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HomeStar Brokers



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Salem Neighborhood Comparison Guide





FINDING THE RIGHT SALEM NEIGHBORHOOD FOR YOUR NEXT HOME

If you're trying to decide where to buy in Salem, you're making one of the most important decisions in the home-buying process. The right neighborhood shapes your daily life—commute times, school quality, home values, and the lifestyle you'll live for years to come.

This guide compares Salem's most popular neighborhoods to help you narrow your search.



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South Salem

What You'll Find Here: Salem's most established premium neighborhood with mature trees, larger lots, and top-rated schools.

Price Range: \$450-850k+

Median Price: ~\$575k

School District: South Salem & Sprague High Schools (both highly rated)

Typical Home Style: Traditional single-family, ranch-style, some custom homes, new construction

Lot Sizes: 0.25-1+ acres common

Average Square Footage: 2,122 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 83 days

Why Buyers Choose South Salem:

- Excellent schools (consistently highest-rated in Salem)
- Established, mature neighborhoods
- Strong long-term value appreciation
- Quiet, family-friendly atmosphere
- Easy access to parks and trails

Trade-Offs:

- Higher price point
- Homes sell quickly in this area
- Limited inventory compared to demand

Best For: Families prioritizing schools, buyers seeking established neighborhoods, long-term value-focused buyers



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West Salem

What You'll Find Here: Growing area across the Willamette River with a mix of established and newer homes, highest average sale price in Salem

Price Range: \$400k - \$750k+

Median Price: ~\$575k

School District: West Salem High School

Typical Home Style: Mix of older ranches and newer construction

Lot Sizes: 0.15–0.5 acres typical

Average Square Footage: 2,086 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 87 days

Why Buyers Choose West Salem:

- Often more affordable than South Salem
- Easy Highway 22 access for commuters
- Growing commercial development (shopping, dining)
- Mix of home ages and styles
- Strong neighborhood identity
- Rolling hills offer lovely neighborhood views

Trade-Offs:

- Bridge access can create traffic during peak hours
- Some areas still developing
- Schools not as highly rated as South Salem

Best For: Buyers seeking newer construction options, families wanting affordability with good access to downtown, folks commuting west of the Willamette River



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Downtown Salem / Central Neighborhoods

What You'll Find Here: Historic cottages, tree-lined streets, and easy access to downtown, the Capitol, and the farmer's market.

Price Range: \$300k-\$550k

Median Price: ~\$363k

School District: North Salem High School

Typical Home Style: Classic bungalows and cottages (1920s-1950s), Craftsman-style, some Victorian

Lot Sizes: 0.10-0.25 acres (smaller urban lots)

Average Square Footage: 1,414 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 77 days

Why Buyers Choose Downtown/Central Salem:

- Walkability to downtown, restaurants, Capitol, Willamette River
- Mature trees, classic charm, and homes with character
- Strong sense of community and neighborhood identity
- More affordable than South Salem with unique appeal

Trade-Offs:

- Homes often need updating (original fixtures, older systems)
- Street parking can be limited in some blocks
- Schools not as highly rated as South Salem
- Some homes lack garages or have single-car only

Best For: Buyers who value walkability over space, those who appreciate character and charm, couples or small families, buyers willing to update older homes, people who want to be close to downtown without suburban commute



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North Salem

What You'll Find Here: Salem's most affordable area with a mix of older homes, established neighborhoods, and strong community feel.

Price Range: \$300k-\$500k

Median Price: ~\$475k

School District: McKay High School

Typical Home Style: Mix of homes & styles - 1950 to new construction

Lot Sizes: 0.15-0.3 acres typical

Average Square Footage: 1,400-1,600 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 77-82 days

Why Buyers Choose North Salem:

- Most affordable entry point into Salem
- Established neighborhoods with character
- Close to downtown Salem
- Good access to I-5 and state offices
- Strong community feel

Trade-Offs:

- Homes often need updating
- Smaller lots compared to South/West Salem
- Schools not as highly rated
- Entry-level finishes and materials

Best For: First-time buyers, buyers willing to update/renovate, those prioritizing location over condition, downsizers on a budget, commuters on I-5



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Keizer

What You'll Find Here: Separate city just north of Salem, family-oriented with good schools, newer development, great neighborhoods and a park on the Willamette River

Price Range: \$375k-\$650k

Median Price: ~\$479k

School District: Keizer schools (McNary High School)

Typical Home Style: Mix of 1970s-1990s homes & newer construction

Lot Sizes: 0.15-0.4 acres typical

Average Square Footage: 1,783 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 77 days

Why Buyers Choose Keizer:

- More house for the money compared to Salem
- Strong schools (McNary High School well-regarded)
- Family-friendly atmosphere
- Growing commercial development
- Easy I-5 access

Trade-Offs:

- Technically a different city (separate taxes, services)
- Less established feel than older Salem neighborhoods
- Commute to Salem adds 10-15 minutes

Best For: Families prioritizing schools and value, buyers wanting newer construction outside South and West Salem, those looking to be slightly outside Salem proper, commuters on I-5



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Hayesville/Jan Ree

What You'll Find Here: Northeast Salem area, suburban feel with a mix of home ages, Chemeketa Community College.

Price Range: \$375k-\$600k

Median Price: ~\$446k

School District: McKay High School

Typical Home Style: 1970s-2000s construction, suburban Rdevelopment

Lot Sizes: 0.15-0.35 acres typical

Average Square Footage: 1,566-1,648 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 74-82 days

Why Buyers Choose Hayesville & Jan Ree:

- Suburban feel while still being in Salem
- Good mix of home ages and styles
- More affordable than South Salem
- Strong neighborhood identity
- Easy access to shopping and services

Trade-Offs:

- Less established than South Salem
- Schools vary by specific location
- Farther from downtown Salem

Best For: Families seeking suburban lifestyle, buyers wanting newer homes without premium pricing, those prioritizing convenience, commuters on I-5



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South Gateway

What You'll Find Here: Salem's newest major development area in far south Salem, modern homes and growing infrastructure.

Price Range: \$500k-\$900k+

Median Price: ~\$649k

School District: South Salem schools

Typical Home Style: Mix of new construction (2010s–2020s) with modern floor plans, and “raised ranch” style homes

Lot Sizes: 0.15–0.3 acres (smaller lots, efficient use)

Average Square Footage: 1,942 sq ft

Average Days on Market: 95 days

Why Buyers Choose South Gateway:

- Newer homes, Costco, access to South Commercial Street
- Modern floor plans and finishes
- Growing commercial development nearby
- South Salem schools without premium pricing
- New infrastructure and amenities

Trade-Offs:

- Higher HOA fees in some developments
- Less mature landscaping and trees
- Farther from downtown and services (improving)

Best For: Buyers wanting new construction, families prioritizing modern homes and South Salem schools, those who don't mind newer developing areas, I-5 commuters



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Quick Comparison Chart

Neighborhood	Median Price	Best For	Key Advantage
South Salem	\$574,172	Families, long-term value	Top schools, established
West Salem	\$516,788	Commuters, variety seekers	Portland access, options
Downtown Salem	\$362,004	Walkability lovers, character seekers	Downtown access, charm
North Salem	\$425,000	First-time buyers, budget	Most affordable, walkable
Keizer	\$478,817	Families, value buyers	Schools, value
Hayesville	\$444,721	Suburban lifestyle	Balance of value and quality
South Gateway	\$650,000	New construction lovers	Modern homes, South Salem schools

Market data sourced from Willamette Valley MLS, December 2025. All statistics represent year-to-date 2025 averages unless otherwise noted.



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What to Consider When Choosing Your Neighborhood

Commute:

- How much drive time are you willing to accept daily?
- Does your job require occasional Portland trips or coast access?
- Would you rather have a 10-minute commute or better schools 20 minutes away?
- Work from home considerations?

Schools:

- How many years until your youngest graduates?
- Top priority vs. good-enough if it means more house?
- Private school option available?
- Will you move before high school?

Home Age:

- Do you have budget, time, and patience for renovations?
- Are you handy or need contractors?
- Pay more now vs. invest over time?
- Character features vs. contemporary?

Resale Value:

- 5-year home or 15-year home?
- Need equity growth for next purchase?
- Long-term stability vs. maximum appreciation?
- Established premium vs. emerging neighborhood bet?.





What to Consider When Choosing Your Neighborhood

Lifestyle:

- Quiet mature streets vs. modern conveniences?
- Walkability important or drive everywhere?
- Neighborhood with kids playing vs. privacy?
- Close to downtown culture vs. suburban family areas?

Budget:

- What monthly payment long-term?
- Stretch budget vs. stay conservative with room for updates?
- Willing to sacrifice schools/square footage for price?
- Starter home and move up, or forever home now?

Market Speed:

- Where is buyer competition strongest?
- Where might you have more negotiating leverage?
- Best timing for selling and buying transactions?



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Next Steps:

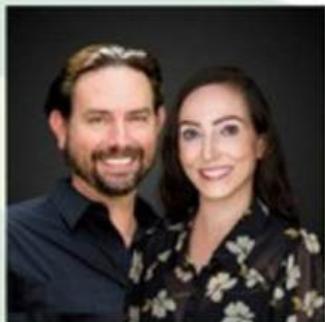
Finding Your Right Fit

Every buyer's priorities are different. Some want top schools no matter the cost. Others want the most house for the money. Some prioritize commute times or specific home features.

The right neighborhood for you depends on your specific situation—budget, timeline, must-haves, and trade-offs you're willing to make.

Want help narrowing your search?

We can walk through current inventory in the neighborhoods that match your priorities and show you what's realistically available in your price range.



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