repository for the analysis conducted for the plan. The Imagine Salem team also used social media—Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—to reach online audiences where they are, give updates on the plan, and collect feedback informally.

The website included links to a



bilingual online survey and an interactive place-based, spatial survey. The bilingual survey asked a series of questions on the respondents’ feelings about Salem; their housing, employment, and transportation situation; how they would like to improve those aspects of the city; and other thoughts about the city. The survey generated nearly 1,200 responses. The place-based survey asked respondents to mark a place on the map that they love or a place they would like to see improved.

## Conclusion

Through all outreach methods, Imagine Salem obtained input from more than 1,900 interactions with people.



# Toward a Collective Vision for Salem

What does the community love about Salem, what would like they like to change, and what values should shape Salem as it evolves?



## Why ask for a vision for Salem?

Cities change over time. People and organizations pursuing their own interests will alter the city to meet their needs, and this is healthy. Local governments will often review individual projects, such as a new building proposal, one-by-one. Similarly, local governments pursue their own projects to accomplish narrow (albeit worthy) goals, such as the installation of a bike lane. This approach works, but it may fail to produce the overall social outcomes that a city's people hope to achieve.

A vision establishes what people value about their community and sets forth a set of overarching goals and priorities to promote those values.

At the 2017 State of the City Address,

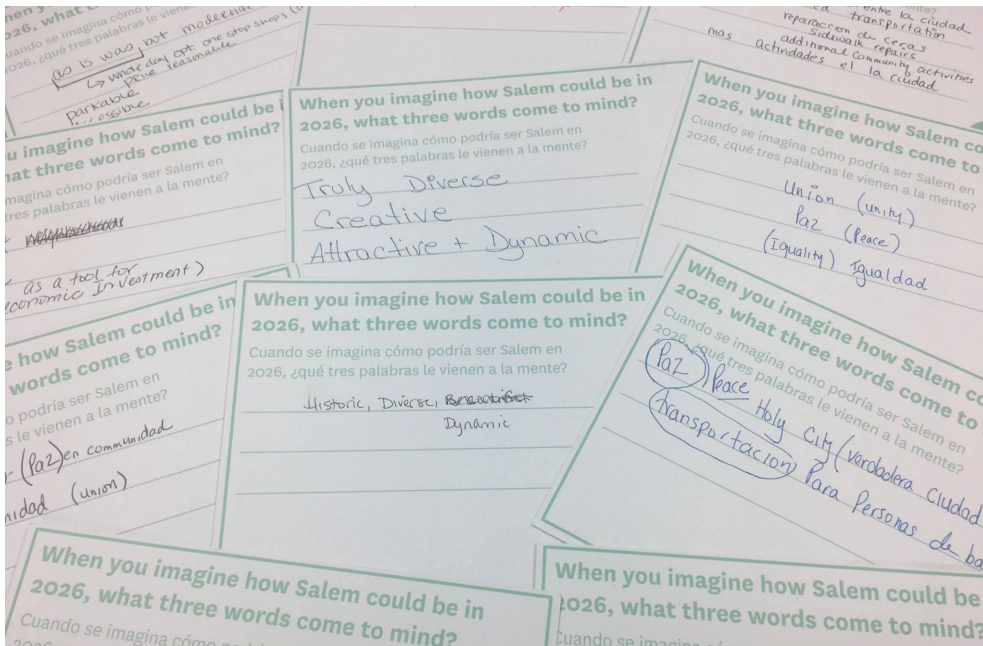
Mayor Kim Driscoll explained Imagine Salem as:

“A community visioning process that will bring together people, organizations, and businesses from across our community to have a conversation together about what we want our community to look like in 2026. What kind of city do we want Salem to be by then? What legacy will we pass on to the next generation of Salem workers, entrepreneurs, parents, and leaders? In what state will we hand off our schools, not just to our children, but to their children?

Can we make it easier to access services or get around Salem? How will we preserve our character while being open to new industry? How do we make

sure that prosperity has a wide impact? We will answer these questions, together, through the Imagine Salem Visioning Process.”

With a vision, future projects can be reviewed in light of their wider impact on the community, and Salem will be able to advance projects that work holistically. Thus, the purpose of Imagine Salem is to ensure future decisions are grounded in the values of the community. Creating an inclusive process of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized is particularly important to ensure that the vision is reflective of the wider community in order to achieve a resilient future for the city.





# What people love about Salem

The people of Salem love a range of things about their city, from broad facets of social life to small but important details.

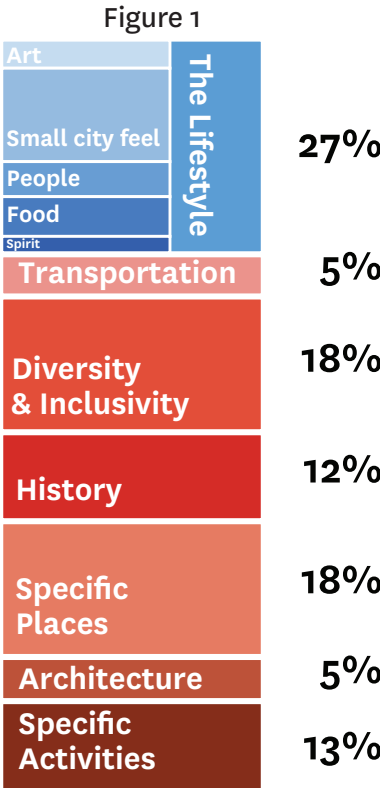
As shown on Figure 1, many Salemites explained that they love the people, particularly the diversity and community bonds found in Salem. (See page 46 for further community input regarding diversity.) Others discussed their love the history of the city, and the fact that its history feels present in everyday life. Relatively small groups of people noted the architecture or some aspect of

transportation as what they love. Yet more people loved some more general part of the Salem ‘lifestyle.’ This includes the ease of walking to shops and cafés, the small city feel, the city’s celebrations for Halloween, or that the city feels simultaneously close-knit and vibrant. Overall, engagement on what people love about Salem shows many distinct pieces coming together. It’s not simply that there are nice parks or distinctive shops, it’s that these pieces are connected through a pleasant and functional cityscape.

In thinking about specific places that people love in Salem, community members often began the conversation speaking of a memory tied to a place, such as the Common and Forest River Park, while other noted that the neighborhood they live is their favorite place. Institutions also played a role—schools, Salem State University, and the Peabody Essex Museum among them. The amenities at the Willows, including its pizza, popcorn and the arcade was a common theme among the second-grade and fourth-grade students at Bates Elementary school.



What do you love about Salem?



Source: Imagine Salem activity cards. Imagine Salem generated these general categories based on written responses, and coded each response into one or more categories.

## “What do you love about Salem?”

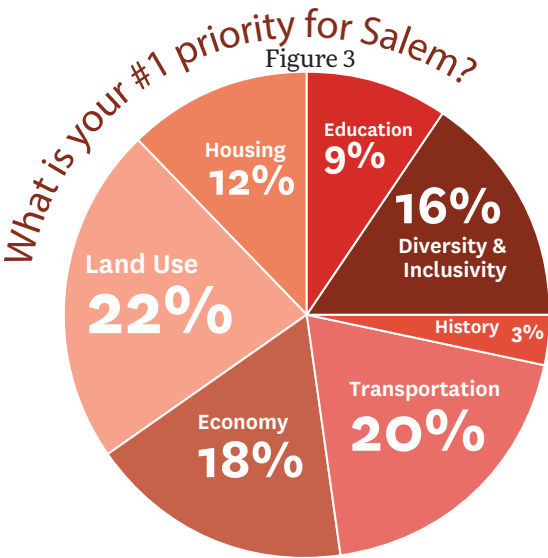
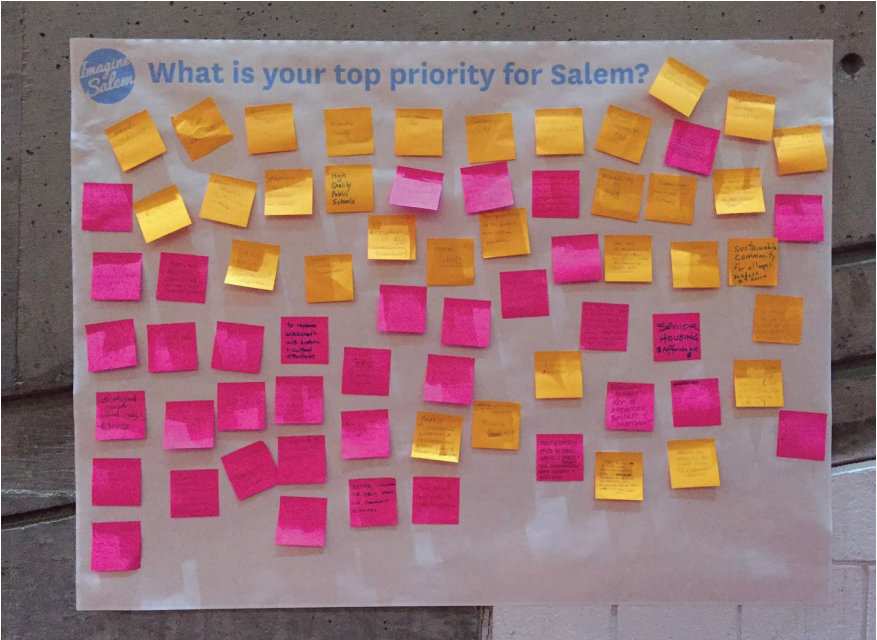
Figure 2

Example responses from activity cards.



# What people would change about Salem

The Salem community has many suggestions on how to make the city better. These range from broad statements like “Involve all residents in the same activities” to specific policy prescriptions like the introduction of accessory dwelling units and place-based ideas such as “Improve Highland Avenue.” When asked their top priority, participants in Imagine Salem activities were split on what was most important. Many responses were in regards to the city’s land use, including the use of specific sites and broader actions like the introduction of urban agriculture or public art. *(Suggestions related to these topic areas are explored in more detail in later sections: “Community” on page 35, “Housing” on page 53, “Employment” on page 71, and “Transportation” on page 87.)* There were also many suggestions related to education—a topic not explored in depth in the Imagine Salem process because the Salem Public School District was concurrently undertaking a strategic planning process. For more information on that process, visit [that plan’s page on the district’s website](http://thatplan.salem.k12.org).<sup>1</sup>



Source: Imagine Salem activity cards. Imagine Salem generated these general categories based on written responses, and coded each response into one or more categories.

<sup>1</sup> <http://salemk12.org>



# “What is your #1 priority for Salem?”

Figure 4  
Example responses from activity cards.



## Core values when planning for Salem’s future

When asked to imagine the Salem of the 2026, participants in Imagine Salem activities responded with a mix of sentiments, many of which work well when grouped together. A number of clear themes emerged as popular. Responses commonly used words such as “diverse,” “inclusive,” and “welcoming.” These sentiments were the most popular, in fact. This is a view of Salem’s future as a city of people with many backgrounds. Some participants called for continued inclusion of specific groups, such as lower income people, people of color, and families. Some saw the city’s

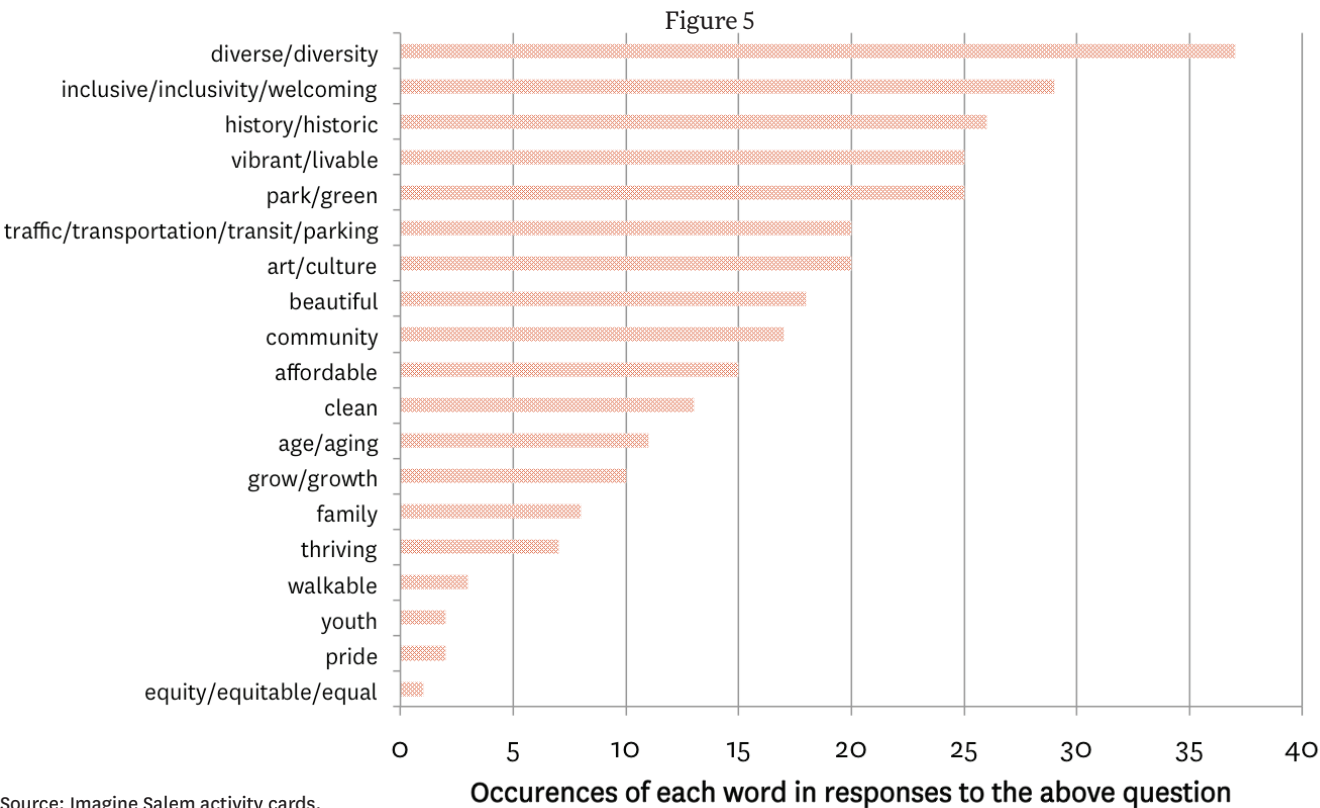
witch-themed businesses and events as hindering diversity, and others saw the openness to the wiccan community as a mark of inclusion. No matter the definition, however, diversity and inclusion were primary in the collective imagination of the Salem community. Equity—a sentiment often paired with inclusion—was not a word commonly used by respondents. However, themes of equity were often discussed in coffee klatches and other settings.

Other sentiments (history, green spaces, the arts, transportation,

vibrancy, beauty, community, and affordability) were also popular amongst Imagine Salem activity participants. These ideas point to a quality of life that the Salem community finds both comforting and compelling.

With this input in mind, Imagine Salem proposes a vision for the city, shown on the opposite page.

## How do you imagine Salem in 2026? (Key words)



## Vision Statement

**In 2026, we are a sustainable and livable city where we celebrate our diverse histories and where people of all backgrounds and means participate and thrive.**



# Analysis and Recommendations

This section reports findings from analysis on four broad topics: population, housing, employment, and transportation. For each topic, the data is reviewed with an emphasis on equity and inclusivity. Data-driven findings are paired with targeted feedback from the community collected engagement, as well as a non-exhaustive sample of current policies and programs relevant to this topic. Finally, guiding principles are proposed for the City to use in future targeted planning efforts.







# Community

Salem has an uncommonly diverse population for a city of its size, including people of many racial and ethnic backgrounds, a range of incomes, and a spectrum of ages, educational attainments, spiritual affiliations, and family structures. This diversity makes Salem a dynamic place to live, and many in the city see it as key to the city's success. To celebrate its varied population and ensure continued diversity, Salem should embrace equity and inclusivity of both opportunities and outcomes—particularly as the population is expected to grow.

# Population Growth and Density

While Salem and its environs had long been inhabited by the native Naumkaeg people, Salem’s first European settlement began as a small village of 30 people in 1626. By the end of the Revolutionary War the population had grown to nearly 8,000 people, and grew rapidly through 1910, when the population had reached almost 43,700 people.<sup>1</sup> The population then trended down until 1990, when it stood at about 38,000.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the population has begun to increase again. As shown in Figure 6, the US Census Bureau estimates the total population to be greater than 43,000 in 2016, retaking its historic peak.<sup>3</sup> That estimate puts Salem ahead of the city’s 2020 population count projected

by MAPC, the public planning organization for Greater Boston, under its high growth “Stronger Region” scenario.<sup>4</sup>

- Salem’s residential population density varies across the city. Figure 7 illustrates that the Point Neighborhood is the city’s densest neighborhood. Census block groups there have as many as 95 people per acre.<sup>5</sup>
- Other neighborhoods in Salem’s historic core are also relatively dense—including Downtown, the McIntire District, Broad Street, North River, Gallows Hill, Salem Common, Derby Street, and Mack

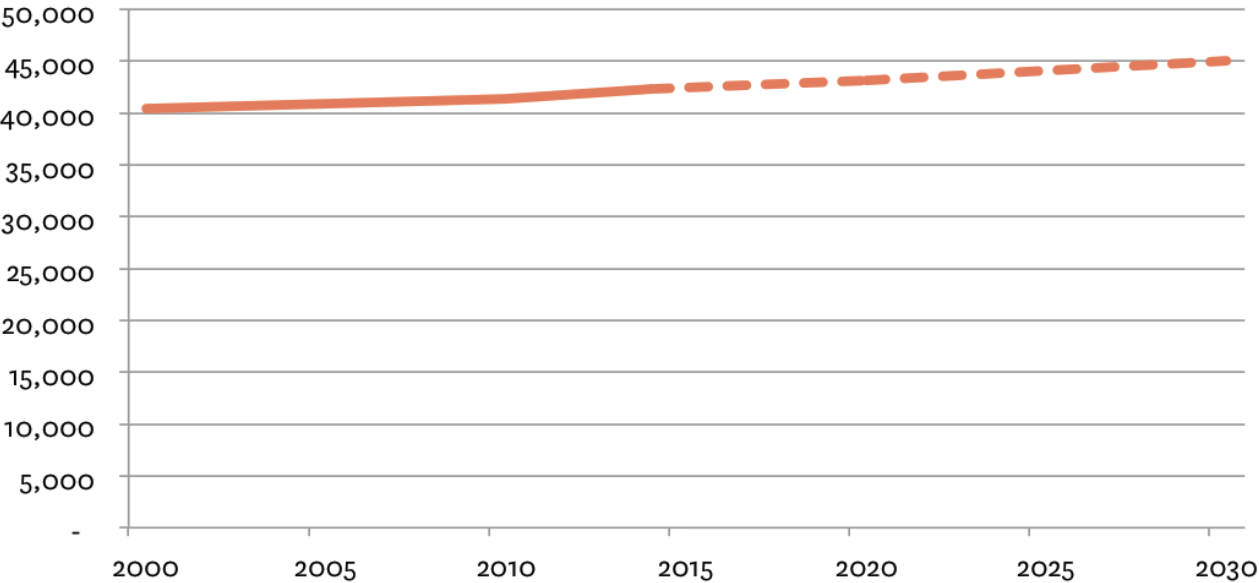
Park, as well as parts of Bridge Street Neck, North Salem, and South Salem.<sup>6</sup>

- Neighborhoods settled more recently, such as Witchcraft Heights and Highland Avenue, are less dense.

Importantly, any consideration of population density should also include a city’s *daytime* population, or the density of people who work in the city or otherwise are in the city during typical working hours. At these times, jobs centers Downtown and the areas near North Shore Medical Center and Salem State University are likely the most dense areas of the city.

1 US Census, 1790–1910  
2 US Census, 1920–1990  
3 US Census, 1990–2010; Census Bureau Population Estimate, 2016  
4 MAPC, Population Growth projections, 2014  
5 American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates  
6 Ibid.

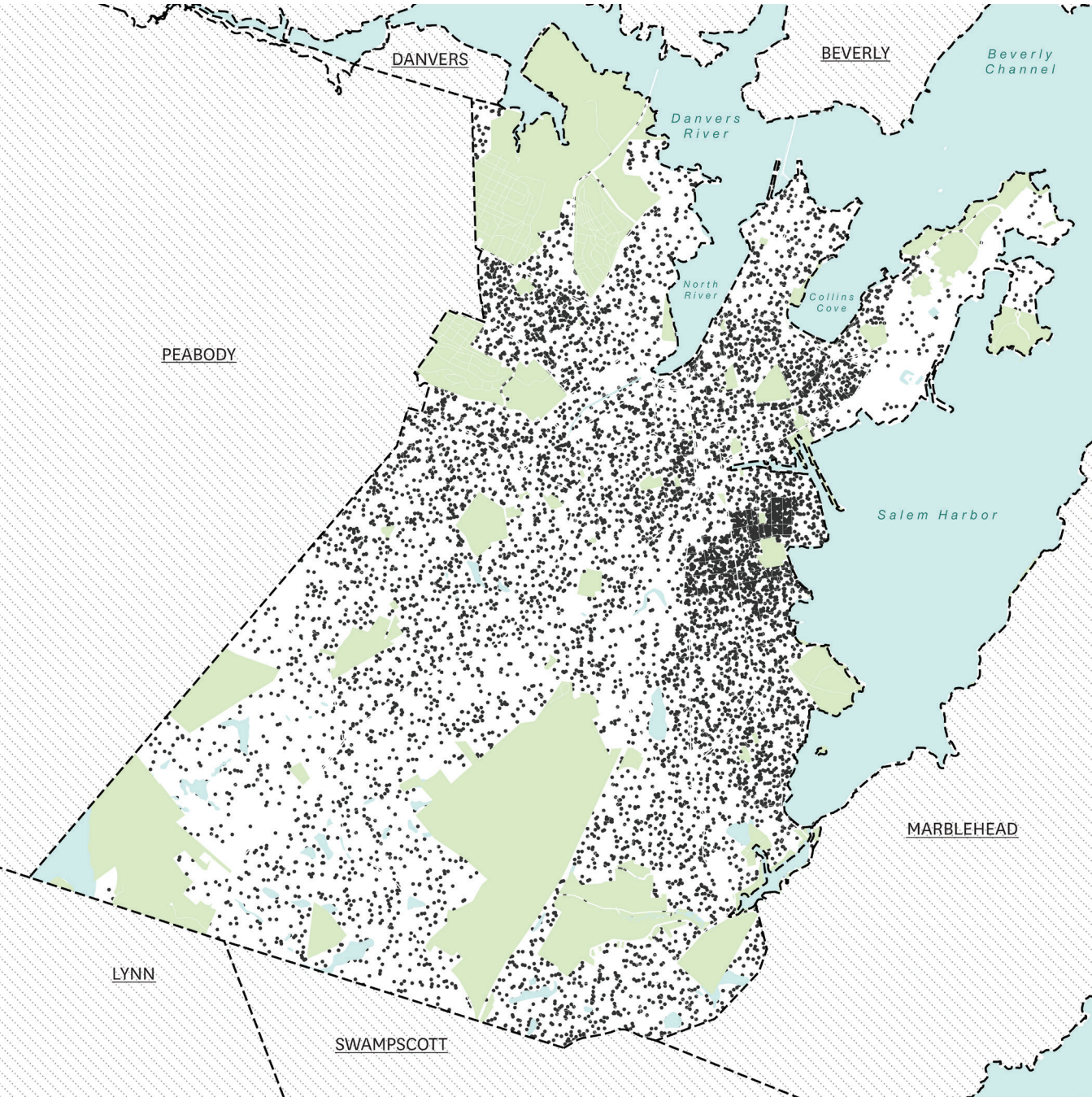
Population Growth, Actual and Projected, 2000–2030  
Figure 6



Source: US Census, 2000–2010; American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates; MAPC population

Actual      Projected  
City of Salem

Salem residents by home location, 2014 (1 dot = 5 people) Figure 7



Salem’s most residentially dense neighborhood is the Point.

Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. Dots do not represent exact home locations, but rather were placed randomly within the residents’ census block group.

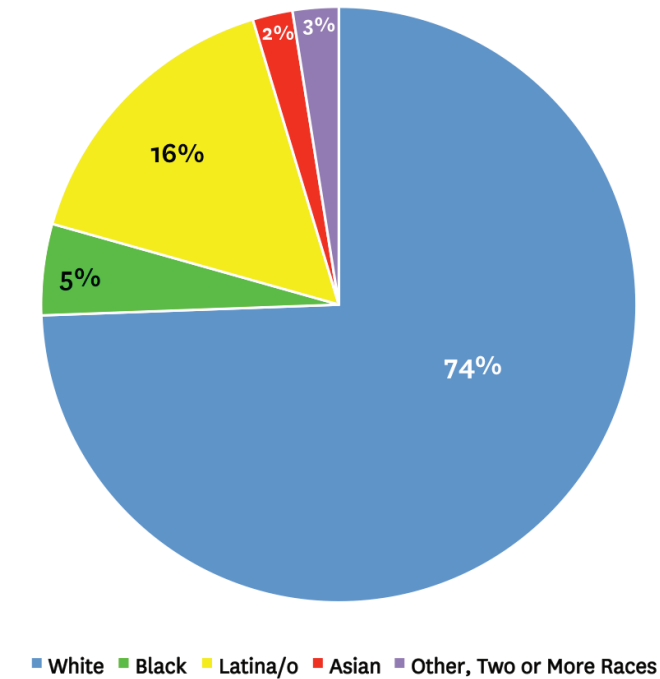


# Race, Ethnicity, and National Origins

Salem’s population is relatively diverse compared to nearby municipalities, though the city is still largely white and non-Latina/o.

- The city’s residents are 74% white, 16% Latina/o, 5% black, 2% Asian, and 3% of any other racial identity or of more than one race.<sup>7</sup>
- Of the cities and towns adjacent to Salem, only Lynn has a larger population of color.<sup>8</sup>
- Figure 9 illustrates that Salem’s people of color are not concentrated in any one part of the city, but rather live dispersed across the city.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the Point has a uniquely high proportion of people of color, and the neighborhood remains a culturally important area, particularly for the city’s black and Latina/o communities.<sup>10</sup>
- Approximately 15% of Salem’s population was born outside the United States.<sup>11</sup>
- Of the population 5 years and older, 23% speak a language other than (or in addition to) English at home. Over half (54%) of those non-English speakers speak Spanish at home.<sup>12</sup>

Salem residents by racial and ethnic identity, 2014  
Figure 8



Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

7 American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. Racial and ethnic identities are based on self-identification. The US Census Bureau’s racial categories include white or Caucasian, black or African-American, Asian, Native American (American Indian or Native Alaskan), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Other, and identification with two or more races. Survey respondents of any race can identify as Hispanic or Latino, which is treated as a non-racial ethnic identity. For the purposes of this report, Latina/o includes people of any race who identify as Hispanic or Latino regardless of race, while all other (racial) categories do not include those who identify as Hispanic or Latino.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

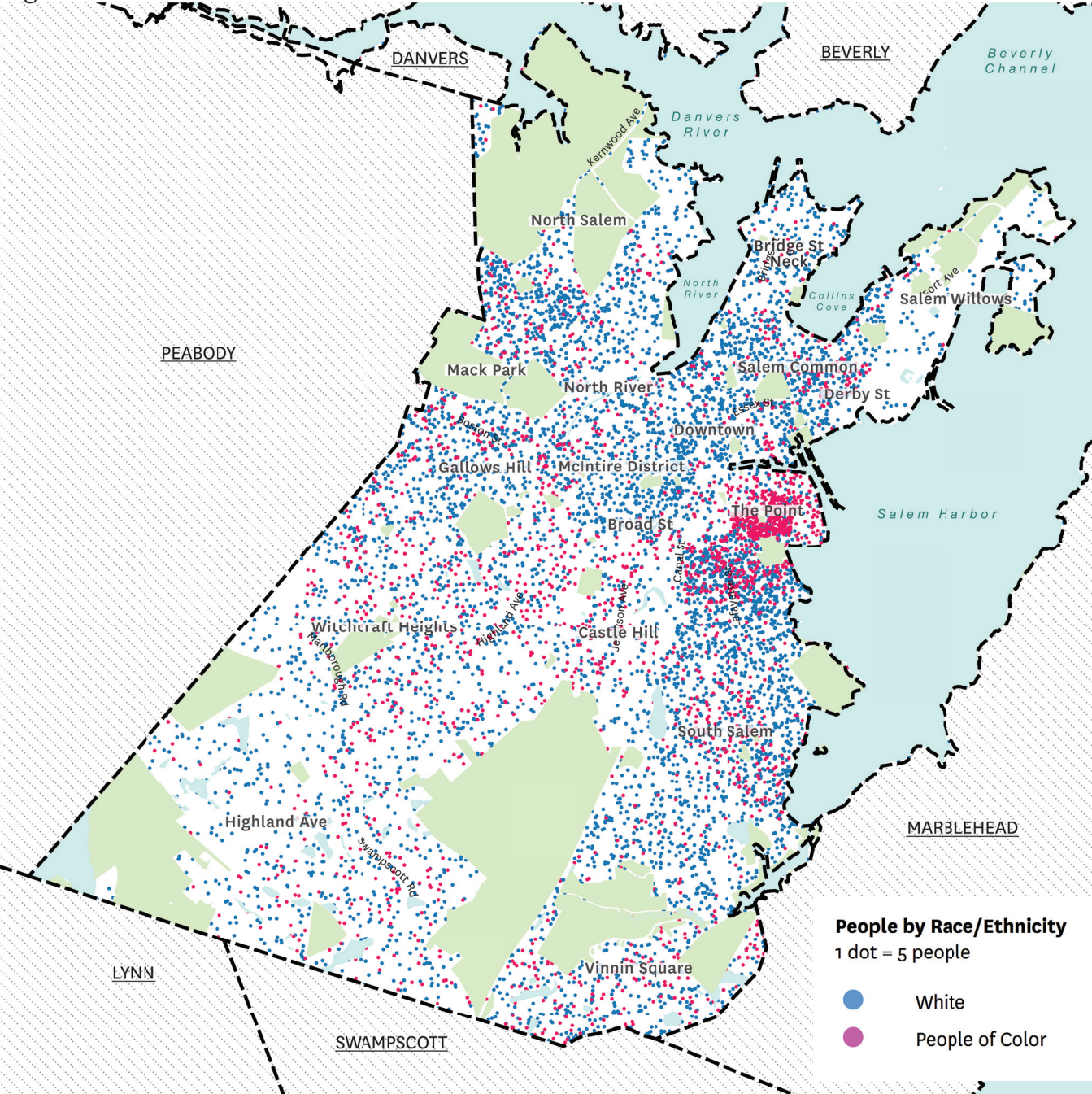
11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

# Salem residents by racial or ethnic identity, 2014 (1 dot = 5 people)

Salem’s people of color live across the city, though many still live in the Point, the historic center of Salem’s communities of color.

Figure 9



Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. Dots do not represent exact home locations, but rather were placed randomly within the residents’ census block group.

## Age and Household Structure

People of all ages live in Salem in a variety of household structures.

### Age Distribution

- The city has proportionally fewer children and seniors than Massachusetts generally, while having a larger share of people age 15–40 than the Commonwealth.<sup>13</sup>
- The largest share of the population is age 20 to 29, partly due to the presence of Salem State, access to the commuter rail, and amenities that enable a lifestyle attractive to this cohort.<sup>14</sup>
- Though all age groups live throughout Salem, certain age groups are relatively more concentrated in some areas more than others.
- The city's youth (ages 0–17) are concentrated in the Point and relatively underrepresented in Salem Willows and Bridge Street Neck.
- Millennials (ages 18–34) are

concentrated in and around Salem State University in South Salem, in the Point, and in Downtown.

- People aged 35–64 years are spread out across the city, roughly in proportion to the general population's geographic distribution.
- Seniors (people of age 65 and older) are underrepresented in the Point, near Salem State and Downtown.
- One out of every five Salem residents is 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.<sup>15</sup> This age group has similar preferences in housing and neighborhood amenities as the Millennial age cohort, though Millennials' preferences may change as their families grow.

### Household Structure

- Over half (53%) of all households (people who occupy a single housing unit) are families (a group of people related by marriage, birth, or adoption). *(See “Neighborhood Character, Housing Size, and Housing Age” on page 54 for more information on housing options for families.)*
- One in four households (25%) have one or more children living in them.
- Over one in three Salem households (38%) are a single person living alone, and 30% of those people living alone are seniors.

<sup>13</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. Unless otherwise noted, all analysis on this page references this survey.

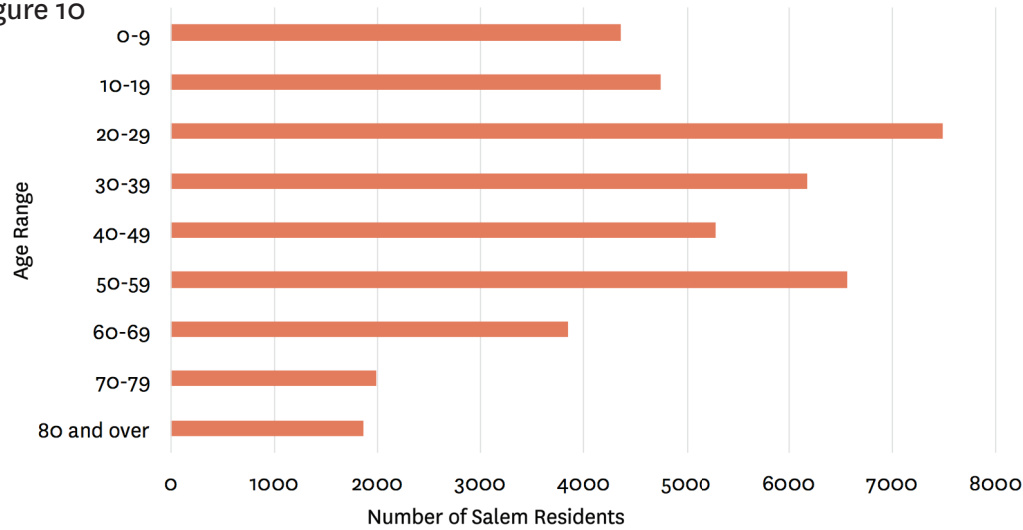
<sup>14</sup> According to Census Bureau policies, university students should be counted at their university residences. In practice, while they are usually counted at their university residences, they are sometimes counted at their parents' residences, and other times counted at both.

<sup>15</sup> MAPC, Population Projections, 2014.



Population by Age

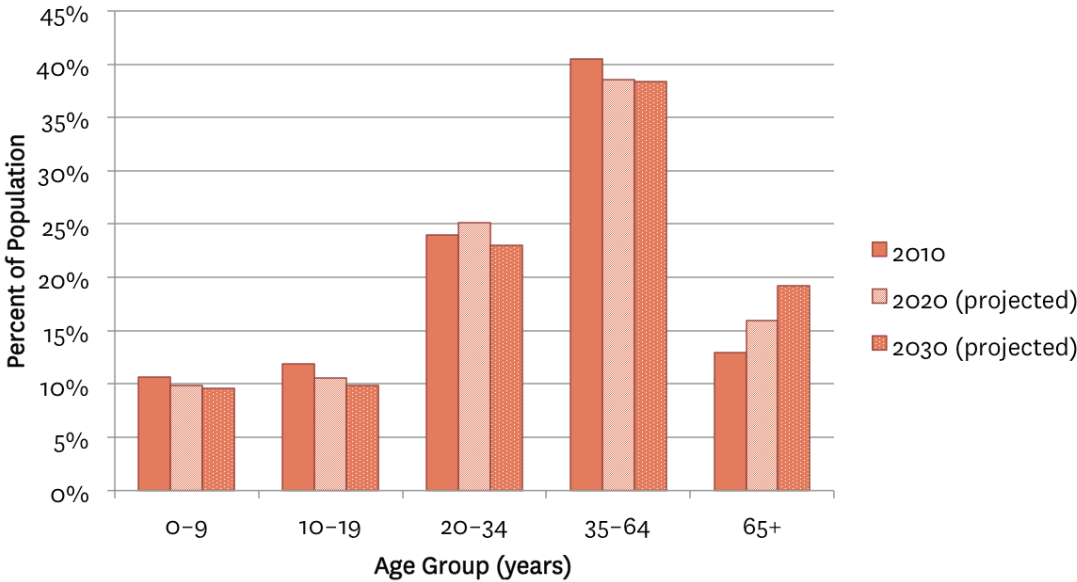
Figure 10



Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

Change in Age Structure, 2010–2030

Figure 11

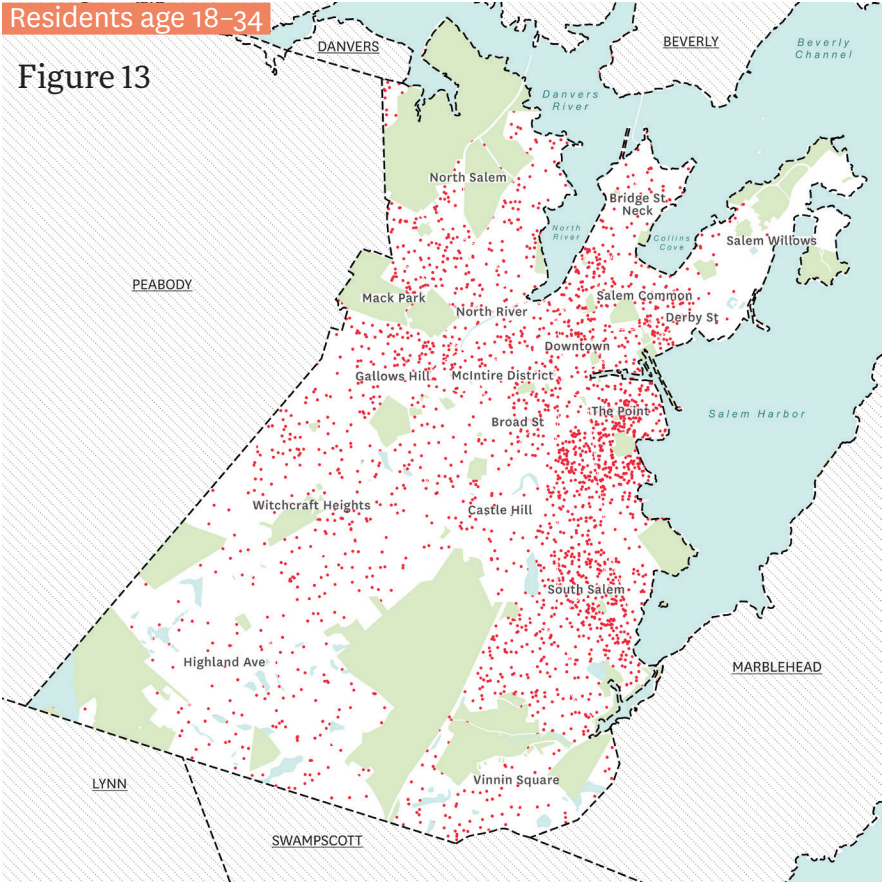
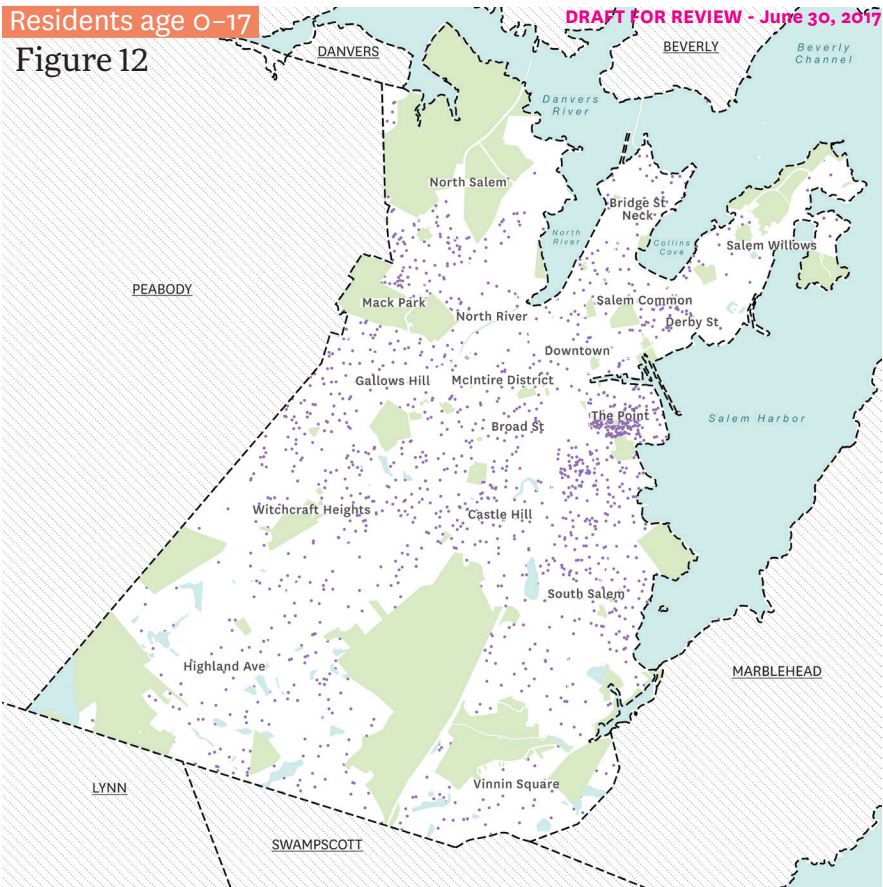


Source: US Census, 2010; MAPC Poulation Projections, Stronger Region Scenario 2020–2030, published 2014. (These age groups do not align with age groups reported elsewhere in this report.)

# Salem residents by age, 2014

(1 dot = 5 people)

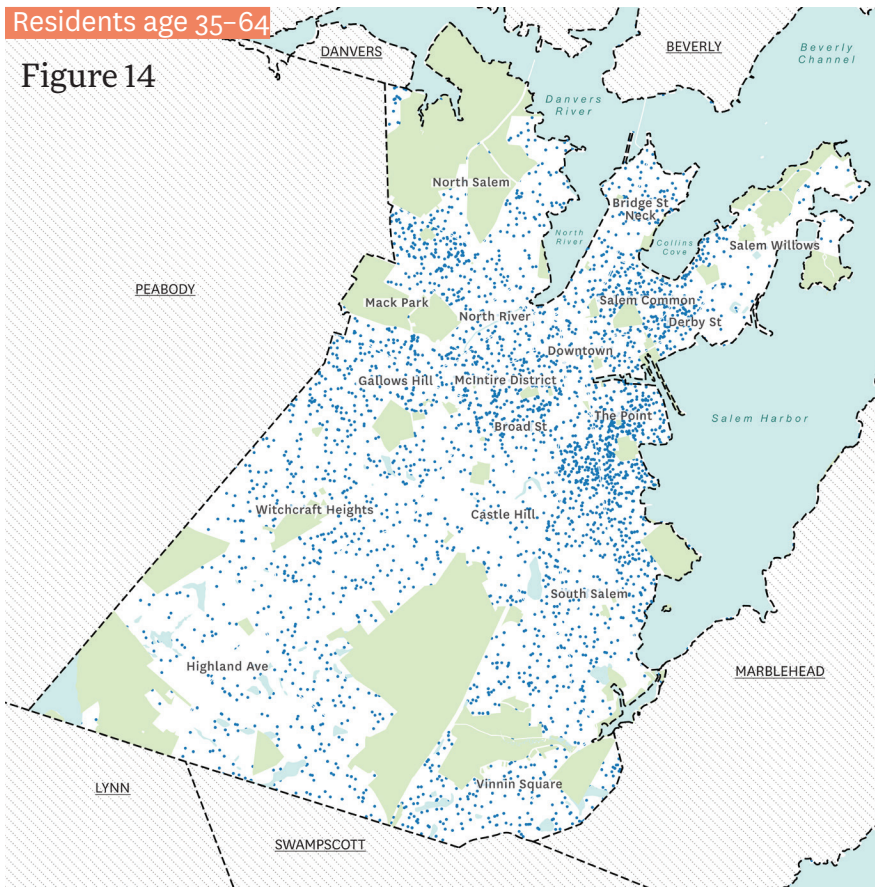
Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. Dots do not represent exact home locations, but rather were placed randomly within the residents' census block group.





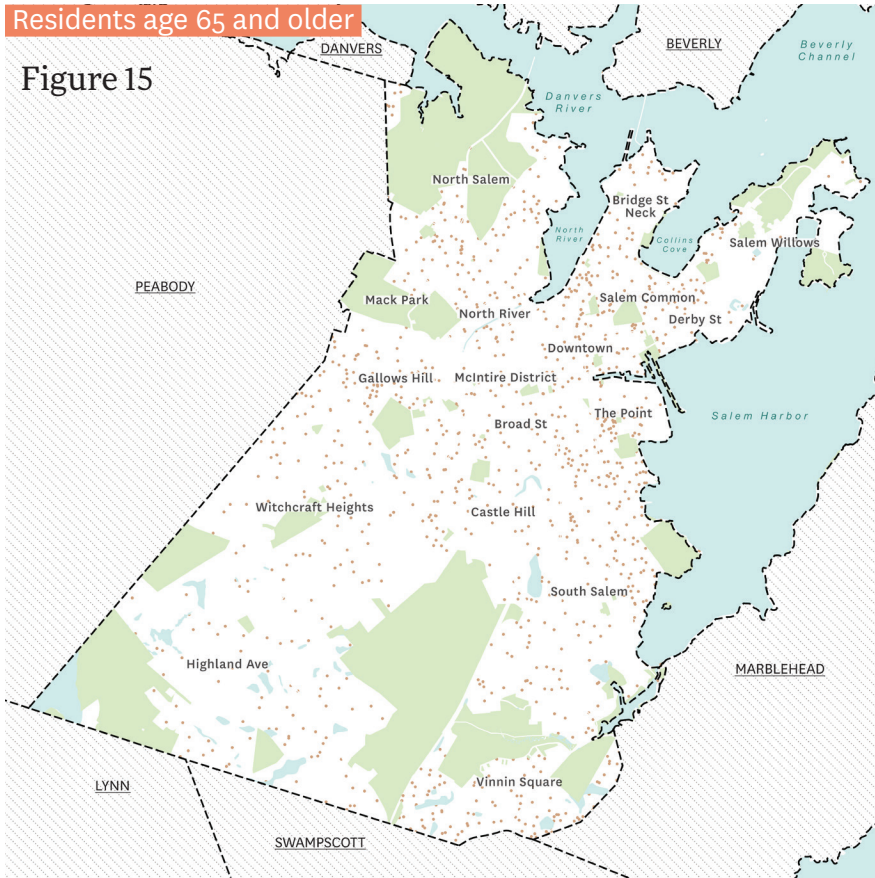
Residents age 35–64

Figure 14



Residents age 65 and older

Figure 15





## Educational Attainment

- Over 90% of Salem residents aged 25 and older are high school graduates, including the 24% of residents who are high school graduates with no college credits.
- Roughly 38% of residents have a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- Younger people are much more likely to have a bachelor's or advanced degree than older people, with the rates of college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds nearly double that of people aged 65 or older.
- High concentrations of Salem residents with a bachelor's or advanced degree are found Downtown and in neighborhoods like Salem Common, Salem Willows, the McIntire District, and South Salem near the university.
- Low concentrations of college-educated residents are found in the Point, Castle Hill, Gallows Hill, and North River.
- Earnings for Salem residents with a graduate or professional degree are double that of residents with no higher education. *(See "Employment and Earnings for Salem residents" on page 76 for more information on the city's income distribution.)*

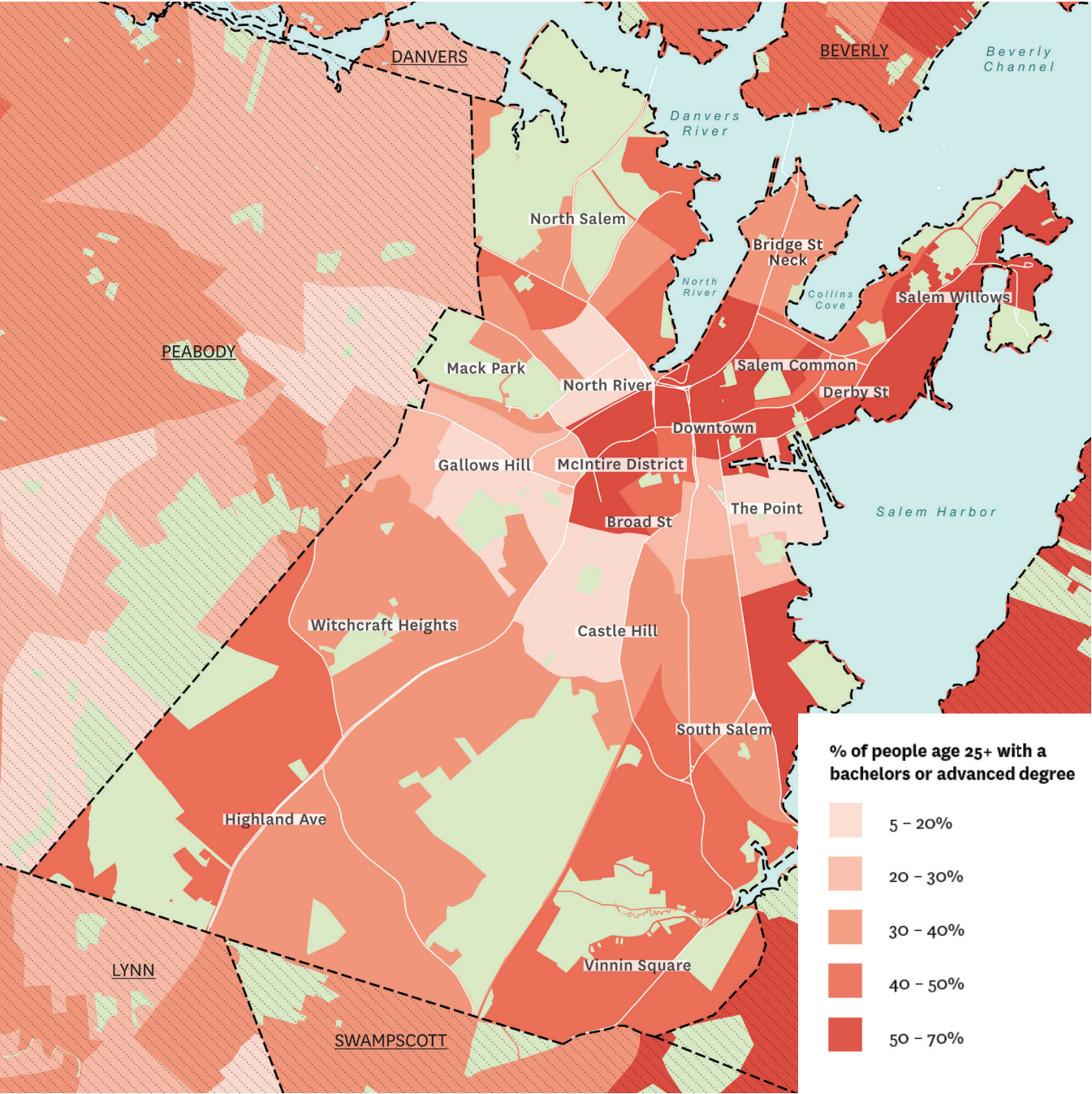


Overlooking Salem State University  
Photo: Salem State University

# Percent of residents with a bachelors or advanced degree, 2014

Salem’s population with higher education degrees are concentrated in the city’s core, near Salem State University, and in Salem Willows.

Figure 16



Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. Dots do not represent exact home locations, but rather were placed randomly within the residents’ census block group.

# What we heard from the community

For some in Salem, the diversity found in the city is its greatest strength. When asked what they love about Salem, 18% of people participating in Imagine Salem’s small group activities mentioned diversity, inclusivity, civic activity, or community pride. In the online survey, 9% of all respondents used the word “diversity” in answering the same question. That so many people of different backgrounds (varying by age, ancestry, color, ability, family status, gender identity or expression, marital status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation) can call Salem home and feel they are part of a wider citizenry is crucial to the future success of the city.

When asked to finish the sentence

“By 2026 Salem should be...”, a majority of survey respondents (53%) chose the phrase “...a city that welcomes all.” The meaning of diversity also varied by respondent. Some prized racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. Sexual and gender identity diversity was important to some respondents, while others saw the openness to both families and unpartnered young people as important. Openness to the wiccan community is a category of diversity uniquely prominent in Salem.

The practical impacts of this sentiment on policy do not have consensus, however. For some, it meant the provision of housing units that would be both affordable and suitable for families. One respondent who wanted Salem to be “a city that

welcomes all” also felt there was too much low-income housing in the city. As another example, the Imagine Salem engagement activities were conducted during the debate on an ordinance to establish Salem as a sanctuary city. Many respondents had strong feelings on this ordinance, but there was no clear agreement on which direction the City should take.


In order to address the differences of opinion regarding diversity and inclusivity in policymaking, the City should continue to foster opportunities to discuss what these values mean in practice, including governance bodies like the No Place for Hate Committee and initiatives like the Salem for All Ages action plan.








**I love the diversity. All are welcomed and accepted.**




-Online survey respondent

**Salem is a great walking city that feels small enough that one's participation in civic life isn't lost in the crowd.**




-Activity card respondent

**I love the multi-age diversity in cultures and economic standing. There's lots to do, with something for everyone.**



-Activity card respondent

**Maintain the welcoming environment.**



-Activity card respondent

## Ongoing programs supporting equity and inclusivity

The City of Salem has taken a number of steps to promote equity and inclusivity in the community. These steps include passing laws to ensure fair and equal treatment, creating governance structures and processes that empower historically disadvantaged populations, and setting up plans and programs to affirmatively advance quality of life for all in Salem.

### Examples

- Salem's City Council has passed the Sanctuary for Peace ordinance in April 2017, which ensures the City will provide services to all Salem residents regardless of immigration status. The ordinance was on the November 2017 election ballot and approved.
- The City of Salem has a number of boards and commissions which empower various communities in the process of governance. These include the Commission on Disabilities, which works to make the city more accessible to all; the Council on Aging, which serves more than 2,000 seniors annually with a variety of services such as exercise classes and daily hot lunches; the Youth Commission, a board of young people who offer recommendations to the City and help craft new programs; the No Place for Hate Committee, an anti-discrimination committee which offers diversity education and helps residents with discrimination claims; the Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Council, an umbrella group for the presidents of each of the city's neighborhood organizations; and the Inclusionary Advisory Committee, a new group that will provide education on the civil rights to disadvantaged communities, including immigrants.
- Salem For All Ages is a wide-ranging initiative created to help Salem residents remain in the community as they grow older and to make the city safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for all residents regardless of their age. The plan includes a needs assessment for Salem's senior population and a detailed action plan to make the city an age friendly community.



## Summary of findings

Salem is a home to a diverse range of people, and its population is growing. The City's policies and initiatives already place value on issues related to equity and inclusivity—such as its nondiscrimination ordinance and its aging in place initiative. Salem's population is relatively integrated in terms of race and ethnicity, though the city remains largely white. The population is less integrated by other measures of diversity, such as age. In certain cases, such concentrations may be preferable to all involved. In other cases, the results may be

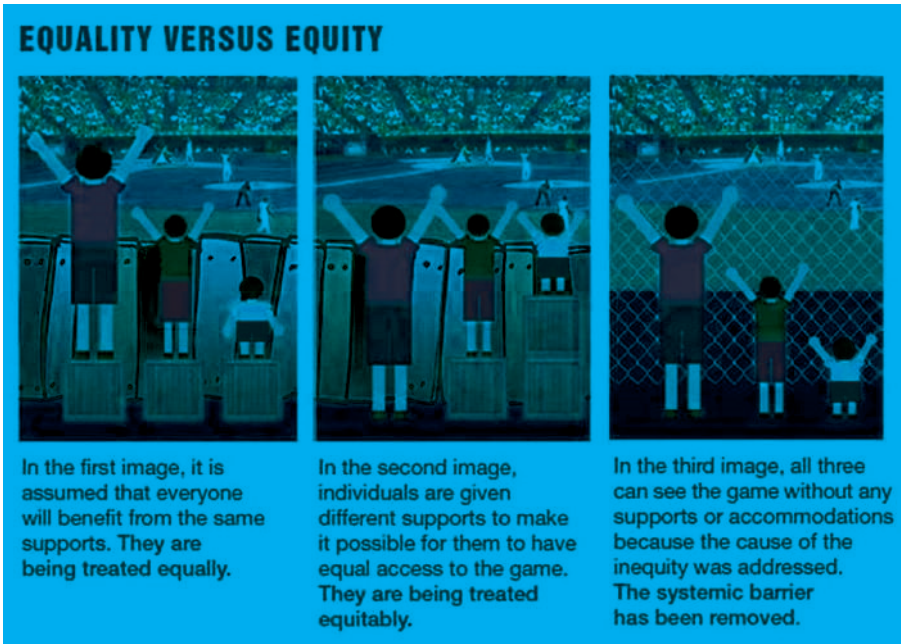
unwanted. As the city's residents and their government adjust to Salem's growing and changing population, Salem should create plans and programs that address change at the citywide and neighborhood scales, in addition to plans targeted at specific populations or topics, such as the Salem for All Ages Action Plan. This approach will address shared issues, as well as the unique needs of each neighborhood. All such plans should note equity and inclusivity for all Salem's communities.





## Community Guiding Principles

Salem believes in growing and supporting a diverse community, where people have equal opportunity and access to social and economic resources. The people of Salem should be able to participate in their community in meaningful ways, including the direction and intentions of their city government. Conversely, the wellbeing of the public should be at the forefront of the City of Salem’s governing objectives.



**Diversity is a fundamental part of Salem's history and is critical for its continued prosperity.**

Salem recognizes the multitude of voices that shaped its past and that its history cannot be adequately told without addressing the lives and contributions of people of many backgrounds. Today the city must create an inclusive environment for people no matter their race, ethnicity, income or wealth, class affiliation, gender identity, sexual preference, religious or spiritual affiliation, household or family structure, veteran status, nationality or refugee status, and employment or student status. Salem acknowledges that in the 21st century, the city will be neither socially or economically prosperous without inclusivity.

**Equity is a necessary component of any approach to planning.**

Salem should embrace equity of opportunity and basic social needs, such as housing or access to transportation. Without equity, diversity and inclusivity are fleeting. Equity moves beyond a simple equality of opportunity, but takes steps to be affirmatively fair and to rectify historic injustices and remove systemic barriers.

**Civic and political engagement within and between communities is key to inclusive governance.**

Equity and inclusivity can only advance so far without the robust engagement from everyone involved. Salem should create opportunities for more people of varying backgrounds to become involved in formal political and informal community life, whether through get-out-the-vote campaigns for municipal elections, the provision of additional usable community spaces, or otherwise.

**Diversity and inclusivity cannot be buzzwords, but must be enacted through legal, social, economic, and symbolic means.**

Salem should continue to advance diversity and inclusivity through ordinances, referenda, and legal interpretations. It should also continue to foster social and economic diversity through policies and programs, many of which are discussed in later sections. Lastly, it should use monuments, public art, festivals, and other means to affirm the historic contributions and present cultures of its many communities.







# Housing

Salem's housing stock includes a diversity of styles, sizes, and arrangements. This variety of housing supports a wide range of people who are seeking different living arrangements. Not all groups feel there is enough housing to meet their needs, however, and families in particular feel there is a shortage of quality options. The city's housing is becoming more expensive, and high housing costs threaten the diversity that Salem's housing fosters. Salem should endeavor to make the housing market affordable for the average household, incentivize housing production for lower income households, encourage diversity in the housing supply, and ensure new housing complements existing neighborhoods while creating access and opportunities for residents.



## Nighborhood Character, Housing Size, and Housing Age

### Character

Homes in Salem come in a wide variety of sizes, densities, and styles—giving each neighborhood its own unique character.

- Downtown is full of historic apartments—often walk-ups—which are sometimes situated above retail stores.
- The Point has a dense array of brick or clapboard apartment buildings that create a shared sense of community.
- Areas like Salem Common and the McIntire District boast historic federal-style homes in a mix of single-family and converted multifamily buildings.
- Neighborhoods such as Witchcraft Heights are more suburban in character, with Cape Cod or Colonial style houses and on quarter-acre lots.
- Furthermore, there are also a number of large, contemporary multi-family developments in neighborhoods far from Downtown, such as Highland Avenue or Vinnin Square.

### Size

Neighborhoods close to Salem's historic center tend to have more multifamily buildings that are more "urban" in character.

Overall, Salem's is mostly multifamily with a range of units.<sup>1</sup>

- Roughly 25% of Salem's homes are detached single-family homes, and an additional 8% are attached single-family homes (townhouses).<sup>2</sup>
- Roughly 67% of Salem's housing is in multifamily buildings. Salem has the largest share of multifamily housing in the sub-region.<sup>3</sup> According to the 2015 Housing Needs Assessment, the City should continue to maintain its high proportion of multifamily housing in order to retain and attract more workers to fill labor gaps left by retiring baby boomers.
- Duplexes account for 19% of the housing, and 21% of homes are in buildings with only 3 or 4 apartments.<sup>4</sup>
- Approximately 20% of homes are in large apartment buildings with 10

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates; Housing Needs and Demand Analysis, 2015

<sup>4</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

or more units.<sup>5</sup>

- Housing size both reflects and influences household size. As household sizes shrink due to national socioeconomic trends, Salem will need to have more housing units to adequately house the population, even before accounting for population growth. According to the Housing Needs Assessment, “the number of housing units produced over time may need to be built at a rate faster than the growth in households.”<sup>6</sup>

Salem’s housing also varies by bedroom.

- Over 1 in 3 housing units (34%) have 3 or more bedrooms—large enough to accommodate a family of four comfortably.<sup>7</sup>
- The plurality of homes (41%) have 2 bedrooms, which are better suited

to new families and roommates.<sup>8</sup>

- 1-bedroom homes and studios account for the remaining 24% of housing in the city.<sup>9</sup> The majority of these units are in older, historic neighborhoods, particularly on either side of Washington/Canal Street, where they can make up over half the housing stock in some census blocks.<sup>10</sup>

## Age

Salem’s housing stock is also

overwhelmingly old. Over half (54%) of all homes were built before 1940.

An additional 27% was built between 1940 and 1980.<sup>11</sup> Salem’s older housing stock is vulnerable to conversion into condominiums, which reduces the city’s rental options.

## 34% of Salem’s housing units have 3 or more bedrooms

<sup>5</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

<sup>6</sup> Housing Needs and Demand Analysis, 2015

<sup>7</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

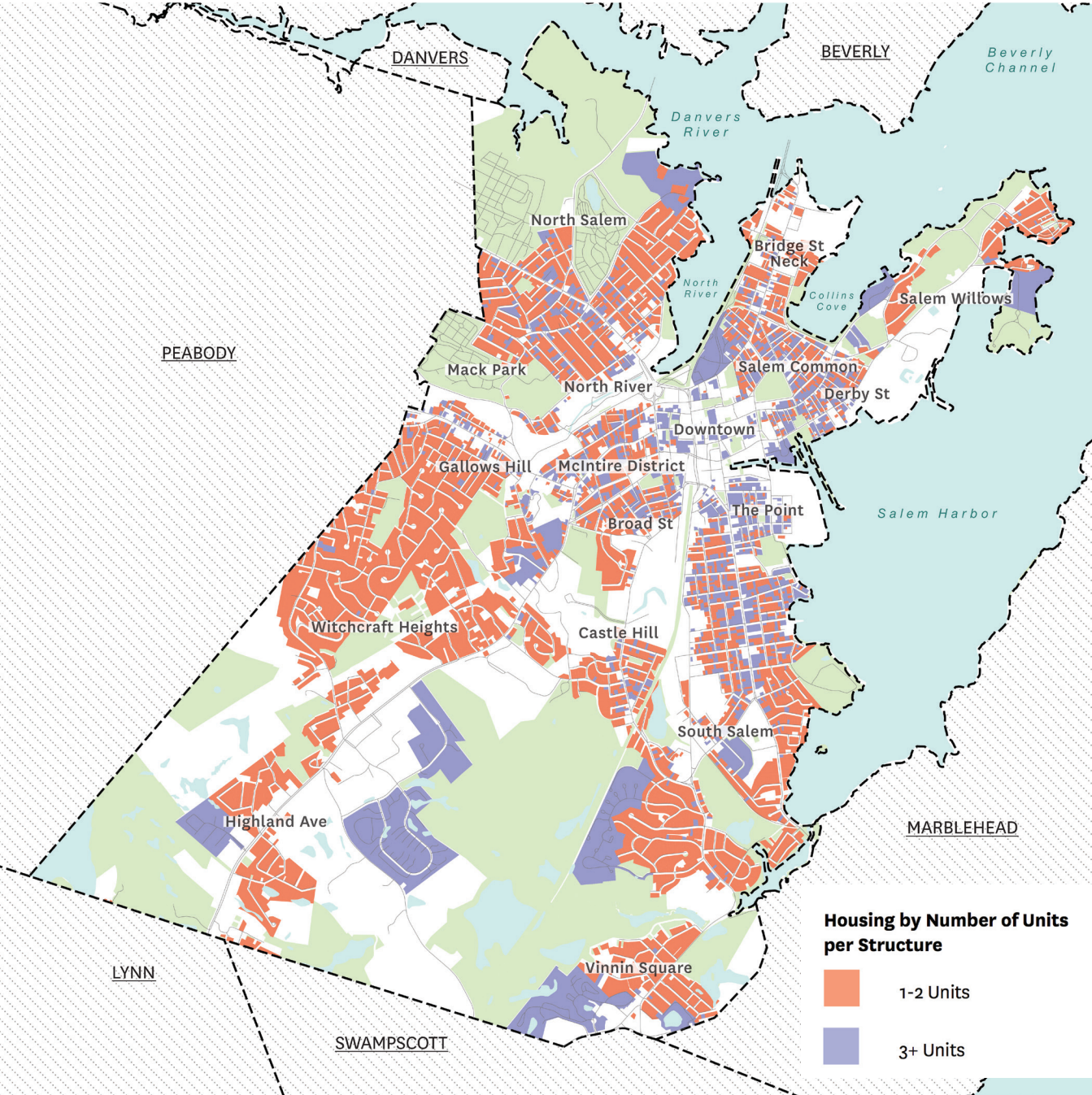
<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



## Housing by number of units in each building, 2014

Multifamily housing tends to be located in the historic core of Salem along main streets, and in new large developments. Roughly 67% of Salem’s housing is in multifamily buildings.

Figure 17

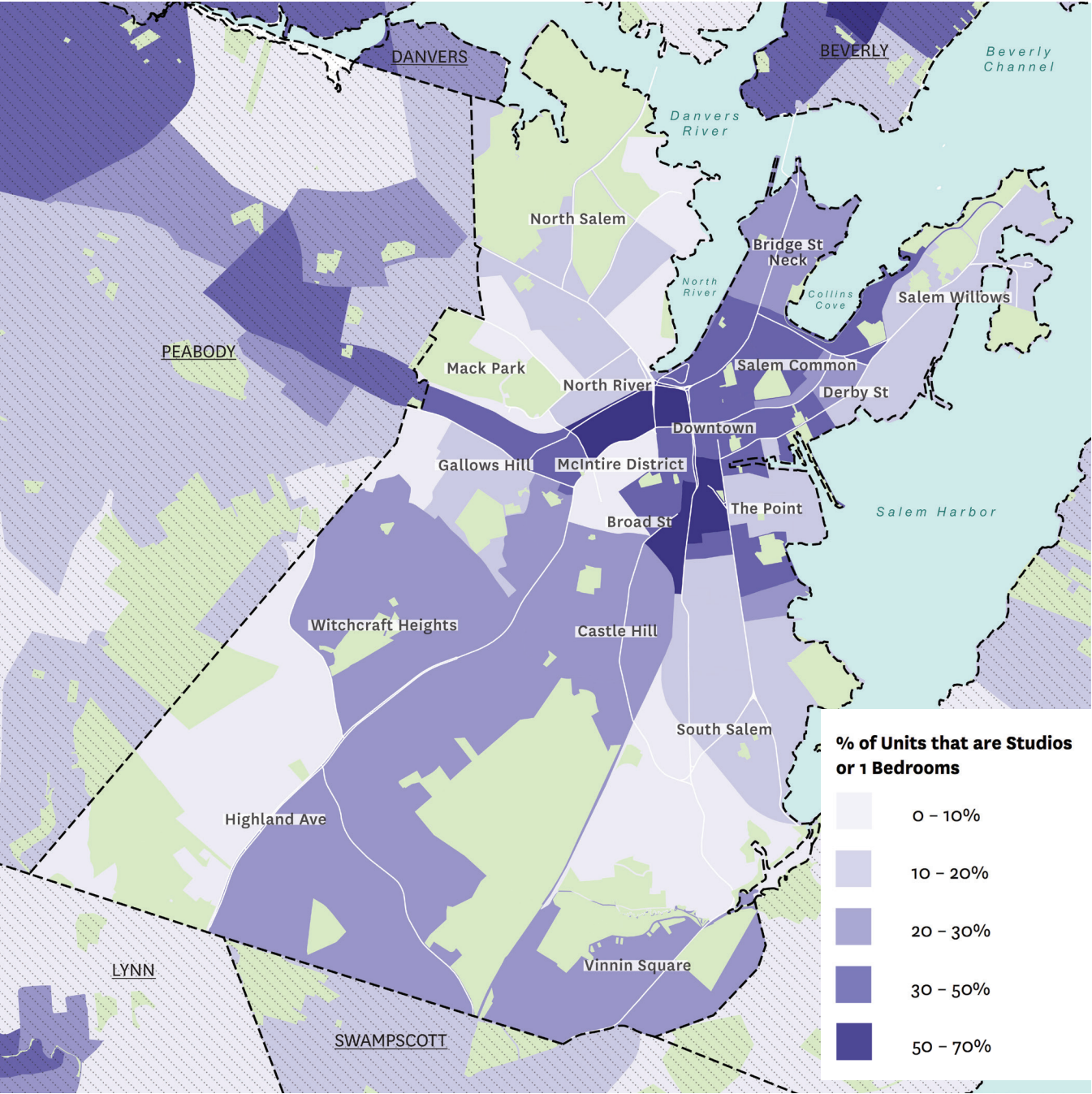


Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

# Percent of housing units that are studios and 1-bedrooms, 2014

Studios and 1-bedroom apartments are concentrated in Salem’s historic core, especially in areas close to the commuter rail station.

Figure 18



Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates



# Housing Prices and Rents

Housing costs are near their all-time highs. Since the Great Recession, costs have steadily risen, especially near the commuter rail, an area rich with amenities and which provides workers with reliable access to the regional labor market.

## Prices

- In the decade between 1996 and 2005, the housing market’s prerecession peak, home values in Salem rose by 150% to a peak average value of approximately \$332,000.<sup>12</sup>
- Home values fell in the housing crash and ensuing Great Recession, dropping to the post recession low of virtually \$252,000.<sup>13</sup>

- Since then, home values have steadily risen, surpassing the prerecession peak in November 2016 and continuing to trend higher.<sup>14</sup>
- A 2016 point-in-time online sample of homes for sale showed asking prices per square foot highest Downtown and Derby Street, with other pockets high prices in the McIntire District, Mack Park, and the far north end of Salem Willows.<sup>15</sup>

## Rents

- Tenant-reported rents in Salem ranged between \$800 and \$1600 per month in Salem between 2010 and 2014.<sup>16</sup>

- The highest rents in parts of Downtown, Salem Common, and Derby Street.<sup>17</sup>
- A 2016 point-in-time online sample of asking rents showed a narrower range from \$1400 to \$1875 per month, after adjusting for the number of bedrooms in each listing.<sup>18</sup>
- The point-in-time sample showed the highest asking rents near the train station, with rents decreasing sharply at the Point, Broad Street, and Gallows Hill.<sup>19</sup>
- Relatively high rents were also found in neighborhoods with relatively few homes for rent, such as Witchcraft Heights.<sup>20</sup>

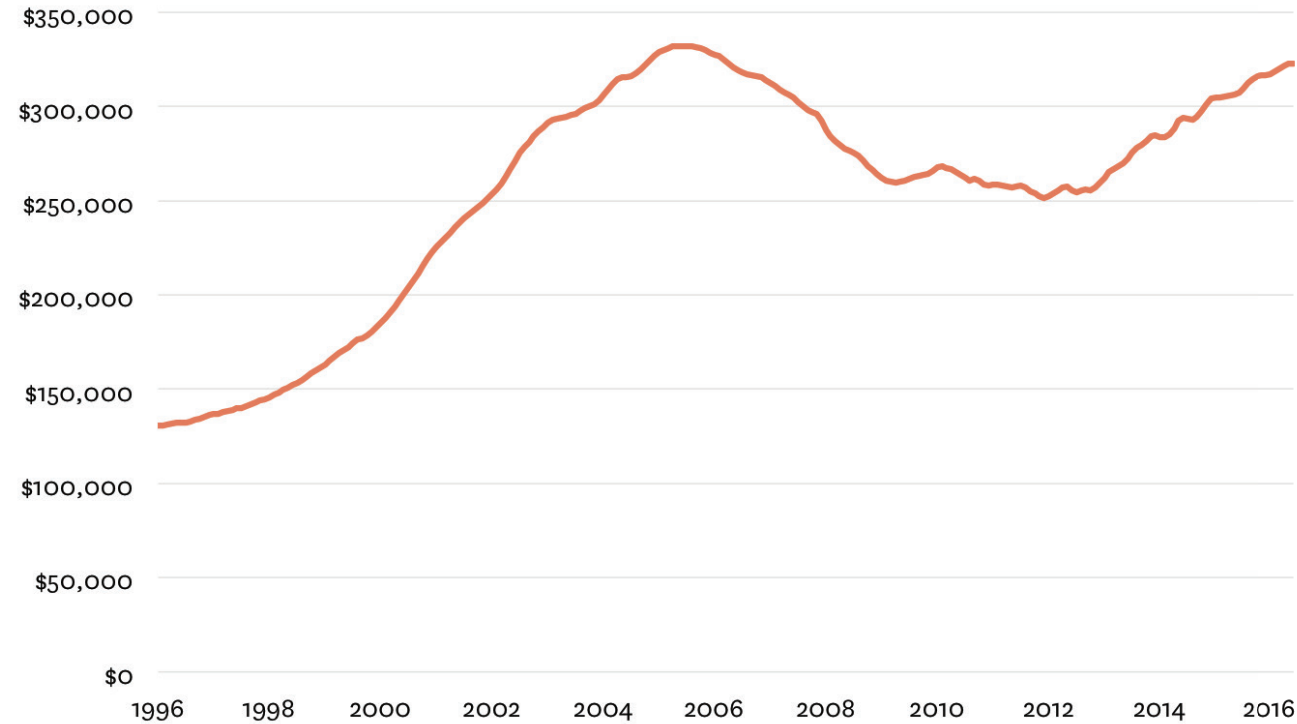
**Home values surpassed their prerecession peak in November 2016.**

12 Zillow Home Value Index, 1996–2005  
13 Ibid.  
14 Ibid.  
15 Zillow, Listings for sale, 27 November 2016  
16 American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates  
17 American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates  
18 Padmapper, Listings for rent, 27 November 2016. Asking rents adjusted to account for the number of bedrooms.  
19 Padmapper, Listings for rent, 27 November 2016. Asking rents adjusted to account for the number of bedrooms.  
20 Ibid.



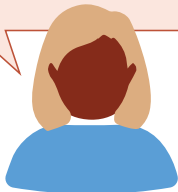
Home Values, 1996–2016

Figure 19



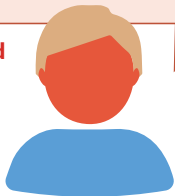
**I do not want Salem to become a place where moderate income earners cannot afford to live.**

-Online survey respondent



**We need more low-cost housing or reductions in the cost of living.**

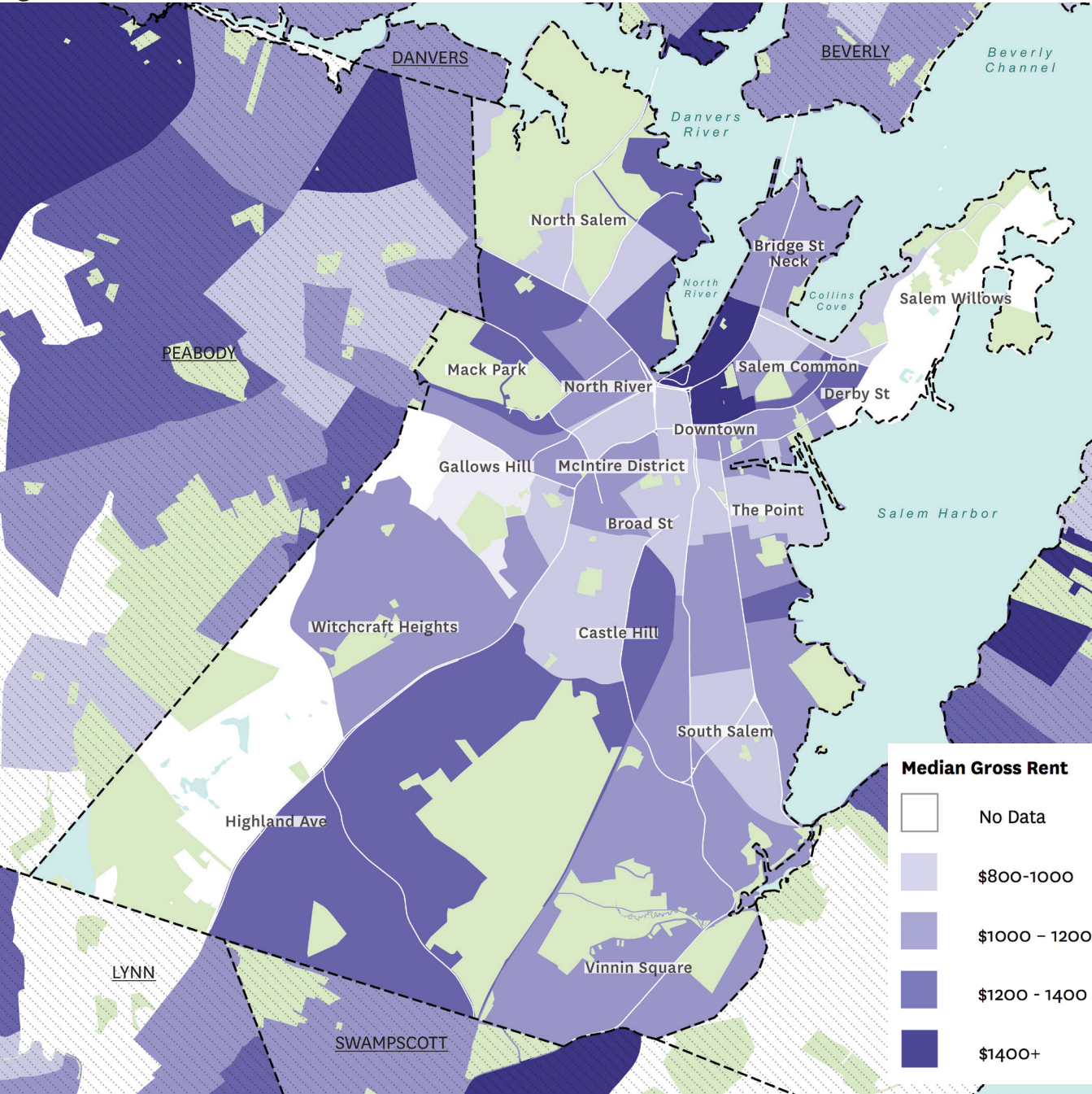
-Activity card respondent



# Median Gross Rent (Rent and Utilities), 2014

Rents tend to be greatest near the MBTA commuter rail station and are generally lower in the Point, Castle Hill, and South Salem.

Figure 20



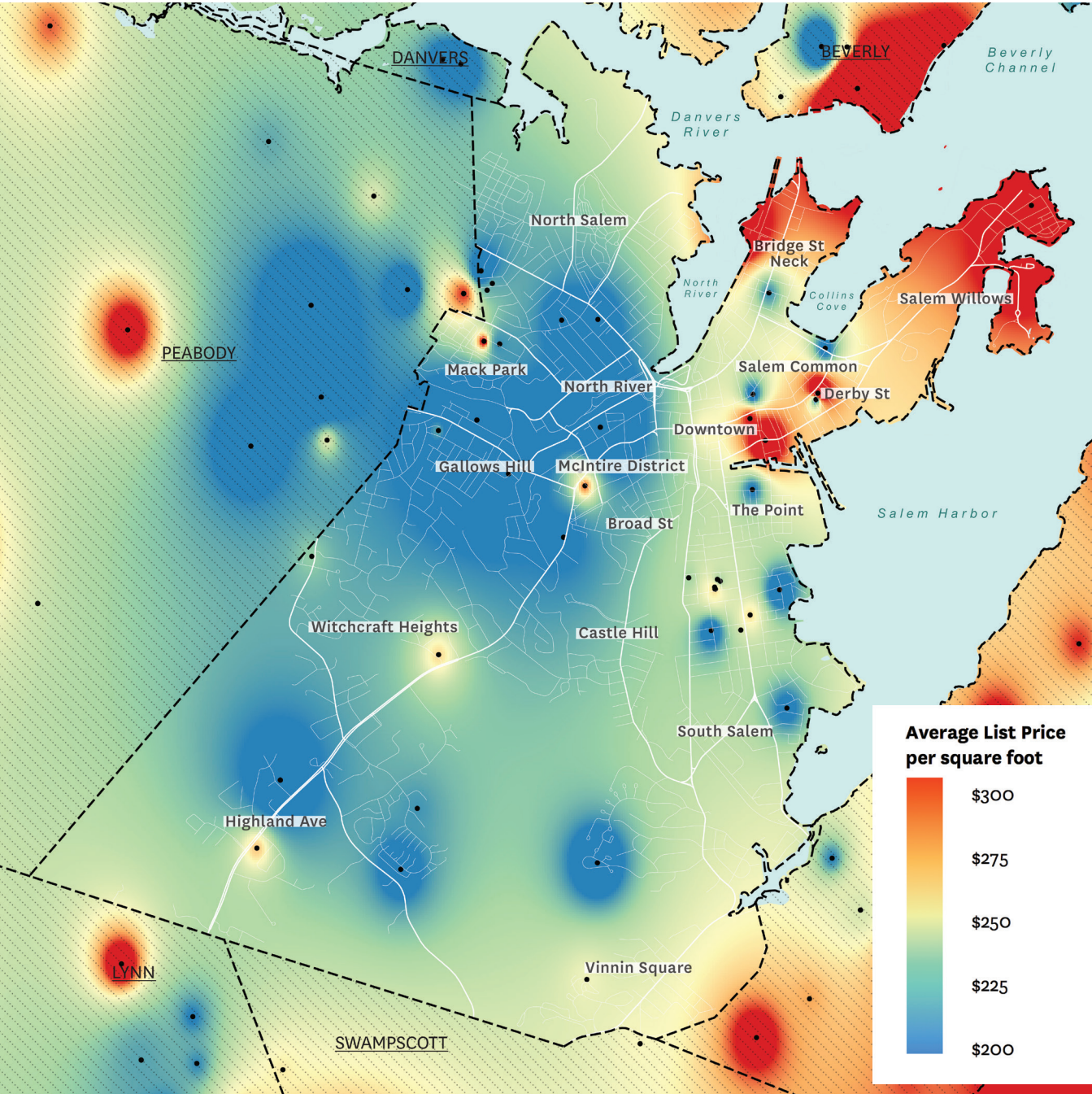
Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates.



# Asking price per square foot for homes for sale, November 2016

Home prices are greatest in and around downtown Salem.

Figure 21



Source: Zillow listings, 27 November 2016. Black dots represent listing sites. The price gradient is then estimated by averaging the prices in the space between individual listings.



## Affordability and Cost Burdens

Home values and their effects on residents are even more relevant when considering residents' income. A housing unit is considered affordable when its residents pay less than 30% of their income toward housing costs. Residents paying more are considered "housing cost-burdened" under federal standards.

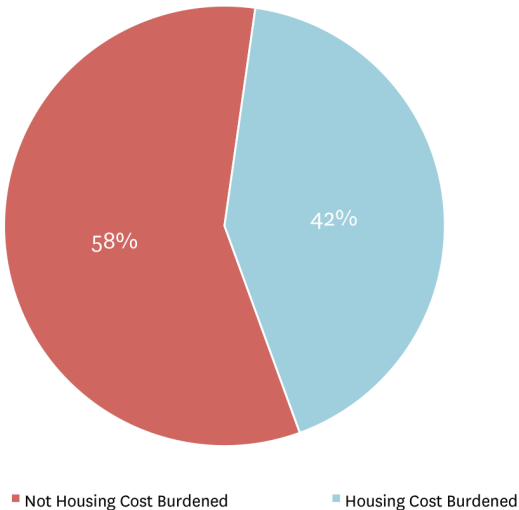
- Between 2010 and 2014, 42% of Salem households—over 7,600 households—paid more than 30% of their income in housing costs, meeting the definition of housing cost-burdened.<sup>21</sup>
- Nearly half (49%) of all renters were housing cost burdened.<sup>22</sup>
- Housing cost-burdened households tended to have lower household incomes. The majority of housing cost-burdened households (62%) had household incomes of less than \$50,000.<sup>23</sup> If rates of housing cost burden continue to rise, Salem risks losing racial, ethnic, and income diversity.
- For households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000, those that owned their home were much more likely to be housing cost-burdened.<sup>24</sup>

- Only 11% of households with incomes of \$75,000 or greater were housing cost-burdened.<sup>25</sup>

As shown on Figure 23, which is based on a point-in-time sample of the housing market in November 2016, a household would need to earn at least \$63,000 in order to affordably rent the average market-rate 1-bedroom apartment in Salem.<sup>26</sup> A household would need to earn nearly \$80,000 to affordably purchase the average market-rate 3-bedroom Salem home.<sup>27</sup>

Households that are Housing Cost-Burdened (Paying 30% or more of their income in housing costs)

Figure 22



21 American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

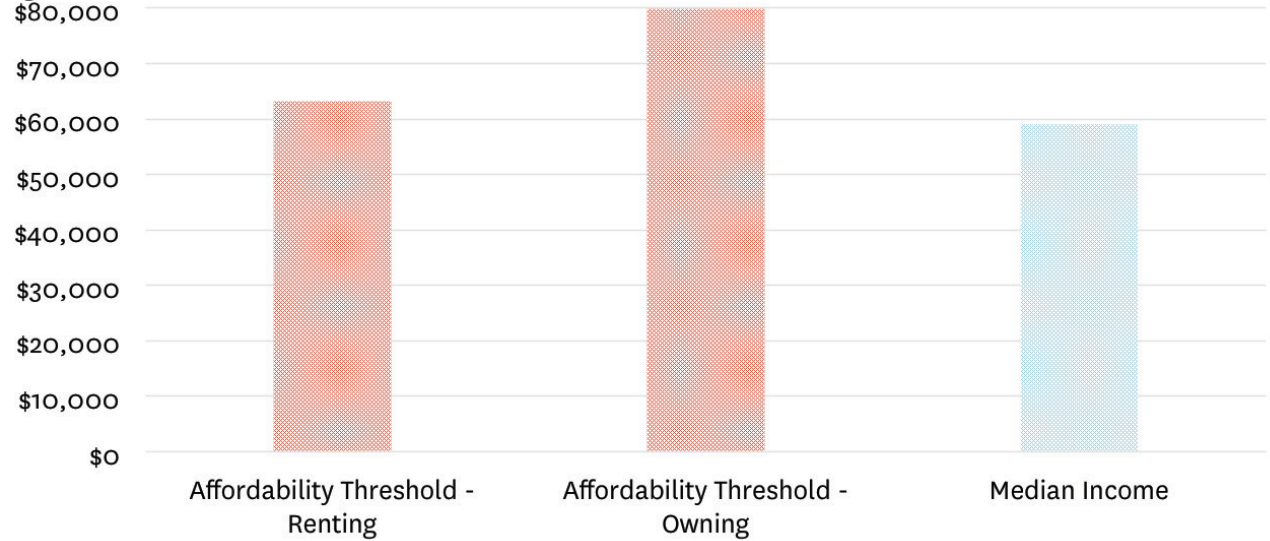
25 Ibid.

26 Padmapper, Listings for rent, 27 November 2016. Asking rents adjusted to account for the number of bedrooms. This calculation is based on asking rents and does not include the cost of utilities. After accounting for these variables, the actual income required to affordably rent the average market-rate 1-bedroom apartment would likely be greater.

27 Zillow, Listings for sale, 27 November 2016. These calculations assume a 30-year fixed rate mortgage at 4.00% with 20% down and do not include HOA fees, taxes, or utilities. The actual income needed to affordably purchase a home is likely higher after factoring in HOA fees and utilities, as well as a larger loan principle and mortgage insurance when paying less than 20% for the down payment.

Household Income and Incomes needed to rent or own housing affordably

Figure 23



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2010-2014; Padmapper 1-bedroom listings, November 27, 2016; Zillow 3-bedroom listings, November 27, 2016; Affordability thresholds are incomes where housing costs (averaged from Padmapper and Zillow samples) are equal to 30% of income. Affordability threshold for renters does not include utilities. Affordability threshold for homeowners assumes a 30-year 4% mortgage with a 20% downpayment.

Number of housing cost-burdened households by annual income (in thousands)

Figure 24



Source: American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-year estimates

## What we heard from the community

In general, the Salem community seeks more affordable housing of varied sizes and types to meet the needs of diverse housing consumers, and they want that housing to be situated in neighborhoods with strong community ties. While this broad goal resonated throughout the Imagine Salem process, there is not agreement within the community on how to achieve it. Some propose emphasis on student housing, while others would like to focus on housing for empty nesters. Many find family housing to be the city’s greatest housing need. Some residents excitedly propose experimentation with micro-housing units at high densities. Others would like a moratorium on condominiums in favor of maintaining rental opportunities. Some residents point to very specific problems that create unique constraints on the housing market, such as lead paint risks constricting the housing market for families.

While there is no immediate consensus on housing policy, there may be more overlap in solutions than some might imagine. A lack of student housing, for example, pushes some students (living as roommates) into housing that might otherwise be a family home—exacerbating the perceived shortage of family housing units. A focus on either student or family housing supply would ease this competition for space. However, a focus on single-family housing— at the expense of other housing types— would likely only increase competition for housing and continue to increase in housing costs. This is because people who would otherwise live in more dense housing developments would then be competing for those single-family homes.

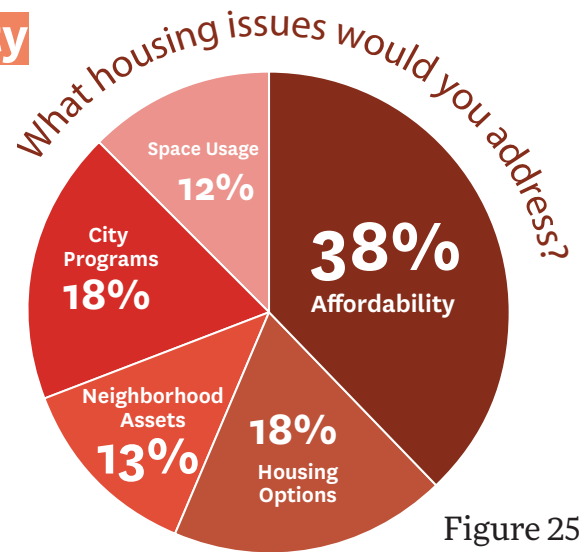


Figure 25

Source: Imagine Salem activity cards. Imagine Salem generated these general categories based on written responses, and coded each response into one or more categories.

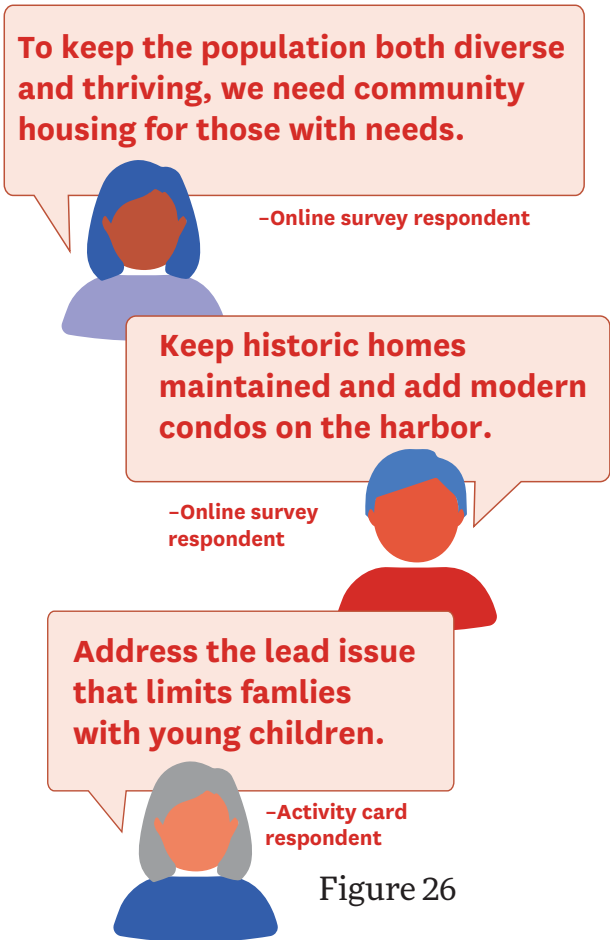
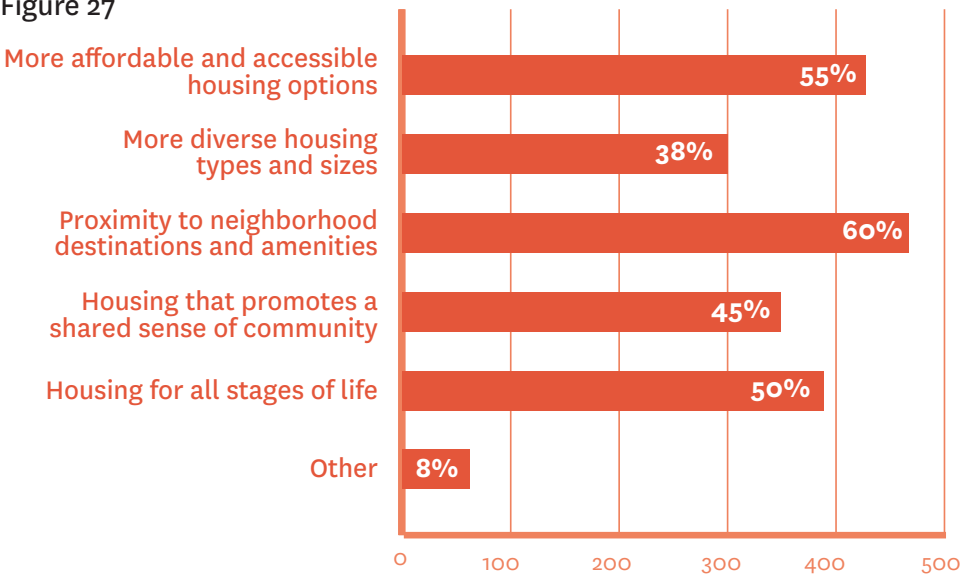


Figure 26



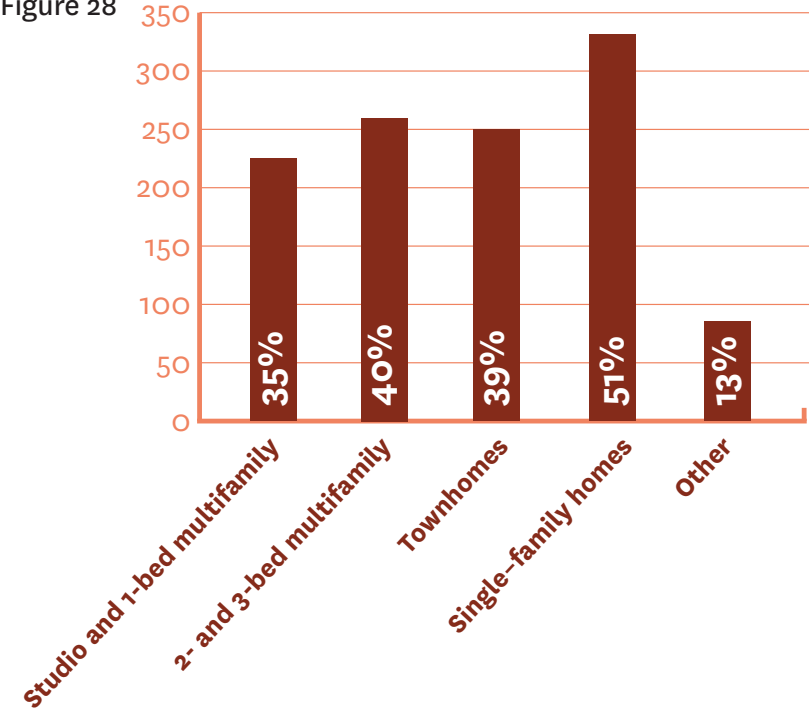
Online Survey: What are the most important factors for the future of housing in Salem?

Figure 27



Online Survey: What type of housing would you like to see more of in Salem?

Figure 28



For both charts, numbers do not add to 100%, as respondents could choose multiple answers.

## Ongoing housing programs

The City of Salem supports a number of housing initiatives promoting housing affordability, safety, and sustainability. These include financial assistance programs for homebuyers and renters, contributions to affordable housing development in the city, and partnerships with other public agencies and private organizations promoting housing services.

### Examples

- The City receives annual federal funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Salem is also a member of the North Shore HOME Consortium, for which it receives an allocation of Home Investment Partnership Funds. Through these funds:
  - The City offers grants and loans for low- to moderate-income residents to support affordable and safe housing. These include the First-Time Homebuyer Downpayment Assistance Loan Program and the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.
  - The City provides funding to various social service agencies, including several that provide housing assistance to persons with disabilities, homelessness prevention emergency funding, and downpayment assistance.
- The City also uses CDBG, as well Community Preservation Act funding, to support affordable housing development through agencies such as the North Shore Community Development Coalition and Harborlight Community Partners. Both organizations develop and manage income-restricted affordable housing.
- The City maintains partnerships with many organizations. These include North Shore Community Action Programs, which provides housing weatherization and other services, and the Salem Housing Authority, a public housing agency.
- The City maintains webpages that help residents learn about foreclosure prevention, predatory lending, and legal resources. Links to resources include MassSave Energy programs, MassHousing loan programs, and the Commonwealth's Get the Lead Out program.
- The Salem Point Neighborhood Vision and Action Plan includes broad housing recommendations, such as one item advocating new affordable units outside the Point neighborhood, including on-site affordable units in market-rate developments.

## Summary of findings

According to Salem's 2015 Housing Needs Assessment, there is a projected demand for roughly 1,200 multifamily units and 210 single family units by 2020. While some of this demand is already being met by projects that have been permitted and built in Salem, there is still significant demand for additional housing in the City. If local and regional housing demand are not met, prices will simply continue to rise.

Salem has a diverse range of housing options, in terms of housing style, type of building, number of bedrooms, and housing price-point. Such varied housing helps to support a range of people wishing to live in Salem—from large families to young professionals to the aging. Salem residents expressed particular anxiety about the availability and affordability of quality family housing.

As the regional housing market has recovered from the Great Recession, home values are now at record highs. These highs could be positive for some homeowners, but can put pressure on renters, potential first-time homebuyers, and homeowners seeking new housing to adapt to changing life circumstances. This is especially concerning, since 52% of housing units in Salem are rented. A significant minority of the city's residents (renters and homeowners) pay more than is affordable for housing, given their income.

Salem should explore ways to increase the supply of housing, particularly near the city's historic core and major jobs centers. It should explore increases in density on underutilized parcels within a short distance to jobs centers, especially along corridors leading out from the

historic core, where some areas can feel out of character with the rest of the city.

Furthermore, the City should study the impact of dimensional requirements and parking regulations on the cost and feasibility of housing development. The City should also consider policies that would encourage the preservation and upgrading of existing housing stock (such as a preservation loan fund), as well as regulatory changes that encourage housing development in line with the historic urban fabric. Additionally, the City should look for opportunities to decrease costs for affordable housing developers, such as the disposition of publicly owned land or systems to expedite their regulatory approvals.





## Housing Guiding Principles

Salem recognizes the community's right to safe, affordable, and life-enriching housing. The City encourages the production housing that meets the varied needs of its population at all price points. Salem also recognizes that quality housing can only exist where there is access to good jobs, transportation choice, and necessary community amenities.

**Market rate housing should be affordable to people earning average wages.**

Salem must meet the rising local and regional demand for housing with increased supply, or else costs will continue to rise beyond what is affordable for its diverse population. Though Salem can't act alone to change the regional housing market, it can lead the region with a progressive approach to housing production.

**Housing for lower income households requires special accommodation to produce.**

Even with broad market affordability, Salem would still need safe and quality housing that is affordable to lower income households. It is unrealistic to assume the market will provide this, given the increased costs and barriers to financing that affordable housing developers face. Salem must help affordable housing developers lower their costs (either through low cost land, as-of-right regulatory processes, or otherwise).

**Housing should be safe, healthy, and resilient.**

Housing design, siting, and maintenance should ensure that housing is safe to inhabit. Housing should promote healthy choices and healthy communities, and be able to withstand environmental and social shocks, particularly those associated with climate change.

**Housing designs must meet the varied needs of diverse residents, and there should be real housing choices for all.**

Salem residents and its future residents have different wants and needs. Large families have different needs than young singles. The aging and people with disabilities have unique requirements for their housing and the surrounding areas. Needs and wants vary, and Salem's housing should account for that variation. Furthermore, Salem's housing should not provide any group with only one choice.

**Housing should be part of a complete neighborhood.**

Housing doesn't work if it is not integrated with other uses like employers, retail, civic and open spaces, a robust transportation system and community spaces like libraries.







# Employment

Salem has a full-fledged urban economy. The city is not a bedroom community. Instead, there are a roughly equal number of people who commute into Salem as there are residents who commute to elsewhere. Employment in the city and for Salem residents is concentrated in education, healthcare, retail, and foodservice—industries that pay low- and middle-incomes on average. Salem should work to create ladders of opportunity from low-barrier-to-entry jobs to higher wages, in part to ensure its community can keep up with rising costs of living.

## Location and density of jobs

Many of the jobs in Salem are found in a mix of large institutions, small consumer-facing businesses, and a few large national employers. These jobs tend to be found within nodes around the city—either as clusters of many organizations and businesses or large single-institution nodes.

- Salem's largest employers (as measured by the number of employees) are major institutions, including North Shore Medical Center, state government, and

Salem State University.<sup>1</sup>

- The city's largest 100 employers are located across the city; the largest concentration of those employers is in and around Downtown, though several of the largest employers (the institutions) are located outside of Salem's historic core.<sup>2</sup>
- The Hawthorne Square Shopping Center—a typical strip shopping center on Highland Avenue—is another node of large employers.<sup>3</sup>

Importantly, the city has a diverse collection of small businesses beyond its largest employers. These businesses include the city's large retail and foodservice sectors that are concentrated Downtown.<sup>4</sup> This concentration supports the everyday needs of Salem's residents and workers, undergirds the city's tourist industry, and creates a fun, active city center.

<sup>1</sup> Mass. Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program, 2015



Washington Street

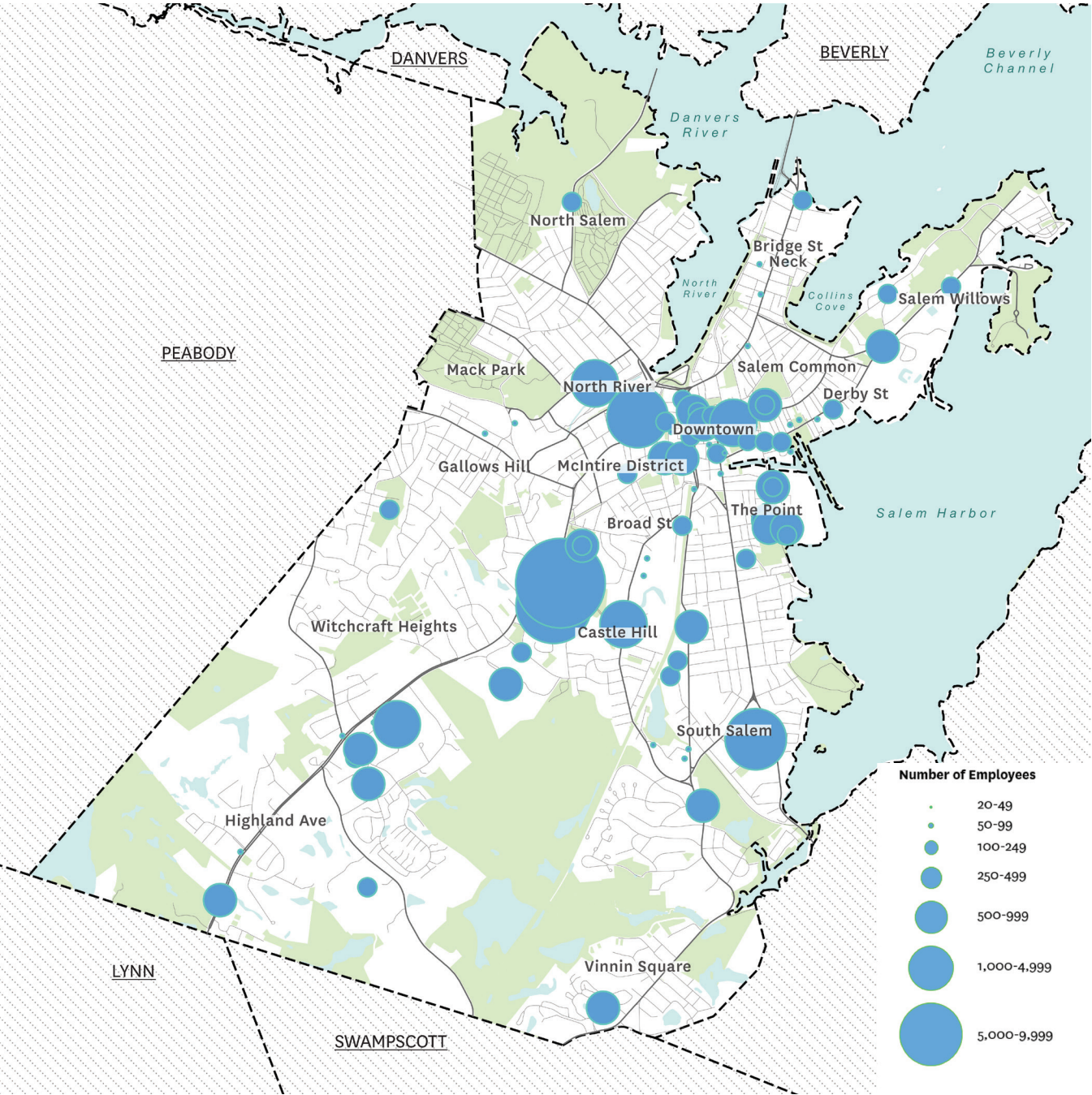
Photo: Flickr user MassMike



## Location of Salem’s top 100 employers, 2015

Salem’s top employers are mostly concentrated in Salem’s historic core and on large institutional campuses.

Figure 29



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2015



# Employment and Earnings for Salem’s workforce

Salem’s economy is partly composed of residents and partly composed of people who live elsewhere but work in Salem, hereafter called Salem’s workforce. *See “Employment and Earnings for Salem residents” on page 76 for economic data on Salem residents, and see “Commuters and residents who work in Salem” on page 78 for the overlap between residents and the workforce.* This section describes economic conditions facing Salem’s workforce.

## Jobs

- More than 5,000 people work in Salem’s Health Care and Social Assistance sector, representing more than 1 in 4 of Salem’s workforce (28%).<sup>5</sup>
- Nearly 4,500 workers (23% of Salem’s workforce) work in Accommodations and Food Service or in Retail.

- Nearly 3,000 workers (15%) work in Education Services, which includes K-12 schools and higher education institutions, e.g. Salem State University.<sup>6</sup>
- All other economic sectors employ fewer than 10% of the people working within Salem.<sup>7</sup>

**The average annual wage for workers in Salem is \$46,700.**

## Earnings

- The average annual wage of Salem’s work force is roughly \$46,700, compared to the average annual wage in Massachusetts of about \$64,200.<sup>8</sup>
- The sectors noted above with

the most employees tend to have average wages that are on the bottom or middle of the wage scale. For instance, Health Care and Social Assistance workers have an average wage of \$53,700, and Accommodation and Food Service workers have an average wage of \$19,600.<sup>9</sup>

- The health and education sectors have middle-range wages in part because they employ a broad range of workers—from low-skill, low-wage laborers to high-skill, high wage doctors and professors. The retail and restaurant sectors, on the other hand, mostly employ low-wage workers.

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2015. These sectors of the economy are defined by the federal government and are based (in most cases) on the primary product or service of the business or nonprofit organization.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

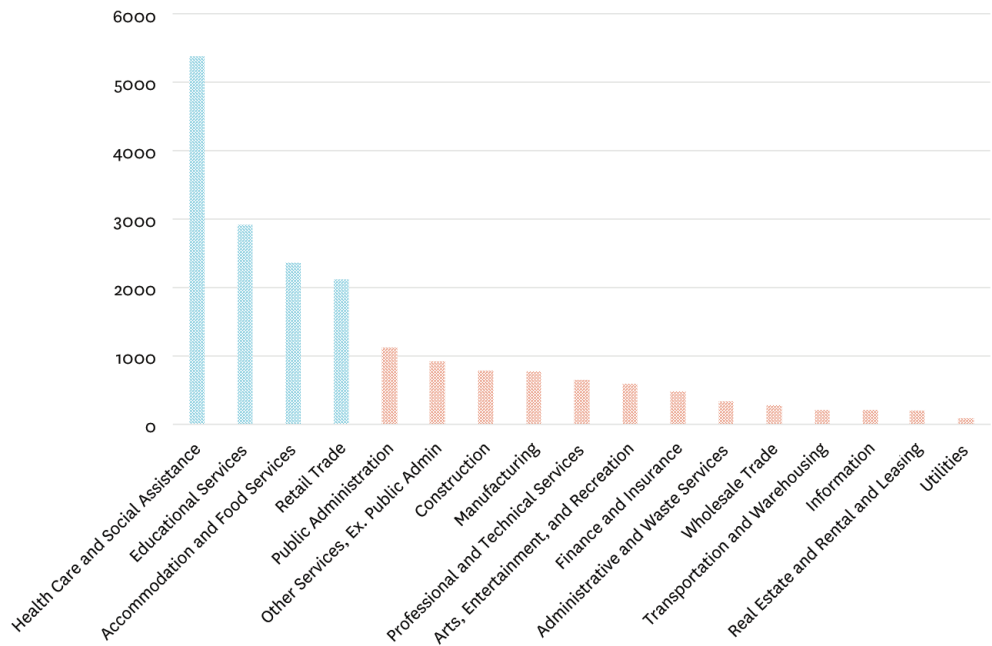
<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. This subsection discusses wages, as defined by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. Wages are the money paid to a worker for a given job. This is roughly analogous to “earnings,” as defined by the Census Bureau. Earnings are the money one person makes from their work, whether from one or multiple jobs. For data availability reasons, this report can only discuss wages for Salem’s workforce, but the subsection is called earnings to suggest a comparison with the earnings of residents (see “Employment and Earnings for Salem residents” on page 76).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

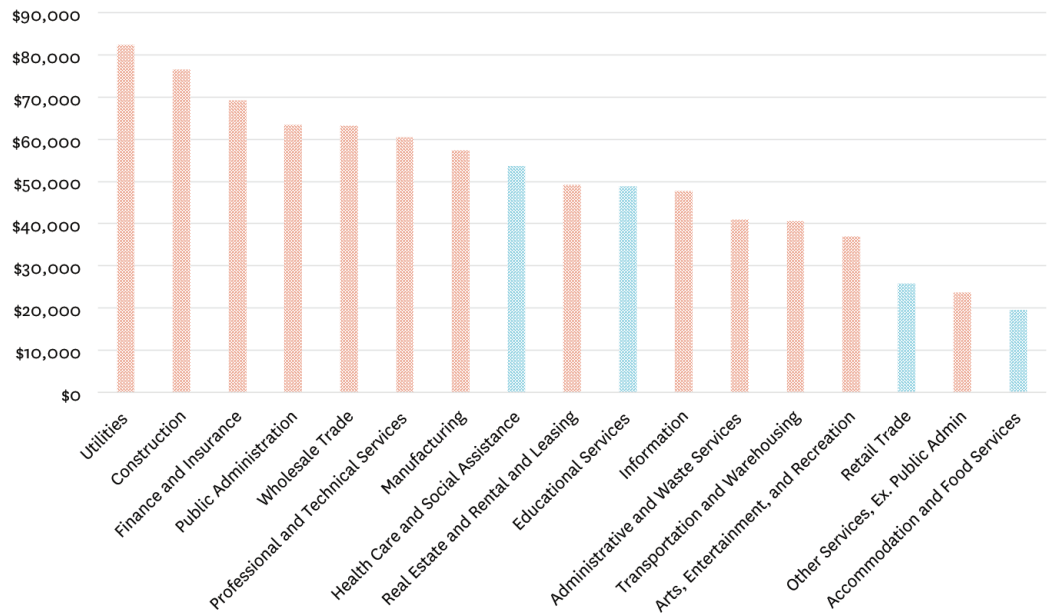
## Number of workers in Salem’s Workforce by sector, 2015

Figure 30



## Average annual wages for workers in Salem’s workforce, 2015

Figure 31



Sectors that employ the most people in Salem pay wages at the middle or the bottom of the wage scale.

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2015

# Employment and Earnings for Salem residents

Salem residents hold jobs in Salem, but also throughout the region. (See “Commuters and residents who work in Salem” on page 78 for more information on the overlap of these two groups.) This section describes economic conditions for Salem residents, regardless of where they work.

## Jobs

Jobs for Salem residents tend to be in industries also found in Salem.

- Regardless of where they work, 29% of Salem residents are employed in Health Care and Social Assistance or Education Services.<sup>10</sup>
- Approximately 13% of residents work in Accommodation and Food Service or Arts and Entertainment, and an additional 12% are in retail.<sup>11</sup>
- Roughly 11% of Salem residents work in fields that include legal practice, engineering, scientific research, architecture, and other

## More than 1 in 4 Salem residents work in health care or education.

fields requiring advanced technical training or administrative skill.<sup>12</sup> Following federal reporting standards, these fields fall under the formal sectors “Professional and Technical Services” and “Administrative Services.”

## Earnings

Incomes for Salem residents tend to be less than the regional average, but Salem has residents of all incomes.

- Median earnings for Salem residents 25 years and older are approximately \$42,000 annually—compared to approximately \$46,000 for Salem’s workforce.<sup>13</sup>
- The median income for Salem households (including earnings

for all members of the household) is over \$59,000, compared to the Boston region’s median household income of nearly \$75,000.<sup>14</sup>

- Notably, households in Salem have a wide range of incomes. The largest percentage of households have incomes ranging from \$50,000–\$75,000, but the city has significant numbers of households with incomes less than \$35,000 or more than \$150,000.<sup>15</sup>

Salem’s neighborhoods with the greatest median incomes were parts of Derby Street, Salem Willows, and the McIntire District. Neighborhoods with the lowest median incomes include parts of the Point, Broad Street, and Castle Hill. While these highs and lows do exist, there is no clear pattern of income segregation in the city, though a finer grain analysis could reveal different patterns.

<sup>10</sup> American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. These sectors of the economy are defined by the federal government and are based (in most cases) on the primary product or service of the business or nonprofit organization. These sectors of the economy are defined by the federal government and are based (in most cases) on the primary product or service of the business or nonprofit organization. Due to reporting standards at the US Census Bureau, multiple sectors are aggregated when looking at residents, making this analysis less fine-grained.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. This point discusses earnings, which are roughly comparable to wages. Earnings are the money one person makes from their work, whether from one or multiple jobs, while wages are the money paid to a worker for a given job. Wages for Salem’s workforce are discussed “Employment and Earnings for Salem’s workforce” on page 74. Note: this earning figure only includes people who have earned money from a job in the last year. It does not include retirees or people who live off of investment income.

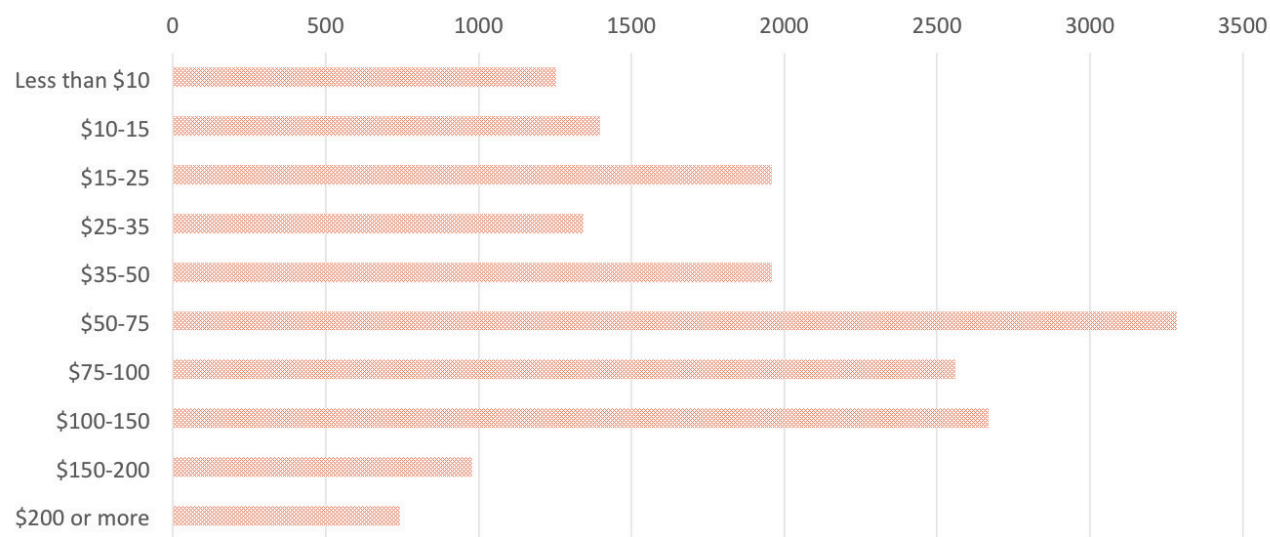
<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Incomes are similar to earnings and wages discussed earlier, but include all streams of potential income (not just money earned for work), and combines all those incomes for each member of a household.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



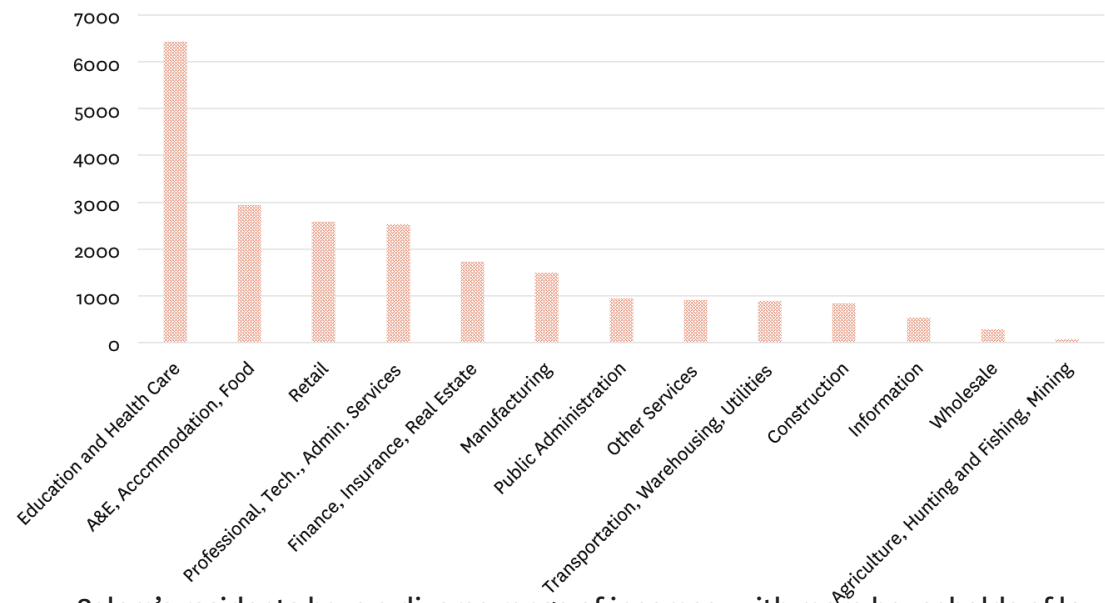
## Number of households by annual household income (in thousands)

Figure 32



## Employed Salem residents by employment sector

Figure 33



Salem’s residents have a diverse range of incomes, with more households of lower and middle incomes than with higher incomes.

Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates (both charts)

## Commuters and residents who work in Salem

Salem is not a bedroom community within the wider Boston region. Rather, the city is fully participating in the regional economy, with people workers commuting to and from Salem each day. This section describes these commuting patterns, as well as the overlap between Salem’s residents and its workforce.

- 19% of Salem’s workforce also lives in Salem.<sup>16</sup>
- 19% of Salem residents also work in Salem.<sup>17</sup>
- Approximately the same number of people commute into Salem as those who commute out of the city—roughly 17,000.<sup>18</sup>

- The most significant home locations for people working in Salem are nearby on the North Shore, particularly the communities of Swampscott, Lynn, Danvers, Peabody, and Gloucester.<sup>19</sup>
- However, people working in Salem come from around the region and state.<sup>20</sup>

About 19% of Salem residents work in the city.

<sup>16</sup> US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program, 2015. Note that this section counts jobs, not employees. Each person may hold multiple jobs, and thus can count the same individual employee multiple times.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

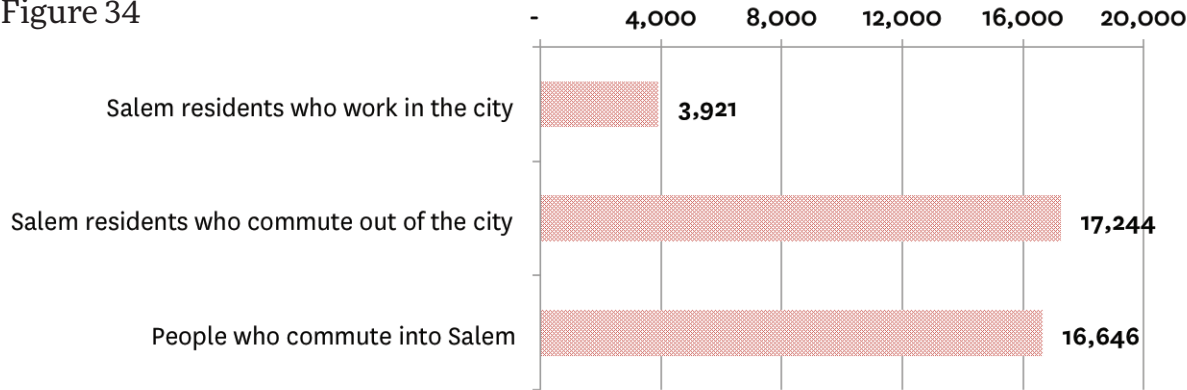
<sup>18</sup> Ibid. This figure does not include students at Salem State University who commute to school, but they are included if they live elsewhere and work a job at school or elsewhere in Salem.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## Jobs in Salem by employee’s commute status

Figure 34

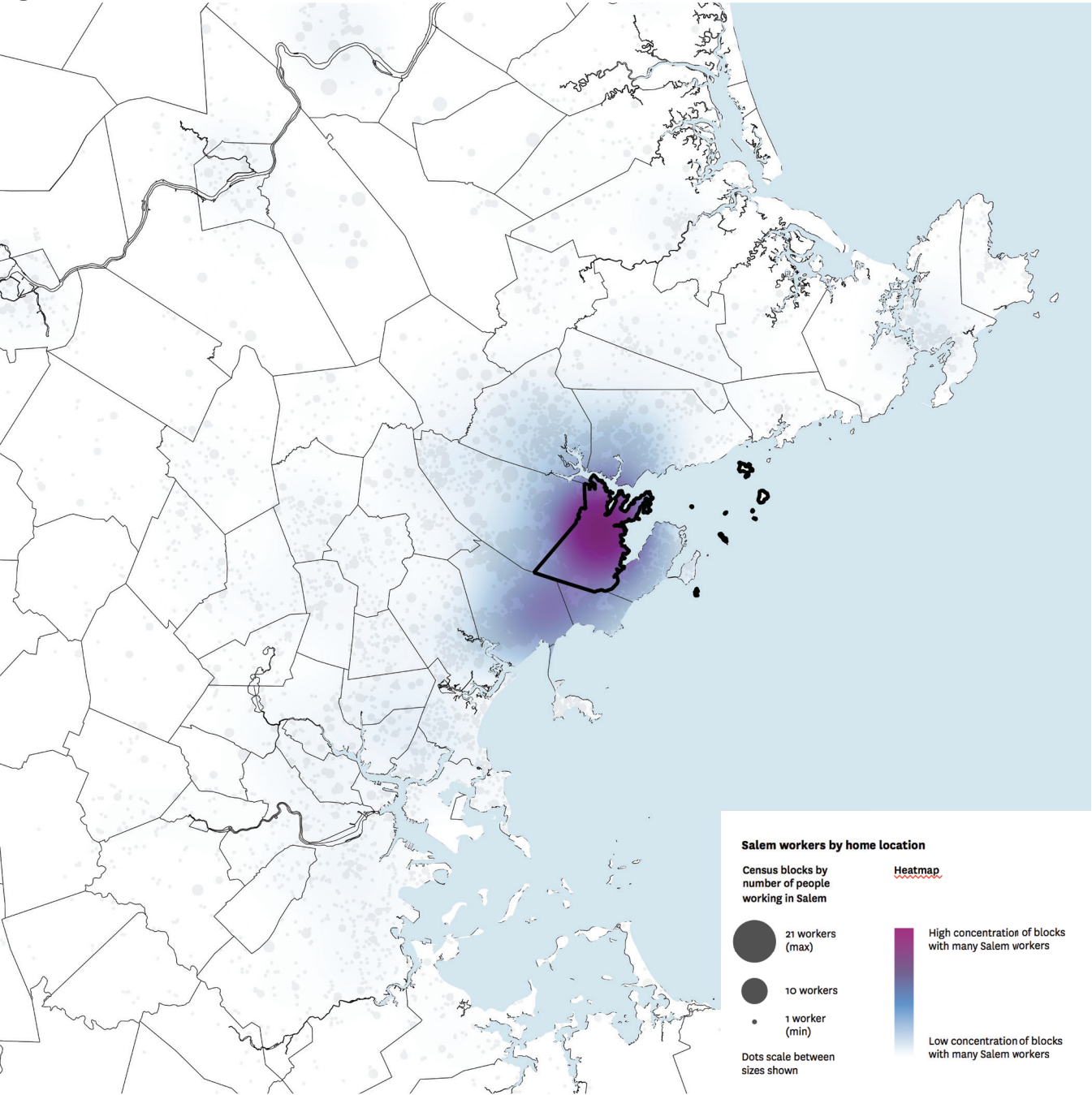


Source: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program, 2015

# Heatmap showing density of Salem workers by residence, 2015

Workers in Salem come from across the region and state, but Salem workers are most concentrated in Salem and nearby communities.

Figure 35



Source: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program, 2015. The Census Bureau alters this data to protect anonymity, so this map should be treated as an inexact model of the true distribution of people working in Salem.



# What we heard from the community

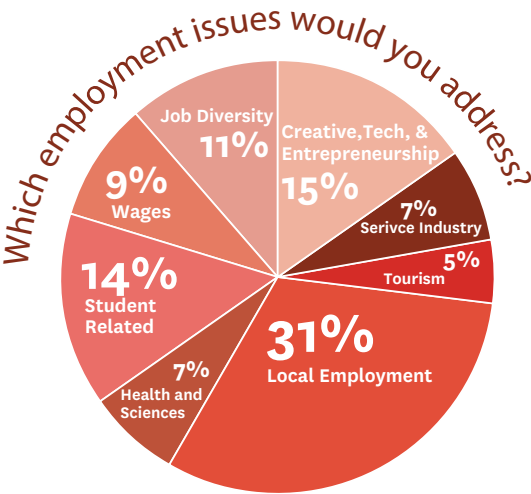
When asked how they would improve jobs in Salem, nearly 1 in 3 Imagine Salem activity participants wrote on their activity cards that there should be more local jobs. “Salem just doesn’t have many opportunities,” one participant wrote. This sentiment was sometimes related to a need for jobs diversity—that large nonprofits and small retail and foodservice businesses inappropriately dominate local employment. Some people called for other professional service or

manufacturing businesses to locate in the city. Large groups of participants called for growth in the high tech and health science industries in order for Salem to participate in the sectoral boom seen in some parts of the region.

This feeling was not universal. Some participants wrote there was already too much focus on the tech and science industries, while others called for continued growth of small retail businesses. On the online survey,

the majority of respondents focused instead on jobs with opportunities for growth and jobs for people of all education levels.

Several participants discussed small businesses and their employees as important parts of the community. They wanted to know the employees at their local businesses and sought greater integration of businesses into community life.

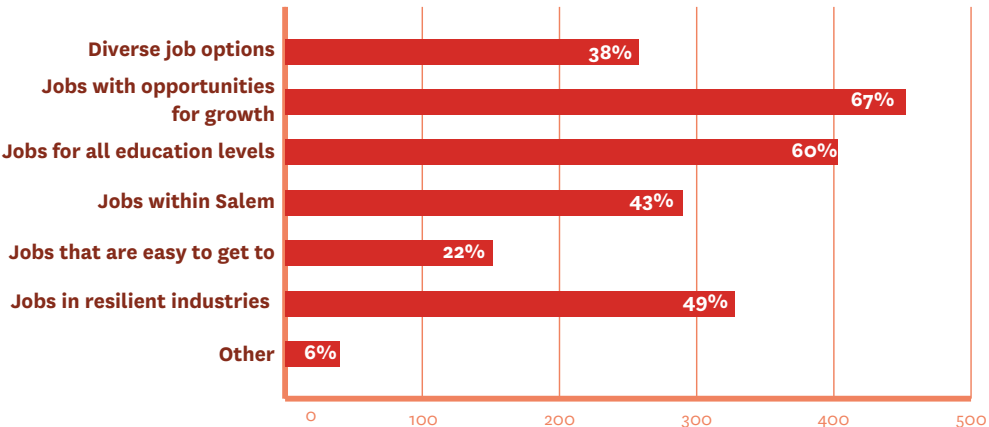


Source: Imagine Salem activity cards. Imagine Salem generated these general categories based on written responses, and coded each response into one or more categories.

Figure 36

Online Survey: What are the most important factors for the future of employment in Salem?

Figure 37



**Fiscally support growing an arts community.**

–Activity card respondent

**Utilize coastal resources for employment opportunities.**

–Activity card respondent

**We need additional access to opportunities to sector of the population that is hard to reach. Increase access to training and education.**

–Activity card respondent

**It is important that there are jobs of all types. I would love to work in Salem.**

–Online survey respondent





## Summary of findings

Employers in Salem provide low- and middle-wage jobs that are concentrated in a limited set of industries: healthcare, education, retail, and foodservice. These industries often have low barriers to entry, but do not always offer paths to higher wages. Salem should explore options to grow industries across the wage spectrum, particularly those with defined ladders of opportunity. Though many Salem residents work in

the industries currently represented in Salem, the suggested diversification may help Salem residents working in other industries stay in the city for their employment. Salem should encourage any new employment to locate near transit access to increase the accessibility of that employment for all. Furthermore, the City should explore mutually beneficial partnerships with small businesses to forge informal community ties

and to establish formal ladders of opportunity for current and future employees. In supporting entrepreneurs, Salem should focus efforts on fostering entrepreneurs working in industries where Salem may already have an edge, including established economic sectors, or Salem's uncommonly prominent place in both history and the public imagination.



Businesses in Salem Willows  
Photo: Flickr user MassMatt

## Employment Guiding Principles

Salem's economy should be a system that contributes to opportunity, a high quality of life, and a sense of community for the city's residents, workforce, business owners, entrepreneurs, students, and visitors. The city recognizes its role in a regional labor market and business community, while asserting the primary importance of homegrown opportunities for the people of Salem.

## **Employment in Salem should provide living wages and opportunities for advancement.**

No one should work full time and live in poverty. While acknowledging that small businesses must sometimes start with lean budgets and that some jobs are designed to begin a career path, jobs that do not provide a reasonable living wage are generally unacceptable. Furthermore, employment should provide formal and informal opportunities for training and advancement, either within that organization or otherwise.

## **Employment should be accessible for people of all education and skill levels.**

Part of Salem's charm is its diverse mix of people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, including education level. Salem should maintain opportunities for work that have low barriers to entry in terms of education, including opportunities for those with technical and vocational training.

## **Salem should bolster core industries, while increasing economic diversification and entrepreneurship.**

Salem should support its core industries like health care, education, food, and retail. Building on these economic clusters will ensure Salem plays a critical role in the regional economy. That said, there should also be robust employment opportunities for people who do not work in those fields, and entrepreneurs should be supported. Economic diversification and entrepreneurship will also mitigate the risk of downturns.

## **Salem should maximize the opportunity to both live and work in the city.**

Compared to the number of commuters coming into or leaving Salem for work, there are relatively few people who both work and live in Salem. Increasing the proportion of people who live and work in the city would reduce traffic congestion grow employee satisfaction, and grow community ties.

## **Employers should complement and contribute to the wider community.**

Though many organizations rightly focus on their own internal needs and opportunities, Salem should encourage employers to foster relationships with their neighbors, either formally or informally. Reestablishing retail stores as sites of informal community and bonding between business owners, employees, and customers was a prominent part of many Imagine Salem discussions.





# Transportation

Salem residents make a variety of transportation choices, and the city has a solid foundation on which to build a truly multimodal system. However, there is uneven access to mobility options that promote sustainability, personal health, and collective wellbeing. Salem continues to work to improve non-automobile options that make these choices easier for everyone, and to relieve the strain of traffic congestion that upsets many residents.



## Residents’ Transportation Choices

Residents of Salem have a diverse set of transportation options. Data for commute trips is the most readily available transportation data, and will therefore be described here, though commutes represent a minority of all trips. Salem residents’ commute choices are virtually identical to the Boston region’s choices overall.<sup>1</sup> However, not all Salem residents have a diversity of transportation options to choose from, depending on where they live and where they work. Their “choice” may in fact be the only reliable option available, as is often the case for automobile users.

- Of the approximately 22,000 Salem residents age 16 or over who worked, 67% drive alone to work.<sup>2</sup> An additional 7% drove with others.
- Pedestrians make up 7% of Salem’s commuters, while less than 1% bike to work.<sup>3</sup>
- More than 12% take public transportation to work (most of whom use the commuter rail), and almost 5% of Salem residents work from home.<sup>4</sup>
- While Salem residents’ commute choices are almost proportionally

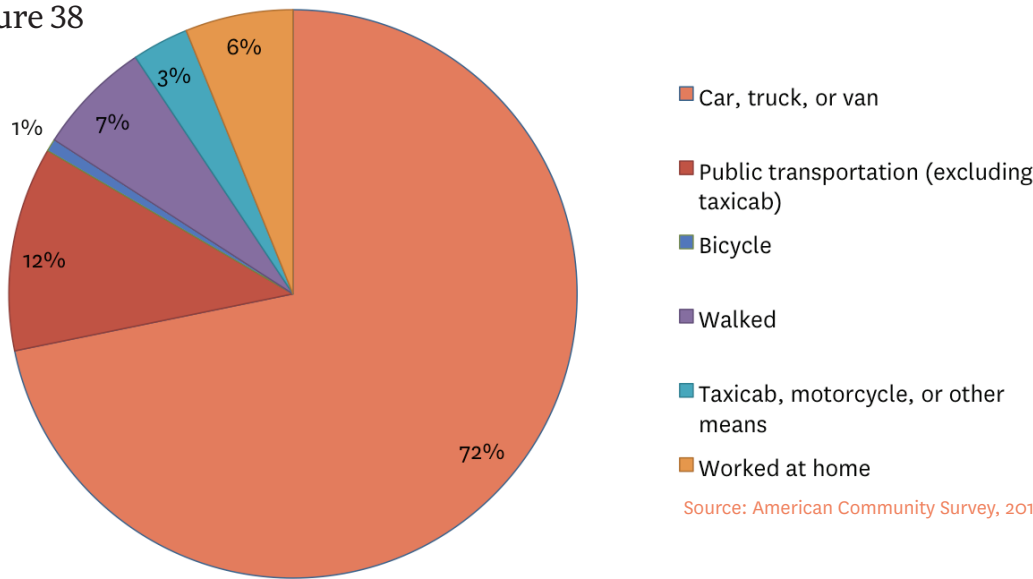
identical to the Boston regions, their commuting patterns stand in contrast to some North Shore communities. Residents of nearby Peabody, for instance, are 15% more likely than Salem residents to drive alone to work.<sup>5</sup>

- Furthermore, given the relative accessibility of retail, food service, and entertainment options in Salem’s historic core, it is likely that non-commute transportation choices in Salem skew further in favor of walking, cycling, and public transit than nearby communities.

1 American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5-year estimates. The Boston region is defined here as the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area, as specified by the US Census Bureau.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Ibid.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid.

### Salem residents transportation choice for their commute, 2014.

Figure 38



Source: American Community Survey, 2010–2014 5 year-estimates

The majority of Salem residents drive to work, though a sizable portion use public transit.



## Transit access and equity

Salem is served by the regional MBTA system through its stop on the Newburyport-Rockport commuter rail line and by the bus system. The commuter rail provides access for Salem residents to the jobs center of Boston, while the bus system aims to connect people with jobs at a finer scale.

- The city's neighborhoods with the most residential and employment density have strong physical access to this system, defined as half-mile walk along the street network, which takes about 10 minutes for the average person.
- Physical access is particularly strong in Salem's historic core, where the commuter rail and many bus lines converge.<sup>6</sup> (See *"Half-mile walkshed to MBTA service in Salem, 2016"* on page 90 for a representation of physical access to transit.)
- The Point, South Salem, and Vinnin Square neighborhoods, as well as areas immediately adjacent to Highland Avenue, have physical access to bus lines running north to Downtown as well as points south.<sup>7</sup> These routes connect dense residential districts with jobs centers like Salem State University,

North Shore Medical Center, and Downtown. (See *"Bus routes in Salem and Salem's top 100 employers, 2015"* on page 91 for a representation to transit access to jobs.)

- In 2016, the City conducted a study to assess the feasibility of an additional commuter rail station in South Salem.<sup>8</sup>
- While there is robust physical access to transit running north-south, there are few east-west routes running through Salem.
- The 465 bus connects Salem with Peabody and Danvers to the west, but the route varies considerably depending on the bus's direction.
- Some residential neighborhoods, such as Witchcraft Heights lack physical access to public transit. Even for those living within walking distance of a bus line, traveling either east or west requires an often unwanted trip into Downtown Salem before transferring to a bus that goes in the desired direction.
- Transit trip frequency remains an issue. The commuter rail runs roughly twice per hour during rush hours, as do some of the higher

ridership buses, such as the 450.

- During off-peak times, bus frequencies in particular drop remarkably.<sup>9</sup> The 450, for instance, runs only once per 80 minutes during midday.<sup>10</sup>
- Reliability is also a concern: the 450 bus only adhered to its schedule 58% of the time.<sup>11</sup> That transit adhere to its schedule is particularly important when its schedule is so infrequent.
- One uncommon transit amenity is the Salem-Boston ferry, which runs from late May through Halloween. The ferry offers direct service between Salem and Boston, with discounts for commuters and Salem residents. While the ferry is a powerful addition to Salem's transportation choices, and it provides access to the relatively underserved Derby Street and Salem Willows neighborhoods, the ferry is not fully integrated with Salem's transportation system.
- The Salem Harbor Shuttle, which makes several stops around Salem's waterfront, increases the connectivity from Derby Street to other parts of the city, but runs on a similarly constrained schedule.

<sup>6</sup> MassGIS, Imagine Salem analysis

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> City of Salem, South Salem Commuter Rail Station Feasibility Analysis, 2016

<sup>9</sup> MBTA, 2017

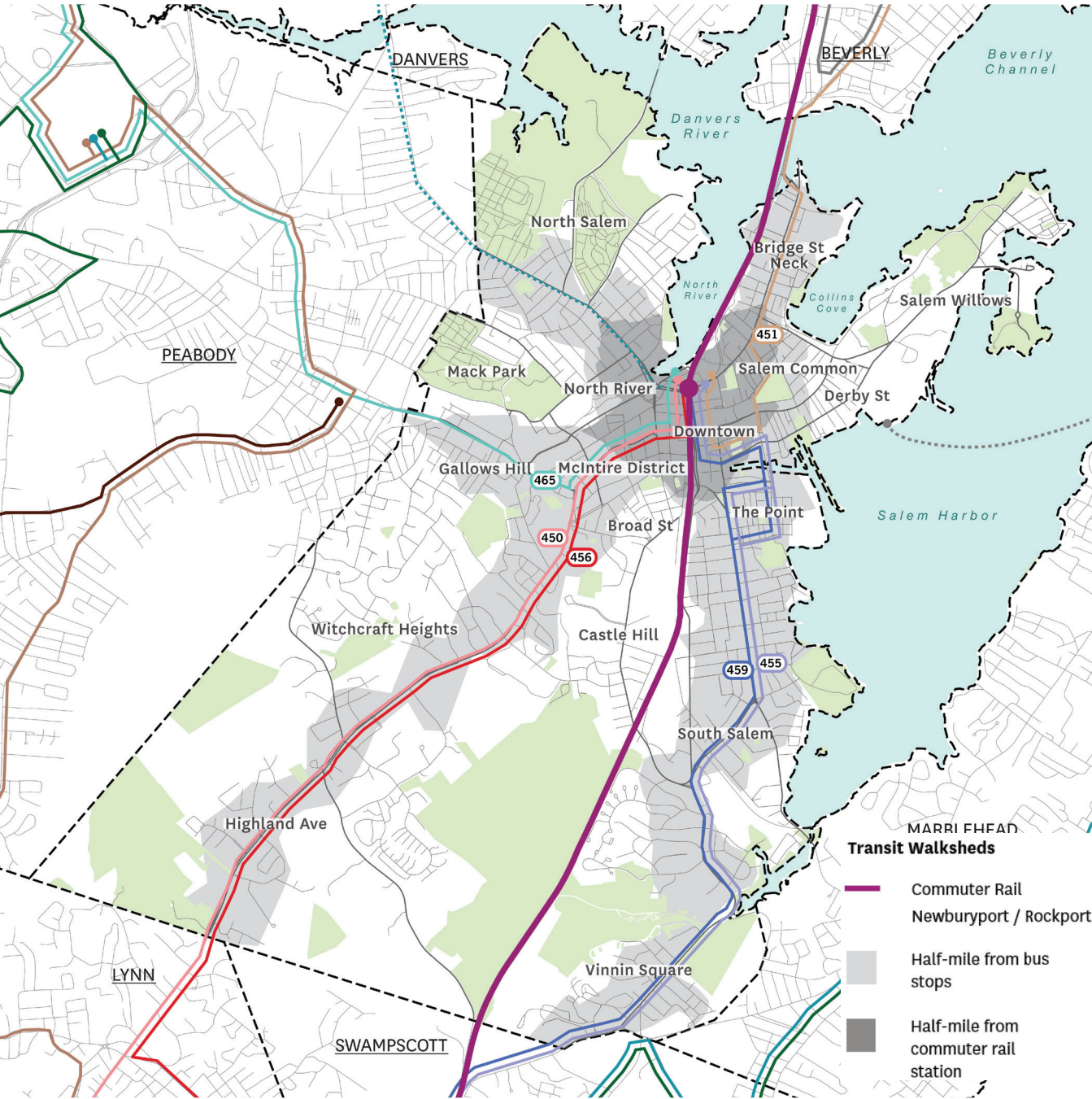
<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> MBTA Dashboard Data, 2017

# Half-mile walkshed to MBTA service in Salem, 2016

Most of Salem’s historic core, South Salem, and the areas along Highland Avenue are within a half-mile walk of transit. Many people choose these modes even beyond the half-mile walkshed.

Figure 39



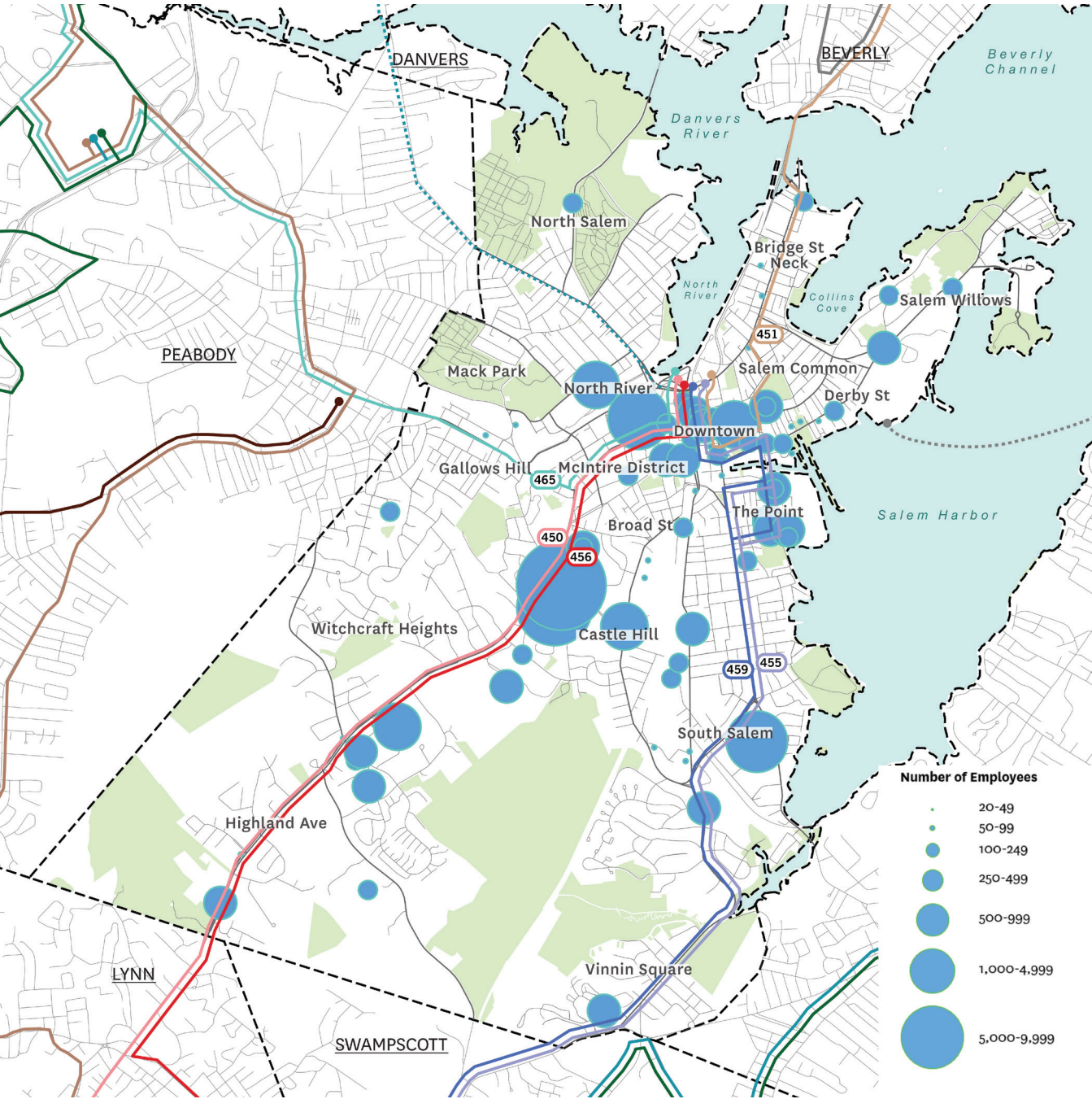
Source: MassGIS, Imagine Salem analysis



# Bus routes in Salem and Salem’s top 100 employers, 2015

MBTA bus routes connect Salem’s historic core to large institutional employers to the south.

Figure 40



Source: MassGIS, Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2015



## Active Transportation

Walking and biking are perhaps the two transportation choices with the most health and sustainability benefits. Both are “active” transportation choices—they require physical activity from the traveler. As such, they are healthy choices, do not produce greenhouse gasses, reduce traffic congestion, create value for retail along the route, and more. The street layout in and around Salem’s historic core enables residents, students, workers, and visitors to walk the city in order to reach numerous amenities. The City has also capitalized on this pattern by prioritizing walking in some areas, such as the Essex Street pedestrian mall.

Not all of the city’s pedestrian infrastructure in the historic core is up-to-date, however, and sidewalks

may prove crowded during peak hours. Furthermore, outside the historic core, the pattern of streets provides fewer intersections and connections, disincentivizing walking. The Boston metropolitan region’s transportation planning organization, the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), also noted in 2014 that Salem was the site of bicycle and pedestrian crash clusters. In part, that finding led CTPS to designate several infrastructure priorities in Salem that are currently under construction by the City.

Salem has existing off-street bicycle and multiuse paths running through parts of Salem Willows, Bridge Street Neck, and the North River, as well as a bike lane running through part of South Salem to Marblehead.

There have been infrastructure improvements for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians at Canal Street, and there are upcoming improvements along Boston Street.

These routes are intended to be connected by the Salem Bicycle Circulation Master Plan’s pilot route, running from South Salem, through the Point, Derby Street, Salem Common, Salem Willows, up to Winter Island Park. The plan also proposes a network of additional biking infrastructure, particularly a system of east-west connections.

Salem also provides a bike share program, in partnership with area businesses and institutions.



The Salem Bike Path  
Photo: LizBee

# City of Salem Bicycle Circulation Master Plan, 2010

Since the adoption of the Bicycle Circulation Master Plan, many of the recommendations have been completed or are underway. For instance, Lafayette Street now contains bicycle lanes running from the City line in the south to Washington Street on the edge of downtown. The City is working with Toole Design Group to update the plan, which will likely recommend additional on-road bicycle facilities, especially throughout Salem’s historic core.



# Traffic and Roads

Driving remains the most common form of transportation for commute trips and is the most typical connection to many communities outside of Salem.

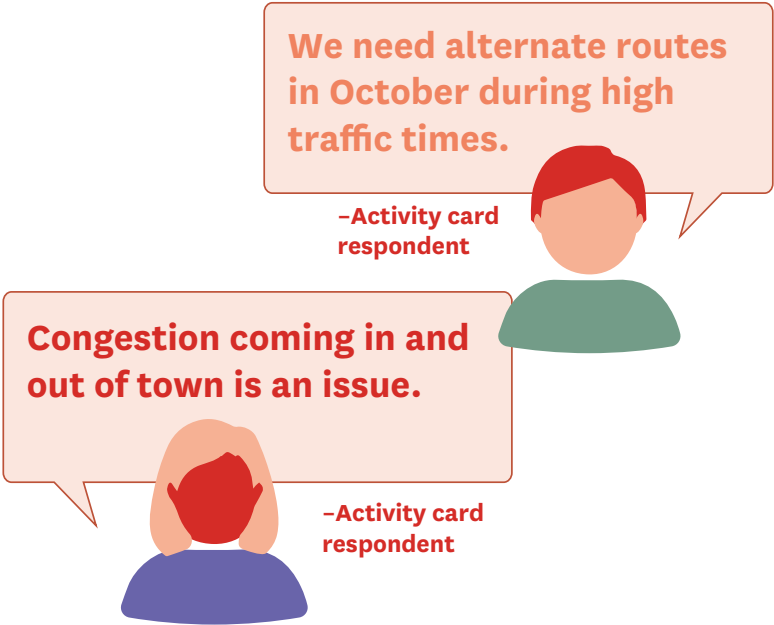
- Key routes into and out of Salem to other jobs centers include routes 114 (North Street/Summer Street), 107 (Highland Avenue/Washington Street), and 1A (Bridge Street/Lafayette Street), as well as Boston Street.
- Key routes within the city include Washington Street/Canal Street, Bridge Street, School Street/Orne Street, Essex Street, and Lafayette Street.<sup>12</sup>

- Average daily traffic counts above 25,000 vehicles have been recorded in Salem along Summer Street in 2004, Highland Avenue in 2016, and Loring Avenue in 2004 and 2010.<sup>13</sup> These counts demonstrate the high volumes on regional arterial roads.
- These roads are supplemented by numerous other streets with average daily traffic counts above 5,000 vehicles, which circulate local traffic and collect traffic into regional roads.<sup>14</sup>
- Routes 1A and 114 are both considered congested regional arterial corridors by the metropolitan region’s planning organization for transportation, the Central Transportation

- Planning Staff (CTPS).<sup>15</sup>
- CTPS recommends Routes 1A and 114 be prioritized for improvements for both passenger and freight travel, including travel by transit, walking, and cycling.<sup>16</sup>

Given the regional importance of these corridors, Salem cannot decrease congestion on its own. It must advocate for smart land use and transportation policy by adjacent communities, as well as regional governing bodies. It can make some impact locally by encouraging more trips within Salem for work, everyday needs, and entertainment, and by incentivizing non-automobile mode choices for those trips.

<sup>12</sup> MassDOT Traffic Volume Counts, 2004–2016  
<sup>13</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>14</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>15</sup> Central Transportation Planning Staff, Charting Progress to 2040, 2014  
<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

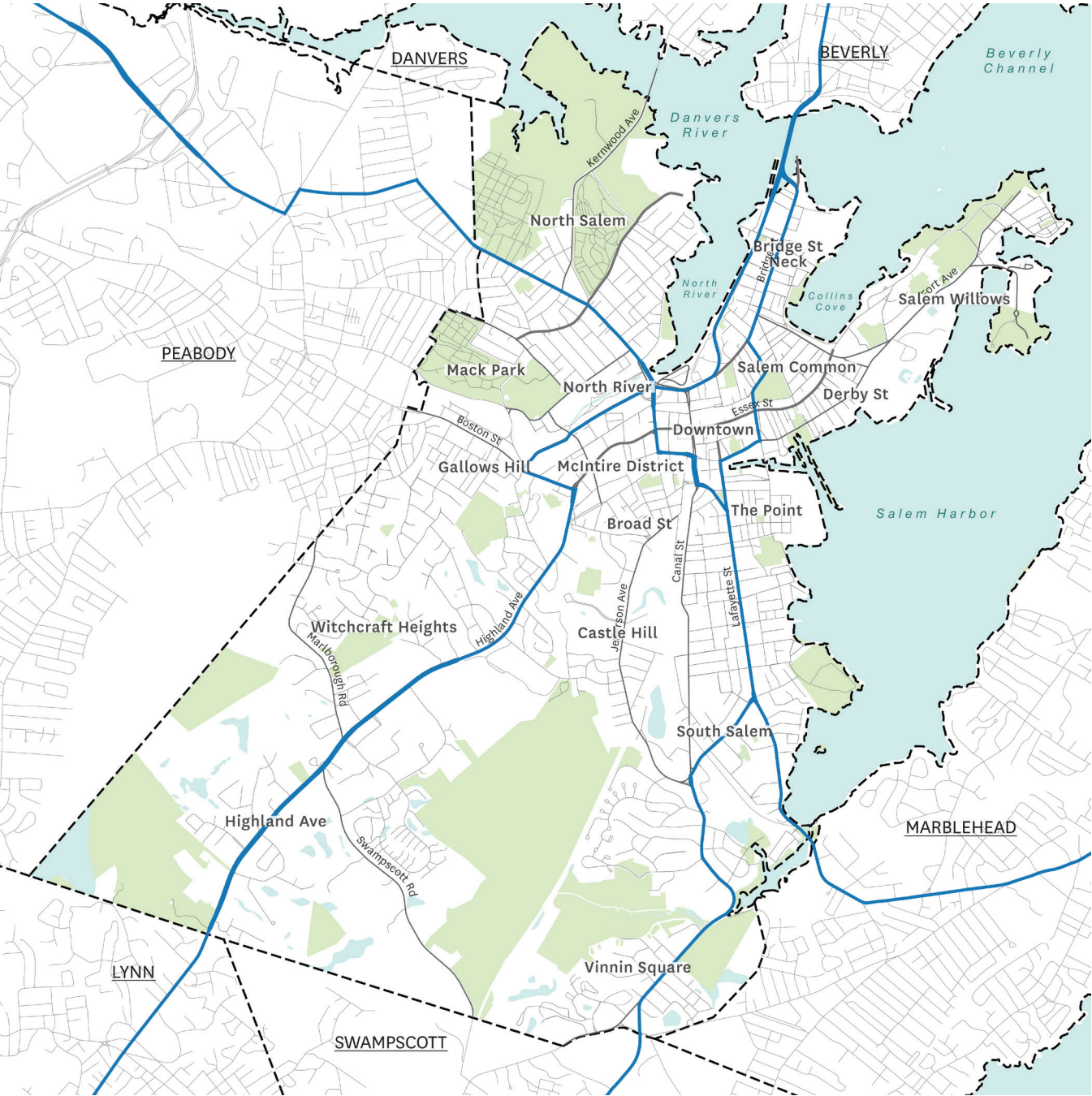




# Major regional routes in and through Salem

Several regional routes converge in downtown Salem.

Figure 41



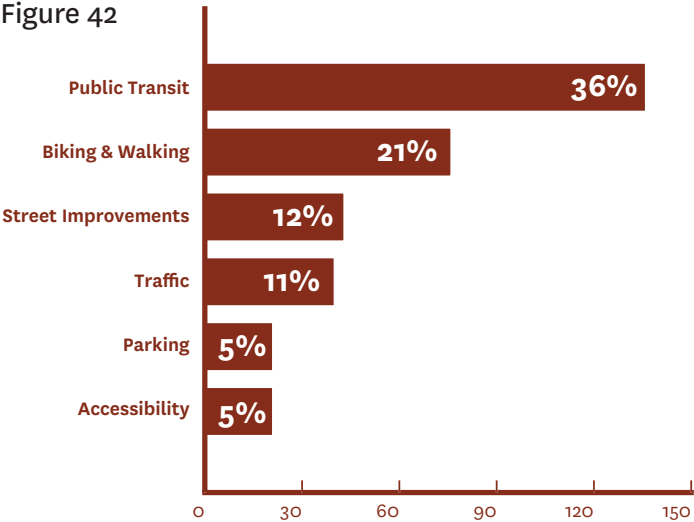
Source: MassGIS

# What we heard from the community

The Salem community has strong feelings on transportation in their city. Overall, many feel that some core aspects of Salem’s transportation system are working—or at least give the city an unique draw over other places. These include the walkability of Salem’s historic core, its regional transit connections, and the potential waterfront transit options. However, there is also a notion that Salem’s transportation system isn’t working, particularly the traffic congestion and the reliability of transit options. Fortunately, these responses point to integrated policy solutions. For instance, if public transit options were improved to be more reliable, more people would be able to use public transit, making automobile traffic less congested.

Which transportation issues would you address?

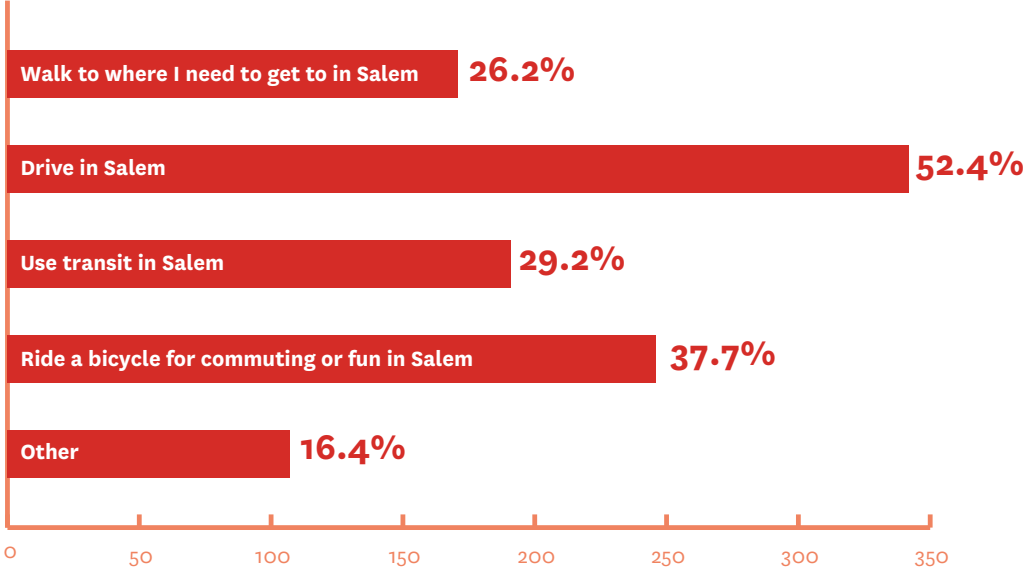
Figure 42



Source: Imagine Salem activity cards. Imagine Salem generated these general categories based on written responses, and coded each response into one or more categories.

Online Survey: Complete the sentence “I wish it were easier to...”

Figure 43



**I love that Salem is walkable! I need to be able to safely walk or ride my bike to public transportation!**

–Online survey respondent



**It is difficult to get around in Salem because of traffic.**

–Online survey respondent



**We need reliable regional transportation to reduce dependence on cars.**

–Online survey respondent



**We live in the Willows and I wish there were better options for getting downtown with a baby/young children.**

–Online survey respondent







## Summary of findings

Salem offers an uncommonly diverse set of transportation options, with an especially good foundation of transit access and active transportation options. The City fortunately does not need to build an entire system from scratch. It rather needs to build upon this system to improve and connect these diverse transportation options. The City must “connect the dots.”

Nonetheless, that task isn’t simple. Salem must address the lack of

physical and temporal transit access, especially in parts of the city with a low- and moderate-income residents, and for populations of all ages and abilities. It must address traffic congestion and its impact on people’s wellbeing. These goals will require investment of resources and robust regional partnerships. As initial steps, the City should advance the policies set forth in its Complete Streets policy and its Bicycle Circulation Master Plan. It should also investigate low-cost

and even temporary measures that can demonstrate the viability of these connections. Salem should also be a strong regional advocate for smarter transportation and land use policies, in order to mitigate the regional traffic and transit issues which the City cannot address on its own.



Salem Old Town Hall at Derby Square  
Photo: Flickr user MassMatt

## Transportation Guiding Principles

Salem believes in an accessible local and regional transportation system that provides alternative modes of transportation and choices. Salem aims to have a true multi-modal transportation system that encourages active and sustainable transportation choices for everyday trips and empowers all travelers to safely use the streets. The City recognizes the crucial role that a sustainable transportation system plays in opening up opportunities for the Salem community.



**People should have options when choosing to get around the city regardless of their age and ability.**

People have differing preferences and abilities, and therefore choice should be embedded in all parts of the transportation system. In many places, providing choice entails rebalancing streets after nearly 80 years of automobile-oriented investment. In other places, it means designing streets and sidewalks to be ensure safety and comfort for all users, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities.

**Elements of the transportation system should connect, so that the system becomes multi-modal.**

It is unreasonable to expect all transportation modes to work for all trips, and creating independent systems for all transportation modes would be redundant in many places. The transportation system should allow travelers to string together different mode choices where appropriate.

**Streets should be designed to enable active and sustainable transportation modes.**

The transportation system will work best when people who can reasonably walk, bike, or use transit can do so safely, comfortably, and reliably. Making these modes work is especially important for trips taken along existing transit lines and for short trips within Salem and to adjacent communities. By enabling these modes, valuable “real estate” in the public right of way will become free. Allowing people to not use their cars unnecessarily relieves traffic congestion, increases retail foot traffic, fosters community, and ameliorates public health.

**The transportation system should be designed for safety and a “Vision Zero” standard.**

Major injuries and deaths from travelling are largely if not entirely preventable. Improper street designs, including those that incentivize fast travel speeds, can increase the likelihood of casualties. When reconfiguring streets, Salem should design for low speeds and low casualties in its neighborhoods. Ultimately, Salem should aim to have zero deaths and major injuries—a standard called “Vision Zero.”

**The transportation system should complement neighborhoods.**

Quality of life in Salem’s neighborhoods should be bolstered by the transportation system. Rather than communities accommodating inflexible transportation infrastructures, the transportation system should be designed with the unique character of each neighborhood in mind.

# Conclusion

**This report draws together ideas from the community, samples of existing policy, and insights from analysis in order to point Salem toward its future. Ultimately, Imagine Salem articulates a vision for 2026 and proposes a set of guiding principles. Using these guiding principles to set the course, Salem must now study and set specific plans in order to enact Imagine Salem’s vision. To conclude, this report collects those guiding principles and offers final thoughts on the Imagine Salem process and potential next steps.**

## Summary of Guiding Principles

These principles are discussed in more detail in their respective chapters.

### Community

- Diversity is a fundamental part of Salem's history and is critical for its continued prosperity.
- Equity is a necessary component of any approach to planning.
- Diversity and inclusivity cannot be buzzwords, but must be enacted through legal, social, economic, and symbolic means.
- Civic and political engagement within and between communities is key to inclusive governance.

### Housing

- Market rate housing should be affordable to people earning average wages.
- Housing for lower income households requires special accommodation to produce.
- Housing should be safe, healthy, and resilient.
- Housing designs must meet the varied needs of diverse residents, and there should be real housing choices for all.
- Housing should be part of a complete neighborhood.

### Employment

- Employment in Salem should provide living wages and opportunities for advancement.
- Employment should be accessible for people of all education and skill levels.
- Salem should bolster core industries, while increasing economic diversification and entrepreneurship.
- Salem should maximize the opportunity to both live and work in the city.
- Employers should complement and contribute to the wider community.

### Transportation

- People should have options when choosing to get around the city regardless of their age and ability.
- Streets should be designed to enable active and sustainable transportation modes.
- Elements of the transportation system should connect, so that the system becomes multi-modal.
- The transportation system should be designed to eliminate deaths and injuries.
- The transportation system should complement neighborhoods.

### Education

The strategic plan identified the following four core pillars which the Salem Public School District is organizing its work to achieve the vision:

- Create a vibrant K-12 teaching and learning eco-system.
- Reimagine the high school experience.
- Nurture Staff Leadership and Empowerment.
- Strengthen Family and Community Engagement.

*For more information see the strategic plan at [www.salemk12.org](http://www.salemk12.org)*



## Final Thoughts

This report arrayed the existing conditions in Salem in broad topical categories. Necessarily, these topics overlap with one another, and various connections are clear. For instance, affordability is not only dependent on the cost of housing, but a household's income. As another example, the everyday viability of the city's transportation system for any individual depends on the location of their home and their job. Additionally, that transportation system can enable or constrain one's employment.

Any future planning that follows this visioning process must take into account the connections between these broad topics, and work to address several topics simultaneously. Maximization of positive outcomes for any one topic area may often seem to negatively impact other topic areas. For instance, increasing transit access and reliability could raise the cost of rental housing in the city. In order to address such concerns, future efforts should not focus on maximization of outcomes for their own sake, but rather to the ends of bolstering equity and inclusivity. If equity and inclusivity are prioritized, some acceptable balance of outcomes across topic areas might be found.

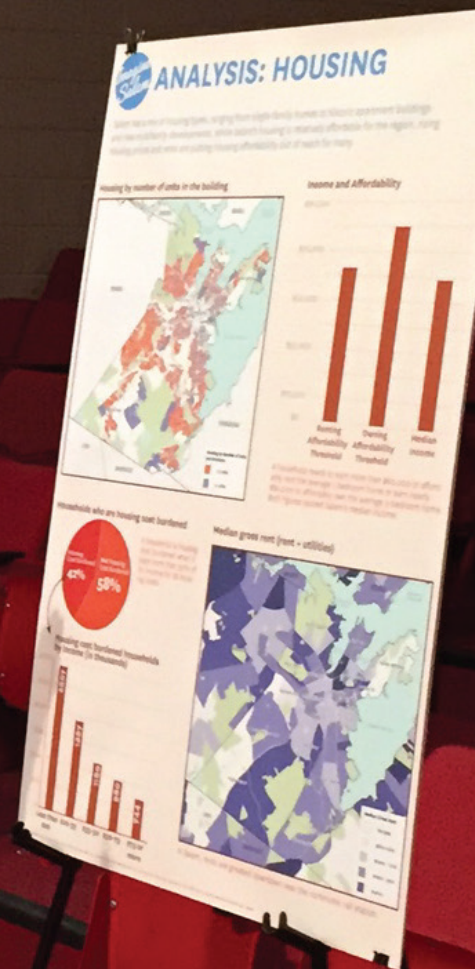
Imagine Salem has begun the process of planning the Salem of tomorrow. It has brought people together in conversation in order to decide together how to reshape the city. To some degree, change is always inevitable, due to forces beyond any city's control. Imagine Salem offers this city the chance to direct that change to advance a collective vision for the community. Planning can only begin with a vision. Beyond this process, there must be planning to address specific issues as they exist "on the ground." Then, of course, these plans must be implemented. All these steps

take work from officials and ordinary citizens acting to make change happen. In a practical way, the connections made through this process will make the next steps easier. People have come together in this conversation, and they are more likely to re-engage as the City makes concrete steps toward progress.

This document proposes some potential directions Salem's planning can take. The City should study how to create access to affordable housing options that meet the needs of the diverse community, it must find new ways to connect people to well-paying jobs and economic opportunity, and it should encourage transportation choices that promote health and sustainability for all. These are just a few ways Salem can advance equity and inclusivity. The community will certainly generate even more ideas over time.

Importantly, some future efforts should address equity and inclusivity in topics beyond housing, employment, and transportation. Members of the working group and the public at large noted climate change and environmental health as two important topics. The City has a recent Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan and other related planning efforts that should be integrated into any work that proceeds from the Imagine Salem visioning process.

Imagine Salem has ultimately tried to find and articulate what people love about Salem and to bring people together to share that love. As the city heads toward its 400th year, it will ideally plan with that love in mind.





# Imagine Salem

## Did you know... Did you know...

¿Sabía usted que?...

The number of residents commuting each day from Salem is about four times higher than the number who live and work here.

El número de residentes que sale de Salem cada día para trabajar es aproximadamente cuatro veces mayor que el número de personas que viven y trabajan aquí.

Number of Commuters  
Total de viajeros



## Did you know... Did you know...

¿Sabía usted que?...

A household needs to earn at least \$63,000 per year to affordably rent the average 1-bedroom apartment in Salem.

Un hogar necesita ganar por lo menos \$63,000 al año para poder alquilar el apartamento promedio de un dormitorio en Salem.



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## Did you know... Did you know...

¿Sabía usted que?...

Salem's 400th birthday is in 2026.

El 400 aniversario de Salem es en el 2026.

