

# Lancaster, MA – Town Administrator



## Position Statement

Lancaster, MA, (pop. 8,441), is a charming small town in Worcester County that has experienced steady growth for the past 20 years. The oldest Town in the County, and originally a farming community, today Lancaster is an attractive, primarily rural-residential Town, easily accessible to Interstates 190 and 495 as well as Route 2, with excellent schools, many recreational opportunities, strong community spirit, and engaged residents. Lancaster is in the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area; and is adjacent to the towns of Lunenburg, Shirley, Harvard, Bolton, Clinton, Sterling, and Leominster.

Led by a three-member Select Board, Lancaster has an Open Town Meeting form of governance and an FY22 budget of \$25.7 million. It has a Moody's rating of Aa3, which reflects a healthy financial position, an average debt burden, low pension liability, strong income profile, and a modestly sized tax base.



Lancaster is seeking a detail-oriented Town Administrator with a professional demeanor and excellent communication, customer service, and project management skills; and an understanding of small-town culture, to support the Select Board and provide collaborative leadership. Both traditional and non-traditional candidates who possess strong financial acumen, superior organizational skills, human resources, grant writing, and economic development experience are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate should have a bachelor's degree (master's preferred), preferably in public administration, business administration, management, or a related field.



**Annual salary: \$160,000+/- DOQ.** The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package that is competitive with other Massachusetts towns, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Residency is not required.

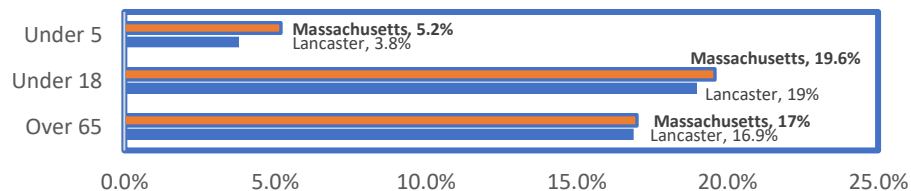
## DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMY

Per the U.S. Census 2019, Lancaster has a labor force of 3,571 workers ages 16 and older. Management, business, science, and arts comprise 1,577 jobs; sales and office comprise 613 jobs; and the remainder are shared between service, construction, maintenance, production, and transportation roles. Lancaster's total assessed value in FY22 was approximately \$1.1 billion, according to the [Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue Division of Local Services](#) (DLS), which represents an increase of 6.5% from FY21. Residential properties account for 85.7% of the Town's total assessed value, with commercial properties accounting for 7.9%, industrial for 3.5%, and personal property for 2.9%. The median FY22 residential property value was \$389,188.

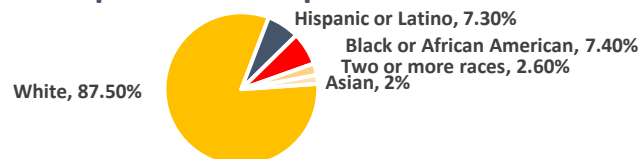
The median household annual income is approximately \$93,646, which is 15.3% higher than the \$81,215 state median household annual income. While the Town's year-round population is primarily middle-income, 4.2% of residents are living in households with incomes below the poverty level. The median age of Lancaster residents is demographically like Massachusetts. The average age of Lancaster residents is 40.7 years, while the average age for Commonwealth residents is 39.5 years. Additional demographics depicted in the charts below is derived from the U.S. Census, 2015 – 2019.



### Age



### Population Composition



## COMMUNITY SERVICES

[UMass Memorial Health \(UMM\)](#) the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the largest healthcare system in Central and Western Massachusetts, serves the Lancaster community via UMass Memorial Medical Center and two community hospitals. Residents are also served by [Emerson Hospital](#), affiliated with Mass General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital, located in Concord. For public transportation, Lancaster is served by the [MBTA Fitchburg line](#). The closest MBTA stations are in Shirley and North Leominster, both of which are approximately eight miles away and provide roundtrip service to Boston. Parts of Lancaster are also served by the [Montachusett Regional Transit Authority](#), which offers local bus routes as well as ADA service. Lancaster has numerous [small-to-medium sized businesses](#) across many industries; and many major retail chains, grocery stores, and restaurants are easily accessible in neighboring towns.



## Finances

Lancaster has an FY22 operating budget of \$25,706,416 with approximately 65% of the budget dedicated to the regional public school system. The incoming Town Administrator has an opportunity to work collaboratively with

### Important Links

- [Town of Lancaster](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Annual Town Meetings](#)
- [Town By-Laws](#)
- [Master Plan](#)
- [Town Budget Documents](#)
- [OPEB](#)
- [Five Year Capital Plan](#)
- [Organizational Chart](#)

the elected and appointed boards, Department Heads, and staff to plan a healthy economic and financial forecast for the Town. Challenges include increasing operating costs, aging infrastructure, and identifying economic development opportunities to offset the residential tax rate. Currently, property and real estate taxes account for the major source of revenue for the Town, generating approximately \$20M in revenue, which is 81% of the budget with 5% generated from state aid. The FY22 tax rate was set at a single rate of \$19.45 per \$1,000 valuation. The average single-family tax bill in FY22 is \$7,570. New growth in FY22 was 1.61% of the FY21 tax levy and most of the new growth was residential. Per DLS, Lancaster's certified free cash in FY21 was \$1.8 million.

## Government

The [Lancaster Select Board](#) has three members who are elected to serve three-year terms; and generally the Board meets on the first and third Monday of each month. The [Town By-Laws](#) and General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts grant the Select Board broad powers to govern the Town. The Select Board appoints more than 20 boards and committees, and acts as Lancaster's primary policy-making body for a wide variety of issues, which affect the Town's development and provision of services. They recommend the budget to the Annual Town Meeting; approve the reorganization of Town departments; provide oversight for matters in litigation; act as the licensing authority for a wide variety of licenses and permits and more.

The Select Board appoints the [Town Administrator](#) who functions as the Town's Chief Administrative Officer. The primary duties of the Town Administrator include the day-to-day oversight and administration of general government and formulation of municipal policies under the direction of the Select Board. The Town Administrator is charged with maintaining a close working relationship with the Select Board, acting as a liaison between the Select Board, Town departments, elected and appointed officials, and residents; and regularly briefing the Board on important issues.



Town By-Laws state that [Annual Town Meeting](#) is held the first Monday in May each year. Lancaster has numerous elected and appointed boards and committees, including the Finance Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Board of Assessors, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Commission on Disability, Nashoba Regional School District School Committee, and more. A complete listing is available on the [Town of Lancaster Boards and Committees](#) web page.



## Departments

### EDUCATION

Lancaster, along with the towns of Bolton and Stow, is a member of the [Nashoba Regional School District](#). Students attend Mary Rowlandson Elementary School and Luther Burbank Middle School. Nashoba Regional High School, located in Bolton, serves students in grades 9 – 12. Lancaster is also a member town for the [Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School](#), which is in the neighboring town of Lexington. Approximately 84.2% of Lancaster residents ages 25 and older have a high school diploma. About 39.5% of residents ages 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree or higher advanced degree.



### PUBLIC SAFETY & DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The mission of the [Lancaster Police Department](#), which currently employs an interim Police Chief, approximately 15 officers and one administrative staff member, is to be a transformational police department that protects and serves the local community. The [Lancaster Fire, Rescue, & EMS Department](#), established in 1848, provides fire



suppression, rescue, and prevention services. The department is made up of a Fire Chief and one full-time firefighter, 30 On-Call Firefighters, and 10 On-Call EMTs. The department operates out of two stations: Center Station (HQ) located at 1055 Main Street and South Station located at 283 South Main Street. Lancaster is a member of the [Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District](#), which is headquartered in Devens. The [Department of Public Works](#) (DPW) operates under the direction of an elected DPW Board and daily DPW responsibilities are administered by the Superintendent of Public Works. DPW oversight includes

highways/roadways, water division, sewer district commission, cemeteries, trees, and recycling center. DPW projects include numerous roadway initiatives, including Complete Streets planning, Main Street Bridge at Bartlett Pond, Route 70/117 intersection, and Brockelman Road Culvert improvements.

### COUNCIL ON AGING, COMMUNITY CENTER, AND THAYER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The [Council on Aging](#), [Community Center](#) and [Thayer Memorial Library](#) serve Lancaster residents by providing a variety of programming, events, resources, and services suitable for every age group in Town. The Council on Aging and Community Center share a former school facility located near the Town Green behind Thayer Memorial Library.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING INITIATIVES

Lancaster has numerous significant economic development and planning decisions before the Town. These include the potential to develop a commercial and industrial area in North Lancaster; to redevelop the South Lancaster commercial district, including the former Atlantic Union College and a vacant DCAM site. The Town completed an [Economic Development Plan](#) to help guide economic development efforts in 2015. An Economic Development Committee has also been established to guide the Town's economic development in keeping with the character of the Town. Lancaster also completed an [Open Space and Recreation](#) Plan update in 2017, which outlines goals to protect, preserve, and enrich Lancaster's open space, water, and recreational resources. Open space and recreation opportunities in Lancaster currently include the Town Beach and Lancaster State Forest as well as Bartlett Pond, Ballard Hill Chapman-Goodale, Turner Pond, Chickering Conservation areas, and more.



## Challenges and Opportunities

Lancaster has dedicated elected and appointed officials, Town employees, and volunteer board members striving to ensure excellent service to the community. There are, however, opportunities for the incoming Town Administrator to embrace and facilitate positive change, including:

- *Build a team-oriented cohesive work environment, with an emphasis on pursuing municipal best practices, transparency, communication, and trust. There is opportunity to achieve this goal by working with both experienced and several newly hired department heads and staff, as well as elected and appointed officials.*
- *Identify and prioritize comprehensive list of town processes, projects, needs, and opportunities. Collaborate with Select Board, Town boards and departments, and residents to find consensus and begin acting upon identified projects and economic development opportunities.*
- *Locate resources to help fund Town-wide needs, technology upgrades, infrastructure improvements, planning initiatives, and more. There are specific economic development decisions currently facing the Town that will shape its future.*
- *Formalize and implement consistent human resources practices and undertake a study to assess personnel and wage policies.*
- *Revitalize website, online presence, and other communication tools to strengthen relationship of local government and the community. Develop strategy to reach out to residents to broaden volunteer base.*





# Lancaster

## MASSACHUSETTS

### The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (Master's preferred).
- Experience as a Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator, or head of a significant department in a complex municipal organization, or professional equivalent.
- Strong skills in economic development, municipal planning, human resources, financial management, and grant writing.
- Adept at liaising between the Select Board, Town departments, elected and appointed boards, and residents.
- Actively informs and supports the Select Board and values transparency.
- Servant leader who manages by example, builds, and sustains consensus.
- Excellent communicator not afraid to discuss hard things honestly and fairly.
- Experience working with regional school district.
- Ability to negotiate compromise and motivate others.
- Strategic and forward-thinker who manages resources effectively.
- Professional, appropriate, approachable.
- Embraces and leads for positive change.
- MCPPO certified or willingness to obtain certification.
- Detail oriented and highly organized.
- Knowledgeable of municipal best practices and familiarity with municipal law.
- Understanding of small-town governance and culture.

### How To Apply

Interested applicants should send a résumé and cover letter, in confidence, by February 18, 2022, 3:00 p.m. EST, to:

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

**Subject: Lancaster Town Administrator**

**Submit materials via a single PDF**

Cover letters and résumés will be reviewed according to the outlined qualifications. Finalists will be contacted for references and approval of background reviews before selections are publicly advanced to the Lancaster Select Board. The Board will interview finalists and select the Town Administrator.

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

John Petrin, Senior Associate  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[JPetrin@CommunityParadigm.com](mailto:JPetrin@CommunityParadigm.com)

781-552-1074

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