



FYI SALEM

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CONTACT THE MAYOR'S OFFICE:

Phone:

(978) 619-5600

Fax:

(978) 744-9327

Email:

mayor@salem.com

Web:

salem.com/mayor

Facebook:

City of Salem MA

Twitter:

@CityofSalemMA



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From the Mayor's Desk



Dear Salem resident,

I hope you will join me in expressing our community's support and appreciation for the LGBTQ+ students and staff at Salem State University. In recent weeks, students and staff on campus have been subjected to vile and hateful comments by an individual unaffiliated with the university or with our community.

Salem is a welcoming place for all regardless of who they love or how they identify. We consistently achieve a perfect 100 score on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, have designated LGBTQ+ liaisons both in the Mayor's Office and at the Salem Police Department, and were one of the first Massachusetts municipalities to adopt a fully-inclusive non-discrimination Ordinance – and then actually enforce it.

We are far from being a perfect community, but we strive daily to achieve a shared goal: making Salem a safe, welcoming, and

loving place for all. The lone protestor at SSU is not reflective of Salem, of what we believe, or of who we are. We are working closely with SSU administrators, students, and staff to identify collective actions we can take to stand up to this hateful commentary.

Salem belongs to everyone. Our own history demonstrates the tragic outcomes that befall a community where people turn on each other. Salem today is not that place, and this protestor does not speak for us or reflect our values. To our LGBTQ+ SSU students and staff who have felt threatened by this individual, know that you are welcome and loved in Salem, always.

On a separate note, on December 1st the Council will vote on the FY22 tax rate. We strive to manage the overall tax burden on homeowners and I am proud that we have never needed or sought a Proposition 2 ½ override. This year residential and commercial rates will drop by about 4% and the average single-family tax bill will increase by just \$97.

The most powerful tool at our disposal is responsible, sensible development that adds to our tax base. Therefore, we have advocated for the appropriate redevelopment of sites such as the former courthouses, the vacant power plant property, and other under-utilized and vacant former industrial parcels. Certified new growth this fiscal year is a very strong \$2 million exceeding last year's growth of \$1.6 million. This is why – in addition to the housing need

and the desire to create good, local jobs – it is important we look to new growth opportunities. We cannot cut our way to stabilized taxes or better services; we can, however, broaden the base that funds our local government, thereby stabilizing taxes and improving services. FY22 once again demonstrates that strategy at work.

Combined, new growth and grant and non-tax revenues have reduced the average tax bill increase by roughly half when comparing the last 17 years of this administration to the 17 years prior to that. We want to keep Salem a vibrant, thriving community that delivers quality public services in as efficient and affordable a manner as possible. It has not always been easy. Just as we emerged from local fiscal trials in 2007 our national economy spiraled into a recession and, just as we were building back from that the pandemic brought a new decline in our economy.

Whatever the cause of our challenges, we weathered them and are today still resiliently positioned for success, with strong growth, a declining unemployment rate, record bond ratings, and award-winning balanced budgets. Our City's bond rating was upgraded eight years ago to AA, the highest in the City's history. In their most recent ratings report the agency cited our financial stability and reasonable budgeting practices in affirming that strong rating. This is validation that the path we have set for ourselves is the correct one for our community.

Kim Driscoll, Mayor

COVID Updates

Curative, the company that operated the City's free rapid COVID testing site in October, will continue to serve the Salem community with a free walk-up COVID testing site located in Riley Plaza starting on Monday, November 15th. The Curative testing trailer will be open six days a week, Mondays-Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Testing at this site is self-collected PCR testing, with results returned within 24-48 hours.



SALEM: GET A TEST
PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES
PROTECT YOUR NEIGHBORS
STOP THE SPREAD

FREE COVID-19 TESTS
[MASS.GOV/STOPTHESPREAD](https://mass.gov/stopthespread)

The state-run testing program, "Stop the Spread," operates two testing sites in Salem: a walk-up site at St. Peter's Church on St. Peter's Street and a drive-up site at Salem High School. The Commonwealth recently announced that the Stop the Spread program will continue through at least March 31, 2022. Testing at these sites are free and results are returned to you within one to three days of testing. More details can be found at www.salem.com/testing.

Massachusetts residents can access booster doses from more than 1,000 locations, with appointments available now across the Commonwealth, including many right here in Salem.

CDC recommendations allow for mixing and matching of different COVID-19 booster doses, and individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. It is recommended that residents with questions about which booster is right for them should consult their health care provider.

Visit the Vaxfinder tool at vaxfinder.mass.gov for a full list of locations to receive a booster. Residents can narrow results to search for locations that are offering boosters. Many locations will be booking appointments out weeks in advance. For individuals who are unable to use Vaxfinder, or have difficulty accessing the internet, the COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line can help schedule appointments by **calling 2-1-1** and following the prompts for assistance (Monday through Friday 8:30am-6pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am-2pm). The COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Line is available in English and Spanish and has translators available in approximately 100 additional languages.

Vaccines are widely available across the Commonwealth and are the best way to keep everyone safe, especially during the holiday season. COVID-19 boosters are safe, effective, and free. Individuals do not need an ID or health insurance to access a booster, and do not need to show a vaccine card.

Am I eligible for a COVID-19 booster shot?

<p>Who?</p> <p>Individuals 18+ who are fully vaccinated</p>	<p>When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 6 months after Pfizer or Moderna At least 2 months after J&J <p>Which booster shot do I get?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may have a preference, but you can get any type of vaccine for your booster shot
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More information at mass.gov/COVID19booster

Additional information on the COVID-booster, including FAQs, can be found at mass.gov/COVID19booster.

Forest River Park

Salem residents and other community members interested in getting a closer look at the new Forest River Park Outdoor Recreation and Nature Center are invited to a free community sneak peek event taking place on Saturday December 18th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The event will feature brief remarks from project team members, an opportunity to tour the facility and new grounds, and light refreshments. This major signature park project included the creation of two new public pools, a renovated bathhouse with community room, public art installations, a splash pad, new accessible trails, and a more resilient and restored ocean cove area. Salem's signature parks initiative (www.salem.com/signatureparks) is a major investment in the City's largest and most enjoyed public parks and open spaces, focused on creating an enduring legacy for the Salem 400 quadricentennial in 2026. More details about the Forest River Park project can be found in the FAQ available at www.salem.com/home/news/sneak-peak-forest-river-park-outdoor-recreation-nature-center.



SAVE THE DATE!
SALEM HOUSING ROAD MAP
COMMUNITY FORUM

The City needs your help to create a plan for housing solutions that contribute to a healthy, equitable, and prosperous community!

When communities encourage homes of many shapes and sizes in a community, it helps to give all kinds of people affordable options and keep prices from shooting out of reach.

**Tuesday,
November 30, 2021
6:30 PM**
Register at:
<https://linktr.ee/salemhousingroadmap>

Housing Forum

The Salem Housing Road Map: A Housing Plan for All will help Salem find the best ways to meet housing needs and shape the location, type, and design of future housing. The Road Map will consider best practices to help promote diverse housing options that are sensitive to the community context and capacity. When completed in the Spring, the Road Map will include specific, actionable recommendations for the City to take. Join the Road Map team on November 30th at 6:30pm at a free forum. Registration is required and can be done at <https://linktr.ee/SalemHousingRoadmap>. The team will provide an overview of the project and lead participants through interactive online activities so you can share your insights about housing needs, challenges, and opportunities in Salem.

Greenlawn Master Plan

The City is developing a master plan to guide future improvements, expansion, and long-term management of its largest place of interment, the historic Greenlawn Cemetery. Through the planning process, the City has identified ways to restore the character and quality of the landscape and has developed concepts for new interment sites. Join the upcoming meeting November 30, 6-7:30pm to learn about the plan's draft recommendations, and offer your comments, participate in polling, and engage in discussion. Information shared at the forum will be considered for inclusion in the final Master Plan document. Find the meeting link and more details at www.preservingsalem.com/greenlawn-cemetery-master-plan.



School Updates

Masks Required in Schools

On Tuesday, October 26, DESE announced that after consulting with medical experts and state health officials, their mask requirement in all K-12 public schools throughout Massachusetts has been extended through at least January 15, 2022. We recognize the desire to "just be done", but we are still in a COVID-19 pandemic and thus, we want to keep all of our staff and students safe. Staff, students, and families are required to wear a mask in our schools. We appreciate your cooperation.

Vaccine Required by 12/1 for School Activities

Salem Public Schools remains committed to a safe and healthy environment for all students, staff, and families in our district. Currently, we are under a vaccine mandate for high respiratory extracurricular activities that was approved by the School Committee in October.

Vaccine eligible students must show proof of vaccination in order to participate in extracurricular activities unless there is a clearly stated medical exemption provided by a doctor or the family attests to a strongly held religious belief that prevents them from getting the vaccine. Students that have **received their first dose by December 1st** and are scheduled for their second dose will qualify to participate in the extracurricular activities.

John & Abigail Adams 2021 Scholarship Winners

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship is a merit-based program that provides a credit toward tuition for up to eight semesters of undergraduate education at a Massachusetts state college or university. For this scholarship, merit is based on student scores on the 10th grade Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test.

Congratulations to the following SHS students:

- Genevieve Boudo
- Harrison Devoe
- Hawa Hamidou Tabayi
- Corey Aras Kaulenas
- Maher Kokonezis-Hanino
- Madison Lane
- Liam McKillop
- Cassadi O'Leary
- Perla Pena
- Jimena Pueyo-Garcia
- Natalie Wessell
- Carla Zoquier-Urbae

Download the ParentSquare app today!

Stay involved with your child's learning and activities at school, from anywhere.



SALEM MUSIC BOOSTERS' 23RD ANNUAL CRAFTS FAIR & HOLIDAY BAZAAR

WHEN

SATURDAY, DEC. 11TH, 10AM-3PM

WHERE

77 WILLSON STREET
SALEM, MA

 ParentSquare