



Milford City Hall Council Chambers 201 South Walnut Street Milford DE 19963

## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA Monday, April 17, 2023

Per the Limited Public Health Emergency Declaration issued by Governor John Carney on March 1, 2022, and the virtual meeting provisions provided in Senate Bill 94, Milford City Council Meetings and Workshops will be held in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Attendees are welcome to participate virtually as well. Public Comments are encouraged on the agenda items designated with a ®. Virtual attendees may alert the City Clerk that they wish to speak by submitting their name, address, and agenda item via the Zoom Q&A function or by using the Raise Your Hand function during the meeting. Those attending in person may comment when the floor is opened for that purpose.

All written public comments received prior to the meeting will be read into the record.

*This meeting is available for viewing by the public by accessing the following link:*

<https://zoom.us/j/95859380584>

*or*

<http://www.cityofmilford.com/553/Watch-Public-Meetings>

*Members of the public may also dial in by phone using the following number:*

*Call 301 715 8592 Webinar ID: 958 5938 0584*

### **6:00 PM**

#### **15-Minute Public Comment Period\***

Virtual attendees must register prior to start time of meeting by calling 302-422-1111 Extension 1300 or 1303, or by sending an email to [cityclerk@milford-de.gov](mailto:cityclerk@milford-de.gov) and providing your name, address, phone number, and the specific agenda item you wish to comment on. Persons in attendance must sign up prior to the start of the meeting.

### **WORKSHOP**

#### **Strategic Plan Update**

**ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE CITY CLERK IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK PRIOR TO MEETING. NO PAPER DOCUMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED, DISTRIBUTED, OR PRESENTED AT MEETING ONCE PACKET HAS BEEN POSTED ON THE CITY OF MILFORD WEBSITE. ANY MATERIALS UTILIZED DURING THE MEETING SHALL BE FROM THE COUNCIL PACKET AND REFERENCED BY PRESENTER USING AUDIO AND VISUAL MEANS TO ENSURE VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE.**

032923

041723 ID Corrected

City of Milford  
**Strategic Plan Workshop**

*4/17/23*

# Strategic Planning Process

- Current Strategic Plan (2018)
- **Four Community Conversations:**
  - 11/2022: Neighborhood & Community Services
  - 12/2022: Economic Development
  - 1/2023: Public Safety
  - 2/2023: Infrastructure
- **Community Workshop**
  - 2/2023



# Neighborhoods & Community Services

- **Growth** – Growth is a major concern of all residents and is a contributing factor to an emerging identity challenge.
  - Residents want to see controlled growth and limited sprawl.
  - However, they also want more stores and amenities
- **Housing** – Housing availability is directly tied to growth
  - There should be a variety of new housing being provided
  - The price of new and existing housing stock are major concerns
  - There is major skepticism about the role developers play in determining the type of new housing built

# Neighborhoods & Community Services

- **Aesthetics / Beautification** – Residents are proud of Milford and think it is a beautiful place.
  - More **code enforcement** to encourage the upkeep of homes.
  - **Less litter**
  - Promote the attractive aspects of Milford to attract visitors and new residents.

# Neighborhoods & Community Services

- **Activities / Amenities** – Milford residents want to see more recreation opportunities for people of all ages and families, **esp. for youth**.
  - More **community-wide events** like the Farmer’s market, concert series, art loops, and festivals in evenings and on weekends.
  - Need **public bathrooms** and **more parking** downtown
  - Some participants were willing to **support youth activities** through scholarships, sponsorship, and volunteerism if it was organized through the City.

# Economic Health & Development

- Residents want a **better mix of businesses** in Milford
- Challenges for downtown include homelessness, lack of connectivity to the larger region, the state agency presence, lack of parking, and slow business permitting processes
- City should **embrace healthcare, industry, and culture** to increase economic development
- Current lack of jobs is seen as a deterrent to young people

# Public Safety & Preparedness

- The major safety issues mentioned by residents were:
  - high rates of youth crime
  - lack of community policing
  - homelessness
  - and code enforcement
- Residents want to see more activities and opportunities for youth

# Public Safety & Preparedness

- **Stronger relationships** between residents and the police
  - More **police presence**, foot patrols downtown and in neighborhoods, attendance at public events, and community outreach through initiatives like the Police Athletic League.
- Residents would like more / **better lighting** downtown and in neighborhoods.
- **Address homelessness.** Suggestions include a police behavioral health unit, panhandling code enforcement, and temporary housing for housing insecure individuals (e.g., the pallet structures in Georgetown)

# Infrastructure: Transportation

- Most residents are comfortable driving and walking around Milford
- There is a lot of **interest in cycling**. However, residents do not feel safe using streets and roads without separate bike facilities.
- **Concerns:** Large truck traffic and congested intersections
- More **transportation options** that connect Milford with the larger community / **regional destinations**, such as DE Turf and the Hospital
- Residents are skeptical that streets in developments are being properly graded and repaved when construction concludes

# Other Infrastructure

- Residents rate Milford's infrastructure as good and reliable, esp. snow removal
- Some **concerns** included: expanded gas service, lack of ISP competition, and the effectiveness of solid-waste removal (i.e. Is recycling actually being recycled?)
- Residents are also acutely aware that increased development might **strain City resources** when it comes to infrastructure
- Reassurance that **essential infrastructure is properly secured** from vandalism and domestic terrorism

# Community Engagement / Local Gov't

Most residents recognize the positive attributes of the City and its government. However, there are areas they feel could be improved:

- **Communications**
  - Greater variety of mediums, more frequent, more timely
  - Share success stories
  - Make in-person resources available at centralized location(s)
- **Civic Participation/Volunteerism**
  - No shortage of opportunity, only participants
  - Try greater promotion of volunteer opportunities
- **Identity** – Milford is at an identity crossroads; a difference of opinion about the vision of Milford's future has emerged between newer residents and legacy residents

# Strategic Plan Overview

# Executive Summary Highlights

- Milford is a well-managed city with solid fiscal and operational policies and implementation.
- Milford is at a critical identity crossroads. It is a destination because of its location near the resorts, affordable costs and small-town feel. It is not a destination recognized as a place to live, work and play.
- Residents of Milford want to participate in their community at all levels from arts, entertainment, parks and recreation to a deeper engagement with each other and how the city grows.
- The downtown and surrounding core city is a vital part of the character of Milford

# Executive Summary (cont.)

## Three Plan Changes with updates to current plan

- Separates Community Engagement from Fiscal Responsibility creating six priority areas
- Focuses more attention on implementation of the Downtown River plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Adds an easy-to-use matrix as a pathway to progress for community use

# Key Five Year Accomplishments

## General

- Conducted a retreat to build and strengthen cohesiveness and communication among council members and staff.
- Developed belief statements for each priority area

## Public Safety and Preparedness

- Construction of a police station with an estimated completion of October 2023
- The hiring of a police chief and several officers. Efforts continue to fully staff the department.
- Accepted plan to adjust and add fire siren locations.
- Adoption of an emergency management plan and designation of an emergency management director

# Key Five Year Accomplishments

## Economic Health and Development

- Purchase of property for a new industrial park
- Hired an economic development and community engagement administrator.
- Created a checklist for how to start and conduct a business in Milford

## Mobility and Infrastructure

- Adopted the Bicycle Master Plan
- Updated and continually monitor sidewalk status

# Key Five Year Accomplishments

## Neighborhoods and community services

- Updated the city building code.
- Developed a checklist for landlords and homeowners on property upkeep.
- Construction of pickleball courts, playground and restrooms for Memorial Park with anticipated completion Fall of 2023.
- Hired a Parks and Recreation program coordinator.
- Farmer's Market will return in 2023.
- Conducted the second National Citizen Survey

## Fiscal responsibility

- Completed a utility rate study and updated the 5-year rate plan.
- Developed a cash reserve policy

# New Priority - Community Engagement

*We believe....*

- We believe in all residents volunteering for the betterment of the City
- We believe City government is open, transparent, and engaging
- We believe constant citizen contact will lead to better governance
- We believe community events are vital to the wellbeing of the City

## Community Engagement Goal - Build an open, transparent, and engaged dialogue between the City government and the Milford community

### Objective 1

- Build and maintain regular and timely communications with community members about the City's activities, programs, and services.

### *Strategies*

- Continue to broaden the City's communication channels to include a wider range of print, email, social media, radio/tv, and in person opportunities.
- Increase frequency of opportunities to listen and engage community members.
- Consider surveying residents to assess the best way to communicate with them.
- Give particular focus to promoting recreational opportunities, emergency preparedness, community events, development, and City achievements.

## Community Engagement Goal: Build an open, transparent, and engaged dialogue between the City government and the Milford community

### Objective 2

- Promote community participation in all aspects of City life.

### *Strategies*

- Create a central hub for information on volunteer opportunities and contact information.
- Create ways of recognizing community volunteers and activists.
- Investigate ways to incorporate creative placemaking principles to develop the arts in Milford.

**Community Engagement Goal: Build an open, transparent, and engaged dialogue between the City government and the Milford community.**

Objective 3

- Develop monthly community events to engage the community and attract visitors to the City.

*Strategies*

- **Expand** community festivals and establish new events, such as a concert series and art loop.

# Public Safety and Preparedness

## *We Believe...*

- We believe in a fully diverse staff and professionally trained police force
- We believe in a properly funded and staffed police force and emergency services to meet future growth of the city
- We believe that mutual trust exists between the police and residents

- Minor updates
- Added objective on Homelessness:

*Objective 3 - Expand the City's efforts and capacity to address homelessness.*

### *Strategies*

- *Partner with state agencies and towns to identify and implement best practices*
- *Explore the feasibility of innovative housing solutions, such as pallet housing .e.g. Georgetown, Salisbury, MD*
- *Continue to build and expand partnerships with organizations who serve the homeless population.*
- *Promote opportunities for residents to volunteer in assisting this population*

# Economic Health and Development

## *We Believe...*

- We believe in the creation of higher paying jobs and career opportunities (focus on medical industry and related fields)
- We believe in a strong economic policy based on well thought out regulations
- We believe in attracting companies with strong potential for growth that will enhance Milford's future
- We believe in high quality amenities including beautification will establish excellent quality of life for residents while maintaining the unique characteristics of the City

- Added page on Downtown Plan
- Revised Objective on Tourism

## ***GOAL: Bring More Tourism to Milford***

- ***Objective 1***
- ***Actively promote tourism opportunities through arts, culture, and eco-tourism in Milford, in order to bring in visitors and provide residents with more recreational options.***

## ***Strategies***

- ***Expand community festivals and establish new events, such as a concert series and art loop.***
- ***Advertise on print, radio/tv, social media, other Delaware park webpages, etc.***
- ***Continue to pursue creative methods of promoting City events, such as street banners.***
- ***Provide amenities such as public bathrooms that support tourism.***

# Mobility and Infrastructure

## *We Believe...*

- We believe all residents need equal access to broadband
- We believe in a well-planned, walkable City
- We believe in well-maintained and well-planned infrastructure to meet future needs
- We believe all residents have access to alternate transportation

- Added a page on Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Added Promote See, Click, Fix.
- Changed Council updates to semi-annual
- Added strategy “Ensure regulations are updated to comply with recommendations in the comprehensive plan.”

## *Objective 4 - Implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*

### *Strategies*

- *Implement high value standalone road projects and intersection improvements based on impact*
- *Collaborate with Kent County, Sussex County, nearby local governments, DelDOT, Dover-Kent MPO, and the University of Delaware to develop regional bicycle routes*

# Neighborhoods and Community Services

## *We Believe...*

- We believe all residents and business take pride in our City (overlap with econ dev)
- We believe all residents have equal access to City services (overlap with infrastructure)
- We believe all residents of all ages have access to open space and recreational opportunities
- We believe all residents have an equal voice in their governance (overlap with comm engagement)
- We believe all neighborhoods will have interconnectivity with each other

- Added strategies to encourage partnerships

## *Strategies*

- Continue to partner with external organizations to gain access to more outdoor and indoor facilities for adult and child sports leagues.
- Build capacity of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board consisting of residents to advise City Council, expand outreach, and recruit volunteers.
- Expand access to existing regional recreational amenities through varied transportation options.
- Work with residents and partners to create a recreational scholarship or subsidy for families who struggle to pay program fees.

**Economic Health and Development**

Goal	Objectives	Strategies	Quarterly Progress
Enable growth of existing businesses	Foster economic activity that will grow the local employment by 4% over the next 5 years.	Partner to provide and advertise job training opportunities so the Milford workforce is ready for the future.	
	Work with the existing business community in order to develop strategies which foster economic growth for the employers, residents, and visitors.	Conduct needs assessments of current businesses to identify growth opportunities.	
		Develop resources for marketing and promoting businesses.	
Foster the establishment of new business	Identify opportunities for growth and development of new businesses in Milford by promoting advantages and opportunities in Milford, and leveraging State assistance..	Create a new industrial park in the City.	
		Annually review the process by which new businesses move to Milford, in order to develop more user-friendly services.	
		Continue to provide current incentives for businesses of all sizes.	
	Ensure City ordinances and procedures support new and expanding businesses in order to promote business success in the City of Milford.	Conduct a business satisfaction survey following completion of interactions with the City.	
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.			
Meet the commercial needs of residents, businesses, and visitors	Develop a more vibrant downtown, in order to bring more visitors to Milford and promote community pride.	Implement the Rivertown Rebirth Plan.	

## Underlying Conditions Public Capital Factors

- The underlying conditions of a community, or public capital factors, includes nine factors—the capacities, relationships, networks, and norms that enable a community to work effectively.
- These underlying conditions enable communities to work and progress through the five stages of community life. While many communities lack these conditions, the good news is that we can create them through our intentional actions. The nine factors operate as an ecosystem—each factor is independent *and* interdependent.

FACTOR	DESCRIPTION
Abundance of Social Gathering Places	These enable people to learn about what is happening in the community and begin to develop a sense of mutual trust.
Organized Spaces for Interaction	Where people can come together to learn about, discuss, and often act on community problems. These spaces help a community begin to identify and tap existing resources—and at times, new resources to address common concerns.
Catalytic Organizations	That help engage people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges and marshal the community's resources to move ahead. These organizations help lay the foundation for action, but do not act as the driving force.

<b>Safe Havens for DecisionMakers</b>	Where a community's leaders can deliberate and work through community concerns in "unofficial," candid discussions
<b>Strong, Diverse Leadership</b>	That exists at all layers of a community, understands the concerns of the community as a whole, and serves as a connector among individuals and organizations throughout the community.
<b>Informal Networks and Links</b>	That connect various individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions together to create a cross fertilization effect of experience, knowledge, and resources.
<b>Conscious Community Discussion</b>	Where a community has ample opportunity to think about and sort through its public concerns before taking action. People play an active role in helping decide how the community should act.
<b>Community Norms for Public Life</b>	That help guide how people act individually, interact and work together. These norms set the standards and tone for civic engagement.
<b>A Shared Purpose for the Community</b>	That sends an explicit message about the community's aspirations and conveys a sense of "we're in this together".

# Next Steps

- Incorporate Council comments
- Finalize the plan
- Post and advertise.
- Tentative public hearing/adoption either on June 12 or 26
- Thoughts?