

Element 01 – Introduction

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1. What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan provides a legal framework to guide future land use, transportation, utility, housing, capital facility and other City policy decisions. It is designed to be comprehensive and general at the same time, while taking a long term approach as follows:

- **Comprehensive** in that it encompasses the entire City and the entirety of physical development in the City,
- **General** in that it presents goals and related policies, guidelines and necessary improvements, and
- **Long Term** in that it looks 20 years into the future balancing long range desires and goals with current issues and needs.

The City's Comprehensive Plan is to be used by the public and private sector alike for Policy Determination, Policy Implementation and Communication/Education.

- **Policy Determination:** Through the comprehensive planning process, City officials assess the big picture for the City. This means setting aside current issues and looking at how the City will perform, feel, and look in the future. This outcome of this process are adopted policies.
- **Policy Implementation:** A City can implement its desires and vision for the future much more effectively and efficiently when they are adopted by an official policy document, such as a Comprehensive Plan.

For most local governments in Washington State, including Milton, the Comprehensive Plan is a required source for City officials to adopt and consult when making decisions that affect the physical development of the City. This includes adopting zoning regulations, public facility development and investment, critical areas regulations, and other development regulations and activities. The comprehensive plan also provides a practical guidebook for making day to day and project level decisions and to ensure the implementation of the City's overall long range goals.

- **Communication/Education:** The Comprehensive Plan communicates and enunciates City policies. It is an expression of what is important to the community. This provides the public, including citizens, property owners, developers, business owners, neighboring jurisdictions, financial institutions and other interested parties with the ability foresee how decisions will be made; providing predictability in Milton's decision making process.

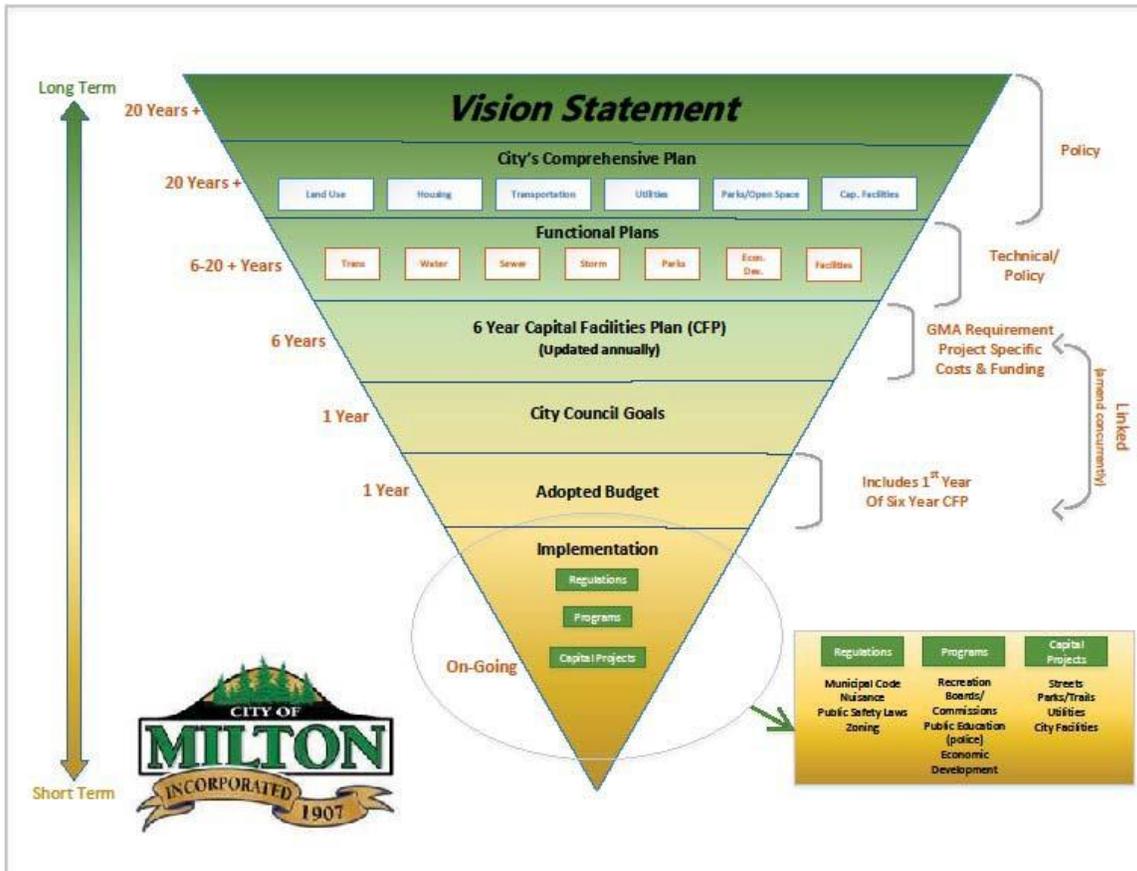
The Milton Comprehensive Plan is comprised of different Elements that address Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Parks, Trails and Open Space. Goals and Policies are included in each element to cover their respective topics.

These goals and policies serve to support the Vision. The goals and policies are then used to guide implementing development regulations. This hierarchy is summarized as follows:

Vision – Regulation Hierarchy

Items	Description	Example
Vision	Aspirational, Big Picture	A City that is proud of its large trees and open spaces.
Goal	Implements the Vision	To enhance and maintain the existing green and open spaces in the City of Milton.
Policy	Specifically who will do what	The City should strive to maintain existing greenery through urban forestry programs and appropriate development regulations, and require development to maintain and enhance the natural vegetation.
Regulation	How many, to what degree, etc	Existing trees shall be protected during redevelopment or replaced at a ratio of X:X. New development shall be required to provide XX square feet of landscaping.

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2. Milton Planning Area (UGA)

The Milton Urban Growth Planning includes the entire City Limits as well as the City's designated Potential Annexation Areas (PAA). The City of Milton is primarily located between SR 161 (Meridian) and SR 99 (Pacific Highway). The City and its Urban Growth Area lie within two jurisdictions, King to the north and Pierce to the south. The cities of Federal Way, Fife and Edgewood lie just beyond Milton's Planning Area.

PLACEHOLDER FOR UGA MAP

3. Planning Framework

In 1990, the State of Washington adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA requires comprehensive plans to include specific elements, requires adoption of implementing regulations, and consistency with countywide and multi-county planning guidance.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

In 1990, Washington State adopted the GMA. In passing the GMA, the State legislature found that,

“uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning. Further, the legislature finds that it is in the public interest that economic development programs be shared with communities experiencing insufficient economic growth.”

The State GMA provides 14 Goals, in no priority, intended to guide the development of Comprehensive Plan and Development regulations. These Goals are:

1. **Urban growth.** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. **Reduce sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. **Transportation.** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
4. **Housing.** Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
5. **Economic development.** Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
6. **Property rights.** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
7. **Permits.** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
8. **Natural resource industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.
9. **Open space and recreation.** Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
10. **Environment.** Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
11. **Citizen participation and coordination.** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
12. **Public facilities and services.** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is

available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

13. **Historic preservation.** *Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.*
14. **Goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act.**

County Wide Planning Policies

The GMA also requires counties which have experienced rapid growth, to adopt Countywide Planning Policies (CPP's). Countywide Planning Policies assist the county and cities and towns within the county in coordinating cross-jurisdictional matters such as urban growth areas and annexations, affordable, economic development, and regional public capital facilities. Countywide Planning Policies also provide a framework to create consistency between the numerous comprehensive plans that are adopted by the cities and towns.

Countywide Planning Policies may not, however, alter the land use powers of cities. The purpose of the CPP's is to ensure consistency between county and city comprehensive plans, not to authorize counties to usurp the land use authority of cities and towns.

The City of Milton's Comprehensive Plan has been written to be consistent with and implement the CPP's for both King and Pierce County.

Vision 2040

The Puget Sound Regional Council adopted Multi-County Planning Policies (MPP's) through the adoption of Vision 2040 in April 2008. Multi-county Planning Policies guide the certification of local Comprehensive Plans, by the PSRC. Vision 2040 is an integrated, long-range vision for maintaining a healthy region – promoting the well-being of people and communities, economic vitality, and a healthy environment. It contains an environmental framework, a numeric regional growth strategy, policy sections guided by overarching goals, implementation actions, and measures to monitor progress.

The City of Milton's Comprehensive Plan has been written to be consistent with and implement the MPP's adopted in Vision 2040.

4. Public Participation

One of the hallmarks of GMA is early and continuous public participation. Public participation techniques must be transparent and clear. The City will encourage and facilitate public participation in the planning process by utilizing the objectives and techniques listed below, tailored to the complexity and nature of the specific plan and/or development regulation amendment. This recognizes that different levels of public participation techniques are appropriate for different plan and development regulation amendments.

For the purposes of complying with RCW 36.70A.140, the following constitutes the City's Public Participation Program. The Public Participation Program is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Provide a roadmap for the public, outlining a clear and accessible public process, as well as identifying opportunities throughout the process for the citizens to provide input.

- Outline a broad base of stake holders and participants.
- Make a concerted and continuous effort to ensure that elected officials, advisory commissions/boards, and staff are fully aware of and understand community and stakeholder concerns.
- Encourage participation among all age groups, specifically retired and young individuals.
- Meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

In order to ensure adequate public participation and notification, the City of Milton will use a range of public participation techniques. In developing the list of public participation techniques, it is recognized that different plan and/or development regulation amendments will warrant a unique Public Participation Program tailored to the amendment and its complexity. This evaluation will be done on a case by case basis to ensure proper public participation and public notification.

Public participation methods include, but are not limited to:

- Newspaper advertisements within the Tacoma Weekly and Milton Signal.
- Mailing notices to property owners and residences within a certain radius of site specific proposals.
- Public Workshops and Open Houses.
- Meetings with the City Council, Parks Board, and Planning Commissions.
- Public Hearings.
- Posting notices in general locations including City Hall, the Milton Library, and the Milton Community Center.
- Notices and/or special videos on the cable access channel.
- Informational pages or notices on the City Website.
- Public Surveys.
- City social networking sites.
- Mayors Forum.
- Announcements at regional board or commissions.
- Booth at the Milton Days festival and other community events
- Citizens Advisory Committees.
- Email lists.

In addition to public hearings required by law for adoption of Comprehensive Plan Amendments and development regulations, public participation will also be solicited through the SEPA process.

Since the time of the Growth Management Act's initial adoption, the internet and social networking sites have become increasingly popular. Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and others may be utilized (where appropriate) to aid in public participation. Additional new techniques and methods to increase transparency and public participation will likely present themselves; the City will look to employ those opportunities in the future as appropriate.

5. Milton 2035 – “A Vision for the Future”

A Vision Statement is a brief statement identifying the desired characteristics of the City's Future. A Vision Statement is the upper echelon of the policy pyramid and guides development of long range goals

and policies. Milton’s Vision Statement is supported by Guiding Principles that were identified by Citizens and elected officials through a citizen participation process.

Vision Statement:

Milton

A City for all ages striving to maintain its small town character and support for strong schools, public safety and neighborhood unity, balancing the need to grow and prosper in a sustainable manner with the environmental, political, economic, and social desires of the City.

A great place to raise a family, with interconnected and attractive parks, trails and public spaces that are complimentary of the natural environment, critical areas and valuable natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

A City that understands the relationship between commerce and healthy livable cities; an understanding that guides the need to support business and economic growth, in harmony with the City’s small town charm.

Guiding Principles:

- Maintain and enhance the City’s small town character
- Create a safe place to raise families
- Provide for strong community unity with an emphasis on family life
- Create safe streets
- Support a strong police and fire force
- Strive to relieve congestion and improve safety on SR 161
- Allow and care for varied needs of population
- Foster and sustain neighborhood cohesiveness
- Buffer incompatible uses and districts
- Maintain and increase the City’s trail, sidewalk and non-motorized modes of transportation
- Concentrate business and industry in appropriate areas
- Preserve and enhance existing vegetation and open spaces
- Provide opportunities for youth activities and engagement
- Protect and enhance the City’s natural resources, critical areas, and wildlife habitat

Future Amendments

A Comprehensive Plan is general and exhaustive. However, the document should be flexible enough to change with the times, as well as changes in political and social desires, demographics, economic circumstances, new laws and technological innovations. However, the State GMA allows for amendments to occur only once a year, except in the case of emergency amendments.

The City will review its Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis to assure its consistency with the State law and regional planning goals and policies.

Public and privately initiated amendments will be considered once a year consistent with the State GMA and Milton Municipal Code section 17.67 – “Comprehensive Plan Amendments”.

6. Other Comprehensive Plan Studies

Since the City's last adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a number of City Utility Comprehensive Plans and other functional plans have been created and adopted. These are listed below and are considered supplemental to and part of this Comprehensive Plan.

- Wellhead Protection Plan (2001)
- Water System Plan (July 2010)
- Electrical System Plan (July 2005)
- Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan (July 2005)
- Shoreline Master Plan (April 2012)
- 2012 Visioning Report; A Community of Neighborhoods, a City of Places (November 2012)