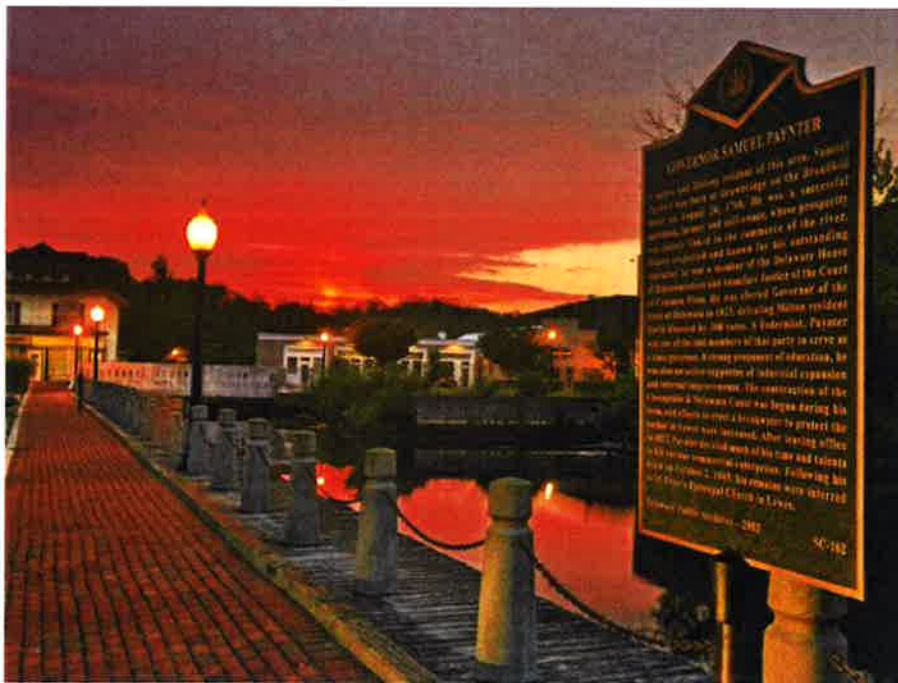




Town of Milton, Delaware Comprehensive Plan 2017



Town Council PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

Adopted 2017

DRAFT

Acknowledgements

TOWN OF MILTON, SUSSEX COUNTY AND STATE OF DELAWARE

TOWN OF MILTON, MAYOR AND COUNCIL

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The People of Milton

Comments, survey responses, and participation by residents and business owners in the Town have been vital in preparing this Plan.

The Milton 2017 Comprehensive Plan

Making Connections Between People, History and The Broadkill

On behalf of the residents of the Town of Milton, The Milton Planning and Zoning Commission is pleased to present our community's 2017 Comprehensive Plan. This plan represents more than two years of intensive work that has engaged the people of Milton and has called upon the expertise of a host of topic-specific experts. It also represents countless hours of training, study and writing undertaken by Planning and Zoning Commission members.

At the center of this undertaking was a series of 15 community meetings, at which we considered several specific topics for this plan (such as our core values, the town center, Broadkill River, historic preservation, transportation, etc.). We are grateful to the outside experts who provided information about these various issues and indebted to the many Milton residents who participated. The recommendations in this plan reflect the dreams, concerns, ideas and aspirations of the people of Milton, shared during these community meetings and through an extensive town-wide survey.

During these conversations and through comments and views shared through a town-wide survey, the recurring theme of *connectivity* emerged. Milton residents want to be connected. They want to be able to safely and easily make their way through town to exercise, visit neighbors and make use of the growing number of businesses and amenities. Miltonians also want to feel connected to the rich history that anchors the lives and personal stories of so many Milton natives and which drew new residents to the community. We want to *hear* stories of the community's past shipping and canning industries and we want to *see* our history through careful preservation and restoration of our town's rich collection of historic structures. And, perhaps, most notably, the community has a deep and profound desire to be re-establish and strengthen its connections to the Broadkill River, which occupies a place of primacy in the town's emotional and physical heart.

The goals and suggested implementation strategies contained in this plan are all geared to advance the community's expressed desire for connections that build a close and engaged community and that place us in even closer relationship with one another and with Milton's rich historic, architectural and natural heritage.

This is the Town's plan.

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Town of Milton, Delaware

I. INTRODUCTION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

The Town of Milton is a historic community at the head of navigation on the Broadkill River in eastern Sussex County, Delaware. It is in the coastal area 10 to 15 miles west of Lewes, Rehoboth Beach and Dewey Beach, Delaware's popular and growing resort centers. The Broadkill River system, which connects Milton with the Delaware Bay, is a special and unique natural environment. An important feature of the Town is its designated National Historic District, including some 188 historic buildings. Milton's town center is in the middle of the district, where Union Street crosses the Broadkill River.

Milton has served as an industrial and employment center for maritime and agricultural processing activity since its founding in the 18th century. The Town's population is diverse and its land uses balanced with a variety of residential, commercial, industrial, civic, public, visitor and recreational uses. The Town's 2010 Census population of 2,576 persons grew during the 1990's at an average of 24 people per year. Growth increased from 2000 to 2010 by 919 persons, or an annual average increase of 92 people in approximately 40 new households. This increase is almost four times the annual growth rate of the previous decade. Significant business growth has followed the pace set by residents. The Town's population has grown since the 2010 Census and is now approximately 2900 (based on American Community Survey estimates in 2015).

The Comprehensive Plan addresses future planning and development within the Town of Milton and the surrounding area while continuing to embrace and to enforce its heritage. The Milton Comprehensive Plan has been coordinated with the Sussex County Comprehensive Plan (2008), with the Office of State Planning Coordination and with the adopted and certified 2010 Town of Milton Comprehensive Plan.

Milton's Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision for a ten-year horizon and beyond with five-year updates to capture events and build upon them. The Plan strives to guide the future development of the Town of Milton and its environs. This 2017 Comprehensive Plan establishes many goals which are intended to guide the town into a future of preservation of its heritage and assets, improvements in its infrastructure, and controls for its growth and development. Milton's history and Core Values are well worth preserving for future generations, just as they are enjoyed today.

The State of Delaware requires the Town to address several issues in its Comprehensive Plan and assists in obtaining some of the information needed. The Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC) provides help with demographics and many other facts needed to develop an accurate baseline for the Plan. This Plan is the product of a robust citizen outreach and input process. The Town's Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) has held many open public hearings and workshops, obtained valuable resident input which has helped to inform the P&Z as it prepared this Plan. This outreach effort makes the Plan a product of the Town's residents, businesses, and leadership.

As part of the review of current town features, Milton submitted the current plan which was updated in 2010 as required by state law for a Preliminary Land Use Service review (PLUS). The Pre-Update Review prepared by OSPC with the assistance of other State agencies has been used as guidance and is included as Appendix C of the Plan.

Delaware Code Title 22, Chapter 7, §702, requires that the Town of Milton prepare, and periodically update, its Comprehensive Plan. The population of Milton is greater than 2,000 persons as of 2010, thus this Plan contains descriptions of the physical, demographic and economic conditions of the jurisdiction; as well as policies, statements, goals and planning components for public and private uses of land, transportation, economic development, affordable housing, community facilities, open spaces and recreation, protection of sensitive areas, community design, adequate water and wastewater systems, protection of historic and cultural resources, annexation and such other elements which in accordance with present and future needs and, in the judgment of the municipality, best promote the health, safety, prosperity and general public welfare of the jurisdiction's residents. This Plan strives to not only meet the requirements established by the State of Delaware but also exceed those requirements as the guidance source document for the Town decision-making over the next 10 years.

The desired outcome of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan is to perform review and update of the 2010 Milton Comprehensive Plan and, upon adoption by the Milton Town Council, will be submitted to the Governor's Office for certification. The Plan's vision responds to the stated needs and desires of the community and, over time, can be implemented with Town resources and town resident's input and participation. The Plan identifies the most important goals for Milton as being the continuation of its tradition as a balanced and diverse community for all residents and uses, economic development to create jobs and tax base, encouragement of a diversity of housing types, and preservation of the natural environment.

Interpreting this Plan

Section 702, Title 22 of the Delaware Code codifies the legal requirement that the Town of Milton prepare a Comprehensive Development Plan. By law, the Milton Comprehensive Plan 2017 "shall be the basis for the development of zoning regulations and has the force of law (such that) no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the Plan".

The Delaware Superior Court affirmed in *Donnelly vs. City of Dover*, 2011WL20086160:

"A City's comprehensive plan is intended to serve as a 'large scale and long term planning document'. It 'cannot...serve unyieldingly as guide(s) to detailed questions of zone designation'. A comprehensive plan 'unnecessarily addresses many issues of land use that inevitably involve tension among inconsistent though desirable goals and thus lead to conflict...'

As a result, challenges to zoning decisions as not consistent with the comprehensive plan must be reviewed with an eye toward flexibility, but not so flexible as to render such plans a nullity."

With this in mind, the Town of Milton has crafted this Comprehensive Plan with care to identify the goals in the Plan that the Town is legally bound to pursue because the Plan has the force and

effect of law. All other items not specifically directing affirmative action to achieve specified goals are expressly intended to be optional and of a suggestive nature.

Any reader of the Town of Milton Comprehensive Plan 2017 will not redundancy of certain goals and potential implementation strategies. After consideration, this is intentional, as issues such as parking, flooding and care for the Broadkill River are specifically applicable to more than one chapter of this Plan.

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Vision Statement: The Town of Milton is an economically vital and fiscally sound community, respectful of its heritage, supporting a diverse population, providing a full range of housing, business, cultural and recreational opportunities in a safe, sustainable and attractive setting for residents, businesses and visitors.

CORE VALUES Of the 2017 Town of Milton Comprehensive Plan

Core Values are those values that form the foundation for our actions. They underlie our work. They focus us. They guide us in making decisions and explaining our actions. In doing so, core values help provide a realistic understanding of what can be expected from our community leaders and from each other. Diligent attention to our core values reminds us what is important and provides stability and constancy.

The following are the CORE VALUES that undergird the Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Milton:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

We value protecting the buildings and town character that tell the stories of our past.

REHABILITATION AND PROTECTION OF THE BROADKILL RIVER

We value protecting the Broadkill River, which lies at Milton's physical, historical and emotional center and improving its stewardship. We value providing responsible access to the river for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES.

We value encouraging safe streets and sidewalks to support commerce, tourism, walkability and creating a strong sense of a connected community.

HOUSING

We value encouraging opportunities to create a balanced range of housing choices for all who desire to live, work and contribute to the future of our town.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

We value creating an environment that supports economic development and job creation while protecting Milton's irreplaceable natural and historic assets.

RESPECT AND FAIR DEALING

We value calling upon and respecting the contributions of all who would like to contribute their skills and experience to improve our community, as demonstrated through the creation of this Comprehensive Plan.

RESPONSIBLE GROWTH.

We value finding ways to provide the infrastructure necessary to support Milton’s responsible development and to inviting annexation of contiguous properties into the town where fiscally sound and consistent with the Charter.

WELCOME VISITORS

We value making Milton an attractive destination for visitors by creating an environment that welcomes and supports a variety of cultural, culinary, entertainment and recreational organizations and businesses.

ENCOURAGE THE ARTS

We value continuing Milton’s history of integrating the arts into the community’s public life and planning choices.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR CITIZENS

We value making responsible choices for our built and natural environment to provide a safe and healthy environment for residents and visitors of all ages.

ATTENTION TO THE WELFARE OF OUR CHILDREN

We are committed to making choices that support formal and informal educational opportunities, support safe schools and create a healthy environment in which our children can grow and thrive.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

We value fostering a culture that encourages and values open communication, meaningful dialogue and mutual respect as the community continues to make decisions about its shared future.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

We value approaching our challenges with fresh ideas and hard work and calling upon subject-specific experts to provide expertise that will ground our decisions in facts, data, science, best practices and wisdom.

II. HISTORY AND CHARACTER

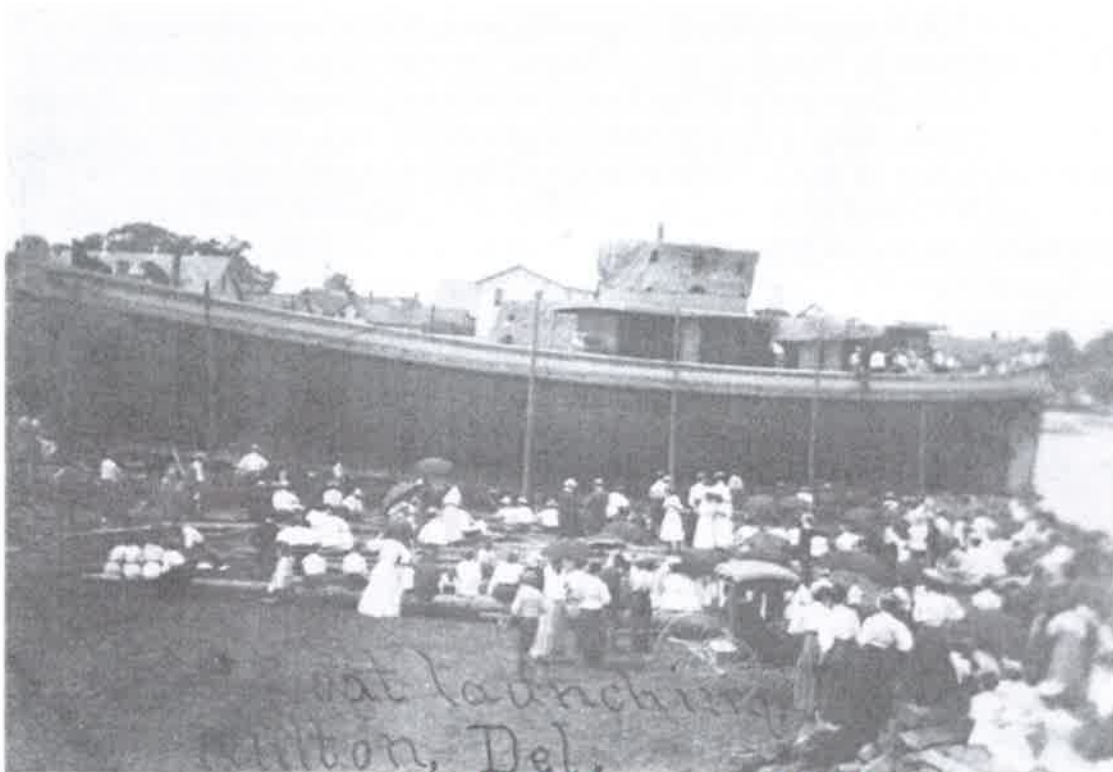
Milton's history is written in its streets, architecture, relationship to the Broadkill River, industrial heritage, and image and reputation throughout Delaware and beyond. Located at the headwaters of the river, this location was first used as a seasonal home and trading place first settled in prehistoric times by Native Americans of the Lenni Lenape and Nanticoke peoples. In 1609, Captain Henry Hudson explored the lands that bordered the Delaware Bay and River, claiming them for the Dutch. Beginning in 1675, English planters began settling in the area, following earlier Dutch settlement at Lewes. With the defeat of Dutch forces by the English in the 1670s, European settlement expanded from coastal areas, reaching present-day Milton in 1680. The beginnings of the Town itself reach back to early 18th century lumbering, mill, shipping and shipbuilding activities at the head of navigation on the Broadkill River. By the mid-18th century, the strategic importance of the site's placement at the river's head of navigation, coupled with a rapid growth of agriculture and milling activities, had resulted in the beginnings of an established community.

Two factors seem to have prompted the development of Milton as an inland port. First, because of its interior location, it offered easy water transportation access to sources of forest and farm products. Second, because it was some 10 miles inland of Lewes via the circuitous Broadkill, it was secure from the pirate and foreign waterborne attacks that plagued coastal areas and the bay front towns in the early centuries. As the community's importance as a maritime commercial hub at the "Head of Broadkill," the community's name was officially changed later to its present name, "Milton".

By 1809, according to *Delaware – A Guide to the First State*:

"... besides a shipyard, there were seven granaries and four stores; tanyards were later established. Shipbuilding reached its peak between the Civil War and 1880, during which time there were on the stocks usually three or four schooners that measured as much as 175 feet in length. The stream was so narrow that there had to be excavations made on the opposite side to receive the vessels as they were launched ("lanched") down the ways. By 1887 shipbuilding had almost ceased, but six vessels plied regularly to Philadelphia and five to New York with grain, produce, lumber, cordwood, and other products (such as holly)."

The Town's shipbuilding heritage is further sustained by the amount of boats and ships built and launched in nearly two hundred years (1737 through 1915) numbering a total of 271 vessels.



The pattern of historic houses running up along Union, Federal, and Chestnut Streets was well established by the mid-19th century. Today, Milton's National Register Historic District contains many fine examples of architectural styles that parallel the community's period of prominence as a center for maritime commerce. Milton is well known for its stately "Governor's Houses", once occupied by men who served as governors of Delaware (or of Wyoming, in one case).

In 1865, the Town of Milton was formally incorporated by the state legislature with a town form of government. The community continued to prosper, and by the late 19th century, the industrial development of granaries and crop processing was well established in the south end of Town. Here the Queen Anne's Railroad (later called the Maryland & Delaware Coast Railway) crossed Federal and Chestnut Streets, with rail service across the Delmarva Peninsula connecting Baltimore (via Chesapeake Bay steamship) to coastal Lewes, points north through Ellendale, and six miles to the west. The town's economic and political importance is illustrated by the service of four local citizens as Governor of Delaware from the 1820s through the 1870s.

By the early 20th century, Milton's town center was well developed with general merchandising stores, shops, taverns and restaurants and a movie theater. In 1909, a fire destroyed 14 buildings in the downtown area.

Boating activity on the Broadkill once mostly related to trade and commerce, is still important today and has reoriented itself to fishing and recreation. Numerous state and national groups are working on conservation issues along the Broadkill.

The history of Milton is especially important in influencing historic preservation and revitalization efforts along Federal and Union Streets. In 1980, Sussex County renovated a former store on Union Street as the Milton Branch of the Sussex County Library. After a strong local effort, the Milton National Historic District was listed on in the National Register of Historic Places on June 25, 1982. At the same time, Milton residents worked to advance the revitalization of the Town Center using the principles of the National Main Street Program. The town continues to participate in the Main Street Program, as an Affiliate. Major improvements were made to the Broadkill waterfront at Milton Memorial Park. Victorian light poles have been installed. The handsome “Governors’ Walk” pedestrian promenade was completed along the central portions of the Broadkill. In 2009, new playground equipment and picnic tables and benches were installed and a new Victorian style gazebo was constructed, which is now the site of summer concerts. Since 2010, several new shops and businesses have opened in the downtown area. New bed and breakfasts have been established in the Historic District.



Milton’s economic history results from a mix of industrial and commercial uses, a diversity of population and income levels and a broad array of housing types. This healthy balance and growth has continued.

One area of significant change, however, is in the location of different types of commercial uses. For the first two hundred years in Milton, the town center was the location of virtually all of the community’s commercial activity. Today’s Milton retains its general focus on the historic center. Federal and Union Streets, as in the past, form a main north-south spine of movement, land use and civic life. But a more specialized pattern of commercial land use has taken hold.

Milton has always been an industrial center. It was for this reason that it was located where the river penetrated deeply into a hinterland that was rich in agriculture and timber. Successors to the original granaries and cannery have redeveloped the property into the Federal Street Medical Park as well as other businesses located in the vicinity, such as a trucking company, a machine shop, a building supply company, a sign company, television studio, and Milton's largest private-sector employer, Dogfish Head Craft Brewery. These have been joined by a successful plastics company that relocated to Milton from Long Island. All in all, it is estimated that there are approximately 1,400 jobs of all kinds in Milton.

Larger scale retail and business functions are choosing highway locations with high volumes of passing traffic and large amounts of free parking, conditions which are difficult to replicate in a downtown area. This pattern is affecting the development of roadside sites on Milton Ellendale Highway/Beach Highway/Broadkill Road (State Route 16) along Milton's north edge, including two shopping centers, Clipper Square at Milton Ellendale Highway (SR 16) and Mulberry Street (Road 197), and Milton Park Center at Milton Ellendale Highway and Union Street Extended (SR 5). Meanwhile, the town center has begun to specialize in generally smaller, more visitor-oriented uses with a diversity of local restaurants and personal service establishments.

Throughout this change, the historic Town Center remains the civic center, and has welcomed new office and commercial uses suited to its central location, pedestrian scale and historic ambiance. These include antique, gift and specialty stores oriented to visitors and professional or service uses. There are several restaurants in Town Center, as well as the renovated historic Milton Theater, now a general performing arts center and movie theater. Just as Milton's commercial land use patterns were once shaped by shipping on the Broadkill River, and later by railroading on the Queen Anne's Railway, today they are being influenced by the area's arterial roadways, and by a new division of labor between the historic Town Center and more highway-oriented uses along SR 16.

III. POPULATION and INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. COMMUNITY GROWTH PROFILE

Growth Trends

According to the 2010 Census, the Town of Milton had an estimated population of 2,576 people. This represents a growth trend that began in 1990, following an earlier period of population loss. The current steady increase in population is shown in Table 1 below:¹

Table 1. Town of Milton Population Growth & Change, 1990-2030

Year	Population	Number Change	Percent Change
1990	1,417	58	4.3
2000	1,657	240	16.9
2005	1,780	123	7.4
2010	2,576	796	44.7
2015	2,869	506	19.6
2020	3,082	296	9.6
2025	3,248	166	5.3
2030	3,378	130	4.0

Source: 1880-2010: US Census. Estimates and Projections: Delaware Population Consortium, US Census 1990 and 2000 and 2010, ACS 2014.

The Plan uses the Delaware Population Consortium's projections for population growth in Sussex County and, using that source, it is possible to estimate future population growth in the Town. If Milton's population growth mirrors Sussex County's, the Town will grow to 3082 by 2020, 3248 by 2025 and 3,378 by 2030. The population forecast is shown in GRAY above.

Comparing actual Census figures of 1990 at 1,417, 1,657 in 2000, and 2,576 in 2010 and calculated using building permit data (in Table 2) from the same years, there appears to be a decline in the size of the average Milton household. Some of this decline can be attributed to the maturing of the Town's median age which is a prevalent condition throughout Sussex County. This maturing has a definite impact of the nature of growth, the income of future households, and the demand for services.

¹ Milton's population has doubled from 1990-2015 as the current from the Delaware Population Consortium shows. 2,869 people lived in Milton as of 2015

Table 2. Residential Building Permits 1990-2014
Town of Milton Incorporated Area

Year	Single-Family Homes	Multi-Family Units	Annual Totals
1990	18	50	68
1991	8	0	8
1992	1	0	1
1993	12	0	12
1994	3	0	3
1995	2	0	2
1996	2	0	2
1997	8	7	15
1998	5	0	5
1999	4	0	4
2000	2	36	38
2001	5	24	29
2002	50	48	98
2003	37	24	61
2004	16	51	67
2005	85	4	89
2006	100	0	100
2007	62	0	62
2008	56	0	56
2009	27	2	29
2010	14	4	18
2011	17	2	19
2012	13	5	18
2013	31	4	35
2014	44	0	44
Total	662	261	883
Av. Annual	27	11	38

Source: Town of Milton, Delaware State Housing Authority.

Town of Milton for 2003-2014 multi-family defined as three or more units in Town Zoning Code.

As is shown in Table 3 below, projected future approved residential building projects could add a total of 956 (plus additional lots that could be developed on unused parcels in town) units to the town, or approximately 2,230 people (956 dwelling units x 2.33 persons per household). When all are constructed and continuing with the same number of persons per household, the Town population could be approximately 5,200 people, or nearly doubling the present condition.²

² Based on the last two years of growth (to 2015), Milton has permitted approximately 40 new homes each year. At that rate 956 vacant lots will provide over 34 years of growth, opportunity within current town boundaries.

Given the present rate of permit activity, the Town has approximately 30 years of building potential on the currently vacant, unconstructed lots within approved subdivisions.

Table 3. Projected Future Residential Building Projects, Active Sub-Divisions/Developments as of 2015

Name	Total Units Approved	Vacant Lots
Chestnut Crossing	25	7
Merriweather	8	7
Preserve on the Broadkill I	27	14
Preserve on the Broadkill II	21	6
Cannery Village	384	162
Wagamon's West Shore	231	33
Heritage Creek	425	327
Holly Lake Villas	44	44
Key Ventures	342	342
The Orchards	14	14
TOTAL	1,521	956

OTHER LARGER PARCEL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

There are larger, but not subdivided parcels located within the current Town boundary on which residential development can occur. Development of these parcels should be encouraged due to availability of existing infrastructure. Among these are:

- A 132-acre parcel located with access to Atlantic Avenue.
- A 5-acre residential parcel located at Mulberry Street and Willow Street.
- A 5.5-acre parcel located along Lavinia Street adjacent to the Rogers Sign Company.
- A 3.95-acre parcel located along Federal Street immediately south of Milton Elementary School.
- A 3.6-acre parcel along Mulberry Street located between Willow Street and Tobin Street.

The sum of the lot potential based on current zoning is about 500 dwelling units. Beyond these larger parcels noted above there are many undeveloped single family lots located throughout town which could yield approximately 40 additional residences. Table 3 (956) plus approved but vacant (500) plus scattered lots (40) create a potential of approximately 1500 new residences.

Area Growth

See Exhibit A in Appendix E, Regional View

Growth in Milton is occurring in the context of overall growth in Sussex County, which, according to the 2010 Census, grew by 26.3 percent between 2000 and 2010 (156,638 to 197,929 persons) with most of that growth occurring before 2009, or prior to the economic downturn. According to the Office of State Planning Coordination (OSPC), growth in Sussex is due to the attraction of the ocean and Inland Bays, the migration of retirees to the area, and to jobs created because of increases in commercial and retail uses along Coastal Highway (Delaware Route 1) in the Lewes-Rehoboth area. Sussex's accelerated growth is expected to continue, with the 2025 population projected at 240,351, a 21.4% increase from 2010 (Delaware Population Consortium, October 31, 2013). As land becomes scarcer and property values increase along the coastal areas of Sussex County, further growth in Milton is anticipated due to its easy access to coastal employment and recreation attractions. It is anticipated that as property values in Milton will remain less than the coastal communities.

Several large parcels located north, northwest, east, south and west of Milton's corporate boundaries have been rezoned and sub-divided by Sussex County for a mixture of commercial and residential development. Due to the national economic slowdown which occurred before and during the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the pace of new development slowed in the County as well as the State. Following a review of approved but undeveloped subdivisions, the Sussex County Council extended the sunset dates of some of the prior approvals based on the applicants' ability to demonstrate that it has been moving toward construction or that the pace of development has been slowed due to outside, mostly regulatory requirements. While the future of this area remains less than certain, Milton, by establishing its growth area and through planning coordination with Sussex County, will have opportunities to participate in the planning of future development in this area. Several of the larger parcels located northeast of the Town of Milton are used for agricultural purposes, currently and many of those are in the Agricultural Land Preservation Program, which does not permit development.

Milton's largest opportunities for growth through annexation continue in the eastern, southern and southeastern quadrants (see Appendix E, Exhibit G). Additional opportunities for growth are found to the west, where some rezoning has occurred by Sussex County but no detailed planning or building has started. These areas offer opportunities for growth through annexation, when and if Milton and the parcel owners can determine mutual interests in expansion and can identify how services can be delivered to the parcels.

Population Characteristics and Demographics

All statistics in this section are from the 2010 US Census, except as noted.

The demographics of Milton are changing. Tables 4, 5 and 6 display population by age cohort and gender, comparisons with Sussex County and the State of Delaware, and population composition by race. The last Decennial Census of Milton occurred in 2010 which indicated that its population was 75.8% white, 16.3% black and 7.9% other. The percentage of white population in Milton increased from 70% in 1990 while the percentage of black population decreased from 28% and the percentage of other races increased from 2%. Persons of Hispanic origin made up 9% of Milton's population in 2000. This was an increase from 1990 when 5% of Milton's population was composed of persons of Hispanic origin.

Compared to percentages at the county and state level, a similar percentage of residents over the age of 25 in the town of Milton have completed high school. (91% Milton; 85.8% Sussex County; 87.7% Delaware). The percentage of Milton's residents holding a bachelor's degree is comparable to percentages at the county and state levels (30.7% Milton; 22% Sussex County; 28.5% Delaware).

Median age in the Town of Milton in 2010 was 39.8 years, somewhat older than the 37.2 median for the US and the 38.8 median age for Delaware, but younger than Sussex County's median of 45.4 years. Sussex County is steadily aging, combining aging in place with a "gray influx" from surrounding States. According to the US Census 2010, 20.8% of Sussex County's population was 65 or over in 2010. The Delaware Population Consortium projects that the percentage of Sussex County's population 65 or older will rise to 24% by 2020, and 28% by 2030. The table (Table 5) below lists the distribution of ages Milton, Sussex County and the State of Delaware as reported by the US Census 2010 and the Delaware Population Consortium's estimate for 2015.

Table 4. Population Estimates Comparison 2010-2015

	Milton		Sussex County		Delaware	
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2010	2015
Total Population	2,576	2,869	197,929	212,868	899,673	941,634
Ages						
Under 5	163	181	11,524	11,616	55,952	56,981
5-9	155	173	11,113	12,453	56,513	58,092
10-14	146	163	10,733	11,757	56,947	58,379
15-19	140	156	11,252	11,215	64,445	58,013
20-24	151	168	10,235	11,293	63,102	66,695
25-29	209	233	10,871	11,369	57,844	63,782
30-34	167	186	9,951	11,841	54,223	60,551
35-39	163	181	10,388	10,782	55,135	55,171
40-44	159	177	11,867	11,357	60,903	56,330
45-49	167	186	13,972	13,204	67,465	62,696
50-54	153	170	14,501	15,978	66,268	68,737
55-59	145	161	14,544	17,241	58,326	67,586
60-64	221	246	15,948	17,229	53,784	59,700
65-69	168	186	14,082	17,595	42,219	53,214
70-74	112	125	10,448	13,993	30,925	39,189
75-79	53	59	7,604	9,673	23,967	27,602
80-84	48	53	5,137	6,462	17,284	19,222
85 & up	56	62	4,195	5,902	15,906	19,751

Source: American Community Survey, 2015

Table 5. Population Estimate of Town of Milton by Age Cohort and Sex

Age Cohort	Total
Total Population	2717
Under 5	199
5 to 9	95
10 to 14	142
15 to 19	94
20 to 24	154
25 to 34	359
35 to 44	322
45 to 54	319
55 to 59	188
60 to 64	224
65 to 74	422
75 to 84	138
85 +	61
Median Age	45

Source: American Community Survey, 2015

Table 6. Population Estimates Race Composition

Racial Composition	Number
White	2112
Black or African American	505
American Indian/Alaska Native	0
Asian	16
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3
Other	81

Source: American Community Survey, 2015

Table 7. 2010 Demographic Profile

U.S. Census Bureau/American Community Survey 2010 Demographic Profile Data	
Geography: Town of Milton, Delaware	
Subject	Number
Unmarried partner	117
In group quarters	10
Institutionalized population	0
Male	0
Female	0
Uninstitutionalized population	10
Male	7
Female	3
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	
Total households	1,101
Family households (families) [7]	644
With own children under 18 years	262
Husband-wife family	422
With own children under 18 years	137
Male householder, no husband present	51
With own children under 18 years	28
Female householder, no husband present	171
With own children under 18 years	97
Non-family households [7]	457
Householder living alone	345
Male	123
65 years and over	37
Female	222
65 years and over	118
Households with individuals under 18 years	299
Households with individuals 65 years and over	353
Average household size	2.33
Average family size [7]	2.93

Table 8. Housing Occupancy

U.S. Census Bureau/American Community Survey
2010 Demographic Profile Data

Geography: Town of Milton, Delaware

Subject	Number
HOUSING OCCUPANCY	
Total housing units	1,340
Occupied housing units	1,101
Vacant housing units	239
For rent	45
Rented, not occupied	7
For sale only	47
Sold, not occupied	7
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	102
All other vacancies	31
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent) [8]	6.6
Rental vacancy rate (percent) [9]	9.1
Renter-occupied housing units	441
Population in renter-occupied housing units	1,097
Average household size of renter-occupied units	2.49

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2010

Foot Notes for Tables 7 and 8

U.S. Census Bureau/American Community Survey
2010 Demographic Profile Data

Geography: Town of Milton, Delaware

X Not applicable

[1] Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

[2] Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories

[3] One of the four most commonly reported multiple-race combinations nationwide in Census 2000.

[4] In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six number may add to more than the total population, and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

[5] This category is composed of people whose origins are from the Dominican Republic, Spain and Spanish-speaking Central or South American countries. It also includes general origin responses such as "Latino" or "Hispanic".

[6] "Spouse" represents spouse of the householder. It does not reflect all spouses in a household. Responses of "same-sex spouse" were edited during processing to "unmarried partner."

[7] "Family households" consist of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. They do not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples. Same-sex couple households are included in the family households category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption. Same-sex couple households with no relatives of the householder present are tabulated in nonfamily households. "Nonfamily households" consist of people living alone and households which do not have any members related to the householder.

[8] The homeowner vacancy rate is the proportion of the homeowner inventory that is vacant "for sale." It is computed by dividing the total number of vacant units "for sale only" by the sum of owner-occupied units, vacant units that are "for sale only," and vacant units that have been sold but not yet occupied; and then multiplying by 100.

[9] The rental vacancy rate is the proportion of the rental inventory that is vacant "for rent." It is computed by dividing the total number of vacant units "for rent" by the sum of the renter-occupied units, vacant units that are "for rent" that have been rented by not yet occupied; and then multiplying by 100.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

Tax Base

The Town of Milton's total assessed valuation in 2008 was \$141,208,739, which is an increase of \$67,771,049 or 48% over 2002. The closing of the Draper King Cole Cannery shortly after the adoption of the 1998 Milton Comprehensive Plan resulted in this tax base decrease in 2002 and the increase in 2008 was based on the development and growth demand. A Town wide tax reassessment was completed in 2009. Table 9 below shows the changes that have occurred since the reassessment was performed. The new figures are shown as of 2010, the first tax year with new assessed values in place.

Table 9. Assessed Values

	Land	Assessed Values Improvement	Total Exempt Value	Net Value Reassessed
2010	220,229,170	222,689,075	-63,448,500	379,539,745
2011	223,120,695	226,528,000	-79,631,100	370,017,595
2012	223,308,895	225,847,300	-80,371,800	368,784,395
2013	232,045,900	259,266,300	-98,748,100	392,564,100
2014	223,254,700	254,446,100	-82,295,500	395,405,300
2015	228,747,900	266,589,800	-83,976,100	411,370,600

2015 assessment values stand at \$411,370,600 which is an increase of approximately \$16,000,000 over last year, a 4% increase. For the 2015 tax year, the Milton Town Council adjusted the tax rate from .216 per \$100 of assessed tax value to .24 per \$100 of assessed value.

Employment and Household Income Characteristics

Milton's labor force in 2010 of 1,245 people composed 61.6% of its population over the age of 16. Approximately 4.9% of Milton's residents over the age of 16 were unemployed, State wide and at present, that is somewhat higher than the reported unemployment rate of 3.7 percent. The predominant occupations of Milton's population were management, professional, and related occupations at 28.8% of the population, sales and office occupations at 25.5%, service occupations with 18.7%, and production, transportation, and material moving occupations with 18.3%.

Table 10 displays income statistics comparing the area Zip Code (19968), the Town of Milton and Sussex County.

Table 10 Income Comparisons

Income	ZIP 19968	Town of Milton	Sussex County
Median Household	\$60,737	\$41,076	\$52,692
Average Household	\$73,855	\$61,462	\$68,578
Per Capita	\$30,621	\$26,963	\$27,748
Greater than \$200,000	4.6%	3.6%	3.4%
Under 25 Years	\$66,667	\$66,667	\$29,494
25 to 44 Years	\$60,978	\$50,395	\$62,594
45 to 64 Years	\$68,378	\$66,172	\$62,594
65+ Years	\$47,550	\$34,167	\$45,369

Source: American Community Survey, 2015

The major industries of employment for Milton's residents in 2010 included educational, health and social services (18%), retail trade (17), and manufacturing (12%).

The following total jobs were reported by the Town of Milton's significant places of employment as of October 2009 and a later 2014 Survey:

**Table 11 Town of Milton
Estimated Employment at Significant Employers by Survey**

	<u>Employer</u>	<u>Jobs</u>
1.	Reed Trucking	65
2.	Atlantis Industries, Inc.	35
3.	Bayport Business Park	26
4.	Clipper Square	61
5.	Brittingham Elementary School	70
6.	Milton Elementary School	80
7.	Town of Milton	23
8.	Town Center Area in General (1)	100
9.	Rogers Sign Company, Inc.	20
10.	US Post Office	19
11.	Dogfish Head Brewery	156
12.	Milton Park Center	118
13.	Mariner Middle School	65
14.	Pediatric Adolescent Center	20
15.	Backyard Restaurant	24
	Total	882

(1) See Table 2 of the *Town Center Use & Parking Survey of February 1998 as updated 2009 and October 2014*.

It is estimated that there are an additional 500 jobs located elsewhere in Milton, bringing the total to approximately 1400 jobs which corresponds to estimates available from American Community Survey.

The median household income in 2010 for the town of Milton stood at \$41,076. This is less than the median household income found across Sussex County in 2010 of \$52,692. A total of 13.5% of individuals in Milton were below the poverty level in 2010, reduced from 18% in 1999, but still more than the 10.5% of Sussex County residents below the poverty level.

Existing Housing Characteristics

According to US Bureau of the Census information, Milton's housing units totaled 1,340 in 2010, with a vacancy rate of 17.8% and 7.6% of all units being for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Renter-occupied housing comprised 40.1% of Milton's occupied units, as compared to 19.3% in Sussex County. Median housing value in 2010 was \$226,848, in Milton, compared with \$241,800 in Sussex. Median rent was \$993 in Milton and \$1,048 in Sussex County.

Most housing structures in the town of Milton are of the single-family detached variety with 67% being single-family detached and being 13% single-family attached. The remaining 20% consist of multi-family housing.

On average, housing units in Milton were built significantly earlier than those found across Sussex County. According to the US Census 2000, the median year of housing construction in Milton was 1952 while the median year of housing construction in Sussex County was 1981.

Statewide Housing Needs Assessment

In the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment prepared in 2014 for the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA), the Milton Census County Division area (larger than the Town incorporated limits) was indicated as having 4100 housing units in Sussex County. Delaware is one of 20 states where Census County Divisions (CCDs) are used for statistical tracking of subdivisions within each county. The Town of Milton is located within the Milton Division of Sussex County. Milton Census County Division is a geographic area used by DSHA for study purposes. The DSHA subdivides Sussex County into east and west (using US 113 as the boundary) with the Town of Milton being included in the East Sussex County analysis area. Statistics below this level of geography are often not available due to their sensitive nature. Prior information from the Statewide Housing Needs Assessment identified a total of 210 households living in substandard housing units in 2015. These are units needing substantial rehabilitation to make them structurally sound, safe and habitable. In addition, the Milton Minor Civil Division (MCD) which includes the Town of Milton and also used by DSHA was found to have approximately 200 "at risk" households living in overcrowded conditions or having incomes less than 50 % of median and paying more than 50% of that income for housing expenses. Although no specific breakdown for Milton is available, the Assessment noted that the proportion of elderly in the Sussex County population (32% in 2015) was the highest in the State, and is expected to grow to 35% by the year 2020. The fastest growing segment of the elderly population is the 85+ year old group. The growing population of elderly along with the population spending more than 50% of income for housing purposes, create demands for housing types and costs that are not readily available in the current market place.

The Existing Housing Market in Milton

Between 2005 and 2010, approximately 30 of the 188 historic district houses in Milton have been sold to new purchasers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many buyers come from outside of Delaware being attracted by Milton's closeness to the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean, its small town historic charm, and lower housing costs when compared to those costs in Lewes or Rehoboth Beach.

In general, sales of houses in Milton increased through 2006, and then lagged between 2008 and 2011. The Table 12 below notes the changes and mostly increase in the transfer tax increasing from 2012 through 2016.

Table 12 Transfer Tax Comparison by Year

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Transfer Tax	\$243,957	\$213,246	\$402,684	\$518,850	\$450,804

Commercial Real Estate Market

Milton began experiencing commercial growth in the late 1990's, both in the Town Center and along Milton Ellendale Highway/Beach Highway (SR 16). There has also been interest in additional Bed and Breakfasts and antique shops. Since the 2003 and the 2010 Comprehensive Plans, there has been additional commercial activity including the following:

- Milton Park Center (Food Lion, Family Dollar, Walgreen's, to include a mixture of restaurants, retail, and personal services)
- Milton Medical Park (multiple buildings providing an array of medical services)
- Major expansion of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery

IV. Town Center

Refer to Exhibit I in Appendix E

Background

Milton's town center is comprised of a mix of commercial and residential properties, many of which were constructed in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The primary north/south artery through the town center is Union Street/Federal Street. It is along this thoroughfare that most of the existing commercial buildings stand. The designated town center also extends along Front Street and Magnolia Street, both of which run parallel to the Broadkill River.

Milton's Town Center has seen several renovations since the adoption of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. Those projects are reviving and invigorating the Town Center. Examples of these projects include new and frequent use of the Milton Theater built in 1920 and renovated in the 1930s, and the façade and interior improvements to the Mercantile Building housing antiques, crafts and giftware. Also, there have been expansions of existing restaurants coupled with repurposing and renovations of other structures resulting in new opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Milton's Town Center boasts several public green spaces, including Memorial Park, Governors Walk and Mill Park. These spaces have been well maintained by Town staff and volunteers – many from the Milton Garden Club. Their efforts can be seen in the flowers that decorate the town center – and in the new antique reproduction town clock, which was purchased and installed by the Garden Club.

Along with these promising developments and opportunities, Milton's town center also faces some challenges. Fortunately, the Town believes that these can be remedied through thoughtful planning, partnerships, hard work and strategic and creative interventions. These challenges include the following:

Limited Space for Expansion: For its first two hundred years, Milton's Town Center was the location of virtually all the community's commercial activity, having developed close to the Broadkill River to support the ship-building, commercial, transportation and shipping trade that supported the town for much of its early history. Today, the historic Town Center remains the center of the town's civic activities, but has evolved from its former role as the center for general merchandising to a new role as a specialized center for more visitor-oriented and leisure uses, including antique, gift and specialty stores, restaurants and the historic Milton Theater.

Two of Milton's greatest assets – the Broadkill River and the town's stock of historic buildings – create challenges for expansion of the Town Center. Flooding issues further reduce opportunities for growth and expansion. Consequently, in response to the changing character of downtown Milton and the growing demand for goods and services to meet the needs of Milton's growing population, larger scale retail and business establishments began to seek locations with higher volumes of passing traffic and more abundant parking – conditions that will be difficult to achieve in the Town Center. Milton's initial response to this new pattern of land use was to develop commercial sites along SR 16, the town's northern edge, including two shopping centers, Clipper Square at SR 16 at Mulberry Street, and Milton Park Center at SR 16 and SR 5.

Thus, Milton now has two commercial centers: The historic Town Center, which is focused on pedestrian-oriented cultural tourism, the arts, dining and community events; and the growing commercial district along SR 16, which caters to the larger community and regional need for goods and services and is more car-focused.

Vacant properties: Even with the renovations and development discussed above, there remain vacant lots and parcels within the Town Center. Their development will depend largely on market forces and opportunities that could further cement positive gains made in the Town Center.

As is frequently found in renovations/revitalization of older downtowns such issues as parcel assemblage, parcel size, multiple owners and higher costs associated with infill-style development, can be challenges to realizing more activity in the Town Center. Vacant parcels can create gaps in the connectivity of uses within the Town Center and can be a cause for inhibiting continued renovation and revitalization.

Flooding: For much of its history, Milton's town center has been subjected to frequent 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. If present trends continue, the intensity and frequency of these floods are expected to increase in the future due to projected sea level rises and the increased severity of storms. These flood events will have a significant impact on Milton's Town Center, and its emergency services (fire and police). Therefore, the community must make efforts to expand and move these emergency services currently located in the town center to less flood-prone higher ground.

Obstructed and limited pedestrian routes: Throughout the public conversation that helps to inform this Comprehensive Plan, the issues of connectivity and walkability emerged on a regular basis. These two desires were so pervasive, they become central to the community's expressed Core Values. In the survey conducted as part of this process, walkways, sidewalks and trails are seen as critical to the community's future. Currently, the town center does not have a continuity of access to the town's residential neighborhoods and employment sites. Since parking supply is limited, improving walking and biking access to the Town Center will help to reinforce its importance within the Town and strengthen the Town Center's connection to its neighborhoods.

Limited parking: Parking in Milton's Town Center is limited. During the economic downturn, Milton's limited parking was not an ongoing challenge. However, as businesses open in the Town Center and activity increases, the limited parking will become a challenge to the town center's infill projects and further revitalization. If a flooding event occurs and many of parking spots become unusable, this problem will be exacerbated.

In addition to limited street parking, the town has a small number of parking lots. A municipal parking lot lies between Magnolia Street and the Broadkill River and contains approximately 55 parking spaces. Unfortunately, because it sits directly adjacent to the Broadkill and near Wagamon's Pond, the lot is prone to frequent flooding. This situation is expected to be exacerbated as sea levels continue to rise and development in the Wagamon's Pond watershed continues.

Additional parking is available in the M&T Bank and Volunteer Fire Department (Milton Company 85) parking lots, both of which are on Front Street, on the south side of the Broadkill River. Both lots are privately owned, but parking is often permitted during events occurring in the Town Center. Together these lots provide an additional 65 spaces. Unfortunately, like the Magnolia Street lot, these lots sit directly adjacent to the Broadkill River and in the designated floodplain.

A small parking lot behind the library is maintained by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and is reserved for users of the boat launch.

It is important to note that the concentration of parking along the Broadkill River also presents other concerns. First, waterside parking is not the best use of land adjacent to the Broadkill River. Second, the proximity of pavement to the river poses two significant environmental problems by increasing impervious surface within the traditional floodplain and creating a source of oils and other contaminants that become trapped in the run off.

While these parking areas may create opportunities for redevelopment to higher uses, having an adequate supply of parking must be part of any redevelopment/revitalization plan so that the Town Center is accessible not only to pedestrians and bicyclists, but also motorists and passengers.

Comprehensive Plan Goals for the Town Center

In light of the opportunities and challenges described above, this Comprehensive Plan sets forth the following goals for Milton's Town Center:

1. Develop a greater sense of continuity and cohesion by working with the property owners and by encouraging the development and use of currently-vacant buildings and properties in the Town Center;
2. Identify strategies to minimize the effects of increased flooding in the town center;
3. Identify opportunities to increase the number of available parking spaces to serve the town center;
4. Explore the feasibility of moving the firehouse and police station out of the Town Center to meet the needs of the growing community;
5. Consider developing a Master Plan of the growing commercial district along Route 16 to meet the community's needs for goods and services, enhance the town's character and plan for the region's increased traffic.

Possible Implementation Strategies

The following possible 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, nor as funding mandates.*

- Include the south side of Front Street, between Chestnut and Collins Street, in the defined "Town Center." This ground is several feet higher than the nearby areas of the Town Center and could create opportunities for development that can take advantage of the preserved and opened water views.

- Include the remaining lots on the west side of Chestnut Street to Mill Street in the defined “Town Center.”
- Undertake a public process to envision a new Front Street “gateway” to Milton making use of the potentially re-zoned “Waterfront District and “Town Center” areas.
- Work closely with homeowners, state preservation office and Delaware Economic Development Office to develop a strategy to attract business to properties along Union Street, north of Chandler Street while preserving the historic integrity and fabric of these buildings.
- Undertake a study to determine opportunities to expand the existing walking trails in downtown Milton and connect them to a larger town-wide network.
- Work closely with DNREC and property owners to remove invasive vegetation and debris to open water views, while preserving or adding riparian buffers.
- Conduct a study of the Town Center to identify properties that may be acquired to expand the town’s parking stock and move existing parking away from the Broadkill River.
- Explore strategies to encourage the development of the town center’s two prominent vacant properties (112-114 Union Street and the intersection of Federal, Union and Front streets)
- Consistently enforce the existing codes that obligate property owners to properly maintain the town’s sidewalks.
- Conduct a tree-by-tree study of the town center’s street trees and tree boxes to evaluate their condition and appropriateness for each specific location. Develop a plan to replace trees that are not well suited with trees with branching habits and cultural needs that meet each location and condition. Develop a map and manual to provide Town staff with specific instructions for each variety’s care.

V. The Broadkill River

Refer to Exhibit D1 in Appendix E

Background

The Broadkill River is central to the identity, history, and character of the Town of Milton. From the time of its earliest settlement by Europeans and for the Lenni Lenape and Nanticoke peoples who pre-dated them, the river has provided its inhabitants with natural resources, opportunities for commerce and transportation. Founded as “Head of the Broadkill” 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, and concerns of the residents in Milton. In a survey conducted as part of the development of this Comprehensive Plan (Appendix B), the Broadkill River was judged to be the town’s greatest asset by most of 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 miniature train, owned by the Town and run by the Lions Club. Together, the river and its waterside park host 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 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,” site 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 Govenor’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 the following.

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 from 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 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 accordingly.

Impervious Surfaces Along the River

Most of the parking in the Milton’s Town Center is concentrated along the Broadkill River. 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 may become contaminated by salts, oil, antifreeze, gasoline and other toxic substances that accumulate on paved surfaces. These toxins may be 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. To reduce the amount of pervious surface near the river, it is also recommended that new Consideration be given to developing new parking venues 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 parking areas should 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 non-utility purpose. Agreements must be attained prior to any relocation of the present use from the waterfront.

Limited Visual and Physical and Recreational Access to the Broadkill River

While the Broadkill River is one of the town's important assets, physical and visual access to the river is limited in Milton's Town Center. Existing vegetation, signage, and fencing create visual and accessibility impairments. Recreational use of the water is primarily limited to Memorial Park and Wagamon's Pond and with no opportunities for access on the south side of the Broadkill River.

A low-cost approach to reduce the visual obstructions might 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 property owners and 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 and 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 significant expenditures of resources and effort. However, these expenditures could be wise investments, making Milton an even more compelling place for water-focused recreation, attracting new residents and visitors, alike. This plan, therefore, recommends consideration be given to the addition of more recreational uses and increased physical access to the Broadkill River within the Town.

Comprehensive Plan Goals for the Broadkill River

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

1. Investigate opportunities to mitigate and accommodate to the expected increased flooding of the Broadkill River.
2. Investigate strategies to minimize the amount of impervious surface near the river.
3. Continue to work with Tidewater Utilities, DNREC and other concerned entities to develop a plan to move the wastewater treatment plant from the Broadkill River.
4. Identify opportunities and strategies to work with property owners to increase visual and physical access to the river while complying with the requirement for riparian buffers in order to maximize the river's benefits to the people of Milton.
5. Consider an increase in the amount of land within Milton and its projected growth area to be designated as a Marine Resource (MR) district, encouraging river-focused businesses and activities, highlighting the importance of the Broadkill River to the community, and attract leisure and recreational tourism.

6. Work with relevant Agencies of the Federal and State governments to determine if funding is available for Milton area projects under the Land and Water Conservation Fund. If such funding is available, try to secure it.
7. Work with relevant Sussex County and relevant State Agencies to enhance the natural environment along the Broadkill River in Milton's designated Growth Areas.
8. Investigate the possibility of having that portion of the Broadkill River that is within the Town of Milton or its proposed Growth Area designated 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, nor as funding mandates.*

- Investigate the possibilities to 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.
- Work with property owners and DNREC to remove invasive vegetation and debris to improve water views, while preserving or adding riparian buffers.
- Evaluate possibilities to create additional opportunities for active and passive river-focused recreation.
- Investigate and evaluate methods to reduce the use of impervious surfaces along the river to aid in the reabsorption of flood waters.
- Conduct a feasibility study of a greenway trail along the Broadkill River.
- Identify methods to improve physical and visual access to the Broadkill River.
- Extend Governors Walk to the South Side of the Broadkill River to connect to potential new waterfront amenities.

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Refer to Exhibit 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. While the number of intact buildings and their familiarity to Milton's residents (many of whom live in or 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.

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, rehabilitation 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 have 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

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 considered to be "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 and clearer map and inset provided in Appendix E, Exhibit J.

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, the Town has experienced losses to its architectural and historic legacy. The University of Delaware's Center for Historic Architecture and Design (UDCHAD) conducted a three-year survey of the historic district. The survey was completed in 2016 and followed an earlier survey performed in 1980. Since the completion of the 1980 survey, certain patterns of change were observable during the 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 removal of chimneys. 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 Goal for Historic Preservation

In light of the opportunities and challenges, the goal for Historic Preservation is to make Milton an example of historic preservation best practices by preserving its unique built environment and developing programs that tell its stories, thus increasing Milton’s attractiveness as a destination for cultural tourism.

Possible Implementation Strategies

The following possible 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, nor as funding mandates.*

- Review and revise Milton’s Historic Preservation Code as necessary to ensure compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation.
- 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.
- Develop an ongoing historic preservation education program for town enforcement staff, HPC members and the public.
- Develop a *Guide for Renovation in Milton Historic District*, 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.
- Develop strategies to eliminate “carve-outs” in the Historic District.
- 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.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings discouraging their demolition.

VII. COMMUNITY DESIGN PLAN

Background

A Community Design Plan should consider the best general patterns of architectural scale, styles and site design within the jurisdiction. This chapter of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan is a new requirement per Title 22, Chapter 7, § 702 (b) of Delaware Code and was not included in the adopted and certified 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

While components of a successful Community Design Plan may vary based on the size, location and age of a jurisdiction that prepares the chapter, the chapter typically includes the following topics:

- Neighborhood Design which is intended to promote compact communities where residents can more easily access schools, recreation, shopping, social activities and public services.
- Design Characteristics which offer amenities and accessibility features such as a discernible town center, noticeable boundaries, walkable compact communities, variety of housing types, parks and open space, grid street networks, pedestrian safe designs, and quality architecture to note a few.
- Variety of Housing Types where people of all income levels should be able to afford quality housing without being segregated within the community. A range of housing choices allows all households to find a niche in a smart growth community-whether it is a garden apartment, a row house, or a traditional suburban home-and accommodate growth at the same time. A variety of housing alternatives also can reduce infrastructure costs, create housing opportunities closer to available jobs, and help to create a strong sense of community among residents.
- Community Layout or Design where the intent is to create pedestrian/bicycle compatible neighborhoods where streets are designed in grid patterns with lower speeds and reduced widths compelling motorists to drive slowly reducing crash potential.
- Parking design.
- Other Characteristics which could be considered are street light placement, sidewalk size, building setbacks and variable lot sizes.

The Community Design Plan's key tool is the preparation, adoption and use of a Design Manual. This manual, once prepared and adopted by the Town, should be used along with other land development regulations 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, recognizing 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 not only on the development parcel's land use designation and zoning district but also on 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, in the design of public improvements by the Town, and in the development of new residential and commercial projects within the Town's jurisdiction and, working with Sussex County, within the proposed Growth Area.

To implement a Community Design Plan and other recommendations found in the Town's 2017 Comprehensive Plan, the Town should consider expanding the intent of Planning and Zoning Commission beyond current zoning, site plan and subdivision responsibilities. The Community Design Plan should provide guidance to the Mayor and 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 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 that should serve to reinforce the Town's goals of sustainability of its downtown and protection of the town's historic heritage. 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 Goal for Community Design

The goal of the Community Design Plan is to develop the "Community Design Manual for Milton" considering the principles outlined above.

Possible Implementation Strategies:

The following possible 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, nor as funding mandates.*

- Review the Codes of the Town of Milton to determine if the following implementation strategies can be accomplished.
 - Establish a Community Design Work Group, seated for the sole purpose of developing the Community Design Manual for Milton. This committee should include members chosen specifically for their training and professional experience in the fields of urban planning, architecture, design, landscape architecture, landscape design, and historic preservation. This could be an ad hoc committee and its work could be time-limited.

- Prepare the Community Design Manual for Milton to supplement the Zoning Code and coordinate its recommendations with Sussex County and the Delaware Department of Transportation.
- Consider augmenting the Planning & Zoning Commission with a design professional or architect.
- 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 proposed Growth Area. The Community Design Manual for Milton should consider consideration of infill residential lot development, revitalization and rehabilitation of existing development, design of new commercial and industrial development, compatibility with the Historic District and Town Center, design of “Gateway” areas, maintenance or creation of connectivity between new/revitalized development and the Town Center, design of new/revitalized development along SR 16 corridor, and design of new/revitalized development along the Broadkill River.

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