

Union St, Milford

Milford is known for "The Oval." If you think of The Oval as a wheel hub with spokes, then Union St is one of the major spokes off of that central hub. The Street opens at the corner of Union and Elm with a granite carved bowl and pedestal fountain. At one time used for watering dogs and horses, this fountain, carved by Martin Comolli c. 1926, is currently used as an attractive planter. This fountain, along with the granite hitching post and granite retaining walls along Union St, speak to past modes of transportation and to Milford's heritage as "The Granite Town in The Granite State."

Across the street from the fountain, between the beautiful World War II Memorial Park and the Carey House, is the Union St Grill. This fine restaurant is situated on a location that has long supported mixed uses as an eating establishment and upstairs residence.

As you venture south on Union St, on the east is the Carey House, home of the Milford Historical Society, and the Congregational Church, and on the west is the Community House and a stately former residence, which currently houses a variety of counseling and alternative medicine practitioners. All of these buildings speak to Milford's rich heritage and architectural history. This area is actively used for various community and church functions including the famous Milford Pumpkin Festival and the decades old annual Congregational Church Antiques Show and Sale. The Community House with its large lawn is rented out for numerous events and gatherings including the weekly Rotary Club meeting, plant sales, dinners, fundraisers, political events, and so on.

Further along Union St, there is a variety of single and multi-family homes with their related activities of daily living as well as a longstanding automotive repair business. Union St is a primary route for walking to the Middle and High Schools, so as you can imagine, it is a bustling avenue during the school year. Moreover, the sidewalks, trees, and interconnection of streets make Union St an excellent place for recreational walking. One interesting place along the route is the Union St cemetery, which dates from 1839. Unfortunately, the old hitching posts at the cemetery were cut down in 1922 when a "new" iron fence was installed. Apparently, the hitching posts were no longer needed. I suppose this action heralded a "sign of the times" back then in terms of changes in modes of transportation.

Near the middle of Union St, where it branches off to Beech St, there is a neighborhood variety store, which has been there almost "forever" and is a handy convenience for the surrounding area. Just in front of the variety store is the Ricciardi-Hartshorn Memorial Park, dedicated originally for a Union St neighborhood soldier who perished during World War I. This park is also the home of the 1798 Oak Tree, so named because it supposedly was planted in 1798. I believe this is the same tree, but I could be wrong in that the original may have been cut down or died in the past 30 years. Nonetheless, there stands there today a magnificently large and shady tree, which adds to the attractiveness and sense of place for Union St. The extensive landscaping efforts up the Union St hill, the retention of historic features and architecture, and the combination of community, residential, and commercial uses all conjure up a wonderful sense of the vitality of the neighborhood. Lastly, Union St is a strong spoke that supports other great, livable neighborhoods around the rim of downtown Milford—Beech & Oak Sts, King & George Sts, just to name two areas.