

# East Bridgewater, MA Town Administrator

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## Community & Position Profile



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# The Community

East Bridgewater is a welcoming community of approximately 14,000 residents, situated in Southeastern Massachusetts approximately 25 miles south of Boston and 35 miles north of Providence, R.I. Residents enjoy East Bridgewater's small-town character as well as its highly respected school system, wealth of public services, and abundant recreational opportunities including hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and boating.

The Town of [East Bridgewater](#) was an early industrial inland town located on the northern portion of the Taunton River system. Its early economy was based on agriculture, but the community did have both grist and saw mills, iron forges, and tanneries. The Keith brothers iron slitting mill is known as one of the earliest reported in southeastern Massachusetts. The first triphammer to make scythes, axes, and other edged tools was established in Town in 1740, and cannons and muskets for the revolution were made in East Bridgewater.

The late 19th and early 20th century saw residential development along the trolley lines in the community. The Bridgewater Branch Railroad from Whitman through East Bridgewater stimulated further industrial growth, and the Town was the site of boot and shoe manufacturing and textile mills.

The real population expansion occurred in the post-war era of suburban development when the Town grew from just under 5,000 to its current population of about 14,000. Projections by the Old Colony Planning Commission show little population increase over the next thirty years.

The Town, which is located in Plymouth County, contains 17.5 square miles of area and is bordered by Whitman to the north, Hanson to the east, Halifax to the southeast, Bridgewater to the south, West Bridgewater to the west, and Brockton to the northwest.

The principal highways serving the Town are State Routes 18 and 106. The Town is also in close proximity to State Routes 24, 3, 495 and Interstate 95. East Bridgewater has easy access to nearby commuting rail stations in five of its adjacent communities.

East Bridgewater has businesses of various sizes in Town, with its largest non-governmental employers being Compass Medical, Sachem Skilled Nursing Home and Ridder Country Club. As with most primarily residential communities, the majority of residents in the workforce commute outside of East Bridgewater for employment.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Town of East Bridgewater's racial makeup is approximately 90.7% white, 3.6% Black or African American, 2.2% two or more races, 2.0% Asian, and 1.6% Hispanic or Latino.

East Bridgewater has a population that is similar to the average Massachusetts community, with the main difference in the number of young residents. The population under-18 years of age in East Bridgewater is 25% of the population compared to 20% for the state, which illustrates that young families are a statistically significant part of the community. In the 65 years and older cohort, East Bridgewater has 15.3% of its population which is similar to the state's 16.2%, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The median age in East Bridgewater is 39.8 years compared to the state's 39.1 years. The median annual household income in East Bridgewater is \$86,568, which is nearly 17% higher than the state median of \$74,167. While East Bridgewater is considered to be a generally middle-income community, approximately 6.6% of the population live in poverty, according to 2017 U.S. Census Bureau estimates.



# The Government

East Bridgewater's government is comprised of a three-member [Board of Selectmen](#) that serves as the Chief Elected and Executive Officers of the Town. Selectmen are elected to staggered three-year terms and are vested with all the municipal authority not specifically retained by the Town's legislative body, Town Meeting, or other elected boards.

East Bridgewater has an Open Town Meeting form of government that serves as the legislative body of the Town. According to the Town's [By-laws](#), Annual Town Meeting is held on the second Monday of May each year. A quorum of 150 voters is the minimum required for any appropriation exceeding \$100,000.

The [East Bridgewater Public School District](#), which is managed by a six-member elected School Committee and an appointed School Superintendent, consists of three facilities, the Central Elementary School, the Gordon W. Mitchell School, and the Junior/Senior High School. As of October 1, 2018, the total enrollment was 2,252 students. Overall, student enrollment has been relatively constant over the last number of years.



The Town is also a member of the [Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School District](#), which had a total enrollment, as of October 1, 2018, of 1,509 students, of which 79 were from the Town. The Town has one elected representative on the district School Committee.

Other elected positions include: Library Board of Trustees, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, Housing Authority, Moderator, Planning Board, and Town Clerk. The Town also utilizes a number of volunteer boards and commissions, with various modes of appointment, to conduct municipal operations. The Town's [2017 Annual Report](#) can be accessed via its website.

The East Bridgewater [Board of Selectmen](#) appoints the position of Town Administrator as the Chief Administrative and Procurement Officer of the Town. The Town Administrator is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for administering the operations and activities of the Town.

The Town Administrator acts on behalf of the Board of Selectmen to administer the Board's role in day-to-day operations. The Town Administrator's authority is derived from Chapter 41, [Section 23A](#) of the Massachusetts General Laws, which provides the authority for the Board to delegate responsibilities to a Town Administrator. The Town Administrator is the Chief Administrative and Procurement Officer of the Town and is the primary officer responsible for the implementation of the Board of Selectmen's policies and Town By-Laws. East Bridgewater's [Town By-Laws](#) can be reviewed on its website.

The Town Administrator sets the strategy of the Town in accordance with Board of Selectmen directives, sets overall operating goals for the Town, and oversees the efficient and effective administration of Town government to achieve those goals. The Town Administrator is responsible for ensuring the continued economic, social, and financial viability of the Town, and also for ensuring the delivery of quality services to the residents and taxpayers of East Bridgewater. Included in the responsibilities handled by the Town Administrator are: preparing the annual operating and capital budgets, an

ongoing capital improvements program, personnel management, negotiating collective bargaining contracts, Town Meeting preparation, grant writing, economic and community development, communications with staff and citizens, and general problems and administrative actions.

East Bridgewater is fortunate to have experienced and talented department heads who will assist the next Town Administrator in accomplishing strategic goals and objectives.

## Finances

East Bridgewater's FY19 budget is approximately \$47.01 million, with about \$16.04 million dedicated to the public school system. The FY19 Water enterprise budget is \$2.7 million and the FY19 solid waste enterprise budget is about \$943,000. Property taxes account for the major source of revenue for the Town with approximately \$36.4 million, or nearly 61% of the total budget. The Town has two stabilization funds. Its general stabilization fund has a balance of \$2.31 million and a capital stabilization fund with a balance of \$4.07 million. East Bridgewater has been paying post-employment benefits on a pay-as-you-go basis. Its total OPEB liability, as of June 30, 2017, is approximately \$65.4 million. Basic [financial statements](#) for recent fiscal years can be reviewed on the Town's website.



East Bridgewater has a rating of Aa3, according to a February 2019 ratings action by Moody's. The rating reflects the Town's strong financial position and moderately sized tax base with above average wealth and income profile. It also takes into account the Town's elevated debt burden and pension liability.

East Bridgewater is primarily a residential community, with approximately 89% of the Town's assessed value attributable to residential uses, about 6% associated with commercial, 2.9% with industrial, and 2.1% with personal property. The FY19 tax rate was set at a single rate of \$17.56 per \$1,000 valuation. In FY19, the Town's total valuation is about \$1.7 billion.

# Challenges and Opportunities

- **Capital Needs.** East Bridgewater strives to address its infrastructure issues in a timely manner; however, there are some infrastructure needs. A boiler replacement project for the Central Elementary School is scheduled to occur this summer at a cost of approximately \$1.54 million, with about 56.26% funded by the MSBA and a potential \$17.8 million public library expansion is under consideration with funding possibly to be voted on at the Fall 2019 Special Town Meeting. A detailed five-year capital plan needs to be developed.
- **Economic Development.** The tax base is mainly residential. Accordingly, additional revenues needed to fund costs can make the Town less affordable for residents unless other revenue opportunities are explored. A new sewer district was recently created along Route 18 from the high school to the center of Town, providing opportunities for development. The Old Colony Planning Council finalized an [East Bridgewater Center Market Analysis](#) in October 2016 that identifies strategies to enhance the Center business district. Municipal water is supplied throughout Town. East Bridgewater is interested in attracting commercial development that will fit with the Town's character.
- **Housing.** East Bridgewater homes have a median value of \$321,600, according to U.S. Census data. The Town, considered a bedroom community, has attracted a significant number of young families in recent years. There is also a sizeable older population, which illustrates the need for mixed housing styles. Approximately 84% of housing units are owner occupied.
- **Education.** The highly respected [public school district](#) includes the Central Elementary School, the Gordon W. Mitchell School, and the East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School, which was built in 2015. The total FY19 school budget is approximately \$28.8 million and there are 2,252 students enrolled. High school students are also eligible to attend the [Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School](#). Approximately 96% of East Bridgewater residents age 25+ have a high school diploma and about 29% have a bachelor's degree or higher, according to U.S. Census statistics. The School Department has one of the lowest per pupil expenditures in Massachusetts.
- **Department of Public Works.** The [DPW](#) is responsible for water quality and distribution; solid waste management; recycling; facilities; maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and storm drains; parks and athletic fields; and snow and ice operations. Currently, the department has 22 full-time employees.
- **Fire Department/EMS.** The [Fire Department](#) currently has 24 full-time firefighter/paramedic positions, including the chief and deputy chief, and approximately four part-time on-call positions. The Fire Department operates out of a single station on Bedford Street. The department also provides EMS services with the majority of firefighters certified as paramedics.
- **Police Department.** The [Police Department](#) has 23 full-time sworn officers and six civilian dispatchers, and is located next to Town Hall. The department is working toward receiving certification from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. The department manages a county wide grant of \$1.5 million related to preventing opioid abuse. [EB HOPE](#) is active in Town striving to provide substance use information, resources, support, and hope. The Police and Fire Departments are working on a plan for combined dispatch.
- **Public Library.** The [East Bridgewater Public Library](#) is popular with residents who enjoy its various collections as well as abundant programming for all ages and numerous events throughout the year. A 25,000-square-foot expansion project is currently under consideration with funding approval scheduled to be voted on at a Fall 2019 Special Town Meeting.
- **Recreation.** The Town has an active Recreation Department that provides the opportunity for leisure and athletic activities for children and adults. There are also trails and woodlands for hiking and biking as well as Robbins Pond for fishing, kayaking and canoeing. The [Beaver Brook Beagle Club](#) is 139 acres of conservation property owned by the East Bridgewater. There are no public trails, but the land is open to the public. The Matfield River enters the Town through Bridgewater, branching off to the Satucket River and Poor Meadow Brook, providing opportunities for wildlife sighting and bird watching. East Bridgewater's popular Community Center, which has a function room available for rent, is also home to the Council on Aging.

East Bridgewater holds numerous community events that contribute to the Town's charm, including Concerts on the Common, Christmas on the Common, a [Christmas Parade](#), a Business Expo on the Common with activities for children, pancake breakfasts, and various other family-focused events that are popular with residents.
- **Communications.** Strong communication skills, both verbal and written, are necessary in order for the Town Administrator to effectively engage and manage relationships with various constituencies. He or she should embrace technology and modern communication tools, including the use of community access media.



Photo: John Phelan

## The Ideal Candidate

The Board of Selectmen seeks a strategic and proactive Town Administrator with municipal managerial experience who is skilled at team building and can work collaboratively with the Board, staff, and volunteers. The successful candidate should be able to demonstrate prior success as a manager, an assistant manager, or head of a significant department in a complex municipal organization. The candidate should be competent in all areas of municipal management and operations, but especially in finance and budgeting, community and economic development, procurement, human resources, and strategic planning. He or she should be a strong communicator who is committed to transparency and citizen engagement.

The Town Administrator must be a decisive administrator and leader who can work collaboratively with the various interests of the Town, including the School Department. He or she is expected to work cooperatively with all constituencies within the Town, including elected and appointed officials and volunteers. The Town Administrator should be Procurement certified by the state or able to attain certification within the first six months of employment in East Bridgewater.

There is currently no town planner and the next Town Administrator should be comfortable assuming some of the duties for which a planner is typically responsible. He or she should be technologically savvy and use technology to create more efficient and effective processes.

The Town Administrator must be able to work collaboratively, delegate effectively, and provide guidance, support and motivation to all municipal employees. The Town Administrator must possess good listening skills and be open to input from all constituencies. He or she should have experience in grant-writing. Strong written and verbal communication skills are important for this position.

The Town Administrator must also possess and demonstrate successful experience in personnel management and adhere to a firm but fair management style. He or she must be able to develop and sustain strong and credible relations with employees, volunteers, and residents. The Town Administrator must be a creative problem-solver who is approachable, accessible, transparent, trustworthy, and a consensus-builder. He or she must lead by example, and be strategic, motivated, innovative, organized, and goal-oriented. He or she should help to develop a shared vision for East Bridgewater.

The next Town Administrator should be a municipal management professional who follows municipal trends, interacts with colleagues throughout the region and in professional organizations, and implements municipal management best practices. He or she should be a change agent, but not a disruptor.

The Town Administrator should be able to build morale and trust within municipal government and throughout the Town as well as be an energetic ambassador for the community. The Administrator should enjoy working in a team-oriented organization and should foster a team approach to problem solving. He or she should be adept at working with different personality types, exhibit patience, and keep an open-door policy. He or she should focus on the positive, be respectful, and embrace becoming actively engaged with the community, including attending local events.



Preferred candidates should possess a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred) in a field related to public administration. Preferred candidates will have experience as a Town/City Manager/Administrator, or Assistant Town/City Manager/Administrator, or education and experience that is equivalent. The successful candidate must possess demonstrated skills, abilities and knowledge in municipal finance, economic development and community planning, municipal procurement, personnel administration, strategic planning, grant writing, and intergovernmental relations.



## Compensation

The Town of East Bridgewater will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable Massachusetts' communities, with an annual salary of \$145,000+/-, depending on qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Administrator's total compensation. Residency is not required.

## How To Apply

Interested applicants should provide résumés and cover letters, in confidence, by 5:00 p.m. on June 24, 2019, to:

[Apply@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Apply@communityparadigm.com)

**Subject: East Bridgewater Town Administrator**

**Submission via a single PDF is preferred**

Following the closing date, résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. The East Bridgewater Town Administrator Screening Committee will interview the most qualified candidates in confidence. Based upon these interviews, finalists will be chosen for further evaluation and reference checks, and will then be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before their selection is publicly advanced to the Board of Selectmen. The East Bridgewater Board of Selectmen will interview finalists and select the Town Administrator.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to Bernard Lynch, Principal, Community Paradigm Associates, at: [blynch@communityparadigm.com](mailto:blynch@communityparadigm.com) or 978-621-6733 or to John Petrin, Senior Associate, Community Paradigm Associates, at: [jpetrin@communityparadigm.com](mailto:jpetrin@communityparadigm.com) or 781-552-1074.

The Town of East Bridgewater is an Equal Opportunity Employer.