



★★★ *The Best Places to Live* ★★★

THE HIPSTER

★Winner
CHELSEA

Runners-up
**LOWELL, MALDEN, MEDFORD,
WATERTOWN**

Once so badly mismanaged that the state had to take it over, Chelsea has emerged of late as a paradise for urban types who appreciate its low housing costs, loft-style living, and mellow vibe. They've brought with them a couple of funky cafés to add to the mix of ethnic eateries and thrift shops that make up the other two points of the hipster hat trick. Lowell has seen a similar transformation with lofts fashioned from its former mill buildings, while Medford, Malden, and Watertown have successfully attracted the scenester overflow from gentrifying Somerville.

THE GRANOLA-EATING LIBERAL

★Winner
LINCOLN

Runners-up
**ARLINGTON, NEWTON,
WATERTOWN**

For the budget-minded
CHELSEA

If John Kerry is looking for somewhere to retire, he might consider settling down in Lincoln, where residents voted for him by a margin of nearly three to one in November. Here, the "L" word means what it *used* to mean. So what if about half the homes here sold for more than \$1 million last year? The town also has a highly educated population and spends—ahem—liberally on culture. The Democratic machine is the only game in town in more proletarian Chelsea, which has the highest percentage of registered Dems (55.5 percent) of any city in Massachusetts except Cambridge.