

CRANFORD

Teri Says ...

"You always know when a community is a great place to live when the sons and daughters who grew up there want to buy their first home there. That's the kind of community Cranford is. Time and again, a mom or dad will call and say "My daughter is getting married ... can you help her and her fiancée find a home. They want to stay in Cranford." And Open Houses are routinely visited by 20 to 30 neighbors (one time, we had 52) who are "looking for my son (daughter)."

Cranford, named one of the top 25 towns in NJ by New Jersey Monthly magazine, is home to Union County College, and some of the loveliest Victorian-era homes in Union County, complimented by a unique Victorian street-scape. Its schools are excellent and well-regarded, and residents take much pride and an active role in their children's education.

Cranford's nearly 5 sq. miles is home to 23,000 residents who enjoy its 415 acres of parkland. If you like to walk, you'll want to try the 2-mile fitness trail through Nomahegan Park, or if biking is your passion, you'll find bike lockers at the train station, and you won't want to miss the 13-mile bike path that connects all major points of interest in town. Another favorite past-time is canoeing -- and Cranford boasts the only Union County facility where you can rent one.

Cranford grew up around the Rahway River and, in the early 1800s, was known as the "Venice of NJ." A canoe ride takes you past some truly spectacular homes built along the river during that era. The rear facades of many of these homes were designed as wonderful masterpieces because "river carnivals" played a major role in Cranford's social scene from 1880 thru the 1920s. And of course, in the winter, ice-skating on the river is a fun -- almost other-worldly experience.

Cranford's thriving business district, with its many and varied storefronts, draws people from all over, and its centralized Rail Station invites residents to "train it" the 20 miles or so to and from NYC. A bustling downtown invites one to shop in its many apparel shops, jewelers, antique stores, and art shops, or to dine in its many restaurants. A stroll downtown will find you stopping to admire its Victorian Street Lights, sidewalk planters and benches, and it's famed clock tower. And, invariably you'll stop at one of its sidewalk cafes, pizza parlors, or ice cream shops just to relax and dream a little.

One of the most exciting recent developments in Cranford is "Cranford Crossing." Representing Cranford's inclusion in the State's "Transit Village" program, it has attracted such upscale retailers as Java's Brewin' ,

the coffee chain, and Cusi, an elite sandwich chain. And more than 1,000 people are excited about a proposed condo development in the area.

Cranford is conveniently located about 20 miles of Manhattan -- a 40 minute trip by rail -- and only 15 minutes by car to Newark Airport. Exit 137 off the Garden State Parkway brings you right to the center of town, or takes you (north) to Rt. 22, 24, 78 and 80, or the NJ Turnpike. Cranford is about 40 minutes to the Jersey Shore to the south, or Kennedy Airport to the north and east. Basically, Cranford is an easy commute to nearly everywhere. "

SOME FACTS

Cranford is home to approximately 23,000 residents who occupy it's 4.9 square miles.

Founded in 1871 along the banks of the Rahway River, Cranford quickly developed from industrial mills and agriculture to a thriving suburban and retail center.

Key factors in the township's early development included the river and the railroad line, which first ran through the area in 1839. Soon, Manhattan and Brooklyn commuters moved to the area to take advantage of its natural beauty. Regular regattas and carnivals along the river were another strong selling point, and real estate men dubbed Cranford "the Venice of New Jersey."