

Auburn, MA – Town Manager



Position Statement

Auburn, MA (pop. 16,820), is a vibrant, well-run, fiscally stable community located in the heart of Central Massachusetts, 46 miles west of downtown Boston. The Town covers an area of approximately 15.7 square miles and is bordered by the City of Worcester and the Towns of Millbury, Oxford, and Leicester. Easy access to and egress from Interstate 290, Intrastate 90 (Massachusetts Turnpike), Interstate 395, Routes 12 and 20 make Auburn a popular destination for commerce, shopping, working, and living. The Town is a residential community with significant commercial and industrial activity. Offering several beautiful parks, walking trails, state of the art athletic fields and a municipally owned and operated nine-hole golf course, as well as boasting an excellent school system, Auburn is a desirable community in which to live. Its diverse commercial and industrial base, excellent highway network, access to an educated, regional workforce and intellectual capital of 12 colleges and universities in the area combine to make Auburn an advantageous location. Its daytime population nearly doubles due to the many employers, retail stores, hotels, commercial businesses, and medical facilities which are popular destinations.

Residents enjoy the many community events organized by the Town, including the annual Fall Festival, Holiday Craft Festival, Tree Lighting event, and Independence Day event, which draws 10,000 attendees from the region to the beautiful Pappas Recreation Complex for music, children's events, and a spectacular fireworks display. The Town also runs a weekly Farmers Market and Summer in the Park concert series throughout the summer. The Town appreciates a Town Manager who engages with the residents and supports and participates in community events and functions.

The Town has a strong and dedicated management team that collaborates on various projects and initiatives. There are numerous initiatives underway, including ongoing infrastructure improvements, library expansion, park renovations, and facility upgrades as well as a potential new fire headquarters facility. There are nine general government collective bargaining groups and seven bargaining units in the schools. The Town Manager negotiates the collective bargaining agreements.

The Town seeks a Town Manager who will provide exemplary leadership to the organization, have strong communications with residents, businesses, and elected officials, and work collaboratively with all stakeholders in the community. Auburn has numerous citizen boards, committees and commissions, and values resident participation. The Town Manager must be able to effectively articulate the issues and disseminate information so the elected and appointed officials, and voters, can make informed decisions. The Town is seeking a manager who will uphold the culture of professionalism in the organization. Employees are seeking a Town Manager who will provide strong leadership, be a good listener, support the departments, and encourage professional development.

Annual salary: \$205,000 +/- DOQ. The successful candidate will receive an attractive compensation package, including health and retirement plans, commensurate with qualifications and experience. Auburn is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Government

Auburn has a Select Board-Town Manager form of government with representative Town Meeting. Members are elected for three-year staggered terms. The Select Board serves as the policy-making body of the Town. The Board appoints the Town Manager as the Chief Executive Officer of the Town and the day-to-day affairs are administered by the Town Manager. There are 120 elected Town Meeting Members representing five precincts. The [Town Charter](#) was amended in 2009. The Town conducted an omnibus review and amendments of both its [General Bylaws](#) and [Zoning Bylaws](#).

The Town Manager oversees the daily operations of the Town, advises, administers the policies and procedures of the Select Board, and enforces Town bylaws and actions passed at Town Meeting. The Town Manager is responsible for the effective administration and management of all Town departments (excluding schools), preparing an annual budget and capital plan, coordinating activities leading up to the Town Meeting, providing support to the volunteer committee system, working with other levels of government, and managing special projects for the Select Board.

Water is provided to approximately 80% of the Town by the Auburn Water District. Two additional water districts, Elm Hill and Woodland, provide water to the remaining portion of the Town. Sewer services are provided by the Town to approximately 68% of the Town through contractual arrangements with the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District.

There are numerous boards, commissions and committees in Auburn that are either advisory or regulatory. Many town residents are actively involved serving on these entities and citizen engagement with the government is encouraged.

The Select Board is seeking a Town Manager who has excellent communication skills and will keep the Board members apprised of developments, issues and initiatives.



Education

Auburn's public school system offers high-quality educational opportunities for approximately 2,500 students in its Preschool through grade 12 system. As a result of previous new school construction and continuous renovation projects, the District's educational facilities are in good condition. The newest facility is the state-of-the-art Middle School which provides a technology-rich learning environment for students in grades six through eight. Auburn High School, constructed 20 years ago, is also a state-of-the-art facility. All third- through fifth-graders are educated at the Swanson Road Intermediate School; kindergarten through second-graders are educated in one of the two elementary schools: Bryn Mawr School and Pakachoag School. Auburn's Integrated Preschool program offers a full-day tuition-based program for four-year-olds or half-day programming for three- and four-year-olds.



Auburn High was designated as a Silver Medal School by US News and World Report. The school department received National Blue-Ribbon recognitions by US DOE for closing achievement gaps and Commendation School designations by MA DESE. School administration has a strong relationship with town administration and works closely with the police and fire departments.

The Town is a member of Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School, located in nearby Charlton, which serves students from its 10 member communities including Charlton, Dudley, North Brookfield, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Spencer, Southbridge, and Webster.

Finances

Auburn is a well-run, financially strong, financially conservative municipality with written financial policies that guide its budgeting practices and expenditures. The Town does not fund operational expenses with non-recurring revenue sources, such as free cash or overlay surplus. The annual operating budget includes an appropriation to the Operating Reserve Account, used to fund any unforeseen and extraordinary expenses that may occur during the fiscal year. The annual appropriation to this account is 0.005% of the Town's general fund operating budget, net of debt service, sewer enterprise, abatements, cherry sheet charges & offsets, and appropriated capital costs. The Town Manager and Chief Financial Officer project revenues and expenditures for the next five years as part of the Five-Year Financial forecast.

Auburn's five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes any capital item (Equipment, Land/Building Improvement) costing more than \$10,000 with a useful life of at least three years. The Town funds its CIP with a mix of tax levy, interest from CIP trust fund, sewer enterprise-retained earnings, and bond proceeds. The Town is committed to maintaining a healthy debt ratio and to reducing the Town's dependency on bond proceeds. To meet this goal, the Town annually commits a portion of the tax levy growth under Proposition 2½ to be used as an offset to the capital budget as recommended in the Town's financial policies. The annual value is 0.10% of an allowed 2.50% levy increase.

Town administration developed a comprehensive Facility Improvement Plan that provides a multi-year plan for undertaking and funding improvements, major maintenance and repairs to all Town municipal facilities. The Town has an Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability Trust Fund, Capital Improvement Trust Fund, Pension Reserve Trust Fund, Special Education Stabilization Fund, and Health Insurance Trust Fund.

Auburn's FY25 budget is \$84,458,399. Auburn has a diverse tax base with a mix of commercial, industrial,

Important Links

- [Town of Auburn](#)
- [Town Charter](#)
- [General By-Laws](#)
- [Zoning By-Laws](#)
- [Budget and Financial Documents](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [Auburn Schools Strategic Plan](#)

retail, and residential properties. The Town has a Standard & Poor's bond rating of AA+. For FY25, the residential tax rate is \$14.29; the commercial and industrial rate is \$16.10; and personal property rate is \$16.04. FY25 residential assessed values (\$2,521,998,670) represent 75.67% of the total assessed value while commercial, industrial, and personal property is 24.33%. The residential levy (\$36,039,361) as a percentage of the total FY25 tax levy (\$49,043,484) is 73.48% while the CIP is 26.52% of the total levy. The tax levy accounts for 54.98% of the total budget; state aid 20.37%; local receipts 9.39%; and other makes up the remaining 15.26%. The average

single-family tax bill in FY25 is \$6,006; the average single-family home value in FY25 is \$420,277. Free cash was certified at \$21,363,298 in 2024.

The 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Plan details the proposed investments for the next five years. The FY25 CIP is \$3,746,427 with the majority going towards public safety and public works vehicle replacement. The Town is seeking a manager who has a strong financial background and can balance the needs of the community while remaining fiscally responsible.

Economic Development

Auburn has a strong and diverse commercial and industrial base consisting of retail, warehousing, distribution, medical, and service sectors. The Town is home to several industrial and business parks, multiple commercial clusters, and a major regional retail shopping mall. Its daytime population swells to more than double that of its resident population as over 700 businesses with approximately 11,000 employees, five hotels, retail and commercial businesses draw from the Central Massachusetts region. Housing opportunities consist primarily of single-family homes with an owner-occupied rate of approximately 95%. Since its affordable housing inventory is less than 10%, the Town has several 40B housing developments proposed or underway.

Auburn's transportation network is one of its greatest strengths and its accessibility stimulated the growth of the Town's economic base over the past few decades. Highway access, bus transit, nearby commuter rail service, and accessibility to major airports make living and working in Auburn convenient. Auburn is located 5.6 miles from Worcester Regional Airport and 7.2 miles from Union Station in Worcester, the multi-modal transportation hub with MBTA Commuter Rail to Boston, Amtrak service, and the Worcester Regional Transit Authority. The Town invests significant dollars annually in its roads and other infrastructure systems.

Over the past decade, the Town has undertaken significant projects and initiatives to stimulate town-wide economic and housing development and create a more welcoming downtown environment in Drury Square. An [Economic Development Strategic Plan](#), [Comprehensive Housing Plan](#), and the [Drury Square Design Plan](#) were completed in 2017, and the [Goddard Park Plan](#) was completed in 2021. The updated [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) enables the Town to access grants from MEMA and FEMA. The Drury Square Village District Overlay Zoning Bylaw was approved to promote mixed-use development, enhance pedestrian access, and create general design guidelines. The Drury Square Design Guidelines were completed in 2019, and a Wayfinding and Branding Project was completed which led to the purchase and implementation of wayfinding signs and banners in 2023. Town Administration is currently seeking quotes for production of wayfinding signage using the adopted Auburn brand to be placed along commercial corridors Routes 12 and 20 and at other notable nodes throughout Town. This unified branding aims to highlight and celebrate Auburn's distinctive qualities, positioning it as more than just a location or transit point but as a noteworthy destination.

The three-phased Library-Goddard Park-Pedestrian Bridge Project is currently underway and includes a new pedestrian bridge to create a physical link between Goddard Park and the Library; improvements to enhance Goddard Park; and the installation of a sunroom addition on the back of the Library to visually connect the Library with Goddard Park and to provide opportunities for outdoor programming and expanded indoor space. This project complements the recently completed \$5 million Auburn Street reconstruction project, the \$350,000 Brotherton Way improvement project, and the Town-funded additional \$900,000 in aesthetic improvements which included decorative lighting, benches, plantings, and a gazebo.



The Town works closely with the local Chamber of Commerce, regional organizations and local brokers to identify economic development opportunities and partnerships. The Business Roundtable was established in 2011 to foster communication and dialogue between the Town and the business community in order to promote business expansion, attract new businesses, retain existing industry, and create an environment in which businesses can thrive. The Business Roundtable consists of business and commercial/industrial property owners, presidents, and general managers who provide valuable input to the Town on the strengths and challenges of doing business in Auburn, identify issues that impact business, and identify programs and/or services that would assist or enhance their operations.

The Economic Development Committee works with Town Administration to advise on projects and plans.

Opportunities/Challenges

The Town has a strong history of using its location and easy access to transportation for the benefit of the Town. That provides opportunities for continued success in economic development but also leads to having to address needs such as traffic within the community. The Town seeks a Town Manager who can articulate the issues facing the community to the residents and elected officials and provide clear and concise data and information to assist and guide decision-making.

Like many communities, the Town needs to address infrastructure and facility needs. The Town will be voting on whether to fund a new fire headquarters at 10 Prospect Street, the site of the former Chuck's Steakhouse, which the Town recently purchased. The new facility would replace the West Street Fire station while the current headquarters would continue to operate as a secondary station. An Owners Project Manager (OPM) was hired, and the Town will seek a Debt Exclusion vote in May 2025 to design, construct, equip, and furnish a new Fire Headquarters. Issues relative to public works projects will also be at the forefront. The Town is seeking to address requests for sidewalks and road improvements. A person who has skills in seeking alternative revenue sources and works well with outside influencers would be helpful.

While the Town has been fiscally stable for many years, potential reductions in state and federal funding are expected to put pressure on future budgets.

It is anticipated that a few key department and division head positions will become vacant over the next couple of years due to retirements. Succession planning will be critical to prepare for these transitions.

Position Responsibilities

The Town Manager is appointed by the Select Board. The Town Manager is the chief executive officer of the town and is responsible for the efficient operation and administration of all town departments except the school department. Section 3.06 of the Town Charter specifies the duties of the Town Manager.

General Responsibilities and Duties:

- Appoint the head of each department, subject to the confirmation of such appointment by the Select Board.
- Supervise and direct the administration of all departments, except that the police chief and fire chief administer their respective departments.
- Appoint committees, boards, and offices of the Town, except those elected by the voters or appointed by the Select Board, the moderator, or as otherwise provided by the Charter.
- Have overall jurisdiction over, and be responsible for, the planning, construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, improvement, use, and rental of all Town property except the property under the jurisdiction of the school committee.
- The Town Manager is the chief procurement officer of the Town, except that the Superintendent of Schools is the officer for the school department. Purchase all supplies, materials, and equipment, and shall award all contracts for all departments and activities of the Town.
- Administer all provisions of general and special laws, by-laws, and regulations of the Select Board.
- Prepare and recommend an annual budget to the Select Board and the Finance Committee.

The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in public administration or a related field.
- Experience as a Town Manager/ Administrator or as an Assistant Town Manager/ Administrator.
- Strong leadership and team-building skills.
- Exceptional personnel management skills.
- Ability to motivate employees and provide opportunities for professional development and advancement within the organization.
- Excellent project management skills to lead and implement a multitude of projects/ plans.
- Energetic, forward-thinking strategic planner.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to utilize various mechanisms to reach all demographics within the town.
- Ability to inform, interact, and engage with Board members and residents.
- Ability to keep residents and businesses informed on upcoming issues, projects, and plans.
- Strong financial planning and budgeting skills.
- Strong personnel management, collective bargaining, and negotiation skills.
- Creative problem solver.
- Approachable, active listener, and able to relate to people.
- Knowledge of best practices and open to new ideas.
- Consensus builder willing to work collaboratively with boards, committees, residents, and other stakeholders.
- Community-oriented and willing to engage with stakeholders in the community.
- Ability to balance the competing needs and interests of the community.



How To Apply

Send cover letter and résumé, in confidence, via email, in a single PDF, by March 21, 2025, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

Apply@CommunityParadigm.com

Subject: Auburn Town Manager

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

John Petrin, Senior Associate
Community Paradigm Associates
jpetrin@communityparadigm.com

The Town of Auburn, Mass., is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.