



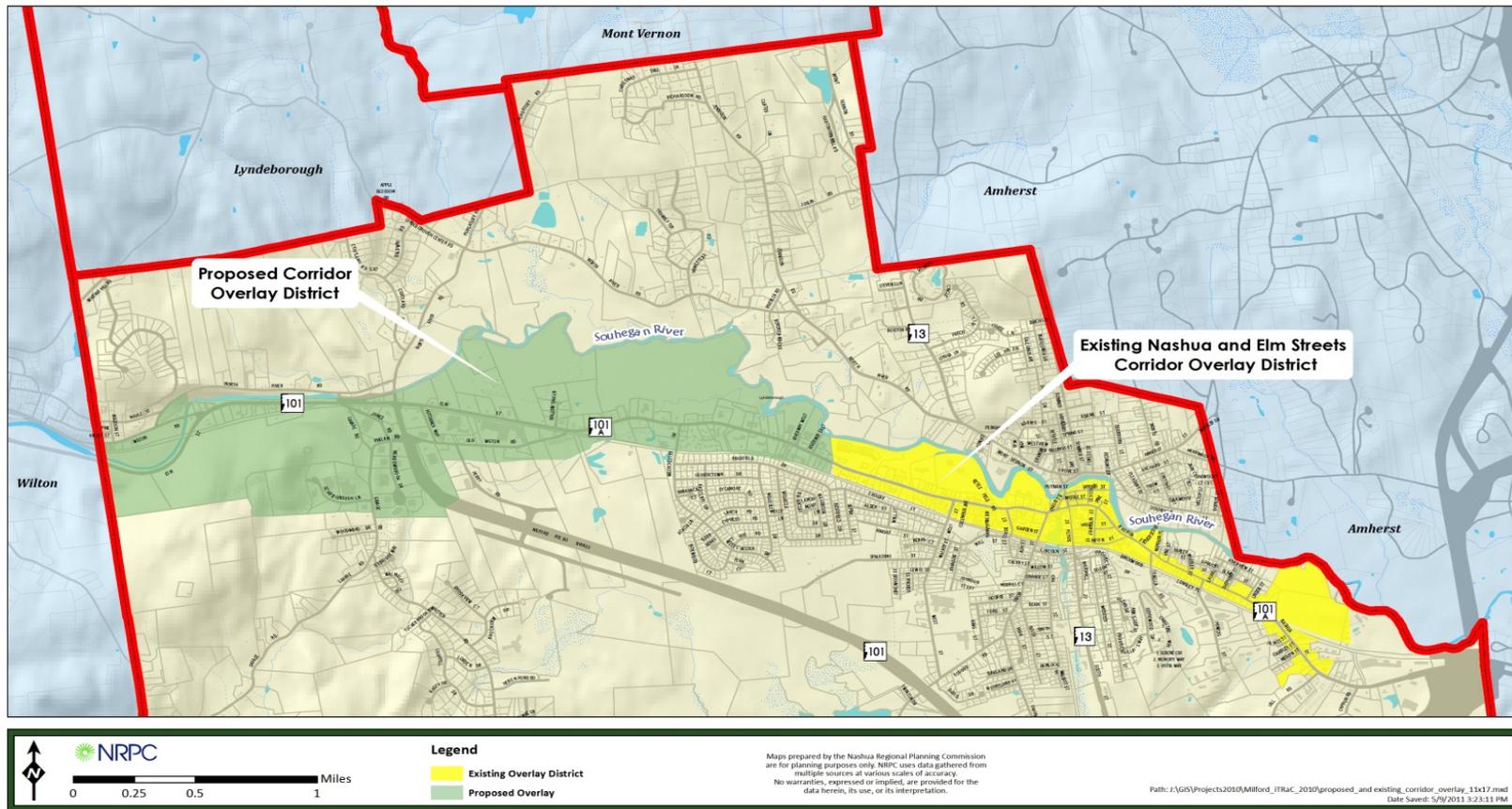
# Elm Street Corridor Overlay District Summary of Visual Preference Survey Results



## Survey Objective

The overall objective of the Elm/Nashua Street Visual Preference Survey is to guide the development of Milford by identifying the amenities and features that survey participants would like to see in the future. This will allow community members to express their opinions about the features depicted in the images. In addition, this survey will provide Milford stakeholders with a broad range of options to depict their vision for the appearance of mixed use, commercial, and industrial buildings in the study area. The existing and proposed overlay districts are shown below:

## Existing and Proposed Corridor Overlay Districts





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In order to obtain relevant input for this study, this survey was administered to the following target groups during specific events and time periods:

**Group 1) - 36** Property and Business Owners along the Corridor during the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 Breakfast Meeting.

**Group 2) - 24** EDAC and Town Board Members during the January 26, 2011 EDAC Meeting and February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 Joint Milford Board Meeting.

**Group 3) - 56** members of the General Public between June 2011 and July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 through a publicly accessible online survey.

### Notable Survey Results

After compiling the results of the survey, several key trends were identified. The following table provides a comprehensive breakdown of all survey results.

- Both the Property and Business Owners along the Corridor (Group 1) and the EDAC and Town Board Members (Group 2) expressed similar attitudes regarding the appropriateness of the specific land use depicted in questions 1-8.
- However, in a number of instances, the Property and Business Owners along the Corridor (Group 1) and the EDAC and Town Board Members (Group 2) had very different opinions relating to the specific design elements illustrated in questions 9-14.
- The General Public (Group 3) considered the land use depicted in questions 4-8 and the design elements illustrated in questions 9-14 significantly more undesirable compared to the two other target groups.
- Overall, the survey participants considered all the land use to be appropriate by more than 65% and believe that all of the design elements are somewhat or very important by just over 30%.



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**TABLE 1: SURVEY RESULTS BY TARGET GROUP**

	<b>Results of December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 Breakfast Meeting</b> (Based on input of 36 Property and Business Owners along the Corridor)	<b>Results of January 26, 2011 EDAC Meeting and February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 Joint Milford Board Meeting</b> (Based on input of 24 EDAC and Town Board Members)	<b>Results Between May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 and July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 via Publically Accessible Online Survey</b> (Input based on 56 responses by the General Public)	<b>Cumulative Results</b> (Input based on 116 responses by Property and Business Owners along the Corridor, EDAC and Town Board Members, and the General Public)
<b><i>Appropriateness of Land Uses</i></b>				
Question 1 (Mixed Use ~ Residential Above/Commercial Below)	82.9%	83.3%	81.8%	82.5%
Question 2 (Mixed Use ~ Residential Redevelopment)	91.4%	85%	65.5%	75.2%
Question 3 (Mixed Use ~ Smaller Scale Buildings)	94.3%	95.5%	83.6%	88.5%
Question 4 (Mixed Use ~ Large Buildings/Development)	64.7%	76.2%	30.9%	48.2%
Question 5 (Commercial ~ Large Scale)	60.6%	65%	25.5%	42.3%
Question 6 (Commercial ~ Small Scale)	97.1%	95%	45.5%	69.4%
Question 7 (Industrial)	85.7%	90%	42.6%	64%
Question 8 (Business Park)	88.2%	100%	51.9%	71%



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<b>Question 9 (Buried vs. Above Ground Power Lines)</b>	1).....13.9% 2).....11.1% 3).....30.6% 4).....30.6% 5).....16.7%	1).....4.3% 2).....0% 3).....26.1% 4).....30.4% 5).....39.1%	1).....7.7% 2).....7.7% 3).....30.8% 4).....21.2% 5).....32.7%	1).....8.9% 2).....7% 3).....29.5% 4).....25.9% 5).....28.6%
<b>Question 10 (Landscaping/Natural Features)</b>	1).....5.7% 2).....22.9% 3).....11.4% 4).....22.9% 5).....37.1%	1).....4.2% 2).....0% 3).....4.2% 4).....25% 5).....66.7%	1).....7.8% 2).....0% 3).....13.7% 4).....19.6% 5).....58.8%	1).....6.4% 2).....7.3% 3).....10.9% 4).....21.8% 5).....53.6%
<b>Question 11 (Streetscaping)</b>	1).....2.8% 2).....19.4% 3).....25% 4).....27.8% 5).....25%	1).....4.3% 2).....0% 3).....13% 4).....34.8% 5).....47.8%	1).....5.9% 2).....0% 3).....11.8% 4).....15.7% 5).....66.7%	1).....4.5% 2).....6.4% 3).....16.4% 4).....23.6% 5).....49.1%
<b>Question 12 (Side/Rear Parking)</b>	1).....9.4% 2).....18.8% 3).....46.9% 4).....21.9% 5).....3.1%	1).....4.8% 2).....0% 3).....9.5% 4).....33.3% 5).....52.4%	1).....6% 2).....2% 3).....42% 4).....20% 5).....30%	1).....6.8% 2).....6.8% 3).....36.9% 4).....23.3% 5).....26.2%
<b>Attitudes toward Design Elements (1 Least Important ~ 5 Most Important)</b>				



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<b>Question 13</b> (Architectural Features and Materials)	1).....2.9% 2).....28.6% 3).....17.1% 4).....31.4% 5).....20%	1).....9.1% 2).....0% 3).....0% 4).....68.2% 5).....22.7%	1).....4.1% 2).....8.2% 3).....30.6% 4).....22.4% 5).....34.7%	1).....4.3% 2).....12.1% 3).....18.1% 4).....31.9% 5).....33.6%
<b>Question 14 (Signage)</b>	1).....6.3% 2).....18.8% 3).....15.6% 4).....21.9% 5).....37.5%	1).....0% 2).....0% 3).....5% 4).....50% 5).....45%	1).....2.1% 2).....4.2% 3).....25% 4).....22.9% 5).....45.8%	1).....3% 2).....8% 3).....18% 4).....28% 5).....43%
<b>Attitudes toward Design Elements (1 Least Important ~ 5 Most Important)</b>				

### (Question 1) Mixed Use ~ Residential Above, Commercial Below

- **82.5%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- **9** of the respondents felt the creation of a “small town, downtown feel” very appealing.
- Landscaping, variety in building materials, and mixed use were identified as positive attributes with this type of development by **7** of the survey respondents.
- **4** of the respondents identified this kind of development as too congested and having too many buildings within a close proximity to each other and inadequate parking.
- A strong resemblance to European architecture and historical integrity were identified as positive attributes for the buildings depicted in the photos by **2** of the respondents.



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### (Question 2) Mixed Use ~ Residential Redevelopment

- **75.2%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- Appropriate landscaping and architectural guidelines were identified as important features with this type of development by **2** of the respondents.
- **11** respondents indicated they liked photograph #4, **11** respondents liked #5, **4** respondents liked #6, **10** respondents liked #7, and **7** respondents liked #8.
- **1** of the respondents indicated that the residential appearance of the buildings depicted in the photographs would not fit well with the commercial oriented corridor.
- The row house architectural design of the buildings illustrated in the photos was unfavorably viewed by **4** of the respondents.
- Increasing curb appeal was identified as a valid approach toward beautifying the corridor by **1** of the survey respondents.

### (Question 3) Mixed Use ~ Small Scale

- **88.5%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- **5** of the respondents emphasized the need for architectural detail and individual character.
- **2** of the respondents believed that guidelines should ensure that there is adequate parking and that architectural detail requirements are not prohibitively expensive.
- **5** of the respondents did not prefer photograph #11 and **7** of the respondents did not prefer photograph #14.
- A **single** survey participant believes this variety of structural design will provide opportunities for small business investment and subsequent investment into the community.
- Increasing the urban appearance of Milford through small scale mixed-use development was expressed as a major concern by **2** of the survey respondents.
- **2** survey participants believe these designs would be an acceptable addition to the West Elm Street corridor.



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### (Question 4) Mixed Use ~ Large Scale

- **48.2%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- **17** of the respondents expressed concern about traffic from this use, the community's ability to support this scale of development, as well as maintaining community character.
- **4** respondents indicated photograph #15 was not appropriate, **4** indicated #17 was not appropriate, and **12** indicated the same attitude toward #18.
- According to **1** of the respondents, additional strip development along the corridor would further contribute to this area's already high level of congestion.
- A **single** respondent believes the building depicted in photograph #17 would provide the community with a great opportunity to hold major social events.
- **1** survey respondent indicated the buildings in photograph #16 and #19 area appealing due to their ability to support mixed use.

### (Question 5) Commercial ~ Large Scale

- **42.3%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- The building depicted in photograph #22 was considered appropriate by **6** of the respondents.
- **2** of the respondents emphasized that this type of development was most appropriate for the Brox property.
- **1** respondent indicated big box retail provides an opportunity to create consumer choices, increase tax revenue, and provide local employment.
- **20** of the survey participants were not in favor of large scale commercial developments and in particular believe there is already enough of this development type in surrounding communities.



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### (Question 6) Commercial ~ Small Scale

- **69.4%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- There was disagreement about what specific examples of small scale commercial development are appropriate for the corridor by **9** of the respondents providing additional comments.
- **2** of the respondents believe that these types of businesses are appropriate for the corridor provided they have proper landscaping and design guidelines. More input is needed on what these guidelines should entail.
- **1** of the respondents considered small scale commercial development to be more consistent with the overall character of Milford.
- **12** respondents indicated photograph #29 was appropriate and **8** indicated #30 was appropriate.
- **2** of the survey participants feel there is widespread redundancy in a number of the commercial uses along the corridor and in general, more diversified uses would be most appropriate.

### (Question 7) Industrial

- **64%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- According to **5** of the respondents, industrial development should avoid architecture that is too boxy or contemporary in style.
- Photographs #35 and #37 were both considered less desirable for the corridor by **8** and **4** of the respondents respectfully.
- According to **8** of the respondents, attention should be paid to landscaping, fencing, architectural features, and design standards.
- According to the accounts of **5** of the survey participants, further industrial development would be favored as long as it is located within the existing industrial zones of Milford.



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### (Question 8) Business Park

- **71%** of respondents said this type of development was appropriate for the corridor.
- According to **3** of the respondents, this type of development was most appropriate for the Brox property.
- **5** respondents indicated photograph #39 was appropriate and **11** indicated #40 and #42 were appropriate.
- The increased traffic volume that would likely be attributed to the construction of additional business parks along the corridor was identified as a negative attribute by a **single** respondent.
- **2** respondents indicated that a sufficient number of business parks currently exist in the Greater Nashua Region. Due to the current economic downturn vacancies exist at some of the business parks.

### (Question 9) Buried vs. Above Ground Power Lines

- **29.5%**, **25.9%**, and **28.6%** of respondents had neutral, somewhat important, and very important attitudes respectfully, regarding this feature.
- **13** of the respondents agreed that buried wires are more aesthetically appealing but were concerned about their cost.
- According to **2** of the respondents, burying transmissions lines underground is a safer and more reliable alternative to conventional above ground power lines.

### (Question 10) Landscaping/Natural Features

- **75.4%** of respondents said this feature was somewhat or very important.
- According to **16** of the respondents, landscaping is a positive feature and an inexpensive way to enhance the appearance of a property.
- **2** of the respondents agreed that landscaping adds to the overall feel of a small town.
- A **single** respondent believes it would be beneficial to encourage economic development along the Souhegan River near downtown Milford in an effort to revitalize the local economy.



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### (Question 11) Streetscaping

- **72.7%** of respondents said this feature was somewhat or very important.
- 1 respondent indicated that this design technique was considered to be more important along Elm Street than in industrial parks.
- Based on the responses of **10** individuals, integrating streetscape design standards into a community is a valid approach toward addressing pedestrian, aesthetic, and safety issues.
- 1 respondent was particularly concerned with the photograph depicting restaurant tables in sidewalks, not originally sized for this use, and their obstructing or impeding pedestrian walkability.

### (Question 12) Side or Rear Parking

- **49.5%** of respondents said this feature was somewhat or very important.
- **2** of the respondents were concerned that side or rear parking was not appropriate for retail businesses, as it would appear that the businesses did not have customers.
- According to **2** of the respondents, owners and developers should have the final say in where parking is located and that it should also be dictated by the shape and size of the lot.
- The notion that this type of parking design is especially important for safety and visibility reasons was expressed by **1** of the respondents.
- According to **4** respondents, one should consider the land use, layout, and historical nature of the property when designating side or rear parking.



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### (Question 13) Architectural Features

- **65.5%** of respondents said this feature was somewhat or very important.
- **3** of the respondents expressed that variety of materials and styles should be encouraged to give each property a unique look and guidelines should not be overly restrictive.
- **3** of the respondents emphasized that well designed architectural features can be relatively flexible and can provide an ideal opportunity to use innovative design standards.
- A strong sense of New England Architectural design was considered a positive trait by **3** of the survey respondents.
- **5** respondents indicated photograph #70 was appropriate, **3** indicated #72 was appropriate, and **4** indicated #73 was appropriate.

### (Question 14) Signage

- **71%** of respondents said this feature was somewhat or very important.
- **5** of the survey participants emphasized the importance of signs attracting patrons to a business and that design guidelines should not limit their ability to do that.
- **2** of the respondents agreed that the size and appearance for signage can either enhance or detract from its overall “welcoming effect”.
- Based on the input of **10** of the respondents, signs displaying digital messages are unattractive, detract from the small town feel of Milford, and can sometimes distract passing drivers.
- **11** respondents believe that signage should be designed in a manner that symbolizes legibility, attractiveness, and distinctiveness.