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### MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Joe Lockwood

The City of Milton has come a long way since its founding in 2006, when I became mayor. And I cannot wait to see where it goes from here.

This Strategic Plan can be instrumental in laying out ways we can make our community's dream for a better future a reality. But one document alone won't get us there. Our success depends on the details and execution of each initiative born from this Plan. It depends on the diligence and intelligence of City staff members who will drive the actions. And, more than anything, it depends on citizens who help make Milton so special by giving our government direction and support. They are the front-and-center in everything we do – including the creation of this Strategic Plan.

Our citizens deserve a government that constantly looks to improve their lives, reflect their ideals, and plan ahead so Milton's tomorrow is even better than today. That's what this Strategic Plan is all about. Yet it is a starting point, not an endpoint. Our City government will keep listening to our residents, keep coming up with ideas, and keep making progress.

Sincerely, Mayor Joe Lockwood

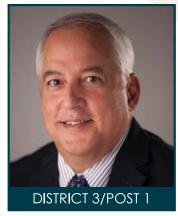
### **CITY COUNCIL**



Peyton Jamison



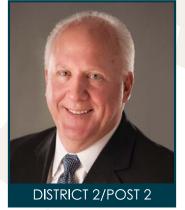
Laura Bentley



Joe Longoria



Carol Cookerly



Paul Moore



Rick Mohrig

## LETTER FROM THE CITY MANAGER AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



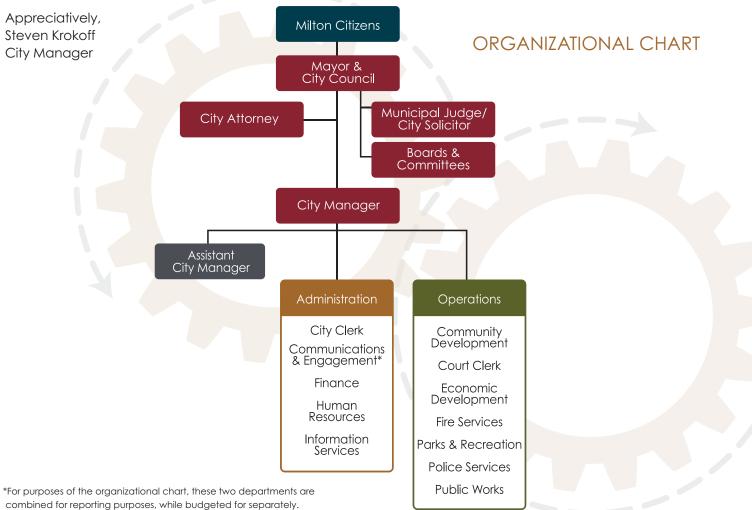
Steven Krokoff

I am honored to share the City of Milton's Strategic Plan for 2021 –2025 – an inspiring, ambitious document that provides us a framework to meet our community's needs. Every piece is grounded in our commitment to our vision: "Milton will be a city recognized for its exceptionally high quality of life, strong sense of place and community, and dedication to preserving our rural heritage."

This Strategic Plan resulted from a collaborative, comprehensive process aimed at setting our goals and how we'll know if we've achieved them. After an extensive engagement phase that included feedback from citizens, business owners, committee members, employees, and various stakeholders, our Mayor and City Council members outlined a vision, mission, core values, and strategic priorities for the City of Milton. This Plan will focus our government's energy and resources, ensure City officials and staff work toward common goals, establish consensus around intended outcomes, and leave room for us to assess and adjust the organization's direction in a changing environment.

I would like to thank Mayor Lockwood and our City Council for their enduring support and leadership that made this Plan possible. I'd also like to express my appreciation for our community members who participated in various ways such as surveys, public meetings, and stakeholder interviews. A special thank you goes out to our steering committee, including our partners at BerryDunn, who endured countless brainstorming and strategy meetings to make this Plan possible. And finally, I want to thank Team Milton for their unwavering commitment to service as exemplified in the Plan before you.

This is an exciting time for the City of Milton as we build upon past success and, together, lead Milton into an even better future.



## PLAN AT A GLANCE

### MISSION

We take pride in our responsibility to protect and improve the high quality of life for those we serve.

### VISION

Milton will be a city recognized for its exceptionally high quality of life, strong sense of place and community, and dedication to preserving our rural heritage.

## VALUES

### Together We Thrive

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Inclusive collaboration, courageous engagement, diversity of opinion, and a purposeful commitment to continuous personal, professional, and team growth lead to outstanding results.

### It's All About Our Rural Heritage

Every step we take protects our rural heritage and culture.

### Service Is Our Obsession

Every interaction is an opportunity to show off our commitment to find solutions. We delight the people we serve by going the extra mile to exceed expectations.

### Own It, Deliver It

We pursue every opportunity with enduring determination, every project with urgency, and every challenge with creativity. We have an unparalleled sense of pride in and ownership of our accomplishments.

### Lead from the Front

We are servant leaders committed to being visible, accessible, and engaged. We walk the talk by setting the example for others to follow.

### Current State

Milton provides a *forward-thinking approach* to economic development, critical event preparedness, day-to-day community safety, environmental sustainability, and its transportation network employing an effective and fiscally responsible service delivery framework. A *motivated and flexible staff* has promoted sustainability in many ways. Financially, the City employs a *conservative pay-as-you-go* system. Environmentally, the City has earned *Green Communities* recognition. From a public safety perspective, Milton has established a service and *outreach-oriented fire department*, boasts routinely *low crime* rates, maintains *safe roadways*, and has a strong track record responding to *critical events* (including managing four federally-declared disasters and several smaller incidents over the past 15 years). The foundation for this success has been a *clear vision for the City* established by elected officials, an engaged citizenry, and a highly professional workforce who leverage their individual experiences, knowledge, and diligence to make Milton a vibrant, noteworthy community.

## Future State

The City recognizes that sustainability and resiliency are a function of all departments, elected officials, and external stakeholders. They work in concert to form a **COOPERATIVE** ecosystem in which mutually reinforcing government and private sector activities contribute to a vibrant and safe community. Milton envisions a future that builds on this strong foundation to provide nation-leading sustainability and resilience fostered by an engaged government focused on community partnerships, creative funding methods, and deliberate efficiency. We maximize our available resources by building teamwork capacity and through effective government processes. This approach takes full advantage of Milton's commercial nodes – furthering Milton's strong regional reputation as an outstanding place to do business – while preserving and enhancing the rural core of the city. It also is powered by a community-reflecting workforce; utilizes technology, training, and planning to enhance critical incident management abilities; ensures that public safety is engaged in the development process, thereby preparing it to meet future community needs while maximizing its day-to-day resiliency; and maintains sound transportation planning/maintenance, energy-efficiency, and solid waste programs that enhance the environmental and social sustainability of Milton's unique character.



# Ensure Milton's long-term financial sustainability

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Further diversify the City's revenue sources to reduce reliance on property tax revenues and diminish the effects of economic fluctuations
- 2. Enhance the commercial tax base with businesses that fit into a cohesive, community-driven vision for Milton
- 3. Establish a financial metrics comparison relative to similar municipalities

#### **OUTCOME MEASURES**

- Chart percentage of revenue across different categories, aiming for a higher percentage (relative to total revenues) derived from non-property taxes year over year
- Develop a 5-year financial plan
- Assess the following, aiming for year-over-year stability and/or improvements:
  Number of new jobs added (trended over a 10-year period)
  - Unemployment rate (as measured against comparable cities)
  - Streamlined/reduced permitting time (as measured against comparable cities and by customer satisfaction)
  - Occupancy rates (as measured against comparable cities)
- Occupational tax process and fee structure updates completed by December 31, 2022



Ensure Milton's readiness and preparedness to respond to disasters as well as unusual or critical events

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Develop cross-disciplinary systems that can respond to unanticipated emergencies, including specialized training and the leveraging of suitable technology
- 2. Identify and plan for natural and manmade disaster mitigation opportunities and recovery needs
- 3. Develop, with Milton's partner cities, a seamless integrated plan (including training) to respond to hostile events

- 100 percent of identified City staff members receive basic ICS training by December 31, 2021
- Complete identified advanced emergency management
  training for appropriate staff members by December 31, 2023
- Conduct advanced level emergency management drills for five consecutive years starting in 2021
- Show improvement on interdepartmental cooperation according to the HSEEP model, evaluated in 2021 and again in 2025 (year 1 and year 5 of this Plan)
- Forge five new community partnerships that will support the City in response and recovery by 2025
- Produce a different resilience-themed community education campaign each quarter during the full course of this Strategic Plan
- Fully implement a continuity of operations plan (COOP) by the end of 2022
- Establish and train an Incident Management Team with Milton, Roswell, Alpharetta, and Fulton County Schools representatives by 2023 while showing improved inter-entity cooperation according to the HSEEP model, as evaluated in 2023 and 2025 (year 3 and year 5 of this Plan)







Protect and preserve Milton's environment through sound land use, environmental stewardship, green infrastructure, and sustainable practices

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Identify opportunities to improve the management of solid waste collection that aligns with sustainable best practices
- 2. Prioritize and fund environmental initiatives that will make Milton a better place today and tomorrow

#### **OUTCOME MEASURES**

- Increase recycling alternatives in terms of ease of recycling and the types of items that can be readily recycled – for Milton residents, as measured year-over-year
- Improve in Green Communities certification from bronze to silver by the end of this Plan
- Year-over-year increases in the amount of environmental signage and kiosks in greenspaces, parks, and other City properties
- Forge a partnership with Georgia Audubon to conduct a "bird audit" and make recommendations for a bird-focused environmental initiative
- Establish a baseline EPA mileage average for City vehicles by the end of 2021 and consistently improve that number year-over-year within the City vehicle fleet
- Increase the number of electronic vehicle charging stations on public and private property in Milton, with 5% growth by the end of this Plan



Maintain a secure community in which people can live, work, and play safely

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Deliver effective, efficient emergency and nonemergency services to minimize fatalities, severe injuries, and loss
- 2. Identify and prioritize notable risk-threat hazards in Milton, develop a strategy to reduce their potential harm, implement this strategy, then evaluate its impact
- 3. Establish a sustainable Safety Crisis Intervention Team (SCIT) within the Police Department to collaboratively, efficiently, and effectively respond to crises
- Rebrand the Milton Fire Department's Community Paramedicine program expanding its scope, mission, and service to citizens
- 5. Create a joint fire-police task force (in partnership with outside providers) to respond to critical events, address non-emergency social services, and take a holistic look at community needs

- Explore accreditation for Milton's Fire Department through the Center for Public Safety Excellence by December 31, 2021
- Reduce wait times for emergency response services in the Milton Fire-Rescue Department by meeting the "first alarm assignment" benchmark to 50% of the time by the end of this Plan
- Improve response times to emergency calls in all zones by 10% by the end of this Plan (relative to 2021)
- Develop and deploy annual scenario-based de-escalation and crisis intervention training for all Milton police officers by December 31, 2022
- Conduct an initial hazards analysis by December 31, 2021, then reassess annually to increase by 5% year-over-year target police/fire public education programs aimed at resiliency/prevention
- Establish a functional Safety Crisis Intervention Team (with 100% CIT-trained staff) by December 31, 2023

- Identify several police officers per shift for advanced training on crisis response and mental health services by December 31, 2023
- Develop an expanded, repurposed operational mobile health response unit (tentatively to be called Milton C.A.R.E.S) by December 31, 2022
- Conduct an initial assessment of community needs that might be served by a mobile health unit by December 31, 2021; develop a comprehensive policy within the Fire Department to address those needs (including health and safety engagement) by December 31, 2022
- Create a joint fire-police task force and conduct initial drill/training by the end of this Plan



Implement a transportation infrastructure that meets current needs, accounts for future growth, and allows residents to traverse Milton in a calm, safe, efficient manner

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Alleviate traffic congestion to reduce travel time and traffic speed throughout Milton
- 2. Improve conditions for walking and cycling throughout the city

#### **OUTCOME MEASURES**

- Complete Local Road Safety Plan with executable strategies by December 31, 2021
- Improve stakeholders' satisfaction with transportation in Milton as measured by a regularly conducted survey
- 5% year-over-year decrease in vehicular-related property damage (using 2021 as a baseline given abnormally reduced traffic in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- 5% year-over-year decrease in vehicular-related personal injury and fatal crashes (using 2021 as a baseline given abnormally reduced traffic in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Deploy a bicycle safety initiative by December 31, 2022
- Ensure effectiveness of intersections does not decrease below level D in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan over each of the next five years
- Establish plan to analyze and develop a means to reduce "red lines" (as seen in widely used mapping software, like Waze) in Milton traffic by December 31, 2023; begin implementing such a plan by December 31, 2024
- Create a baseline on the extent of "walkability" in Milton by contracting for a walkability study by December 31, 2022
- Establish plans for connections to Big Creek Greenway December 31, 2021



Cultivate a diverse, engaged, and healthy workforce dedicated to service and excellence

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Provide continuous development of all Milton staff so that skills and competencies are strengthened, work quality increases, and the City becomes a learning organization
- 2. Create an inclusive work environment where a diverse group of employees and contracted service members form a team that are considered full partners in the delivery of high-quality programs and services
- 3. Strengthen the on-boarding and leadership competencies of those serving on City boards and commissions, as well as in volunteer leadership roles
- 4. Attract and retain a first-rate workforce that is more closely reflective of the community's diversity and prepared to lead into the future
- 5. Enhance the wellness program to support City of Milton employees' physical and emotional fitness and well-being





#### **OUTCOME MEASURES:**

- Conduct engagement and satisfaction surveys for City employees (measured through a customized climate/culture survey or the Gallup Q12) to create baseline measures, followed by incremental year-over-year improvements
- Year-over-year increases in the percentage of employees achieving their documented professional growth objectives
- Establish a baseline in 2021, then annually increase the percentage of employees seeking training and mentorship for career advancement
- Conduct survey to establish baseline, then create and accomplish year-over-year goals that attest to contracted service providers having a positive work environment and providing quality services
- Establish an onboarding plan for all board and commission members, as well as those in other volunteer leadership roles by December 31, 2021
- Reduce accidents and workers compensation claims by analyzing baseline data from 2020, then implement plans to reduce the number of incidents, year-over-year, through the end of this Plan
- Year-over-year progress toward goal of making City of Milton's workforce more reflective of the community's demographics
- Year-over-year increases in the percentage of Milton staff taking advantage of benefits (and to what degree)
- 20% year-over-year increases in wellness program offerings available to City staff



Enhance the effectiveness of the City's information technology to promote efficient operations and customer-oriented service delivery

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Increase the reliability of technology support to the organization through technology service reporting, domain migration, and the enhancement of a disaster recovery plan
- 2. Establish a plan to create an intranet for City employees by December 31, 2021
- 3. Enhance the system for inventory management and "lifecycle" replacement of the City's hardware by December 31, 2021
- 4. Increase transparency through digital accessibility to City records, resources, and services

- Increase in City staff satisfaction with technology tools and services, as measured through a customized work climate/culture study to be conducted annually
- Complete domain migration to miltonga.gov by June 30, 2021
- Earn a major national IT award (through GovTech, ICMA, Gartner, or Center for Digital Government Innovation Award/GCN) by December 31, 2025
- Complete an intranet plan by December 31, 2021
- Have a fully functioning intranet by December 31, 2022
- Institute IT Glue (or something similar) for inventory management and "lifecycle" planning by December 31, 2021
- Establish a fully functioning Laserfiche public portal by December 31, 2021
- Re-establish publicly available GIS mapping by June 30, 2021
- Increased community satisfaction with the City's website, as measured periodically through the ICMA National Citizen Survey
- Increased ratings on municipal website transparency as measured through a generally accepted measurement tool, with 2021 set as the baseline and a follow-up assessment in 2023



## Current State

The City of Milton is distinguished as an *iconic rural community* developed around a crossroads-style town center with *low-intensity commercial nodes*. This agrarian character has been achieved by maintaining an *aesthetic balance* of well-maintained subdivisions scattered amongst the open and rolling hills of quaint equestrian farms. Residents enjoy a rural, *peaceful setting* without compromising easy access to high-end shopping, quality professional services, and excellent restaurants. This has resulted in *high land values*, which entices large lot landowners to consider selling to the subdivision development community. Over time, this *threatens to disturb the balance* of subdivisions to equestrian farms and large lots threatening to erode the rural, *visual character* central to Milton's brand.

## Future State

The City of Milton is a *thriving community* steadfastly committed to its long-term comprehensive *land use plan*. Our dedication to *smart development* is evident in areas identified for specific growth and incorporating *design elements* that reflect our rural, peaceful nature and charm. Milton's *special character* – as reflected in its bucolic pastures, modern rustic architecture, and walkable commercial districts – is *identifiable* as soon as you enter the city. The City's *equestrian brand* is integrated into the commercial nodes to re-emphasize Milton's sense of place and unique identity. Milton is nationally recognized as a "location of choice" for small and medium equestrian hobbyists, which reflects a desire for the *equestrian farm lifestyle*.



#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Explore the establishment of equestrian character area zones around Milton
- 2. Identify and encourage equestrian lifestyle, heritage, and visitor experiences
- 3. Establish a national marketing campaign to promote Milton's equestrian lifestyle
- 4. Establish Birmingham Park as an equestrian destination
- 5. Offer incentives and increase/reduce regulations that make it easy to build and maintain a farm
- 6. Attract complimentary goods and services for equestrian/agricultural operations to Milton

#### **OUTCOME MEASURES:**

- Milton is listed/recognized nationally as one of the top places for recreational/hobby equestrian hobbyists by December 31, 2024
- Establish baseline of agricultural properties segmented by size and set achievable goals by December 31, 2021
- Establish a baseline of satisfaction within the equestrian/agricultural community for goods, services, support, and available experiences by December 31, 2022



#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Stop sprawl from eroding Milton's distinctive rural look and feel
- 2. Interweave the City's architectural standards with its land use plan to preserve Milton's unique character
- 3. Integrate equestrian branding into the City's commercial nodes through signage, names, gateways, and architectural elements to emphasize Milton's sense of place and identity

- Increases year-over-year in the percentage of large lot subdivisions as a percentage of overall subdivisions created during a given period
- Increased citizen satisfaction with the City's land use policies and decisions (as measured periodically by the ICMA National Citizen Survey)
- Milton becomes a regional leader in land development practices as evidenced by positive publicity in regional publications by December 31, 2022



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3 Acquire, Manage, and Develop Public Land and Resources To Support Milton's High Quality Of Life

## Current State

The City of Milton offers recreational opportunities available that support our high quality of life. Whether it be attending special events, walking to schools and activity centers, riding your horse on stunning passive park trails, volunteering at one of our inclusive special needs Camps, or attending a youth lacrosse game, there's a unique, strong sense of place and community in Milton. Milton's rural character is put on display whether you're driving by the hundreds of acres of beautiful nature preserves (the purchases of which voters strongly supported) or enjoying the "small town farm feel" evident at Milton's premier athletic complex, Bell Memorial Park. These great amenities and offerings do not come without challenges. According to national standards, Milton's young, yet growing Parks and Recreation Department underserves our citizens stemming from a shortage of facilities. The existing network of sidewalks and trails do not serve all transportation needs, though plans are in motion to prioritize meaningful, more widespread access to destinations. Regardless of deficiencies, we continually collaborate as a team and with the community to explore creative ways to keep our citizens engaged.

### Future State

The City of Milton has a vast array of recreational opportunities that greatly contribute to our quality of life. Our active park space and program offerings are consistent with demand and expectations. Regardless of one's ability, we continue to strive to ensure that our programs and facilities are inclusive. The City's passive parks have become a favorite with Milton's citizens including locations geared toward equestrian enthusiasts. Our greenspaces are an oasis for citizens to enjoy the beauty of nature. The City's sidewalk and trail network is built-out according to our designated trail priorities, giving families opportunities to safely travel, experience the outdoors, and enjoy what Milton has to offer.





Develop and maintain active park spaces and facilities where all Milton residents can enjoy recreational opportunities

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1. Better leverage current parks and partnerships to increase recreational opportunities
- 2. Address needs of low-income families by offering a financial aid program for recreation programs
- 3. Analyze needs, acquire land, and develop programming in underserved parts of Milton per the 2027 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Identify and offer opportunities for new recreation programs that meet citizens' needs and expectations

#### **OUTCOME MEASURES**

- Establish a baseline for utilization rate of parks and recreation facilities, then increase that utilization rate year-over-year
- Increased community satisfaction of parks and recreation facilities and programming as measured periodically through the ICMA National Citizen Survey and/or surveys coordinated by program providers
- Year-over-year increases in community participation in Parks and Recreation
  activities, as measured in the number of individuals enrolled in City-affiliated programs
- Establish a scholarship program for recreational programs based upon generally accepted guidelines
- Year-over-year increases in available active indoor recreation space (as measured in total square footage)
- Year-over-year increases in active outdoor park and recreation space (as measured in total acreage)



Enhance existing passive parks to promote and preserve Milton's natural beauty for the enjoyment of all residents

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Create plans to enhance Birmingham Park for equestrian use by December 31, 2021
- 2. Phase in the Providence Park Master Plan to improve Providence Park as identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan
- 3. Add aesthetically pleasing, informative, educational signage at City-owned natural areas and habitats
- 4. Phase in the plan to improve the former Milton Country Club

- Increased space and trails for equestrian activity by December 31, 2025
- Increases in community satisfaction with passive park spaces as measured regularly in ICMA National Citizen Survey and/or other surveys
- Implement significant improvements to transform Birmingham Park into more of an equestrian destination by December 31, 2025
- Open bathrooms, pier, and new trail in Providence Park by December 31, 2021
- Open first trails in former Milton Country Club by October 31, 2021







# Improve mobility networks to create a more connected Milton

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Connect neighborhoods, character areas, retail nodes, and open spaces in accordance with the Milton Community Trail Prioritization Plan
- 2. Create interactive maps, trail heads, standard signage and markers, and public education campaigns that show how to access Milton's trail and bike system
- 3. Create a standing Trails Advisory Committee to help prioritize and guide the build-out of Milton's trail system
- 4. Implement plans for multi-use (i.e. walking, biking) connections to the Big Creek Greenway
- 5. Establish an "Adopt-a-Trail Program" to assist with the City's trail system maintenance
- 6. Identify roads with high frequency of bicyclists and create routes that allow safe bicycle travel throughout Milton

#### OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increases in community satisfaction with Milton's trail system, as measured periodically in the ICMA National Citizen Survey and other surveys
- Establish a baseline and then target for the number of families connected to businesses and activity nodes via a continuous network of trails; increase the number of connected families by December 31, 2025

MILTON

- Develop an interactive trail map to feature on the City's website, then increase the number of visits to that trail webpage by December 31, 2025
- Explore the measurement of foot traffic on city sidewalks and trails by December 31, 2024



Facilitate and promote the use of public spaces for arts, culture, and events that make people feel welcome and connected with our community

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Explore adding an outdoor performing arts space/venue
- 2. Explore the addition of more public art to parks and community spaces
- 3. Distribute community spaces so there is more equitable access throughout Milton
- 4. Create technologically interactive spaces
- 5. Explore the creation of an "Adopt-a-Roundabout" program for citizens to further beautify roundabouts around the city

- Establish a baseline of residents' satisfaction with the City's community spaces (as measured in the ICMA National Citizen Survey and/or other surveys), then produce a notable increase in satisfaction by 2025
- Year-over-year increases in the number of households that are within half mile of a community space
- Year-over-year increases in technologically interactive spaces on Milton properties



Protect and enhance Milton's greenspaces to maintain the natural beauty of the city for present and future generations

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Identify and establish the appropriate use of each existing City-owned greenspace
- 2. Create signage and educational components for trees and habitats
- 3. Explore opportunities for the City to acquire more greenspace
- 4. Create interactive maps, trail heads, standard signage and markers, and public education showing how to access Milton's trail and bike system

- Complete a greenspace plan/strategy by March 31, 2022
- Year-over-year increases in signage and other educational components at City-owned greenspaces and parks
- Identify opportunities to acquire/add more City-owned greenspaces
- Incorporate greenspaces into Milton's interactive maps, trail heads, standard signage and markers, and public education programs

### MILESTONES

This Strategic Plan is scheduled to extend five years, charting a step-by-step course for Milton to get from where it is now to where it wants to be. Yet it took considerable time to come together through dozens of interviews, thorough analysis of myriad documents, laying out detailed plans, and much more.

Here are milestones along the way...



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