

Ipswich, MA – Town Manager



Position Statement

Ipswich, MA (14,000 pop.), is a thriving coastal community that enjoys a tradition of professional and highly responsive government service, strong citizen engagement, and respect for its proud history. Located 28 miles northeast of Boston, Ipswich is a historic community with more First Period homes (built from 1620-1720) than any other town in the nation. Ipswich's population has grown slowly but steadily over the past 40 years.



[Ipswich](#) has been very well managed in recent years and is poised for continued success. It has a AAA rating and an FY23 budget of approximately \$54 million. The Town's challenges include managing infrastructure needs, managing residential growth, continuing its emphasis on human rights, and maintaining financial stability. Additionally, Ipswich recognizes that climate change impacts community health, local natural resources, and infrastructure, and is diligently working to mitigate those impacts and to enhance the Town's climate resiliency.

Ipswich is within an hour's drive of Boston, Lowell, and southern New Hampshire and Maine. Located on the Newburyport-Rockport commuter rail line, the train station in downtown Ipswich provides frequent service to Boston and other points south and Newburyport to the north. The Ipswich-Essex Explorer bus service from the rail station to Crane Beach and other local sites has become more heavily used in the last several years.

Ipswich is seeking a dynamic and visionary leader, with strong communication skills and an ability to plan for the future, to serve as its next Town Manager. Preferred candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration, business management, or a related field, and experience as a municipal town manager/administrator or assistant town manager/administrator, or equivalent education and experience. Candidates should be proactive and strategic thinkers, instill confidence and trust, and be able to build collaborative relationships with appointed/elected officials, business owners, residents, and employees. Ipswich's next Town Manager should be engaged, forward-thinking, and creative.

Ipswich is seeking a dynamic and visionary leader, with strong communication skills and an ability to plan for the future, to serve as its next Town Manager. Preferred candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration, business management, or a related field, and experience as a municipal town manager/administrator or assistant town manager/administrator, or equivalent education and experience. Candidates should be proactive and strategic thinkers, instill confidence and trust, and be able to build collaborative relationships with appointed/elected officials, business owners, residents, and employees. Ipswich's next Town Manager should be engaged, forward-thinking, and creative.

Annual Salary: \$180K+/-. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, with salary negotiable based on qualifications, education, and experience. Ipswich is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Government

The government of Ipswich consists of an elected five-member [Select Board](#), a [Town Manager](#), numerous departments, an open Town Meeting, and many boards and commissions. The Town Manager, who is appointed by the Select Board, is responsible for the overall operation of the Town, and has appointment authority for most of the Town staff (excluding schools) and many boards and commissions. The remainder are appointed by the Select Board and/or the Town Moderator, except for the constable, moderator, [School Committee](#), and the Ipswich Housing Authority, which are elected by registered voters. Ipswich has formed a [Human Rights Commission](#) which serves as an advisory committee to the Town Manager, Select Board, and Town. Town Meeting typically meets twice per year: the Annual Town Meeting in May and the Special Town Meeting in October, and has a quorum of 200 registered voters. The Town Manager's responsibilities include preparation of the municipal budget for adoption by the Select Board, Town Meeting documents, and the Annual Town Report. Responsibility for the educational needs of Ipswich children rests with the elected School Committee.



Finances

Ipswich has an FY23 budget of approximately \$54 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AAA with a stable outlook. The Town is in stable financial condition. Approximately 84.9% of the Town's revenue comes from property taxes, with 11.24% from state aid, 6.36% from local receipts, and 1.8% from other funds (with 4.3% paid out for assessments and other charges). The total assessed value of Ipswich properties in FY22 is nearly \$3.44 billion. The FY22 tax rate is \$12.86 per \$1,000 valuation for all properties. In FY22, the average single-family home value is \$618,795 and the average single-family tax bill is \$7,958. Free cash for FY22 was certified at \$3.74 million. The Town has capital requests for facilities, schools, and town equipment totaling nearly \$8 million for FY23 through FY26.

The Town Manager should have strong financial acumen and the ability to help maintain Ipswich's healthy finances. The next Town Manager needs to be decisive and forward-thinking regarding finances and all aspects of municipal management. Five of the Town's seven union contracts have recently signed three-year agreements. Collective bargaining experience would be beneficial in this position.

Important Links:

- [Town of Ipswich](#)
- [Ipswich Town Charter](#)
- [Town Code](#)
- [FY23 Annual Budget](#)
- [FY22 Annual Budget](#)
- [Capital Plans](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy Phase I](#)
- [Economic Development Strategy Phase II](#)
- [Downtown Development Plan \(draft\)](#)
- [Strategic Planning Working Group Presentation](#)
- [Community Development Plan](#)
- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)
- [Various Plans and Studies](#)
- [Climate Action Plan](#)
- [Public Safety Building Feasibility Study](#)

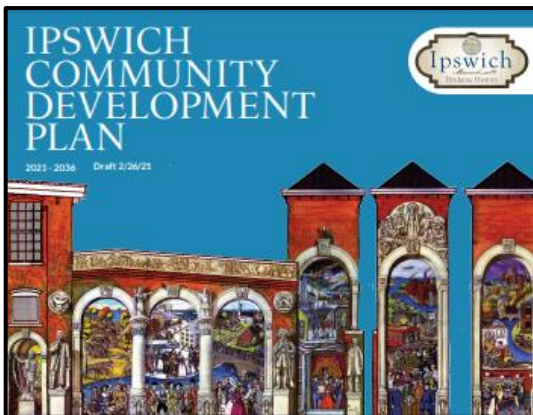
Education

Ipswich strives to provide an excellent education to all students and there is strong communication between the municipal and school departments. Day-to-day operational responsibility of [Ipswich Public Schools](#) is delegated to the School Superintendent with a seven-member School Committee focused on school policies. The [Ipswich Public Schools](#) currently serves approximately 1,600 students. Its FY23 budget is approximately \$33 million. The Town recently approved a \$1.8 million operational override to help fund increasing education costs. The school department has two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Ipswich's student body is 86.1% White, 7.5% Hispanic, 4% multi-race non-Hispanic, 1.3% Asian, 0.9% African American, and 0.2% Native American. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, approximately 33.5% of the student population has high needs, 20.5% of students reside in homes considered to be low-income, and 5.9% of students come from homes where English is not the first language.



Economic and Community Development

Ipswich has a diverse economic base that includes manufacturing, retail, service, and natural resource industries such as farming and shell fishing (Ipswich is the state's largest producer of soft-shell clams). This diversity is an important part of the Town's character and self-image. Ipswich is not just a bedroom community; it is a place where people grow crops, make products, practice a wide variety of professions, and come to shop and relax.



Over the past two decades, Ipswich's economy has exhibited considerable strength and resilience, and its job growth has been impressive, in part due to the arrival and subsequent expansion of two major businesses, EBSCO, Inc. and New England Biolabs. Ipswich would like to see appropriate business growth continue and the next Town Manager should strive to attract new business.

The Town's primary commercial areas are: the town center; the commercial areas on Route 133/1A north of the Ipswich Middle/High School and east and north of the Route 133/1A intersection; and along Route 1 near its intersection with Linebrook Road. Its primary industrial areas are located near the town center: one along Mitchell Road north of High Street, and the other consisting of the Ipswich Business Park off Hayward Street. The town center is home to most of the Town's institutional uses, many of its retail stores and restaurants, and its largest employer, EBSCO, Inc. In recent years, Ipswich has developed a food and spirits niche, featuring numerous restaurants, two breweries, and two distilleries. Despite the economic stresses of the pandemic, Ipswich did not lose any of its restaurants. The Town Manager should engage with Ipswich's businesses and business organizations, helping to exhibit the Town's interest in their success. A [Downtown Development Plan](#) was never formally adopted but contains useful information about Ipswich's downtown. Downtown Ipswich has an MBTA commuter rail station served by the Newburyport/Rockport commuter rail line. There is some concern that ongoing development is straining the Town's limited water supply. Ipswich is continuing to seek ways to manage increased water usage and to improve its climate resiliency.

Specializations

Located adjacent to Ipswich Bay, Ipswich offers its Town Manager the opportunity to oversee some relatively specialized departments that most communities cannot provide. The [Harbormaster](#) and [Shellfish](#) departments allow the Town Manager to gain, or to increase, knowledge and experience that is fairly unique in the municipal management field. The Harbormaster department's mission is to provide marine law enforcement, search & rescue operations, and educational services to boaters. It patrols 43 miles of the Ipswich coastline and the Ipswich River and manages more than 1,000 moorings. Ipswich has more than 900 acres of shellfishing areas and the Shellfish department is responsible for enforcing related rules and regulations. The [ReCreation & Culture](#) department is a hub for community enrichment, providing centralized coordination of recreational and cultural programming in celebration of Ipswich arts, open space, history, and heritage. Additionally, Ipswich established a community-owned, not-for-profit [Electric Light Department](#) in 1901, which has an FY22 budget of approximately \$17.5 million.



Open Space, Recreation, and Climate Resiliency

Ipswich is an environmentally concerned coastal community with abundant natural resources, including beaches, marshes, rivers, forest, wildlife refuges, and reservations. Ipswich is deeply concerned about environmental protection, preservation of open space, climate change, sustainability, and use of renewable energy. The Town's [Climate Resiliency Committee](#) is charged with making measurable progress on conservation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, in part through becoming a Green Community which was achieved in February 2020. The [Great Marsh Coastal Adaptation Plan](#), which was the result of a two-year adaptation planning effort led by the National Wildlife Federation, is available on the Ipswich River Watershed Association website. The Trustees of Reservations owns several large tracts of land in Ipswich including the Crane Estate and Appleton Farm. Protecting critical open space properties is a priority for residents. The Open Space Program, through its bond program, has permanently protected 983 acres of land. The program's manager collaborates with numerous Town boards and works closely with local, regional, and state organizations on land protection projects in Ipswich. The Town's [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) highlights the Town's accomplishments with open space acquisition and creating locations for recreation such as athletic fields, while also exploring critical needs and emerging challenges faced now and in the future. Ipswich is home to Crane Beach Reservation, a five-mile barrier beach and the crown jewel of The Trustees of Reservations properties. The Willowdale State Forest contains miles of the Bay Circuit Trail and is heavily used for mountain biking.

Projects

Some of Ipswich's many ongoing and upcoming projects are:

- \$26 million in funding for the construction of a new public safety building was recently approved.
- In the near future, the Town will need to decide whether to replace its two elementary schools with a single new school or with two schools.
- In May 2022, the Town approved a \$6 million bond for wastewater treatment plant upgrades.
- Management of the Town's infrastructure needs while maintaining sensitivity to taxpayer concerns is an ongoing focus.
- The need for affordable housing is a continuing discussion as Ipswich recognizes that ongoing development will require additional affordable housing.
- Ipswich is planning to hire a Climate Resiliency Coordinator on a contract basis.
- The Town must determine uses for the downtown fire station and police station property once the public safety building is completed as well as the future use of a now-defunct wind turbine.
- The Town must determine appropriate use of remaining ARPA funds and any Build Back Better funding that may become available.





The Ideal Candidate

- Graduate degree in a field related to public or business administration or management.
- Experience as a Town Manager or Assistant Town Manager.
- Skilled in strategic planning, financial management, personnel management, community planning, project management, and collective bargaining.
- A superior communicator, both internally and externally; approachable; active listener.
- Strong leadership skills and experience.
- Skilled at community engagement.
- Creates a welcoming environment for all.
- Ensures everyone is treated fairly and equally.
- Embraces climate resiliency efforts.
- Strategic; forward thinking; proactive; creative; and collaborative.
- Understands the balance needed between economic development and maintaining community character.
- Skilled in setting goals and revisiting progress.
- Data-driven decision making; analytical.
- Ability to successfully seek out grants and to manage grants.
- Embraces transparency in government.
- Team-oriented; a willingness to roll up their sleeves.
- Ability to build and maintain morale.
- Creates a vision for the future and secures buy-in.
- Skilled in long-term planning; organized.
- Ability to remain calm in a crisis; practical.
- Values the uses of modern technologies.
- Knowledgeable of municipal best practices.

How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by July 5, 2022, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@communityparadigm.com

**Subject: Ipswich
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 Ipswich, Mass., is an Equal Opportunity/
Affirmative Action Employer.*