



Seth J. Dewey Photography

# ENVISION MILFORD

## Final Summary



Prepared by:

Nashua Regional  
Planning Commission

June 2023



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## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Milford, through the Milford Planning Board, collaborated with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission to conduct a community outreach effort and identify key values, challenges and opportunities facing the town. This effort is known as Envision Milford and served as an avenue for education on the master planning process, to identify key issues and topic areas facing the town, and to generate support for the future development of a town-wide master plan. The findings from this outreach effort have been summarized below and resulted in key goals and action items that will be incorporated into the development of an updated town-wide master Plan.

Several methods were used to obtain public input from Milford residents including an online survey, public input sessions, and civic group meetings. The survey was the starting point for gathering input. The public input meetings and civic group meetings provided an opportunity for residents to participate in an interactive discussion of the major planning issues of interest to the community and to develop the major themes and vision for the master plan.

All input that was gathered from the community input sessions and civic group meetings, has been analyzed and summarized into key themes, goals, and action items. Key findings begin on page 12.

A poster for "Community Input Sessions" from Milford, New Hampshire. The poster includes the town's logo, a starburst graphic that says "JOIN US!", and details for two sessions: an online session on Tuesday, April 11th, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm, and an in-person session on Saturday, April 15th, from 9:00am to 11:00am at Banquet Hall in Milford Town Hall. A green box highlights "PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED\*" with a note: "\*Please register for only one session per person." At the bottom, it says "HELP ENVISION MILFORD'S FUTURE" and "YOUR OPINION COUNTS!".

**MILFORD**  
NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Community Input Sessions

**JOIN US!**

**Online:** Tuesday, April 11th, 6:30pm - 8:30pm  
or  
**In Person:** Saturday, April 15th, 9:00am - 11:00am  
at Banquet Hall in Milford Town Hall

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED\***  
\*Please register for only one session per person.

**HELP ENVISION MILFORD'S FUTURE**  
**YOUR OPINION COUNTS!**



## ENVISION MILFORD STEERING COMMITTEE

Following the Community Survey, the Envision Milford Steering Committee was formed with it's first meeting occurring in February 2023. Thank you to all who have taken their time to volunteer!

<b>MEMBERS</b>	
Erin Bradley	Patricia Kenyon
Elaine Cohen	Stephen Knott
Chris Costantino	Janet Langdell
Justin DeMontigny	Kathy Parenti
Karen Facques	Jason Plourde
Steve Facques	Susan Smith
Jerry Guthrie	Michael Thornton



# COMMUNITY SURVEY

## Community Wide Survey

- ✓ Fall 2022
- ✓ 422 Responses

Hundreds of postcards and flyers were distributed throughout the Town of Milford to promote the Community Survey. In addition, there was a large social media blast with paid advertisements to boost engagement.



### The Town of Milford Wants Your Opinion!

Now is the time for residents, business and property owners to share what you love about the town and how to make Milford an even better place to live, work, and play!

Your suggestions will be used to identify key issues and goals for the development of our town-wide Master Plan.

Learn more here: [www.EnvisionMilford.org](http://www.EnvisionMilford.org)

Scan the QR code to access the survey or complete online



<https://tinyurl.com/envisionmilford>



**The Town of Milford Wants Your Opinion!**  
Now is the time for residents and business/property owners to share what you love about the town and how to make Milford an even better place to live, work, and play!  
Your suggestions will be used to identify key issues and goals for the development of our town-wide Master Plan.

### Take our Community Survey



Scan the QR code or complete online by **December 1<sup>st</sup>**

<https://tinyurl.com/envisionmilford>

Project and Master Plan Information:  
[www.EnvisionMilford.org](http://www.EnvisionMilford.org)

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

### Community Input Sessions

- **Steering Committee Input Session - 4/03/23**
  - ✓ 10 participants
- **Zoom Input Session - 4/11/23**
  - ✓ 21 participants plus 10 staff & volunteers
- **Community Input Session - 4/15/23**
  - ✓ 32 participants plus 16 staff & volunteers

Two main Community Input sessions were held in April of 2023. The first one was held via Zoom, with a second in-person event later the same week. Additionally, as most of the Steering Committee members were volunteering at the events and wouldn't be able to actively participate, a separate in-person input session was held for the Steering Committee. This had the added benefit of serving as an informative dry run for the larger events.



**HELP ENVISION MILFORD'S FUTURE**  
YOUR OPINION COUNTS!

#### WHO IS IT FOR?

- Milford Residents
- Milford Business Owners
- Milford Property Owners

#### WHAT IS IT?

- This is an interactive discussion of the major planning issues in our community called a 'community charrette'.
- The sessions will be used to develop the major themes and a vision for Milford's Master Plan.

#### Online

Tuesday, April 11th  
6:30pm - 8:30pm

or

#### In Person

Saturday, April 15th  
9:00am - 11:00am

Banquet Hall

Milford Town Hall

*Join in person for a chance to win a door prize!*

Photo by Len Mannino

#### PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED\*

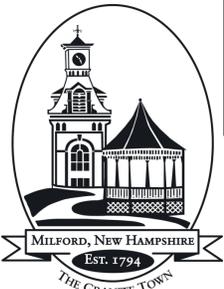
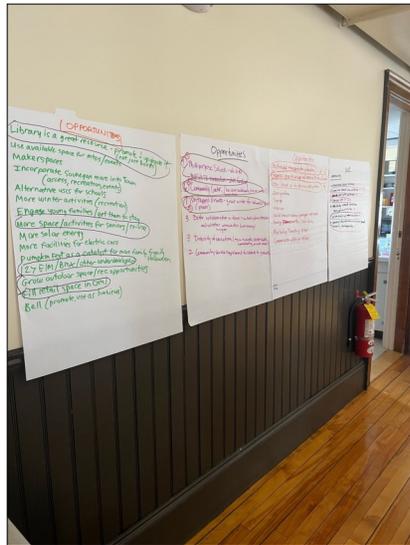
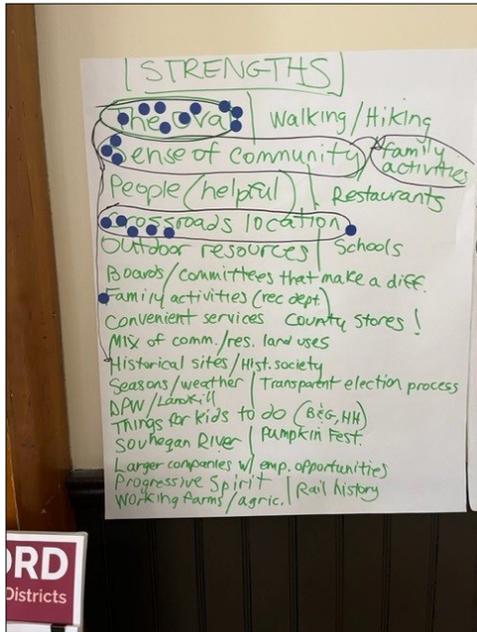
\*Please register for only one session per person.



To register: scan the QR Code or visit  
[www.EnvisionMilford.org](http://www.EnvisionMilford.org)

If you have any questions or problems registering, contact Kristin Wardner at NRPC at (603) 417-6570.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

### Civic Group Meetings

- **Milford Trails, Conservation Commission, Souhegan River Lower Advisory Committee Summary - 4/10/23**
  - ✓ 5 participants
- **Souhegan Valley Outreach (SVOT) - 4/11/23**
  - ✓ 5 participants
- **Milford Rotary Club Input Summary - 5/10/23**
  - ✓ Over 40 participants including residents and business owners.

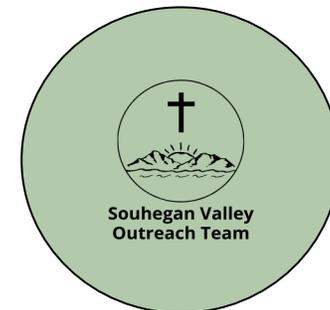
NRPC staff attended three civic group meetings to understand their specific needs and viewpoints, and incorporate their ideas and input into the process.

A Zoom meeting was organized by Chris Costantino with representatives of the Conservation Commission, Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SoRLAC) and Trails Committee. NRPC staff attended a regularly scheduled lunch meeting with the Souhegan Valley Outreach Team (SVOT).

Finally, the Milford Rotary Club hosted an input session at their regular lunch meeting. With over 40 members present, including 4 Planning Board members, it was a great input session.

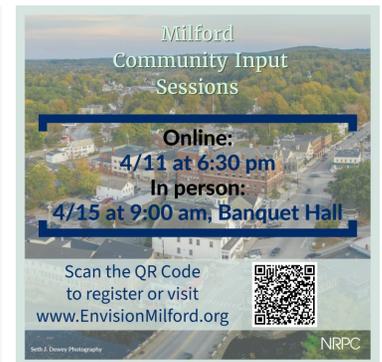
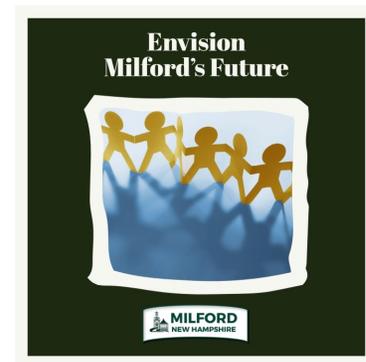


Milford NH  
**Rotary**  
Club



# SOCIAL MEDIA

Weekly social media posts were created and shared throughout the duration of the project. This served as an excellent opportunity to keep residents informed about the process, while building social capital and raising awareness throughout the community. The intent was to brand Envision Milford and establish a solid foundation as the town embarks on the next phase of the Master Plan update.

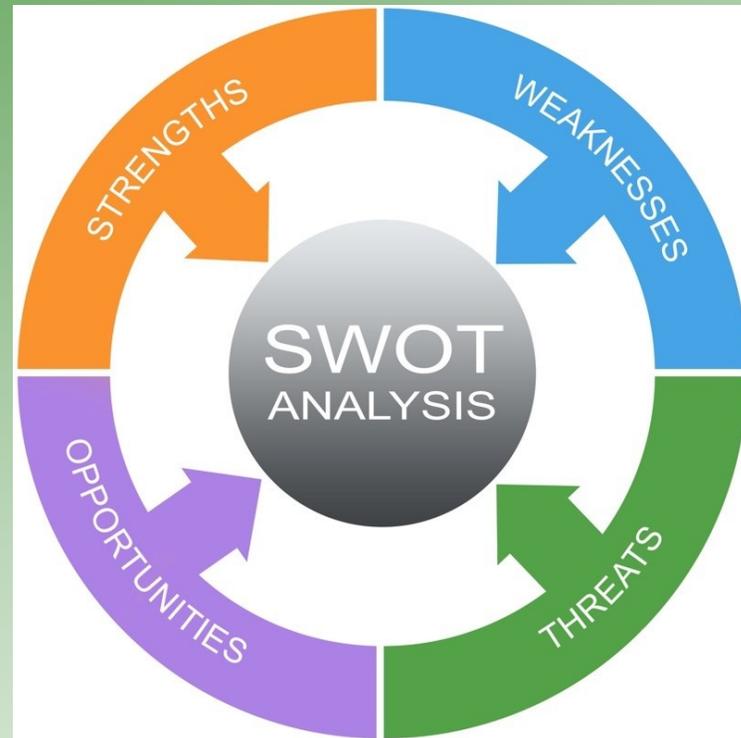


## SWOT ANALYSIS

A technique called a “SWOT Analysis” was conducted at each of the community input sessions and civic group meetings. The SWOT is a planning technique used to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and is ideally suited to obtain a holistic picture of key issues facing the town.

### SWOT Analysis

During the SWOT analysis, participants organized into small groups to identify, discuss and prioritize Milford’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results were recorded and posted in the meeting room. Participants then voted for their top selections.



# SWOT ANALYSIS

This graphic was used as a guide to facilitate a discussion at each of the community input sessions and civic group meetings on each topic area.

## Positive

### Strengths

What does Milford do exceptionally well?  
What advantages do we have?  
What attracts people to Milford?  
What assets and resources do we have?

### Opportunities

What opportunities exist, but have not been pursued?  
What new technologies or trends should we pursue?  
What new lifestyle trends do we want in Milford?

### Weaknesses

What could we do better?  
What are we criticized for or get complaints about?  
What vulnerabilities does Milford have?

### Threats

Where is Milford potentially vulnerable?  
What legislative, economic or environmental conditions will affect Milford?  
What external barriers do we face?

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## Negative



# HIGH VALUE ITEMS

Several overarching themes emerged from the community outreach process that were revealed through the community survey, community input sessions and civic group meetings. These themes can be used to develop a Vision Statement, one of the key components of the Master Plan, as well as to inform development of potential goals, objectives, and strategies to guide formation of the plan. These “High Value Items” are summarized below in alphabetical order.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Residents frequently brought up community-wide events, such as the Pumpkin Festival, as a strength in the community. These community events appeal to a multitude of different people and ages, building upon the sense of place and community pride. There is significant interest in the town to expand current offerings and add more community events and festivals.

## CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

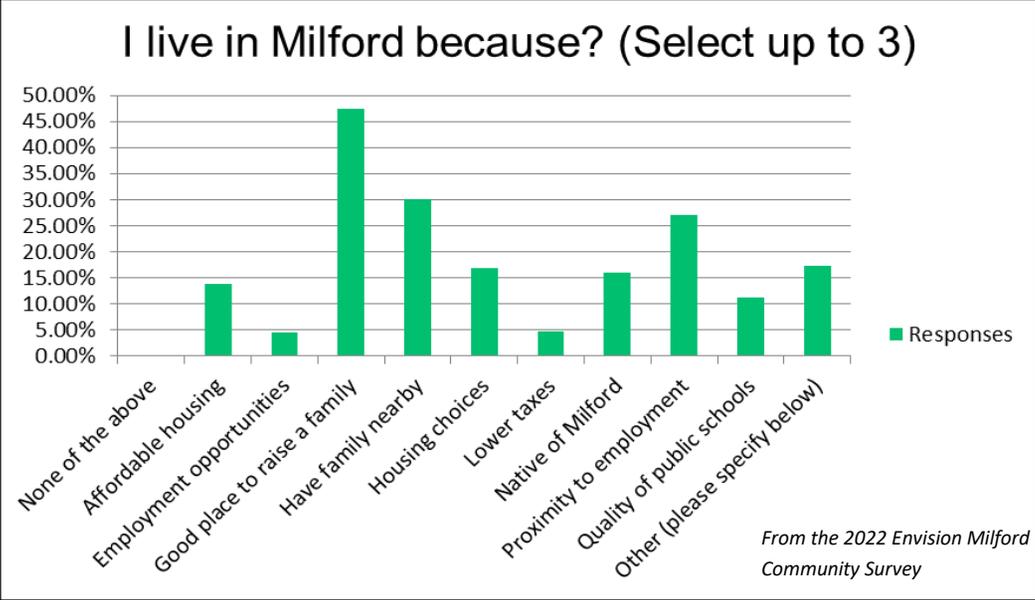
Survey respondents placed a high value on the conservation of open space and natural areas as well supporting investments in outdoor recreation including parks, ball fields and the abundant network of trails. Outdoor recreation was cited as both a *strength* and an *opportunity* by most of the public input and civic group sessions participants.

## FAMILY

In the survey, in response to the question “I live in Milford because”, the largest percentage of respondents by a significant margin answered, “Good place to raise a family” (47.3%), followed by “have family nearby” (30.2%). Clearly, family-related considerations play a central role in why people choose to live in Milford. The elements that

make Milford a good place to raise a family and the importance of family relationships to maintaining a sense of community are worth exploring further.

Though the theme of family did not emerge directly in the community and civic group sessions, issues that touch on family such as schools, family and individual recreational opportunities, youth programming, and the library were cited several times.



## HIGH VALUE ITEMS

### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Proximity to major roads and urban amenities, while maintaining a rural town feel was mentioned as a strength in most public input sessions as well as the survey. The ability to easily access metropolitan areas including Nashua, Manchester, and Boston, as well as mountains, lakes and beaches was identified as a great value.

### SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The was also selected as one of Milford's most important characteristics in the survey and was selected as a strength in all of the groups engaged. Related themes included the value of community events such as the Pumpkin Festival and volunteerism. The lack of community diversity and engagement was also seen as a weakness in one of the community input sessions and failure to maintain interpersonal relationships or community spirit was seen as a threat.

### SMALL-TOWN FEEL

Milford's small-town atmosphere, also phrased as *small-town charm* and *small-town character*, emerged as perhaps the most highly valued characteristic of the community in the survey and in the public input and civic group sessions. When asked in the survey "What do you like about Milford?" over 70% of respondents selected "small town atmosphere", a higher percentage by far than received for any other answer. The importance of this theme was echoed in the public input and civic group sessions as a "strength" while the potential loss of Milford's small-town character was also seen as a "threat". Notably, the vast majority of survey respondents still consider Milford to be a small town. The concept of small-town character encompasses physical qualities, such as Milford's historic downtown, as well as concepts such as *sense of community* that also emerged as a key theme.



Photo by M. Cleveland



Photo by Len Mannino

## HIGH VALUE ITEMS

### THE OVAL AND HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

The Milford Oval is a vibrant town center that serves as a focal point and anchor of the community. The Milford Oval was mentioned in the survey, most input sessions and some of the civic group meetings, as a strength of the community. Residents enjoy the diverse small businesses, restaurants, nightlife, music, library, and historical buildings. “Historic charm” was also one of the top three responses to the survey question “What do you like about Milford?” Implicitly, the central importance of the Oval also relates to Milford’s small-town feel and sense of community. It is also noteworthy that the lack of parking was frequently cited as a weakness or threat, most often within the context of the Oval area.



Photo by Len Mannino

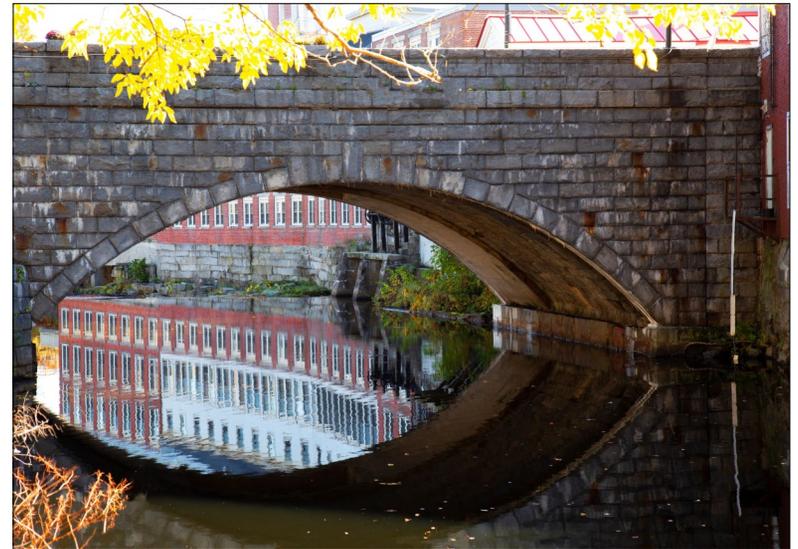


Photo by Karen Mitchell



## OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UPON

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Participants in public input and civic groups sessions cited a lack of affordable housing as a weakness and as a threat. Residents expressed the need for more affordable housing of all types, to meet a wide range of economic needs. Cottage style neighborhoods, tiny houses, and accessory dwelling units, could be especially helpful in providing an economical way for young people to stay while attracting families to Milford.

- Survey respondents' top preference is for single-family housing, followed by cottage-style neighborhoods, senior housing, townhouses and condos, accessory dwelling units. Many of these options could provide affordable housing to young people starting out and older people looking to downsize.
- It is important to note that the survey had a significant number of individual responses stating a strong preference for no additional housing, especially condos, apartments and multi-family units.

### **AMENITIES**

Milford's proximity to larger urban areas provides access to a wide range of amenities. However, residents would like to see more multi-modal transportation options including, sidewalks, bike lanes, trail access, public transit, as well as more services and activities for seniors and youth in town. Seasonal events and festivals are highly valued, and residents would like to see more of them.

### **COMMUNICATION**

With the increased use of social media and the reduced availability of local print media, it is increasingly challenging to relay information to the entire community. Challenges around a perceived lack of communication and negative or inaccurate communication in social media were also noted as threats or

weaknesses in the community and civic group input sessions. Building strategies and identifying avenues to more effectively communicate to all age groups and town residents are needed.



Photo courtesy of Milford Pumpkin Festival website:  
[www.milfordpumpkinfestival.org](http://www.milfordpumpkinfestival.org)

## OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UPON

### **ECONOMIC**

The majority of survey respondents indicated that they would like to see lower taxes in the next 10-20 years. Lower taxes were also a recurring topic in the public input sessions. Respondents are interested in reducing reliance on residential taxes by increasing commercial/industrial development including industrial, manufacturing and retail sites. This will have the dual impact of increasing employment opportunities while adding to the tax base. The survey also indicated the desire for more hotel and hospitality business development.

### **IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE**

The need for infrastructure improvements, most notably sidewalks and parking, especially around the Oval and at recreational sites, was prioritized in the survey and by most of the input session groups. Deferred maintenance including specific references to municipal and school district buildings, water and sewer, internet and roads were cited as both a weakness and a threat. The need for improved lighting around the Oval was also cited.

### **INCREASED CONNECTIVITY AND WALKABILITY**

Although the Oval area of town is walkable, there is a general desire to improve overall safety, mobility, and connections by planning and designing infrastructure that facilitates and promotes multi-modal opportunities both for transportation and outdoor recreation.

Improvements to pedestrian safety are underway in the Oval. Once completed the town can consider options to expand and build upon these improvements.

- Increase the availability and connectivity of sidewalks, crosswalks and lighting.
- Improve access to public transportation and bike lanes.
- Building upon the existing trail network, specifically providing connections from neighborhoods to trails.

### **PARKING**

The need for additional parking was a common theme amongst all outreach methods, however there was strong pushback against the idea of a parking garage.



Osgood Pond



## OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD UPON

### RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The town has well established recreational opportunities that respondents highly value. Additional opportunities, such as improving accessibility to the Souhegan River, Osgood Pond, and the Rail Trail were suggested. The survey indicated a strong desire to increase open space, natural areas, conservation land and recreational facilities, while preventing loss of rural character. The need for additional parking at trail heads was also cited specifically on multiple occasions.

### SCHOOLS

Survey respondents were much more concerned with improving the quality of the schools rather than the need to reduce costs associated with the schools. Question 5 of the Community Survey asks “How would you like to see town services improved in the next 10-20 years?” 43% (178) of respondents indicated quality of school education, opposed to only 24% (102) of respondents indicated they would like a reduction in the cost of school services. School performance or proficiency was also cited as a weakness at public input sessions as well as concerns over school funding and maintenance.

### SUSTAINABILITY

There is significant interest in promoting a sustainable way of thinking. This includes installing solar panels at schools and municipal buildings, EV charging stations in town, as well as green energy options including solar farms, wind power, and hydroelectric power.



Photo by Seth J. Dewey Photography

## GOALS

During the process of summarizing feedback, some potential action items have surfaced based on the common themes and community suggestions that arose through the public input process. These action items are listed below in no particular order. Please note that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather a starting point for discussion as the Town embarks on the Master Planning process.

1) Maintain the small town feel and sense of community that Milford currently provides.

*Action* - Develop a communication plan identifying the most effective means of dispersing information to residents, property and business owners.

*Action* - Explore ways to collaboratively improve town-wide communication and planning of community events.

*Action* - Obtain grant funds to dedicate a staff person to town events and festivals.

*Action* - Explore opportunities to create attractions that draw visitors from out of town.

2) Continue to retain young people and attract families to establish their lives in Milford.

*Action* - Work with the School Board and administrative staff to understand the key issues and needs facing the schools.

*Action* - Identify the most pressing needs of the school system and identify funding sources to address these items.

*Action* - Hold a forum with parents to identify key issues and concerns they face regarding the school system.

*Action* - Facilitate collaborative approaches to identify youth entertainment needs and sustainable solutions.

3) Create more services for seniors, including transportation and a senior center.

*Action* - Explore and implement ways to enhance Milford's senior focuses services, including a senior center for centralized resources and opportunities, and enhanced transportation resources.

4) Improve overall mobility and connections by planning and designing infrastructure that facilitates and promotes multi-modal opportunities.

*Action* - Update the Pedestrian, Bicycle, Trail & Recreation Connectivity Plan (2014).

*Action* - Build community and political support for expansion of key sidewalk connections.

*Action* - Seek grant funding for sidewalk and bike and pedestrian facilities.

*Action* - Look for opportunities to connect neighborhoods to the trail network.

*Action* - Explore ways to establish fixed route bus transportation to Milford.



## GOALS

5) Infrastructure - Maintain and enhance the existing infrastructure throughout the town including roadways, sidewalks, crosswalks, municipal buildings, and schools.

*Action* - Review, update and developed infrastructure plans to identify immediate needs and address long term maintenance.

*Action* - Seek grant opportunities to obtain federal, state and private grants to assist in addressing these needs, while reducing some of the overall costs to the town.

6) Promote a sustainable way of thinking through green energy sources, EV charging, and solar panel installation at municipal buildings.

*Action* - Work with the Energy Advisory Committee to evaluate the feasibility of installing solar panels on town buildings.

7) Build upon Milford's existing mix of housing stock to provide an array of affordable housing options to meet a wide range of economic needs.

*Action* - Explore the level of interest for various housing types, including senior housing.

8) Improve access to recreational opportunities in the town.

*Action* - Support the Conservation Commission's vision of developing a 7.5 mile loop river trail along the Souhegan River from the Oval to the next bridge crossing.

*Action* - Increase parking at trailheads and explore the feasibility of creating a centralized parking area to access the trail network.

9) Increase open space, natural areas, conservation land and recreational facilities, which would help support the sense of rural character.

*Action* - Evaluate methods to increase accessibility and better utilize the Souhegan River and Osgood Pond.



Keyes Memorial Park



## GOALS

10) Economic - Promote town-wide business development and foster the vibrancy of the Oval, by attracting and supporting additional mom and pop businesses, and expanded employment opportunities throughout the community.

*Action* - Consider resurrecting the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to promote the economic opportunities within the community, develop marketing materials, and serve as a liaison to support and attract local businesses.

*Action* - Update the parking study of the downtown area to evaluate current and future needs, and develop a parking map.

*Action* - Evaluate the use of tax incentives to attract new industrial, manufacturing, retail and hospitality businesses to the town.

*Action* - Explore options to utilize grant writing services within the town to pursue and take advantage of available grant opportunities.

*Action* - Encourage recreationally focused businesses such as bicycle and kayak rentals.

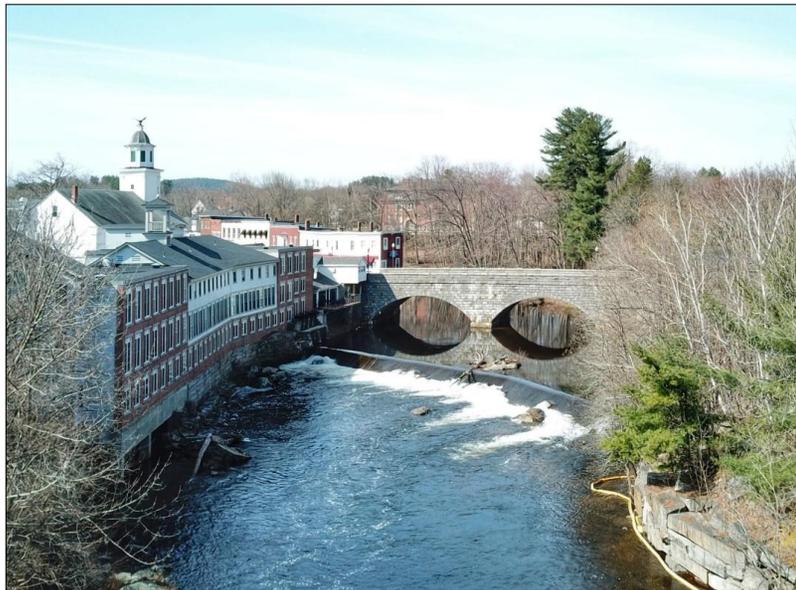


Photo by Tim Berry



Photo by Len Mannino



# ENVISION MILFORD COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS



## Key Themes from Community Input Sessions

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of community and small-town feel</li> <li>• Community events – Pumpkin Festival, family activities, parades</li> <li>• The Oval and historic downtown with shops and businesses</li> <li>• Unique features such as the swinging bridge and drive-in theater</li> <li>• Good geographical location, intersection of major roads, proximity to Nashua / Manchester</li> <li>• Volunteer resources</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sidewalks and walkability</li> <li>• Lack of effective communication for the entire community</li> <li>• Deferred maintenance of government buildings</li> <li>• Infrastructure, lack of parking and deferred maintenance</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing across all income levels</li> <li>• Proficiency rating of schools</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advantage of fixing infrastructure with federal and state funds as well as grants</li> <li>• Multi-modal transportation / improved connections</li> <li>• Expand retail / commercial / industrial tax base and use tax breaks to attract businesses and offset the tax burden on homeowners</li> <li>• Untapped grants – grant writer for schools and Town</li> <li>• New decision makers, including Board of Selectman with new vision</li> <li>• Create new sidewalks – have walking clubs</li> <li>• Opportunity to increase communication with residents, newspaper, TV, knowledgeable voters</li> <li>• Souhegan River</li> <li>• Sustainability – promote a sustainable way of thinking (green energy, EV charging)</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic vulnerability that can change the feel of Milford (economic crash, decisions by legislation)</li> <li>• Community water (availability and quality), increased speed of development, growth management, need for industrial development</li> <li>• Not maintaining the small-town feel/interpersonal relationship/community spirit</li> <li>• Short-term thinking by leadership / lack of political support on initiatives and long-term planning opportunities</li> <li>• Aging infrastructure</li> <li>• Inability to change from the way things have been done (innovation)</li> <li>• Community education / communication, need more positive community engagement</li> <li>• Enough appeal to attract a younger generation and families</li> </ul>

## Zoom Community Input Session Summary - 4/11/2023

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small town feel in a great location</li> <li>• Volunteer resources, community, small town vibes</li> <li>• Good geographical location, intersection of major roads, proximity to Nashua / Manchester. Rural but close to urban.</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parking and walkability</li> <li>• Connecting communication in community</li> <li>• Deferred maintenance of government buildings</li> <li>• Infrastructure and parking</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advantage of fixing infrastructure with federal funds and grants</li> <li>• Multi-modal transportation</li> <li>• Expand retail / commercial / industrial tax base and use tax breaks to attract businesses to offset the tax burden on homeowners</li> <li>• Outdoor recreation</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic vulnerability that can change the feel of Milford (economy crash, decisions by legislation)</li> <li>• Community water, speed of development / growth management, need for industrial</li> <li>• Not maintaining the small-town feel / interpersonal relationship / community spirit</li> <li>• Short-term thinking by leadership on economic decisions</li> </ul> <p><b>Prioritized by votes.</b></p>

**List of Additional Answers:**

**Strengths** – Community programs that appeal to a multitude of different people; the Oval; natural resources / trails; affordable / workforce housing; broad demographics; friendly people / comfortable atmosphere; lower cost of housing vs. Nashua; easy access jobs; good schools; recreation department and events (Pumpkin Festival).

**Weaknesses** – Non-ADA compliant sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, and parking spaces (Town Hall); need more businesses in Town to offset tax rate; empty store fronts; affordable/workforce housing; communication about town affairs / community-wide communication; trees on powerlines; loss of the Cabinet (quality is gone); division / political issues; transportation for residents who are not able to drive; more activities for adults that are reasonably priced;

lack of big business; rental vacancy is very low; housing is expensive and young people move out of town; lack of voting.

**Opportunities** – high speed internet capabilities in town; solar power; electric charging stations; working remotely; add a grant writer to Town staff; extend library facilities; heritage; Brox property; pothole repair; better bike / pedestrian infrastructure.

**Threats** – social media negativity; loss of community identity; short-term thinking (voting); aging infrastructure; only a handful of major employers in town; superfund sites; safety / gun violence – police leaving due to low pay; need for schools / improve schools; industry needs / workers; perceived high taxes; exclusion of diversity; commercial space left unrented; people isolated; inflation; zoning does not protect environment

## In-Person Community Input Session Summary - 4/15/2023

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community events – Pumpkin Festival / family activities*</b></li> <li>• <b>The Oval and downtown district / historical sites</b></li> <li>• <b>Unique features – swinging bridge, drive-in, Oval with shops / businesses, parades, activities</b></li> <li>• Safety – feel safe walking, low crime</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Geographic location / proximity</li> <li>• Small town character</li> <li>• Walkability</li> <li>• School / CTE Center</li> <li>• Souhegan River – scenic beauty</li> <li>• Restaurants</li> <li>• “Norman Rockwell” town of NH</li> <li>• Keyes Memorial Park, Recreation, Trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Infrastructure and deferred maintenance*</b></li> <li>• <b>Affordable housing</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of sidewalks</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of communication to residents</b></li> <li>• Political short-sited vision</li> <li>• Lack of parking</li> <li>• Traffic – speeding and pedestrian safety</li> <li>• Leadership follow-up (repairs, schools, library, not spending on old infrastructure)</li> <li>• Traffic flow/dangerous environment in the Oval</li> <li>• Community diversity / participation engagement</li> <li>• School performance / proficiency</li> <li>• Car dependency</li> </ul> <p style="margin-top: 10px;"><b>*Bold Items have been prioritized by votes.</b></p>

### List of Additional Answers:

**Strengths** – Diverse businesses (manufacturing, small businesses, farm stands); community organizations (Boys and Girls Club, etc.); preschool to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Town; parks – skate park / pool, music in the parks; working farms / agriculture; outdoor resources and open space; bus service; old / historic buildings and history; access to medical care; growing population; emergency services; community leaders / volunteers; community resources – SHARE; convenient services; mix of commercial and residential land uses; historical society; seasons / weather; DPW / landfill; things for kids to do (Boys & Girls Club, Hampshire Hills); larger companies with employment opportunities; progressive spirit.

**Weaknesses** – Empty businesses / no business variety in Oval; public transportation; overdevelopment; property taxes / tax structure; no local newspaper; lack of accessible indoor event space; lack of designated space for seniors and youth; overworked volunteers in Town; distance to major medical; cell service / dead spots; lack of hotel / conventions space; lack of adult education programs.

## In-Person Community Input Session Summary - 4/15/2023

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Untapped grants – grant writer for schools and Town*</b></li> <li>• <b>New “blood” at the decision – making table</b></li> <li>• <b>Create new sidewalks – have walking clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>Opportunity to have more communication with residents, newspaper, TV, knowledgeable voters</b></li> <li>• Library is a great resource – promote and update it (not just books)</li> <li>• More space / activities for seniors</li> <li>• 127 Elm / Brox / other undeveloped spaces</li> <li>• Fill retail space in the Oval</li> <li>• Multipurpose schools – adult education, MHS / CTE renovation (state funding)</li> <li>• Community Center (low-cost childcare, senior center, Keyes Park)</li> <li>• Federal grants and capital reserve to fund “match”</li> <li>• Multimodal transportation alternatives</li> <li>• Get more people involved in Town</li> <li>• Townwide Wi-Fi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aging Infrastructure*</b></li> <li>• <b>Inability to change from the way things have been done (innovation)</b></li> <li>• <b>Better community education / communication, need more positive community engagement</b></li> <li>• Cost of living – assessment practices, perceived high taxes</li> <li>• Lack of affordable housing / rents (workforce)</li> <li>• Inflation / rising costs</li> <li>• Overdevelopment / high density development</li> <li>• Retaining talent</li> <li>• Town water quality</li> <li>• Energy costs</li> <li>• Housing costs</li> <li>• Increasing taxes / cost of living</li> </ul> <p style="margin-top: 10px;"><b>*Bold Items have been prioritized by votes.</b></p>

**List of Additional Answers:**

**Opportunities** – Attract more diverse businesses; housing - affordable single-family homes attract people who work from home; signage zoning reform; vacancies; social services to balance growing population and needs; energy committee / solar farms; marketing/promotion of Milford; better collaboration in Town, school administration, and other communities in region; diversity of education (tech schools, charter schools, homeschooling, private schools); community service requirement for students to graduate; use available space for meeting / events / maker spaces; incorporate Souhegan River more into Town (access, recreation, events); more winter recreational activities; solar energy; more facilities for electric cars; grow outdoor space / recreation opportunities; bell (promote).

**Threats** – Environmental (storms, flooding); potential drugs / crime due to proximity to Manchester / Nashua; population growth; water supply – drinking wells; capacity at the water / sewage plant; Nimby-ism; changing job opportunity / working from home; crime rate; lack of mental health resources; political will / lack of leadership/short-sighted leadership; bonding requirements; social media negativity, misinformation, reducing civil discourse, and unwillingness to find common ground; becoming a city (newcomers expect city services); lack of creative leadership in town; climate change; transportation at capacity; keeping people in town after school-age; worker shortages; emergency services are a less desirable career; dwindling trade labor force, organizations have less money to help offset other costs.

## Steering Committee Input Session Summary – 4/03/2023

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of community, volunteerism, small town atmosphere</li> <li>• Milford Oval / business district</li> <li>• Central location &amp; proximity</li> <li>• Formal &amp; informal, indoor / outdoor family &amp; individual recreation opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old infrastructure – water, sewer, drainage, school, municipal facilities, lack of cemetery space</li> <li>• Proficiency rating of schools</li> <li>• Parking</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability – promote a sustainable way of thinking (i.e., grants for green energy, EV charging)</li> <li>• Federal / state funding opportunities</li> <li>• Grow bicycle, pedestrian, and alternate modes of transportation; incorporate the Souhegan River</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of political support for initiatives</li> <li>• Lack of diversity of employment choice</li> <li>• Enough appeal for younger individuals and families to live, work, and play</li> <li>• Lack of long term/big picture planning (i.e., current tax rate blindness)</li> <li>• High taxes</li> </ul> <p><b>Prioritized by votes.</b></p>

**List of Additional Answers:**

**Strengths** – Family activities; Trails / outdoor recreation; Restaurants; Good library; Great trades / businesses locally; Small population; Keyes Memorial Park & pool; Pumpkin Festival & other events; Mix of blue & white collar; Many places of worship; Hampshire Hills and Boys & Girls Club; Town civic, community & youth athletic organizations; Local/proximity to healthcare services; Recreation department; Diversity of housing stock.

**Weaknesses** – Lack of cultural diversity; Availability of housing; Lack of follow-through / establishment of school & municipal maintenance plans; Lack of sidewalks / limited walkability.

**Opportunities** – Parking – better waymaking; Re-evaluate land use regulations shaping town & address infrastructure & appearance; Student / younger people engagement (i.e., student placement); Enhance communication / centralize plans, ideas, proposals to enhance Milford; Milford Schools are at a crossroads.

**Threats** – Financial /real estate / economic issues; Environmental / extreme weather events (i.e., flooding); Perception of threats & level of safety (i.e., national events; Isolation from community engagement due to technology; Limitations of philanthropic funding, especially in crisis (i.e., Share etc.).

# ENVISION MILFORD CIVIC GROUP MEETINGS



# Milford Trails, Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission

## Summary – 4/10/23

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Good town</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Natural resources – access to resources &amp; usability, 19 miles of trails (surrounding towns come here), trail care (notification of issues, collaborative effort between trail users &amp; maintenance, snowmobilers are good volunteers)</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School system – funding, maintenance, curriculum</li> <li>• Develop a “let’s get it done” mentality – short term, not looking for long term (turning down grants)</li> <li>• Need more focus on youth – how to entertain them</li> <li>• SoRLAC – increase awareness of water quality in communities along the river, consider impacts</li> <li>• BOS not supporting grants for expanded sidewalks</li> <li>• Promoting walkability</li> <li>• Sidewalks – helps you get to know your neighbors</li> <li>• Walkability is key to building a sense of community</li> <li>• Sidewalks facilitate cooperation &amp; reduce isolation</li> <li>• Sidewalk connections</li> <li>• People in apartments along Nashua Street need to walk safely to the street</li> <li>• Better for the environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More trails – front doors to outdoors, connect neighborhoods to trails</li> <li>• Fixed route transit to Milford</li> <li>• River trail along the Souhegan River from the Oval to the next bridge – 7.5-mile loop</li> <li>• Good access from Keyes Field &amp; the Boys &amp; Girls Club – connect to the Souhegan River Trail</li> <li>• A central place to park &amp; access a solid trail network, economic development</li> <li>• Town has access along the north side to the fish hatchery</li> <li>• More parking at trail heads</li> <li>• More sidewalks – West Street / Osgood / Armory Road / Shaw’s (Nashua Street)</li> <li>• Grants that were not politically supported – the community support is there for rural &amp; not the urban sidewalks</li> </ul>	

## Souhegan Valley Outreach (SVOT) Summary – 4/11/23

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents rally around people in distress</li> <li>• Community connections</li> <li>• During Covid – lots of opportunities outside at parks</li> <li>• Parks / North River Road fields</li> <li>• Milford Rotary</li> <li>• Good people</li> <li>• Building upon the solid grassroots that are here</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club / Theater (Cast, ACES, Monica Gallant)</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing when our neighbors are in distress</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Volunteerism – MCAA community involvement</li> <li>• Church is siloed &amp; out of touch with society</li> <li>• Church has developed a victim mentality, trends requiring conformity</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Showing children, teenagers, young adolescents that they have value</li> <li>• Lack of leadership</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People want to connect</li> <li>• Church involvement</li> <li>• Reaching the homeless, single parent, blended families, those in need</li> <li>• Churches are silos – the church is disconnected &amp; out of touch with society</li> <li>• Positive message of love &amp; caring has been lost</li> <li>• ARC NH – Addiction Recovery Centers of NH &amp; mental health</li> <li>• Bales &amp; 127 Elm Street</li> <li>• Engagement – constant interaction</li> <li>• Seeking leaders / leadership development</li> </ul>	

## Milford Rotary Club Input Summary – 5/10/23

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced economy</li> <li>• Oval</li> <li>• People / attitude of people</li> <li>• Community support</li> <li>• Small town feel</li> <li>• Open space / conservation / trails</li> <li>• Quarries</li> <li>• Rotary club</li> <li>• Proximity / location</li> <li>• Community spirit</li> <li>• Night life and music</li> <li>• Business friendly</li> <li>• Socioeconomic diversity</li> <li>• Diversity in housing</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior center / senior programs</li> <li>• Lack of parking</li> <li>• State of roads in and out of town</li> <li>• Market rate / mixed use housing like on Nashua Street</li> <li>• More trails for bikes</li> <li>• Upgrade library</li> <li>• Connect to pedestrian trail in Amherst (side path)</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Souhegan River</li> <li>• Osgood Pond</li> <li>• Rail trail</li> <li>• Town newspaper</li> <li>• Solar – municipal / schools, parking shade panels</li> <li>• Tiny home village</li> </ul>	

# ENVISION MILFORD COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS



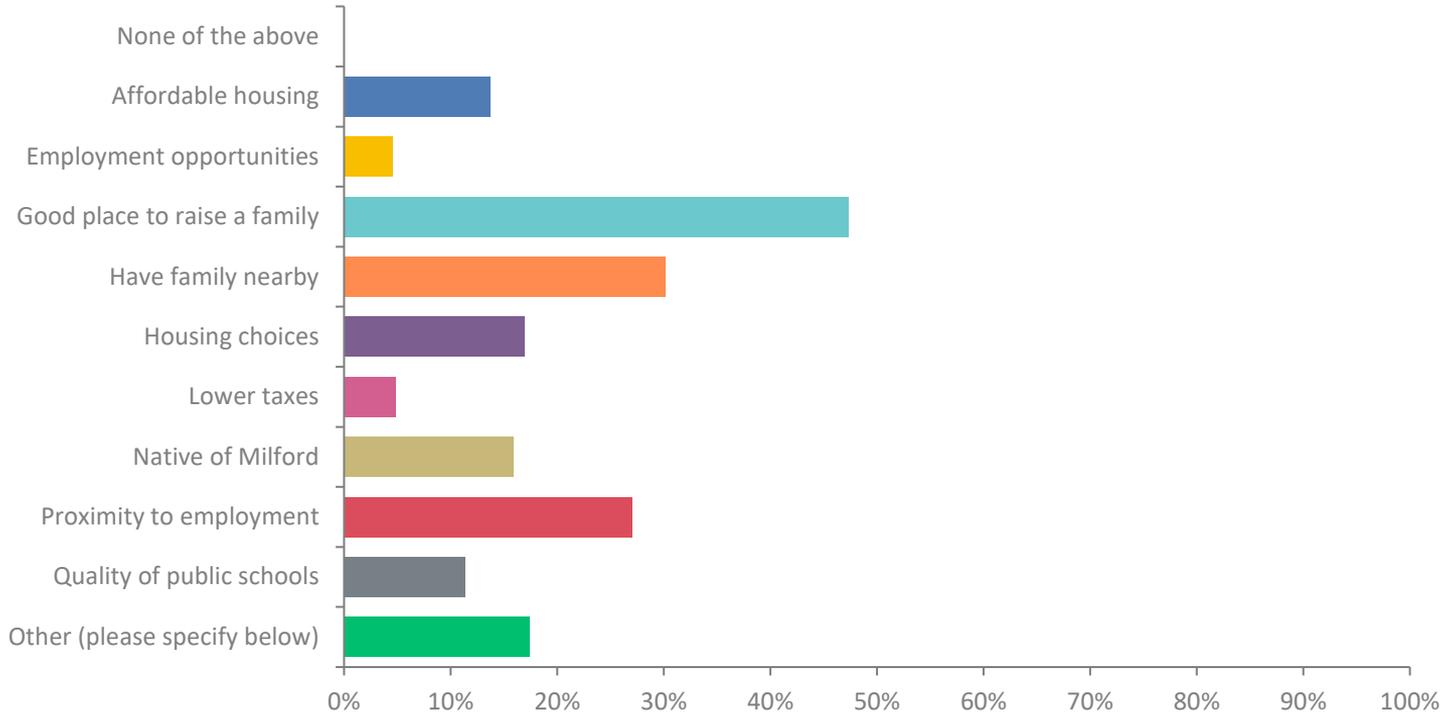
# Help Envision Milford's Future, Your Opinion Counts!

**422 Total Responses**

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

# Q1: I live in Milford because? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 414 Skipped: 8



# Q1: I live in Milford because? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 414 Skipped: 8

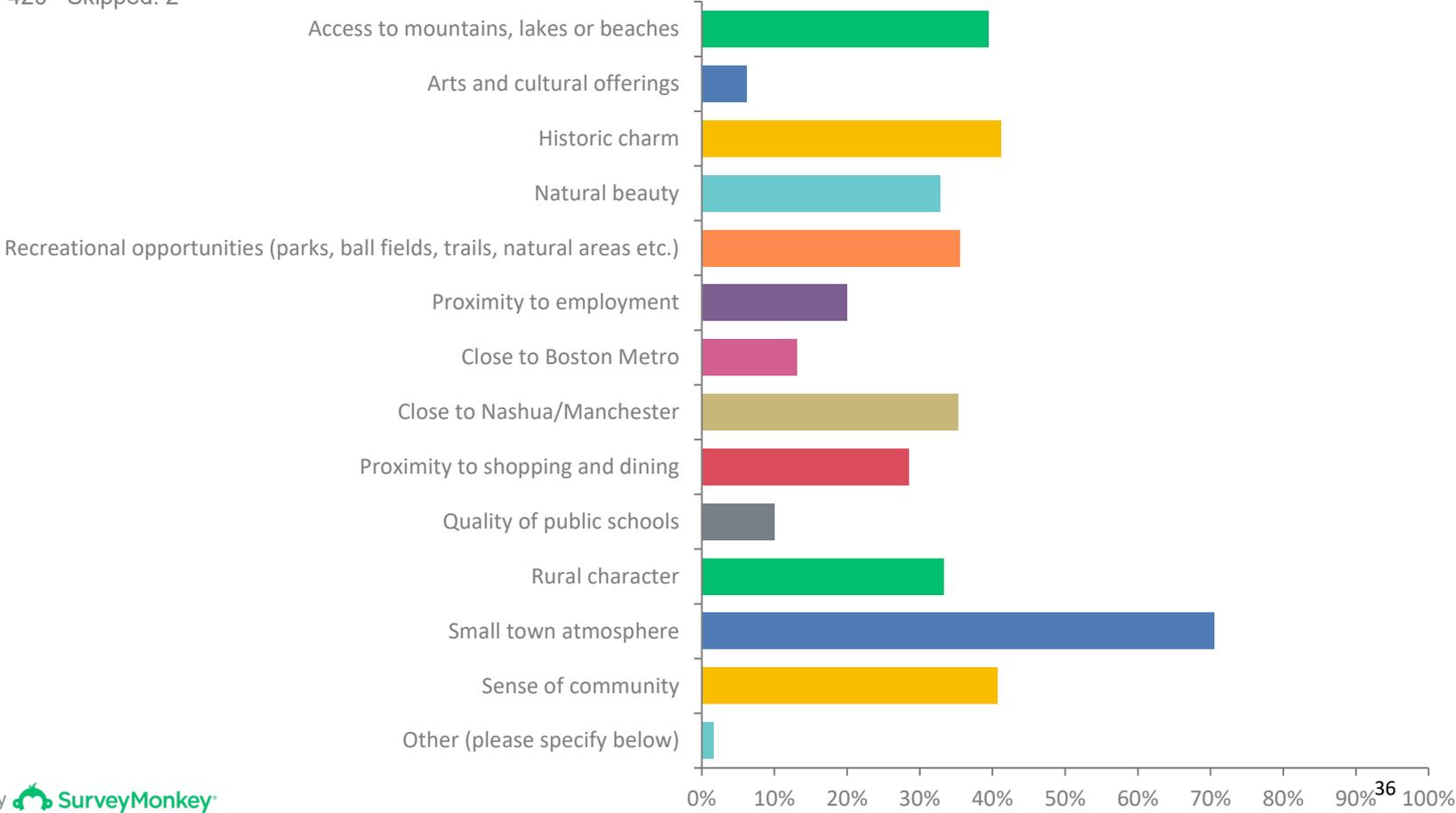
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	0%	0
Affordable housing	13.77%	57
Employment opportunities	4.59%	19
Good place to raise a family	47.34%	196
Have family nearby	30.19%	125
Housing choices	16.91%	70
Lower taxes	4.83%	20
Native of Milford	15.94%	66
Proximity to employment	27.05%	112
Quality of public schools	11.35%	47
Other (please specify below)	17.39%	72
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>784</b>

# I Live in Milford Because – Key Themes

- Small town and rural feel
- Close to friends and family
- Friendly people and a great sense of place
- Vibrant town center / the Oval
- Easy access to plentiful amenities
- Proximity to Nashua, Manchester and Boston
- Moved here years ago and still LOVE the town
- Walkability and access to trails and green space

# Q2: What do you like about Milford? (Select up to 5)

Answered: 420 Skipped: 2



## Q2: What do you like about Milford? (Select up to 5)

Answered: 420  
Skipped: 2

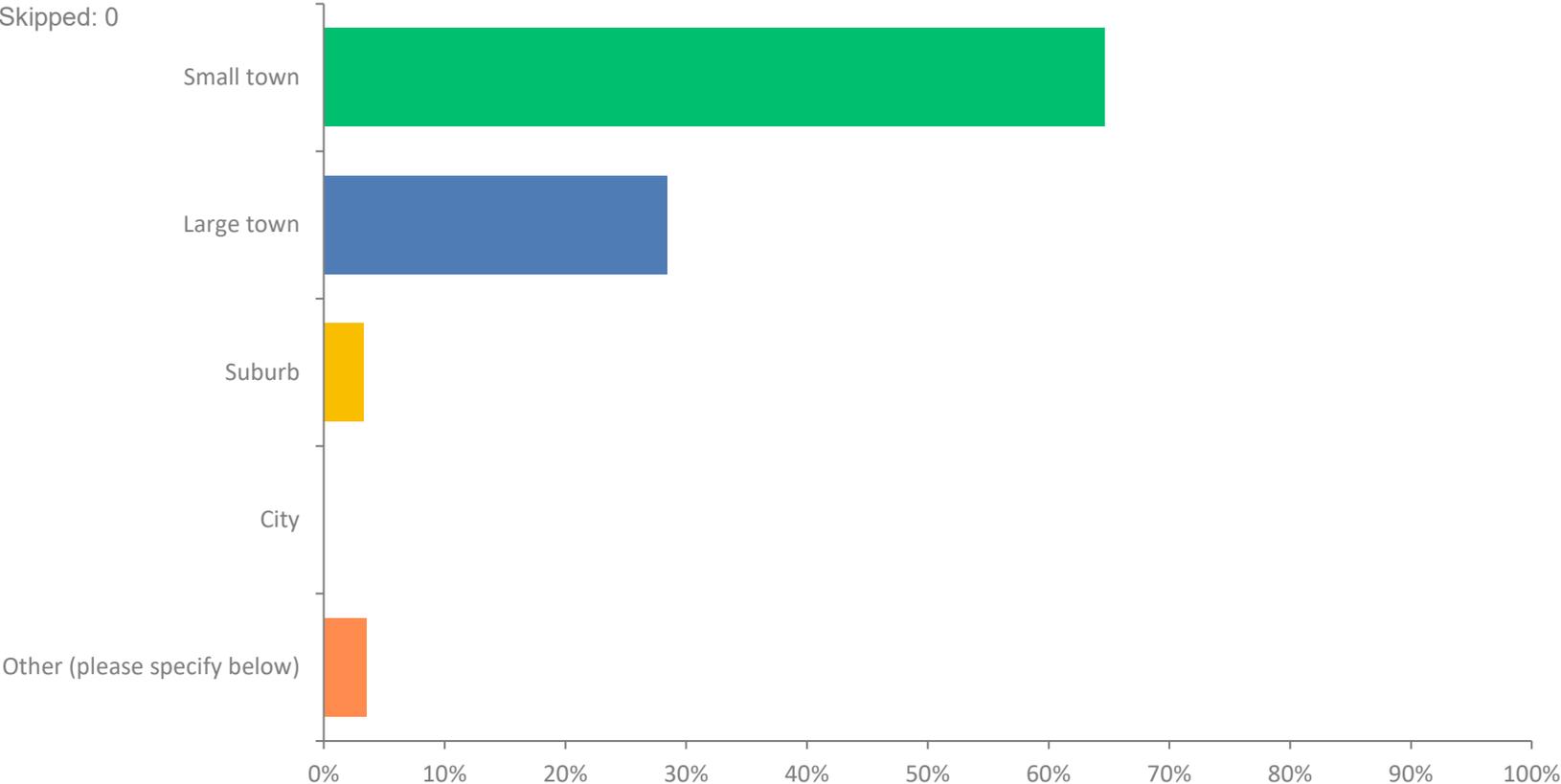
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Access to mountains, lakes or beaches	39.52%	166
Arts and cultural offerings	6.19%	26
Historic charm	41.19%	173
Natural beauty	32.86%	138
Recreational opportunities (parks, ball fields, trails, natural areas etc.)	35.48%	149
Proximity to employment	20.0%	84
Close to Boston Metro	13.10%	55
Close to Nashua/Manchester	35.24%	148
Proximity to shopping and dining	28.57%	120
Quality of public schools	10.0%	42
Rural character	33.33%	140
Small town atmosphere	70.48%	296
Sense of community	40.71%	171
Other (please specify below)	1.67%	7

# What Do You Like About Milford? – Key Themes

- Milford's central location with easy access to oceans, Boston, Maine and the mountains
- The pumpkin festival, parades, community events, the bandstand, fireworks, summer concerts
- **The library**
- Great restaurants and local activities
- The Oval, an active downtown, very walkable with amenities and attractions near housing

# Q3: How would you best describe Milford?

Answered: 422 Skipped: 0



### Q3: How would you best describe Milford?

Answered: 422 Skipped: 0

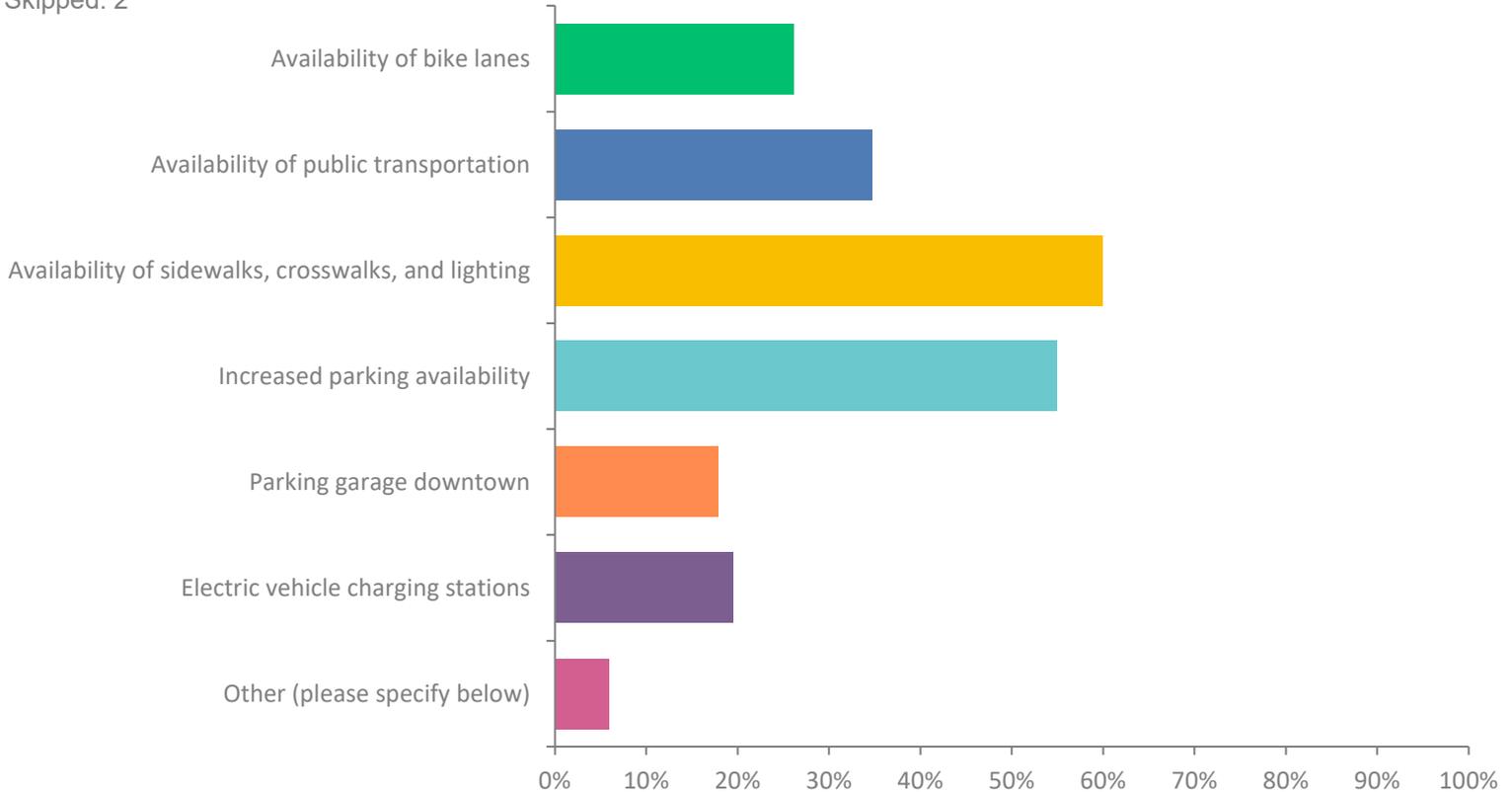
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small town	64.69%	273
Large town	28.44%	120
Suburb	3.32%	14
City	0%	0
Other (please specify below)	3.55%	15
TOTAL		422

# How Would You Best Describe Milford? – Key Themes

- Small town transitioning to a large town or suburb
- A medium town
- Large town with small town vibes
- No longer a small town

## Q4: How would you like to see transportation and parking improved in the next 10-20 years? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 420 Skipped: 2



## Q4: How would you like to see transportation and parking improved in the next 10-20 years? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 420 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Availability of bike lanes	26.19%	110
Availability of public transportation	34.76%	146
Availability of sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting	60.0%	252
Increased parking availability	55.00%	231
Parking garage downtown	17.86%	75
Electric vehicle charging stations	19.52%	82
Other (please specify below)	5.95%	25
TOTAL		921

# Transportation and parking improved in the next 10- 20 years?

## Key Themes

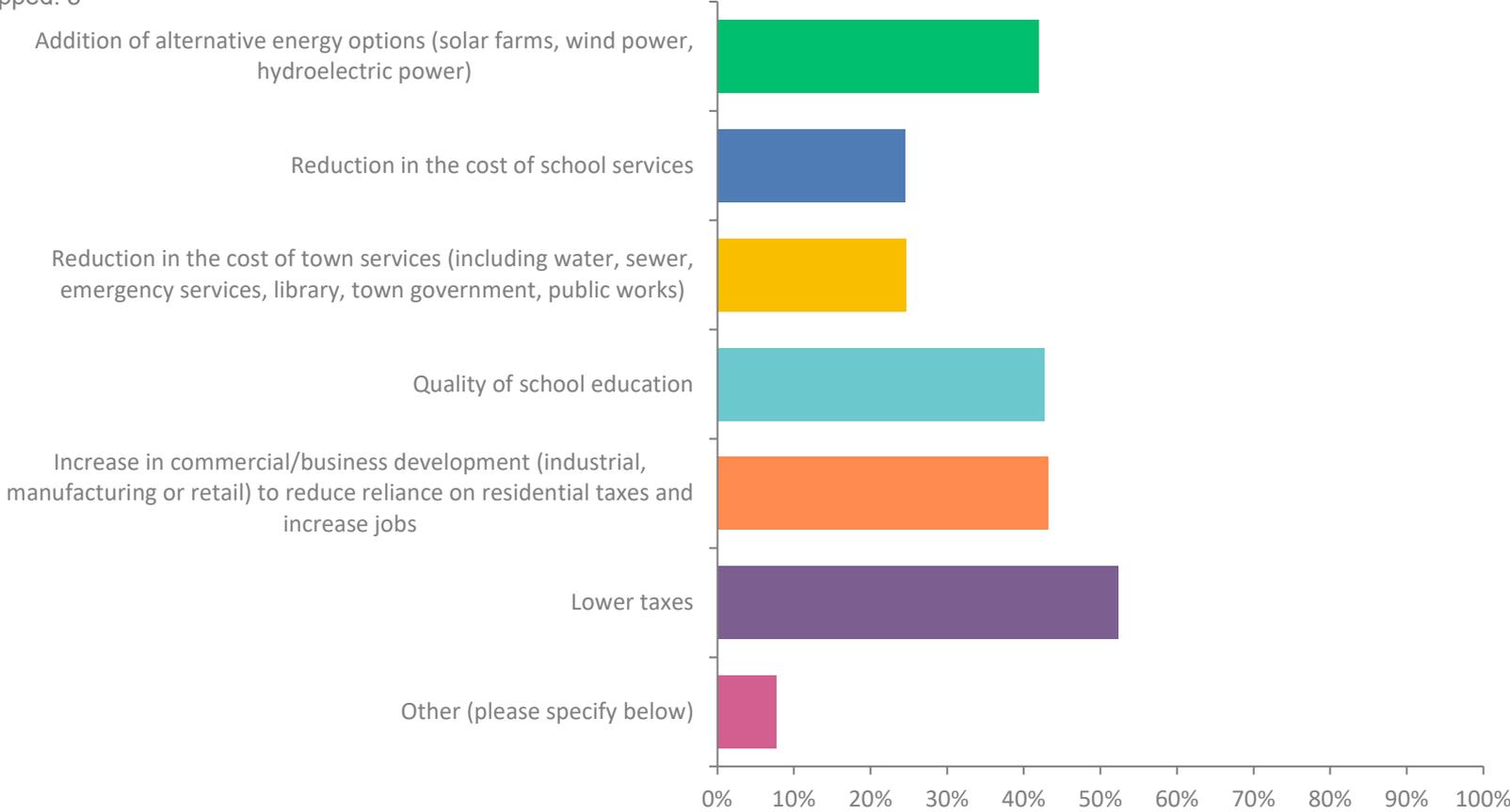
- **No parking garage**
- Leave as is, no changes needed
- Parking can be challenging in the Oval
- Improve maintenance of existing infrastructure
- Consider public transit, a trolley service and taxi service
- More lighting in the Oval

## Select Comments

- Install traffic lights at busy intersections, add more lighting in neighborhoods, solar lights at crosswalks
- Sidewalks needed on Crosby Street, Osgood Road, Heron Pond area

# Q5: How would you like to see town services improved in the next 10- 20 years? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 417 Skipped: 5



## Q5: How would you like to see town services improved in the next 10- 20 years? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 417

Skipped: 5

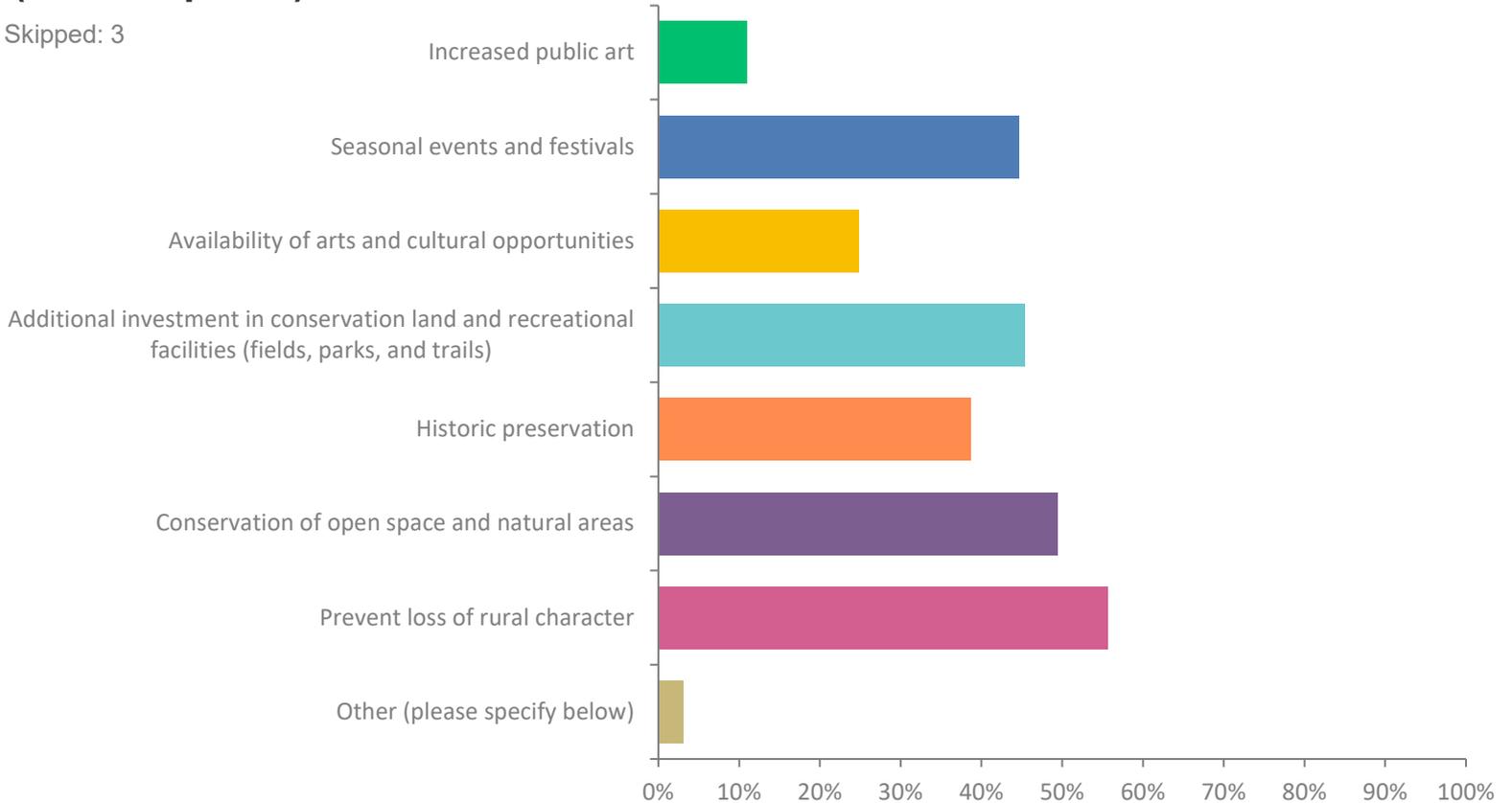
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Addition of alternative energy options (solar farms, wind power, hydroelectric power)	41.97%	175
Reduction in the cost of school services	24.46%	102
Reduction in the cost of town services (including water, sewer, emergency services, library, town government, public works)	24.70%	103
Quality of school education	42.69%	178
Increase in commercial/business development (industrial, manufacturing or retail) to reduce reliance on residential taxes and increase jobs	43.17%	180
Lower taxes	52.28%	218
Other (please specify below)	7.67%	32
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>988</b>

# Town services improved in the next 10- 20 years? – Key Themes

- Invest in the schools to improve quality and infrastructure
- Expand the tax base beyond property taxes
- More services for seniors including transportation and a senior center
- Improve water and brown color
- Upgrade the Wadleigh Library
- More restaurants, shops, entertainment options
- Improve trash pick up
- Increase the quality and quantify of services include full time fire department

## Q6: How would you like to see recreation, arts and culture improved in the next 10-20 years? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 419 Skipped: 3



## Q6: How would you like to see recreation, arts and culture improved in the next 10-20 years? (Select up to 3)

Answered: 419 Skipped: 3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increased public art	10.98%	46
Seasonal events and festivals	44.63%	187
Availability of arts and cultural opportunities	24.82%	104
Additional investment in conservation land and recreational facilities (fields, parks, and trails)	45.35%	190
Historic preservation	38.66%	162
Conservation of open space and natural areas	49.40%	207
Prevent loss of rural character	55.61%	233
Other (please specify below)	3.10%	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1142</b>

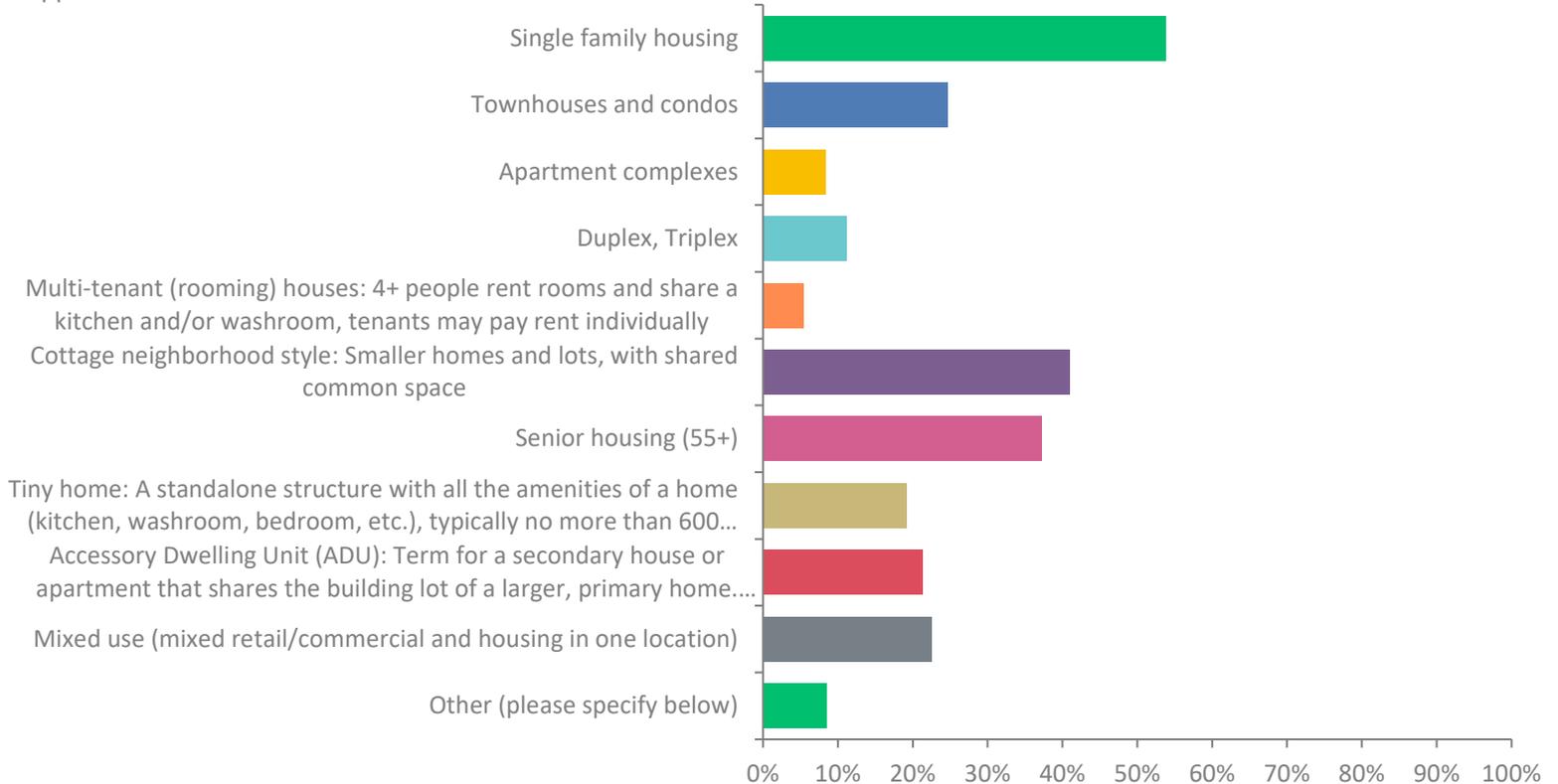
# Recreation, arts and culture improved in the next 10-20 years? Select Comments

## Select Comments

- Addition of multi-generational community center including senior center
- Easier access and parking at snowmobile/ATV trails and allowing the use of snowmobiles/ATVs on public roadways
- Offer concerts at Town Hall and Emerson Park
- Movie theatre, playhouse, museum

# Q7: What type of residential development would benefit Milford over the next 20 years? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 422 Skipped: 0



## Q7: What type of residential development would benefit Milford over the next 20 years? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 422 Skipped: 0

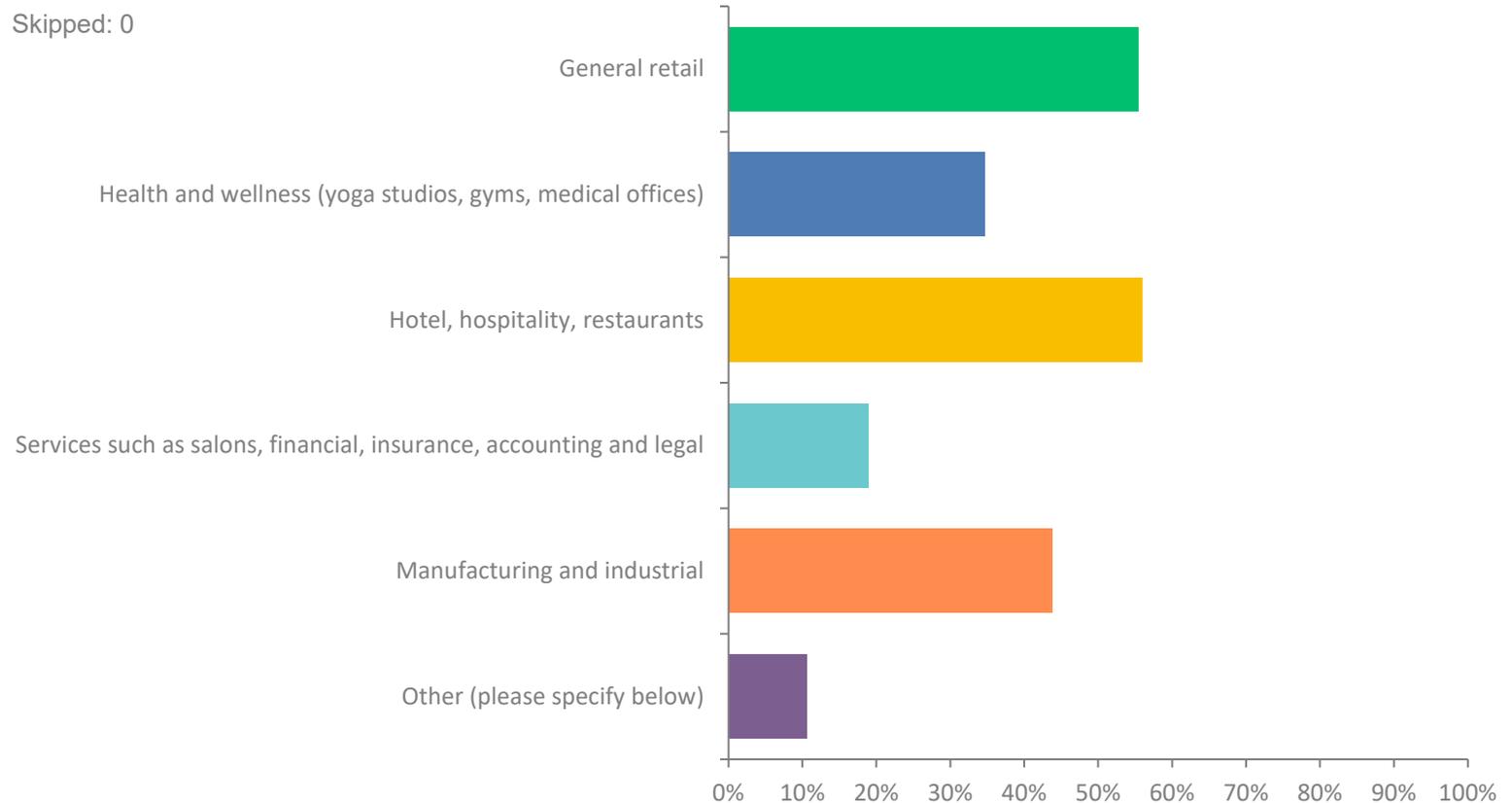
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single family housing	53.79%	227
Townhouses and condos	24.64%	104
Apartment complexes	8.29%	35
Duplex, Triplex	11.14%	47
Multi-tenant (rooming) houses	5.45%	23
Cottage neighborhood style	41.00%	173
Senior housing (55+)	37.20%	157
Tiny home:	19.19%	81
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	21.33%	90
Mixed use	22.51%	95
Other (please specify below)	8.53%	36
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1068</b>

# What type of residential development would benefit Milford over the next 20 years? – Key Themes

- Affordable housing of all types for singles
- No need for more housing, especially condos, apartments, multi-family
- Moderate sized single-family housing
- Tiny houses, ADUs, and cottage neighborhoods planned and built correctly would provide affordable housing to young people starting out and older people downsizing

## Q8: What type of business development would benefit Milford over the next 20 years? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 422 Skipped: 0



## Q8: What type of business development would benefit Milford over the next 20 years? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 422 Skipped: 0

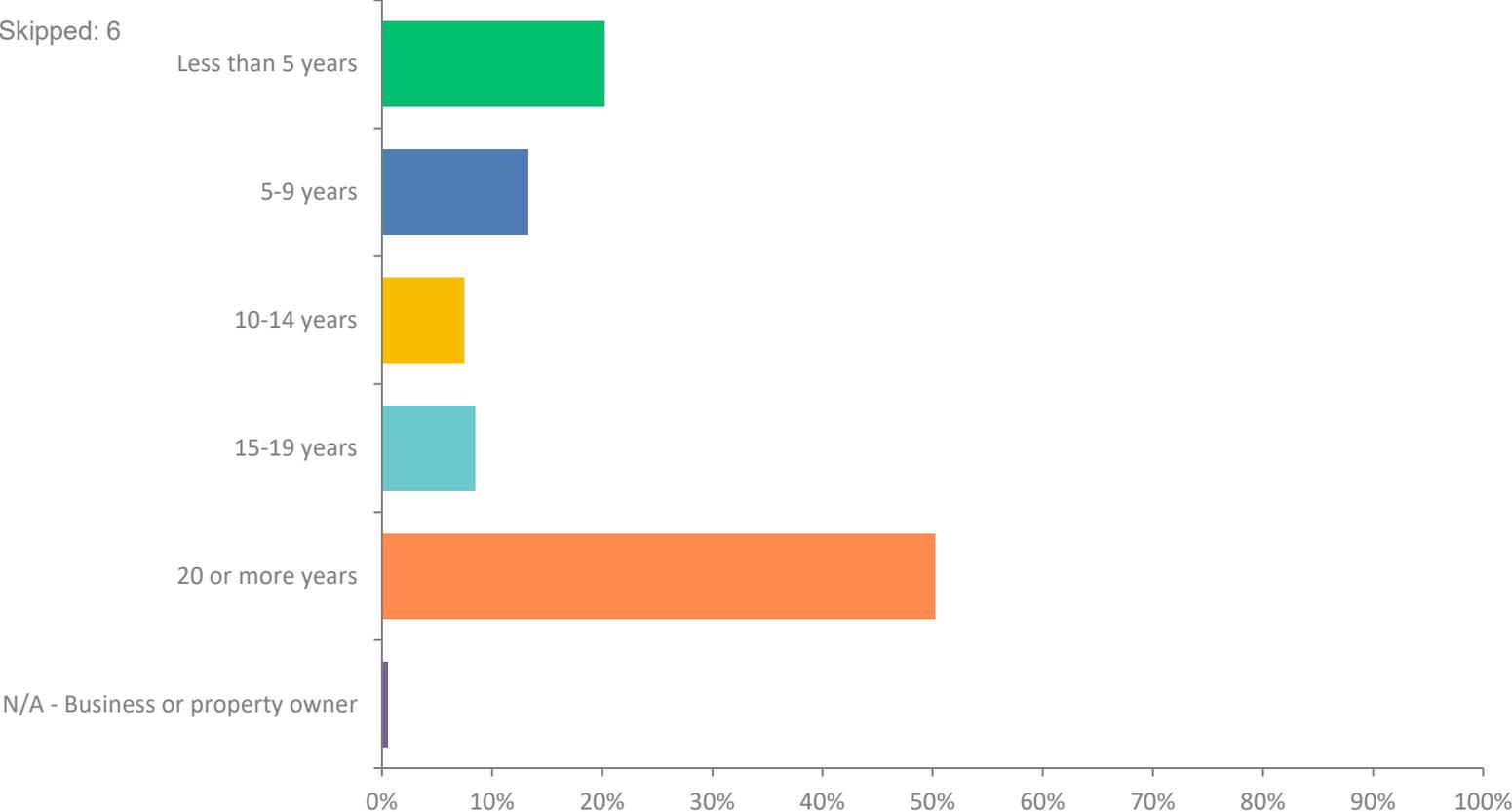
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
General retail	55.45%	234
Health and wellness (yoga studios, gyms, medical offices)	34.60%	146
Hotel, hospitality, restaurants	55.92%	236
Services such as salons, financial, insurance, accounting and legal	18.96%	80
Manufacturing and industrial	43.84%	185
Other (please specify below)	10.66%	45
TOTAL		926

# Business Development – Key Themes

- **Hotel**
- **No additional business development needed**
- **Support and strengthen existing businesses**
- **Local ‘mom and pop’, boutique style businesses, not chains**
- Manufacturing, industrial and tech companies
- Large stores such as Kohl’s or Target
- Farming and food production
- Indoor entertainment, theaters, recreation facilities

# Q10: How long have you lived in Milford?

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6



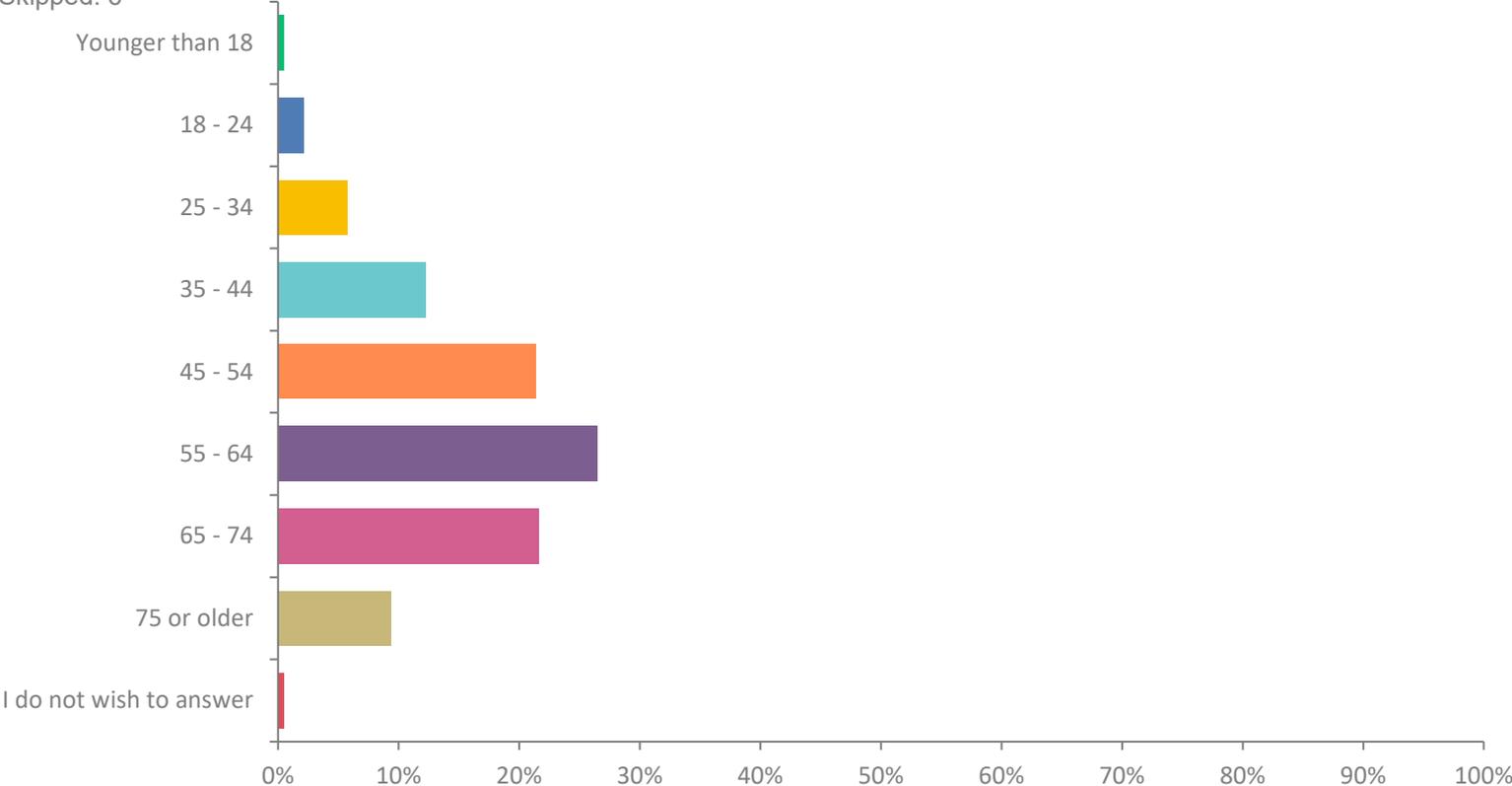
## Q10: How long have you lived in Milford?

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 5 years	20.19%	84
5-9 years	13.22%	55
10-14 years	7.45%	31
15-19 years	8.41%	35
20 or more years	50.24%	209
N/A - Business or property owner	0.48%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>416</b>

# Q11: Please select your age group.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6



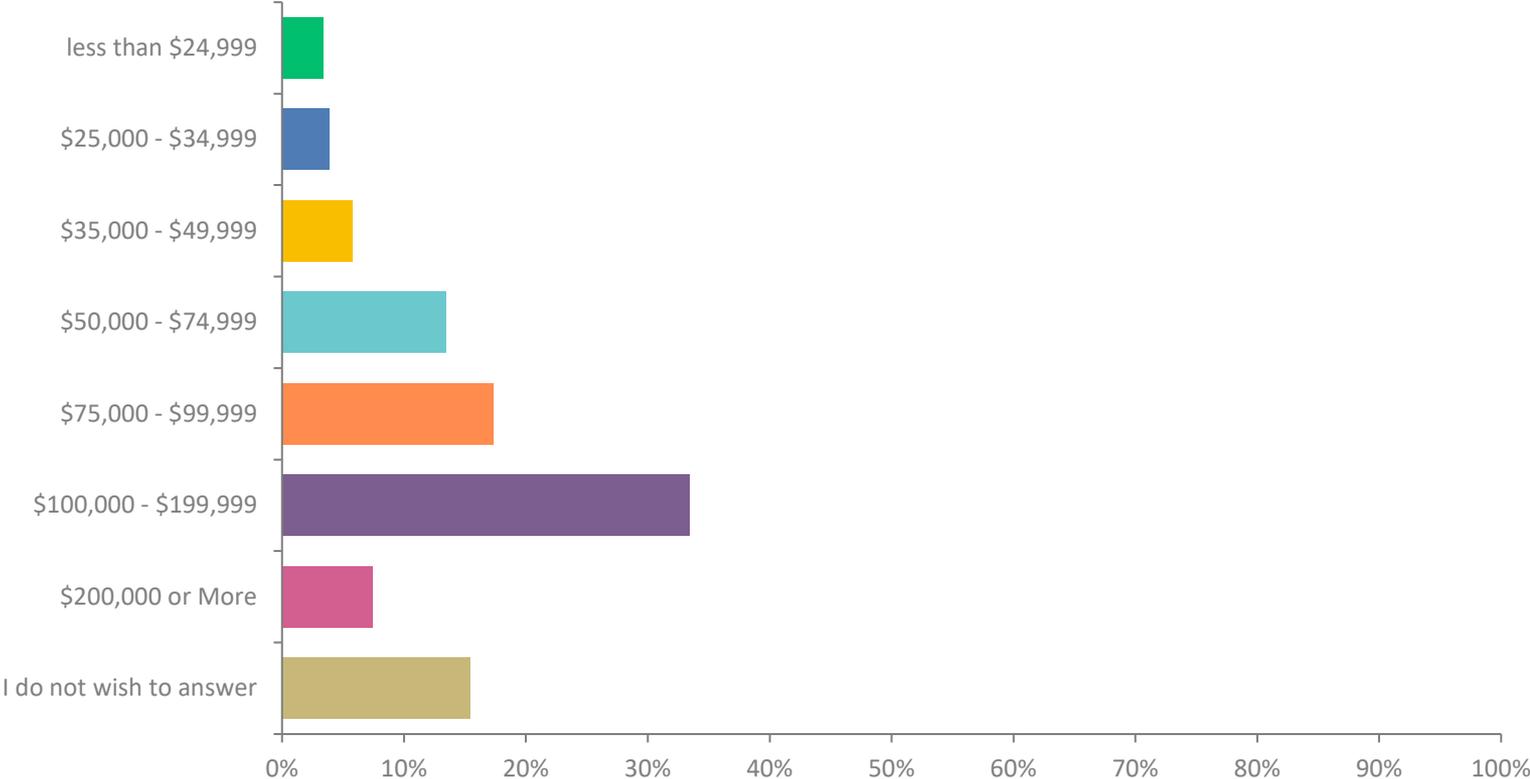
# Q11: Please select your age group.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Younger than 18	0.48%	2
18 - 24	2.16%	9
25 - 34	5.77%	24
35 - 44	12.26%	51
45 - 54	21.39%	89
55 - 64	26.44%	110
65 - 74	21.63%	90
75 or older	9.38%	39
I do not wish to answer	0.48%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>416</b>

# Q12: Please select your annual household income.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6



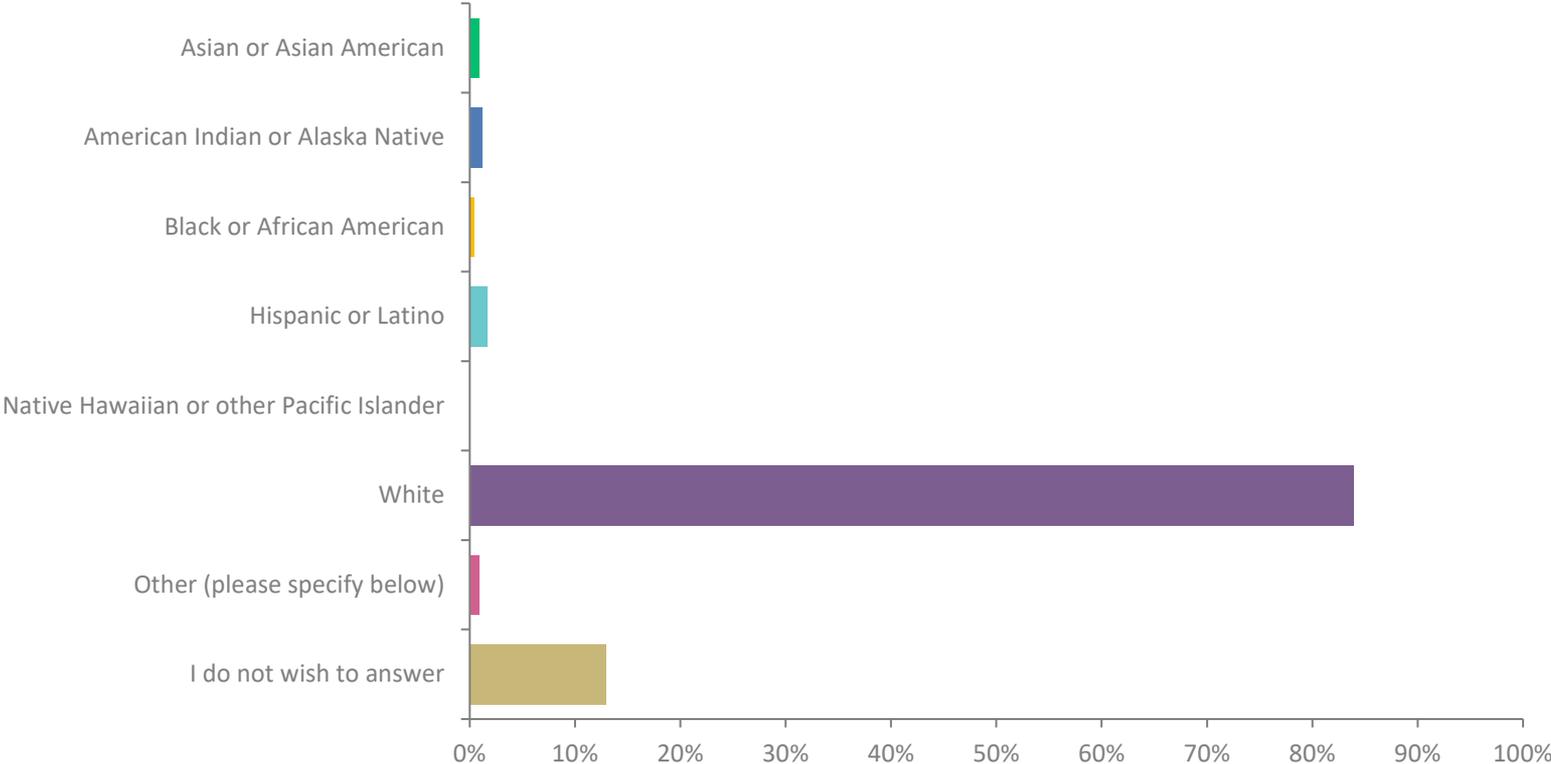
## Q12: Please select your annual household income.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
less than \$24,999	3.37%	14
\$25,000 - \$34,999	3.85%	16
\$35,000 - \$49,999	5.77%	24
\$50,000 - \$74,999	13.46%	56
\$75,000 - \$99,999	17.31%	72
\$100,000 - \$199,999	33.41%	139
\$200,000 or More	7.45%	31
I do not wish to answer	15.38%	64
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>416</b>

# Q13: Which of the following best describes you? Select all that apply.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6



# Q13: Which of the following best describes you? Select all that apply.

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asian or Asian American	0.96%	4
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.20%	5
Black or African American	0.48%	2
Hispanic or Latino	1.68%	7
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%	0
White	83.89%	349
Other (please specify below)	0.96%	4
I do not wish to answer	12.98%	54
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>425</b>

# Additional Thoughts – Key Themes

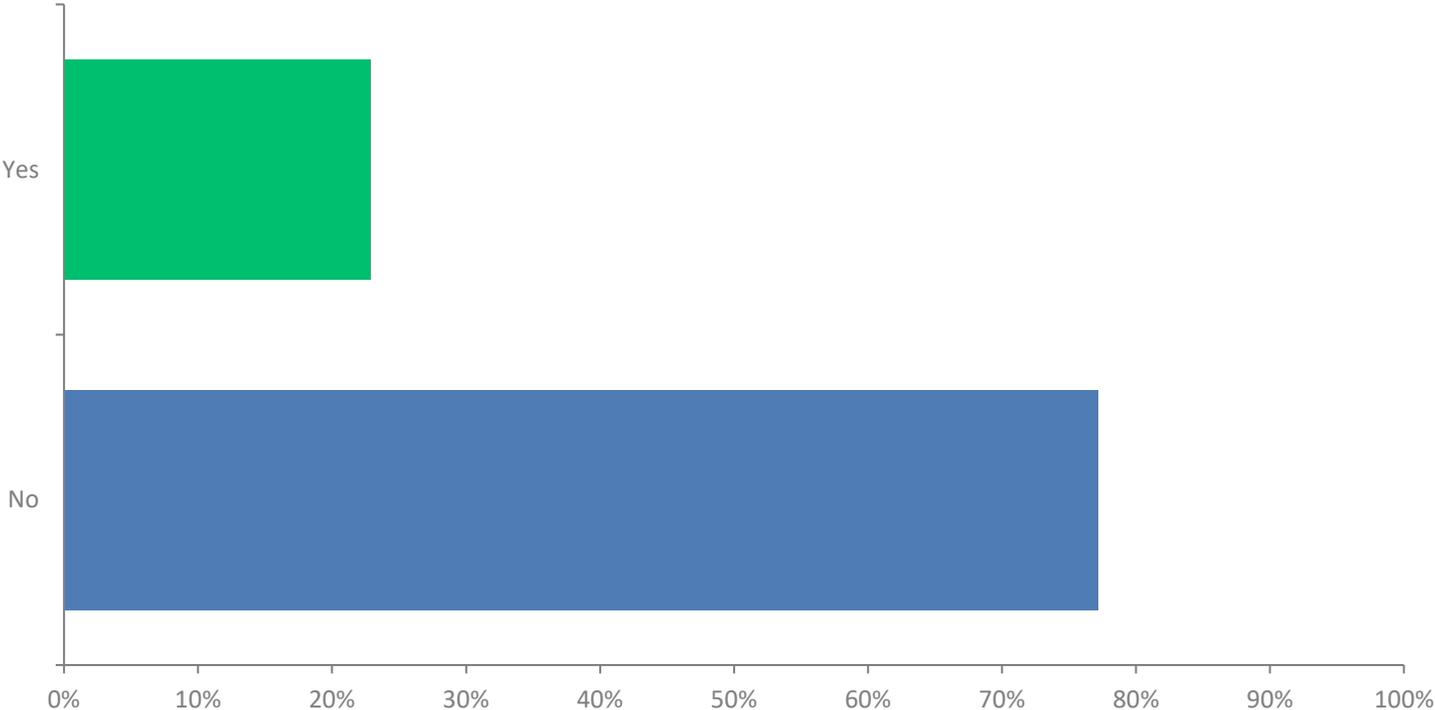
- Overgrowth of housing, especially apartments
- Milford has lost its small-town feel, has become too expensive, high taxes, and is not as appealing as it once was
- School system needs to better prepare students for college and trades
- Don't lose the New England /small town charm
- Housing options that support multi-generational ages

# Additional Thoughts – Select Comments

- Car show at Keyes Field
- Milford has done a good job conserving its charm while increasing convenience and access to services. Hopefully future developments will build on that success in a similar way.
- I really enjoy living in Milford. Farmer's market, great library, church fairs, good restaurants and farm stands.
- Need to increase civic participation, especially with young people
- I hope that we can invest in clean energy alternatives and affordable living spaces for all residents
- I would love to see Milford keep its magical small town charm

# Q14: Would you like to be contacted about participating in Envision Milford events and volunteer opportunities?

Answered: 416 Skipped: 6



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Answered: 416 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	22.84%	95
No	77.16%	321
TOTAL		416