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FYI SALEM

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From the Mayor's Desk



Dear Salem resident,

Happy New Year!

The new year brings an opportunity for us to reflect on the past, and, just as important, an opportunity to think about the future.

I want you to know that City officials are working hard for you- day in and day out- to help make sure Salem remains a vibrant and welcoming community offering a high quality of life to those of us fortunate enough to live here.

As we turn the page to a new year, we also look ahead to the resolution of this pandemic.

To date, one out of every 16 Salem residents has had COVID-19 at some point last year and public health officials expect case numbers to continue to climb over the coming weeks.

But there is good news: here in Salem and across the Commonwealth we're now starting vaccinations.

Several hundred Salem residents have received the vaccine so far and starting January 11th we'll be working with our surrounding communities to vaccinate our first responders.

My greatest wish for the new year is that it brings us happiness and an opportunity to, once again – after far too long – gather together in person – we've got a lot of making up to do!

So much energy and effort has gone into Salem's response to COVID-19 over the last ten months, if we can be vigilant for a few more weeks, as more residents are vaccinated, we'll be closer to the new normal we all seek.

As I reflect on the last 10 months, I think our community's greatest accomplishment may very well be the resilience, strength, and compassion of our residents themselves.

Thank you for making this City the special place that it is and I hope you have a happy, healthy and restful New Year.

Kim Driscoll
Mayor
City of Salem

Senior Tax Exemption

Salem's new Senior Tax Exemption Program (STEP) allows qualifying seniors to have a percentage of their circuit breaker income tax credit deducted from their annual property tax bill. The STEP exemption is available to more Salem seniors than the current exemption, which is set by state law to a lower income-eligibility level. For FY2021, STEP is available to Salem seniors who applied for and received the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit on their 2019 taxes.

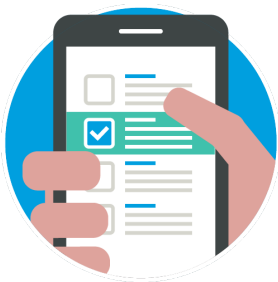


The income threshold under STEP is \$61,000 (not head of household) and \$76,000 (head of household) for those who are single and \$92,000 for married couples, where the old exemption thresholds were \$27,000 for those who are single and \$32,800 for married couples. STEP will greatly expand the number of Salem seniors who can get a property tax exemption: last year, under the old exemption limits, only 40 Salem seniors applied for an exemption; under the STEP limits, however, hundreds of Salem seniors are now eligible to have a portion of their property taxes waived.

"The Senior Tax Exemption Program continues our commitment to making Salem an even more age-friendly community," said Mayor Kim Driscoll. "Salem is a place where residents of all ages can live and grow old in comfort. While we have managed, through responsible fiscal practices, to keep tax changes relatively modest over the last fifteen years, it's important that we recognize the disproportionate burden felt by income-limited older residents. As the cost of living increases in Salem and across the Commonwealth, we have a responsibility to develop strategies to help our residents most in need of assistance."

Applications for the STEP program for the FY2021 tax year will be available starting January 11, 2021 at www.salem.com/step or by calling the City Assessor's office at (978) 619-5608. Applications must be received by April 1, 2021 in order to be considered for the current fiscal year.

Two City Surveys



The City of Salem is currently conducting two important surveys for resident feedback:

- COVID-19 Survey: www.salem.com/covidsurvey
- Race Equity Survey: www.salem.com/racesurvey

Your input and comments will help shape the City's response to these two critical, on-going issues. The COVID-19 Survey will be online until January 15th and the Race Equity Survey until January 8th.

The latest COVID response information from the City of Salem can be found at www.salem.com/covid.

Case data, public health guidance and advisories, links to resources, and much more.



**Coronavirus
(COVID-19)
Information**

City of Salem
salem.com/covid



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Highland Avenue Corridor Study Virtual Community Meeting

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Via Zoom



The City of Salem is working with a consultant to develop corridor plan for Highland Avenue that will serve as a guideline for fostering and managing future change along the corridor.

Join the City of Salem and its consultant team to learn about the Highland Avenue Corridor Study project, process, timeline and the analysis completed to date.

The presentation will be followed by a community discussion. We need your help to guide how new growth could happen. A few growth scenarios will be presented for you to consider.

This is a separate project from the MassDOT roadway improvement project.

There are three ways to join the community meeting on January 12 at 7pm:

1. Enter <https://bit.ly/34PqmgB> into your browser, or
2. Enter <https://zoom.us/join> into your web browser to open the Zoom website. Enter meeting ID # **897 1433 1630** and password **7418**, or
3. Dial a toll-free phone number at **877-853-5257**. When prompted, enter meeting ID # **897 1433 1630** and password **7418**

SALEM PUBLIC SCHOOLS COVID-19 TESTING

A Test is Best!

Following winter break, testing sites will be available across the district for ALL SPS students and staff! Find a convenient location and time for you listed below to be tested!

Who

Any SPS Student and Staff Member

Anyone who tested positive within 60 days is not eligible

What

Saliva-Based Pool PCR Testing

Please do not eat or drink anything 30 minutes prior to testing

When

Monday January 4th, Tuesday January 5th, and Wednesday January 6th

How

Drive-Up Outside or Walk-Up at Saltonstall School

*Staff can test inside any building & do not need to wait in line

Where

ALL SPS SCHOOLS. Families can choose any school location for students to be tested. Your testing location does not need to be your home school.

Monday, January 4th

All Day	2pm-6pm (Drive-Up)
Saltonstall (Walk-Up): 10am-4pm HMLS & SHS (Drive-Up): 10am-3pm	Bentley & ECC Collins & WHES

Tuesday, January 5th

All Day	7am-11am (Drive-Up)	2pm-6pm (Drive-Up)
Saltonstall (Walk-Up): 7:30am-4pm HMLS & SHS (Drive-Up): 7:30am-3pm	Bentley & ECC Collins & WHES	Bates & Carlton NLIS & Salem Prep

Wednesday, January 6th

Half Day	7am-11am (Drive-Up)
Saltonstall (Walk-Up): 7:30am-11am HMLS & SHS (Drive-Up): 7:30am-11am	Bates & Carlton NLIS & Salem Prep

Results will come back Friday, January 8th

Visit the website for more information:
<http://bit.ly/3nGLNrk>

Remember to keep wearing your mask to protect yourself and those around you!

