

# Summary of U.S. Census Bureau’s 2022 Population Estimates for Massachusetts Cities and Towns

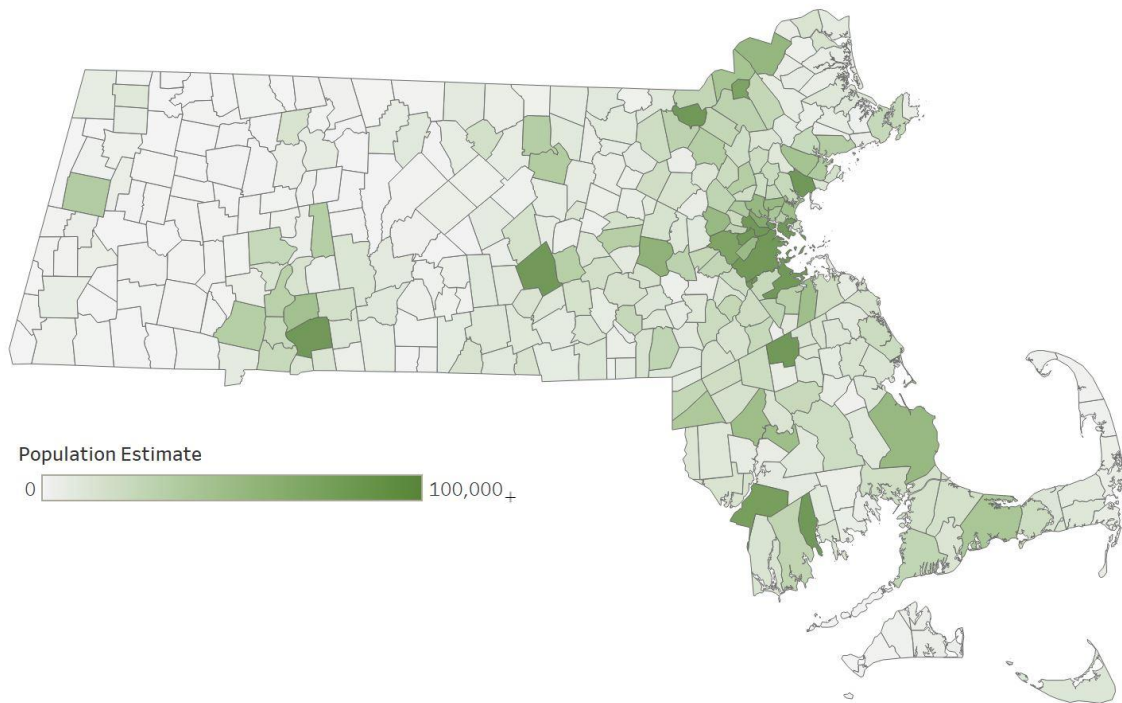
Prepared by:

UMass Donahue Institute  
Economic and Public Policy Research  
Population Estimates Program

**For Release May 18, 2023**

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Figure 1. Massachusetts Sub-County Population Estimates, July 1, 2022



UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

## Background

On May 18, 2023, the U.S. Census Bureau released updated population estimates for Massachusetts cities and towns (also called “minor civil divisions” or “MCDs”) for July 1, 2022. This new vintage of estimates is derived from the allocation of the Census Bureau’s 2022 county-level population estimates, released on March 30, 2023, to individual municipalities. While county-level estimates are produced by accounting for “components of change,” including births, deaths, and migration, sub-county estimates are produced by distributing the county-level household population to each city and town based on a housing unit formula and then adding the town’s “group quarters” population. The Bureau’s housing unit formula considers each town’s share of the county housing unit totals along with its specific persons-per-occupied-unit rate from the most recent census count.

The Vintage 2022 estimates were built from a “blended base” that includes a combination of 2020 Census Data, Census 2020 *Demographic Analysis* (DA) Estimates, and Vintage 2020 Population Estimates for April 1, 2020, which are based on the 2010 Census.<sup>1</sup> This updated methodology was utilized by the U.S. Census Bureau to account for various challenges of the 2020 Census. These challenges include the limitations of the new disclosure avoidance system applied to 2020 Census counts, the scheduling delays of census operations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing evaluation of 2020 Census data as a suitable base population for the annual estimates.

For more information on state and county estimates for Massachusetts, please see our detailed reports at: <https://donahue.umass.edu/business-groups/economic-public-policy-research/massachusetts-population-estimates-program/population-estimates-by-massachusetts-geography>

### County-Level Migration Trends

Many of the town-level trends observed in the V2022 population estimates relate directly to changes in county-level migration and immigration patterns in Massachusetts during and in the years just following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Census 2020 count showed unanticipated, accelerated population growth in the seasonal and rural areas of the state, with Nantucket, Dukes, and Barnstable showing the greatest percentage gains in the state between 2019 and 2020. Domestic migration into the seasonal counties of Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket, and Berkshire – and even the adjacent Plymouth and Franklin Counties - remained very strong in the 2020-2021 estimates year, according to Census Bureau estimates. At the same time, the more urban and most population-dense Massachusetts counties -- especially Suffolk, Middlesex, and, to a lesser extent, Norfolk -- experienced greater levels of net domestic out-migration to other U.S. counties in the 2020-2021 year. This urban out-migration included both movement to other Massachusetts counties, which comprised the majority of net movement, and increasing migration to other New England states such as New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island.<sup>2</sup> While positive immigration historically offsets domestic out-migration in the more urban counties of Massachusetts, in 2020 and 2021, immigration was also greatly reduced, compounding population loss in those counties.

The [V2022 Census county estimates](#) indicate that the migration and immigration trends observed in 2020 and 2021 have started to revert back towards pre-pandemic patterns. Immigration has started to rebound, slowing the population loss in Suffolk County, including Boston, and in Middlesex County municipalities. While all Massachusetts regions benefit from rebounding immigration to the state, Suffolk, Middlesex, Essex, Norfolk, and Worcester benefit the most, having the highest rates of immigration as a percentage of their populations in 2022. In terms of domestic migration, the 2022 estimates show an increase in domestic out-migration for the state as a whole. Within Massachusetts, however, they show decreasing movement out of the most population-dense counties of Middlesex and Suffolk counties and decreasing migration into the seasonal counties, compared to the previous year. Finally, as the state population continues to age and with overall decreasing fertility rates, half of Massachusetts counties experienced more deaths than births in the 2021-2022 estimates year, which also contributed to population loss in many places.

The Vintage 2022 population estimates for cities and towns reflect the broader trends observed in the county-level estimates released in March 2023. Just under half of the towns in Barnstable County continued to pick up population during the year –compared to growth in all towns, but at a slower pace than in the two previous

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<sup>1</sup> “Methodology for the United States Population Estimates: Vintage 2022.” Census.gov, US Census Bureau, Dec. 2022.

<sup>2</sup> According to UMDI’s analysis of IRS tax return data for years 2019, 2020, and 2021.



years. Towns in the other seasonal counties of Nantucket, Dukes, and Berkshire started to lose some of the population they had gained at the height of the pandemic through a reversal of domestic migration, with Nantucket and Dukes losing population in all of their towns, and Berkshire in 28 out of its 32 towns (88%). Towns in the denser, more urban counties such as Middlesex and Suffolk still show population loss in the 2021-2022 year, but to a lesser extent than in the previous year. And Middlesex, Plymouth, Worcester, Norfolk, Bristol, and Essex counties – most of which are highly influenced by rebounding immigration – are well represented among the state’s top 25 fastest growers this year.

## Annual Population Change 2021-2022

### Large Places: Cities and Towns with Populations >50,000

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2022 Sub-County Population Estimates, only 6 out of Massachusetts’ 26 cities or towns with populations of 50,000 or more in 2020 increased in population from July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022. Medford led the group in terms of total population gained with an estimated 3,236 person increase over the year and was also the fastest-growing large place in terms of percentage growth, with a 5.2% population increase. In terms of annual percentage change among places with populations over 50,000 in Massachusetts, Boston ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> this year with a 0.6% population decrease or a loss in population of 3,831 people. The shift in population away from Boston is a continuing trend from 2020 and aligns with wider urban population trends in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decrease in population in Boston has slowed down from July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022 compared to the previous year due to the rebound in international migration to pre-pandemic levels. However, net domestic out-migration, while slowing for Suffolk and Middlesex counties, has still not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, leading to the observed population decrease. Meanwhile, domestic outmigration has increased over last year in the rest of the state, contributing to population loss in most of the largest places in Massachusetts. Table 1 shows the estimated numerical change and percent change from July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022 for cities and towns in Massachusetts with populations over 50,000 in 2020.

Geography	July 1 Population Estimate		Change 2021 to 2022	
	2021	2022	Number	Percent
Medford	62,163	65,399	3,236	5.2%
Plymouth	61,925	64,269	2,344	3.8%
Methuen	52,882	53,241	359	0.7%
Quincy	101,142	101,727	585	0.6%
Taunton	59,701	59,922	221	0.4%
Cambridge	118,082	118,488	406	0.3%
Lynn	100,992	100,891	-101	-0.1%
Worcester	205,660	205,319	-341	-0.2%
Fall River	93,952	93,682	-270	-0.3%
Somerville	80,018	79,762	-256	-0.3%
New Bedford	101,007	100,682	-325	-0.3%
Haverhill	67,399	67,153	-246	-0.4%
Brookline	62,786	62,535	-251	-0.4%
Weymouth	57,655	57,410	-245	-0.4%
Chicopee	55,228	54,980	-248	-0.4%
Peabody	54,140	53,896	-244	-0.5%
Framingham	71,289	70,963	-326	-0.5%
Newton	87,799	87,381	-418	-0.5%
Waltham	64,393	64,065	-328	-0.5%

Lawrence	88,436	87,954	-482	-0.5%
Springfield	154,948	154,064	-884	-0.6%
Boston	654,537	650,706	-3,831	-0.6%
Lowell	114,288	113,608	-680	-0.6%
Brockton	105,501	104,826	-675	-0.6%
Malden	65,136	64,712	-424	-0.7%
Revere	59,517	58,528	-989	-1.7%

UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

### All Cities and Towns: *Single-Year Change*

Among the 351 individual cities and towns in Massachusetts, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 89 municipalities, or just 25%, increased in population between July 1, 2021 and July 1, 2022. This percentage is much lower than the Vintage 2020 estimates released by the Bureau in May of 2020 that showed 139 municipalities, or 40% of all, as increasing. Again, here we see the effects an increasing domestic out-migration component and increasing deaths over births in the county-level estimates to which the municipal estimates are controlled. The largest population gains from 2021 to 2022 were estimated in Medford (3,236), Plymouth (2,344), Everett (759), and Shrewsbury (717), representing a shift in population growth from the largest urban centers in the state, like Boston, Springfield, and Worcester, into smaller cities and nearby towns located mostly in Middlesex, Plymouth, Worcester, Essex, and Norfolk Counties. The table below describes the top 25 cities and towns in Massachusetts by numeric population change from 2021 to 2022.

City or Town	County	July 1 Estimate		Change 2021-2022	Percent change 2021-2022
		2021	2022		
Medford	Middlesex	62,163	65,399	3,236	5.2%
Plymouth	Plymouth	61,925	64,269	2,344	3.8%
Everett	Middlesex	48,591	49,350	759	1.6%
Shrewsbury	Worcester	39,088	39,805	717	1.8%
North Andover	Essex	30,702	31,295	593	1.9%
Quincy	Norfolk	101,142	101,727	585	0.6%
Franklin	Norfolk	33,136	33,656	520	1.6%
Berlin	Worcester	3,678	4,189	511	13.9%
Bellingham	Norfolk	16,917	17,407	490	2.9%
Cambridge	Middlesex	118,082	118,488	406	0.3%
Newburyport	Essex	18,294	18,662	368	2.0%
Methuen	Essex	52,882	53,241	359	0.7%
Rehoboth	Bristol	12,724	13,023	299	2.3%
Hopkinton	Middlesex	18,967	19,249	282	1.5%
Wrentham	Norfolk	12,194	12,457	263	2.2%
Medway	Norfolk	13,137	13,393	256	1.9%
Raynham	Bristol	15,220	15,474	254	1.7%
Taunton	Bristol	59,701	59,922	221	0.4%
North Reading	Middlesex	15,340	15,549	209	1.4%
Woburn	Middlesex	41,063	41,248	185	0.5%
Millis	Norfolk	8,675	8,836	161	1.9%
Ware	Hampshire	10,226	10,385	159	1.6%

Medfield	Norfolk	12,914	13,072	158	1.2%
Rowley	Essex	6,129	6,283	154	2.5%
Canton	Norfolk	24,458	24,609	151	0.6%

UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

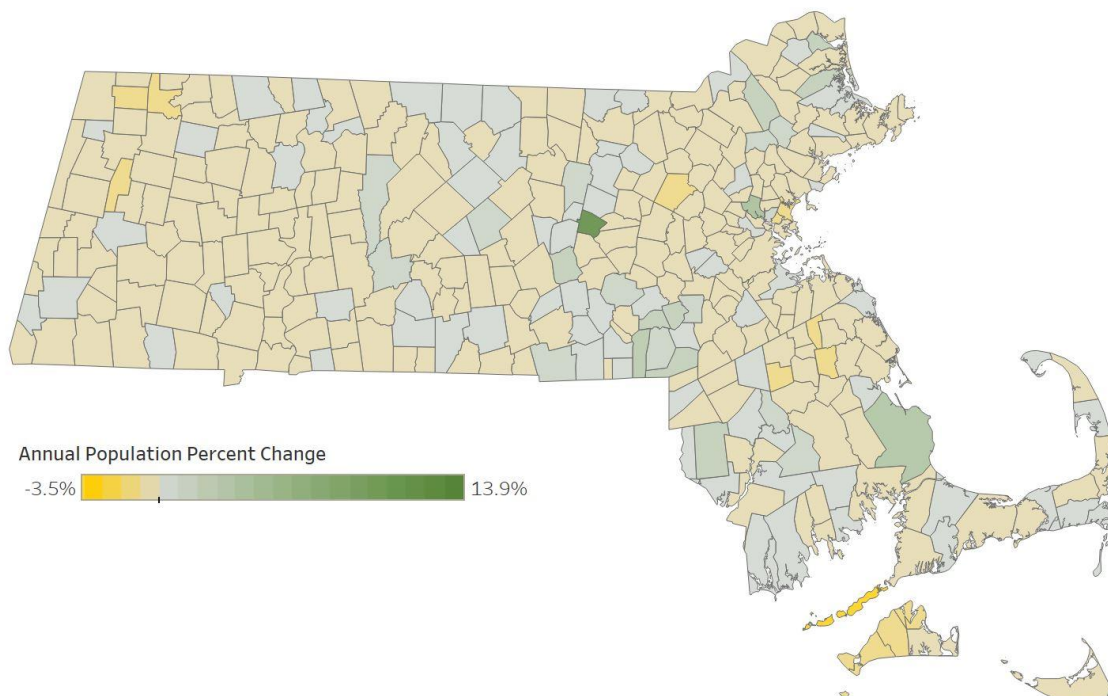
Percentage-wise, the fastest growers of the year were mostly small- to mid-sized towns and cities, including many in Norfolk, Worcester, Middlesex, and Essex Counties. The table below shows the top 25 fastest growing municipalities in the state in terms of percentage change from 2021 to 2022.

<b>Table 3: Top 25 Massachusetts Cities and Towns by Percent Population Change 2021 to 2022</b>					
City or Town	County	July 1 Estimate		Change	Percent change 2021-2022
		2021	2022		
Berlin	Worcester	3,678	4,189	511	13.9%
Medford	Middlesex	62,163	65,399	3,236	5.2%
Plymouth	Plymouth	61,925	64,269	2,344	3.8%
Bellingham	Norfolk	16,917	17,407	490	2.9%
Rowley	Essex	6,129	6,283	154	2.5%
Rehoboth	Bristol	12,724	13,023	299	2.3%
Wrentham	Norfolk	12,194	12,457	263	2.2%
Newburyport	Essex	18,294	18,662	368	2.0%
Medway	Norfolk	13,137	13,393	256	1.9%
North Andover	Essex	30,702	31,295	593	1.9%
Millis	Norfolk	8,675	8,836	161	1.9%
Shrewsbury	Worcester	39,088	39,805	717	1.8%
Raynham	Bristol	15,220	15,474	254	1.7%
Franklin	Norfolk	33,136	33,656	520	1.6%
Everett	Middlesex	48,591	49,350	759	1.6%
Ware	Hampshire	10,226	10,385	159	1.6%
Hopkinton	Middlesex	18,967	19,249	282	1.5%
North Reading	Middlesex	15,340	15,549	209	1.4%
Medfield	Norfolk	12,914	13,072	158	1.2%
New Salem	Franklin	996	1,008	12	1.2%
Rutland	Worcester	9,192	9,298	106	1.2%
Middleton	Essex	9,729	9,837	108	1.1%
Lakeville	Plymouth	11,766	11,895	129	1.1%
Lancaster	Worcester	8,308	8,394	86	1.0%
Douglas	Worcester	9,070	9,153	83	0.9%

UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

The map below displays the cities and towns in Massachusetts by annual percent population change between 2021 and 2022. The town of Berlin stands out as the municipality with the largest percent change with an estimated 13.9% increase in population.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, the two of the four cities which comprise Suffolk County – Revere and Chelsea, as well as several towns in Dukes County – Gosnold, Aquinnah, Oak Bluffs, West Tisbury, and Chilmark– demonstrated the largest percent decreases in the state ranging from -1.1% to -3.0%. In terms of percentage population loss, municipalities in Suffolk and Dukes counties overwhelmingly showed the greatest estimated percent decreases during the 2021-2022 period. The municipalities showing the largest *numeric* population decrease during the year were Boston (-3,831), Revere (-989), Springfield (-884), and Lowell (-680).

Figure 2. Estimated Annual Percent Change in Population by Massachusetts Municipality, July 1, 2021 to July 1, 2022



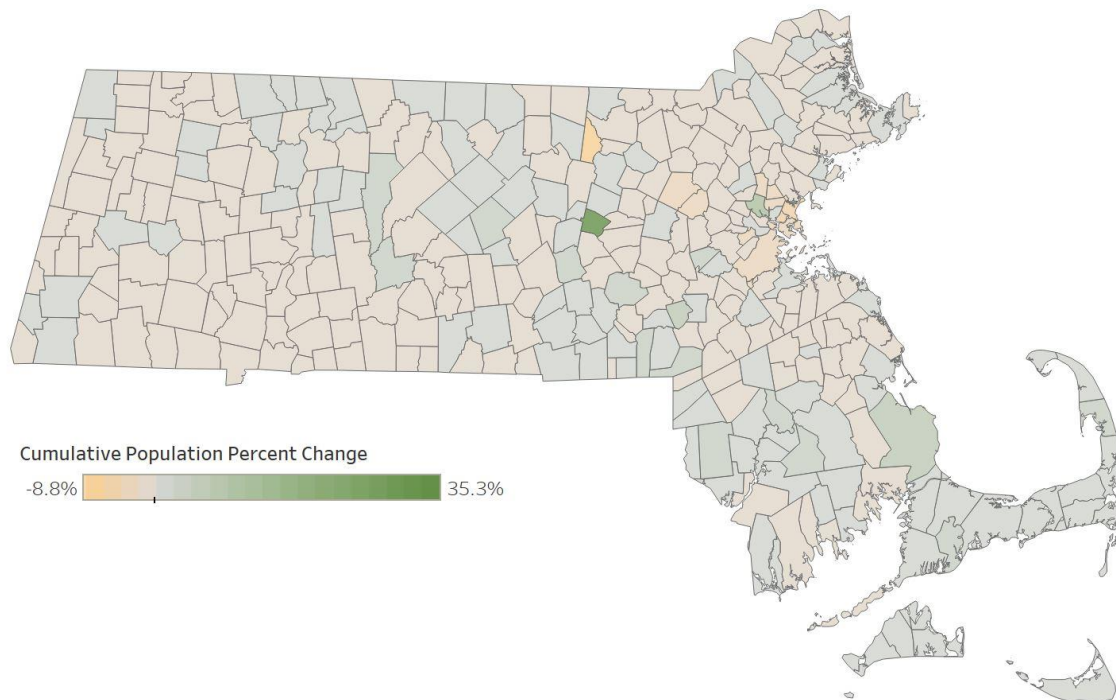
UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

<sup>3</sup> The large gain in Berlin is explained by a 30% increase in its housing units as estimated in the Census Bureau’s Building Permit data. In the dataset, 2020 and 2021 building permits for Berlin are “imputed” based on the last actual report of 215 new residential units in 2019. See: *Residential Building Permits Issued in Massachusetts Cities and Towns, Building Permits Survey (BPS)*. U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Indicators Division, Residential Construction Branch. Revised November 30, 2022.

## Cumulative Change Since 2020

Since the 2020 Census, the largest cumulative population gains at the county level occurred in Barnstable, Plymouth, and Bristol Counties and the largest cumulative percentage gains were seen in Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties. At the city and town-level, however, the fastest growers since the 2020 Census are found in Middlesex, Plymouth, and Worcester Counties. The municipalities with the largest cumulative population gains since the 2020 Census include Medford (5,733), Plymouth (3,055), Shrewsbury (1,484), Berlin (1,030), and Wellesley (971). By percent change, the largest gains from 2020 to 2022 were estimated in Berlin (32.6%), Medford (9.6%), Plymouth (5.0%), Millis (4.4%), and Rehoboth (4.2%).

Figure 3. Estimated Cumulative Percent Change in Population, April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 by Massachusetts Municipality



UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

Table 4, below, lists the 25 fastest growing municipalities in Massachusetts since April 1, 2020 by population growth, followed by a table of the 25 fastest growing municipalities by percentage growth (Table 5).

Table 4: Massachusetts 25 Fastest Growing Cities and Towns by Cumulative Population Change April 1, 2020 Base to July 1, 2022					
City or Town	County	April 1, 2020 Base	July 1, 2022	Cumulative Population Change	Rank Cumulative Change
Medford	Middlesex	59,666	65,399	5,733	1
Plymouth	Plymouth	61,214	64,269	3,055	2
Shrewsbury	Worcester	38,321	39,805	1,484	3
Berlin	Worcester	3,159	4,189	1,030	4

Wellesley	Norfolk	29,553	30,524	971	5
Amherst	Hampshire	39,270	40,059	789	6
Barnstable	Barnstable	48,912	49,532	620	7
Falmouth	Barnstable	32,525	33,104	579	8
Rehoboth	Bristol	12,498	13,023	525	9
Taunton	Bristol	59,400	59,922	522	10
Hopkinton	Middlesex	18,763	19,249	486	11
Bellingham	Norfolk	16,947	17,407	460	12
Mashpee	Barnstable	15,061	15,468	407	13
Franklin	Norfolk	33,272	33,656	384	14
North Andover	Essex	30,914	31,295	381	15
Millis	Norfolk	8,461	8,836	375	16
Newburyport	Essex	18,290	18,662	372	17
Lakeville	Plymouth	11,523	11,895	372	17
Woburn	Middlesex	40,882	41,248	366	19
Sandwich	Barnstable	20,261	20,611	350	20
Raynham	Bristol	15,135	15,474	339	21
Ware	Hampshire	10,061	10,385	324	22
Wrentham	Norfolk	12,175	12,457	282	23
Medway	Norfolk	13,112	13,393	281	24
Medfield	Norfolk	12,800	13,072	272	25

UMass Donahue Institute. Source data: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Minor Civil Divisions in Massachusetts: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (SUB-MCD-EST2022-POP-25). U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. May 18, 2023

**Table 5: Massachusetts 25 Fastest Growing Cities and Towns by Cumulative Percent Population Change  
April 1, 2020 Base to July 1, 2022**

City or Town	County	April 1, 2010 Base	July 1, 2021	Population Change	Percent Change	Rank Percent Change
Berlin	Worcester	3,159	4,189	1,030	32.6%	1
Medford	Middlesex	59,666	65,399	5,733	9.6%	2
Plymouth	Plymouth	61,214	64,269	3,055	5.0%	3
Millis	Norfolk	8,461	8,836	375	4.4%	4
Rehoboth	Bristol	12,498	13,023	525	4.2%	5
Shrewsbury	Worcester	38,321	39,805	1,484	3.9%	6
Wellesley	Norfolk	29,553	30,524	971	3.3%	7
Lakeville	Plymouth	11,523	11,895	372	3.2%	8
Ware	Hampshire	10,061	10,385	324	3.2%	9
Bellingham	Norfolk	16,947	17,407	460	2.7%	10
Mashpee	Barnstable	15,061	15,468	407	2.7%	11
Rutland	Worcester	9,054	9,298	244	2.7%	12
New Salem	Franklin	982	1,008	26	2.6%	13
Hopkinton	Middlesex	18,763	19,249	486	2.6%	14
Wrentham	Norfolk	12,175	12,457	282	2.3%	15
Wellfleet	Barnstable	3,564	3,644	80	2.2%	16
Raynham	Bristol	15,135	15,474	339	2.2%	17





Medway	Norfolk	13,112	13,393	281	2.1%	18
Medfield	Norfolk	12,800	13,072	272	2.1%	19
Newburyport	Essex	18,290	18,662	372	2.0%	20
Amherst	Hampshire	39,270	40,059	789	2.0%	21
Williamstown	Berkshire	7,514	7,663	149	2.0%	22
Rowley	Essex	6,163	6,283	120	1.9%	23
Sterling	Worcester	7,985	8,139	154	1.9%	24
Douglas	Worcester	8,983	9,153	170	1.9%	25

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For additional detailed tables and maps related to this summary report refer to the appendices of the UMDI May 18, 2023 release at:

<https://donahue.umass.edu/business-groups/economic-public-policy-research/massachusetts-population-estimates-program/population-estimates-by-massachusetts-geography/by-city-and-town>

For more information on the U.S. Census Bureau’s Vintage 2022 Population Estimates Release and to see data for the rest of the U.S., visit the U.S. Census Bureau’s estimates page at:

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/data/data-sets.html>

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