



Town Manager

Reading, MA (26,000 pop.), is a well-managed community that values and preserves its history and open spaces while actively supporting smart growth and a vibrant downtown. The Town has a traditional New England center surrounded by family-oriented neighborhoods and endeavors to be a welcoming community. Located in Middlesex County, Reading is only 12 miles north of the center of Boston. The Town lies close to the intersection of Interstate 93 and Interstate 95, allowing easy access to Boston. Principally a residential community, Reading has a significant but modest level of commercial businesses, many of which are located near the highways. The MBTA has a station in Reading which links the Town to Boston's North Station and has two bus lines which connect to the Orange Line. Reading is known for its award-winning schools and outstanding Town services. It has a safe, small-town feel and offers residents many recreational and cultural opportunities, both within the community and as part of the greater Boston region.



Reading has an AAA rating and an FY24 budget of approximately \$119 million (including public education) with a strong free cash position. Reading's current goals and challenges include various sustainability projects, redevelopment of the Killam Elementary School with support of the MSBA and possibly IRA grant funding, consideration of a new or improved senior center or community center, downtown economic development, attracting and retaining employees, and financial sustainability. Additionally, Reading will be pursuing acceptance into the state's Community Preservation Act program.

To serve as its next Town Manager, Reading is seeking an experienced, highly competent, and innovative municipal manager with strong communication skills and financial acumen with a commitment to assisting the community complete major goals such as the school and senior center and who will work with the Town-owned power company on the state-mandated transition to green energy in buildings and vehicles. The current Town Manager is the third to hold this position over the past 37 years. The next Town Manager should be an approachable, communicative, and collaborative team builder. Candidates should have exceptional management skills, including budget and financial management, personnel management, and experience in successfully seeking grant opportunities. Reading is fortunate to have talented department heads who will work collaboratively to accomplish goals and to whom the Manager should be a motivator and mentor. The Town Manager needs to recognize and be empathetic to citizens' concerns and be supportive of the community's active volunteers. The next Town Manager should be a unifier, who can navigate differences of opinion and help bridge divides. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration or a related field and shall have a minimum of five years of full-time paid experience as a City or Town Manager or Assistant City or Town Manager or the equivalent level public or private sector experience. Preferred candidates will have a proven record of leadership, and consistently treat others fairly and equitably. The next Town Manager should be innovative, have a strong work ethic, be well-versed in municipal best practices, and willing to be highly engaged in the community.

Annual salary: \$215K+/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Town of Reading is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Government

Reading has a Select Board-Town Manager form of government with Representative Town Meeting. The Town has eight precincts and elects 24 Town Meeting members per precinct. The [Select Board](#) are the Chief Elected Officers of the Town government and set policy and provide strategic direction in the best interest of the Town as a whole. The Board's responsibilities include adopting policies, reviewing fiscal guidelines for the annual operating budget and capital improvements program, calling Town Elections, and preparing the Warrants for Town Meetings. The Select Board appoints the Town Manager, who is responsible for the daily management of the Town, as well as the Town Accountant and Town Counsel. Residents appreciate a Town government that is communicative and transparent.

The Town has a number of elected boards, committees, and positions including: Select Board, School Committee, Board of Library Trustees, Municipal Light Board of Commissioners, and Town Moderator.

Reading has a strong sense of community and a long tradition of civic engagement and volunteerism. The Town prides itself on having many active, appointed committees that report to the Select Board or to Town Meeting. The next Town Manager must be skilled at collaboratively engaging with Reading's various elected and appointed positions, boards, committees, and residents who work together to enhance and serve the community.

Finances

Reading has benefited from skilled financial management and is in a strong fiscal condition. The Town has an [FY24 operating budget](#) of approximately \$119 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AAA. For FY24, free cash was recently certified at \$19.5 million, equaling 16.9% of the budget. New growth in FY23 was \$0.95 million. The FY24 tax rate is \$11.73 per thousand-dollar valuation for residential properties and \$12.93 for commercial and industrial properties. The total assessed value of Reading in FY24 is \$7.49 billion. The property tax base is approximately 93% residential, about 6% commercial, and approximately 1% personal property. Approximately 74% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy, with 13% from state aid, and about 7% from local receipts. Reading voters approved a \$4.15 million Proposition 2½ override in 2018 to help fund school (\$2.65 million) and municipal (\$1.5 million) operating costs. Maintaining Reading's financial strength while keeping tax increases to a minimum are priorities.

The [Reading Municipal Light Department](#) is overseen by a five-member elected Board. It is a \$100 million operation with more than 70 employees. The Town Manager needs to work collaboratively with the RMLD, which is an asset for the community and serves approximately 100,000 customers in Reading and surrounding communities.

There is a desire for appropriate economic development, in harmony with the Town's vision, to help fund town services and support infrastructure needs.



Important Links:

- [Town of Reading](#)
- [FY24 Budget](#)
- [Various Town & School Budgets](#)
- [Annual Financial Statements](#)
- [Home Rule Charter](#)
- [General By-Laws](#)
- [Various By-Laws and Regulations](#)
- [Reading Master Plan 2005](#)
- [Annual Town Meeting Information](#)
- [Economic Development Action Plan](#)
- [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)
- [Housing Production Plan 2018](#)
- [Various Town of Reading Plans](#)
- [Reading Municipal Light Department](#)

Economic and Community Development

Reading is a thriving suburban community with a vibrant downtown, strong commercial base, and easy access to and from Boston via I-93 and I-95 as well as its MBTA commuter rail station and bus lines. Reading is committed to strengthening existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and expanding the resident base needed to support a growing local economy. Reading completed its [Economic Development Action Plan](#) in December 2015. There are a number of initiatives focused within the [Eastern Gateway](#) and the Downtown Smart Growth 40R District. Reading is a considered a model community for Smart Growth zoning having adopted it 12 years ago. Reading is home to Jordan's Furniture, Home Depot, Staples, and a number of restaurants, shops, service industries, and professional offices. Medical marijuana dispensaries, in compliance with Town bylaws, are permitted in Reading, but any other commercial cultivation, production, or sale of marijuana is prohibited in accordance with the Town's 2017 ballot question vote. The tax base is heavily dependent on residential taxes and the Town is working to diversify the tax base. Reading is completing a comprehensive community outreach process to comply with the [MBTA Communities legislation](#).

Education

Reading residents consider education to be a prominent civic value. [Reading Public Schools](#), serving more than 4,000 students, has five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Reading is an active participant in Boston's METCO program. Reading is also home to Austin Preparatory School, a co-ed independent school that has an enrollment of approximately 700 students in grades 6-12. The Town Manager should understand the importance placed on public education and work collaboratively with the School Superintendent and the School Department to mitigate cost increases while maintaining education excellence.

Open Space and Recreation

Reading values its small-town feel and open spaces. The Town occupies approximately 10 square miles. Reading completed a 2022-2029 [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#). The 290-acre Reading Town Forest offers a variety of trails and conservation land for residents and visitors to explore. Additionally, Reading is a regional leader in the [Resilient Mystic Collaborative](#) research project which involves 17 cities and towns. Reading's 19-acre Maillet, Sommes & Morgan Conservation Land has been selected as one of the top six sites for possible nature-based flood control. The Town is now in the midst of implementing a Master Plan for [Birch Meadow](#) Park related to recreation, school athletics, youth and community services. The Town used some of its ARPA funds to implement the first phase of the Master Plan in 2022 and Town Meeting just approved Phase II to be implemented in 2024.

Current projects/issues

- Continue the MSBA process for the Killam Elementary School building project.
- Continue efforts to achieve compliance with MBTA Communities Zoning Regulations.
- Complete construction of Birch Meadow Phase II, and continue building out Birch Meadow Master Plan.
- Focus on initiatives to enhance employee retention and hiring.
- Complete the construction of Haven Street with a [\\$2.6 Million MassWorks Grant](#).
- Finalize Green Community status; craft plan to respond to climate resiliency issues including carbon reduction, electric vehicle charging stations, and various community sustainability projects.
- Continue Town's efforts of a [Feasibility Study](#) for a new Senior Center or Community Center.
- Support the work of the [Reading Coalition](#) and the [Director of Equity & Social Justice](#), who is based in the Public Library Department, to work with all Town departments, organizations, businesses, and residents.
- Complete the construction of a community parking lot to increase access to the Town Forest.
- Work with Town on need for additional recreational courts.
- Continue Town's efforts of an RFI for a public/private partnership at Symonds Way.





The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (with a master's preferred), preferably in public administration, public policy, or a related field.
- A minimum of five years of full-time paid experience as a City/Town Manager or Assistant City/Town Manager or the equivalent level public or private sector experience.
- A strong communicator, both internally and externally.
- Superior skills in municipal financial management including budget experience and responsibility and experience in grant acquisition.
- An active listener with superior people skills.
- Outgoing; approachable; collaborative.
- Skilled in personnel management and superior management skills.
- Energetic; enjoys engaging with and participating in community events.
- Knowledgeable of, and able to implement, municipal best practices.
- Innovative, strategic, and proactive.
- Supports transparency in government.
- Strong leadership qualities and experience.
- Ability to coach and mentor staff.
- Team-oriented; morale builder.
- Initiates and supports diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- A unifier who can help bridge divides.
- Excellent follow-through.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills.
- Professional, courteous, and respectful.
- Superior work ethic; confident and flexible.
- Diplomatic; calm under pressure.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by December 15, 2023, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Reading
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 Reading, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity Employer.