



1. Vision and Goals

1.1 Community Vision

Merrimack is a community that cherishes its rural residential town character, school system, vast open spaces, and the natural resources that provide numerous cultural and recreational opportunities. This rural character is the Town's core value as expressed by the places where people gather, the open spaces, and the historical and cultural assets that residents and visitors hold dear. This Master Plan sets the course for the Town to balance the need to protect important natural, historic, and cultural areas; create new economic opportunities for business; sustain a diversity of housing options; and enhance the design of the built environment. This Plan seeks to preserve the Town's character and the great quality of life experienced by its residents. Merrimack is a great community to raise a family and live regardless of whether you are a single, younger or elder community member. Merrimack believes that its identity and sense of place is what attracts people who would like to live, work, shop and play in the community. Through its actions thus far, and through its ongoing implementation of the goals of the 2013 Master Plan, the Town will continue to thrive and build further upon these assets.

1.2 Land Use and Community Design Goals

- Provide for a sustainable and balanced land use pattern that incorporates the needs of the many stakeholders in Merrimack.
- Encourage the proper balance between residential, commercial and industrial development to ensure the Town continues to prosper while protecting the historic, environmental and rural character of the community.
- Look for opportunities to creatively revitalize underutilized and vacant sites.
- Establish guidelines for future multi-family, commercial and industrial development to enhance the design of buildings to create a quality built environment.
- Protect existing residential neighborhoods.

1.3 Housing Goals

- Encourage high-quality housing in attractive neighborhoods through development of innovative land use controls, regulations and programs, such as incentive bonuses to encourage features in site plans/New Hampshire Revised Statutes (RSA).
- Maintain the Town of Merrimack's compliance in meeting the housing affordability goals pursuant to the Workforce Housing Law.
- Ensure that housing choices are available to meet the needs of current and future generations in Merrimack.

1.4 Economic Development Goals

- Establish, maintain and expand the lines of communication and relationships between the public and private sectors.
- Retain Town businesses and attract new ones.
- Unify the Town's public sector to become more economic development-oriented.
- Develop a stronger Town "brand" that highlights economic development efforts.
- Make the Town's development review process more transparent and consistent.
- Refine the Town's zoning and land use regulations to allow for greater flexibility.
- Encourage repositioning and redevelopment through the creation of public-private development finance mechanisms such as tax increment financing (TIF).

1.5 Natural Resources Goals

- Continue to preserve significant parcels of land along the Merrimack and Souhegan Rivers, Grater Woods and Horse Hill to enhance biodiversity, recreational opportunities, and water quality.

- Integrate biodiversity protection and land use through Merrimack's land use regulations.
- Protect the quality of water in Merrimack's rivers and ground water supplies through effective stormwater management practices, subdivision regulations, and design.
- Develop community-wide environmental awareness of open space and forest conservation and practices that protect water.

1.6 Historic Resources

- Protect Merrimack's historic and archaeological resource by careful identification and documentation of historical resources.
- Continue to promote interest and pride in Merrimack's heritage through local exhibits, attractively designed markers, historical tours, and school curriculum.
- Preserve Merrimack's unique historical assets including its scenic roads, historic barns and graveyards, as well as the historic sites located along the Merrimack River.
- Integrate the protection of unique historic resources into land use regulations.

1.7 Utilities and Energy Goals

- Continue water conservation efforts and enhance public awareness of water conservation techniques through appropriate plant selection and watering.
- Continue to explore potential new water supplies to meet projected and future needs.
- Promote energy efficiency in municipal and public operations, starting with an Energy Committee that can advise and support energy efficiency efforts by Town departments.
- Encourage energy efficiency, conservation, and sustainability in Merrimack to reduce energy consumption and cost.
- Ensure that Merrimack stays competitive within the global economy by supporting telecommunications infrastructure and broadband.

1.8 Communities Facilities Goals

- Develop a comprehensive planning process for short- and long-term capital improvements for all town facilities and services.
- Given the often conflicting demands, establish priorities for building and facility upgrades and replacement.
- Establish new or improved/upgraded facilities and increase staffing for public safety to meet demands resulting from anticipated growth.
- Provide and enhance recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.
- Lead by example in community facilities and operations by establishing sustainability principles and initiatives.

1.9 Transportation Goals

- Promote and implement a roadway system that encourages the appropriate use of the Town's street system to reduce traffic volumes and travel speeds on local roads and within residential neighborhoods, relieve congestion on some of the Town's major travel routes, and proactively anticipate changes in the local roadway system as a result of future development or changes in the travel demand.
- Plan, develop, and maintain a system of bicycle and pedestrian ways serving the residents, including linkages among neighborhoods and local connections across the F.E. Everett Turnpike to the US Route 3 corridor.
- Develop a town-wide plan to prioritize the needs for additional sidewalk and pedestrian way construction throughout the Town and to plan for funding of the plan implementation.
- Establish a separate Capital Reserve Fund for sidewalk and pedestrian way construction.
- Coordinate land use planning with transportation planning to ensure that land use does not overburden the capacity of the Town's transportation system, so that land development and related transportation improvements are coordinated as to timing, individual components of the transportation system are appropriately utilized, and the ability to expand the transportation system is preserved where necessary.
- Promote and provide for mixed-use, higher density development, where appropriate, that will enable less use of the automobile.
- Provide for the enhancement of aesthetics associated with any planned transportation infrastructure improvements.
- Provide for the safety of all motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and travelers on and within the Town's transportation system through the implementation of appropriate design standards for improvements; improve and/or upgrade traffic control devices (such as signage, pavement markings, and lighting) in specific areas where deficiencies currently contribute toward public safety concerns and/or as opportunities arise.
- Promote the management of traffic operations on the roadway system by maintaining acceptable levels of service on the arterial and collector streets, by improving the efficiency of the existing system, and by the timely implementation of traffic operational improvements.
- Continue to seek the cooperation of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission in monitoring and evaluating traffic flow and safety problems on State highways, and in coordinating transportation planning within the Town.
- Establish a multi-modal approach to the Town's transportation system, including pedestrian and bicycle travel as well as future consideration for bus and rail service, in order to assist in reducing the dependency on automobiles for travel, and thereby reducing the need to increase capacity on the roadway system.
- Seek adequate funding from public and private sources including through grants, fees, and exactions to support the expansion, improvement, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system.