

# Lexington Then and Now

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## Community Growth

Lexington is a suburban community located 11 miles northwest of Boston. First settled in 1642, the town has grown to encompass 16.64 square miles with a population of approximately 30,000.



Parker, leader of the Lexington Militia

The Town was named after Lord Lexington, an English nobleman. The first battle of the

American Revolution was fought in Lexington on April 19, 1775 and the Town is now referred to as the “birthplace of American liberty”. The historic setting of the Battle Green and the number of colonial era buildings and exhibits annually draw thousands of visitors. The Battle of Lexington is re-enacted early in the morning of Patriot’s Day.

Settlement originally occurred on the best farmland. Construction of a railroad connection to Boston in the 1850’s began Lexington’s evolution from an agricultural community to a bedroom suburb within the Boston urban area. Construction of state highways and expressways has reinforced Lexington’s role as a desirable residential suburb. In the post-World War II era, suburban office park development, particularly of “high-technology” firms, has provided a diversified commercial and employment base within the town.

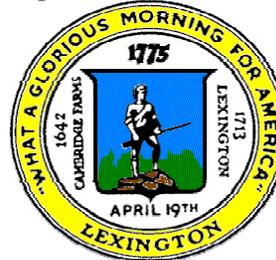
Lexington is a community that prides itself on the beauty of Town land, the safety of its residents and the excellence of its public school system. Numerous parks, conservation lands, museums and libraries provide exceptional opportunities for recreational and cultural activities. Today the Minuteman Bikeway connects Bedford, Lexington, Arlington, and Cambridge using the old railroad right-of-way. The town’s physical location allows easy access to Boston, the Atlantic Ocean, the White Mountains, and many important historical sites in New England.

## Town Government

In the spring of 1713, Lexington was incorporated as a Town and its residents established Lexington’s first Town Meeting. Lexington abolished the open Town Meeting in 1929 and established a representative Town Meeting to appropriate funds for Town services and to establish Town policies. Today twenty-one citizen representatives from each of nine precincts are elected for three-year rotating terms. In addition, the Moderator and several at large members participate in Town Meeting by virtue of their positions in Town government.

Town Meeting convenes for a series of meetings in the spring, and at other times when necessary, to approve annual appropriations and by-law changes. Town Meeting approves funding for the operating and capital budgets for the upcoming fiscal year, which runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. The current budget for all municipal and school departments is approximately \$160 million.

Lexington has operated under a Town Meeting – Board of Selectmen – Town Manager form of government since 1969. Each member of the unpaid, five-member Board of Selectmen is



elected for a three-year term to establish policy directives for Town government. The Selectmen appoint a Town Manager, the chief executive officer of the Town, who is

responsible for the implementation of the Board’s directives and daily administration of municipal services.

Town government relies on over 500 citizen volunteers who serve on approximately fifty permanent and ad hoc committees, commissions, and boards. These citizens provide advice and help administer programs relating to waste management, Lexington Center revitalization, bio-safety, personnel, transportation, human services, recreation, land use, tourism, and other important community issues.