



C. Quality Community Objectives

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) worked with the planning team to craft the Community Assessment for the City of Milton based on the City’s initial vision that: *“Milton is a distinctive community embracing small-town life and heritage while preserving and enhancing our rural character.”* Local residents expect the rural character and low density character of the community to remain.

The State’s Quality Growth Objectives were compared to with the City’s goals to develop the following statements. Generally, the objectives of the City and the State are relatively close although the City does not have the urban areas to satisfy all of the State’s objectives. Milton is a singular and unique community that is part of the larger Atlanta regional economy rather than a complete separate economy.

1. Assessment of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

Category	Quality Growth Objective	City of Milton Planning Context
Development Patterns	<p><u>Traditional Neighborhoods:</u> Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.</p>	<p>New development in the Crabapple and Highway 9 areas include higher densities and connected streets found in traditional neighborhoods. Context sensitive transportation facilities are needed to improve safe pedestrian and bicycle access in both areas. Although the density and scale of recent development in the Crabapple Crossroads Community Overlay Area provide the more traditional neighborhoods advocated by the quality growth objectives, nearby residents are concerned that the density is more than that desired and is changing the character from a rural village to a larger community activity center form. Traffic volumes and the scale of development in the Highway 9 Overlay Area also need to be addressed.</p>
	<p><u>Infill Development:</u> Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.</p>	<p>The Crabapple Crossroads Community Plan and the Crabapple Crossroads Overlay Zoning District define an area where infill development is occurring rapidly and where lack of an established downtown area for the City requires planning to define the desired urban form for Crabapple (and for the State Route 9 Area). The existing sewers and access in these areas provide the opportunity to increase carefully sited density in these activity centers and the use of TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) to exchange development density in environmentally sensitive areas for increased infill density in these activity centers</p>



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<p>Development Patterns</p>	<p>Sense of Place: Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.</p>	<p>There is no pre-existing “downtown” area within the City and Milton should create a venue to become its cultural and governmental focus. Crabapple Crossroads has evolved from a rural hamlet to a neighborhood center and the older rural character is being replaced by new suburban mixed use development. Birmingham Highway is a narrow two-lane rural highway that becomes suburban as it enters the activity center at the new Milton High School. Access improvements are likely to destroy the last vestiges of the old rural charm of the community. Construction and traffic congestion have changed perceptions for developers, but the existing community wants to hold on to the historic idea of the Crossroads. The Visioning element of the Community Agenda needs to establish what the new role for the community should be. The Community Plan prepared in 2005 requires local streets and a “community center green space” to establish a focus point for pedestrians and reduce local auto travel. This would also create a better “sense of place” for the community to use as a basis for the design of replacement structures in an around the crossroads.</p> <p>As the Highway 9 Overlay Area transitions from rural highway strip commercial and adjacent residential subdivision development to a gateway corridor, efforts are required to “brand” the corridor and the City of Milton as unique. The equestrian theme or some other alternative may be carried forward in design standards, consistent greenspace standards, including trees plantings, sidewalks, sign standards, etc. The creation of the Overlay Zoning category by Fulton County, and the local attention to design quality provided by the creation of the City have improved advocacy for local design elements and consistent enforcement along the Highway 9 corridor as it changes from rural to urban.</p> <p>Emphasis should be placed on making the south end of the Highway 9 Corridor around the Webb Road and Windward Parkway intersections more pedestrian friendly. Opening up close parallel secondary streets for mixed commercial/office and higher density residential development would add to the capacity for the area to develop a downtown core.</p>



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<p>Development Patterns</p>	<p>Transportation Alternatives: Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.</p>	<p>Mass transit and safe bicycle and pedestrian paths should be heavily promoted to create access to Highway 9 and the Crabapple/Arnold Mill areas. The bicycle and pedestrian trail plan should be implemented to encourage alternative travel modes throughout the rest of the City.</p>
	<p>Regional Identity: Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.</p>	<p>As above, Milton should “brand” the unique qualities that make up the City and the community. The rolling hills, small equestrian farms, large estates, and scenic pastoral views are desired attributes that brought many of the current residents to the City. Since too much infill development could eliminate many of these resources, the Plan should balance new development with protection of the existing environment including the low-density residential and rural agricultural/equestrian neighborhoods.</p>





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<p>Social and Economic Development</p>	<p>Growth Preparedness: Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.</p>	<p>The Comprehensive Plan should consider how the Crabapple Crossroads Community Area works in parallel with the Crabapple Silos Community around State Route 140 and State Route 372 intersection, and the Arnold Mill Road (State Route 140) corridor into Cherokee County.</p> <p>The transition from Fulton County to an independent city provides a new start point for determining economic and environmental sustainability. An economic model will be prepared to provide cost and benefit estimates for resources needed by the public realm. The model is intended to evaluate how the City will cope with financing public services and capital improvements at the levels desired by the existing community while maintaining the unique quality of life values that are important to the citizens as a basis for their choice to live in the City of Milton.</p>
	<p>Appropriate Businesses: The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.</p>	<p>Milton is home to many executives and professionals that commute to offices on Georgia 400 in Alpharetta, Roswell or Sandy Springs or in downtown Atlanta or the I-285 Perimeter Expressway. There is strong demand for local services and support industries such as restaurants, personal services and retail shops including boutiques. Most of these services can be accommodated in the activity centers along Highway 9 and at Crabapple Crossroads and within the 27.1 acres of the geographically bound and legally defined area of Birmingham Crossroads.</p> <p>There are very few resources and little room for new blue-collar industries to locate in Milton except for equestrian services, home services, or ancillary personal services. The Deerfield mixed use development does provide the possibility to expand white collar services within or adjacent to the Deerfield Mixed Use Development Center close to the Georgia 400 interchange at Windward Parkway.</p>



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<p>Social and Economic Development</p>	<p><u>Educational Opportunities:</u> Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.</p>	<p>Georgia State University and several other institutions provide facilities for higher education and technical training along the Georgia 400 corridor. Although these facilities for higher education are within the adjacent jurisdiction of Alpharetta, they are within 10 miles of all portions of the City of Milton and very accessible for the City’s residents.</p> <p>The new Milton High School campus is in the Crabapple Crossroads Community Area off Birmingham Highway. Northwestern Middle School and Crabapple Crossroads Elementary School are located on adjacent campuses.</p> <p>A site for a new Fulton County public high school (and an adjacent middle school) is located in northern Milton on the west side of Freemanville Road just south of the White Columns Country Club. However, the site is controversial after a history of community opposition to a private school at the same site. The implications regarding the site remain to be discussed including the recent slow-down in the economy and the effects of the strong commitment of the City to maintain low density development. .</p>
	<p><u>Employment Options:</u> A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.</p>	<p>The majority of the City’s workers appear to commute out of the City every day. These commuting trips by local residents are multiplied by commuters from Cherokee County traveling to jobs on the Georgia 400 corridor and western Forsyth County residents commuting to jobs in Roswell or Cobb County. More local employment options would be needed to reduce regional travel in Milton and in the adjacent counties.</p> <p>Access to facilities and services is required to assist local and visiting handicapped and challenged individuals.</p>



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<p>Social and Economic Development</p>	<p><u>Regional Cooperation:</u> Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.</p>	<p>The City should cooperate with Roswell and Alpharetta and with Cherokee County and Forsyth County to the north on issues that have joint impacts. These include issues such as land use decisions along the city limits (or county boundaries) of each jurisdiction, traffic and travel demand on local arterials and collectors, and water distribution and wastewater collection and effluent disposal decisions.</p> <p>Economic development and marketing the location advantages of the Georgia 400 corridor affect all of the jurisdictions along the corridor and may have impacts on local employment, traffic and travel demand on local arterials and collectors, and local land use decisions within each jurisdiction.</p> <p>Water, wastewater, and solid waste are additional regional issues that affect all of the local jurisdictions requiring regional cooperation in managing services and capital development.</p>
	<p><u>Regional Solutions:</u> Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer. Commuter traffic and congestion, water, wastewater, and solid waste are regional issues that affect Milton and all of the adjacent jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Milton should cooperate with Roswell, Alpharetta, Johns Creek, and Forsyth County on wastewater decisions along Big Creek, and with Cherokee County, Roswell, and Mountain Park on decisions affecting water quality in the Little River basin. Solid waste services may also require a regional approach to resolve long term disposal issues.</p> <p>The Georgia 400 corridor is important to Dawson and Forsyth Counties and to Milton, Alpharetta, Roswell, Johns Creek Sandy Springs, and Atlanta. Although congestion may be a local land use problems, commuter traffic and congestion affect all of the jurisdictions along the corridor.</p>



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<p>Social and Economic Development</p>	<p><u>Housing Opportunities:</u> Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community. Work force housing opportunities may need to be considered to provide shelter for the service professionals (teachers, police, fire, security, public works, etc. and their families) that serve in the City.</p>	<p>The agricultural and equestrian heritage of the Milton community serves as a basic character trait for the community’s culture and economic vitality. New development and infill should be compatible with existing housing and integrated together in forms that sustain the community’s ability to function together as a unit rather than in component parts.</p> <p>Housing along the Georgia 400 Corridor should be coordinated as part of a regional approach to ensure the convenient and economic location of workers to meet a complete range of needs by employers and local service industries.</p>





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Resource Conservation	<p>Heritage Preservation: The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.</p>	<p>The rural, agricultural and equestrian heritage of the Milton community serves as a basic character trait for the community's culture and economic vitality. New development and infill should be compatible and complementary with the existing development and integrated to provide the opportunity for the community to function as a complete City rather than in component parts.</p>
	<p>Open Space Preservation: New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.</p>	<p>Greenbelts and wildlife corridors should be based on the stream system along the Little River and the Copper Sandy and Chicken Creek tributaries that flow from east to west across Milton. Creative tax incentives may be used to preserve and protect existing farmlands and the possibility of transfer of development rights provide a means to transfer undesired development in environmentally sensitive locations to desired development in areas that can better accommodate the growth and its impacts.</p>
	<p>Environmental Protection: Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.</p>	<p>Air quality is a regional issue, but each local jurisdiction must make crucial land use and transportation decisions that reduce potential congestion and auto emissions from cars that are sitting in traffic. Cities should demand development practices that protect against dust and air emissions, storm water runoff, and removal of vegetative cover outside the area of construction. When possible, sloped terrain should be preserved to maintain character and natural drainage patterns.</p> <p>Low-lying flood prone areas along Providence and other road corridors should be protected from development except where they can be re-directed to reduce property damage and liability. The 100-year floodplain protects the health, safety and welfare of the community by efficiently managing storm water flows and should be included on the Community Agenda map</p> <p>Milton is working to prioritize realistic, attainable initiatives for the City and measurable performance standards that identify benefits to the local economy, public health and safety to assist the Comprehensive Plan in the implementation of sound environmental policies.</p>