

PERFORMANCE SPACES PILOT

BUSKER INFORMATION | OCTOBER 2026



YEAR ONE: SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS ONLY

WHAT IT IS

A voluntary program with designated performance spaces on the Pedestrian Mall, created to support performers and give guests the best possible experience.

A coordinated place to perform. A way for visitors to discover participating artists. Shared expectations for respectful interactions, voluntary tips and clear access through the Mall.

WHAT IT ISN'T

This is not an effort to remove buskers from the Mall. There will continue to be plenty of space for folks who want to show up and perform independently.

Not everyone needs to join the pilot or pay for a designated space. Independent busking remains part of Salem. Applicable City rules and any required property or event-area permission still apply.

CITY UPDATE: TIPS CAN START AT 8 AM

Daily performance hours: 8 AM-8 PM. From 8-10 AM: 68 dB maximum and no amplification. See the City rules on page 4.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

YEAR ONE: SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS ONLY

THE ORANGE OUTLINE

On the ground, it marks a designated performance space.

This photo shows an outlined area on the Mall, with the orange boundary visible around the performer and setup.

THE BUSK STOP CIRCLE



The Busk Stop graphic shown here is part of the program signage.

The photo illustrates the space. A marked area or sign does not confirm a booking; wait for your written assignment before using a designated space.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

START ON OUR WEBSITE

Compare the options, read the current requirements and choose the application that fits your act.

Most designated performance spaces are already taken. Remaining placements are subject to availability and written confirmation.

Open participation information & applications

hauntedhappeningsmarketplace.com/
busker-roaming-performer-pilot/



Scan to start

DESIGNATED SPACE

For a fixed setup on the Mall. Limited spaces; Saturdays and Sundays only. Current rates and program dates are on the website.

ROAMING PARTICIPATION

Free program participation, with voluntary tips and no reserved spot. No power is provided in either track.

1 APPLY & AGREE

Complete the appropriate form and accept the current full Code of Conduct.

2 COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS

Provide each performer's and helper's private reference photo before participation can be confirmed. For a designated space, review and accept the offer and complete the booking requirements.

3 WAIT FOR WRITTEN CONFIRMATION

An application or requested space is not a booking. Your confirmation gives the terms of your participation or assigned space.

Questions or already applied? **John Andrews**
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Produced by Creative Collective. Original campaign artwork: @batsinthebelfrycrafts (human-made).

Festival Partner: Salem Night Tour. Title Sponsors: Jenni Stuart Fine Jewelry & Salem Wax / Haunted Neighborhood. Overall Sponsor: Prime Group Shetland Park.

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CITY RULES: THE QUICK READ

NEW: TIPS CAN BEGIN AT 8 AM

Voluntary tips can begin with performances at 8 AM.

Performance hours: **8 AM-8 PM daily.**

From **8-10 AM: 68 dB maximum and no amplification.**

TIPS & CONTRIBUTIONS

Tips are voluntary. Performers may request contributions, but may not require a set fee or sell items. Contribution signs may be no larger than **12 x 12 inches**.

SOUND & AMPLIFICATION

From **10 AM-8 PM**, use the City map: **72 dB in green/B2 areas; 79 dB in blue/B3 areas**, measured 15 feet from the sound source. October Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: **no amplification in green/B2 areas**, subject to the October 31 provision below.

KEEP ACCESS CLEAR

Keep passageways, ramps, doors and windows clear. Props must be portable and attended. Do not attach equipment or signs to poles, bollards, buildings or windows, or plug cords into City poles or businesses.

SAFETY & LOCATION

No fire, knives or weapons, including replicas. Performers under 16 need adult supervision. Private property requires written owner permission; authorized event areas require sponsor permission. Additional City location and safety restrictions apply.

October 31 needs City clarification. The performance rule ends at 8 PM, while the amplification provision lists 4-10 PM. Do not assume that the amplification exception extends performance hours.

THE COMPLETE CITY DOCUMENT FOLLOWS

Pages 5-8 reproduce all four pages of Jeremy Fiske's revised October 9 attachment, including the sound-limit map on packet page 8. Read the full wording for details and exceptions. The map shows sound limits; it does not approve performance locations.

CITY OF SALEM
DOWNTOWN STREET PERFORMER RULES & REGULATIONS (OCT. 2026)

The City finds that the existence in the City of street performers provides a public amenity that enhances the character of the City and seeks to encourage such performances to the extent that they do not interfere with the reasonable expectations of residents to the enjoyment of peace and quiet in their homes or to the ability of businesses to conduct their businesses uninterrupted. These rules and regulations seek to balance the interests of the performers with those of the residents and businesses of the City.

A. Definitions.

1. "'Perform" includes, but is not limited to, the following activities: acting, singing, playing musical instruments, pantomime, juggling, magic, dancing, reading, puppetry, sidewalk art (working with non-permanent, water-soluble media, i.e., chalk, pastels, or watercolors directly on the pavement), and reciting. "Perform" shall not include the production of items for sale or services such as face painting or caricatures for which specific payment is requested, this is vending.
2. "Public areas" means public sidewalks and other publicly owned open space within the City of Salem's downtown, B5 zoning district. See zoning map at saalem.com/gis-and-maps.

B. Performances.

1. Performances may take place in the following locations:
 - a. In public areas, except within one hundred feet of an elementary and/or secondary school, library, or church while in session, a hospital at any time, and except public areas excluded by the Chief of Police pursuant to subsection C.
 - b. On private property, with the written permission of the owner or other person in control of such property; and
 - c. In public areas where an authorized street fair or public festival is being conducted, with the permission of the sponsor of such fair or festival typically held on the Common, Derby Square and Charlotte Forten Park.
2. Performances may take place 8AM – 8PM Daily subject to restrictions set forth below (Noise Restriction between 8AM-10AM is 68 decibels and no amplification).
3. Performers may not plug any electrical cord to a city pole or business, attach any rope, wire, poster or any other item to a City (or private) pole, bollard or building. Further, any necessary prop must be portable and easily moved at a moment's notice. A prop may not be left unattended on public property for any amount of time.

4. A performer may request contributions or money or property at a performance, provided that no sign requesting contributions shall exceed twelve inches by twelve inches in size and no set fee shall be required. Contributions may be received in any receptacle, such as an open musical instrument case, box or hat. On sidewalks, displays must not obstruct handicap ramps, doorways, or windows (i.e., performers shall not tape or post signs or posters on windows or lean displays against windows so as to obstruct a clear view through the window). Performers may not sell items.

5. Performers under the age of 16 shall be supervised by an adult.

C. Exclusion of Public Areas.

A specific public area may be excluded at any time from performances if the Chief of Police determines safety so warrants. (See map)

D. Prohibition.

1. The use of fire of any kind during the performance or the use knives or weapons regardless of authenticity is strictly prohibited.

2. No performer or group of performers may generate noise exceeding the designated sound level of the performance area measured at a distance of fifteen feet from the performer or group of performers. Performance areas shown on the attached map have accompanying maximum Db levels that may not be exceeded as well as time restrictions as follows:

NOISE ORDINANCE – 2026

Sec. 22-6. - Special regulations relative to the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall and adjacent streets and sidewalks.

(a) Essex Street Pedestrian Mall and adjacent streets and sidewalks shall include:

- 1) 125 to 259 Essex Street;
- (2) 93 to 155 Washington Street;
- (3) Cervoni Walkway (Salem Green);
- (4) Derby Square from Essex to 15 Derby Square; and
- (5) Central Street from Essex Street to Charter Street.

(b) No person shall use, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, a musical instrument or similar device, loudspeaker, amplifier, public address system or similar device, or radio, disc player or similar device which produces, reproduces or amplifies sound in excess of the decibels levels set forth below upon the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall and Adjacent Streets and Sidewalks as measured 15 feet from the noise source:

- (1) Exceeding 68 decibels between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. upon the streets, sidewalks and public ways within the entirety of the Essex Street Mall and Adjacent Streets and Sidewalks;

(2) Exceeding 72 decibels between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. upon the streets and sidewalks between and including 173 and 259 Essex Street; between and including 11 Central Street and Essex Street; 125 and 133 Essex Street, 13 Central Street and Charter Street, Cervoni Walkway, the two public walkways abutting 20 Central Street running from Central Street to Derby Square and Derby Square from Essex Street to 13 Derby Square.

(3) Exceeding 79 decibels between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. between and including 137 and 161 Essex Street, 69 Washington Street and 99 Washington Street, 112 Washington Street and 154 Washington Street and 15 Derby Square and Front Street.

When the ambient noise level upon a street or sidewalk within the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall exceeds the decibel level set forth in sections (b)(2) and (b)(3) for a street or sidewalk, as determined by a police officer or a health, licensing or building official or their designees, the applicable decibel level for the street or sidewalk shall be ten decibels above the ambient noise level. Ambient noise shall mean the background noise other than the sound, such as a theatrical performance, being monitored,

(c) With the exception of public safety announcements, the use of loudspeakers, amplifiers, public address systems or similar devices, shall be prohibited on the streets and sidewalks set forth in section (b)(2) above during all hours on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during the month of October with the exception of October 31st when such devices may be utilized, at the decibel limits set forth above, between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 p.m.

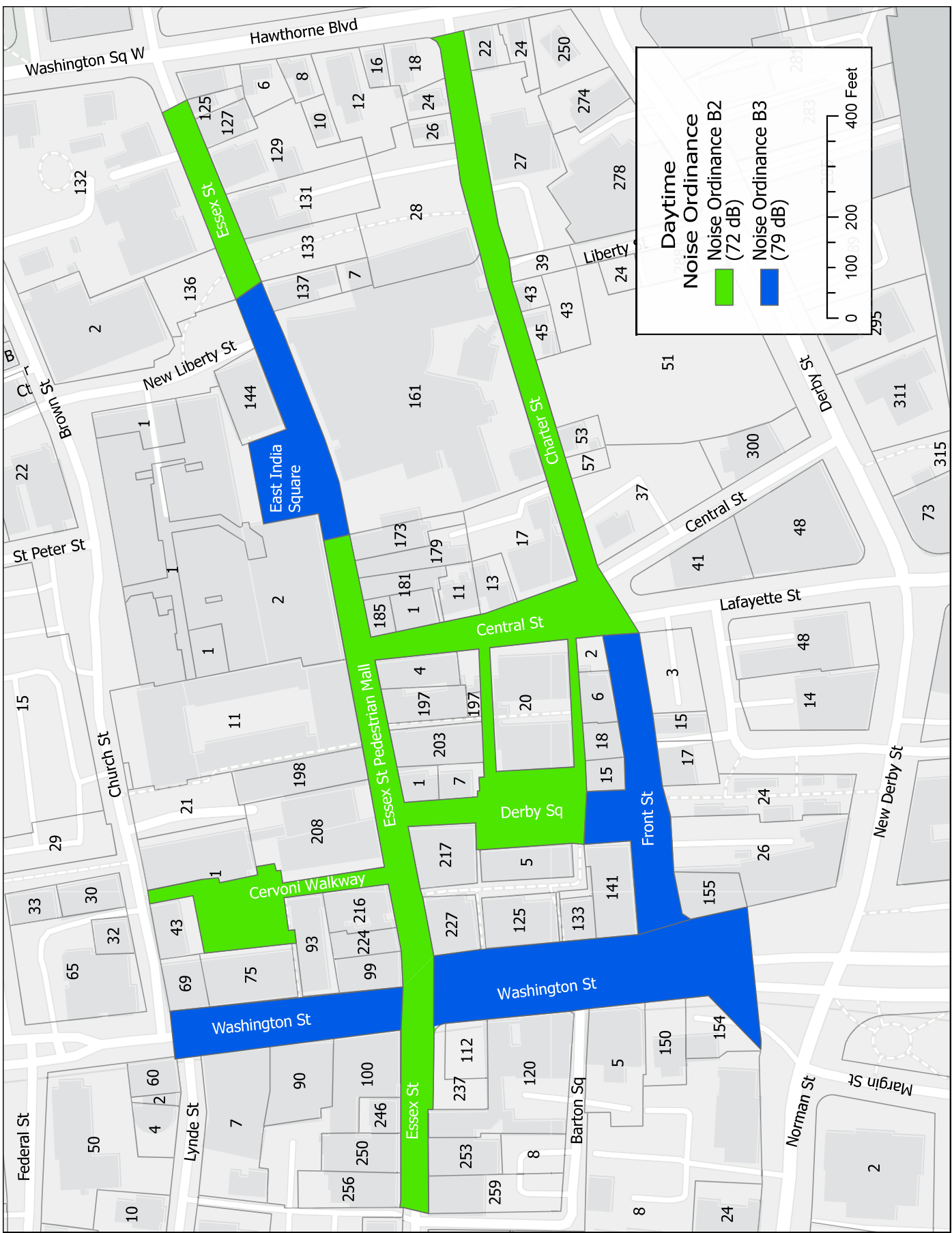
(d) A map depicting the decibel limits set forth above shall be on file in the office of the city clerk and available to the public at no fee.

Note: On occasion, City-sponsored programmed events are scheduled at various locations such as Derby Square, Charlotte Forten Park or the Salem Common. During these occasions, these areas are not open public performance spaces.

END OF NOISE ORDINANCE

3. Upon a complaint by a resident, a designated staff person from the City of Salem shall, with the permission of the resident, measure the sound level inside the residential dwelling. If the sound level exceeds a median sound level of fifty decibels and exceeds the background noise by at least ten Db(A), the performer or group of performers causing the excessive sound level shall either turn down the music or move to a distance from the residence so as to reduce the sound level within these limitations.

4. A performer may not create an undue interference with the passage of the public through a public area. If a performer attracts a crowd sufficient to obstruct the public way, a police officer may disperse the portion of the crowd that is creating the obstruction. The police officer shall not cause the performer to leave the location unless efforts to move the crowd fail to adequately protect the public safety or order. A police officer shall not ask the performer to leave the location unless all other means of restoring the public safety or order have been exhausted.



Sound Levels may not exceed the decibel level indicated on this map during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily. Overnight, 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m., the decibel level shall not exceed 68 decibels. Areas covered by City Ordinance Chapter 22 Sec. 22-6 include the street, sidewalk and adjacent public spaces. Decibel levels shall be measured 15' away from the sound source.