

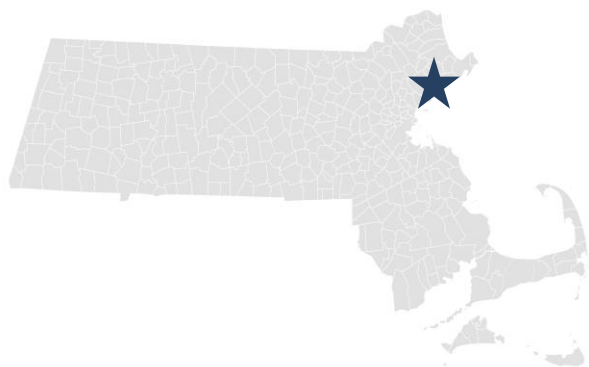
CITY OF SALEM



TRANSPARENCY BEST PRACTICE | DECEMBER 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Salem, Massachusetts has adopted the Transparency best practice as part of a Community Compact agreement signed with the Baker-Polito Administration in May of 2016. The City had already taken the lead on transparency by adopting a “Sunshine Ordinance” in 2005 and Mayor Driscoll’s administration partnered with VisGov to take greater steps forward in transparency by providing the City’s budget in a graphical and machine-readable format. Salem’s visual budget tool provides open data insight into revenues, expenses, funds, and reserves along with a calculator tool so individual city taxpayers can see where their tax dollars are going in the budget.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Salem is located in northeastern Massachusetts in Essex County. Salem is regarded as one of the cultural centers of the northeast, home to numerous historical landmarks from the Puritan settlement of New England, including the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

Population is 41,340 residents*
Annual Budget is \$149M (FY 2017)
Median Household Income is \$44,033*

**As of 2010 census*

In partnership with:



THE CHALLENGE

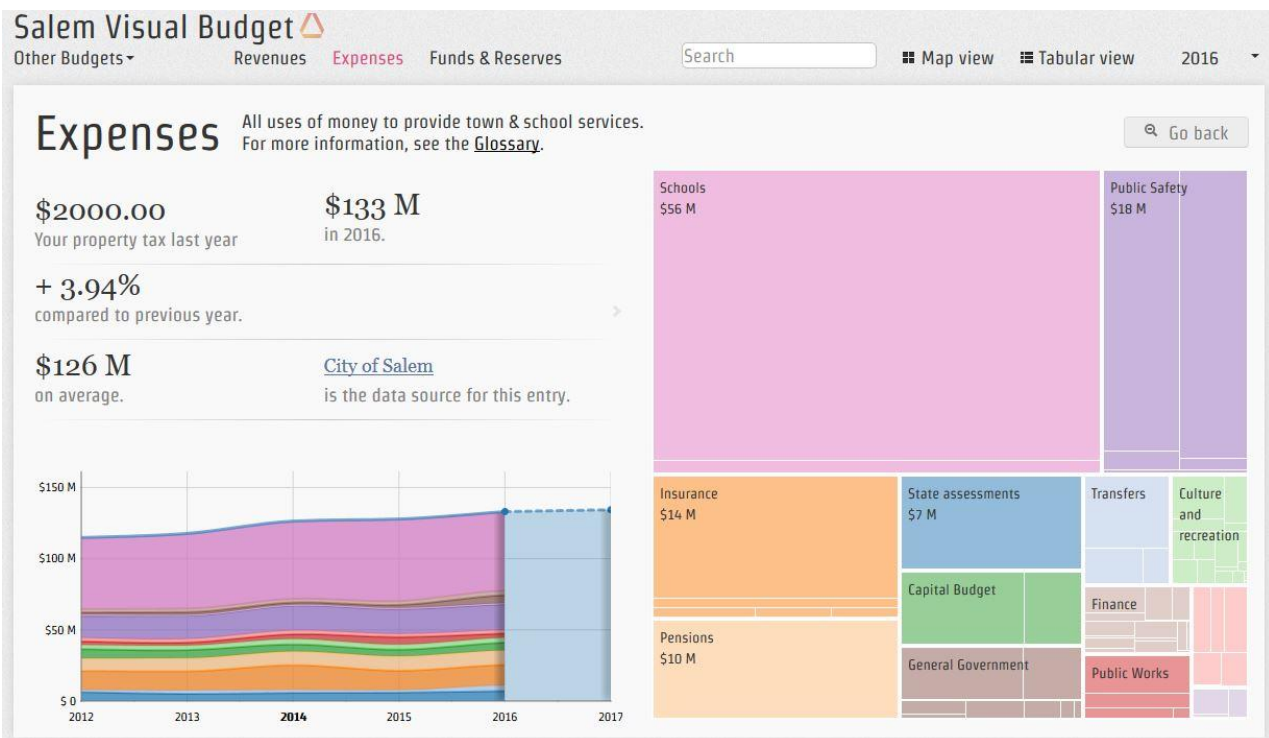
In her State of the City address in January of 2016, Salem's Mayor pledged to provide "a graphical website that quickly and clearly illustrates how and where tax dollars are being invested to deliver services to Salem residents."

The Mayor further promised to deliver the website alongside Salem's FY17 budget, so Salem residents can see clearly where every dollar from this new budget is going.

THE SOLUTION

As shown in the below screenshot, the tool – accessible at salem.visgov.com – provides a visual overview of the budget, showing the share of funds allocated to Salem's schools, public safety, pensions, and other areas of necessity. Users can also see revenues that come into the government from taxes and other assessments.

THE RESULTS



Source: <http://salem.visgov.com> – accessed on November 2nd, 2016.

"This was a critical piece of the transparency agenda that was announced in this year's State of the City address in January. A Visual Budget is a simple, user-friendly, open-source website that allows anyone to get a quick snapshot glance at how we are carefully and strategically investing public tax dollars to improve our City."

-Kim Driscoll, Mayor of Salem