

# Watertown, MA – Director of Public Works



## Position Statement

Watertown, MA (35,329 pop.), is a thriving community that provides a suburban-like setting with urban amenities. Located just six miles from Boston, the City is a hidden gem offering many of the benefits of a smaller town with access to the economic, cultural, and educational resources of a big city. Cultural destinations like the Arsenal Center for the Arts and the Armenian Museum of America are complemented by welcoming neighborhoods, a good school system, international food offerings, coffee shops, and fresh green grocers. The City, which has a diverse population including the second-largest Armenian population in the country, celebrates and supports the rich and varied cultures within the community. Watertown is a City in transition as it has been experiencing demographic and socio-economic changes in recent years. Watertown has 72 road miles contained within 4.1 square miles.



[Watertown](#) is well managed and well situated for continued success. It has an AAA rating and an FY25 total budget of \$204 million. The City's

challenges include managing its growth, maintaining its superior financial stability, continuing to build a strong team of municipal department heads as retirements occur, maintaining the City's relative affordability, and moving to the forefront on social issues, including diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts. Watertown recognizes that climate change impacts community health, local natural resources, and infrastructure and is diligently working to mitigate the impacts and to enhance climate resiliency.

This is an exciting opportunity for a highly qualified Public Works leader to join a high-functioning and collaborative team in a City that is known for developing and completing innovative projects. The position of Director of Public Works will oversee the divisions of Administration, Fleet, Highway, Forestry, Parks, Cemetery, Street Lighting & Wiring, Traffic Control, Engineering, Water & Sewer, Snow Removal, and Waste Disposal. Watertown is seeking an experienced and dynamic public works professional with superior management, communication, and technical skills to serve as Director of Public Works. Preferred candidates should have a bachelor's degree (master's is a plus) in civil engineering, public administration, or a related field and at least seven years of progressively responsible experience in municipal government with at least five years in a public works or public works adjacent department, or an equivalent combination of education, training, and experience. Candidates must be innovative, proactive, and a proven leader.

**Annual Salary: \$150K +/-, DOQ.** The successful candidate will also receive an excellent benefit package including health and retirement plans. Health insurance 80% City paid premium. Watertown is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Department of Public Works

Watertown is an innovative and active community that seeks out projects and completes them, and the [Department of Public Works](#) is a significant part of these efforts, as demonstrated with its close collaborations with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority in upgrading the City's sewers. Watertown is implementing innovations in stormwater efforts, including installing [tree trenches](#), with state and federal grants. The City is highly successful in seeking and receiving funds from a variety of programs, such as MassWorks.

The City is soon to undertake engineering design for the future of Watertown Square, including new pedestrian amenities, complete streets strategies, reconstruction of the intersection, reduced travel lanes, and additional bicycle infrastructure. Currently underway is a full reconstruction of Mt. Auburn Street, a TIP project that will cost more than \$20 million and is being done in coordination with the Commonwealth and its contractors.

Watertown is considered a leader in 'complete streets,' and has a commitment to complete streets projects annually. The City strives to ensure it meets the needs of all users of its streets and sidewalks, thus providing commuting, exercise and recreational opportunities for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Watertown has allocated over \$70 million in its Capital Improvement Program to reconstruction of streets, sidewalks, and implementation of complete streets strategies over the next five years. The City is making it a point to install curbs on streets and throughout the community as it improves its infrastructure. Additionally, it has allocated \$12 million FY2025-2029 capital plan for upgrades to the DPW's own infrastructure and DPW vehicles. The City has more than \$750,000 annually in Chapter 90 funds.

### Director of Public Works Position & Staffing

The Director of Public Works oversees the public works divisions of Administration, Fleet, Highway, Forestry, Parks, Cemetery, Street Lighting & Wiring, Traffic Control, Engineering, Water & Sewer, Snow Removal, and Waste Disposal. In FY24, Watertown re-aligned the Public Works' divisions, added staff (including



new engineering positions), and adjusted salaries through its 2023 Classification and Compensation study, which assisted in filling vacancies as the City seeks to fully staff the department. The changes are intended to provide proper leadership and management structures and clear division of responsibilities to enhance the department's operational efficiency and grow its capacity for meeting Watertown's growing needs. The DPW staff has won awards for the City's trash/recycling programs that are focused on reducing overall waste, providing municipal compost, and maintaining stability in the trash and recycling program and budget.

The Director oversees the Public Works department's 60 staff positions and General Fund budgets totaling \$15.4 million as well as overseeing Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund budgets totaling \$22.2 million and various capital projects. The Director is also a member of the Emergency Management Team and Traffic Commission.

The Director works under the policy direction of the City Manager and is responsible for improving service delivery and customer service; asset management and preventive maintenance; work order, resource, and staff management; and the development of standardized policies and procedures. The Director is also responsible for planning and implementing public works capital projects, collaborating with the Community Development & Planning Department on open space and major roadway projects, and effectively managing major contractors. The Director is responsible for meeting all regulatory requirements including, but not limited to, those resulting from MassDEP's 2030 Solid Waste Management Plan and the City's NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) permit.

## Government

Watertown recently completed a charter review process in which a revised [Home Rule Charter](#) was adopted with a number of modifications including a revised preamble, creation of a Community Engagement Specialist, and creation of a Human Rights Commission. It retained its Council-Manager form of government but redesignated itself to be known as the City of Watertown. The nine-member City Council serves as the legislative and policy-making body of Watertown. The Council appoints the City Manager as the Chief Administrative Officer of the City. The Director of Public Works reports to the City Manager and regularly interacts with the City Council.

## Finances

Watertown has an FY25 total budget of approximately \$204 million and a Standard and Poor's rating of AAA with a stable outlook. The City is in exceptionally strong and stable financial condition. Watertown has a fully funded Retirement System (as of July 2021) and a long-range funding plan has been created for addressing the unfunded OPEB liability which is scheduled to be fully funded in 2031. Additionally, it has a Building for the Future plan, which is a comprehensive, forward-looking initiative to address operational, and capacity improvements for all city and school facilities.

## Education

The [Watertown Public Schools](#) provides an excellent education and currently serves approximately 2,600 students. It has a preschool, three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Watertown's student body is diverse, reflecting the ever-changing demographics of the community and the country. Watertown schools are working to address climate resiliency in various ways, including via two new elementary schools that are Net-Zero due to energy efficiency efforts and solar deployment.

## Economic and Community Development

Watertown is transitioning into a post-industrial community with a mix of cultural, racial, educational, and economic diversity. There has been considerable investment in Watertown from biotechnology and life science industries as well as in the retail and restaurant sectors in recent years. The City benefits from its location, bordering Soldiers Field Road and the Massachusetts Turnpike, which are major arteries into downtown Boston. A variety of housing types and innovative reuse of old industrial sites along the river and former rail corridor provides flexible options for a mix of business and residential uses. In addition to having a key location, Watertown is a well-maintained community, with a relatively new DPW facility, a popular public library, recently constructed police station, three well-maintained fire stations, and upgraded recreation fields. The City is thriving, which is apparent via its vibrant downtown, squares, and mixed-use developments.

## Open Space, Recreation, and Climate Resiliency

Watertown has beautiful open space along the Charles River, in the reservation owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The City is also home to the multi-use [Arsenal Park](#), Filippello Park, the Whitney Hill Conservation Area, the [John A. Ryan Arena](#) (skating rink), and 10 playgrounds. The City's [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) identifies Watertown's open space and recreation resources and ensures the resources are not lost due to pressures of development or uncoordinated individual actions. The City is committed to equity, communication, and innovation while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enabling all residents to thrive in the face of climate change. Watertown is a leader in making high efficiency buildings the norm and powering them with clean energy. Watertown has three municipal solar installations, and two new elementary schools will be Net-Zero via energy efficiency and aggressive rooftop and canopy solar deployment.

### Important Links:

- [City of Watertown](#)
- [Home Rule Charter](#)
- [City Code](#)
- [Department of Public Works](#)
- [Annual Town Reports](#)
- [FY25 Annual Budget](#)
- [FY25 Capital Improvement Program](#)
- [Watertown Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Arsenal Park Master Plan](#)
- [Economic Development Report](#)
- [Watertown Square Area Plan](#)
- [Complete Streets Policy](#)
- [Resilient Watertown Climate and Energy Plan](#)



## The Ideal Candidate

- Bachelor's degree (master's is a plus) in civil engineering, public administration, or a related field.
- At least seven years of progressively responsible experience in municipal government, at least five of which should be in a public works or public works adjacent department; or any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.
- At least five years of supervisory experience.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships.
- Superior management and leadership skills.
- Skill in developing policies and procedures to accomplish goals and objectives.
- Proficient communication and organizational skills; responsive to the community.
- Ability to work both independently and as a team leader.
- Ability to collaborate and cooperate with other town departments.
- Skill in utilizing office computer software systems, such as Microsoft Office and other applications.
- A valid Massachusetts driver's license with good driving history.
- Registration as a Professional Engineer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is not required but is a plus.
- Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) Certification is not required but is a plus.

## How To Apply

Position is open until filled. For a guaranteed review of application materials, send cover letter and résumé via email, in a single PDF, by November 8, 2024, 3:00 p.m. EST to:

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

**Subject: Watertown Director of Public Works**

Questions regarding the position should be directed to:

Bernard Lynch, Principal  
Community Paradigm Associates  
[Blynch@communityparadigm.com](mailto:Blynch@communityparadigm.com)  
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*The City of Watertown, Mass., is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.*