



## *Narrative*

The Town of Fairhaven is a seaside community on the shore of Buzzards Bay, directly across the harbor from the famed whaling port of New Bedford. Fairhaven has a rich history dating back to the days of the Pilgrims. The first naval battle of the American Revolution was fought by Fairhaven militiamen aboard the sloop *Success* in May of 1775. The Town suffered both material damage and loss of life during the raids and battles of King Philip's war and significant settlement took place only after the war. Until the middle of the 18th century, the Town's economy was agricultural. Beyond that point there was a shift toward maritime activities such as shipbuilding, whaling and foreign trade focusing on the Town's wharves. By 1838, Fairhaven was the second busiest whaling port in the country and at its peak the Town boasted 46 ships and 1,324 men engaged in bringing back over \$600,000 worth of whale products annually. Discovery of oil in Pennsylvania coming on the heels of a national depression ended whaling and the town turned to such industries as fishing, boat building and repair, and tack making. In 1903, the American Tack Company's new plant was said to be the largest and best tack mill in the world. Prominent Fairhaven resident Henry Huttleston Rogers went to Pennsylvania to learn about the oil industry. He became vice-president of Standard Oil Company and after making himself an oil millionaire Rogers re-made his hometown. He donated the town hall, library, Unitarian church, schools, streets and water system. The buildings make up some of the State's finest collection of National Registered Historic public buildings, almost all designed by Boston architect Charles Brigham. The community began taking on the character of a suburban town in the mid 1870's when the New Bedford and Fairhaven Street Railway Company connected Fairhaven to New Bedford. At the same time Fairhaven began to develop as a summer resort area with 29.4 miles of pristine shoreline with significant rural areas still the site of working farms. Today's economy is comprised of marine repair and construction, fishing industry, winches and fishing machinery, hospitality industry, retail, and agriculture.

## **GEOGRAPHY:**

### **Location**

Southeastern Massachusetts, bordered by Acushnet on the north, Mattapoisett on the east, Buzzards Bay on the south, and New Bedford Harbor and New Bedford on the west. Fairhaven is about 15 miles southeast of Fall River; 55 miles south of Boston; 35 miles southeast of Providence, Rhode Island; and 208 miles from New York City.

<b>Total Area:</b>	14.10 sq. miles
<b>Land Area:</b>	12.41 sq. miles
<b>Population:</b>	16,132 (Town Clerk figures as of January 2004)
<b>Density:</b>	1,300 per sq. mile

### **Climate**

(National Climatic Data Center, New Bedford Station)

Normal temperature in January:	30.6°F
Normal temperature in July:	73.5°F
Normal annual precipitation:	47.3"

**U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates**

Marion, New Bedford North, Sconticut Neck, New Bedford South

**Regional Planning Agency**

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

**Metropolitan Statistical Area**

New Bedford

**GOVERNMENT**

**Form of Government**

Board of Selectmen

Executive Secretary

Representative Town Meeting

**Year Incorporated**

As a Town: February 22, 1812

**Registered Voters** (Town Clerk figures as of January 2004)

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Total Registered	10,348	
Democrats	3,846	37.20%
Republicans	914	8.80%
Libertarian	58	0.60%
Green-Rainbow	14	0.10%
Other parties	11	0.10%
Unenrolled Voters	5,505	53.20%

**TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS**

Fairhaven, which is situated in the New Bedford-Fall River Area, has easy access to the air, land, and ocean transportation facilities of New Bedford, Fall River, and Providence.

**Major Highways**

Principal highways are U.S. Route 6 and Interstate Route 195.

**Rail**

No rail passenger service exists in Fairhaven, but connections to all points can be made on Amtrak from Providence.

**Bus**

Fairhaven is a member of the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), which provides fixed route service between New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Mattapoisett. SRTA and the Council on Aging also provide paratransit services for the elderly and disabled.

**Other**

Nearby New Bedford Municipal Airport is a Primary Commercial Service (PR) facility with scheduled passenger flights. It has 2 asphalt runways 4,997' and 5,000' long. Instrument approaches available: Precision and non-precision.