

HSI PROJECT OVERVIEW | SHETLAND PARK

35 Congress St | Salem, MA 01970



Shetland Park

Shetland Park is a privately owned, 27-acre waterfront property in The Point neighborhood of Salem, which is a National Register Historic District. Built in 1915 after the Great Salem Fire, Shetland Park was once home to the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company, once one of the most significant textile facilities in the Northeast. Its usage has expanded over the years and now includes multiple office spaces as well as the Salem Academy Charter School. Shetland Park represents a very exciting development opportunity for Salem.

What Is Being Proposed

The developer of the project is the Prime Group, based in Saratoga Springs, New York. If the project is developed and approved as planned, this will be the largest residential development project in Salem’s history. The development may increase the population of Salem by fully 10%. No utility expansion has been proposed by the developer. Traffic, parking, water, and sewer impacts would be significant.

Prime’s current proposal for Shetland Park includes the development of new:

Housing Approximately 1,200 affordable residential rental units with a mix of studios, 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units. 20% of these units will be affordable housing. Housing is planned for six (6) buildings; building heights will be 8 and 12 stories.

Hotel A 13-story hotel with 200 rooms

Office Space Approximately 1 million of existing square feet

Retail Space A new restaurant, retail shops, and a grocery store, among other amenities.

School A new facility for the Salem Academy Charter School

Parking “Ample underground parking to support residents, workers, and visitors”

Public waterfront space 2/3-mile-long Harborwalk, raised 36” above projected flood access, which will provide access along the waterfront with various green spaces

Impact on Salem

The proposed development will have a major impact on the current scale, density, height and character of the city and the residents of Salem.

Housing Density

Based on Massachusetts household size averages, 1,200 rental units can represent approximately 1,800 to 2,600 additional residents, depending on final unit mix and occupancy patterns. This represents roughly a 4–6% increase of Salem’s current population in one location. In addition, the development of 6 distinct multi-story buildings, with heights ranging from 8 to 12 stories, will dwarf the existing low-rise housing height of The Point neighborhood and overwhelm the character of this historic neighborhood.

Infrastructure & Transportation

The developer is still putting together various Community impact studies, but this project will likely:

- Generate 6,000 to 8,000+ people and/or vehicles entering and leaving the site, daily, to travel on 2 two-laned roads through The Point and Salem’s dense downtown
- Increase usage of an already stressed water and sewage treatment plant system.
- Be affected by long-term sea level rise and flood risk in a coastal location

Key Questions for the City & Community

- How will design standards ensure the project looks and feels like Salem?
- What is the cumulative infrastructure impact of 1,200 additional housing units?
- What independent peer review will be conducted?
- How will public input be incorporated before zoning approval and during project phases?
- Are alternative building density and height options being evaluated?

Shetland Park and Chapter 40R

For the Prime project to go forward, the city of Salem will need to create a special zoning overlay for the site. The potential tool for this variance can be found in Chapter 40R which is a state zoning tool that allows higher-density housing to be developed in designated overlay districts, in exchange for affordable housing requirements and state incentives. The City is convening a Design Standards Working Group in 2026 to shape development standards for the district, and HSI has been invited to participate. Presuming the City Council adopts the 40R district and state approval, (the City Council must vote to approve this) the project would proceed to full site plan and design review. This is a long-term, phased redevelopment anticipated to unfold over many years and will shape Salem's waterfront for decades.

Why Historic Salem, Inc. is Monitoring the Project

Historic Salem, Inc. (HSI) was founded in 1944 with the mission to preserve Salem's historic character, scale, and quality of life while ensuring that new development complements the city's historic fabric.

We are monitoring this project to ensure that redevelopment of this historic waterfront site complements Salem's character and that long-term infrastructure and community impacts are carefully evaluated.

Next Steps Stay Informed

To learn more please go to:

City of Salem – Official Project Information

Shetland Park 40R Project Page

imaginesalem.org/proposed-smart-growth-overlay-district-shetland

City of Salem - Planning & Community Development

98 Washington St | Salem, MA

salemma.gov/planning

Historic Salem, Inc.

9 North St | Salem, MA

historicsalem.org