



# FYI SALEM

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## From the Mayor's Desk



Dear Salem resident,

Thank you for reading the latest issue of the FYI Salem newsletter!

The arrival of June brings with it splendid weather for getting out and about here in Salem. Parks are opening and school will be out for the summer soon. It also brings the return of our partnership with the Salem Trolley, which offers free rides for Salem residents between June 1 and September 30. Find out more in this issue.

June also means we are gearing up for the start of the next fiscal year, which begins in July. As we do each year, this is "budget season" at City

Hall. Our Finance Department has finished up the FY2020 Budget plan and filed it with the City Council, who will begin a series of hearings on the various departments' proposed budgets.

We've always viewed the budget as, not just a spending plan, but an encapsulation of our values and priorities. It's also filled with lots of great information about the important work, accomplishments, and projects that are taking place in Salem. The full budget is online now at [www.salem.com/FY20](http://www.salem.com/FY20) if you're interested in looking through it!. In this issue of the newsletter you'll find an abbreviated version of my letter to the Council when we submitted the budget.

Also in this issue, find out more about *Homes for Salem*, an online video series the City produced in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The videos offer a good summary of why Salem is facing a housing crisis today and, most im-

portantly, what we can do about it. It also features the voices of neighbors who are feeling the burden of the unavailability of affordable housing in Salem today. The full series is available online and will soon be on Salem Access TV.

On the most recent FYI Salem podcast I'm joined by Acting Superintendent Kate Carbone and Salem High School academic dean Emily Flores to talk about the work underway to improve teaching and learning at Salem High School. Find the podcast at <https://www.salem.com/mayors-office/pages/fyi-salem-podcast> or search for it on Apple podcasts.

Thanks for taking the time to read the FYI Salem newsletter! If you know someone who might be interested in this newsletter, please feel free to forward it along or encourage them to subscribe themselves by visiting [www.salem.com/subscribe](http://www.salem.com/subscribe).

Kim Driscoll  
Mayor  
City of Salem



## Free Trolley Rides

Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll, in partnership with the Salem Trolley, is pleased to once again offer free rides on the Salem Trolley for Salem residents starting June 1<sup>st</sup> and lasting until September 30<sup>th</sup>. Residents can receive a Resident Ticket by providing proof of residency at the Salem Trolley office (8 Central Street).

"I hope residents will make use of this great opportunity to take an enjoyable ride out to the Willows or to Salem Wharf, where they can catch the Salem Ferry to Boston, this summer," said Mayor Driscoll.

"Not only does this service provide a pleasant way to get around Salem, it helps reduce the number of passenger vehicles on our roadways and ease traffic congestion."

2019 is the seventh year of the free trolley ride program. Last year 1,437 rides were given and, since the program's start in 2013, a total of 9,922 rides have taken place, displacing several thousand vehicle trips from Salem streets. The Trolley runs seven days a week from 10am to 5pm. The Trolley's route includes much of downtown Salem and also the Salem Willows. The complete route map is available at <http://saletrolley.com/map-of-tour-3.html>.

## Homes for Salem

homes  
for Salem!



Housing is an essential part of what makes Salem a strong and welcoming community; however, the market is not supplying homes that are affordable for Salem residents or workers. To help residents better understand the housing crisis and what can be done about it, the City and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council have launched *Homes for Salem*, a four-part video series, which explains the importance of creating affordable housing policies in Salem.

"If we want to continue to be the type of community we are today, that welcomes people of different backgrounds and income levels, we need to be thoughtful about our policies," said Mayor Kim Driscoll. "Without these changes, people who have lived all their lives here in Salem will continue to be priced out of the community they call home. These videos help explain why we're in this situation today and, most importantly, what we can do about it together."

The videos are online at <https://tinyurl.com/HomesForSalem> and can also be viewed on SATV. To stay up to date on housing matters in Salem, checkout <https://imaginesalem.org/housing> and signup for updates at [bit.ly/salemhousing](http://bit.ly/salemhousing).



## Street Sweeping Website

The City of Salem has launched a new website and online tool to look up address and street-specific details about street sweeping. The website, [www.salem.com/streetsweeping](http://www.salem.com/streetsweeping), includes a link to a map where residents can find out when their street sweeping dates are by looking up their address or clicking on their street. It also features links to the seasonal street sweeping schedule, a list of alternative parking locations for street sweeping days, and more.

On the map, clicking on a street displays sweeping days, no parking times, and sweeping zone. Use the scroll-wheel to zoom in and out and click and drag the map to navigate. There is an address locator in the top-left corner, along with home, locate, full-screen, and zoom buttons. When entering an address, after the address is found, click on the street to view its sweeping details.

# FY20 Budget

*The text below is from Mayor Driscoll's cover letter for the FY2020 budget. The complete letter and budget is online now at <https://www.salem.com/FY20>.*

The proposed budget reflects a balanced and responsible spending plan for our community that continues to invest in the critical quality of life, public infrastructure, and education needs that help make Salem the hub of the North Shore and such an attractive place to live, visit, do business, and raise a family. It is hard to imagine that when I first took office, we walked into a City Hall carrying a \$3.5 million deficit from the prior administration. From having nothing in our rainy-day fund when we took office, we today have over \$7 million in that fund thanks to permanent, prudent finance policies that we have put in place. From having a dismal bond rating, today we have the highest bond rating in our City's history.

All of these facts are a reflection of our dedication to policies that foster positive economic growth, stable financial management practices, and sustainable and transparent budgeting. Since 2006 we have implemented professional financial management standards and the share of our budget that is our debt payment has been reduced by more than a third. Our general fund debt payment for FY2020 is down 4%, or \$310,000, from last year. We were able to accomplish this by leveraging hundreds of millions in grants, as well as PILOT, SILOT, and other tax agreements, and by being responsible, thoughtful, and prudent with tax dollars. Not only do our sound fiscal practices ensure public funds are being managed to the highest standards, they also allow us to realize financial gains. Better bond ratings mean we can finance debt at lower rates, saving taxpayers money.

In our budgeting practices, the taxpayers of Salem have always been foremost in mind, and FY2020 is no different. This budget recognizes the impact of property taxes on residents and meets their demands for investments in the local services they need and rely upon every day. We have received the Government Finance Officers Association's highest accolades for fiscal transparency for the last decade. Salem's average tax bill change over the last decade has been well below the average for our region and coupled with as many exemptions and abatements as practical, particularly focused on our neediest taxpayers, including lower income residents, seniors, veterans, and those living with disabilities.

We have been able to be respectful of taxpayers, while also investing in critical needs. In the FY2020 budget there is a focus on priority areas identified by the administration, the City Council, and residents. These include a more thoughtful approach to maintenance and capital planning for public facilities, investing in critical infrastructure including parks, sidewalks, roadways, trees, and our water/sewer system, a continued focus on addressing our housing challenges, increasing our coordination and preparation for the local impacts of climate change, as well as funding for transportation alternatives.



The FY2020 budget maintains our dedication to fiscal responsibility while also strengthening our community. I am proud of our collective efforts to limit impacts on Salem taxpayers while also providing much needed services to constituents. This is possible due to our collective attentiveness to City finances, as well as our ongoing efforts at identifying efficiencies in the delivery of services. Our fiscal practices have resulted in not only affirmation of our historic high AA bond rating, but also our regular receipt of recognitions and awards from the GFOA.

Lastly, beyond budgets another factor impacting our local economy is the large number of public and private investments in our community. These enhance our short- and long-term economic growth, create needed housing, add to our tax base, and generate revenues and jobs that improve our community. We cannot provide the services and improvements that our constituents demand and deserve, without new growth. Given the reliable increase in fixed costs to the City, a reflexively anti-growth approach to local government is equivalent to endorsing substantial tax increases on Salem homeowners. It is neither fair nor prudent, and we should avoid allowing such a harmful perspective from directing our approach to policy and budgeting. Salem taxpayers deserve better.

In FY2020 we will continue to strive to exceed the service level expectations of our constituents, while simultaneously ensuring fiscal prudence. The mission of Salem City government is to provide open, honest, and pro-active services effectively and efficiently, focusing on the needs of today, with a vision for the future. In order to accomplish this, the proposed budget aligns operations with short-term and long-term strategic goals and objectives, while maintaining necessary fiscal controls and a careful attention to our financial forecasts in our budgeting. This is a challenging balance to strike, but I believe the proposed budget accomplishes precisely that.

The proposed FY2020 budget represents a strong commitment to the people we are fortunate enough to have been elected to serve. It continues our balanced and responsible approach to city finances and budgets. It invests in continuing to make Salem a vibrant city, a welcoming city, a city with schools in which we can all take pride – in short, a forward-looking and livable city for all.



# School Updates

## Interim Superintendent

The Salem School Committee held a Committee of the Whole meeting on Wednesday, May 29th at 6:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at the Collins Middle School to interview Kathleen Smith for the position of Interim Superintendent. Ms. Smith is the retiring Brockton Public Schools Superintendent. The Committee of the Whole was followed by a meet and greet event in the IMC, which was open to the public so parents, staff, and others from the community would have the opportunity to meet Ms. Smith and ask her questions. At the Committee meeting, members voted to recommend moving forward with approving a one-year interim contract with Ms. Smith. The final vote will be taken up by the School Committee at their next regular meeting on June 3rd at 7:00 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at the Collins Middle School. Public comment can be offered at the meeting of June 3rd.

## ALICE Drills in June

During the first two weeks of June, all schools in Salem will be conducting an ALICE drill. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to learn more about ALICE, the district's active shooter protocol, by clicking [here](#).

A letter to families from Acting Superintendent Kate Carbone was sent home with children in grades Pre K-8 to alert families to the drill and to provide them with the opportunity to reach out to their school principal if they have specific concerns. You can find the letter at [https://saalemk12.org/news/what\\_s\\_new/alice\\_drills\\_scheduled\\_for\\_june](https://saalemk12.org/news/what_s_new/alice_drills_scheduled_for_june).

## School Committee Approves FY2020 Budget

The Committee approved the FY2020 budget for the Salem Public Schools at its May 6th meeting. The budget is next scheduled to be taken up by the City Council's Committee on Administration and Finance on Wednesday, June 5 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council chambers at City Hall, 93 Washington Street. You can find the budget online here: [https://saalemk12.org/news/what\\_s\\_new/f\\_y20\\_budget\\_approved](https://saalemk12.org/news/what_s_new/f_y20_budget_approved).

## Teaching & Learning Newsletter

The Salem Public Schools are now publishing a periodic newsletter highlighting educational practices, curriculum updates, special classroom programs, and much more. You can find the most recent issue online at [https://saalemk12.org/news/what\\_s\\_new/teaching\\_learning\\_newsletter](https://saalemk12.org/news/what_s_new/teaching_learning_newsletter).

