Introduction

The goal of these design guidelines is to preserve Milford’s community character and encourage appropriate economic development, while promoting the context-appropriate appearance of coordinated mixed-use, commercial and industrial style development along the west end of the West Elm Street Gateway and the surrounding areas. To maintain and improve the high-quality development of Milford in accordance with the Town’s Master Plan; site design, architectural, and landscaping standards have been established including mechanisms to protect and enhance Milford’s historic heritage, established and new neighborhoods, major arterials, scenic roads, viewsheds and entryways into the Town (*Town of Milford Master Plan Update 2007. Chapter 1: The Character of Milford and the Community’s Vision for the Future*).

These *West Elm Street Gateway District Design Guidelines* are applicable to the West Elm Street Gateway District as shown on page 3. This document describes and provides examples of the visual and functional details of the site design and architectural standards identified as critical for maintaining the character of Milford for mixed-use, commercial, industrial and campus style development.

These standards are tools that create a flexible framework, guiding the appearance of future development compatible to the historic nature of Milford, while allowing for innovation and architectural creativity in order to create a special place.

Table of Contents

Study Area..................................................................................................................................3

General Provisions.......................................................................................................................4

Mixed Use...................................................................................................................................9

Commercial .................................................................................................................................10

Mixed Use and Commercial – Design......................................................................................11

Mixed Use and Commercial – Traffic Standards.......................................................................17

Industrial....................................................................................................................................20

Campus Style...............................................................................................................................24

Glossary......................................................................................................................................29

Photo Credits: all photos taken by Nashua Regional Planning Commission staff unless otherwise noted
Study Area

Milford’s site design and architectural performance standards are set forth in the West Elm Street Gateway District Ordinance. This District consists of a significant portion of Elm St and Route 101, from the Granite Town Plaza to the Wilton Town Line. It is bounded to the north by the Souhegan River to the fork at Wilton Road and Elm Street, where it is then bounded by North River Road and Wilton Road. The study area is bounded to the south by Elm Street and both sides of Old Wilton Road to an area 500 feet south of Old Wilton Road’s centerline. The southern boundary also includes Meadowbrook Drive, Scarborough Lane and 2 large parcels just south of 101 and west of Savage Road.

The Overlay District includes the intersection of routes 101 and 101A, key east-west corridors for the greater region. This key intersection is supported by a variety of mixed uses including commercial, small and large scale industrial development as well as a business park. In addition, this area has pristine views of agricultural lands, the Souhegan River, Dram Cup Hill and Pack Monadnock which need to be preserved and enhanced as new development occurs.
General Provisions

**Viewsheds**
The West Elm Street Gateway District contains acres of undeveloped wooded and agricultural areas. The hilltops provide stunning vistas of Milford including Dram Cup Hill and the Souhegan River Valley and also provides many scenic views along Routes 101 and 101A. Future development must consider this varied natural beauty and ensure that building scale and siting is done in such a way as to foster and enhance these unique natural amenities and landscape. Development along the Souhegan River should be situated to provide views from adjacent buildings as well as pedestrian amenities and lookouts near the River’s edge.

**Underground Utility Lines**
Visible powerlines impede the viewshed of an area and detract from Milford’s community character. In addition, they are especially susceptible to storm damage from wind, snow and ice. It is more cost-effective to locate utilities underground at the time of new site development than to retrofit at a later date. Utility lines should be located underground in all new developments and whenever possible during significant upgrades and renovations.
Streetscaping
Amenities such as public art, lighting, street furniture, landscaping, special sidewalk and crosswalk treatments, and banners enhance the experience of both drivers and pedestrians. Such features foster a sense of place and build community character. They can also increase foot traffic, attracting additional businesses and services.

Public art adds to the visual interest of passers-by and provides an opportunity to highlight community heritage.

Pedestrian scale lighting, bicycle racks and park benches create a safe and inviting environment for walkers and bicyclists.

Outdoor seating extends restaurant activities onto the sidewalk, and creates lively street environments.

This shade tree and bench provide respite for pedestrians while the well defined crosswalk fosters safety.

Banners create a sense of place and an opportunity to promote seasonal events.

Statues provide an excellent opportunity to highlight local history.
Gateways
Gateways announce entry points into communities, residential neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial centers, or historic districts. Gateway designs can include signage on a landscaped plot, an arch or other feature over the roadway, sculpture and fountains. Gateways, when properly designed, establish a community’s distinct identity.

The Overlay District has several opportunities for corridor improvements or landscaped gateways welcoming visitors and residents alike. Gateways are proposed for the following locations:

- Near the Wilton Town Line on Route 101
- North River Road just north of the Elm Street / Route 101 Intersection
- Near Map 7, Lot 12 on Elm Street
- Just west of the Route 13 / Route 101 Intersection

The following images are examples of potential gateway improvements:

- An eye-catching gateway sign to a particular business will attract visitors and can be used as a directional landmark to locate the business.
- Residential gateways such as this over the roadway arch welcome you to a particular neighborhood.
- This classic gateway sign identifies a point of entry as well tourist information.
- This gateway sign welcomes you while directing you to a website for more information.
**Screened Loading Docks and Storage Areas**
All loading docks shall be well screened to conceal delivery trucks and bays from view. In addition storage of supplies should be housed inside or heavily screened with attractive landscaping or fencing.

The angle of the site and placement of trees conceals this delivery area.  
The placement of trees screens this multiple bay loading dock from the roadway and adjacent sidewalk.

**Natural Features**
Buildings, parking lots and other impervious surfaces must be located on the parts of the site best suited for development, protecting sensitive habitat areas and preventing potential property damage. Floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, unique natural areas, and sand and gravel aquifers are among the geographic conditions deemed unsuitable for development. Natural drainage on the site must also be preserved to the maximum extent, requiring protective measures included in proposed site plans or reducing the amount of excavation.

The adjacent pond provides a scenic seating area for this parking lot.  
This un-mowed field can provide habitat for birds and other animals.
Mixed Use development can include a combination of residential, retail, office and industrial development in the same building or on the same site. Well integrated sites can successfully complement multiple development styles in close proximity to one another. Residences and offices often create foot traffic at local commercial sites, fostering a sense of place, social connections and added customers and business.

The Milford Oval provides opportunities for small scale commercial, residential and office space in the same buildings or sites.

This downtown commercial center provides housing or office space above the shops.

This corner site provides appealing commercial space on the first floor with space above.

Narrow and tall buildings provide a perfect infill opportunity supporting residences above first floor commercial sites.
Commercial

Small and larger scale commercial development provides an opportunity for local business growth as well as regional and national chains requiring smaller footprints. A mix of building styles and traditional architectural features and materials should aim to foster and enhance Milford’s sense of place.

This Veterinary Clinic is well situated close to the street, with side and rear parking, and an attractive human scale entrance.

This small commercial site has angled the building to shorten the appearance of its length. Numerous windows and dormers enhance the traditional New England look.

This medical facility has varied roof peaks minimizing the length of the building.

This Starbucks building incorporates a varied roof line with numerous windows and awnings to create curb appeal.
Mixed Use and Commercial — Design

These site design standards prescribe an interrelationship between the new project and its site. The project’s size, location, relationship to the street and other buildings, the use of natural features on its site, and the amount of visitors it will attract should be considered and adjusted to reflect the town’s traditional patterns of development for the most harmonious effect.

Building Orientation
Buildings shall locate their main entrance or storefront toward the street with appropriate architectural details clearly indicating the doorway. The entrances shall be directly accessible from the sidewalk. This maintains the traditional emphasis towards the pedestrian-oriented streetscape. Buildings shall maintain a street edge consistent with the adjacent buildings.

Building Massing, Form, and Height
New buildings must maintain the scale and context of the corridor through similar mass, form and height as the existing structures. Small-scaled architectural features on large structures, including variations in roof form and height, and creating an irregular footprint makes the large volume buildings seem smaller. Terraces, material changes, and horizontal trim bands articulate each floor within. Buildings must be compatible with adjacent structures and overall height must conform to the zoning ordinance.
Architectural Features & Materials
Architectural details associated with Milford’s architectural heritage include columns, pilasters, porticos, awnings and arches, and must be considered in every building design. Large areas of repetitive architectural elements or flat wall surfaces should be avoided. Traditional materials such as wood, brick, tile and stone, or materials that have the same visual effect are desired.

The Bales School displays traditional architectural features, particularly around the entryway and upper windows. Photo: Milford Heritage Commission

Different materials articulate the stories and reduce the apparent mass of this medical services building.

Pedestrian Scale
The ground level is the pedestrian level. Blank walls should be avoided by using windows, trellises, material changes, arcades, or other features that increase the visual interest for people on the street. Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be utilized wherever possible and be consistent with the existing building and location. The use of floodlights, wall packs, and tall light posts are not encouraged.

The overhang at the entrance of this building creates a shaded patio for dining.

Pedestrian scale lighting by this park bench creates a safe and welcoming environment for walkers.
Parking Areas
Large parking lots are unsightly, take up valuable real estate, and make travel less pleasant for pedestrians. Large parking lots also isolate stores from the street and one another. To limit the negative effects of vast amounts of visible parking lots, parking in the Overlay District shall be located to the back or side of a building. At the side, parking shall be buffered from the street. Shared parking between buildings is ideal and encouraged to eliminate potential access management problems and more efficient use of the sites.

Existing Structures
Existing buildings of historic value should be preserved. If renovated or expanded, the work must be done in a manner that is respectful of the character, features and details of the existing structure.
Roof Forms & Materials
Rooflines should employ the local vernacular of peaked roofs with dormers, chimneys, or gables. Large roofs must be broken into appropriately scaled masses to avoid large continuous planes. Where appropriate, roofs must provide overhang for pedestrian activity below. Flat roofs are generally discouraged. Roofing materials must be high quality durable and architecturally consistent, such as asphalt shingles, standing seam metal, or concrete tile.

![Classic roof lines on the new police station help it to maintain the character of older public buildings.](image)

![The roofline of this redevelopment project also helps it to blend in with existing structures.](image)

Windows
Modestly scaled, vertically oriented windows are most common in the local building vernacular and should be adopted. These windows are abundant, non-reflective, and align vertically with any windows above or below, if possible. Ground floor, street-facing walls must have display windows, recessed windows, detailed entry areas, awnings or prominent sills.

![These bright storefront display windows help to create a vibrant downtown.](image)

![Large windows on the front of this commercial building provide an attractive design element.](image)
Building Entrances
All building entrances must be clearly defined and highly visible from the street. Many methods exist, including canopies, porticos, raised cornice parapets over the door, outdoor patios, display windows, and planters.

Signage
Signs must complement the building site and surroundings while being readable by both pedestrians and motorists approaching the site. Consideration should be given to form, color, lighting, and materials that are compatible to the building and its surroundings. Wall mounted signs must be appropriately scaled to the building and not obscure important architectural features of the building.
Screening
All rooftop air conditioning, heating and large mechanical equipment, building accessories, and refuse must be screened from public view.

Even items as large as dumpsters can be well screened, attractively enough to be located near an entry way.

Shrubbery conceals this electrical equipment while allowing easy access for repairs.
Mixed Use and Commercial – Traffic Standards

As Milford continues to grow, a set of transportation standards will assure that the needs of all forms of transportation are addressed and met, including the potential for public transit in the future. These standards serve to limit the future effects of auto-focused development that have changed the traditional patterns of land use in Milford, in addition to strengthening the capacity of other modes of transportation through infrastructure improvements. Encouraging foot traffic and allowing for safe and efficient bicycle travel will help create a lively streetscape along the commercial corridor that extends beyond downtown Milford.

Access Management

Access management policy moderates the number of access points along Elm and Nashua Streets for safety and convenience. Currently, the number, placement, and frequency of curb cuts along the roadway create the potential for conflicts and delays. Any new access points will be allowed only if it is not feasible to share existing access points.

The following methods are established to limit the necessity for new access points. Where feasible, all projects are required to provide interconnecting driveways for existing adjacent properties or easements to allow interconnecting driveways for future construction. This minimizes the number of access points along the main travel corridor, and reduces the possibility of conflicts. Shared access is strongly encouraged between adjacent interior parking lots to further reduce potential access points along the main road, and allow pedestrian and vehicular access between adjacent lots without entering the roadway.

The daycare center on Elm Street locates its driveway on a side street, allowing a landscaped buffer along the busier road.

Curb cuts are well defined with granite blocks.
**Throat Length**

Throat length describes a long driveway entrance into a parking lot. Blocked by the use of landscaped barriers or other devices, no turns are possible along this entry way. These structures funnel traffic into and out of the parking lot safely by preventing turns from unexpected vehicles or pedestrians entering the throat.

This landscaped median is part of the parking lot’s throat, and it makes access to the main road less chaotic.

**Bicycle Facilities**

Bicycle facilities must be provided where recommended by the studies listed in the Overlay District Ordinance or as otherwise required by the Planning Board. Facilities include on-street bike lanes or separate bike paths. Bike racks may be required for all developments.

Designated on-street bike lanes allow bicyclists to ride safely among motorized traffic.

The provision of bike racks encourages citizens to use this alternative form of transportation.
**Pedestrian Facilities**

Sidewalks must be constructed where recommended by the studies listed in the Overlay District Ordinance or as otherwise required by the Planning Board. Sidewalks will be universally accessible and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards which can be found online at www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada.

When a sufficient right of way exists, sidewalks will have landscaped buffers between the roadway and the sidewalks to improve the pedestrian experience and create a barrier between traffic and walkers. Walking routes must connect destinations and not require pedestrians to travel out of their way unnecessarily. Buildings should be sited to create plazas and pedestrian gathering spaces.

![Image of a pedestrian plaza providing an ideal gathering space for walkers.](image1)

![Image of tree-lined buffers separating sidewalks from the street enhancing pedestrian safety and aesthetics.](image2)

*Photos (pg 14): courtesy of Dan Burden, Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, Inc., and Walkable Communities*

**Transit Facilities**

In order to facilitate future transit use, all major developments that could generate high volumes of transit users must incorporate the future development of transit into the design, in such a way that makes transit an attractive transportation choice. Potential transit routes as well as locations for bus turn outs and shelters will be designated along major roads at practical locations and within large developments, and easements reserved for such facilities, for implementation at a later date.

![Image of an indented turnout lane allowing buses to stop for passengers without disrupting traffic.](image3)

![Image of bus shelters indicating bus stops and protecting riders from the weather.](image4)
Industrial

This District is home to numerous industrial businesses and anticipates the future development of additional industrial sites. All industrial sites should be visually appealing and well integrated with adjacent sites, the natural landscape and viewsheds. Buildings should be oriented to the street where possible with a human scale and visually interesting facades. Sites should provide rear and side parking or reduce the visibility of parking from the street. All loading areas should be screened from the street. Accommodations should also be made for bicycles, pedestrians, transit and green spaces.

**Building Orientation and Siting**
Buildings should orient their main entrances towards the street. If not possible, a building’s main entrance shall be oriented towards internal roadways and sidewalks within the site. Building facades that do not face the street shall have architectural details or landscaping to enhance the view of the building.

![This building is oriented towards the street with a well appointed and visible entrance.](image1)

![This building is oriented towards the street with side parking and a natural area in the front.](image2)

**Building Massing, Form, and Height**
New industrial buildings should have similar massing, form and height as surrounding buildings or those located on the same site. Buildings should be designed to minimize the appearance of being overly large and out of place and must conform to the zoning ordinance. Architectural features, windows, entrances, building materials and articulated facades can reduce the appearance of building size.

![The red peaked roof creates a human scale to this entrance.](image3)

![The window placement and varied building materials reduce the appearance of size.](image4)
Architectural Features and Materials
Buildings and adjacent walkways shall use a variety of architectural materials, colors and features to create attractive and visually appealing structures. Corrugated metal buildings and large flat wall surfaces should not be located within view of both internal and external street networks. When warranted such buildings should be well screened and situated in less visible areas of the site.

The entrance of this multi-story building incorporates a brick and glass articulated façade to create visual interest.

This industrial building on Meadowbrook Drive has both a brick façade and pedestrian area. A row of highly visible windows creates a visually appealing front.

Access Management
Access to industrial sites should be limited to 2 entrances. If the site is large enough, a tree lined roadway through the campus can provide access to smaller connector roads and parking areas. This design will limit access issues both into the site from the District as well as internally on the site. Where feasible, all projects are required to provide interconnecting driveways for existing adjacent properties or easements to allow interconnecting driveways for future construction.

A planted center median provides controlled access and safety as well as aesthetic benefits.

A central road extending the length of this office park provides access to specific buildings.
**Parking**

Parking should be located to the rear and side of buildings to avoid large parking lots in the front of buildings. Landscaping and small street trees shall be densely planted on medians. Special crosswalk and sidewalk treatments shall be used to create safe internal pedestrian access between parking lots and buildings.

Parking is visible from the street but it is minimized by its side and rear location. Parking is located on the side of this building and screened with shrubs.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Design**

Bicycle and pedestrian connections are encouraged to adjacent trails and networks if applicable. Separate bicycle facilities, including marked bike lanes, separated paths or other amenities, may be required by the Planning Board.

This sidewalk provides safe pedestrian access from the parking lot and main driveway to the building entrance. At industrial facility on Meadowbrook drive has paved sidewalks lead to this well landscaped employee plaza.
Transit
In order to facilitate future transit use, all sites over 2 acres in size will be evaluated to determine if the site is a feasible location for future public transit service. An easement to accommodate future bus turnouts and shelters may be required. Internal sidewalks should be planned to provide access to this easement area.

Buses can also accommodate front mounted bicycle racks.

Bus shelters indicate bus stops and protect riders from the weather.
Campus Style

Campus style development refers to business parks and industrial parks with both internal roadway and sidewalk networks. All campus developments should be visually appealing and well integrated with other internal buildings, the natural landscape and viewsheds. Buildings should be oriented to the street where possible with a human scale and visually interesting facades. Sites should provide rear and side parking or reduce the visibility of parking from the street. Accommodations should also be made for bicycles, pedestrians, transit and green spaces.

Building Orientation and Siting
Buildings should be oriented towards internal streets and sidewalks. Front entrances should have human scale features, architectural details, landscaping and adequate signage indicating the main entrance. All entrances should have direct access to sidewalks.

Building Massing, Form, and Height
Campus buildings on the same site should have similar massing, form and height. Buildings should be designed to minimize the appearance of being overly large and out of place and must conform to height requirements in the zoning ordinance. Architectural features, windows, entrances, and building materials can reduce the appearance of building size.
**Architectural Features and Materials**
Buildings and adjacent walkways shall use a variety of architectural materials, colors and features to create attractive and visually appealing structures. Similar materials should be incorporated on buildings and walkways throughout the campus to create a uniform look. Interesting features such as glass, brick, patterns, detailed entrances and varied setbacks should be incorporated.

![Building with windows, brick, and varied footprint](image1)

*This building incorporates windows, brick and a varied footprint.*

![Use of mirrored wall provides visual interest and breaks up expanse](image2)

*The use of mirrored wall provides visual interest and breaks up expanse.*

**Lighting**
Attractive downcast lighting shall be incorporated in a uniform manner throughout the campus.

![Small light ideal for walkways and main entrances](image3)

*This small light is ideal for walkways and main entrances.*

![Light fits well with wrought iron fence and landscaping](image4)

*This light fits in well with the wrought iron fence and landscaping.*
**Green Space**

Campus style developments must set aside a green space for bicyclist and pedestrian use. This area should provide an attractive green space and natural area on each site. This space could include landscaping, benches, tables, fountain or public artwork. These areas must be connected to the internal sidewalk network.

*Ponds provide a natural area for wildlife, attractive views and gathering places for pedestrians.*

*This meandering sidewalk creates visual interest and the benches and trash receptacles provide an outdoor eating and gathering place.*

**Directional Signs**

Uniform directional signs shall be located at main entrances throughout the campus. They should provide clear directional information for deliveries and visitors.

*Specific information regarding deliveries and entrances are noted here.*

*The visitor entrance is clearly noted on this facility’s sign.*
**Access Management**
Access to campus style developments should be limited to 2 main driveways. If the site is large enough, a tree lined roadway through the campus can provide access to smaller connector roads and parking areas. This design will limit access issues both into the site from the District as well as internally on the site.

![A planted center median provides controlled access and safety as well as aesthetic benefits.](image1)

A central road extending the length of this office park provides access to specific buildings.

**Parking**
Parking should be located to the rear and side of buildings to avoid large parking lots in the front of buildings. Landscaping and small street trees shall be densely planted on medians. Special crosswalk and sidewalk treatments shall be used to create safe internal pedestrian access between parking lots and buildings.

![Mature trees and a well developed sidewalk network enhance this parking area.](image2)

Planted sidewalks located in this parking lot provide attractive and safe pedestrian access.
**Bicycle and Pedestrian Design**

Bicycle and pedestrian connections are encouraged to adjacent trails and networks if applicable. Separate bicycle facilities, including marked bike lanes, separated paths or other amenities, may be required by the Planning Board.

---

**Transit**

In order to facilitate future transit use, all sites over 2 acres in size will be evaluated to determine if the site is a feasible location for future public transit service. An easement to accommodate future bus turnouts and shelters may be required. Internal sidewalks should be planned to provide access to this easement area.
Glossary

**Arcade**
A covered walkway consisting of a series of arches supported by columns or piers; a building or part of a building with a series of arches open to the street level; a roofed passageway, especially one with shops on either side (definition: NRPC Staff; photo Wikipedia).

**Articulation**
Places emphasis on the visible expression of distinct parts of a building, such as stories or windows, rather than on the building as a whole (definition: The Architecture Project, University of Arizona; photo NRPC Staff).

**Awning/Canopy**
A roof-like structure, often made of canvas or plastic, that forms a shelter over a storefront, window, door, or deck (definition & photo: NRPC Staff).

**Cornice Parapet**
A projecting ornamental molding along the top of a low, solid, protective wall or railing situated along the edge of a roof or balcony (definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: Wikipedia).

**Cupola**
A small structure that sits on a building roof, often featuring architectural elements such as domes or other ornamentation (definition: NRPC Staff; photo: Milford Heritage Commission).

**Display Window**
A store window, typically facing the street, that it is used to display merchandise for sale in the store (definition & photo: NRPC Staff).
**Dormer**
A vertically set window on a sloping roof; the roofed structure housing such a window *(definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: NRPC Staff).*

**Gable**
A ridged roof with at least two slopes on each side, which forms a triangular wall segment at the end of a double-pitched roof *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff).*

**Gateway**
An entrance feature along a corridor that announces the entrance into a new district, area or neighborhood. Gateway features often include signs, decorative landscaping, monuments or natural features *(definition: NRPC Staff; photo: ).*

**Integral Planter**
A planter contained within the structure of a building *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff).*

**Outdoor patio**
An open seating area for restaurants, often located on the sidewalk in front of or adjacent to the building *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff).*

**Overhang**
A projecting upper portion of a building, such as a roof or balcony *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff).*
**Pilaster**  
A shallow pier attached to a wall; often decorated to resemble a classical column *(definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: Wikipedia).*

**Portico**  
A major porch, usually with a triangular, pediment roof supported by classical columns *(definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: This Old House).*

**Prominent Sill**  
A broad flat space located at the bottom of a deeply set window *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff).*

**Vertically Proportioned**  
Describes the vertical orientation and equal spacing of openings on a building facade, typically used in reference to windows above the first floor *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff).*

**Wall Plane**  
The wall plane is the exterior surface of a wall along the front and sides of a building. In order to minimize the mass and scale of larger structures and to encourage pedestrian-scale development along the public way, the impact of the wall plane should be reduced in height and width. Combined with architectural features and landscaping, the proportions of larger structures can appear to be more in scale with the context of the surrounding area *(definition: NRPC Staff, photo: Milford Heritage Commission).*

**Wing Wall**  
A subordinate wall, one end of which is built against an abutment; usually acts as support for the abutment and as a retaining wall *(definition: McGraw-Hill Dictionary; photo: Radial Block).*