

Greater Boston's Top Five Towns on the Rise for 2026

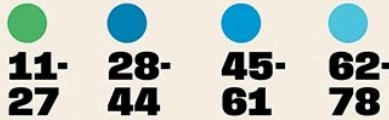
Five Massachusetts communities shot up our Top Places to Live list. What do they know that you don't?

by **BRITTANY JASNOFF** • 2/26/2026, 1:10 p.m.

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TOP PLACES TO LIVE 2026

THE DEFINITIVE RANKING OF GREATER BOSTON'S CITIES AND TOWNS



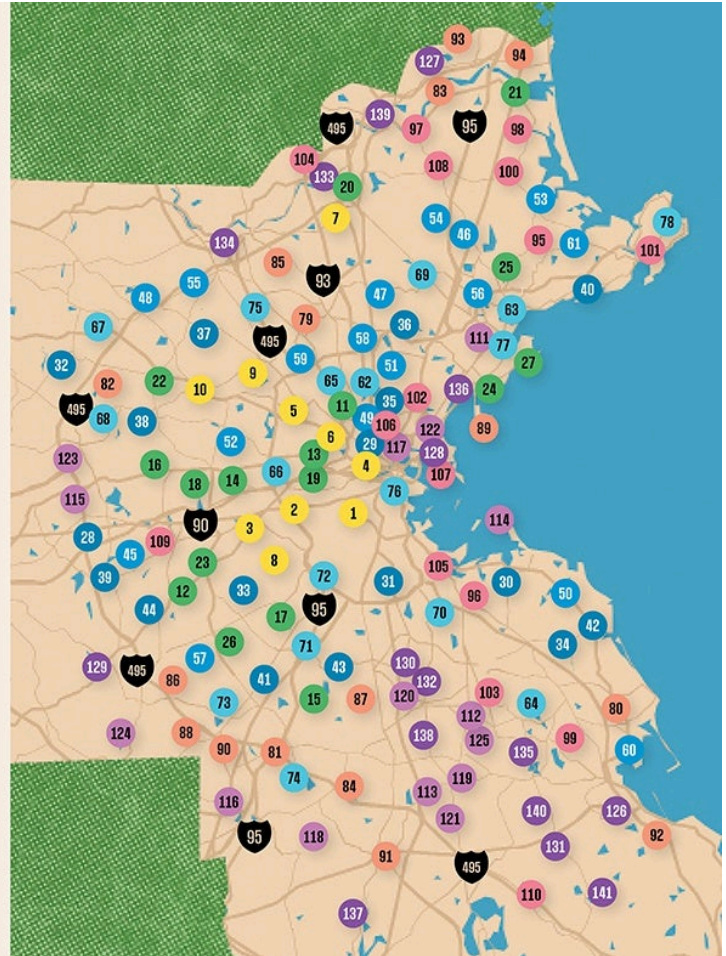
RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE
11	Winchester 6.01	28	Southborough 6.31	45	Ashland 5.66	62	Stoughton 5.41
12	Sharon 6.06	29	Somerville 6.31	46	Topshfield 5.66	63	Beverly 5.38
13	Dorchester 6.05	30	Wilmington 6.31	47	North Reading 5.64	64	Haverhill 5.38
14	Wilton 6.05	31	Milton 6.04	48	Westford 5.64	65	Woburn 5.38
15	Sharon 6.04	32	Harvard 6.03	49	Medford 5.63	66	Waltham 5.38
16	Sudbury 6.02	33	Dover 5.97	50	Chatham 5.69	67	Littleton 5.37
17	Westwood 6.00	34	Norwell 5.96	51	Walden 5.57	68	Low 5.37
18	Wayland 6.07	35	Melrose 5.96	52	Lincoln 5.55	69	Middleton 5.36
19	Watertown 6.05	36	Lynnfield 5.84	53	Spaulding 5.53	70	Ervington 5.36
20	North Andover 6.30	37	Carle 5.84	54	Soxford 5.53	71	Norwood 5.34
21	Newburyport 6.29	38	Maryard 5.93	55	Dorchester 5.52	72	Dorham 5.34
22	Acton 6.25	39	Hopkinton 5.92	56	Danvers 5.50	73	Haverhill 5.34
23	Natick 6.25	40	Manchester-by-the-Sea 5.89	57	Mills 5.49	74	Manchester 5.33
24	Swampscott 6.20	41	Weymouth 5.88	58	Reading 5.45	75	Billerica 5.25
25	Wenham 6.19	42	Schubert 5.80	59	Burlington 5.42	76	Roslin 5.20
26	Methuen 6.15	43	Canton 5.71	60	Dorbury 5.42	77	Salem 5.17
27	Marblehead 6.12	44	Holliston 5.67	61	Essex 5.41	78	Randport 5.16

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RANK	SCORE
1	Brookline 7.69
2	Newton 7.36
3	Wellesley 7.10
4	Cambridge 7.08
5	Lexington 6.96
6	Arlington 6.92
7	Andover 6.86
8	Needham 6.85
9	Bedford 6.84
10	Concord 6.78



RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE
79	Wilmington 5.36	96	Hamilton 4.84	111	Peabody 4.48	126	Kingston 4.12
80	Marshallfield 5.33	97	Weymouth 4.82	112	Abington 4.46	127	Merrimack 4.06
81	Fairborough 5.32	98	Groveland 4.80	113	West Driffield 4.45	128	Chelsea 4.05
82	Bedford 5.30	99	Newbury 4.79	114	Hill 4.39	129	Milford 3.95
83	West Newbury 5.08	100	Pembroke 4.74	115	Marlborough 4.38	130	Randolph 3.95
84	Easton 5.07	101	Rowley 4.72	116	Plainville 4.38	131	Plympton 3.89
85	Franklin 5.04	102	Dorchester 4.67	117	Everett 4.37	132	Holliston 3.87
86	Medway 5.01	103	Saugus 4.66	118	Norcan 4.37	133	Lawrence 3.83
87	Stoughton 4.99	104	Rockland 4.65	119	East 4.36	134	Lowell 3.79
88	Franklin 4.98	105	Methuen 4.62	120	Bridgeport 4.35	135	Norfolk 3.78
89	Norfolk 4.97	106	Dorbury 4.62	121	Amesbury 4.32	136	Lynn 3.71
90	Wrentham 4.93	107	Malden 4.61	122	Bridgeport 4.27	137	Quincy 3.70
91	Ryeplam 4.93	108	Westbury 4.59	123	Rowe 4.25	138	Brockton 3.65
92	Plymouth 4.89	109	Georgetown 4.58	124	Hudson 4.21	139	Haverhill 3.57
93	Amesbury 4.87	110	Frankingham 4.54	125	Bellingham 4.21	140	Halifax 3.49
94	Sudbury 4.87	111	Middleborough 4.48	126	Whitman 4.15	141	Dorset 3.33



For a closer look at the full list, [head here](#). / Illustration by Benjamin Purvis

Our **Top Places to Live in Greater Boston** ranking shifts annually—some cities hold steady, others slip, and a handful of towns make moves that are hard to ignore. This year, these five communities stood out for ascending the ranks among all 141 Greater Boston locales, dramatically improving their scores across categories like education, safety, housing, and more. In other words: Don't sleep on these five spots.

Greater Boston's Most Affordable Top Towns

Top Places to Live in Greater Boston for 2026: The Definitive Ranking



Stow is more than an apple-picking destination. / Wikipedia

1. Stow

Median Single-Family Home
Price \$861,000
Overall Score 5.37

Yes, the **apple** picking is great—but Stow has more going on than fall foliage and **cider doughnuts**. The town's scores climbed in nearly every category this year, including diversity, employment, and education. On that last front, a big addition is coming: The \$83 million **Masters Academy International**, a private school focused on athletic excellence, is set to open in the former Bose headquarters this September. And then there's the land itself. "You definitely get more rolling land

and kind of a country feel," says Kathleen Newton of Advisors Living. "It's all farms and very beautiful, lush land." Translation: space to breathe, less than an hour from Boston.