

Town of Auburn, Massachusetts

Julie A. Jacobson
Town Manager



Community Message (October 19, 2020)

Greetings, Auburn Residents, Businesses and Community Members:

The global health pandemic caused by Covid-19 has impacted our local, state and national economies as well as those economies across the globe. Communities across the country, including Auburn, have had to adapt to those social and economic impacts as we forge a new reality, which means new ways of doing business, new ways of interacting and communicating with others, new ways of learning, and new ways to deliver health care. Covid-19 has compelled municipal and state officials to develop new and creative strategies for operating and delivering services to the public while protecting the health and welfare of our citizens. Here in Auburn, these innovative approaches have enabled the Town to continue to provide critical and essential services to our residents and businesses.

The Drive-Through Kiosk outside Town Hall remains open Monday through Thursday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Fridays 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The Kiosk is very busy and has enabled Town administration to continue to provide services to the public while limiting visitors into Town Hall, which remains closed to the public other than by-appointment-only. Our town employees all remain in their municipal offices working their regular hours, and many more hours above the regular workday, to provide critical services to the residents and businesses. If you need to pick up a birth, marriage or death certificate, dog license, building or health permits or any other documents at the Kiosk, you must call the appropriate Town Department ahead of your visit to the Kiosk. This will ensure that your documents are ready when you arrive at the Kiosk. No cash or credit cards can be used at the Kiosk. Payments can be made on-line at www.auburnguide.com or via telephone prior to arriving at the Kiosk to pick up permits, licenses and other documents.

The outside Service Window at the Treasurer/Collector's Office can be accessed via the handicapped ramp at the back of Town Hall. **PLEASE NOTE THAT ONLY TREASURER/COLLECTOR BUSINESS CAN BE HANDLED AT THIS WINDOW.** This window is only staffed by employees in the Treasurer/Collector's Office. *All other non-Treasurer/Collector's Office inquiries and town business must be done through the Drive-Through Kiosk or by calling the appropriate Town Department.* We thank you for your cooperation so we can continue to service the public efficiently through the Kiosk and the walk-up Service Window at the Treasurer/Collector's Office.

The Auburn Public Library continues to provide curbside pick-up and drop-off. Visit the library's website at <http://www.auburnlibrary.org/> for more information. Check out the Library's many new virtual programs and services! The Lorraine Nordgren Senior Center remains closed to the public to protect our most vulnerable population. However, staff continue to conduct critical outreach through Auburn CARES Program's Our Seniors Matter. Some outdoor programs were held over the past few months but with the cold weather settling in, the Senior Center will focus on additional virtual programming for seniors.

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Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and the State's Department of Public Health guidelines and data, large gatherings and events, both indoors and outdoors, have specific restrictions in Massachusetts under Governor Baker's Orders, and many activities and events are prohibited under the current Phase III of the Commonwealth's Statewide Reopening Plan. Since Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic in March, several community events have been cancelled in Auburn and across the State. Given that health experts predict Covid-19 positive cases to continue to increase across the State and throughout the nation this fall and winter, and given the occupancy restrictions under the Governor's Gatherings Order, we anticipate that community events in Auburn and municipalities will continue to be cancelled over the next few months.

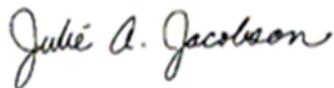
As of October 14th, (and as of the date of this article on October 21st) Auburn has been considered higher risk for COVID-19 transmission based on the State's Department of Public Health's Community Data reporting. This designation means that over the past two weeks, residents have tested positive for COVID-19 at an average daily rate of eight or more per 100,000. This higher risk designation places Auburn in the red zone, following three weeks in the next highest risk category – yellow. Several Central Massachusetts communities are now in the yellow or red zone, indicating an increase in the number of positive cases in this region. Here in Auburn, there is no one incident or cluster to which we can attribute the rise in cases. The cases are scattered throughout multiple households with no relation to one another. This could be due to an increase in informal social gatherings and behavior changes. As the temperatures become colder, there will be less opportunity for outdoor activities which may drive the positivity rates even higher.

Currently, Auburn is in Step 2 of Phase 3 based on the Community Data two weeks ago. Should Auburn remain in the red zone for additional weeks, the Town will have to revert to Step 1 of Phase 3 of the state's Reopening Plan until the Town maintains a lower risk designation (non-red) for three weekly reporting periods (which represents four weeks of testing data). For more information, please visit: www.mass.gov/reopening.

We urge Auburn residents to remain vigilant and take all precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Frequent hand washing, wearing face coverings and social distancing are critical to preventing the spread of the Coronavirus. There are more than 250 testing locations in the state. Click on www.mass.gov/covidtestmap to find a location. We also encourage all residents to utilize the state's existing Stop-the-Spread (STS) testing sites, which are operating through December and are located throughout the Commonwealth. For Stop-the-Spread locations, please visit: www.mass.gov/stopthespread.

Thank you and stay safe.

Warm Regards,



Julie A. Jacobson
Town Manager