

Uxbridge, MA Town Manager

Community & Position Profile



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The Community

The Town of Uxbridge, Massachusetts, is an attractive community of approximately 13,000 residents located about 40 miles southwest of Boston. Uxbridge residents share a proud history, a good quality of life, and a community that boasts of profound natural beauty. Uxbridge is seeking an experienced, strategic, and professional municipal manager interested in a tenure of at least 5-8 years to serve as its next Town Manager.

The Town is well placed for future growth given the completion of the Route 146 highway connections with Providence, Worcester, and the Massachusetts Turnpike as well as Uxbridge's proximity to a nationally important dense fiber data connection corridor.

Uxbridge's natural resources include a high-yield aquifer of regional significance. It is home to more than a dozen working farms, a growing advanced manufacturing cluster, and an expanding base of high-tech firms. The Town considers progressive economic growth that maintains its rural character, a safe environment, and a good quality of life to be a high priority.

History: [Uxbridge](#) was first settled in 1662 and is named for the Earl of Uxbridge. It separated from its parent town, Mendon, in 1727. The Town was a prominent textile center in the American Industrial Revolution, with its industrial growth driven by its abundant water power. Military uniforms were manufactured in Uxbridge for more than 100 years. The first U.S. Air Force dress uniform, called "Uxbridge Blue" was manufactured in Town. Uxbridge was once the overnight stop for mill goods shipped first by river, and then by rail, from Worcester to the seaports of Providence. Uxbridge played early roles in women's suffrage. The Town was home to the nation's first legal woman voter, Lydia Chapin Taft (who cast her vote at a colonial-era Town Meeting) and to Debra Sampson, the nation's first female soldier (who disguised herself as a man to serve in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War). Additionally, in 1922, the Town's Board of Selectmen defied the Massachusetts's Secretary of State by appointing the first women jurors in Massachusetts.



Geography: Uxbridge is 30.4 square miles in size, of which 0.8 square miles is water. There are approximately 124 road miles in Town.

Uxbridge is located in Worcester County at the midpoint of the [Blackstone Valley National Historic Park](#). It is situated approximately 39 miles southwest of Boston, 16 miles southeast of Worcester, and 20 miles northwest of Providence, R.I. It borders Douglas, Mendon, Millville, Northbridge, and Sutton in Massachusetts as well as Burrillville and North Smithfield in Rhode Island.

Uxbridge consists of residential properties as well as a variety of commercial, business and retail districts. The Town is known for its beautiful areas of open space.

Assessed Values: Uxbridge's total assessed value was approximately \$1.73 billion in FY19. Residential properties account for about \$1.44 billion of the Town's total assessed value, while commercial properties account for \$87.7 million, industrial properties for \$99.5 million and personal property for \$104.5 million, according to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services. The average residential single-family property assessment in Uxbridge for FY19 was \$314,110 and the average single-family tax bill was \$5,450. The FY19 property tax rate was \$17.35 per \$1,000 valuation for all properties.

Business: A number of nationally and internationally prominent advanced manufacturing firms make their home in Uxbridge including Lampin Corporation, Lenze Americas, and Precision Engineering. There is an advanced manufacturing sector in the southern end of Town that includes approximately 10 businesses. Hannaford and BJ's Wholesale Distribution also have facilities in Uxbridge. The first three exits off Route 146, coming out of Rhode Island, are in Uxbridge and provide prime retail and corporate locations.

Census Data: According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2018, the Town of Uxbridge's racial makeup is approximately 93.8% white, 2.4% Black or African American, 2.1% Asian, 1.5% Hispanic or Latino, and 0.9% two or more races. The median household annual income is \$94,656, which is higher than the state median household annual income of \$74,167. Approximately 8.3% of Uxbridge households have incomes below the poverty level compared to about 10% statewide, according to U.S. Census data.

The Town is demographically similar to the state regarding resident age cohorts with differences in, for example, the under-18 years cohort with Uxbridge at 22.7% in 2018 U.S. Census Bureau estimates versus 20.0% for the state. In the under-5 years cohort, Uxbridge has 5.0% of its population which is only slightly lower than the state's 5.3%. Uxbridge has a lower percentage than the state in its senior population with the 65 years and over cohort in Uxbridge at 12.4% of its population compared to the state's 16.2%. However, the median age of residents in Uxbridge is 40.4 years, which is just slightly older than the state's 39.4 years.



Government and Finance

Board of Selectmen: The Town of Uxbridge is governed by the [Board of Selectmen](#), which is made up of five members who are elected for three-year overlapping terms. The Town adopted a Home Rule [Charter](#), which provides for the Board of Selectmen, Open Town Meeting, and Town Manager form of government. The Board of Selectmen is responsible for issuing strategic policy directives as well as making appointments to Town offices, boards, and committees. A list of appointments made by the Board is listed in the Charter. The [Town of Uxbridge Charter](#) and the [General Bylaws](#) can be viewed online.

Committees: An elected seven-member [School Committee](#) oversees the long-range policies of the Town's public school system. Other elected positions in Town include the Board of Health, Town Moderator, Housing Authority, Board of Library Trustees, Edward B. Thayer Fund Trustees, a Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational School District Committee representative, and three members of the Finance Committee. In addition, the Town utilizes many other appointed boards and commissions to conduct municipal operations. The [2017 Uxbridge Annual Town Report](#) is available online.

Town Manager: The Board of Selectmen appoints the position of Town Manager to serve as chief administrative officer of the Town. The Town Manager is responsible for executing the policy directives of the Board of Selectmen and for managing the operations and activities of the Town. Details regarding the qualifications and powers and duties of the Town Manager can be found in Article 4, Section 2 of the [Town Charter](#). The Town Manager is responsible for numerous appointments, including but not limited to: Town Accountant, Town Treasurer/Collector, Town Clerk, Assessor, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals.



The Town Manager is specifically responsible for providing support to the Board of Selectmen; supervising all departments under his/her jurisdiction; financial management and budgeting, with input from the Finance Committee; revenue generation, including grant procurement and administration; economic development planning; the capital plan, with input from the Capital Committee; handling personnel and benefits administration, hiring and firing of personnel, employee performance reviews, and collective bargaining; public relations; purchasing of supplies, materials, and equipment; coordination of inter- and intra-governmental affairs; attending Board of Selectmen meetings; and coordinating the activities of all town agencies serving under the office of the Town Manager and the office of the Board of Selectmen.

Financial Snapshot: The Town received a Standard and Poor's rating of AA+ and a Moody's rating of Aa3, according to December 2017 rating information. Currently, the Town's rating is on hold awaiting the results of an ongoing audit. Free cash has been certified and reconciled. The Town is in the process of clearing up backlogs in financial record reconciliation and operational deficiencies. The Town's goal is to manage its finances in a manner that will serve to maintain or improve the 2017 ratings. A new Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer were hired in early July 2019.

Uxbridge's FY20 budget is approximately \$44.3 million, including general government, public safety, public works, community and economic development, human services, and culture and recreation. It also includes the Uxbridge Public Schools FY20 budget, which is approximately \$24.8 million. The FY20 sewer enterprise is \$3.83 million, water enterprise is \$2.42 million, and the cable access enterprise is \$180,752. Local property taxes generate 56.70% of revenue, while state aid is 23.03%, local receipts bring in 15.63%, and other available revenue brings in 4.64%.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services, Uxbridge had a FY18 stabilization fund balance of \$3,350,321. The stabilization balance is currently 7.7% of the operating budget. The Town's FY19 free cash balance was \$831,751. Currently, the Town has approximately \$2.5 million in reserves. As of FY19, Uxbridge has excess levy capacity of \$204,379 and its new growth for FY19 was \$532,960. The Town's [Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan](#) for FY2015-2019 can be viewed on its website. Developing an updated Capital Improvement Plan should be a priority for the next Town Manager. The Town's [Financial Management Policy and Objectives](#) also can be reviewed on its website.

Uxbridge is seeking a Town Manager with strong finance and budgeting skills who will grow revenue sources, including state, federal, and grant aid resources; achieve an equitable and sustainable balance between commercial, industrial, and residential tax support, and efficiently deliver services with innovation and sound financial practices.



Challenges and Opportunities

- **Economic Development**

Uxbridge's downtown has charming buildings and excellent walkability, which make it ripe for an influx of additional restaurants and shops. The legalization of marijuana in Massachusetts has created the potential for considerable economic development in Uxbridge. The Town has 12 permits in the pipeline, including four for retail establishments and eight for grow facilities. One retail establishment has already received the necessary permits and is open for business, and two grow facilities are under construction. Another area of strong growth is Uxbridge's nine solar field developments. There is also a one million-square-foot manufacturing business that is currently considering locating in Town. Water and sewer services are available for new businesses in the downtown and commercial sectors, and there is an educated and skilled workforce in the region.

Traditionally, construction and development have been strong economic drivers. The Town has been facing some fiscal challenges as residential growth outpaced business growth, but the recent applications for marijuana facilities and other new businesses should assist in easing those challenges. Traditional mill zoning placed industrial development close to rivers for power generation and waste disposal purposes. Many of the Town's citizens are active in promoting the need to protect this economically important resource as the Uxbridge moves from a mill past to a technology-driven future.

Uxbridge is interested in thoughtful economic development, including commercial and mixed-use proposals, that will align with the community's character while increasing the vibrancy of the Town.

- **Citizen Engagement and Communication**

The Town embraces civic engagement and appreciates the high levels of participation and discourse residents provide. The next Town Manager must be a skilled communicator with a strong belief in transparency. He or she should have a visible presence in the community, attending events and seeking out opportunities to increase engagement with residents. Citizens serve on a significant number of elected and appointed boards and committees as well as in other volunteer capacities. Maintaining a strong and collaborative relationship between residents, employees, and volunteers is vital to the success of the community. Ideas, training, and recommendations regarding improved methods of communicating with and engaging citizens, including new technologies and use of social media, would be welcome.

- **Capital Needs**

Like most communities, Uxbridge has capital needs that should be addressed. Roads and bridges require ongoing repairs, facilities need to be maintained, the Council on Aging building is too small for its current usage, and Town Hall is in need of renovations. The Town is also considering how to best use the former McCloskey Middle School, which was closed in 2018. The [Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan](#) for FY2015-2019 can be viewed on the Town's website. An updated Capital Improvement Plan needs to be developed by the next Town Manager, with input from the Capital Committee.

- **Green Community**

Uxbridge is a Massachusetts-designated Green Community. It received the designation by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources in 2018. The Town has received approximately \$318,000 in Green Communities grants, which have been earmarked for such projects as funding energy conservation measures, lighting, energy studies, and grant administration in the public schools, public library, Town Hall, Senior Center, and DPW well fields.



- **Education**

Uxbridge residents place a high value on education. [Uxbridge Public Schools](#) operates the [Taft Early Learning Center](#), [Whitin Intermediate School](#), and [Uxbridge High School](#). The high school was built in 2012 and the three schools currently serve 1,765 students. In recent years, the schools obtained CNC manufacturing equipment and integrated technology training and advanced manufacturing into the high school curriculum. The [school budget](#) for FY20 is approximately [\\$24.8 million](#). Students in grades 9-12 also have the opportunity to attend the [Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School](#) in Upton or [Norfolk County Agricultural High School](#) in Walpole. Illustrative of the Town's strong support of education is the fact that 94.5% of Uxbridge's residents age 25 years and older have a high school diploma and 35.1% of the population ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher.



- **Transportation**

Uxbridge has the geographic gift of being a “counter-commute” locale for three major metropolitan areas. It is 35 minutes south of Worcester, 25 minutes north of Providence, and about an hour and 15 minutes southeast of Boston. Route 146, a four-lane divided highway called Boston’s “third beltway” has major connections to I-95, I-290, I-295, and I-90. Route 16 connects to Connecticut via I-395, and Boston by I-495. WRTA bus services reach to the neighboring communities of Douglas and Northbridge. Commuter rail stations are only 20-30 minutes away in Grafton, Franklin, and Providence. Approximately, 2,000 people travel daily to Uxbridge to work.

- **Open Space and Recreation**

Uxbridge’s traditions as a farming and mill community have expanded into a growing and popular recreation area. Boating, kayaking, and fishing have been enhanced by two significant rail trail hiking and biking venues. The 22-mile [Southern New England Trunkline Trail](#) links communities from the Connecticut border to Franklin. In recent years, new sections of the 48-mile [Blackstone River Bikeway](#), which runs from Providence to Worcester, opened. The [Blackstone Canal Towpath](#) is a treasured hiking and walking resource under the care of the National Park Service. Blissful Meadows Golf Club, a popular 18-hole course, is located in Uxbridge.

Uxbridge has an abundance of open space, including woods and forests, rivers, wetlands, fields, and ponds. Conservation of open space and natural resources is a priority for residents, both for recreational use and for environmental preservation purposes. The Town has playing fields and recreational land for youth and adult sports. Uxbridge’s Recreation Department offers a wide variety of youth programs.



- **Housing**

Approximately 80.1% of the housing units in Uxbridge are owner occupied with a median value of \$280,800, according to U.S. Census data. Uxbridge provides a variety of housing options for residents, including single-family homes, condominiums, rental units, senior housing, and affordable housing, although housing is primarily made up of single-family homes. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission has been asked to conduct a study on affordable housing in Uxbridge.

- **Public Safety**

The Uxbridge [Police Department](#) has 23 full-time employees, including a Chief, a lieutenant, three sergeants, 13 full-time police officers, two intermittent police officers, an administrative assistant to the Chief, two animal control officers, four full-time dispatchers, six intermittent dispatchers, and a custodian. The department receives 15,000-20,000 calls for service annually. On average, 10% are alarms and 20% are medical responses. Typically, the department charges almost 500 people each year with criminal offenses. Its FY20 budget is approximately \$2.2 million. The Uxbridge [Fire Department](#) has approximately 14 career personnel and approximately 25 on-call firefighters. It has two stations, with one station currently unmanned. The Fire Department moved into its new modern headquarters about 18 months ago. The department has a FY20 budget of about \$1.5 million and also operates Ambulance Services/EMS. The police and fire departments share a combined dispatch.

- **Department of Public Works**

The Uxbridge [Department of Public Works](#) has 26 full-time positions plus five seasonal part-time positions. The department oversees the Highway & Parks, Water, and Wastewater Divisions. The DPW's FY20 budget is approximately \$1.68 million.



Photo: Kenneth C. Zirkel



Ideal Candidate Qualifications

Competencies: The Uxbridge Board of Selectmen seeks an innovative and strategic Town Manager with strong finance and communication skills, municipal management experience, and who is highly proficient in citizen and community engagement.

The successful candidate:

- should be able to demonstrate prior success in leading a complex municipal and/or business organization or department.
- must be competent in all areas of senior-level management and operations, but especially in finance and budgeting, financial forecasting, human resources, and economic and community development.
- should be a strong and effective communicator both internally and externally and be comfortable using technology and newer methods for communicating, such as social media.
- must be able to lead an organization to a consensus on direction, Town Meeting initiatives, and long-term strategies.
- should be highly visible in the community, enjoy attending local events, and seek to become actively engaged with the community.
- must be a proactive and visionary leader who can work effectively with various interests of the Town.
- is expected to work cooperatively and collaboratively with staff, citizens, volunteers, and the business community. He or she should make excellence in customer service a priority.
- must have a record of earning the respect and confidence of employees, department heads, committees, and Board of Selectmen.
- should be highly approachable, accessible, and relatable.
- should be knowledgeable of and willing to implement municipal management best practices.
- must be inclusive, collaborative, ethical, and committed to transparency in government.
- must be able to delegate effectively, mentor department heads, and provide support and motivation to ensure continued high performance and professional growth for Uxbridge employees.
- should be highly motivated, enthusiastic and strive to build morale.
- should be firm, but fair; must provide mature leadership and sound judgment.
- must be dedicated, organized, patient, have a strong work ethic, and inspire trust and confidence.
- must have the ability to effectively explain complex issues to officials, staff, and citizens.
- must be a strategic thinker, particularly in regard to budgeting, financial and capital planning, economic and community development, and management practices.
- should be skilled in team building, and in developing and maintaining relationships.
- should be a creative problem-solver and active listener who is open to new ideas and is considered a consensus-builder.
- must lead by example, have conflict resolution skills, inspire respect, and be respectful.
- must be a community unifier who manages projects in a participatory manner.

Education and Experience:

- The ideal candidate should hold a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred) in Public or Business Administration or a related field and have relevant municipal management experience.
- Massachusetts experience is preferred, but not required.



Compensation Package

The Town of Uxbridge will offer an employment agreement and compensation package that is competitive with comparable area communities, with an annual salary of up to \$155,000, commensurate with qualifications. An attractive benefits package, including health and retirement plans, is part of the Town Manager's total compensation.

How To Apply

Interested applicants should submit cover letters and résumés, in confidence, by August 21, 2019, 5:00 p.m., via email to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

Subject: Uxbridge Town Manager Search

Please submit a single PDF containing both cover letter and résumé.

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

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal
Community Paradigm Associates
Blynch@communityparadigm.com
978-621-6733

The Town of Uxbridge, Mass., is an EEO/AA employer.



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