

# 5 things to know about living in Needham

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When colonists first came to Needham in the 1600s they tried to farm, fairly unsuccessfully given the town's poor soil. But as the years progressed, Needham's industry transformed from poor farming to mills opening along the Charles River through the 18th century.

There was a growth of industry through the 19th century, which included the William Carter Company that made knitted underwear and other goods, and continuing through the 20th century. In fact, in the mid-1850s, during the time Back Bay was being turned from a swamp to a neighborhood, the landfill was obtained from Needham.

After WWII, tech firms came to the area and in combination with great schools, and better access to Boston, Needham became the residential community it is today.

## 1. You'll live in...

... in a community that cares about historic homes. Needham's Historical Commission has an "Inventory of Historic Homes," which are subject to a six-month demolition delay.

In fact, one local woman founded Little Pink Houses, which is a mission to save historic homes in Needham, The Boston Globe reported. Other groups in town have followed suit to encourage people to buy old homes and fix them up, as opposed to just tearing them down.

## 2. You'll pay...

... less than the surrounding suburbs. The Zillow Home Value Index puts the median home value for Needham at \$790,800, compared to about \$1,157,200 in Wellesley and \$967,300 in Dover. Similarly to most places in the area, median home values have gone up 5 percent in the past year and are expected to rise 1.4 percent within the next year.

For \$700,000 to \$800,000 you can get a single-family home with around 2,000 square feet. The WalkScore in town is well below average at a 37, so a car is pretty necessary.

## 3. You'll hang out...

... at the Charles River Peninsula. Though the Charles runs through many Greater Boston towns, in Needham the river makes a 180-degree turn, which has created a peninsula and a 20-acre open field.



*A house being restored on Warren Street. Barbara Jones is a Needham contractor who has started a business aimed at saving older homes from being torn down and replaced by McMansions. Little Pink Houses was able to save and resell one older house and is now working on a second. - Suzanne Kreiter / Globe staff*

For those that want to stay inside, you can head to Needham Bowlway for candlepin bowling or go to Glass, Arts & More, where you (and/or your kids) can take art classes and learn to craft glass.

If an afternoon of shopping strikes your fancy, two local shops made it on to the TripAdvisor list of best things to do: Taylor's Stationery, Inc. and Architrave.

When you are hungry there are plenty of options. Ranked first on Yelp is Sweet Basil, a small Italian restaurant in Needham center, but there are a number of other bistros, sandwich shops, and local restaurants to grab a bite.

#### **4. Your kids will...**

... go to some top-rated schools. Almost every school in town receives an 8 or 9 on the 1-10 GreatSchools rating, including Needham High School, which scored a 9.

There are also plenty of family-friendly activities around town, including The Kid's Place, which has parties and many art classes, including paint and pottery.

#### **5. You'll love...**

... the Great Hall Concert Series. The Great Hall Performance Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit that focuses on historic preservation and performance arts in Needham's public schools, puts on a four concert series each year with artists from the pop, folk, classical, and jazz genres. The concerts are in Needham Town Hall.