

COMMUNITY PROFILE FOR THE TOWN OF MERRIMACK

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HISTORY

Although Merrimack has gone through tremendous changes in recent years, many historical landmarks have survived development and are essential in defining the town's unique identity. Nearly half of those who responded to the 1993 Master Plan survey perceived the need to preserve historic aspects of Merrimack.

The Town of Merrimack has a rich and varied history. Home to the Pawtucket, Nashuaway and Penacook native American tribes long before the arrival of the English speaking colonial settlers these tribes settled along Merrimack's river systems living by fishing, hunting, gathering and agriculture.

Originally incorporated on April 2, 1746, Merrimack grew to its present size of 33.8 square miles by a second incorporation occurring on June 5, 1750. Beginning with Merrimack's first European settlers to the present, the Town has seen a transition from agriculture, timber and grist mills to the world of computers and other high technology industries. Some of Merrimack's most notable historical sites include the 1847 Schoolhouse, the Turkey Hill Cemetery, and the "Old" Town Hall building that was dedicated on January 1, 1873, and still remains in use as town offices.

REGIONAL SETTING

Beginning in the 1970s and into the 90s, Merrimack has become an important industrial center in its own right. Today Merrimack is home to many leading manufactory high technology firms, which produce a wide range of commercial and industrial products, attracted here because of the favorable tax structure, solid business climate and overall quality of the labor market. During the 80's Merrimack was one of the fastest growing communities in the state of New Hampshire. Although situated in the most populated area of south central New Hampshire, Merrimack still maintains its quiet rural atmosphere. It also forms a vital industrial, social, economic and transportation link between New Hampshire's two largest cities, Manchester to the north and Nashua to the South, which makes for an easy commute to a job or the area tourist attractions. The mountains, beaches, and Boston are all within an hours drive which adds to Merrimack's attractiveness for business and recreational purposes. The town has a special goal that it tries to uphold and that is, " to maintain a well-planned, affordable, aesthetically pleasing community with a rural, residential atmosphere and open space uses, and an effectively managed municipal and school government."

TRANSPORTATION

Merrimack's transportation system has played and continues to play a major role in the development of the town and its future. The upgrading and maintenance of the town's roads are

a constant concern of the Merrimack's Department of Public Works. With several new regional transportation projects completed or in the planning stages, Route 101A improvements, Camp Sargent Road Bypass, the Circumferential Highway, and the Manchester Airport Access Road. Merrimack is continually working with its neighbors to ease the flow of traffic for its residents and businesses. The town has three access points to the Everett Turnpike. When combined with five miles of major highway, 54 miles of arterial and collector streets, and 83 miles of local roads, this comprehensive street and highway system allows easy travel to all parts of the town, adjacent communities, the New England region, and beyond. The completed Camp Sargent Bypass project involved the reconstruction/ relocation of Camp Sargent Road, which serves as an arterial link between NH 101A and Continental Boulevard Industrial area. The bypass was designed to remove traffic from Naticook Road and the existing Camp Sargent Road. The Circumferential Highway involves the possible construction of a bridge across the Merrimack River and a limited access, four lane highway connecting with the F.E. Everett Turnpike in southern Nashua, forming a semi-circle through Hudson and Litchfield and re-connecting with the turnpike at a new exit 9 interchange near the Nashua/ Merrimack line.

Rail Services

Presently passenger services are not available in Merrimack, although there is the Boston + Maine Railroad line and it provides services through the heart of the town's industrial district. Planning for the extension of passenger rail to Nashua from Massachusetts is well underway. With eventual links planned to Merrimack.

Airports

Merrimack's residents and visitors enjoy convenient access to three area airports that currently provide varying levels of services. Manchester's brand new terminal facility at Grenier Field is a breath of fresh air to the area for plane travel. Major carriers continue to expand their

schedules in Manchester, and Merrimack residents may have quicker access to a major airport with the future development of a new bridge and highway leading to the Manchester Airport. Logan Airport is also only about an hour away in Massachusetts and offers international trips.

The other area airport, Boire Field, is in Nashua; this facility offers corporate flights and offers modern flight training programs and will become increasingly more important with planned expansion programs.

EDUCATION

Merrimack School District is governed by a five member school board elected at the School Districts May meeting, along with a six member Planning and Building Committee, which makes recommendations regarding buildings and potential sites. The Merrimack School District serves children in grades Readiness through 12th grade at three elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. There is no public kindergarten in the school district. Mastricola Elementary School is located near the middle and high schools and is the oldest of the three elementary schools. Reeds Ferry Elementary School is located in the northeastern part of Merrimack on a 35.6 acre site. Thorntons Ferry Elementary School is on Camp Sargent Road in southern Merrimack and is on a 29.8 acre site. Reeds and Thorntons Ferry are almost identical in design. James Mastricola Middle School, the oldest of the complex off Baboosic Lake Road houses grade 6 , 7, and 8th graders. Merrimack High School is located just down the road on McElwain Street and houses grades 9-12 .

This chart shows past enrollments and future projected enrollments.

YEAR	GRADES															TOTAL
	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SPED.		
	ENROLLMENTS															
1994-95	58	402	399	373	374	373	435	382	355	382	358	325	284	77	4577	
1995-96	11	458	401	421	381	378	375	446	367	383	347	335	299	73	4697	
1996-97	39	395	452	414	425	371	383	369	427	353	339	337	335	72	4711	
1997-98	35	413	381	453	415	426	376	403	370	433	359	340	324	81	4809	
1998-99	38	363	424	384	457	422	432	372	393	377	409	357	334	86	4848	
1999-00	24	367	365	446	396	461	434	428	362	379	365	410	348	86	4891	
2000-01	28	381	368	385	450	389	448	450	428	394	381	341	408	90	4941	

Source: Merrimack School District

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Thomas More College, a highly reputable liberal arts college is located in the southern part of town. Other educational facilities in the Merrimack area which offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs and technical training include: Franklin Pierce Law School, Saint Anselm's College, Daniel Webster College, New England College, Hesser College, Merrimack Valley College, New Hampshire College, New Hampshire Vocational and Technical College, and Rivier College. There are also many fine educational facilities in neighboring Massachusetts.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Merrimack operates under the town meeting form of government. Until the 1970s, town business was overseen by a three-member Board of Selectmen and a largely volunteer staff. Hiring of full-time employees to share the increasing workload of the Selectmen began in the 70s. A Public Works Department was created in 1976. In 1978, Merrimack residents adopted a Town Manager/ Town Meeting government structure, expanded the Board of Selectmen to its current five-member size, and adopted the Municipal Budget Act. The Town adopted the official ballot law in 1997. Once each year residents gather at the Annual Town Meeting to hear and decide matters of community importance. The Clerk's duties include certifying actions by the Selectmen and other Town officials, managing all town records and serving as an elected official. Conducting the town's day to day business is the responsibility of the Town Manager. Appointed by the Selectmen, the Manager is the chief administrative and personnel officer.

Town Facilities

The west wing of the town hall (Old Town Hall) has served as the town's administrative offices since its dedication in 1873. The first floor houses the Finance and the Welfare Department. The District Court is located on the second floor. The upper level of the east wing (New Town Hall) houses the offices of the Selectmen, Town Manager, Assessing Department, Town Clerk, and Tax Collector. The lower level of the east wing houses Community Development Department, which includes Planning, Zoning, Code Enforcement, Building, Economic Development, Historic Resources, Heritage Commission, Conservation and Health. Police Department is located on the corner of Hillside Terrace & Baboosic Lake Road. The Administrative staff of the Public Works Department is located in the Kent building on Bishop Street, part of the Town Hall Complex. Public Works Highway Department is located on Turkey Hill Road. Town Landfill is located off of Lawrence Road on Fearon Road. WasteWater Treatment Facility is located off Daniel Webster Highway on Mast Road. Central Fire Station is located on Daniel Webster Highway adjacent to the Souhegan River. Reed Ferry Fire Station is located on North Daniel Webster Highway and South Merrimack Fire Station is located on Naticook Road.

RECREATION

Merrimack's location affords many opportunities for individuals and families to participate in a wide variety of recreational activities year round. The sea coast, lakes, beaches, and mountains are within an hours drive, which is ideal for summer and winter vacations. Activities offered include hiking, camping, biking, swimming, fishing, and hunting to name a few. Other appealing aspect that the Merrimack area has to offer is the many historical sites, museums, county fairs, and the city night life.

Locally Merrimack has an overwhelming amount of recreational facilities. The town stands near or at the national standard for facilities based on population. The available facilities consist

of four major parks, an ice rink, tennis courts, Merrimack river access, and town forest lands. Wassermann park is the newest and largest of the parks and is the location of the town's Parks and Recreational Department. The park contains basketball, and tennis courts, along with two softball fields and a soccer field, the towns only public swimming pool is also here. Located on Naticook Lake, this town park offers beach frontage for swimming and fishing. The town offers boat access to the Merrimack River at the Depot Street boat ramp and at another ramp in the southern part of Town. In the past few years, the Town has gained over fifty acres of Merrimack riverfront land including three islands in the river itself. Twin Bridges park that is located in the center of town has the town's largest playground called Kids Kove. In the early 80's it was adopted by a local Boy Scout troop. Turkey Hill Park offers baseball and softball fields. Veterans Memorial Park is another park on Lake Naticook and offers a picnic area, ballfields and a playground. The newest addition is the "Bandstand" at Abbie Griffin Park located adjacent to the Town Hall Complex.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMBULANCE	424-2212
ASSESSING DEPARTMENT	424-5136
BUILDING/CODE ENFORCEMENT	424-3531
CONSERVATION COMMISSION	424-3531
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS	424-5137
FIRE DEPARTMENT	424-3690
HEALTH	424-3531
LANDFILL SITE	424-2604
MEDIA COORDINATOR	424-8524
MERRIMACK LIBRARY	424-5021
MERRIMACK DISTRICT COURT	424-9916
MERRIMACK VILLAGE WATER DISTRICT	424-9241
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT	882-1046
PLANNING & ZONING	424-3531
POLICE DEPARTMENT	424-3774
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE	424-2331
TOWN CLERK / TAX COLLECTOR	424-3651
WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY	883-8196

ACCOMMODATIONS

Merrimack currently has four modern hotel/motel facilities that include one full service hotel, two Motels, and a long-term stay facility that together offer over 500 rooms. All accommodations are located conveniently near the highway. Merrimack also has some of the finest restaurants in the state to enjoy a night out dining. Visitors to Merrimack also have convenient access to many other quality establishments in neighboring Nashua, Bedford, Hudson, Litchfield, Amherst and Manchester.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Within Merrimack and adjacent communities, many religious organizations serve

all denominations. Several of these organizations are affiliated with or offer educational, counseling, and/or health care services.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Merrimack is well served by local and regional medical facilities. The Town has two medical clinics, several medical offices offering family practice, pediatric and specialty care along with chiropractic, dental and eye care facilities. Patients needing ambulance transportation will be brought to other area hospitals. Hospitals serving Merrimack include the Catholic Medical Center and Elliot Hospital in Manchester. St. Joseph Hospital and the Southern N.H. Medical Center in Nashua and the Veterans Administration Hospital. There are many other area family medical centers in the region, along with the excellent facilities in Massachusetts.

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

There are over thirty organizations within Merrimack that are involved in a variety of community service activities. Some of these groups are affiliated with national and international organizations while others are of local interest. Represented in Merrimack are :

American Legion	Rotary
Chamber of Commerce	Veterans of Foreign Wars
Jaycees	Lions Club
Kiwanis	Senior Citizens
Knights of Columbus	Exchange Club

MERRIMACKS PROJECTED POPULATION TO 2010

2000	2005	2010
25,119	31,965	38,372

2000 Population by age:

<i>5 and under</i>	<i>1,731</i>
<i>5 to 19</i>	<i>6,110</i>
<i>20 to 34</i>	<i>4,216</i>
<i>35 to 54</i>	<i>9,183</i>
<i>55 to 64</i>	<i>2,275</i>
<i>65 and over</i>	<i>1,601</i>

Median Age 36

TOP TEN MOST POPULATED NEW HAMPSHIRE

CITIES / TOWNS

1. MANCHESTER	107,006
2. NASHUA	86,605
3. CONCORD	40,687
4. DERRY	34,021
5. ROCHESTER	28,461
6. SALEM	28,112
7. DOVER	26,884
8. MERRIMACK	25,119
9. KEENE	22,563
10. PORTSMOUTH	20,784

Based on 2000 Census

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION							
Total	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Single Family Detached	75	102	164	168	130	174	87
Mobile Home	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Multi Family	0	0	0	0	56	0	104
Garden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town House	0	0	0	8	11	11	0
Duplex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elderly	0	0	0	0	0	0	46

Multi-family style homes had all but stopped being built in Merrimack in the late 80s and into the 90s. Single family detached housing reached its lowest point in a decade in 1991, but has made a strong come back in 2000 with 174 respectively. Multi-family housing construction resumed in 1999.

Source: Merrimack Building Department

1. Standard and Poors Bond Rating: A+

2. Moody's: A

3. 2000 Tax Year

Total Valuation: 1,643,048,010

Tax Rate: 21.45

1. Municipal: 5.40

2. County: 1.79

3. School: 8.67

Valuation

1. Residential: 76.06%

2. Commercial/Industrial 23.94%

4. Town Budget For FY 1999-2000

Town: 18,654,152

Rates

Per

Rate per \$1000 1998 1999A 2000B

Town 6.00 5.99 5.40

County 2.14 2.12 1.79

School 22.82 8.99 8.67

Tax Rate 30.96 24.58 21.45

A - Reflects new state school tax and education adequacy grants

B- Reflects property evaluation

Source: Merrimack Assessing Department

THE LARGEST TAXPAYERS IN RANKING ORDER

NAME	TYPE OF BUSINESS	2001
		ASSESSED VALUATION
1. FIDELITY (FMR)	FINANCIAL SERVICES	69,263,957
2. ANHEUSER BUSCH COMPANY	BREWER	54,605,900
3. BAE SYSTEMS	ELECTRONICS	22,496,900
4. NASHUA CORPORATION	PAPER PRODUCTS MFG	17,981,100
5. KOLLSMAN, INCORPORATED	ELECTRONICS MFG	13,305,800
6. PUBLIC SERVICE OF N.H	UTILITY CO	12,830,400
7. UNITRODE INTEGRATED	CIRCUITS MFG	11,024,500
8. CHEMFAB CORP (St. Gobain)	COATED FABRICS	9,455,200
9. SHANER HOTEL GROUP, L.P.	HOTEL & LAND	7,571,700
10. APPLE DEVELOPMENT L.P.	MALLS	4,781,200

Source: Merrimack Assessing Department

EMPLOYMENT

<u>MERRIMACK</u>	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
LABOR FORCE	13,730	13,650	13,140	12,850	13,650	13,780	15,033
EMPLOYMENT RATE	5.7	5.0	3.0	3.8	2.7	2.4	2.3
UNEMPLOYED	790	680	410	500	380	350	390
<u>HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY</u>							
LABOR FORCE	189,270	188,340	191,340	182,440	192,980	195,840	213,390
EMPLOYMENT RATE	6.1	5.0	4.2	3.9	2.8	2.7	2.6
UNEMPLOYED	11,500	9,350	8,060	7,480	5,520	5,390	5,640
<u>NEW HAMPSHIRE</u>							
LABOR FORCE	618,330	623,140	632,550	597,200	625,390	633,250	685,510
EMPLOYMENT RATE	5.3	4.6	4.0	4.2	3.1	2.9	2.8
UNEMPLOYED	32,870	28,730	25,160	25,890	20,170	18,950	19,190

MERRIMACK'S AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT BY PLACE OF WORK

NON-MANUFACTURING	8,561	GOVERNMENT	960
MANUFACTURING	3,645	PRIVATE PLUS GOVERNMENT	13,166
PRIVATE INDUSTRY	12,206		

Source: N.H. Department of Employment Security, Department of Economic Analysis