



7. Energy and Utilities

7.1 Introduction

The status and availability of a town's utilities and public services is a necessary component to planning for the future growth of a community. In Merrimack, there are restrictions on the availability of utilities in certain areas of Town due to topography, slope, soil types and other factors. These constraints need to be identified and taken into consideration when planning any new developments. This chapter includes a description and future plans for: 1) electrical infrastructure; 2) natural gas; 3) telecommunications; and 4) water supply.

7.2 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.

7.3 State Context

The State of New Hampshire enabled communities to adopt energy chapters in their Master Plans in 2008. The State of New Hampshire established the Climate Change Policy Task Force, which in 2008, prepared the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan. The Plan identifies that some of the most significant reductions in greenhouse gases could be achieved through increased energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy and establishing land use policies that reduce the reliance on the automobile as the primary means of travel. The plan sets forth the recommendations that New Hampshire's greenhouse gas emissions be reduced by 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2025 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 consistent with the New England Governors – Eastern Canadian Premiers resolutions and the scientific community's recommendations. Building further upon these efforts, in 2009, the Legislature authorized the establishment of local energy committees at the municipal level. These committees are often comprised of local citizens and municipal staff members that are charged with assessing and improving community action on energy use and climate change. The Town of Merrimack does not yet have a designated energy committee, and it is recommended that Merrimack explore the possibility of creating an energy committee as a next step.

7.4 Electrical Infrastructure

Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) is the main electricity supplier for the Town of Merrimack. PSNH is a subsidiary of Northeast Utilities, an energy company based in Connecticut and Massachusetts which operates New England's largest energy delivery system. With three fossil fuel-fired generating plants, nine hydroelectric facilities, one biomass plant, and one solar array, PSNH has over 1,150 megawatts of NH-regulated generating capacity.

In Merrimack, PSNH provides service to approximately 11,335 customers, or "accounts," which include homes, commercial establishments, businesses, and outdoor lights. Distribution and transmission lines, which are placed along roadways or within "rights-of-way," carry power throughout Town to individual customers. The voltage from these lines is stepped down to a voltage that can be utilized by customers through the use of transformers and other electrical equipment.

PSNH offers customers the ability to purchase renewable energy as part of its EarthSmart Green Rate. Depending on a customer's level of membership, PSNH will buy Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) equal to 25 percent, 50 percent, or 100 percent of a customer's monthly energy use. Those certificates provide revenue to renewable energy suppliers and are equivalent to purchasing power directly from them. In addition to the GreenRate, PSNH also provides net metering to customers with renewable energy installations that produce more electricity than what is used. Net metering allows meters to run backwards when the energy generated on site (for example, through rooftop solar panels) exceeds the energy being used on the site. Any energy generation that goes unused during a billing period converts to an energy credit toward later bills so customers receive financial benefits for the energy generation.

Electricity is delivered to Merrimack through six distribution substations, which are located in Amherst, Merrimack and Nashua. Two transmission switching substations are also located in Merrimack, to serve the Town and surrounding communities.

PSNH anticipates being fully capable of providing an adequate supply of electricity to Merrimack at full build-out. PSNH has undertaken three substation and line projects since 2005 to meet existing and future customer load. PSNH's Engineering Departments develop long-range plans, which are reviewed and analyzed annually, to ensure that PSNH has the necessary facilities and equipment in place to serve new and existing customers.

The role of PSNH's Transmission Department is to improve power quality and the reliability of electric service; this results in fewer power outages which are shorter in duration and affect fewer customers. The Transmission Department also works to enhance competition in the wholesale electricity markets, to create a more robust transmission system for homeland security, and to make New Hampshire more attractive to businesses and positioned for continued population growth and energy usage. PSNH's Distribution Department works in unison with their Transmission colleagues by building and servicing the facilities in the neighborhoods and along the streets and roads that serve customers directly.

7.4.1 Energy Usage for Merrimack

PSNH compiles aggregate figures for electricity use by all customers in Merrimack. The data are not broken down by class of customer (i.e. residential vs. commercial). Based on data from the last two years, the customer base has remained relatively steady while electricity use has decreased slightly (see [Table 7-1](#)).

Table 7-1: Electricity Use by Merrimack Customers

Town-wide Electric Use 2010–2011		
	2010	2011
Total KWh	327,899,343	317,979,276
# of Customers	11,143	11,161

Source: PSNH Northeast Utilities System

7.4.2 Energy Efficiency Programs

New Hampshire's Restructuring Act, RSA 374-F:3 X, prompted electric utilities in the State of New Hampshire to offer a variety of energy efficiency programs for both residential and commercial/industrial customers. These programs, funded by the System Benefits Charge, were initially rolled out to customers beginning in 2002. In Merrimack, the PSNH operates a number of energy efficiency programs to serve residential, commercial and industrial customers under the NHsaves program. PSNH energy efficiency programs include consultations with residents interested in new construction of Energy Star Homes, a non-income based home weatherization program that helps residents pay for energy efficiency improvements, and an income-based home energy assistance program that helps residents manage energy use and reduce electric bills. Home energy assistance helps reduce residents' electricity bills through home improvements such as insulation, air sealing, thermostat replacement, hot water conservation measures, and cost-effective appliance and lighting upgrades.

In addition to the energy efficiency programs offered through PSNH, the State of New Hampshire allows towns and cities to give property tax exemptions to property owners who install certain renewable energy systems, such as solar systems, wind turbines, and wood-fired heating systems. Merrimack has not yet offered this to its residents but it is recommended that Merrimack explore this option as a next step. To be implemented, this property tax exemption would have to be approved in a town-wide election.

7.4.3 Natural Gas

In July 2012, Liberty Utilities took over National Grid natural gas service in New Hampshire, including within the Town of Merrimack. Liberty Utilities now owns and controls the natural gas distribution lines in the Town of Merrimack.

Natural gas is currently provided to much of the Town, including many neighborhoods located along the Baboosic Lake Road, Camp Sargent Road, NH 101A, Peaslee Road/Naticook Road, Turkey Hill Road and Thorntons Ferry Road corridors. Natural gas is also provided along the Route 3 corridor south of Griffin Street.

7.5 Telecommunication Infrastructure

Telecommunications in Merrimack are provided by two primary entities. The major provider in the region is Comcast which provides cable, high speed internet, and phone service. Comcast cable plans are on average approximately \$40 per month. Comcast phone rates are \$25–\$40 per month. High speed internet is available throughout the Town with rates at approximately \$40 per month. Additionally, these services are available bundled from \$100–\$200.

Given the trend toward the use of cellular phone lines rather than landlines, the role of wireless communications has increased over the last few years. Although local data could not be obtained, there has been an overall shift that has resulted in a growing percentage of households that do not have a landline at all, meaning that cellular phones double as the "home"

phone number as well. This area is served by major wireless communication companies, such as Verizon, ATT, Sprint and T-mobile.

The expansion of access to broadband service is an important economic development issue as a means to provide opportunities for small businesses and home offices. The ability for employees to work out of their homes not only provides flexibility for workers to stay at home when needed, but it also can help to reduce commuter travel during peak times. Adequate broadband coverage that allows workers to work at home is one strategy to reduce the greenhouse gases associated by eliminated some of these work trips. Through its Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and the Telecommunications Advisory Board (TAB), the State of New Hampshire prepared a Broadband Action Plan in 2008.¹ It contained a number of recommendations including streamlining the wireless facility siting process, remove barriers to right of way access, improve utility pole access, provide incentives for service to underserved areas, engaging local government in developing and supporting broadband initiatives, among numerous other recommendations. The Town should monitor these initiatives in order to determine how best to leverage improvements to broadband access across Merrimack as the technology continues to move toward faster and more cost-effective communication.

The New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program (NHBMPP) is a comprehensive program that evaluates where broadband is currently available in New Hampshire and provides assistance on how to encourage increased levels of broadband adoption and usage throughout the state. As access to technology plays an ever increasing role in our daily and work lives, it is critical to plan for not only broadband coverage but also the speed with which computers are able to download and upload information. Part of the NHMPP is a broadband availability inventory and mapping effort, in addition to planning and technical assistance initiatives. The broadband mapping program shows that Merrimack is relatively well-covered by broadband technology.² However, Merrimack should monitor the site to ensure that Merrimack download speeds and coverage continue to keep pace with current broadband technology for both economic development and sustainability reasons.

Unfortunately, there is sometimes a divide between households that have access to broadband and those that do not, either due to cost or availability concerns. The Town should work with providers and developers to ensure that broadband access is made available in new housing developments, especially affordable housing projects.

7.6 Public Water Supply

7.6.1 Merrimack Village District

The Merrimack Village District (MVD) is a Municipal Corporation established and regulated in accordance with the provisions of RSA 52 as amended. Under this law, the District has similar powers like a town and is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, Clerk, Treas-

1 <http://www.nheconomy.com/uploads/Final-Report-082808.pdf>

2 New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program, Broadband Service Availability Viewer v1.0. (<http://broadbandnh.sr.unh.edu/NHBroadbandServiceViewer1.0/>). Accessed September 2012.

surer and Moderator. The MVD provides water to over 85 percent of the town by servicing and maintaining 893,000 feet of pipe, 889 fire hydrants, 7 wells (6 active, 1 inactive), 3 water storage tanks and 2 booster stations. The MVD manages over 7,500 customer accounts, which include residents and businesses.³ The breakdown of water use by category is approximately 81 percent residential, 14 percent commercial, and 5 percent industrial.

All of Merrimack water comes from ground water from water pumped from wells in both Merrimack and Hollis. The Merrimack Village District (MVD) is one of two primary public water suppliers for the Town of Merrimack. MVD water is often referred to as “town water,” it is a separate entity and is not a part of Merrimack Town government. The existing MVD system resulted from the combination of the original MVD system and the Reeds Ferry System. The original system was formed in 1955. At that time it encompassed the area from Baboosic Brook on Route 3 to the Elbit Systems property in Thorntons Ferry. Customers of the Reeds Ferry System, which was developed in 1934 or thereabouts, held a special meeting before the 1955 formation of the MVD at which they chose not to join with the MVD. The two systems did eventually combine in 1974 with a combined service area of about 10,000 people.

The two systems were still essentially isolated although connected by gate valves in 1975 when Whitman and Howard prepared a water supply study for the MVD. The 1975 study made a number of recommendations intended to improve provision of water to two high-pressure service areas, improve fire flow capability and supplement the district’s water supply. Many of the recommendations (e.g. abandonment of the Reeds Ferry tank and construction of a 4 million gallon storage tank on Turkey Hill, opening of the gate valves, addition of transmission mains and installation of MVD Well No. 6) were implemented.

7.6.2 Water Supply

All of the MVD’s water comes from groundwater. The distribution system is divided into two pressure zones that are defined by elevation. The main pressure zone serves the eastern portion of Merrimack, and the high-pressure zone serves the portion of Merrimack west of Naticook Road, Meetinghouse Road and McQuestion Road. Each zone is served by one water storage tank. Water is pumped from sand and gravel packed wells, through a network of pipes into our largest storage tank for distribution to MVD customers within the main pressure zone. Water from this zone is then pumped from a booster station into the high pressure zone where two smaller tanks store water to distribute to customers within the high pressure zone.

The MVD’s system is comprised of six (6) functioning sand and gravel packed wells with good water quality and sufficient yield. The MVD’s newer wells, Wells 7 and 8 are located in the Town of Hollis. According to the MVD, there are no economically viable well locations remaining within the Town that will provide suitable volumes of water so water conservation is critical. Well capacity and installation dates are listed in [Table 7-2](#). Capacity was determined based on 24-hour pumping of each source. However the MVD does not currently pump any of our wells on a 24 hour basis for an extended amount of time, during the summer months with the lack of rain we do see an increase in usage and longer pump cycles.

3 Merrimack Village District Annual Report 2011, p. 5

Table 7-2: Merrimack Village District Well Capacity*

Well	Installation Date	Capacity (gpm) ¹	Capacity (gpd) ² at 24-hour pumping
1	1956	0	decommissioned
2	1960	1100	1,584,000
3	1972	800	1,152,000
4	1956		see note
5	1970	625	900,000
6	1981	not used	not used
7	1997	429	617,760
8	1997	671	966,240
Totals	-	3,625	5,220,000

Source: Underwood Engineers, Inc. Merrimack Village District Water Supply Evaluation Update 12/15/2010

* Notes: Wells #4 & #5 are pumped through a common station for treatment and are considered together. Wells #7 & #8 are pumped through a common station for treatment and are considered together.

¹ gallons per minute

² gallons per day

Water from all of the MVD wells is stored in one of three storage tanks in Merrimack. The first storage tank was constructed in 1979 and has a holding capacity of four million gallons. The other two tanks were constructed in 1988 and can hold one million gallons each. The water is treated on-site at each pumping station with Chlorine, Lime and Zinc Potassium Polyphosphate and then distributed through a network of over 169 miles of water mains to homes, businesses and schools.

Future Water Demand

The current capacity of the existing MVD system (assuming a 24-hour pumping rate for each well) is about 5.22 million gallons per day (mgd) or 3.64 mgd if the largest well is not in service. This meets the current annual average day demand of 2.2 to 2.5 mgd but falls short of the high end of the maximum daily demand of 4.3 to 5.4 mgd. The average daily demand is the average daily use over an entire year. The maximum daily demand is the highest use recorded for one day within the year. The maximum day typically occurs during the summer months after long, dry periods. Maximum daily demand is usually caused by landscape irrigation and other outdoor water uses like filling swimming pools and washing cars.

The MVD Water Supply Update, estimates that the average daily demand in year 2030 would be approximately 2.9 mgd and the maximum daily demand in year 2030 would be approximately 5.9 mgd. The average daily demand projected in year 2030 is well within the existing system capacity. The projected maximum day demand of 5.9 mgd in year 2030 exceeds the current system capacity. The MVD has been actively looking at new sources as well as improvements to existing ones. One of the recommendations of the “MVD Water Supply Evaluation Update” issued in 2010, currently under consideration by the Town, is to blend well 6 with wells 7 and 8 and treat the Fe/Mn.⁴ This will not only improve water quality, but will add an additional 864,400 gallons per day (gpd) into the system putting the system capacity

⁴ Underwood Engineers. MVD Water Supply Evaluation Update. December 15, 2010.

over 6 mgd meeting the maximum day projection of 5.9 in year 2030. Blending these wells together (with potential Fe/Mn treatment) will bring the VOC's from well 6 to near or below detection along with improving the water quality at wells 7 and 8 prolonging or possibly avoiding the need for a treatment plant for the three wells in the future.

Another recommendation from the MVD Water Supply Evaluation Update is slated for the year 2012 - 2013 in the MVD Summary of CIP Projects to increase the pumping rate at well 2 from 1,100 gallons per minute (gpm) to 1,500 gpm at which the Town is currently permitted for. This will increase the system capacity an additional 576,000 gpd. Mitchell Woods is a source identified during the most recent water search with limited supply that could be used during high demands (summer months) with potential to add 432,000 gpd to the capacity of the system. MVD is currently in the permitting process for this source with no definite date for its construction.

Once these improvements are made, the system capacity is expected to increase by 1.87 mgd if pumped on a 24-hour basis, bringing the total system capacity to 7 mgd. If for any reason should any of the existing wells go off line, the system may not be able to meet the maximum daily demand that typically occurs during summer. The MVD continues to encourage water conservation along with infrastructure improvements.

Preparing for Future Water Demand

In order to reduce the maximum daily demand that occurs primarily during the summer months, the MVD implemented an odd-even management policy effective in 1999. This policy allows residents with odd numbered houses to use water outside on odd numbered days and residents with even numbered houses on even numbered days. The one exception to this rule is that all residents are allowed to water outside on the last day of the months of March, May, July, August and October, but only from 5AM to 8AM. These water restrictions help to manage the distribution system by lowering peak daily demand and protect against seasonal fluctuations. The policy is expected to continue indefinitely and has been successful in lowering the weekly demand. When system capacities cannot meet demands (due to a well being offline and/or increased water use during the summer months), MVD has periodically purchased water from Pennichuck Water Works (see below). However, MVD has not needed to purchase water on a regular basis since 1995.

In addition to outdoor watering limitations, the MVD has implemented a public education program to encourage water conservation as well as groundwater protection. The MVD is committed to education in conservation by providing literature at the customer service counter, sending out mailings and offering "I save water kits" to interested customers. This outreach changes regularly from "water wheels" with conservation tips to jar openers with reminders "to turn off water when brushing your teeth." Merrimack is the only community in the state to receive the distinction of becoming a Groundwater Guardian Community through the National Groundwater Foundation.

The MVD also has a number of naturalistic, educational landscaping projects for viewing by the public, which show how to use drought resistant, hardy native species and low maintenance grass blends to reduce water use. The landscape systems also have rain barrels on hand to collect rainwater for watering the plants during dry spells. In addition, the MVD will be considering conservation rate structures to help reduce the demands on the system.

The MVD is currently considering a Master Plan Update, however, based on the last update in 2000, the following recommendations are being followed:

- Continue to implement the odd/even water management plan (described above);
- Put Well #6 back online as growth requires; and
- Work with new businesses to help keep outside watering in their facilities at a minimum.

The MVD developed a strategy to address water supply demand and aquifer recharge issues in the Naticook Basin. A series of recommendations were made to address water supply and aquifer recharge issues. Specifically, it was recommended that the existing outdoor watering limitations remain in place, that separate commercial and industrial irrigation meters be used to control demand, that drought resistant alternative landscaping be encouraged and that moisture sensitive irrigation systems be employed to minimize waste. The MVD is continuing to work toward implementing the improvements needed to serve its existing customers as well as to ensure that the Town's needs can be met at build-out.

7.6.3 Pennichuck Water Works

Pennichuck Water Works was founded in 1852 and is the largest investor-owned water company in the State of New Hampshire. Pennichuck Water Works serves over 110,000 customers in the City of Nashua and the Towns of Amherst, Hollis, Merrimack and Milford. In addition, Pennichuck owns and operates 11 community water systems in Bedford, East Derry, Epping, Milford, Newmarket, Plaistow and Salem, New Hampshire.

Pennichuck Water Works currently provides water for southeastern Merrimack. The service area is bounded by the Merrimack River to the east, the FEE Turnpike to the west, the Merrimack/Nashua border to the south and extends to the area around Industrial Drive to the north. The service area includes hundreds of housing units and some of the Town's largest industries such as Anheuser-Busch, BAE Systems and Nashua Corporation.

An agreement between MVD and Pennichuck established an emergency water line at the State Barn, located directly across from the Anheuser-Busch facility, along Daniel Webster Highway that both Pennichuck and MVD can draw from. Pennichuck also ties into the MVD water line near the Home Depot along 101A in order to help with summer peak demand. Although MVD has purchased water from Pennichuck in the past, there has not been a consistent purchase since 1995. There are currently no Pennichuck Water Works storage facilities in Merrimack. However, a booster station and connection is planned for the Daniel Webster Highway area just west of Anheuser-Busch south of Exit 10.

The southern portion of Merrimack that ties into the Pennichuck system currently consumes approximately 722 million gallons per year, or 2 million gallons per day. Anheuser-Busch is the largest consumer, using nearly 1.8 mgd. According to the Town of Merrimack Build-out Study, updated 2001, the area of Merrimack served by Pennichuck Water Works can accommodate an additional 62 housing units and 2,844,351 square feet of non-residential floor area. Although the potential water demand will depend heavily upon the type of use that is developed, Pennichuck Water Works anticipates they can meet the water supply needs of its service area at build-out. The emergency connection agreement with MVD and the addition of the new booster station and connection is designed to provide the quantity of water needed to support the southeast portion of Merrimack.

7.7 Recommendations

Water Conservation

- U-1 Continue to implement Town water odd/even day restrictions for outdoor water use that help to manage the distribution system by lowering peak daily demand and protect against seasonal fluctuations.
- U-2 The MVD should use separate commercial and industrial irrigation meters to control demand.
- U-3 The MVD should continue to expand homeowner education programs to reduce demand and encourage water conservation such as alternative drought-resistant plants for gardens on residential and commercial properties.
- U-4 The MVD should create list of native and drought-resistant plants and flowers for the public that is posted on the Town's website.
- U-5 The MVD should work with all businesses to help keep outside watering in their facilities to a minimum.

Energy

- U-6 In order to address energy issues in a comprehensive manner throughout Merrimack, the Town should establish an Energy Committee. As an example, the Town of Bedford recently established such a committee. The following is its mission statement:
 - › The Bedford Energy Commission is formed to facilitate energy efficiency, conservation, sustainability, reliability and affordability within the community and will develop recommendations to advance these objectives relative to public buildings and facilities, and may develop recommendations to advance these objectives relative to residences, local businesses, civic institutions and transportation. The Bedford Energy Commission will serve in an advisory role in support of the Town Council and School District. In its advisory role in support of the Town Council and School District, the Bedford Energy Commission will review construction, renovation and maintenance projects and will provide periodic reports covering short and long range recommendations for action by the Town Council, School District and other appropriate officials of the Town or School District.⁵
- U-7 The Town should consider providing for property tax exemptions to property owners who install certain renewable energy systems, such as solar systems, wind turbines, and wood-fired heating systems.
- U-8 Conduct detailed energy audits to specifically identify what is needed in each building owned by the Town and the School District. Pursue available grant funding to help cover the cost of this initiative. By conducting energy audits and identifying strategies for improvements that can reduce fuel and electricity consumption, the Town can reduce costs in the long-term and serve as a "leader by example" in future efforts to encourage residents and businesses to do the same. In addition to focusing on

5 See http://www.bedfordnh.org/pages/BedfordNH_BComm/Energy/energy.pdf

town-owned buildings, the Town should address energy usage in its fleet of vehicles and street lighting (grants are frequently available to switch to LED street lighting, for example).

- U-9 Once all the audits are completed, the Town should prepare a detailed energy reduction plan that should establish an energy reduction goal (a certain percentage reduction to be achieved over a period of time).⁶ Included in such a plan would be the following considerations:
- › Prioritized list of specific projects based on projected energy savings, as well as estimated capital and operating costs for new building construction, retrofits and renovations
 - › New vehicle or technology costs, projected annual energy savings, and timing of future vehicle purchase
 - › Cost and projected energy savings for street and traffic lighting

Among the tools that can be used by municipalities to track energy consumption is the Energy Star Portfolio Manager, which is a free energy and water consumption tracking software program available on the Energy Star website.⁷ Consumption can be tracked in individual buildings as well as a combination of numerous buildings.

- U-10 Contact utility companies that service Merrimack prior to undertaking major street repairs so that any planned utilities work can be done at the same time to minimize disruption to local neighborhoods and save costs
- U-11 The Town should consider adopting an official policy to purchase only fuel efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever commercially available and practicable.
- U-12 Review the zoning ordinance to address potential land use changes that encourage mixed-use, and compact development patterns that reduce automobile trips. Conversely, energy efficiency should be considered for future development in the undeveloped residential areas of the Town in order to minimize the impacts of sprawl.
- U-13 Include street lighting as part of a comprehensive energy policy for the Town. Consider a requirement for energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) street lighting in any new developments.
- U-14 Consider adopting regulations that recommend or incentivize the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or similar standards for new construction, including municipal, commercial, industrial and multi-family buildings. Municipalities across the country have established such standards as a means to establish a benchmark for sustainable development.
- U-15 Adopt building code regulations that enhance energy efficiency in all new and renovated residential buildings. These should be performance driven regulations designed to meet standards of efficiency based on the Home Energy Rating System (HERS). As an explanation of this code revision, the Residential Energy Services Network offers the following:

⁶ A typical goal advocated by agencies in New Hampshire and Massachusetts is a 20 percent reduction within five years of commencing the program.

⁷ See http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=evaluate_performance.bus_portfoliomanager

- › “Home energy ratings provide a standard measurement of a home’s energy efficiency. Ratings are used for both new and existing homes. In new homes rating often verify energy performance for the ENERGY STAR homes program, energy efficient mortgages, and energy code compliance. Homeowners who want to upgrade the home’s energy efficiency can use the energy rating to evaluate and pinpoint specific, cost-effective improvements. For existing homes, homeowners can receive a report listing cost-effective options for improving the home’s energy rating. An energy rating allows a homebuyer to easily compare the energy performance of the homes being considered.
- › There are two types of ratings:
 - a. Projected ratings - Ratings performed prior to the construction of a home or prior to the installation of energy improvements to an existing home.
 - b. Confirmed ratings - Ratings completed using data gathered from an on-site inspection, which could include performance testing of the home.”⁸

Telecommunications

- U-16 Work with Department of Resources and Economic Development to address issues of telecommunications access to encourage people to work from home.
- U-17 Monitor efforts to ensure that Merrimack download speeds and coverage continue to keep pace with current broadband technology.
- U-18 The Town should work with broadband providers and developers to ensure that access is made available in new housing developments, especially workforce housing projects.

⁸ See <http://www.resnet.us/ratings/overview/default.htm>