

merrimac public library LONG RANGE PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2009 – 2013



submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners
by the Merrimac Public Library Long Range Planning Committee

October 1, 2007

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MERRIMAC PUBLIC LIBRARY

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*This plan has been reviewed and approved by the Merrimac
Public Library Board of Trustees on September 20, 2007.*

Susan Coburn, Co-Chairperson

Ellen Evans, Co-Chairperson

Jen Brown
Yvonne Cosgrove
Linda Getz
Jeff Hoyt

acknowledgements

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Jen Brown Chair of LRP, Library Trustee
Ellen Colburn School Librarian
Bonnie Collins Board of Selectmen
Tina Follansbee Library Director
Eric Getz Community Participant, Parent
Linda Getz Library Trustee
Katie Harris Circulation Assistant, Teen
Mark Hebenstreit Library Building Committee
Peter Lundy Community Participant, Parent
Laura Mailman Council on Aging
Lee Morphett Library Volunteer
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NORTHEAST MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM (NMRLS)

Consultants / Facilitators

Susan Babb
Mary Behrle
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LIBRARY TRUSTEES

We would like to thank the Library Trustees for their support and feedback in the Long Range Planning endeavor.

Jennifer Brown
Susan Coburn, Co-Chair
Yvonne Cosgrove
Ellen Evans, Co-Chair
Linda Getz
Jeffrey Hoyt

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Linda Getz



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Merrimac Public Library
serves and enriches the community
with access to intellectual, cultural
and recreational resources.



methodology

THE MERRIMAC PUBLIC LIBRARY LAUNCHED its Long Range Planning process during the Summer of 2006. Following Library Director Tina Follansbee's inquiries, Scott Kehoe from Northeast Massachusetts Regional Library System (NMRLS) presented the "NMRLS Planning for Results" model to Ms. Follansbee and the Board of Trustees at their September meeting.

A diverse, twelve-member Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) was formed to include Trustees, Town Department Heads, a Selectman, librarians, and patrons, while also representing parental, youthful and senior points of view. The LRPC took part in three meetings facilitated by NMRLS consultants. The first, held in early February 2007, identified the Library's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). At the second meeting in March, the LRPC brainstormed and prioritized Community Vision Statements based on outcomes from the first meeting. These became the basis of the LRPC's draft Goals and Objectives.

A Community Survey was developed and distributed to Merrimac residents, providing them with an opportunity to inform the LRPC how the Library could best serve their needs. NMRLS tabulated the responses.

Survey results were reported at the LRPC's third meeting in August, which helped to solidify the Library's Goals and Objectives and clarified the Action Plan for the first Fiscal Year.

A final draft of the plan was submitted to the Trustees for their approval on September 20, 2007.



assessment of user needs

IN MAY OF 2004, the Thomas Hoyt Library in Merrimac closed its doors and the newly built Merrimac Public Library opened to the public on July 1. The impressive, state-of-the-art building generously accommodates growing collections, services and numbers of visitors. Its bright and tranquil environment serves well with the friendly and helpful staff in creating an inviting, everyday destination for children and adults. A 120-person capacity Meeting Room, open to the community for organized events, entertainment, exercise, and Town use, has made the Library a valuable asset. With its convenient location and ample parking, it has even become the Town's official polling location.

As part of the planning process, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) designed a Community Survey to give residents an opportunity for input into the long range vision. NMRLS launched an online version of the Survey, to which visitors could link from the Library's website. Announcements ran in local newspapers to explain the Long Range Planning process, emphasize the value of community input, and inform how to access the Survey online or where to look for a hard copy. A campaign for a town-wide paper copy distribution included: mailing to each household, with the help of the Light and Water Department's mailing capabilities; sending them home in elementary school communication envelopes; handing them to and collecting them from Town Meeting attendees in May 2007; and having additional copies available at the Library. The LRPC's goal was at least a 10% rate of response. With 2,400 residents contacted, 310 Surveys were submitted, surpassing the goal with a 13% return rate.

The Survey results, along with the LRPC's identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and formulated Community Vision Statements, guided the determination of the following user needs:

■ **LARGER AND MORE DIVERSE COLLECTION.** The community expressed a need for a wider range of materials in the collection, including fiction and nonfiction books, reference materials and DVDs.

■ **BETTER HOURS.** Although 61.3% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the Library's hours, written comments made it clear that there is a set of people who prefer a different schedule. Residents who work later in the evening and students in need of resources for school were most vocal in their need for expanded hours.

■ **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING.** While the Library already provides successful programming for children and has begun to offer more to adults, there is opportunity to expand further and, specifically, to collaborate with other community organizations in doing so.

■ **PROMOTION.** More frequent promotion will raise community awareness of the Library and its services and programs. The library does a fine job of providing services to the community, but there is a need to get the message out to residents and to especially reach out to those who are not using the Library's services.

■ **REMAINING STATE-OF-THE-ART.** The new Library building includes a wireless system and an adequate number of computers provided for public use in Adult, Young Adult and Child Areas. The Library recognizes the need to remain current with fast-paced changes and updates in technology, to optimally serve our patrons who depend on its use.

■ **PRESERVATION.** Subsequent to opening the new Library, circulation has increased along with in-house patron activity. Many who responded to the Survey expressed their pleasure and gratitude with the new building. In honoring what this building means to the community, the Library recognizes the importance of its maintenance and preservation.



goals, objectives & actions

GOAL 1. The Merrimac Public Library will develop collections that support interests and needs of patrons, ensuring availability of balanced and diverse materials.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.

Develop more opportunities for patron and staff input on material selection for the collection.

FY09 ACTION 1.1.1. Actively promote the Library's written in-house request list for both patrons and staff.

FY09 ACTION 1.1.2. Add a page on the Library's website for patrons to request specific titles or general subjects.

OBJECTIVE 1.2.

Systematically review, strengthen and update adult fiction and non-fiction collections.

FY09 ACTION 1.2.1. Evaluate and update the three non-fiction sections most mentioned in our survey: Computers, Business/Networking and Home Repair.

FY09 ACTION 1.2.2. Order a third copy of most popular fiction to provide an additional copy of best-sellers for walk-in traffic.

FY09 ACTION 1.2.3. Begin weeding select sections of collection.

EVALUATION *Gather feedback from patrons regarding satisfaction with the collection.*

OBJECTIVE 1.3.

Acquire materials of interest to Young Adults including books, periodicals, and multi-media materials.

FY09 ACTION 1.3.1 Continue to purchase additional series paperback titles favored by teens.

OBJECTIVE 1.4.

Expand the DVD collection.

OBJECTIVE 1.5.

Expand and promote audio books on CD and continue to keep up with newer formats.

FY09 ACTION 1.5.1. Purchase small amount of Playaways to evaluate usefulness to the collection.

EVALUATION *Track number of titles added and gather feedback from patrons in targeted collection areas.*

OBJECTIVE 1.6.

Digitize historical and genealogical records housed in the Library's Special Collections Room.

GOAL 2. The Merrimac Public Library will offer hours that best serve the community.

OBJECTIVE 2.1.

Establish when the Library is most utilized.

FY09 ACTION 2.1.1. Acquire a patron counter to record walk-ins.

OBJECTIVE 2.2.

Determine community needs for the best schedule of open hours.

FY09 ACTION 2.2.1. Conduct a mini-survey of patron preferences for days and hours open. Survey will be distributed via email, website, newspapers and library circulation desk.

FY09 ACTION 2.2.2. Director and Trustees will evaluate use statistics and mini-survey results to determine the need for additional open hours or rearrangement of existing days and times.

OBJECTIVE 2.3.

Determine if more funding is necessary and possible to support additional hours and staff.

GOAL 3. The Merrimac Public Library will promote and provide enrichment and educational programs for patrons.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.

Develop programs to encourage public use of the Library and resources.

FY09 ACTION 3.1.1. Hold an Open House during National Library Week providing children’s crafts and refreshments.

- A. Coordinate with the Friends of the Library to hold a book sale.
- B. Encourage community to visit during this week to sign up for a library card.
- C. Advertise Open House in newspapers, schools, and other local organizations.

EVALUATION *Track participation and dialog with attendees to find out how the Library can best serve their needs.*

OBJECTIVE 3.2.

Establish enrichment programs for seniors and collaborate with the Council on Aging (COA) to promote.

FY09 ACTION 3.2.1. Investigate the possibility of offering a book delivery program to seniors by collaborating with the COA and surveying other communities that provide similar programs.

EVALUATION *Feedback from seniors will determine interest in this service.*

OBJECTIVE 3.3.

Collaborate with other community organizations to provide programming.

OBJECTIVE 3.4.

Establish programming specific to Young Adult interests.

FY09 ACTION 3.4.1. A list of popular Young Adult author websites and blogs will be created and displayed in the Young Adult area.

FY09 ACTION 3.4.2. Displays of new Young Adult books will be created throughout the year as new materials arrive.

EVALUATION *Feedback and use from teens will help determine future purchases to make the YA area inviting to teens.*

OBJECTIVE 3.5.

Expand current programming specific to Children’s interests.

OBJECTIVE 3.6.

Communicate with the schools to determine areas in which the library can collaborate and support reading initiatives.

GOAL 4. The Merrimac Public Library will work to raise awareness of its presence in the community.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.

Develop and implement a communications plan to inform residents about programs, services, resources, developments and accomplishments.

OBJECTIVE 4.2.

Optimize print and web media presence through consistent press release submittals to a broad list of contacts with newspapers and websites with local appeal.

OBJECTIVE 4.3.

Explore and utilize alternative (non-print or web) outlets, such as school communications, the local cable channel, community boards, etc.

OBJECTIVE 4.4.

Explore collaborative communication opportunities with other town departments and events.

OBJECTIVE 4.5

Display more on-site promotion of events, newly-acquired books and media, the Friends of the Library and other Library news.

FY09 ACTION 4.5.1. Purchase additional floor and tabletop display easels.

FY09 ACTION 4.5.2. Investigate preferences and options for a display rack for popular teen paperbacks.

FY09 ACTION 4.5.3. Create effective in-house displays promoting upcoming events, releases, etc.

EVALUATION *Track patron attendance to promoted events.*

OBJECTIVE 4.6

Provide a user-friendly, frequently updated website.

FY09 ACTION 4.6.1. Review and redesign site navigation and appearance.

FY09 ACTION 4.6.2. Train staff to learn how to edit the website.

EVALUATION *Increase in website "hits."*

GOAL 5. The Merrimac Public Library will provide access to up-to-date information technologies and collections via current advancements in technology and equipment.

OBJECTIVE 5.1

Provide up-to-date well-maintained servers, computers and printers for the staff and public.

OBJECTIVE 5.2

Provide opportunities and time for professional training of staff.

FY09 ACTION 5.2.1. Ensure that each staff member attends at least one MVLC or NMRLS scheduled workshop per year.

EVALUATION *Staff is able to share learning experiences from workshops.*

OBJECTIVE 5.3

Improve service to patrons with software that is systematically updated.

FY09 ACTION 5.3.1. Run periodic updates.

FY09 ACTION 5.3.2. Subscribe to software upgrades as they become available.

OBJECTIVE 5.4

Inform and educate the public on how to use computers, including general operation, Library website and catalog use.

GOAL 6. The Merrimac Public Library will provide a safe, inviting, well-maintained building for its staff and community.

OBJECTIVE 6.1

Maintain the exterior of the building and grounds on a regular basis.

OBJECTIVE 6.2

Maintain the interior of the building on a regular basis.

OBJECTIVE 6.3

Provide appropriate budget allocation to ensure proper upkeep of the building and grounds.



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LONG-RANGE PLANNING WITH NMRLS

Meeting 1: S.W.O.T. Exercise

February 7, 2007

STRENGTHS

Inter-Library Loan

- Quick
- no waiting
- notified by phone or email

Facility

- Newness of library – comfy

Staff

- helpful, pleasant
- offer individualized service
- know their patrons and what they like to read
- comfortable, professional
- plugs new resources
- attentive to patron needs
- open to suggestions

Heartbeat of the Library

- all generations are welcome and use the library with enthusiasm

Available for free: computers, videos, dvds

Library supports community activities, artists, local crafts

Meeting room

Children's Room

- books are new and appealing
- engaging
- puppets and puzzles
- scaled to size furniture
- separate craft room – able to do more

Audiobooks – excellent selection

Large print books

Magazines – growing collection

Wireless

School collaboration – tours, welcoming staff, library cards

WEAKNESSES

Storage – Friends group needs more space for book sale

PR – promotion

Operations budget is lean

- not enough staff
- not enough hours – particularly evening hours
- no emergency funding
- salaries are not competitive

Collection

- dated (fishing)
- nonfiction lean (computers, philosophy)

Accessibility

- DVDs, media – hard to find anything and get off shelving
- Sidewalk doesn't reach the library
- Library in the wrong place – not near center of town
- Conflict between programming "rules" and child behavior = non-welcoming

YA Room

- unknown
- unused
- secluded

OPPORTUNITIES

Promote Library Tools & Services –

“let’s get them in the door!”

- wireless
- meeting room: staging for plays, performances, stereo system, projection system, art display/hanging system
- Museum passes
- DVD collection
- Special Collections Room

Diversify Library PR

- website
- newsletter
- cable access channel, slides promoting library events/services
- a short “PSA” for library before any meeting held in meeting room
- town meeting, offer a “flashier” message about library
- stronger advocacy groups for library (mobilize Friends, Trustees, supporters)

Annual Library Open House

- during voting since library meeting room is town polling station
- Free movie night in meeting room
- different offering for kids, tweens, teens

Workshops for patrons

- using MVLC online catalog
- using computers / internet

Increase collaboration with other town & non-profit agencies

Strengthen relationship with school librarians

- promote summer reading program through schools
- out-reach to for library volunteers, both parents & students
- use library to display school art contests / art shows

Children’s programming

- programs for younger set, open up communications between parents & children’s librarians

YA Area

- display area, more topical or themed: authors, subjects, award winning books, books into movies
- freshen music CD collection
- ALA Teen Tech week, mid-March/April

Friends group

- reconstitute mission
- increase membership

Volunteers

- Find quality vols. to take pressure off lean library staffing, implement programs, advocate
- utilize Tax works-off program through Senior Center

THREATS

Technology

- no library budget to upgrade software/hardware
- current computers are “temperamental”
- threat from digital downloads, audio-books

Funding

Apathy

- ignorance of potential users, not knowing what’s here
- lack of advocacy for library

Building

- long-term upkeep & maintenance
- HVAC system

Notes provided by Scott Kehoe, NMRLS Consultant

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LONG-RANGE PLANNING WITH NMRLS

LRPC Meeting 2: Community Vision Statements

February 7, 2007

Collaborations (9 votes)

Town departments
Sports
Churches
Schools
Connect with neighboring town, e.g., Amesbury
Connect with other towns at a commercial level
Communication library programs with schools, especially Summer Reading Program – schools are willing to do this with Library

Education (8 votes)

Promote lifelong learning available at Northern Essex Community College

- Connect with Northern Essex Community College
- Some high schoolers take classes there
- Promote what the College offers

Library can conduct Internet classes
Local continuing adult education closer to Merrimac, e.g., cooking

PR & Promotion (8 votes)

What does our Library do very well?

- No wait for computers
- No charge for DVDs
- Meeting room

Library is doing everything right
Draws patrons from Amesbury and Haverhill
Can't beat this Library
Get Town residents interested in the Library
How to get the word out?
White signboard catches the eye – has upcoming events
Family network – support parents, connect families, a resources for families and children

Youth (6 votes)

Work with the schools –two-way conversations between Library, schools librarians, teachers
Get young residents to come to the Library whether they are in public or private schools

Town (4 votes)

Decent restaurant
Like Rockport – Old New England flavor with drawing power, but without destroying

- People come to enjoy Merrimac history

Pedestrians can get around – there are sidewalks
Expand “Old home Day” to year round

- Theatre
- Cultural events

More diversified downtown

Volunteerism (3 votes)

Encourage in Town
Encourage people to run for office

Seniors (3 votes)

Homebound services – Library and Senior center

- Volunteers deliver and know what people like to read

Municipal Services (2 votes)

Expanded hours of library, Town departments, Senior Center, to serve working people
More open communication

- Between Town and residents
- Use Town websites better

Dovetail on the road work the State is doing on Route 110 and the Town Square, maximize what can be done

- Plan with State to make the Square better
- Sidewalks

Change Town Meeting day, Town needs to have more fun

Money (0 votes)

Tax revenues should be based on the values a department brings to the community vs. the historic budgets

Collaborations Draft goal Statements

The Merrimac Public Library will create programs to support the goals of other ...
... town departments.
... civic organizations.
... regional businesses.
... community organizations.

The Merrimac Public Library will strive to improve communication ...
... with other town departments.
... among community organizations
... among schools.
... among neighboring towns.

The Merrimac Public Library will strive to incorporate the goals of other community organizations into its programs.

Education Draft goal Statements

The Merrimack Public Library will promote educational opportunities in the town ...
The Library will provide a venue for educational opportunities for the residents of Merrimac.

Related ideas:

Offer workshops /courses, free, open to all

- Collaborate with historic commission
- Community colleges?
 - Use MPL as a class location
 - Have the CC offer a “mini-class” to promote their catalog, “infomercial for the CC”
 - Use CC students as instructors?

PR & Promotion Draft goal Statements

The Library will (aggressively, proactively) promote and market it’s services to the community of Merrimac.

Related ideas:

Outreach promotion (review previous long-range plan)

- Targeted emails
- Email database
- postcards
- Website

Promote “traditional” library service

Take advantage of meeting room being Town’s polling place

Sell library to book buyers not library users

Magazine footnote (?)

Library card campaign (MVLC card stats)

Notes provided by Scott Kehoe, NMRLS Consultant

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LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Community Survey

merrimac public library community survey

1. **What are the ages of the members in your household?** (check all that apply)
 Under 12 13–18 19–30 31–39 40–54 55–64 65 and over
2. **How many members in your household have a Merrimac Library card?** _____
3. **How often do you visit the Merrimac Library?** (choose one)
 Once a week Once a month Occasionally Never
4. **Are you satisfied with the Library's hours?** The Merrimac Library is currently open for 40 hours a week: Monday and Wednesday, 10 am to 5 pm; Tuesday and Thursday, 10 am to 7 pm; Friday and Saturday*, 10 am to 2 pm.
 Yes No *Saturday hours are from September through May only.
5. **If you do visit the Library, for what purpose do you come?** (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> To browse/check out adult books, movies, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> For group study or privately-arranged conferences
<input type="checkbox"/> To browse/check out children's books, movies, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> To attend public events/classes in the Meeting Room
<input type="checkbox"/> To attend Children's programs	<input type="checkbox"/> To use the copier and/or fax machines
<input type="checkbox"/> To browse magazines and newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/> To obtain Museum Passes (Museum of Science, New England Aquarium, Museum of Fine Arts, The Children's Museum—Portsmouth, Massachusetts State Parks)
<input type="checkbox"/> To use the computers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> To research and/or use reference materials	
<input type="checkbox"/> For quiet study	
6. **Do you visit the Library's web site: www.merrimaclibrary.org?**
 Yes No **If yes, do you find it useful?** Yes No
7. **Do you access Merrimac's and other library catalogs through the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium's web site: www.mvlc.org?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> To search the catalog <input type="checkbox"/> To request books and materials <input type="checkbox"/> To renew items <input type="checkbox"/> To download digital audio books	<input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know about this service <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know how to use this service <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know my PIN number
---	---
8. **Have you attended any of the following programs sponsored by the Friends of the Library?**
 Origami Workshops Book Sales Summer Family Programs Museum Passes
9. **What Library Programs & Activities would you like to see developed over the next five years?** (choose up to 5)

For Adults: <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Education & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogical Resources	For Babies & Toddlers: <input type="checkbox"/> Playgroups <input type="checkbox"/> Lap Stories/Music Time
For Young Adults: <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Drama <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment	Other Programs: <input type="checkbox"/> Book Discussion Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Internet/Computer Classes <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____
For Young Children: <input type="checkbox"/> Story Time <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Themed Programs	
10. **What Library Collections would you like to see developed over the next five years?** (choose up to 5)
 Adult Fiction Young Adult Books Books on Tape/CD Music CDs
 Adult Non-Fiction Children's Books DVDs Genealogy/Local History Resources

Your comments and suggestions: _____

**Your input is important. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
PLEASE RETURN YOUR SURVEY TO THE MERRIMAC PUBLIC LIBRARY BY JUNE 12, 2007.**

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LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Community Survey Results

Ages

40–54 (54.5%)
Under 12 (38.4%)
65 and over (25.5%)
55–64 (21.6%)
13–18 (20.6%)
31–39 (15.5%)
19–30 (11.9%)

Library Cardholders

Average 2.2 per household (sample=281)

Visiting Frequency

Occasionally (36.6%)
Once a week (31%)
Once a month (28.8%)
Never (3.6%)

Satisfaction with Hours

Yes (61.3%) No (38.7%)

Reason for Visiting

Adult books, movies, etc. (78.1%)
Children’s books, movies, etc. (41.6%)
Meeting Room events/classes (33.5%)
Museum Passes (27.1%)
Reference materials (26.5%)
Periodicals (24.8%)
Copier/Fax (17.7%)
Computers (17.4%)
Quiet study (10.3%)
Other* (5.8%)
Group study/Private conferences (5.2%)

Other:

- would like group study
- to vote (4)
- book club
- browse
- volunteering/meetings
- quiet reading

Library web site use

No (64.7%) Yes (35.3%)

Web site usefulness

Yes (86.4%) No (13.6%)

Mvlc.org site use

Yes

- Request books/materials (31%)
- Catalog search (29.4%)
- Renew items (17.1%)
- Download audios books (5.5%)

No

- Didn’t know about it (45.5%)
- Don’t know how to use (23.2%)
- Don’t know PIN (16.8%)

Friends’ sponsored programs attended

Book Sales (31%)
Museum Passes (31%)
Summer Programs (15.8%)
Origami Workshops (4.8%)

Programs to expand/add

Adults: Education & Enrichment (48.1%)
Adults: Genealogical Resources (31%)
Adults: Arts & Crafts (26.1%)
YA: Enrichment (26/1%)
Children: Themed Programs (25.5%)
Children: Music (24.8%)
YA: Arts & Crafts (24.2%)
Children: Story Time (23.5%)
Other: Internet/Computer classes (23.5%)
YA: Drama (22.6%)
Other: Book Discussion Groups (21.3%)
Babies/Toddlers: Lap Stories/Music (11.6%)
Babies/Toddlers: Playgroups (11.3%)
Other: (4.2%)

- Drama/Music performances for adults
- Seniors Book Mobile
- Writing Groups
- Local Authors
- Yoga Classes
- Exercise Programs
- Human Service Programs

Food Stamp applications - Mass Health –
Legal – Medical

- Computer Classes

Job searching - How to use Library’s resources
For Children to research

- DVDs
- Digital Audio Books

Collection Expansion/Development

- Adult Fiction (48.7%)
- Adult NonFiction (41.9%)
- DVDs (40%)
- Audio Books (31.3%)
- YA Books (48.7%)
- Genealogy/Local History (26.1%)
- Children's Books (23.5%)
- Music Cds (21%)

WRITTEN COMMENTS

(Sample=148)

Hours

- My only comment is that I wish the library opened earlier say 9am. I always go out early to do my errands for the day and I always have to go back out at 10 to go to the library.
- Please open the library earlier in the morning! People with young kids are frequent back home for naps before the library even opens.
- I rarely go to the Merrimac library because the limited hours just do not fit into my schedule or my children's. Opening at 10 am is to late and closing at 5 pm is way to early. You are only open late 2 of the 6 days and this does not accomodate busy working families.
- Run well but M,T,W hours should be until 7pm even if you open at noon so kids and adults have time to go after school or after supper.
- One evening a week open until 9pm would be helpful.
- Monday and Wednesday 12-7
- More evening hours
- More evening hours and Sunday. The greatest library in the world is no good closed!
- Evening hours are not adequate and very inconvenient
- Re: hours. The library is only open until 7 two nights a week. If you have a job, you can't get to the library before it closes.
- Would like it to stay open until 8:30pm rather than 7pm.
- Stay open longer. We get out os school late and need books for research.
- I would like the library expand past 7pm one night a week. I work until 7pm and cannot get to the library after work weekdays.
- Open later at night one night a week.
- 7pm closing to early if in High School sports - put it back up to 8pm.
- I have constantly seen people being asked to leave at closing time. This would indicate the later hours are necessary. Other library hours are 9-9 most weekdays.
- Library should be open at night.
- Not satisfied with Friday hours.
- Open more, especially on Fridays
- In Closes too early on Fridays
- Please keep open later on Fridays - even to 5pm would be nice.
- Later hours on Friday would be better for us.
- You close too early on Fridays.
- Please open more hours! I do not think on
- Fridays library should close at 2pm. -Pleas open on Fridays until 7 or 8pm.
- Fri afternoon would be good during school.
- Would like to see library open a little more on Fridays -maybe 4pm? More available to kids in summer
- I would have liked to have seen a question that would survey patrons who would utilize the library on Saturday during the summer, and/or increase the evenings the library is opened during the week. This is extremely important stats to have when going before the town to support additional funding.
- Current library hours are too limited for high school students involved in sports -Our son has needed to access the library several times on weeknights/weekends only to find it closed! Let's expand the library hours!
- It would be good if you had more evening and weekend hours
- Hours Terrible, especially for people who work late. :(I would like to see the library open until 9pm one night during the week. I would also like to see the library extended its hours on Saturday until 5pm.
- Hours need to better accommodate adults who work out of town during all the hours the library is open Mon-Fri. Stay open until 9 on Tues. and Thurs. and open the library at 9am on Sat.

■ You really need to change the hours. Specifically, either stay open late on Friday or year round on Saturday. Some people are only able to come on weekends and would visit the library much more often if you had more convenient hours.

■ I used to use the library more often but 5:00 closing on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and Sat. 10 - 2 is closing too early. Used to use on Friday afternoon for the weekend when it closed at 5:00. Stupid hours for those of us who work! It will even be worse when the Sat. closing for the summer takes effect!

■ Longer evening hours. Maybe till 8 or 9pm. Weekend hours can't get there on summer weekends. Not open. Feel strongly cheated with library hours. Caters to at home people. No weekend summer hours during summer. Ger to pay for, but can't use it. Every time I go to the library, it's closed.

■ I never come in the summer due to hours open. I do not get home until 7 pm. I arrived and 6:50pm to have the doors locked! If I request a book I can only pick it up on Saturdays. Please change your hours to accommodate those who work outside of Merrimac. You are forcing me to support the Haverhill and Newburyport libraries because they are open! Since you are closing on Saturdays 6/2 - I will see you in October.

■ As a working adult, I find the library hours, especially during the Memorial Day weekend thru Labor Day weekend shut down, very uninviting. In the summer the library is not open during hours I am not at work out of town. And the Sat. hours at midday are perhaps the least useful when available. It would show some interest in readers who do not fit your schedule to post hours on this website of nearby libraries that operate during hours Merrimac is closed. Reliance solely on internet searches for valley-wide services is helpful, but not a draw. Inviting or developing adult programs for evenings 2-4 times a month may be a nice half-way step to evening hours.

■ on friday, your hours are only from 10-2, which really isn't long enough. most schools dont get out until 2, so people cant go to the library after school to get their work done. also, i dont like that your summer hours start on may 26. schools dont get out that early, so

if the library isn't open late enough on friday, and is closed, saturday, than people who have projects cant work on them. but really, thats all that i have to complain about, i like everything else. Hahah

■ Hours are the biggest problem. Longer into the evening on those two nights would be good. And Saturdays year round is a must!

■ wish library was open to 7pm everynight and consistantly on sat.

■ need more "professional friendly" hours.

■ The library needs to stay open for the working and commuting adults.

■ Maybe open up at 9am on Saturdays.

■ I'd prefer to see longer hours on Saturdays and fewer hours during the week. A lot of residents work in Boston during the week and can't possibly make weekday hours.

■ I think the Saturday hours should be longer for those who work during the week.

■ I would like to see longer hours on Saturdays.

■ More weekend hours

■ a family where both parents work full time and kids have school projects, we need a library that is open more that FOUR HOURS on the weekends.

■ More weekend hours would be nice - through the summer, or add hours on Sunday.

■ I would love to have the library open Saturday year round. Stopping by the library is a wonderful reward for getting the Saturday errands done.

■ I wish the library was open on Saturdays during the summer.

■ You really need to expand your hours, or at the very least, re-arrange them so that you are open on Saturday's year-round. Due to my work schedule, it is very difficult to get to the library any other day.

■ Those of us who work out of town cannot use the library if not open on Saturday.

■ Remain open on Saturdays during the summer.

■ Mostly satisfied with the hours. Have wished for Saturday hours during Summer months.

■ Should be open every Saturday.

- Would like Sat. all year
- I would prefer Sat. hours all year
- Satisfied with the hours but would like to see year round Saturday hours.
- Having the library open on Saturdays would be helpful, although I try to schedule weekday visits during the summer.
- Saturday hours year round would be great!
- Would like to have Saturday hours for the summer and fall, and well as we do currently for winter and spring. Summer Saturday hours for working parents that work out of town. Would be nice to take child to the library on the weekends during the summer.
- Keep Saturday hours during summer and close Monday or Tuesday instead.
- I wish the library was open every Saturday thru year -with longer hours
- Could it be possible to open on Sundays?
- Even a few hours on Sunday would be really appreciated.
- The hours are a little confusing. I think, maybe cutting the long days and lengthening the short so that it's all the same?
- Please do something about your hours!
- The new library is beautiful but is not open enough to be fully utilized.

Collections

- I recently went to Haverhill's library for reference books that I could not obtain in Merrimac, so the reference section does need to be improved.
- Need more research books. Classes in school sometimes require reference type books as well as web site, as the web can be so unreliable.
- reference books
- Resource books,/ New electrical codebooks, HVAC, Plumbing and Heating, Auto repair, framing, basements/houses, Computers and networking bight be good too, but I need more home repair books.
- Need health and wellness materials enhance my activities as the town's public health nurse.
- Business/ stock market books
- The resources are also limited. Every time

our family has wanted a book it had to be requested from another library. Our family now usually goes to another library because we have had little luck in Merrimac.

- ...but the collection of books is very thin.
- I'm thankful for MVLC. I think this is the only way O could get the books my family has interest in. I have rarely found the books I need at this library.
- There seems to be fewer resources, especially fiction.
- NEED MORE BOOKS! I find myself going to West Newbury more. Why are donations (books) denied when there are not enough books???
- There are so many more resources. Before the renovation, I always went to the Amesbury Library, but now do I seldom need to.
- Library is always trying to accommodate requests for newer bestsellers - sometimes they might take a while to get
- Your selection of adult books needs to improve. My wife gets most of her boos from the West Newbury library. Children's books need to improve. Ages 10-18 books could improve.
- I love my library, but I'd love to see more non-fiction and young adult books.
- More NEW large print adult fiction
- Please keep up the mystery section.
- The adult children's sections are already great.
- It would be great to have more children's books. Children's books seem to be a bit lacking.
- Get Amesbury genealogy out of storage! Merrimac is missing us on the attentive spin off business of a functional genealogy section.
- You need to get more current DVD's. No new ones have been purchased in the last year.

Collaboration/Community

- Develop the library as a community center for all ages, esp youth. Work with Historical Comm for local history / genealogy. Work with other libraries to not duplicate collections or programs. Allow people to organize book groups, etc using library facilities & recommendations.
- Active involvement in both public schools to foster increased use of libraries.

■ Why are we now being charged 50\$ an hour to use the meeting room? When the library was being built, we were led to believe that it would be a “free & public meeting room for all to use”.

Promotion

■ I also believe it would be useful to include write ups in the local papers about library resources, new books, staff, outreach sources (including travellogues/photo exhibits per camera clubs/history of libraries like Newburyport etc once a month in a library room, interviews with library supporters including kids (kids say the darndest things)would be good for the Library and the citizens of Merrimac and surrounding communities.

■ More publicity about events going on - especially for my grandkids. I use the Haverhill Library because I tutor there weekly in their ESL program.

Information

■ I would recommend posters/displays listing the top 20 bestsellers (fiction/non fiction), include well known authors/books from other countries, science, arts, classics, sports, book series, authors, etc). Folks would appreciate recommendations.

■ a list of all the cds and movies that are available would be helpful.

■ The website is convenient as well.

■ The Merrimac Library website is somewhat useful.

■ The web site could be more user friendly.

■ The website is somewhat useful. Wish that it was more up to date with current events.

■ The only useful section on the web site is the MVLC. The Event section should be updated.

■ Library website should be updated weekly if possible.

■ Monthly newsletter online and in the library

■ I have some difficulty navigating the website.

■ I also have a tendency to forget my pin number. Thanks.

■ Have not visited the website because of limited access to the internet.

■ To request Books and materials I don't know how to use the computer they do it for me I didn't know the Merrimac library had a website

■ I have often had trouble with mvlc.org website -accessing and book search

Programs

■ Maintain what you're already doing with the Children's programs and activities.

■ My children loved story time 25 years ago. Continue to build.

■ The story hour is great compared to others we have attended. Please keep up the good work.

■ My children love story hour. They started when they were 3. They love it.

■ Get a piano for children's program's and activities.

■ Story time for all children, not limited to a few. I attended one where children were sent home because of a limit. I wonder if they still like the library.

■ I stopped attending story time because is seemed as though it was not child friendly. My two year old was expected to sit still. I currently attend story time in Methuen where young children's energy is accepted.

■ More activities for children 10-12 yrs old.

■ The YA seem to be drawn to technology and media. Perhaps something along those lines would be good to be further developed.

■ Origami workshops great; but child not old enough yet.

■ It would be helpful if the meeting rooms were available for evening meetings. It seems like a waste of valuable space.

■ I appreciate the meeting room for my cub scout pack meetings.

■ Hears thru the grape vine that the MPL lost its one and only writers group due to logistics/scheduling problems. That's a real shame!

■ maybe show movies 1X a week in conference room?

Staff

■ I would like to see the help there on time. I have been 3 times and had to wait beyond opening time for help to appear and then wait

while they got organized. Most of us get to our job a little early so we are prepared and not feel rushed.

- Merrimac's library personell are always very helpful and pleasant...
- Staff is friendly and very helpful.
- I really enjoy our library, the staff is really friendly and nice.
- The staff however has been pleasant and helpful.
- Too bad the survey didn't ask about the staff -- they're good.
- We as a family are very pleased with your services and staff.
- I go there often and the staff is always very helpful and friendly.
- You do a great job! Patrick has been outstanding over the last year or tow since we moved to the area from Plaistow, NH. He was most helpful to me, always pleasant, always accommodating. You are lucky to have him.
- Very helpful employees encountered at your library
- The staff have always been very helpful and cooperative when I have needed assistance.
- I use the library often. I have found it to be very helpful in all ways and the staff could not be more pleasant and helpful. They make you all feel at home!!
- Good job -such a warm and friendly staff
- Staff is sociable and helpful.
- The librarians are extremely helpful to my children and I.
- The Children's librarians are excellent -very resourceful and creative with their ideas. A pleasure going to story hours to see them.

Service

- When ordering books on line, it sometimes takes a long time to get it, even when it is on shelf at nearby library.
- Check book/DVD drop boxed more for returns.
- Membership in the Merrimac Library Consortium is a good thin so the you don't have to cover all areas by yourself.

Use of Space

- Segregate children to a childrens room. The library should not be overrun with children. The library is for all ages.
- It would be helpful for families with young children to have an enclosed children's center. This would be better for all library patrons. Perhaps moving the children's area to the hall/meeting space.
- Like the layout
- set up a corner of the meeting room with comfortable chairs/couch to encourage literary groups (book clubs, that writing group) to meet at the MPL.
- Move movies/DVDs from entry area -out of sight out of mind- For a 5 yr old and a 3 yr old. We want to encourage reading to our children. Not watching television!

Building

- Your's is a terrific building...
- I very much enjoy the comfort of the new building. I think it's the best thing Merrimac had done since I've been here (almost 20 years).
- I love the Library -It's a beautiful building and I find them very accommodating. Thank you.
- Very nice and spacious facility compared to the former library.
- ... and the premisis is neat as a pin.
- The Library is a nice place to visit, with OK parking, nice interior.
- Also great being able to easily park.
- I loved the old library. I find the new one unfriendly and difficult to find things.
- Too many lights on at night, not good for the tax payers electric bill and energy conservation.

Access

- Need sidewalk - square to library, more patronage
- We need a sidewalk from Currier Ave. to library, so that the Donahue school children can walk safely to the library.

Friends

- Could there have been a question here that would ask how the public veiws the Friends and in what ways patrons support the Friends?

Compliments

- The new library is fantastic!
- As an MVLC employee I find the Merrimac Public Library (as one of thirty-five) to be a great asset. You are on the right track with collection development, programming and computer access.
- ...Besides that I love the library.
- Great library.
- I enjoy the library and its staff even though I do not go too often. I am in Florida in the winter.
- I love the library.
- The Library is just a wonderful place to visit, with friendly and helpful staff. Love the new building, too!
- We love the library. Thanks for all that you do! We couldn't homeschool successfully without all the great resources.
- Great library
- over all, i like this library...
- Think the library is the best bang for my tax dollar in town.
- I'm so glad to have a library that's great and the people who work there.
- It's always a pleasure to visit Merrimac's Library...
- Keep up the good work! Paul and Ann Tucker
- I love going to the library.
- My husband and I have not visited the library. My so was visiting here though and made a few trips to the library. He was impressed.
- You are doing a great job
- Very pleased with our new library
- My family loves the library!
- Other than the hours being limited we LOVE the Merrimac Library.
- You do an excellent job. We're grateful!
- What a great resource for the community! Great books, great space, and great people.
- The new library is a wonderful asset to our town!
- You all do a wonderful job and thank you.
- We love the new library
- Thank you!

- Thank you LRP Committee for their hard work.
- Really enjoy coming because I read a lot.
- We are not avid readers but fully appreciate Merrimac having a library available and accessible to all. This survey is a great idea and perhaps will prompt us to use the library in the future...Thanks!
- Excited to visit the library
- We very much enjoy and appreciate the beautiful Merrimac Library and hope to make even more use of it in our retirement years. Keep up the great work!
- MPL has come a long way in a short time. We are very pleased with it's progress
- Generally happy with resources and people at the library.
- No negative comments. Staff are helpful, facilities are beautiful and lean. - love it.
- I think your library is excellent. I have worked in libraries in past years and miss reading. But my husband has a broken neck and ALS so spend most of my time as caregiver

Miscellaneous

- I am 82 and don't do much reading. (eyes not good)
- I am fairly new to the town and have a newborn so I have not been able to take full advantage of what is offered. I look forward to doing so in the future
- Just mover here - haven't been to library yet.
- We love the library and should use it more often.
- Love to read both fiction and non-fiction.
- I don't use the library as much as I should, but I feel it should be open, developing (always), and available for all the above mentioned programs/ideas -If my computer (or copier) goes down I like to know that I can go to the library for these services and more. -Thanks for giving Merrimac a beautiful library!!
- I have not been well enough to go on my own.
- When my children were little we always were at the library (the old one). Now 18, 21, and 24 I seem to use it most for taking out books.

Survey compilation provided by Scott Kehoe, NMRLS Consultant

appendix • e

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Town of Merrimac



MERRIMAC IS A TOWN IN ESSEX COUNTY, Massachusetts, in the United States, and on the southeastern border of New Hampshire. It is situated along the north bank of the Merrimack River. As of the 2000 census, the town population was 6,138 people.

HISTORY

Merrimac was known for its horse-drawn carriage industry during the latter part of the 1800s and during the Industrial Revolution, which, in the United States, found one of its seeds in nearby Lowell, Massachusetts. It is now known as a relatively sleepy residential community. Its town center consists of the typical brick buildings and Victorian architecture of the late-19th century. Much of the town's population surrounds this center, with the old part of the town bordering the shore of the Merrimack River. The older and newer parts of the town, which are the more affluent and middle-to-lower class parts of the town respectively, are divided by Interstate 495, which roughly follows the river. Merrimac is located on exit 53 of this highway, though it also shares exit 52 with the city of Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Today, Merrimac is a typical and small New England community. It went through numerous growth spurts, however, throughout the 1990s and the turn of the 21st century, with the construction of several new residential developments.

Merrimac, along with its many surrounding communities, was known as a blue-collar community well into the 20th century. Only recently has the entire town begun to experience gentrification.

GEOGRAPHY

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 22.9 km² (8.8 mi²). 22.1 km² (8.5 mi²) of it is land and 0.8 km² (0.3 mi²) of it (3.40%) is water.

Located in the Merrimack River Valley and on the coastal plain of Massachusetts, Merrimac's land consists mainly of small, forested hills. This is in stark contrast to Merrimac before the twentieth century, which was mostly pasture. The town also has several ponds, streams, and a large lake. Merrimac is bordered by Amesbury, Haverhill, and West Newbury in Massachusetts, and Newton in New Hampshire.

DEMOGRAPHICS

As of the census of 2000, there were 6,138 people, 2,233 households, and 1,699 families residing in the town. The population density was 277.8/km² (719.6/mi²). There were 2,295 housing units at an average density of 103.9/km² (269.1/mi²). The racial makeup of the town was 98.27% White, 0.39% African American, 0.11% Native American, 0.28% Asian, 0.29% from other races, and 0.65% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 0.90% of the population.

There were 2,233 households out of which 40.6% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 62.8% were married couples living together, 10.3% had a female householder with no husband present, and 23.9% were non-families. 19.8% of all households were made up of individuals and 9.2% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.73 and the average family size was 3.16.

In the town the population was spread out with 29.0% under the age of 18, 5.0% from 18 to 24, 31.4% from 25 to 44, 23.6% from 45 to 64, and 11.0% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 37 years. For every 100 females there were 94.9 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 90.5 males.

The median income for a household in the town was \$58,692, and the median income for a family was \$69,118. Males had a median income of \$48,718 versus \$35,325 for females. The per capita income for the town was \$24,869. About 1.9% of families and 2.7% of the population were below the poverty line, including 0.7% of those under age 18 and 7.7% of those age 65 or over.

GOVERNMENT

Merrimac’s local government is composed of an open New England town meeting. Three selectmen are elected to administer the government, but all major decisions, as well as many minor decisions, are handled during the town’s annual town meeting, as well as special town meetings, if required. Per the constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, any resident of Merrimac may introduce legislation with the support of 10 registered voters.

The current selectmen of Merrimac are Robert Sinibaldi, Bonnie Collins, and Carol Traynor.

EDUCATION

The following schools serve the town of Merrimac. All of the regional schools, however, are located in neighboring West Newbury, Massachusetts.

- Frederick N. Sweetsir School - named for a doctor who practiced in Merrimac
- Helen R. Donaghue School - named for a former principal of the school
- Pentucket Regional Middle School
- Pentucket Regional High School
- Pentucket Regional School District
- Merrimac High School operated until 1958, and closed when Pentucket Regional High School opened.

Information from the Wikipedia website.



MERRIMAC PUBLIC LIBRARY

86 W. Main Street

Merrimac, Ma 01860

978.346.9441

www.merrimaclibrary.org