

“Press Play: Vision 2023”



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| THE PRELUDE | # |
| CITY MANAGER’S LETTER | # |
| CITY COUNCIL PROFILE | # |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | # |
| THE PLANNING PROCESS..... | # |
| VISION | # |
| MISSION | # |
| VALUES..... | # |
| | |
| OUR CITY | # |
| DEMOGRAPHICS..... | # |
| CITY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE | # |
| <i>Overview of City Departments</i> | # |
| <i>Milford Organizational Chart</i> | # |
| | |
| CURRENT STATUS/UNDERSTANDING TODAY /WHERE ARE WE NOW? | # |
| NATIONAL CITIZENS SURVEY | # |
| COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS | # |
| MEETING WITH CITY STAFF..... | # |
| <i>Overview of Past Plans</i> | # |
| <i>Overview of Current Initiatives</i> | # |
| | |
| LOOKING FORWARD | # |
| PUBLIC SAFETY | # |
| ECONOMIC HEALTH & VITALITY | # |
| NEIGHBORHOODS & RECREATION | # |
| MOBILITY | # |
| FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | # |
| | |
| COMMUNITY PARTNERS | # |
| COMMUNITY CONVERSATION PARTICIPANTS | # |
| GLOSSARY | # |
| APPENDICIES | # |
| A: NCS COMMUNITY LIVABILITY REPORT | # |
| B: NCS DASHBOARD SUMMARY OF FINDINGS | # |
| C: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS QUESTIONS..... | # |
| D: PRIORITY AREA CHARTS | # |

City Manager Letter to Residents and Employees

Milford City Council Profile



| Member | Ward | Years of Service | Email |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|--|
| Arthur J. Campbell | One | 2 Years | acampbell@milford-de.gov |
| Christopher H. Mergner | One | 4 Years | cmergner@milford-de.gov |
| James F. Burk | Two | 3 Years | JBurk@milford-de.gov |
| Lisa Ingram Peel | Two | 3 Years | lpeel@milford-de.gov |
| Owen S. Brooks J. | Three | 36 Years | obrooks@milford-de.gov |
| Douglas E. Morrow Sr., Vice Mayor | Three | 29 Years | dmorrow@milford-de.gov |
| James O. Starling Sr. | Four | 19 Years | jstarling@milford-de.gov |
| Katrina E. Wilson | Four | 24 Years | kwilson@milford-de.gov |

To contact your elected official via telephone, please call City Hall at (302) 422-1111. For updated contact information for current elected officials, please access the City Website at <http://www.cityofmilford.com/175/Member-Information>.

Executive Summary

In September 2016, the City of Milford embarked on a strategic planning effort. This planning process culminated in the of Spring 2018 with the findings published in this report. The following pages are the result of deliberate and collaborative efforts to understand the needs and concerns of all its citizens. The Strategic Plan strives to create an organizational framework that will be used to drive effective decision-making for City Council and City management through the next five years. This framework lays the foundation for allocating financial and staffing resources, as well as proactively managing natural and environment resources, in order for the City of Milford to thrive and grow.

This plan also includes new vision, mission and values statements, which serve as the decision-making foundation for the City's employees, management, and leadership. This plan also aligns with previous municipal planning documents and unites them into a solid structure for managing change, growth, and development.

Though a deliberate community-engagement process, the Milford's residents identified five priority areas, which are essential for the City's continual improvement, as well as to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and other stakeholders:

- Public Safety and Preparedness
- Economic Health and Development
- Mobility and Infrastructure
- Neighborhoods and Community Services
- Fiscal Responsibility and Public Engagement

This plan outlines the City's goals in each of the priority areas, how the City's departments will implement action plans to meet these community goals, as well as sets a timeframe for achievement.

The Planning Process

Our Strategic Plan is a road map to guide the City of Milford's planning, staffing and fiscal decisions over the next five years. Over the course of the last two years, the Milford City Council and City staff have worked with the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware to develop a better, more comprehensive understanding of the City's current capacity (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) to develop forward-thinking vision, mission, and values.

City Councilmembers participated in individual interviews with an IPA facilitator between August 8-19, 2016. These interviews garnered each Councilmember's views of the City's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. Then, at a day-long retreat on September 17, 2016, the City Council had a group discussion about these opinions. This discussion led into a goal-setting exercise, in which Councilmembers were encouraged to set short, 1-2 year goals and long 5-10 year goals for the City. During this discussion, Councilmembers identified ten priority areas:

- Economic Growth & Development
- Encourage & Manage Growth
- Fiscal Policies
- Capital Improvements & Infrastructure Planning
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Code Enforcement
- Public Works
- Connectivity for the Entire City
- Human Resources Management

These areas informed the questions and areas of focus during the community engagement portion of the strategic planning process. A variety of methods were used when garnering resident and stakeholder input. Community engagement outreach included conducting a National Citizen Survey of residents in the summer of 2017, 18 Community Conversations during November and December of 2017, and the opportunity for residents and stakeholders to submit comments online.

Based on the information gathered, City Council met again in February of 2018 to develop vision, mission, and values statements for the City.

- A *vision* is a general statement that presents a timeless, inspirational view for the ideal future of our City.
- A *mission* is a statement of the purpose of the City; it's reason for existing.
- *Values* statements outline the City's core principals, used to create a positive image among residents, employees, and stakeholders.

Vision

Mission

Values

Open and Honest Communication: Effectively and clearly communicate ideas, information, and expectations between team members and to our community in a responsible, transparent manner.

Reliable: Ensure and provide consistent, quality services that residents and customers can depend on.

Respect for Diversity and Equity: Foster and support a culture that values the rich heritage of the City and experiences of our community members, while providing services impartially and fairly to all.

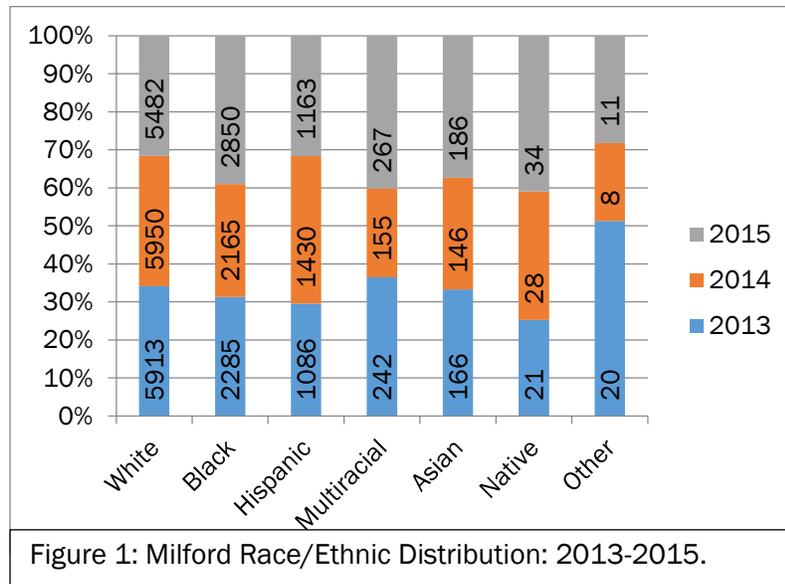
Stewards of our Resources: Make the best use of resources, in the short- and long- term.

Commitment to Excellence: Tackle objectives quickly and positively, going above and beyond basic requirements, to create a service-oriented culture through teamwork and collaboration.

Our City

With 10,979 residents, the City of Milford is a diverse community, spanning 9.86 square miles between Kent and Sussex Counties. Over the past decade, Milford has experienced consistent growth in both its population and economy. Milford is proud of the fact that it has one of the fastest growing populations in the State of Delaware. Based upon some of the latest data available, Milford boasted a nearly 15% rate of growth between 2010 and 2016 and subsequently had a 3.5% growth in employment between 2014 and 2015.

Demographic Profile

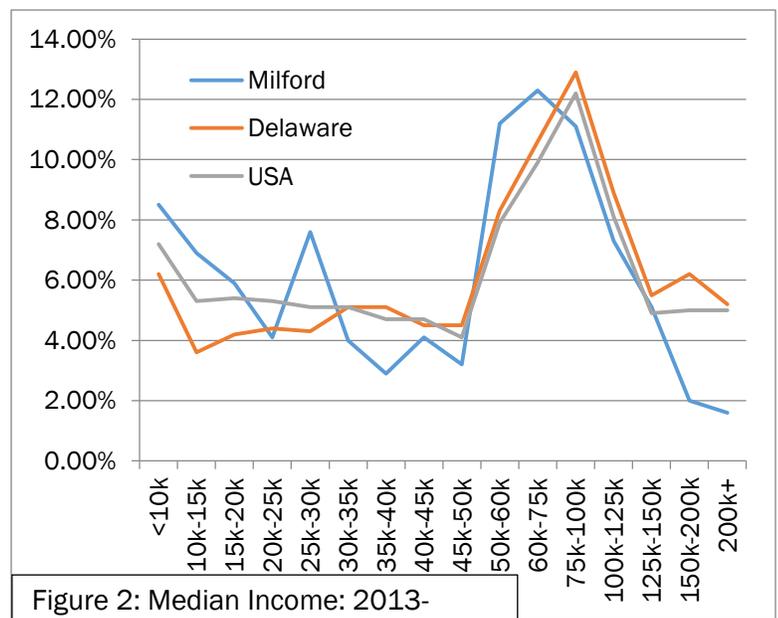


Milford's Population

- Between 2013 and 2015, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, Asian, and Native ethnic groups all showed growth (see Figure 1).
- The median age in Milford is 38; almost two years younger than that of the median age in the State of Delaware (39.7)

Milford Economy

- The median household income in Milford is \$15,887 lower than the state average and \$10,407 lower than the national average (see Figure 2).
- Between 2014 and 2015, there was a 4.2% decline in Milford's homeownership rate. This is lower than the state and national average for homeownership.
- As of 2015, 47.7% of the households in the City of Milford pay below \$800 in taxes. This is lower than both the state and national averages.



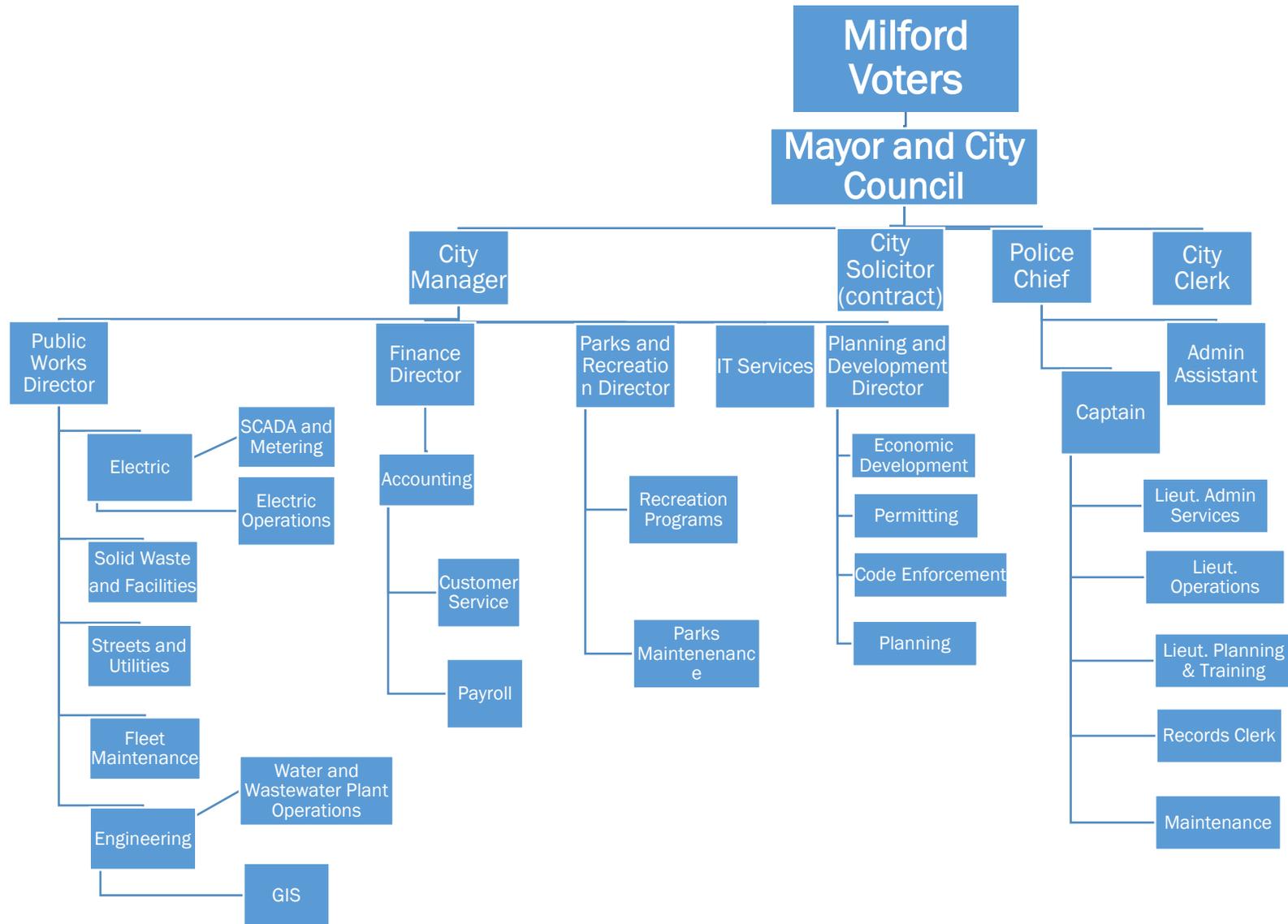
City of Milford Government Structure

The City of Milford follows a council-manager form of government that combines the strong leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager. In a council-manager government, Councilmembers are the leaders and policy makers elected by the residents of Milford to represent the four wards and to concentrate on policy issues that are responsive to citizens' needs and wishes. The City Council directly oversees the Chief of Police and the City Clerk. A City Manager is appointed by the Council to carry out policy and ensure that the entire community is being served. Below is an organizational chart depicting the council-manager form of government in the City of Milford, as well as an overview of each City Department, its responsibilities, and contact information.

Milford's Departments

| Department | Phone Number | Location | How can we help? |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--|
| City Hall | 302-422-1111 | 201 South Walnut St. | Mayor, City Manager, City Clerk offices, city voter registration |
| Customer Service | 302-422-6616 | 119 South Walnut St. | Utility and tax billing, set up/disconnect service, schedule bulk pick up, property assessment |
| Electric Utility | 302-422-1110 | 180 Vickers Dr. | Power outages, street lights |
| Parks & Recreation | 302-422-1104 | 207 Franklin St. | Parks and recreation |
| Planning | 302-424-8396 | 201 South Walnut St. | Building permits, inspections, code enforcement |
| Police | 302-422-8081 | 400 NE Front St. | Police |
| Streets & Solid Waste | 302-422-1110 | 180 Vickers Dr. | Street drains, refuse collection |
| Water & Wastewater | 302-422-1110 | 180 Vickers Dr. | Water leaks, sewer back up |

Milford's Organizational Chart



Where are We Now?

In order to establish a thoughtful, achievable, and forward-thinking Strategic Plan, it is important to understand where the City of Milford is coming from and what is happening currently.

City of Milford's Existing Plans

The City has commissioned and produced several plans that take into account many of the community's concerns and priorities. Relevant components and recommendations suggested in these past plans, including the "Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan," "Rivertown Rebirth Plan," and the "2018 Comprehensive Plan," are outlined here:

In 2010, the City's *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* was published in order to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure into the City's future planning. This plan demonstrates how to gradually and effectively link residential areas to activity centers. This linkage allows for residents and visitors to easily move about the City without the need for motorized transportation. Some of the key recommendations in this Plan are to:

- Make pedestrian safety and mobility the first priority in activity centers.
- Provide safe access across roads with attention to design of crosswalks.
- Provide pedestrian and bike linkages between neighborhoods, as well as between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and recreational facilities
- Provide bike parking, such as bike racks, at activity centers.

In 2015, the *Milford Rivertown Rebirth Plan 2025*, or "Downtown Master Plan," was published. This Plan is a visual and graphic representation of the goals for Milford's downtown. This Plan divides downtown into "Downtown West," "Downtown Core," and "Downtown East," and makes specific recommendations for each of these areas.

- In Downtown East the Rebirth Plan recommends:
 - Building an amphitheater and /or outdoor festival space.
 - Building a pedestrian bridge
 - Making the Historic Milford Shipyard a tourist destination.
- Downtown Core the Rebirth Plan recommends:
 - Reusing the old bank building for mixed use purposes.
 - Including an Art Town splash pad.
 - Include more parking on the south side away from the river.
- Downtown West the Rebirth Plan recommends:
 - Re use the fire house for mixed use or recreational purposes.
 - Revitalize the gateway into town, beautifying this entry way.
 - Enhancing and beautifying the street spaces with curb extensions, ornamental lighting, and better signage.

The 2018 *Comprehensive Plan* is a deep dive into the process for determining the community's goals and aspirations in terms of the community's growth and development. This Plan makes recommendations to

developing the City's transportation, utilities, land use, economy, and housing. Some of the *Comprehensive Plan's* specific recommendations are to:

- Enable the safe and efficient mobility of residents, using all methods of travel (i.e., biking, walking, driving), via a safe and interconnected transportation system.
- Plan for and provide adequate utilities and services to accommodate the planned growth in Milford.
- Encourage the preservation of areas along all streams, lakes, and ponds by enhancing buffer areas around bodies of water.
- Encourage the inclusion of connected, accessible parks and open spaces in new development.
- Broaden Milford's economic activity beyond Monday to Friday, nine to five, by encouraging businesses, activities, and festivals that will help develop Milford's identity as a great place to work, live, and have fun.
- Encourage a balanced range of housing types and home-ownership opportunities for existing and future residents.

Community Engagement

Community input and involvement is always a priority. In preparation for drafting this plan, the City of Milford utilized a series of engagement techniques with community members and stakeholders.

National Citizen Survey:

The National Citizen Survey is a collaborative effort between the National Research Center Inc. (NRC), the National League of Cities (NLC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The survey utilizes a standardized process that combines high quality research methods with a database of comparable data to help cities and towns understand their residents' opinions, satisfaction, and concerns through a questionnaire survey.

In the summer of 2017, the City of Milford contracted with NCS to conduct a resident survey to capture opinions within three community pillars: Community Characteristics, Governance, and Participation. These pillars were assessed across eight central community facets:

- Safety: Protection from danger or risk (e.g., public safety, personal security and welfare, emergency preparedness)
- Economy: Maintenance of a diverse economy (e.g., vibrant downtown, cost of living)
- Natural Environment- resources and features native to a community (e.g., open spaces, water, air)
- Building Environment: Design, construction, and management of the human-made space in which people live, work, and recreate on a day-to-day basis, including the buildings, streetscapes, parks, etc.
- Mobility: Accessibility of a community be motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation (e.g., ease of travel, traffic flow, walking)
- Recreation and Wellness: Recreation, healthy lifestyles, preventative and curative health care, supportive services (e.g., fitness opportunities, recreation centers)
- Education and Enrichment: Learning, enrichment, and workforce readiness for children, youth, and adults

- Community Engagement: Quality and frequency of social interactions (e.g., civic groups, volunteering)

The survey was sent to a representative sample of 1,435 Milford residents across all four wards. Of these surveys sent, 411 were returned resulting in a response rate of 29%. Based on this representative sample and in comparison to other cities of similar size:

- Residents in Milford enjoy a high quality of life. Three quarters of residents rated their quality of life as “excellent” or “good.”
- Safety is a priority for the community.
 - 96% of respondents indicated that it was “essential” or “very important” for the community to focus on ensuring the police force is well-trained and has the necessary equipment, staff, resources, and facilities.
- Residents emphasized the value and importance of a healthy economy.
 - Overall, Milford’s economic ratings are similar to those in other communities in the United States.
 - However, fewer Milford residents gave high marks to Milford as a place to visit.
 - Less than half of respondents reported positively about the economic health of the community. This included shopping and employment opportunities, cost of living, as well as the vibrancy of downtown.

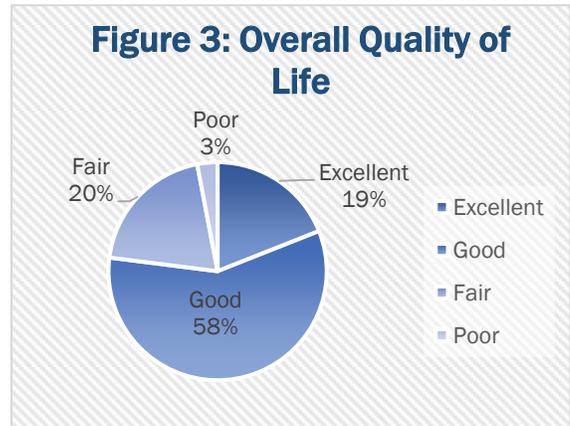
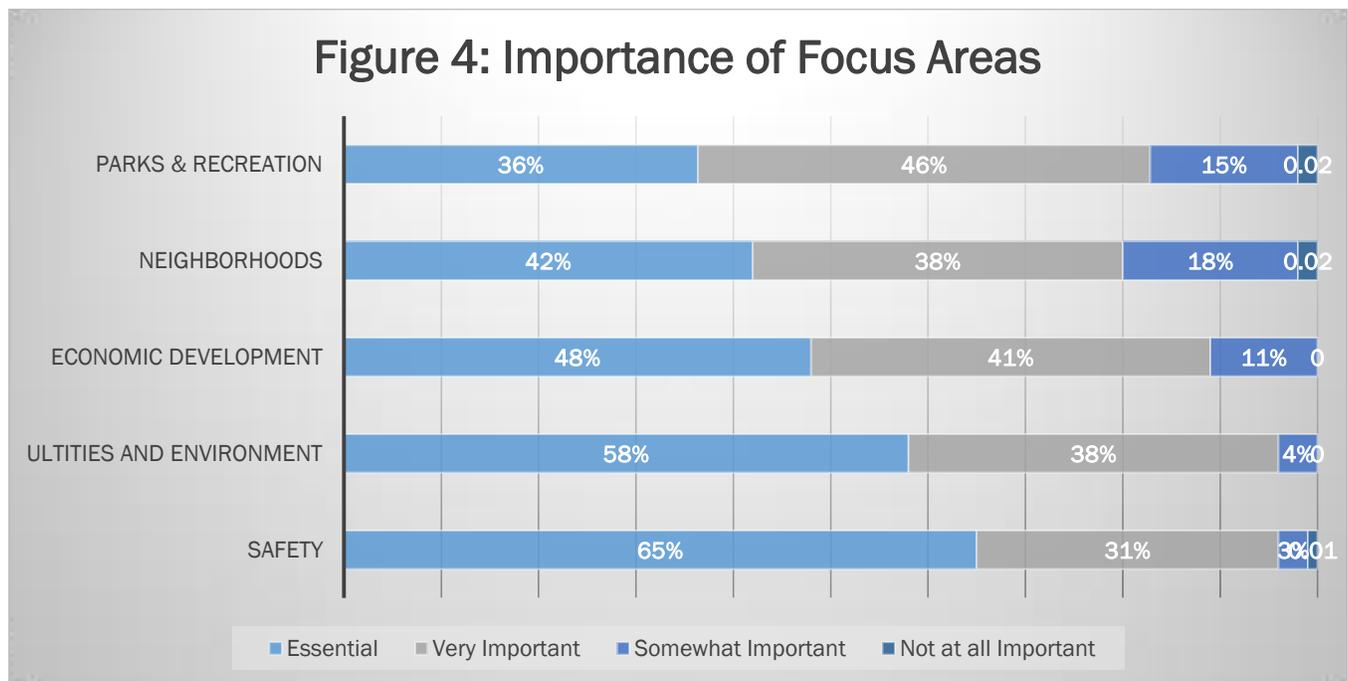


Figure 4: Importance of Focus Areas



- Milford residents rated recreational and enrichment opportunities, as well as K-12 education lower than residents of other jurisdictions.
 - Milford residents rated adult educational opportunities significantly lower than residents in other communities.
- While on par with nationwide rating, code enforcement received the lowest marks from Milford residents.
 - 39% rated code enforcement as “excellent” or “good”

The full survey results are included in three separate documents, the *Community Livability Report* (Appendix A) and the *Dashboard Summary of Findings* (Appendix B). These are also available online.

Community Conversations

A “Community Conversation” is guided discussion conducted with a small, but diverse group of participants, to gather more information on resident and stakeholder views and opinions. A form of qualitative research, these “conversations” consisted of a closed-ended “voting” exercise and a facilitated discussion.

In collaboration with the Institute for Public Administration (IPA), the City of Milford worked to develop more in-depth questions, which targeted the major priorities areas and concerns revealed through the NCS results. The Community Conversations’ questions were segmented into five priority areas, which mirrored the NCS “community facets”:

- Safety: Public safety, personal security and welfare, emergency preparedness
- Economic Health & Vitality: Maintenance of a diverse economy (downtown, cost of living, employment)
- Neighborhoods & Built/Natural Environment: Maintenance and design of open spaces, construction and management of buildings/housing, streetscapes, and parks
- Mobility: Accessibility of the community, ease of travel, traffic flow, walking, and biking
- Recreation & Wellness: Availability of supportive services that promote healthy lifestyles

Upon arrival, participants were asked to use stickers to “vote” on 28 closed-ended questions in five priority areas. A full list of these closed-ended, “voting” questions can be found in Appendix C.

[insert dot question picture]

After “voting,” participants were guided through a facilitated discussion where participants were asked open-ended questions about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes in each of the priority areas outlined above. Questions were asked in an interactive, group setting where participants were free to either answer aloud or were given the opportunity to submit written responses. During this process, responses were captured by a note taker. A full list of these open-ended, discussion-based questions can be found in Appendix C.

IPA and City staff facilitated 19 Community Conversations in November and December of 2017:

- Music School of Delaware: 10/19/2017
- Milford Senior Center: 11/01/2017
- DMI Small Business/Entrepreneurs: 11/06/2017
- City of Milford Employees: 11/06/2017 (2)
- Ward II: 11/06/2017
- Milford School District (Administrators and Key Staff): 11/09/2017
- Ward III: 11/15/2017
- Reformation Lutheran Church: 11/16/2017
- Large Employer Executives: 11/27/2017
- St. John the Apostle Church: 11/28/2017
- Police Department: 11/28/2017 and 11/30/2017
- Chamber of Commerce: 11/29/2017
- Non-Profit Organizations: 11/30/2017
- Ward I: 11/30/2017
- Haitian Community: 12/03/2017
- City Public Works Employees: 12/04/17
- Ward IV: 12/05/2017

The full notes from each [Community Conversation](#) are available on the City's website.

Based on the 18 [Community Conversations](#), residents and stakeholders are most interested in seeing the City work towards:

- Better connectivity between residential areas/neighborhoods and downtown.
 - Residents and stakeholders suggested more sidewalk connectivity, bike paths, and an inner city transportation bus loop.
- Increasing the overall feeling and perception of safety *throughout* the City, not just downtown.
 - Residents and stakeholders suggested: better lighting, less "loitering" through increased Parks & Recreation activities for young adults and adults, and more visible police patrols (biking or walking).
- Making Milford a more attractive place to visit and live.
 - Residents and stakeholders suggested: increasing the variety in the housing market, better and more proactive code enforcement, as well as more recreational opportunities for people of all ages.
 - Residents and stakeholder would like to see a more vibrant downtown, which includes beautifying the gateways & building facades, bringing more businesses to Milford, and more accessible through pedestrian walkways and/or bike paths.
- More engagement and exchange of information about current plans and events, as well as a better way to request information from the City.
 - Residents and stakeholders suggested a notification system for events, the ability to request trainings or practice for floods, storms, etc., and more Q&A or open forums with City officials, outside of City Council meetings.

[Discussions with Council Members, Department Heads, and Staff](#)

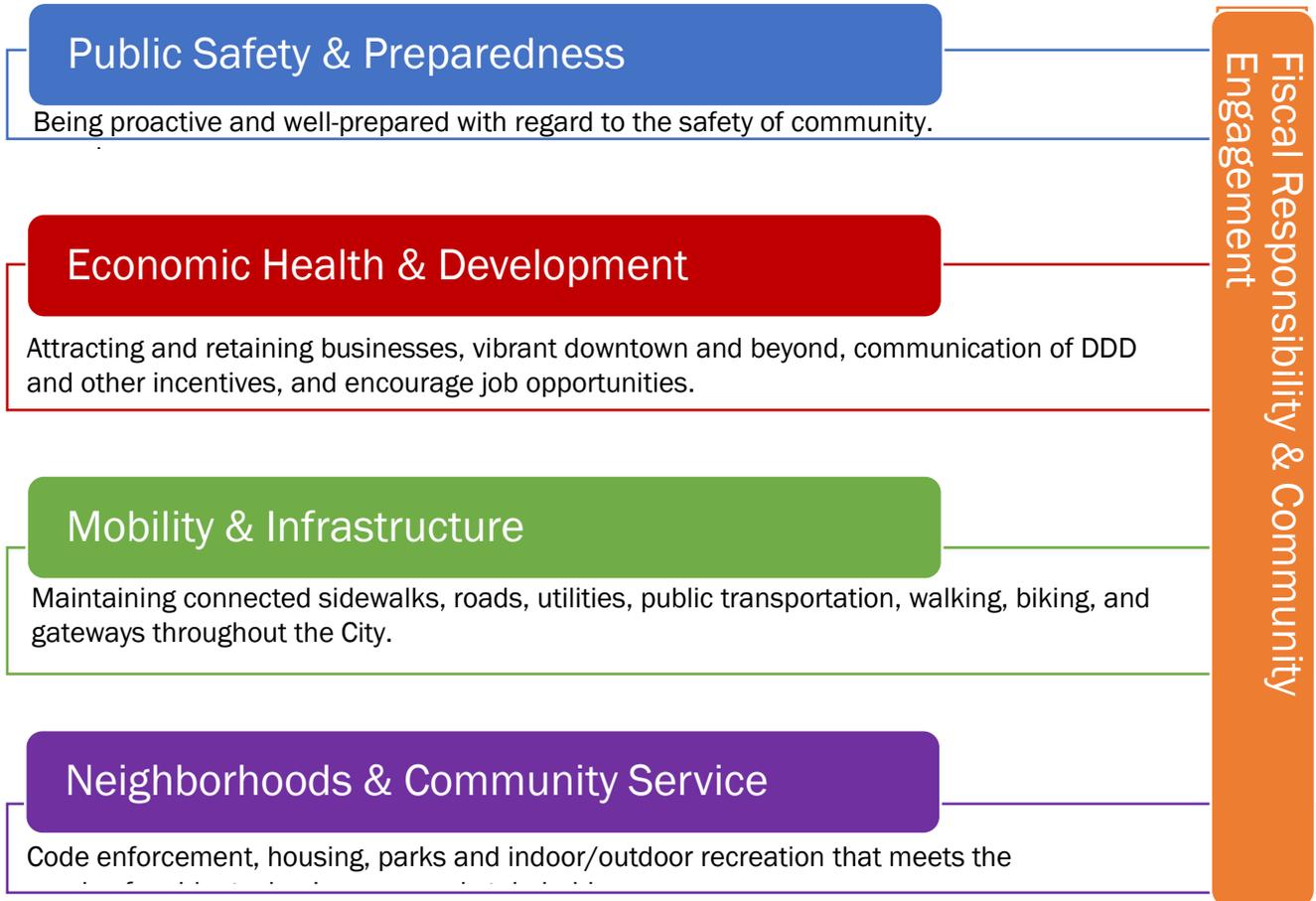
After the [Community Conversations](#), IPA staff met with City Council, City management staff, and Department Heads to present the themes. Based on these results, Department Heads were able to refer to past plans' recommendations, as well as discuss items that they are already working to address.

The feedback from the [National Citizens Survey](#) and [Community Conversations](#), in conjunction with the expertise of Department Heads, Council, and past plan recommendations, staff worked to outline specific

goals and objectives for each of the Strategic Plan priority areas. The culmination of this effort is outlined in the next section of this Plan, entitled “Looking Forward,” as well as in Appendix D.

Looking Forward

In order to successfully move the City towards its vision and effectively address the needs and concerns of our residents and stakeholders, there needed to be specific and measurable goals. City officials have worked to establish five priority areas, all of which are defined below. One of these priority areas, “Fiscal Responsibility & Community Engagement,” is overarching. While it has its own associated goals, it also has become a part of the action items for each of the other four priority areas.



Each priority area is comprised of a framework. The framework for each priority includes goals, objectives, and strategies for their achievement. Additionally, specific action items, success metrics, a timeline, and community partners are developed by the appropriate Department Heads for each strategy. The following pages outline the framework for each priority area, which will be used during implementation. These details can also be found in Appendix D. The Appendix chart will be regularly updated (at least twice annually) and made available online.

Priority Area

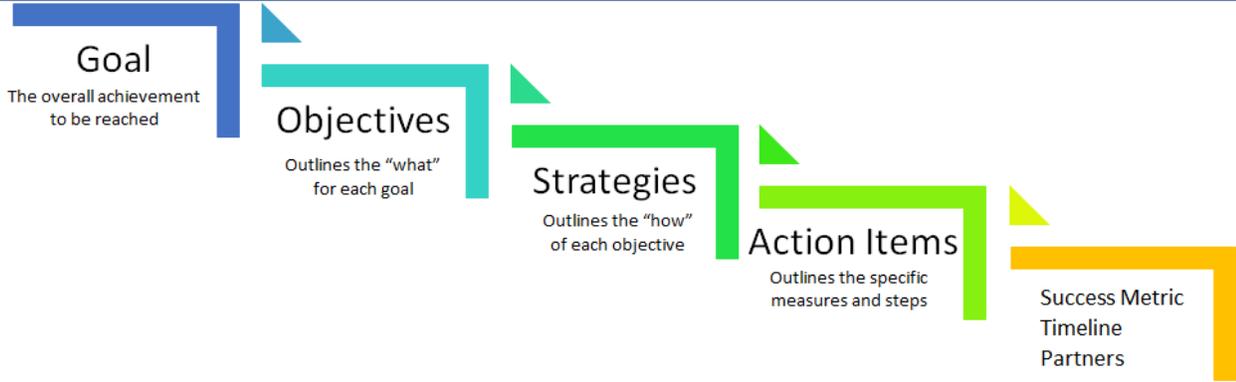


Figure 5: Priority Area Framework

Public Safety & Preparedness

Public safety and emergency preparedness was the top priority of residents in the National Citizen Survey, as well as in the Community Conversations. Safety also plays a role in fostering economic growth and bringing new residents to Milford.

GOAL

Efficiently utilize all police resources (i.e., staff time, personnel, training, and technology)

OBJECTIVE 1- Evaluate and regularly monitor the Milford Police Department's (MPD) workload, including patterns of calls for service, number of reports/crimes committed, and staff time.

- STRATEGY 1- Analyze existing data to understand what emergencies take place, where, and when.
- STRATEGY 2- Identify new tools, technology, and analytics to assist in establishing patterns and make predictions about crime in the City.
- STRATEGY 3- Utilize current and new technology to help collect and analyze data that could aid in establishing shift schedules and better understanding adequate staffing levels.

OBJECTIVE 2- Prepare MPD for future CALEA accreditation by researching standards/expectations.

- STRATEGY 1- Work with the Commission and other accredited Municipal Police Departments to understand the accreditation process.

GOAL

Reduce crime

OBJECTIVE 1- Make a meaningful reduction in violent crime in the City of Milford.

- STRATEGY 1- Identify the most common types of violent crime in the City of Milford.
- STRATEGY 2- Create a plan of action for each of the most common types of crime.

OBJECTIVE 2- Continue to monitor national and state trends to target and reduce illicit drugs in the City of Milford.

- STRATEGY 1- Partner with statewide agencies that have state-specific data on illicit drug use to identify the types of drugs being used and how they are obtained.

Public Safety & Preparedness

GOAL

Establish and maintain strong and beneficial police-community relations

OBJECTIVE 1- Create a reciprocal and trusting relationship between Milford residents and police officers through consistently proactive, responsive, and visible policing throughout the City.

- STRATEGY 1- Increase visibility of police through more walking patrols, biking patrols, and overall presence.
- STRATEGY 2- Conduct a regular community satisfaction survey to ascertain the community's current feelings about the Police Department.
- STRATEGY 3- Fund and hire more police officers.
- STRATEGY 4- Prioritize and fund specialized training for officers.
- STRATEGY 5- Reinststate the Citizens' Police Academy.

Public Safety & Preparedness

GOAL

Utilize effective, proactive emergency preparedness and public safety strategies

OBJECTIVE 1- Work with the Carlisle Fire Company on evaluating the use of new technology for communication.

- STRATEGY 1- Identify new technologies that could help limit the use of the fire siren.

OBJECTIVE 2- Proactively plan for emergency events (i.e., storms, active shooter, etc.) through regular meetings between all City departments and State, regional and local agencies to ensure plans are up-to-date and compatible.

- STRATEGY 1- Update existing and adopt new City of Milford Emergency Plans, which are compatible with statewide initiatives and plans.
- STRATEGY 2- Ensure excellent internal emergency management coordination of executive leadership, personnel, resources, and communications.
- STRATEGY 3- Educate community about current plans and when plans are adopted or updated.

OBJECTIVE 3- On a regular basis offer and make available preventative training for emergency events (i.e., storms, active shooter, etc.).

- STRATEGY 1- Provide training opportunities for the community upon requests.
- STRATEGY 2- Offer community-wide emergency planning events.

OBJECTIVE 4- Replace the current Police Station with a safe and modern facility to serve community needs.

- STRATEGY 1- Establish a Planning Task Force.
- STRATEGY 2- Develop a public engagement strategy.
- STRATEGY 3- Create a Concept Plan and present to voters through a referendum.

Economic Health & Development

The economic health and development of the City of Milford was another top priority for residents in the NCS. It was equally as important during the community conversations.

GOAL

Enable growth of existing businesses

OBJECTIVE 1- Foster economic activity that will grow the local employment by 4% over the next 5 years.

- STRATEGY 1- Partner to provide and advertise job training opportunities so the Milford workforce is ready for the future.

OBJECTIVE 2- Work with the existing business community in order to develop strategies which foster economic growth for the employers, residents, and visitors.

- STRATEGY 1- Conduct needs assessments of current businesses to identify growth opportunities.
- STRATEGY 2- Develop resources for marketing and promoting businesses.

Economic Health & Development

GOAL

Foster the establishment of new businesses

OBJECTIVE 1- Identify opportunities for growth and development of new businesses in Milford by promoting advantages and opportunities in Milford, and leveraging state assistance.

- STRATEGY 1- Create a new industrial park in the City.
- STRATEGY 2- Annually review the process by which new business move to Milford, in order to develop more user-friendly services.
- STRATEGY 3- Continue to provide current incentives for businesses of all sizes.

OBJECTIVE 2- Ensure City ordinances and procedures support new and expanding businesses in order to promote business success in the City of Milford.

- STRATEGY 1- Conduct a business satisfaction survey following completion of interactions with the City.
- STRATEGY 2- Ensure that all business-related organizations and City departments are knowledgeable about development processes for new or expanding businesses through communication and training of City Staff and coordination with partner organizations.

GOAL

Meet the commercial needs of residents, businesses and visitors

OBJECTIVE 1- Develop a more vibrant downtown, in order to bring more visitors to Milford and promote community pride.

- STRATEGY 1- Implement the Rivertown Rebirth Plan.

Mobility & Infrastructure

GOAL

Proactively maintain our streets

OBJECTIVE 1- Maintain City streets so that 80% are always in “Fair,” “Satisfactory” or “Good” condition.

- STRATEGY 1- Fund street rehabilitation so that all streets rated “Poor,” “Very Poor” or “Serious” condition are completed over the next 5 years.
- STRATEGY 2- Regularly update the Pavement Condition Report
- STRATEGY 3- Proactively repair and repave City streets after making necessary utility and sidewalk improvements/repairs.

GOAL

Proactively maintain our utility infrastructure (i.e. electric, water and wastewater systems)

OBJECTIVE 1- Continue to identify and utilize new technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of utility services.

- STRATEGY 1- Use SCADA, AMI, and other Smart technology to monitor our electric, water and wastewater systems.

OBJECTIVE 2- Evaluate current condition and put plans in place to maintain or replace City utility infrastructure.

- STRATEGY 1- Conduct regular preventative maintenance
- STRATEGY 2- Establish an inventory of existing utility infrastructure & grade that system on an “Excellent” to “Serious” condition scale.
- STRATEGY 2- Address inflow and infiltration into the wastewater system.
- STRATEGY 3- Address older portions of the City without cleanouts and/or house traps on service lines.
- STRATEGY 4- Address illegal connections to sanitary sewer system.
- STRATEGY 5- Eliminate lead “goose neck” water services.
- STRATEGY 6- Institute proactive replacement program based on the inventory system.

Mobility & Infrastructure

GOAL

Address future growth by proactively making improvements to infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 1- Meet annually with the City Manager, City Planner, and Council to project and evaluate wastewater demands required for future growth.

- STRATEGY 1- Sewer: Install force main from SE Pump Station to Kent County Pump Station (evaluate other potential areas that would be in addition to this system such as areas East and West of Route 1 from the Mispillion River, South.)

OBJECTIVE 2- Meet annually with the City Manager, City Planner, and Council to project and evaluate electricity demands required for future growth.

- STRATEGY 1- Consider the installation of an additional substation.
- STRATEGY 2- Consider other ways the City can generate electricity and reduce demand through efficient use.

OBJECTIVE 3- Meet annually with City Manager, City Planner, and Council to project and evaluate water demands required for future growth.

- STRATEGY 1- Evaluate storage demands for water in NW business park and other portions of the City.
- STRATEGY 2- Ensure SE wells are producing what is necessary for future growth.

Mobility & Infrastructure

GOAL

Continue to develop a multi-modal, pedestrian-friendly framework throughout the City.

OBJECTIVE 1- Include “Complete Streets” best practices as a part of all projected new street or repaving projects.

- STRATEGY 1- Address deficiencies and maintenance issues in the City’s bicycle network.

OBJECTIVE 2- Implement the sidewalk maintenance/replacement program

- STRATEGY 1- Regularly inspect the sidewalks on a 5-year cycle to notify and work with property owners on necessary repairs and/or replacement.

OBJECTIVE 3- Improve existing transportation options and accessibility by evaluating the number of routes, the frequency of routes, where stops are and where they should be.

- STRATEGY 1- Work with DART to improve transportation accessibility within the City and to provide access to key destinations such as the new Bayhealth Sussex Campus and Nationwide Campus.

GOAL

Improve traffic management throughout the City.

OBJECTIVE 1- Work with agency partners to ensure that the safety of pedestrians and drivers are improved.

- STRATEGY 1-Pursue, in coordination with DeIDOT, the creation of a Transportation Improvement District for areas subject to the updated Southeast Master Plan.
- STRATEGY 2- Perform an Engineering Traffic Study within the City.
- STRATEGY 3- Evaluate truck traffic downtown and feasibility of maneuvers at downtown intersections.
- STRATEGY 4- Improve accessibility to and from the East and West portions of the City.

Neighborhoods & Community Services

GOAL

Preserve and enhance the property values and quality of our neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE 1- Ensure properties are safe, attractive, and well-maintained through improved code compliance.

- STRATEGY 1- More proactive code enforcement throughout the City through additional enforcement and revised standards.
- STRATEGY 2- Proactive information sharing and outreach regarding code requirements to landlords, tenants and homeowners.

OBJECTIVE 2- Enhance the City's identity through well-maintained green spaces and parks.

- STRATEGY 1- Establish a beautification and maintenance program for streetscapes and gateways.
- STRATEGY 2- Maintain and appropriately redevelop the current, 200-acres of open space to provide for diverse outdoor recreational activities.

OBJECTIVE 3- During future neighborhood planning and zoning, ensure the inclusion of sufficient open space in and near neighborhoods.

- STRATEGY 1- Connect neighborhoods through biking/walking paths that do not use state highways.
- STRATEGY 2- Establish a planning priority that all new neighborhoods have a minimum requirement for open space and sidewalks/trails to connect with other parts of Milford.

GOAL

Encourage a balanced range of housing types and home-ownership opportunities for existing and future residents

OBJECTIVE 1- Ensure a variety of housing options, in varying affordability ranges are available throughout the City, in order to encourage residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds to reside in the City.

- STRATEGY 1- Ensure zoning ordinance provides for a variety/flexibility in housing options.
- STRATEGY 2- Identify ways to bring in more affordable housing options.

Neighborhoods & Community Services

GOAL

Promote a healthy community with recreational activities provided by the City and community partners

OBJECTIVE 1- Provide residents with more recreation options by partnering with local private and nonprofit agencies in the area.

- STRATEGY 1- Partner with external organizations to gain access to more outdoor and indoor facilities for adult and child sports leagues.
- STRATEGY 2- Create a Recreational Advisory Board which consists of City officials and community partners.

OBJECTIVE 2- Actively promote current recreational opportunities offered by the City and partners.

- STRATEGY 1- Collaborate & partner with recreational and wellness service providers to identify needs/wants for seniors and persons with disabilities and connect them to existing partners.
- STRATEGY 2- Advertise current children's programming.

OBJECTIVE 3- Create more City-sponsored recreational opportunities for adults.

- STRATEGY 1- Establish an adult sports league.

GOAL

Bring more tourism to Milford.

OBJECTIVE 1- Actively promote the variety of ecotourism opportunities in Milford, in order to bring in more visitors and provide residents with more recreational options.

- STRATEGY 1- Continue to hold festivals and establish new events that highlight Milford.
- STRATEGY 2- Advertise on print, radio, social media, other DE park webpages, etc.

OBJECTIVE 2- Develop more river-based activities, in order to bring in more visitors and provide residents with more recreational options.

- STRATEGY 1- Bring water rentals (kayaks, paddle boards, etc.) to Milford during the summer season.

Fiscal Responsibility & Public Engagement

The goals under this section are also part of overarching goals in each of the priority areas. In other words, it is important that when implementing the strategies in each of the other areas, that City officials keep in mind the following:

GOAL

Operate in an efficient and responsible manner

OBJECTIVE 1- Keep community members informed and engaged in the City's activities, programs, and services.

- STRATEGY 1- Translate City communications for the public into Spanish and Haitian Creole.
- STRATEGY 2- In collaboration with the Milford School District, consider jointly hiring a multilingual PIO/Communication Specialist.
- STRATEGY 3- Establish an internal Communications Team to coordinate internal and external communications about the City of Milford.

OBJECTIVE 2- Manage resources wisely and sustainably by maintaining appropriate fund balances and reserves.

- STRATEGY 1- Achieve a structurally balanced budget through diverse revenue sources, smart financial management, comprehensive forecasting, and results-oriented and efficient services.
- STRATEGY 2- Implement and maintain a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.
- STRATEGY 3- Achieve and maintain fiscally-sound balances and reserves for all of the City's various funds.
- STRATEGY 4- Ensure Solid Waste, Water and Wastewater utilities are properly funded and that rates are fairly and appropriately set by conducting cost of service studies.
- STRATEGY 5- Identify ways to deal with the high demand for electricity when the cost is at its highest peak, both in the short-term and long-term.

Fiscal Responsibility & Public Engagement

GOAL

Review and update the Strategic Plan

OBJECTIVE 1- Ensure the Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated every 3-5 years to identify accomplishments and establish new priorities, goals, and objectives.

- STRATEGY 1- Complete another resident survey in 2019 and 2021.
- STRATEGY 2- Meet with Department Heads quarterly to review status on goals and objectives previously established. Report semiannually to the City Council and the public.
- STRATEGY 3- Host Community Conversations and aim for even more community participation than previously.

Community Partners list

Assemblée Chrétienne de la Famille de Delaware, Inc

Baltimore Aircoil Company

Bayhealth

Carlisle Fire Company

Chamber of Commerce for Greater Milford

Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. (DBF)

Delaware Area Regional Transit (DART)

Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)

Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA)

Delaware Hospice Inc.

Delaware Technical Community College

Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI)

Greater Milford Boys & Girls Club

Kent-Sussex Industries

Milford Housing Development Corporation

Milford School District

Milford Senior Center

Music School of Delaware: Milford Branch

Perdue

Reformation Lutheran Church

St. John the Apostle Church

Community Conversations Participants

This is a list of Community Conversations participants who agreed to be listed in this Plan.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Ward</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Ward</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Ward</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Pat Abel | 2 | Mary Galligan | | Leona Raffio | 4 |
| Jennifer Anderson | | Sharon Hepford | 1 | Val Randolph | 1 |
| Jennifer Antonik | | Walt Hepford | 1 | Alice Rausch | |
| Matt Babbitt | | David Herron | 4 | Lang Redden | 2 |
| Brian Baer | 3 | Alicia Hollis | | Marcia Reed | 2 |
| Barbara Studer Baer | 3 | Trevor Horsey | | Peggy Reilly | 1 |
| Ken Behrans | 3 | Keith Johnson | | Bryan Rice | |
| Ruth Behrans | | Teresa Johnson | 4 | Pastor Andrew Scott | |
| Paul Bowman | | Anne Kling | 1 | Ed Simon | 1 |
| Jan Broulik | 2 | Judy Lynch | 1 | Robin Smith | |
| Jen Byerly | 2 | Ray Lynch | 1 | Eugenia Sparks | |
| Rich Byerly | | Keith Markowitz | | Glen Stevenson | |
| Rick Carmean | | Joan Marks | | Judy Struck | 2 |
| Rita Cartright | 4 | Scott Marks | | Dean Tatman | 2 |
| Cheryl Clendaniel | 1 & 4 | Stephanie McDonough | 2 | Stephanie Tatman | |
| Sara Croce | | Dot McKain | | Don Vaughn | |
| Dan Dond | 4 | Lucy Mehl | | Dean Walston | |
| Loretta Edmondson | 2 | Valerie Miller | | Paul W. Western | |
| Mitch Edmondson | 2 | Joanne M. Milton | | Trish D. Western | |
| Steve Ellingsworth | | Ben Muldrow | 2 | Mark Whitfield | |
| Ron Evans | | Christie Murphy | | Renate Wiley | 2 |
| Paige Evers | | Charles Nordberg | | Joe Wiley | 2 |
| Eric Evers | | Leonard Ott | | Eric Williams | 2 |
| Tod Van Eyken | | Milly Pedersen | 1 | R. Darrell P. Wilson | 4 |
| Bruce Fenerstein | | Patti Persia | 2 | Frank Wisniewski | 1 |
| Lisa Fitzgerald | 2 | Joey Phillips | 2 | Craig Zychal | 2 |
| Franklin Fountain | 4 | David Pickneil | 2 | Nadia Zychal | 2 |
| Suzannah Frederick | 2 | Rob Pierce | | | |
| Patrica G | | Sara Pletcher | 2 | | |

Glossary

Action Item- an event, task, or activity, which outlines a specific step in the process of achieving a goal.

Activity Center- any place where people gather, such as shopping centers, downtown, schools, recreations centers, the Riverwalk, Library, etc.

Art Town- refers to the variety of galleries, shops, and performance spaces in the downtown area.

Buffer Areas- a zone that lies between two or more areas. In the case of land use, these are typically used to prevent erosion or overpopulation.

Community Conversation- discussion-based gatherings of residents and stakeholders, which were held in order to gather more information about community needs, opinions, and concerns.

Downtown (Milford's)- divided into "Downtown West," Downtown Core," and "Downtown East," Milford's downtown consists of the area between Silver Lake and Goat Island. This area consists of all streets and businesses between Causey Avenue/ Southeast Front Street and Northeast Front Street, with an opportunity for development on N. Walnut Street¹.

Downtown Core- encompasses from Warren's Furniture Property to the Historic Milford Shipyard.

Downtown East- encompasses from Bicentennial Park to Goat Island

Downtown West- encompasses from Silver Lake to the Gateway Arch.

Gateway- refers to the main thorough-fairs into and out of the City. Specially on either end of Northeast Front Street and Route 113.

Goal- an overall object, aim or desire to be achieved or reached.

Link(age)- an infrastructure facility, such as a paved shoulder, sidewalk, or recreational path, that provides a clearly defined way for a bicyclist or pedestrian to get from one destination not the next, without undue conflict with motorists².

Mixed Use- refers to utilizing a single space for multiple purposes, such as second floor apartments with first floor retail or restaurant space.

National Citizens' Survey- a community's data-based examination of residents' needs and perspectives.

Objective- outlines the "what" for each goal; specifying more information about the process for achieving the goal.

Priority Areas- topics that are of utmost importance to City officials, residents, and other stakeholders.

Strategy- outlines the "how" of each objective; a plan of action or policy designed to achieve the overall aim.

Success metric- the mechanism by which the City will measure whether or not a goal is being achieved.

¹ As illustrated in the *Milford Rivertown Rebirth 2025 Plan*

² *Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan* definition

Appendix A

NCS Community Livability Report

Appendix B

NCS Dashboard Summary of Findings

Appendix C

Community Conversations Questions

Safety: Public safety, personal security and welfare, emergency preparedness

Flip Chart Questions:

- How important a priority should emergency preparedness planning be over the next 5 years? (emergency preparedness planning includes preparing for major storm events, sea-level rise, flooding, electric outages, as well as educating the public about the City's plans for these events)
 - 1- Essential
 - 2- Very Important
 - 3- Somewhat Important
 - 4- Not Important at all
- Do you believe the City of Milford is prepared for emergencies related to future weather events? [y/n/ not sure]
- Would you support a tax or fee increase for additional police officers? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax or fee increase for additional police officer training, equipment or other law enforcement resources? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase to replace the old police station so it meets current needs and safety standards? [y/n]

Open ended Questions:

- How should the City of Milford focus on the overall feeling of your neighborhood and Milford's downtown in the coming two years?
- How can greater "emergency preparedness" be achieved?
- Do you have any other thoughts related to safety?

Economic Health & Vitality: maintenance of a diverse economy (downtown, cost of living, employment)

Flip Chart Questions:

- Are you concerned about the future of employment opportunities for yourself within the City of Milford? [y/n]
- Are you concerned about the future of employment opportunities for others within the City of Milford? [y/n]
- What types of employment opportunities do you feel are missing from Milford?
 - Administrative
 - Retail

- Technology
- Trade/industrial
- Professional
- Nothing is missing
- Other
- Would you support a tax or fee increase to better promote business opportunities that will create jobs in Milford? [y/n]
- Currently, the City offers economic development incentives in the form of fee waivers and short-term tax exemptions under certain circumstances to promote job growth and capital investment in the community. Would you support a tax increase to generate more resources be used for Economic Development? [y/n]

Open ended Questions:

- Keeping in mind that the City of Milford has limited control over certain aspects of the local and Delaware economy, we want to know your thoughts on the following questions. If your ideas or concerns are out of our control, we may share concerns with state and/or local representatives. What aspects of economic health are most important to you?
 - (potential prompting options: more businesses downtown, more jobs in the downtown development district, better housing market, more business startups)
- What, if any, job training opportunities are you interested in or that someone you know would be interested in?
- What, if any, goods/services can you not find in Milford, that you would like to be able to buy here?
- In your opinion, what would make Milford a more attractive place to visit?
- In your opinion, what would make Milford a more attractive place to live?
- Do you have any other thoughts related to economic health/vitality?

Neighborhoods & Built/Natural Environment: maintenance and design of open spaces, construction and management of buildings/housing, streetscapes, and parks

Flip Chart Questions:

- Do you see code enforcement concerns in your neighborhood? [y/n]
- Do you feel comfortable reporting Code Enforcement concerns? [y/n]
- What range for cost of housing do you believe is the most affordable for Milford residents?
 - (RENTAL: less than \$500, \$500-\$800, \$800-\$1000, \$1000-\$1300, \$1300+)

- (BUYING: less than \$100,000, \$100,000-\$150,000, \$150,000-\$200,000, \$200,000-\$250,000, \$250,000-300,000, \$300,000-350,000, \$350,000-\$400,000, \$400,000+)
- Is there enough variety in the types of housing available (i.e.- rental & owned; single family, townhome, apartment, etc.)? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase to create or enhance neighborhood parks? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase for maintenance or expansion of open spaces? [y/n]

Open ended Questions:

- What do you think are the most pressing “code enforcement” issues to be addressed by the City of Milford?
- Do you feel there are barriers or challenges to reporting code violations?
- The City of Milford has a variety of housing options available. Do you have suggestions for additions or changes in what is available to rent or own?
- Do you have concerns regarding the quality of any utilities or other services provided by the City of Milford? If so, please describe?
- Do you have any other thoughts related to neighborhoods?

Mobility: Accessibility of the community, ease of travel, traffic flow, walking, and biking

Flip Chart Questions:

- The City of Milford has met with DART to discuss improving local bus services. This could include connecting employment and retail centers with neighborhoods and other key destinations. Would you use public transportation (i.e.- bus routes) if it was available? [y/n]
- If improvements to the bikeability and walkability within the City were made, would you be more likely to bike and/or walk? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase for upkeep of existing City streets and sidewalks? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase to add City sidewalks or pathways to connect neighborhoods? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase to introduce a trolley on weekends? [y/n]

Open ended Questions:

- In your opinion, how could the City of Milford make it easier to move around the City?
 - FOLLOW-UP: Is there anything in particular that the City of Milford would need to address in order to accomplish this?
- Do you have any other thoughts do you have regarding the mobility?

- Are there any areas of the City that could benefit from more public transportation options?

Recreation & Wellness: availability of supportive services that promote healthy lifestyles

Flip Chart Questions:

- Do you feel that the City of Milford's Parks & Recreation Department offers enough recreational opportunities for children? [y/n]
- Do you feel that the City of Milford's Parks & Recreation Department offers enough recreational opportunities for adults? [y/n]
- In addition to recreational opportunities provided by the City, do you feel other there are sufficient other private or non-profit recreational opportunities available in the community? [y/n]
- Are recreational opportunities easily available / convenient to you? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase for adult recreation? [y/n]
- Would you support a tax increase for a community recreation center space? [y/n]

Open ended Questions:

- What, if any, types of recreational opportunities for children would you like to see more of?
- The City of Milford offered a variety of adult sports league programs in the past; but they were discontinued due to a variety of concerns. What, if any, types of recreational opportunities for adults would you like to see offered in the future?
- Do you have any other thoughts regarding the recreation/wellness opportunities in Milford?

Participation & Community Engagement:

Wrap-up Discussion Question:

- The City wants this Strategic Plan and its outcomes to support the needs and priorities of entire community; what suggestions do you have for the City to connect with all segments of community now and in the future?

Appendix D

Priority Areas Charts