V. The Broadkill River

Refer to Map D1 in Appendix E

Background

The Broadkill River is central to the identity, history, character and economic well-being of the town of Milton. From the time of its earliest settlement by Europeans – and for the Leni Lenape and Nanticoke Indians who pre-dated them, the river has provided its inhabitants with natural resources, opportunities for commerce and transportation. Founded as "Head of the Broadkiln" in 1763, the town's location made it ideal for the construction of wood boats, thanks to an abundant supply of lumber (and the river's greater depth prior to erosion-caused silting). Milton's protected inland location provided security from ocean storms and it was secure from the pirate and foreign naval attacks that plagued the bay-front towns in the early centuries, most notably during the War of 1812.

In later years, access to sources of forest and locally-raised farm products made the port central to the developing and prosperous shipping community. The river also allowed for the development of several mills, as waterways leading to the Broadkill were dammed to create the millponds that are defining scenic elements of today's Milton.

Today, the Broadkill River continues to occupy a place of primacy in the hearts, minds, economy and concerns of the residents in Milton. In a survey conducted as part of this Comprehensive Plan (Appendix B), the Broadkill River was judged to be the town's greatest asset by most the survey's respondents. The river's importance to Miltonians and the Town's visitors is best represented by the inseparable relationship between the Broadkill and the community's central gathering place – Memorial Park. Where hulls for sailing ships were once manufactured, and formed the core of Milton's economy, the activity in Memorial Park is now largely recreational. Bounded on two sides by the river, the park includes a boat ramp and six boat slips, as well as open space, a playground, bandstand and beloved miniature train. Together, the river and its waterside park bear witness to many of the town's ongoing traditional gatherings, including a summer concert series, annual Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Festival, and Canoe and Kayak Race.

Memorial Park serves as the starting point of Milton's Governors Walk, a riverside walking trail that celebrates the five native sons who became state governors (four serving Delaware and one

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who served the state of Wyoming). Governors Walk makes its way from Memorial Park through an alleyway (between Irish Eyes and Mercantile at Milton) leading to Union Street. Crossing Union Street, it parallels the Broadkill River to Mulberry Street and loops south to "Mill Park," home of the John Milton statue. The pathway ascends a hill in the park and emerges on Federal Street, creating a lovely loop that provides pedestrians with an opportunity to enjoy Milton's town center, the Broadkill River and Wagamon's Pond. A walk through Memorial Park and Governer's Walk is highlighted by the beautiful gardens planted and maintained by the Milton Garden Club.

While seen as Milton's greatest asset, the Broadkill River also poses significant threats and challenges. These include:

Flooding

For much of its history, Milton's town center has been subjected to recurring flooding by the river, caused variously by storm surges that push water up the river from the Delaware Bay to the east and inundation of the Wagamon's watershed after heavy rainfall from the west. Wagamon's Pond, a millpond created in 1915, collects water from an expansive and far-reaching watershed and is frequently outmatched by severe rainfall. These twin threats have inundated downtown Milton with varying degrees of severity over the years.

If current trends continue, the intensity and frequency of these floods are expected to increase in the future due to projected sea level rise and the anticipated increased severity of storms, per maps provided to the Planning and Zoning Commission by Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). There is a discussion of this topic in the Natural Environment, Environmental Protection, and Open Space Chapter that follows later in the Plan. It is critical, therefore, that all plans made for Milton's town center remain cognizant of the threat of the river and make realistic and responsible accommodations to the anticipated increased flooding.

Impervious Surfaces Along the River

Milton's limited parking in the town center is concentrated along the Broadkill River. This runs in opposition to this Comprehensive Plan's expressed desire to make the "best and highest use" of the town's land (and water) resources. It is hard to argue that waterside parking is the best use of a beautiful natural resource, such as the Broadkill River. Impervious surfaces (such as concrete and asphalt) close to flood-prone waterways do not allow flood waters to be absorbed back into the soil. Flood waters are instead trapped on top of the impervious surface and will remain so until the surrounding flooding subsides. More troubling, the flood waters become contaminated by salts, oil, antifreeze, gasoline and other toxic substances that accumulate on paved surfaces. These toxins are then washed into the river as the floodwaters subside.

The Town Center chapter of the Comprehensive Plan recommends that the town significantly expand its stock of available parking spaces in the town center (see "Town Center"). To reduce the amount of pervious surface near the river, it is also recommended that new parking venues should be located at an appropriate distance from the river and efforts should be made to reduce and/or eliminate the riverside impervious surfaces. This could be accomplished by transferring parking elsewhere AND replacing the impervious surfaces with pervious material. These new

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parking areas need to be within reasonable walking distances to the proposed river and Town Center attractions to help visitors and residents take advantage of them.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

The sewage treatment plant, constructed in 1960, and located on the southern edge of the Broadkill River and 300 block of Front Street detracts from the natural beauty of the Broadkill waterfront and potentially deters downtown development. Necessary security measures prevent public access to the 6.1-acre waterfront site. The Mayor, Town Council and residents of Milton have been nearly unanimous in their desire to move the sewage treatment plant off the river, eliminating the dangers of raw sewage spills during flooding and allowing the waterfront to be used for a better and higher purpose (i.e. property enhancement, outdoor recreation, downtown improvement, environmental protection, and beautification).

Limited Visual and Physical and Recreational Access to the Broadkill River

While the Broadkill River is seen as the town's greatest asset, physical and visual access to the river are limited in Milton's current town center. At the extension of Front Street, the view of the river is blocked by vegetation; the extension of Federal Street loses its river view to vegetation, trash containers, street signage and a plank fence. In all cases, there are no opportunities for direct physical access to the river. Similarly, recreational use of the water is primarily limited to Memorial Park and Wagamon's Pond and there are no opportunities for access on the south side of the Broadkill River.

A low-cost approach to reduce the visual obstructions could be clearing the vegetation that blocks the river views from the streets and neighborhood. The Town should look for opportunities to increase visual access to the Broadkill River and, by engaging with DNREC, develop plans to improve view sheds while preserving or restoring the vegetative buffers along the river's edge. Doing this would increase the attractiveness of the town center, its connection to the Broadkill River, create additional attractions for out-of-town visitors, and may increase nearby property values.

Creating opportunities for physical access and recreation would require more significant expenditures of resources and effort. However, these expenditures would be wise investments, making Milton an even more compelling place for water-focused recreation, attracting new residents and visitors, alike. This plan, therefore, recommends the addition of walking trails, canoe docks, fishing piers, boat launches and other amenities to increase physical access to the Broadkill River.

Comprehensive Plan Goals for the Broadkill River

Considering the opportunities and challenges described above, this Comprehensive Plan sets forth the following goals for the Broadkill River:

1. Identify opportunities to mitigate and accommodate to the expected increased flooding of the Broadkill River.
2. Develop strategies to minimize the amount of impervious surface in close proximity to the river.

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3. Work with Tidewater Utilities and Delaware State Public Service Commission to develop a plan to move the wastewater treatment plant from the Broadkill River.
4. Identify opportunities and strategies to increase visual and physical access to the river, thereby maximizing the river's benefits to the people of Milton and making it a more prominent feature of the town.
5. Increase the amount of land within Milton and its projected growth area designated as a Marine Resource (MR) district, encouraging river-focused businesses and activities, highlight the importance of the Broadkill River to the community, and attract leisure and recreational tourism.
6. Partner with the US Department of the Interior and the State of Delaware to continue the protection of the Prime Hook National and State Resource Areas and to secure funding for the Milton area projects under the Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund.
7. Work with the Nature Conservancy to further enhance the natural environment along the Broadkill River, including the Edward McCabe Preserve to the east and the Pemberton and Brittingham branches west of Milton.
8. Identify the Broadkill River Natural Area as a State Resource Area.

Possible Implementation Strategies

The following implementation strategies were identified from suggestions made by community members as possible ways to advance the Comprehensive Plan's goals. *While illustrative, these strategies should not be construed as directives. The directive portion of the Plan rests in its Goals.*

- Create a new "Waterfront District" between Federal and Collins streets along Front Street, and on the south side of Magnolia Street to:
  - Highlight the Broadkill River in Milton's town center;
  - Minimize possible property damage from expected increased flooding;
  - Create opportunities for outdoor active and passive recreation; and
  - Promote improved water quality through the creation of vegetative riparian buffers.
- Undertake a public process to envision a new Front Street "gateway" to Milton making use of these newly created "Waterfront District and re-zoned "Town Center" areas.
- Work closely with DNREC to remove invasive vegetation and debris to improve water views, while preserving or adding riparian buffers.
- Create additional opportunities for active and passive river-focused recreation, including:
  - Additional boat launches
  - Additional fishing spots
- Reduce the use of pervious surfaces along the river to aid in the reabsorption of flood waters.
- Conduct a feasibility study of a greenway trail along the Broadkill River from Milton to Lewes, by partnering with Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Sussex County and the Town of Lewes.
- Improve physical and visual access to the Broadkill River at all of the intersections of Front Street with waterfront features or amenities, such as a new fishing pier, canoe launch or seating area.
- Extend Governors Walk to the South Side of the Broadkill River to connect to these new waterfront amenities.

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VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Refer to Map J in Appendix E

Background

In addition to the Broadkill River, Milton's intact historic structures are its most valuable and unique physical assets. Together, they give Milton the small-town charm and sense of history that is so central to its identity and critical to its economy. While the number of intact buildings and their familiarity to Milton's residents (many of whom live in and visit these buildings on a regular basis) can make these rare structures seem unremarkable, their value is not lost on Milton's residents. In the survey conducted for this Comprehensive Plan, Milton's historic structures were voted second only to the Broadkill River in importance to the town.
Milton has several tools at its disposal to ensure the protection of its historic built environment.

The first tool is the listing of The Milton Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service (NPS), which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Milton Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1982. It consists of 87.2 acres with 188 buildings with various periods of significance ranging from 1825 to 1924.

The second tool is the Town of Milton becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG) in November 2006. It is one of seven CLG's in Delaware and one of 1946 CLGs, nationally. The purpose of a CLG is to partner with the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and the NPS. Since the Town is certified, it can gain access to benefits of the Federal Historic Preservation Program. As with any Federal or state program, successful partnership requires an agreement by the Town to adhere to Federal and State requirements.

The SHPOs receive annual appropriations from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund. States are required to give at least 10 percent of their funding to CLGs as subgrantees. These grants can fund a wide variety of projects including: surveys, National Register nominations, rehabilitiation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies, naming only a few projects that are eligible.

Beginning in 2014, the Town of Milton has received annual CLG grants. These grants hae been used to partner with the University of Delaware Center for Historic and Architectural Design (CHAD) to re-survey the Milton Historic District which was originally surveyed in 1980. Final reports of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 resurveys are available at the Town Office. The general conclusion of the three surveys is the Milton Historic District is composed of a collection of buildings that, collectively, achieve a strong feeling of an earlier, historic landscape, The Town

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of Milton's 2017 CLG grant again will partner with CHAD to develop a *Guide for Renovation in the Milton Historic District.*

The third tool is The Milton Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), a volunteer commission of five-to-seven members, which reviews application for proposed changes to historic buildings to make sure those proposed renovations will preserve their historic and architectural integrity.

Per the Milton Town Code, the work of the HPC is guided by Milton Historic Preservation Ordinances and the *Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.* The purpose of the Standards is "to assist in the long-term preservation of historic materials and features. The HPC can also call upon The State of Delaware's Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Milton Historical Society for technical assistance and information. The State of Delaware Historic Tax Credits provide financial incentives for property owners to make the necessary investments in their properties' proper preservation.

Traditionally, the focus of the HPC's work has been on its Historic Preservation Overlay District, which covers approximately 87.2 acres and includes 188 structures that are "contributing" to the historic character of the district by virtue of their age and condition (i.e., how intact they are; what materials have been used for restorations/renovations; whether those renovations preserved the style, scale and proportions of the original design).

A small map of the Historic District is shown below (Figure 1) with a larger map and inset provided in Appendix E, Map J.

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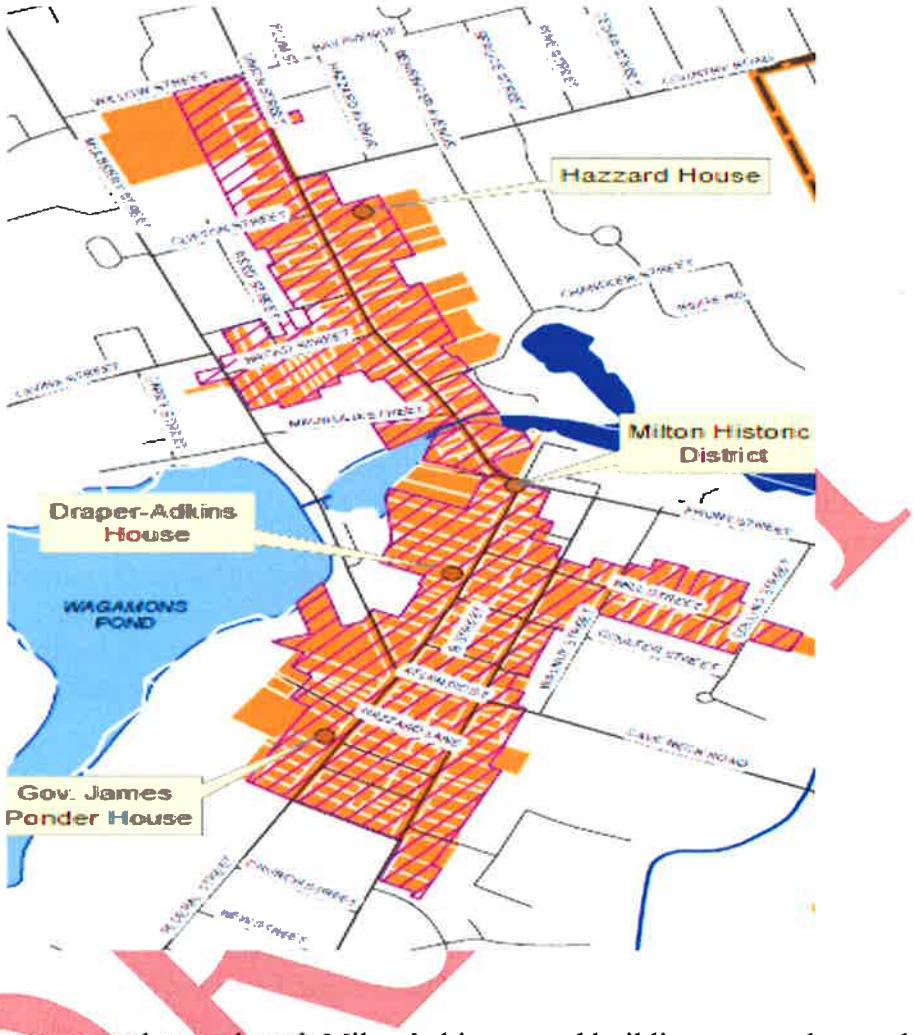
Figure 1: Map of Historic Overlay District, Town of Milton



Despite these resources, and even though Milton's history and buildings are understood to be central to the town's identity and vital to its economy, the Town continues to see losses to its architectural and historic legacy. According to the three-year survey conducted by the University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design (UDCHAD) of the historic district (completed in 2016, following an earlier survey in 1980), since the circa 1980 survey, certain patterns of change were observable during the three-phase analysis of the district. Representative alterations to structures in Milton that threaten historic integrity include changes to siding (the most common change being the addition of vinyl siding); the replacement of windows (often from early 20th century glass windows to vinyl windows); and one or all the chimneys removed. The effect of these alterations, however, did not disqualify the overall architectural integrity for most of the properties evaluated.

The survey also determined that ten extant structures have also been determined to be non-contributing having lost architectural integrity through additions, removals, and material changes to the structures. Since the initial survey one property (circa 1961) has achieved contributing status, although not originally included most likely due to the date of construction. However, the

structure is now more than 50 years old, and its designation has been switched from "not included" to "contributing".

Further, two dwellings have been moved and lost their contributing status. Of the 12 buildings demolished, eight were deemed non-contributing, two were accessory buildings with a contributing structure remaining on the property, and the remaining two were demolished and a vacant parcel remains.

Despite these losses, the survey commends the town's efforts to preserve its historic district, stating that, "The result is a collection of buildings that collectively achieve a strong feeling of an earlier, historic landscape in Milton.

Comprehensive Plan Goals for Historic Preservation

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the following goals for Historic Preservation:

1. Make Milton an example of historic preservation best practices by preserving its unique built environment and developing programs that tell its stories.
2. Increase Milton's reputation and attractiveness as a destination for cultural tourism through careful preservation of its buildings and marketing programs.
3. Make the preservation of Milton's built environment and historic landscape more easily attainable through the provision of information and professional staff support.

Possible Implementation Strategies

To accomplish these goals, the Comprehensive Plan recommends consideration of the following implementation strategies:

- Revise and strengthen Milton's Historic Preservation Code by making it more fully compliant with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and successfully have it adopted by the Milton Town Council.
- Provide greater professional support to the Historic Preservation Commission, using consulting architectural historians on an as-needed basis, to help it more consistently apply the Secretary of the Interior's standards to projects in Milton's historic district;
- Increase the Historic Preservation Commission's and the public's knowledge and use of Delaware Historic tax credits that have traditionally been underutilized;
- Develop an ongoing historic preservation education program for town enforcement staff, HPC members and the public. This program should be required for Milton town staff and for HPC members to ensure continued service on the commission.
- Develop a *Guide for Renovation in Milton,* like those prepared by other municipalities who have had success with historic preservation providing better information to the public, the Secretary's Standards and the processes through which preservation takes place in Milton. Include a thorough explanation of the state's historic tax credit program.
- Develop a guide for prospective and new property owners, that can be distributed through area realtors, outlining the benefits and responsibilities of owning a historic property in Milton.
- Re-draw the boundaries of the historic district to eliminate carve-outs. These property-specific suspensions of preservation standards undermine the historic character of neighborhoods and streetscapes.

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- Explore the feasibility of expanding the town's historic district or the creation of new districts to highlight and preserve other important architectural and historic resources that tell Milton's story.
- Continue to interpret and appropriate develop undeveloped and blighted sites between M&T Bank (formerly Wilmington Trust) and the undeveloped marina along Front Street on the south side of the Broadkill River.
- Interpret the shipyard archeology, appropriate development of these waterfront sites includes additional boating facilities and possibly small-scale commercial uses with appropriate flooding protections and site design incorporating best management practices against runoff.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings discouraging their demolition.

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VII. COMMUNITY DESIGN PLAN

Background

This chapter was not required in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, but is now a requirement under Title 22, Chapter 7, § 702 (b). The 2017 Comprehensive Plan is the first time that Community Design is addressed by the Town. The Community Design Plan considers the best general patterns of architectural scale, styles and site design within the jurisdiction. The purpose of the Design Plan is to draw together the infill lots and parcels as well as the potential development in the Growth Areas noted in the Comprehensive Plan so that these developments support and strengthen the existing town design patterns and theme.

The Community Design Plan should be a tool to support and enforce the Town's historic heritage by focusing on macro and micro design elements. On a macro level, new development should be consistent with the Town's historic scale and character, continuing the existing grid street pattern, sidewalks, street widths, building sizes, heights and set-backs from streets, alleys and sidewalks. On the micro level, new development and renovations should utilize or emulate local and historic architectural elements and building materials. A neighborhood approach to design should be adopted by the Town in which the design of an individual structure is related to the design of its surrounding neighborhood.

While development occurs based on the timing of the market place, the design themes should be considered based on not only the development parcel's land use designation and zoning district but also the parcel's visual and geographic connection to the existing Town of Milton. These design patterns may be expressed in the practices of private designers and developers, in the Town's Zoning, Site Plan and Subdivision requirements, established in the Town Code, in the design of public improvements by the Town, and in the development of new residential and commercial projects within the Growth Area.

As noted elsewhere in the Plan, the Town should encourage development which does not detract from the businesses located in the Town Center, but through appropriate design promote commercial and industrial development that adds to the town's regional attractiveness, takes advantage of a good highway network, and creates strong connections to the Town Center. Likewise, with residential development, the Town's proposed mixed used districts should embrace design principles which promote and replicate the "small town feel" of Milton's current neighborhoods and require safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Town Center to reduce the demand for parking while promoting a healthy life style for its residents.

To implement Community Design and other recommendations found in the Town's 2017 Comprehensive Plan, the Town should consider expanding the intent of Planning and Zoning Commission to provide guidance to the Town Council regarding sustainable community principles through design of new and redevelopment proposals as they progress through the Town's development regulation process.

To guide the Commission in performing this additional responsibility to the Town, the Town's current zoning and subdivision codes including site plan requirements and its specification and

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standard details should be subject to periodic review. The purpose of the review of the Town's development codes is to keep the town current on changes in the land development industry while promoting a theme throughout the town while should serve to reinforce the Town's goals of sustainability of its downtown and protection of the town's historic heritage. Both of these values are reflected in responses from the surveys of its residents and businesses. To guide the Commission and the Council, the Town should seek comment from design and development professionals in preparing recommendations for site plan and subdivision applications before the Town.

Comprehensive Plan Goals for Community Design
This Comprehensive Plan sets forth the following goals for Milton's Community Design:

1. Preserve and enhance Milton's historic character and scale by developing guidelines that support development;
2. Promote, through appropriate design, commercial and industrial development that adds to the Town's regional attractiveness, takes advantage of the area's highway network and creates strong connections to the Town Center;
3. Protect Milton's historic and small town character through the development and adoption of design principles which promote and replicate the "small town feel" of Milton's current neighborhoods and require safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Town Center to reduce demand for parking while promoting a sustainable and healthy lifestyle for its residents' workforce.

Possible Implementation Strategies:
To implement Community Design Goal in Milton, the following possible implementation strategies are recommended:

- Review the Codes of the Town of Milton to determine if the following implementation strategies can be accomplished.
- Establish a Community Design Committee, seated for the sole purpose of developing a Community Design Plan for Milton. This committee should include members chosen specifically for their training and professional experience in the fields of urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture/landscape design, historic preservation, urban design and horticulture. This will be an ad hoc committee and its work will be time-limited.
- Prepare a Community Design Manual to supplement the Zoning Code and coordinate its recommendations with Sussex County and the Delaware Department of Transportation for those areas outside the jurisdiction of the Town. The manual would be used to inform Planning & Zoning regarding site plan, subdivision and zoning recommendations to the Town Council.
- Augment the Planning & Zoning Commission with an urban design professional or architect as a voting member or advisor.
- Develop the community in a manner which continues Milton's historical character as a town of human-scale development, in clustered neighborhoods which are connected to the Town Center by a grid street pattern, sidewalks and safe bicycling opportunities.

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- Establish and then enforce standards for building setbacks, façade treatments, landscaping and relationships to both public spaces and the Broadkill River and its tributaries.
- Sustain the Town going forward, not only in the current limits of the Town, but also in its recommended Growth Areas adjacent to the Town's current boundaries.
- Evaluate specific design requirements in areas in the Town and coordinate those requirements with Sussex County, and the Delaware Department of Transportation (as appropriate) for areas within the Growth Area:
    - Infill Lot Residential Development: Develop new single-family homes and townhouses on small or large lots with attractive tree planting and landscaping. Houses should front the street to the extent possible, garages should be oriented to side streets or rear alleys. Curbs and sidewalks should be used within the Town limits. To the extent possible, houses can be multi-story (subject to height limitations in the zoning code) and front door entrances should be expressed in their architecture with porticos, arches or gables;
    - Existing Residential Development within the present limits of Town: Promote and support a town-wide property revitalization and rehabilitation campaign to provide diversity of housing types, engender infill development and strengthen community design;
    - Industrial Area: Require vegetative and other buffering where industrial areas abut residential uses;
    - Within the Town Center, Historic District, and Traditional Neighborhood areas, where street patterns are part of Milton's heritage: Design buildings to be compatible with their neighbors, setbacks from streets should be kept to a minimum and landscaping should reflect the landscaping pattern of the larger district. In addition, historic and older homes should be preserved and rehabilitated wherever possible;
    - Gateways: Areas at the edges of the Town: Highlight and beautify with new landscaping, signage pylons, banners, and directional or pathfinder signage to give people a strong image of the best of Milton. All Gateways may not presently be located within the Town of Milton site plan control may not be possible. The Town will need to coordinate with DelDOT and Sussex County regarding features to be included at the intersection gateways. Currently identified Gateways are SR 5/SR 16, SR 16/SR 30, SR5/Chestnut Street, Cave Neck Road (SR 88)/Sam Lucas Road, and SR 16/County Road;
    - Transportation Facilities Connections: Extend Milton's interconnected street network into new growth areas and bike paths and multi-use trails should be developed along major roads and through parks and public areas.
    - State Road 16 Corridor: Create a theme along this important commercial route by encouraging new street tree plantings, pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements, maintaining those few mature trees to create a visual connection between the route and its business and residents to the Town Center of Milton. Coordinate with the Delaware Department of Transportation to provide more visible signage directing motorists and pedestrians to the Town Center as well as by-pass signing for those motorists seeking destinations beyond the Town. Encourage uniform setbacks, common

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access points to adjacent parcels, planting of street trees and landscaping themes for new development or redevelopment along SR 16;

- Within the Growth Areas: Create flexible design standards within the proposed Mixed Use Commercial/Residential Districts, the Marine Resource District, and the Light Industrial District to supports the goals noted above for lot and building design, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, grid street patterns, and thematic and physical connection to the Town Center. Provide open space areas to support the development area's population and employment; and
- Along the Broadkill River: Create opportunities for public access to the River, design buildings and facilities that enforce the historic, recreational and cultural aspects of the River to the Town and provide appropriate setbacks based on the topographic, vegetative and other natural conditions found along the River and its tributaries.

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VIII. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

Background

Generally, Affordable Housing is described as housing opportunities that are available to persons or families, regardless of income. For planning purposes, approximately 30 percent of income is assumed to be used to support housing costs. The Town of Milton has provided affordable housing opportunities and proposes several initiatives to continue that effort. As housing costs increase and income does not keep pace, the gap between available and affordable housing increases.

Milton desires to continue to provide opportunities for such housing. As the Town strives to achieve the goal that people who work in Milton can afford to live in Milton, it should establish a constructive dialog with the Delaware State Housing Authority ("DSHA") for information and assistance as well as coordinate with Sussex County and other State agencies.

However, the Town of Milton experiences an existing condition of economic forces which govern the housing market in the Town.

- Using the Delaware Population Consortium's projections for population growth in Sussex County, it is estimated that, within its current municipal boundaries, Milton's population is estimated to be approximately 2,900 and will grow to 3,082 by the year 2020, 3,248 by 2025 and 3,378 by 2030.
- Much of this growth is attributable to new retirees moving to Milton from out of state, attracted by lower taxes and proximity to the shore amenities. Based on projections by the September, 2014 Delaware Housing Needs Assessment, between 2015 and 2020, 16% of future rental demand will be for senior rental housing, whereas 32% of future home sales will be from seniors.
- The 2014 Assessment reports that 30-50% of Milton area renters are paying more that 30% of their income on housing (housing cost burden). Coupled with transportation costs, this creates a substantial financial burden of renters.
- The 2014 Assessment reports that 20-30% of Milton area homeowners are paying more than 30% of their income on housing.
- The 2015 the HUD defined Area Median Income ("AMI") for a family of four in Milton is $63,300.
- Noted elsewhere in this Plan, as of 2015 more than 950 new housing units have been approved for construction but remain unbuilt. None of these housing units is likely to be considered as affordable housing. Construction and sale of these homes will most likely increase the average home sales price in town which could limit current residents from moving up into these units based on current average household income.
- In 2014, the median price of a newly constructed home in Milton was $329,908. Given that price point, it would be very difficult to build even townhomes priced under $200,000.

- To qualify for Section 8 assistance, a renter household containing four persons cannot earn more than $31,650 (50% of the AMI).
- Half of Milton's 166 existing affordable housing units are sustained by some form of rental assistance to make rent more affordable for very low income families.
- The remaining 86 affordable housing units were financed by the Federal Government's Low Income Housing Tax Credits ("LIHTC"). LIHTC properties usually have units available for families earning 60% or less of the AMI ($37,980).
- Historically the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established Fair Market Rent ("FMR") in Milton has risen an average of 3.92% annually. The FMR for a two-bedroom unit in 1985 was $361. That same two-bedroom apartment's rent had increased to $987 by 2015.

Current Inventory of Affordable Housing Units and Opportunities to Expand

Six subsidized housing facilities in Milton provide our residents with 166 affordable housing units or approximately 11% of all housing units in 2014. Five of these projects are in the Northeast Quadrant of town. Two complexes along Bay Avenue, Luther Gardens (18 units) and Luther Gardens Annex (18 units) provide housing for moderate income senior citizens. Also on Bay Avenue, Luther Towers (48 units) provides housing for Milton's low income senior citizens and Park Royal Apartments (32 units) provides housing for low income families. The 48-unit Milton Landing on Palmer Street Extended provides housing for moderate income families. In the Northwest Quadrant, Spinnaker Lane Supported Living is a two-unit project for low income people with disabilities. Milton Landing (48 units), Luther Gardens (18 units) and Luther Gardens Annex (18 units) were created under the LIHTC program and will be eligible for conversion to market rate in, respectively, the years 2028, 2020 and 2031.

In the Northwest Quadrant of town, the modest older single family homes on Mulberry Street provide housing for young families, retirees and blue collar workers. The 50-acre housing subdivision, Shipbuilders Village (212 townhomes, 44 duplexes, 6 triplexes and 93 single family homes), predominantly serves a rental market of young single and married persons and retirees. Twenty-four townhouses along the single block Tobin Street are home primarily to retirees or young people just starting out in the housing market.

Numerous compact older single family homes, built in the early 1950s and 60s primarily to house the workforce of the Portland Hosiery Mill, can be found in the Northeast Quadrant of town within the boundaries of Bay, Union, Sussex and Atlantic Avenue. A number of these homes need repair, investment and upgrade but could become the houses contributing to the supply of affordable housing in the Town.

Affordable Housing

The State of Delaware requires all municipalities with a population greater than 2,000 to provide, as a component of their Comprehensive Plan, an Affordable Housing Plan. It must include policies, statements, goals and planning components which serve to define the municipality's strategy for providing affordable housing for current and future residents. The State believes it is

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critical that such municipalities proactively provide a variety of housing options to meet the needs of their residents.

Further, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") obligates municipalities that receive federal funds for housing to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing ("AFFH") by taking proactive steps to promote racially, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse communities. The Town of Milton applies annually for Federal funding but does not always receive a grant. However, over the span of this Comprehensive Plan, grants may be awarded to the Town. In the recent past the Town last received these funds in 2012 when Sussex County, on behalf of Milton, rehabilitated five housing units using $64,000 in CDBG grant monies.

The 1.63 square mile Town of Milton (approximately 2,900 population) is like many small working class towns in Eastern Sussex County which have slowly (for the last 200 years) developed outward from an established town center. Through annexation in the twenty years between 1983 and 2002, the town almost doubled in size and population and experienced a previously unprecedented boom in new home construction, primarily in the profitable retirement housing market. These newly constructed homes are, for the most part, more expensive than the homes in the older half of Milton which has experienced little in the way of new construction.

Housing prices are a function of market forces. Throughout this Plan's span of time, the market has and will continue to fluctuate in price points resulting in a range of prices both for owner-occupied housing and for rental properties, leading to a range of rent prices. The Town does have current housing stock that provides affordable housing options and opportunities and should periodically analyze the affordable housing landscape to evaluate the existing range of housing opportunities available.

Milton hopes to maintain and to increase its current broad range of housing, an important State goal. It should seek State support to identifying implementable programs and strategies to reduce financing, construction and operating housing costs. Statewide programs that address housing affordability and provide for a dedicated revenue stream from comprehensive and broad-based sources provide a much better chance of delivering affordable housing opportunities than Milton, as a small town could create acting alone. The traditional tools available to the Town such as increasing housing densities could disrupt established neighborhoods, or waiving revenues such as taxes and impact fees create a fiscal impact on the Town which must maintain its infrastructure and balance its budget. Traditionally, the State has more resources and is a more appropriate entity to address this issue properly.

Current Affordable Housing Growth Opportunities

The Town of Milton, throughout its history, has been cognizant of, and attempts to be responsive to the needs of its low and moderate income residents. The Town of Milton has not negotiated a density bonus, in exchange for construction of affordable housing units, with any of the developers of the 10 residential developments in which more than 950 new housing units approved, but not yet constructed. Also, noted elsewhere in the plan, there are more than 500 potential lots located on large parcels and an additional 40 vacant lots scattered around the Town.

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There are opportunities both for new residential development as well as infill on current lots located within the Town's boundaries and in the Growth Area. While procedurally it is possible for any developer to file to amend their subdivision and site plan to reflect a newly negotiated density bonus, it is a time consuming and costly process not likely to be undertaken unless a subdivision's site plan sunsets, or other advantages are perceived. Also, it should be noted that there are no regulations or procedures in place that authorize the Town to negotiate for affordable housing below market price.

The Town is willing to work with area builders and non-profit organizations, and to partner with the Delaware State Housing Authority to build affordable housing on some of the available lots where there is capacity in the available infrastructure. The Town could consider adding incentives to the subdivision or site plan codes that would create opportunities for developers to provide affordable housing units.

Plans for Future Affordable Housing Opportunities
Throughout the planning process there has been an ongoing discussion about the most appropriate housing mix in the Town and its growth area. Using the tools available to the Town, it wishes to promote a mix of housing opportunities attainable for individuals and families having a wide range of household incomes.

Milton's vision of affordable housing is not confined to subsidized housing. Rather the Town wishes to promote housing opportunities for various housing price points to accommodate tradespeople, blue collar workers and para-professionals, teachers, nurses and our municipal workforce, who are frequently often shut-out of owning a home in Milton, since the housing costs are beyond what most can afford. The Town understands the importance of providing starter housing for young singles and families who need a small down payment and low monthly payments to enter the housing market. It is also important to create opportunities allowing current residents, particularly seniors and families with grown children, to remain in their homes and neighborhoods and obtain extra income, security, companionship and services.

Comprehensive Plan Goal of the Affordable Housing Plan
The goal of the Affordable Housing Plan is to create opportunities to provide housing to meet the wide range of household incomes available within the Town of Milton.

Possible Implementation Strategies
Considering the challenges to meet the Goal, the Town sets forth the following strategies:

- Work with Habitat for Humanity and embrace the concept of building simple, decent and affordable single family homes within the fabric of the community on some of the close to fifty vacant infill lots. Concurrent with those efforts, the town should impose design standards to ensure that any affordable housing constructed within existing residential neighborhoods is compatible with existing housing.
- Evaluate the impact of an inclusionary housing requirement through the Town's land development codes. The Town should attempt to ensure that new growth areas in Milton will include a range affordable housing opportunities.

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- Seek to codify an Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance (ADU) which would amend the Zoning Code and provide the opportunity to offer an affordable and independent housing option to the owner's children or parent who might need housing assistance or increase household income through rents.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of providing utility and repair assistance for qualified home owners, through partnerships with non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity or First State Community Action or use of Federal funds through the Community Development Block Grant program.
- Consider a provision in the proposed mixed use districts to promote a "Live Near Your Work" program which was previously available from the State of Delaware as a permitted use within a mixed-use district or Town Center District in lieu of commercial or retail space.
- Create an opportunity to increase the inventory of housing mix and housing costs in the new Mixed Use Residential/Commercial Zoning District that is proposed to be a most used land use designation in the Town's Growth Area, specifically for the section of the town's growth area along the Route 16 corridor.
- Evaluate the changes in housing prices and range of availabilities of owner-occupied and rental housing on a periodic basis to determine the effectiveness of the programs and zoning districts in place.

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IX. COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT and SUSTAINABILITY

Background

Noting earlier information provided in this Plan, it is evident that the Town of Milton's economy and employment has shifted from manufacturing and agricultural to an economy relying on the provision of services rather than goods. As accessibility to Milton and its businesses has improved, the Town's economy is drawn into the County's and State's economies.

As noted in Table 11 of the Plan (page 25), those firms with the greatest number of employees are the Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, retail and service centers (Milton Park Center and Clipper Square), Reed Trucking, and Atlantis Industries. As a collective area of employment, the Town Center has one of the highest concentrations of town employment, but number is the summation of several small businesses involving personal service, government and hospitality. Presently, total employment located within the Town is approximately 1300 jobs which equates to approximately 1.3 jobs per household which indicates that much of the Town's labor force is imported from other areas.

Residential home development is the third major part of Milton's economy that drives both taxable income for the town's government and potential customers for both merchants and service businesses. The population growth in Sussex County has fueled residential growth in Milton since the turn of the century and the current and forecast migration to Sussex County should insure a continuation of that trend.

The Town of Milton seeks new development as well as redevelopment of the current economic base to achieve a sustainable pace of growth, to develop and expand its tax base and, through the expanded tax base, implement the goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. In seeking to expand its economic base, the Town should build from its natural and built assets such as the Historic Town Center, its accessibility to coastal attractions, the Broadkill River with its recreational opportunities, and its current core industries.

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In promoting itself as a place where its residents and workforce can live, work and play, the Town must ensure the availability of transportation access, public facilities and services, and adequate utilities. Through its planning efforts, the Town should guide economic growth to those areas where public facility capacities are available and where this is limited impact upon he natural environment and the Town's historic fabric. It should accomplish this by forming cooperative partnerships with those commercial and service sectors of the Town's economy with the goal of protecting the natural and built environment, promoting the Town's cultural and environmental assets, and preserving and enhancing its neighborhoods.

Attempting to address economic development using the Town's assets such as location, environment, and base industries, the Town should prepare and adopt an Economic Development Plan which focuses on each of the three major sectors of the Town's economy: Industrial, Commercial and Residential. This Plan should include the following considerations:

- Retention: The Town should encourage and focus on the retention of existing industries currently operating in Milton and promote future light industrial development to be sited in those areas identified by this Comprehensive Plan.

- Commercial Development: Commercial development should be centered within the Town Center and along SR 16, SR 5 and SR 30 corridors. The Plan should focus on attracting businesses to the Town Center that will represent a good fit with the Historic District where the Town Center is located.

- Residential Development: Milton is an attractive residential target location for those migrating to Sussex County because of its proximity to the Beach economy and attractions due to the Town's accessibility and its location away from the SR 1 corridor. Residential development will continue with the buildout of existing vacant lots within the Town's neighborhoods and already approved subdivisions. New developments which maintain the character of the Town should be encouraged while seeking opportunities to increase affordable housing availabilities to support the Town's growing labor market and workforce.

- Historic District as an Attractive Asset: Because of the contribution of the Historic District to the Town's character and attraction of new residents, the Plan should also encourage and incentivize rehabilitation and maintenance of the inventory of historic structures in the Milton Historic District.

- Sustainability: The Plan should detail strategies to promote Sustainability in Milton by promoting sustainable practices by residents, businesses, and local government which take advantage of potential cost savings while preserving the Town's heritage, its natural and built environment and promoting its future. Currently the Town has an established Sustainability Subcommittee (created in 2015). This subcommittee has defined Sustainability as "…satisfying current needs without sacrificing future well-being through the balanced pursuit of ecological heath and economic welfare." Presently this subcommittee is focusing on four areas: Water, Waste, Energy, and Native Plants. Their

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efforts involve research, outreach through events and tours and promulgation of recommendations.

Finally, the Town should consider becoming the first municipality in Delaware to be identified as an Age-Friendly Community. Presently there are more than 130 jurisdictions throughout the United States and Puerto Rico which include more which 61,000,000 people that are identified as Age-Friendly Communities. Although inclusion does not mean that AARP endorses the community as a place to live, nor does it mean that the jurisdiction is presently "age-friendly". What it does mean is that the Town is making a *commitment* to actively work toward making the municipality a great place for people of all ages. The application requires a letter of commitment from the Town and the eventual completion of an Age-Friendly Action Plan. This Action Plan involves making improvements and enhancements to the "eight domains of livability" which include Open Space and Buildings, Transportation (all modes), Housing, Social Participation, Social Inclusion, Civic Participation/Volunteerism, Outreach/Communication Methods, and Accessible Community and Health Services. Also, the Town will need to complete an AARP Community Survey which could be accomplished by the Town's Sustainability Subcommittee of the Economic Development Committee.

Comprehensive Plan Goal for Community and Economic Development/Redevelopment
The goal of the Town's Economic Development Plan is to sustain and to expand its economic and employment base while protecting the natural and built environment, promoting the Town's cultural and environmental assets, promoting its accessibility and preserving and enhancing its neighborhoods.

Possible Implementation Strategies:
To accomplish this goal, the Town has identified several possible implementation strategies;

- Work with developers, Sussex County and DelDOT to ensure the continued availability and quality of transportation access, public facilities and services, and adequate utilities. Through its planning efforts, the Town should guide economic growth to those areas where public facility capacities are available and impacts to the natural and built environment are limited.
- Promote economic development opportunities within the Town and the Growth Area parcels as they become eligible for annexation.
- Make revitalization of its historic town center a priority by promoting small-scale redevelopment and new commercial development by making use of vacant buildings and infill lots.
- Guide new commercial and industrial development projects to areas located along the edges of town where the land use designations and zoning districts permit larger scale projects and the parcels can be more easily accessed via highways with adequate design and capacity.
- Promote smaller-scale redevelopment and new commercial development within the Town Center, such as small incubators, where parking supply is limited, but can be served by present or programmed public facilities and services.
- Direct office and light industrial uses to the proposed mixed use districts which will be sited along Route 16, Route 30 and Route 5A. In designing these sites, work with

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DelDOT to reduce potential impacts to travel along these roadways as they serve to connect the Town and its center with Sussex County and the State of Delaware and promote the connection of these activities with the Town's neighborhoods and its center.

- Prepare utility and public service extension plans for those sites along Routes 16, 30 and 5A so that they can be adequately served as the parcels are developed.
- Target new business recruitment with high quality, knowledge-based, technology-oriented service, office and other commercial/industrial businesses.
- Promote the Town's year-around accessibility due to its location near the Beach communities and within Sussex County.
- Promote the Town during scheduled events which occur throughout the year.
- Encourage and incentivize maintenance and rehabilitation of historic structures in the Milton Historic District.
- Develop incentives to encourage development and redevelopment in the Town Center.
- Continue to promote the Town as a place to visit and to relocate.
- Prepare an Economic Development Plan and implement that Plan's recommendations.
- Evaluate the benefits of applying to the AARP for designation of the Town of Milton as an Age-Friendly community.

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