

Strategic Economic Development Plan

Milton, New Hampshire

June 18, 2012

Submitted To:

Town of Milton
Milton, New Hampshire

Submitted By:

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A. Recent Economic Development Trends

The State of New Hampshire and Strafford County have seen substantial economic change in the past ten years (2002 to 2012). During the early part of the decade, an economic boom resulted in significant jobs and housing growth, increased commercial building and increased individual buying power. By the end of the decade (2010), the Seacoast, including Milton, experienced a serious economic downturn that saw the downsizing of businesses, a slowdown in housing construction and sales, and a high unemployment rate. More recently, however, the Seacoast area has experienced a mild economic recovery as demonstrated through rising employment and wages. Much of this growth has tended to be in high paying technology employment and professional/management occupations. All of these changes have affected the economy of local communities, including Milton.

Like the state and the Seacoast region, the Town of Milton has undergone numerous changes in the past decade in terms of population growth, employment and income. Although the unemployment rate crept up from a low in 2001 of 3.9% to 7.4% in 2011, for Milton, it was still higher than Strafford County or the state both of which were lower than 6%. In addition, its full value tax rate of \$20.51 compares favorably with surrounding communities and other communities in Stafford and Rockingham Counties. Furthermore, its assessed valuation has increased significantly since 2000.

Once a small industrial community that relied on local jobs and the jobs associated with the recreational businesses tied to Milton Three Ponds, Milton has become more of a bedroom community where many of the residents find employment outside the town. While there are a number of thriving businesses and a small industrial park, Milton could benefit from expanded economic development that is consistent with its small town character.

Milton's economic future will in large part be shaped by the Town's commitment to positive economic development activity. Such activities may include the maintenance and enhancement of the downtown, the development of suitable areas for new businesses or business expansion or the enhancement of Milton's cultural and agricultural sector, including such centers as the New Hampshire Farm Museum. Such efforts will have a positive impact on the town's tax base and employment, as well as its quality of life.

Recent business and job growth has occurred in the Portsmouth-Pease area as well as the Dover-Rochester area. The expansion of Albany International and the location of Safran USA in nearby Rochester are examples of this trend. This growth may continue north along the NH Route 16 Corridor. Such growth may have spinoff business that could target Milton. Milton needs to be prepared for this growth or it could "leap frog" the town and go to towns further north.

B. Milton's Vision for Economic Development

In 2006, the Town of Milton formed the Cost of Community Services Study Committee to produce recommendations to promote balanced growth. This committee looked at the density of development as well as ways to protect open space while encourage denser development in more suitable areas for growth. As a result of the committee's work the town adopted a larger minimum lot size and a Transfer of Development Rights regulation. This committee also looked into a multi-use village district and office/commercial/light industrial districts.

In 2007-2008, Milton engaged in a very positive exercise to identify its strengths and weakness with respect to environmentally sensitive economic development. This effort was spurred by a community-wide dialog supported by planning and community development professionals from the Natural Resource Outreach Coalition (NROC) organized by UNH Cooperative Extension. An Environmentally Sensitive Economic Development Committee was established that identified Milton's strengths and weaknesses for economic development.

More recently Milton obtained a small grant from Public Service of New Hampshire to prepare a strategic plan for economic development. In the spring of 2012, the town sponsored a public forum to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis as part of the grant program. This analysis came up with similar results to the NROC project in 2007. In summary the forum identified several key strengths:

- Two exits on Spaulding Turnpike, each with adjacent developable land
- Good municipal services—fire, police, libraries, DPW
- Local recreational facilities, e.g., Milton Three Ponds

And several weaknesses:

- School system
- Lack of curb cuts on NH Routes 75 and 125 at Exit 18
- Minimal land/zoning for industry-Industrial park full

The participants in the forum also identified several opportunities for and threats to economic development:

Opportunities

- Grow your business in small town
- Allowing development adjacent to Exits 17 & 18 of Spaulding Turnpike while leaving remainder of Milton more rural
- Widening of Spaulding in Rochester will allow greater access
- Milton can draw on Rochester's economic growth
- Assistance from agencies such as WEDCO, NH DRED, PSNH, etc.

Threats

- Additional commercial development along NH Route 11 in Rochester/ Farmington drawing business that could come to Milton
- Current fragile business climate
- Hydroelectric facility on Milton Three Ponds affecting recreational opportunities.
- Potential for large scale forest/brush fire, e.g., 1946

From this process the following economic development vision was formulated to guide future strategic planning efforts. In order to achieve this goal several objectives also were identified

Milton will promote a sustainable, diversified local economy that is consistent with the Town's rural and village character. Milton will work to retain its current businesses, foster business expansion as needed, and encourage new businesses to locate in the Town to broaden the Town's employment opportunities and tax base.

The Objectives

1. Retain Milton's existing business and industrial base.
2. Encourage and attract development of new diversified business and industry consistent with the Town's vision.
3. Initiate an economic development program to oversee economic development activity in Milton.
4. Ensure that Milton's land use policies and regulation are consistent with the local economic development goal.
5. Provide a level of public infrastructure and services that enables economic development in a cost-effective manner.
6. Support and expand opportunities for cultural activities, recreation and tourism.

C. Economic Base Assessment

Milton's Economic Base Reliant on the Region

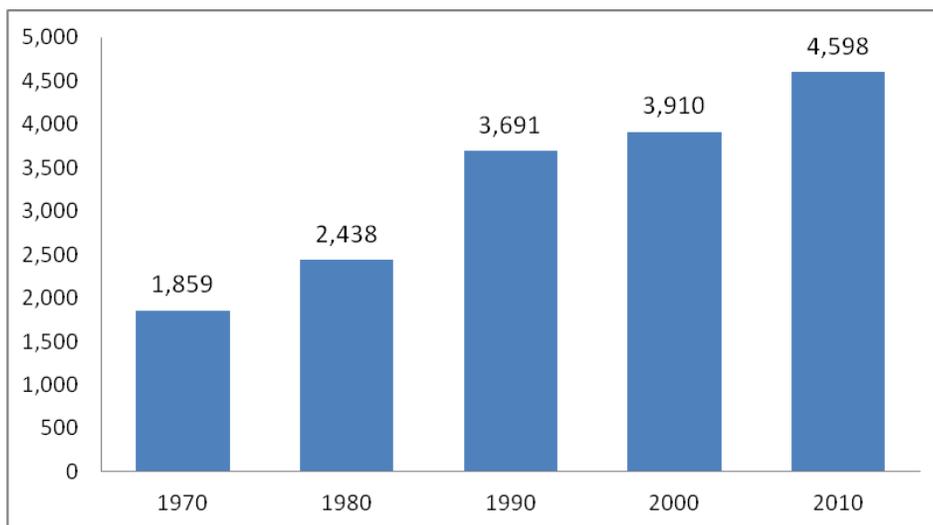
To understand the economic conditions of Milton, it is critical for the town to understand its own economic base and how it fits into the economic base of the region. Milton's economic base is closely tied to the regional economy. The regional economy has been recently described in the recently released *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Strafford Region, 2012*. Almost one-half of Milton's workers derive their income from nearby New Hampshire communities. Because of its small population base, the town cannot support the same level of industrial activity, commercial outlets, banks and service firms as nearby Strafford County communities such as Rochester, Farmington Dover, and Somersworth. Milton residents have effectively traded the convenience of residing closer to commercial centers for a smaller town, rural atmosphere.

Population Trends and Projections—*Continuous increase since 1970; Trend projected to continue*

Milton's population has grown from 1,859 in 1970 to 4,598 in 2010 as shown in **Figure 1**. The largest 10-year increase during that period was between 1980 and 1990 when the population jumped by 1,253—over 50% as shown in **Table 1**.

Based on the newly released data from the US Census Bureau, Milton had a population increase of 688 between 2000 and 2010 or 17.6% compared to a 9.1% increase for Strafford County. See **Table 1**. Since 1950 Milton has grown at a faster rate than the rest of Strafford County except between 1990 and 2000. This trend indicates that Milton is an attractive community for residential growth.

Figure 1 Population Change: 1970-2010



Source: US Census, 2010

Table 1: Population Trends, 1980-2009

	1980	1990	% Increase 1980-90	2000	% Increase 1990-2000	2010	% Increase 2000-2010
Milton	2,438	3,691	51.4%	3,910	5.9%	4,598	17.6%
Strafford County	85,408	104,233	22%	112,223	8%	124,005	9.1%

Source: 2000 US Census & NH OEP

Based upon the most recent population projections provided by the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NH OEP), Milton is expected to grow by approximately 862 residents or 19% from 2010 to 2030. This is an overall rate that is more modest than that between 1970 and 2010 (**Table 2**). By contrast Strafford County is expected grow at just 15% over the same time period.

Table 2: Population Projections, 2010-2030

Town - Year	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Increase 2010-2030	% Increase 2010-2030
Milton	4,598	4,790	5,040	5,270	5,460	862	19%
Strafford County	5	129,500	134,210	138,930	142,890	18,885	15%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau and NH OEP Population Projections for Municipalities, 2007.

Employment— *Both the number of firms and jobs have increased since 2000*

Milton’s employment base in 2010, including both public and private sectors, was approximately 488 individuals, an increase of 62 (15%)—from 2000 (**Table 3**). However, there was an increase of only 7 workers since 2005. This modest increase was due to hiring in the private sector, which added 63 employees. The number of public sector employees dropped by 12 between 2005 and 2010.

While the overall employment in Milton showed modest gains since 2000, weekly wages increased significantly. In the private sector, average weekly wages increased by \$196 or 43%. Even more significant were the gains in the public sector where average weekly wages increased by \$285 or 77%.

Table 3: Average Annual Covered Employment in Milton¹

	2000	2005	2010	Change 2000-2010
Number Private Businesses	44	51	50	6
Average Employment	377	417	440	73
Average Annual Weekly Wage	\$453	\$580	\$649	\$196
Number Public Entities	4	4	3	-1
Number Public Employees	49	60	48	-1
Average Annual Weekly Wage	\$371	\$438	\$656	\$285
Total Employment	426	481	488	62

Source: NH Employment Security, 2010

There is a discrepancy in wages paid in the public sector. While local public sector workers received an average of \$614 per week (for 41 workers), federal workers (7) received \$907 per week and state workers (7) received \$815.

Table 4 represents employment of Milton workers by business sector. Private sector employment is broadly categorized into *Goods Producing Industries* and *Service Providing Industries*. Because many businesses in Milton are small, data by number of employees in many subsectors has not been made available to ensure privacy. The largest reported category of employment is in manufacturing which has 189 employees. The largest service-related business is retail trade with 43 employees.

Table 4: Covered Employment by Sector, 2010

	Employment Sector	# of Employees	%
1	Goods-Producing Industries	221	44.7%
1a	Manufacturing	189	
1b	Other Goods Producing Industries (e.g. forestry, agriculture, mining, etc.)	32	
2	Service-Providing Industries	219	44.2%
2a	Retail Trade	43	
2b	Accommodation and Food Services	26	
2c	Other Services (Finance & Insurance, Real Estate, Health Care, etc.)	150	
	Total Private	440	
3	Total Government	55	11.1%
	Total, Private plus Government	495	

NH Department of Employment Security, 2010

¹ Covered employment is defined as all employment except those workers who are self-employed.

Unemployment Rates—Milton lags County over past ten years

Another measure of Milton’s economic health is the rate of unemployment. Since 2001 Milton’s average annual unemployment rate has fluctuated between 3.9 and 8.4 percent as shown in **Figure 2** and **Table 5**. Milton’s rate has been higher than both Strafford County and the state throughout this period. During the early part of the decade, the rates between Milton and the county or state were less than one percentage point. More recently Milton’s average annual rates have lagged by more than two percentage points behind the county (**Table 5**).

Figure 2: Average Annual Unemployment

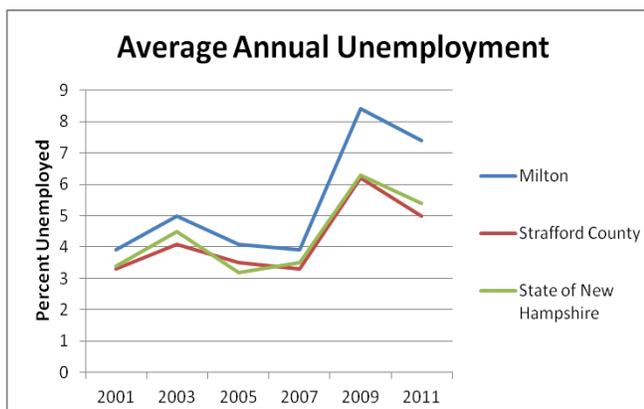


Table 5: Unemployment 2001 to 2011

	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Milton	3.9	5.0	4.1	3.9	8.4	7.4
Strafford County	3.3	4.1	3.5	3.3	6.2	5.0
State of New Hampshire	3.4	4.5	3.2	3.5	6.3	5.4

Source: NH Department of Unemployment Security, 2012

Major Employers—Most employ less than 20 Workers

While there are over 50 employers in Milton, most are rather small employing 20 or fewer workers. Businesses range from small retail operations to larger businesses in the Milton Industrial Park. Index Packaging employs by far the greatest number of individuals. **Table 6** lists the top eight employers in the town.

Table 6: Major Employers

Business	Product	Employees
Index Packaging	Foam Packaging	160
Milton School District	Education	77
Ray’s Marina	Marina	30
Short Ridge Academy	Private Education	25
Town of Milton	Public Administration	24 Full time/ 40 Part or Seasonal
Iron Mountain	Storage	20
Global Tek	Recycler	20
Eastern Boats	Boat Manufacturing	31
Frizell Paving & Construction	Construction Services	
Proline	Dock manufacturing	12

Source: NH Department of Unemployment Security, 2012

Employment Projections—Biggest gains expected in Service Sector

Based on projections by the NH Department of Employment Security from 2008 through 2018 for Stafford County, total jobs are expected to grow by 4,732 or about 9%. Such projections have not been done on a town-by-town basis. **Table 7** shows projections by NAICS² categories. The greatest gains in employment numbers are expected in the service industry; professional, scientific, and technical services; and health care. Manufacturing is expected to lose jobs.

Table 7: Long-Term Projections, Stafford County, 2008 – 2018

NAICS Code	Industry	Estimated 2008	Projected 2018	2008-2018 Change	
				Numeric	Percent
	Total Employment (incl. Self-employed)	51,434	56,166	4,732	9.2%
101	Goods Producing Industries	6,754	6,433	-321	-4.8%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	136	140	4	2.9%
21	Mining	23	25	2	8.7%
23	Construction	1,380	1,551	171	12.4%
31-33	Manufacturing	5,215	4,717	-498	-9.5%
102	Service Providing Industries	40,376	45,178	4,802	11.9%
22	Utilities	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
42	Wholesale Trade	1,037	1,119	82	7.9%
44-45	Retail Trade	6,629	6,921	292	4.4%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	1,013	1,056	43	4.2%
51	Information	926	977	51	5.5%
52	Finance and Insurance	3,651	3,728	77	2.1%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	409	452	43	10.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	2,032	2,623	591	29.1%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	218	230	12	5.5%
56	Administrative & Waste Managt. Services	2,032	2,371	339	16.7%
61	Educational Services	7,759	8,718	959	12.4%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	6,261	7,837	1,576	25.2%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	514	611	97	18.9%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	3,634	3,990	356	9.8%
81	Other Services (Except Government)	1,606	1,766	160	10.0%
	Government	2,582	2,710	128	5.0%
	Self-employed and Unpaid Family Workers	4,304	4,555	251	5.8%
	n = data does not meet disclosure standards				

Source: Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, NH Employment Security,

With fewer than 500 employees, Milton comprises less than 1% of the total county employment. These regional economic changes are likely to affect Milton not only in terms of its local employment, but also in terms of the types of workers that may live in Milton, but commute to

² NAICS is abbreviation for North American Industrial Classification System

jobs outside town. Milton’s economy is dependent on the larger regional economy that is fully described in the recently released *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Strafford Region*, 2012.

Median Family Income—Milton lags behind almost all communities in Strafford County

Based on the US Census 5-year estimate from 2005-09, Milton’s median family income (based upon a family of four) lags well behind the average for Strafford County and is the second lowest of the 13 county towns—only Middleton is lower at \$58,125; Rochester is approximately \$60,000 (Table 8). By contrast, Durham is well above the Strafford County average and all of the other towns in the county. Comparing the family income data to the year 2000, once again Milton lags behind the county and Middleton. Compared to the percentage increase over this period Milton’s income increased less than half that of the county’s—24% compared to 50% for the county.

Table 8: Median Family Income

Community	Median Family Income		% Change
	2000	2009	
Durham	\$83,609	\$114,757	37%
Milton	\$48,033	\$59,750	24%
Middleton	\$48,529	\$58,125	20%
Average for Strafford County	\$53,075	\$73,963	50%

Source: US Census, 5-year Estimates, 2005-2009

Educational Attainment—Milton citizens have lower educational attainment than other Strafford County communities

As shown in Table 9, Milton appears to have a relatively high number of high school graduates compared to the county--44.7%, however, this is in part due to the fact that Strafford County and nearby towns have higher percentage of their population post-secondary education. The number of Milton citizens holding a bachelor’s degree is almost 8% lower than the county and the number holding a graduate degree is over 7% lower. The only communities in Strafford County with lower post-secondary educational attainment are Middleton and Farmington.

Table 9: Educational Attainment, 25 years and older

	Less than HS Diploma	HS Diploma	Some College/ Associates Degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Graduate Degree
Milton	13.4	44.7	17.6	10.8	4.0
Strafford County Average		31.5	27.6	17.9	11.7

Source: US Census, 5 Year Estimates, 2005-2009

Community Value—Town Assessed Valuation increased slightly from 2005 to 2010

The total assessed value of Milton is an indicator of the relative prosperity of the town and can be compared to other communities. **Table 10** provides a breakdown of the major land use categories in Milton and the assessed value of each for 2005 and 2010. The total assessed value of Milton is almost \$388 million—92% of this value is in residential property both land and buildings.

Table 10: Town Assessed Value by Land Use

Land Use/Year	2005	2010	% Change 2005-2010
Land -Current Use- Conservation Restriction	\$1,421,754.00	\$1,258,037.00	-11.5
Residential	\$354,356,215.00	\$356,933,715.00	+7%
Land	\$135,649,200	\$128,178,700	
Buildings	\$202,698,615	\$213,535,815	
Manufactured Homes	\$16,008,400	\$15,219,200	
Commercial/Industrial	\$27,492,185.00	\$27,420,885.00	-0.3%
Land	\$5,905,400	\$6,243,900	
Buildings	\$21,582,100	\$21,172,300	
Discretionary Preservation Easement	\$4,685	\$4,685	
Utilities	\$6,107,900.00	\$5,663,300.00	-7%
Net Valuation Before Exemptions	\$389,379,054.00	\$391,275,937.00	+0.5%
Net Valuation on Which Tax Rate is Computed	\$385,810,054.00	\$387,944,220.00	+0.5%

Source: Milton Assessor, 2012; MS-1 Forms for 2005 and 2010

Between 2005 and 2010 only the residential category of assessed value increased by 7%. Commercial/Industrial, Utility and Current Use assessed values all decreased. The overall town assessed value only increased slightly—5%—due largely to the modest gain in residential value. The downturn in the economy over the last several years has had a significant negative impact on the town’s assessed value.

Full Value Tax Rate—Higher than other communities in the county

The NH Department of Revenue Administration prepares an annual report that attempts to compare the tax rates from one community to another by calculating full value tax rates. This process attempts to determine what a property in one municipality would pay for taxes on a property of equal value in another community. **Table 11** compares full value tax rates for Milton and surrounding communities for 2000, 2005 and 2010. Milton has the 161st highest tax rate out of 234 towns and cities in the state, while by comparison Rochester ranks 163.

Table 11: Full Value Tax Rates, Milton and Surrounding Towns

Community	2000	2005	2010	2010 State Rank
Milton	\$21.72	\$14.36	\$22.40	161
Middleton	\$21.48	\$13.00	\$18.49	78
Farmington	\$20.11	\$15.45	\$22.06	148
Wakefield	\$13.10	\$8.31	\$11.62	24
Rochester	\$20.99	\$16.34	\$22.75	163
New Durham	\$19.05	\$15.25	\$21.10	132
Somersworth	\$22.55	\$17.32	\$27.20	212

Source: NH Department of Revenue Administration, 2012

Residential Building Activity—Milton’s building permits dropped off significantly in 2007

Another measure of economic activity is the number of residential building permits issued over the past 5-10 years. During the period of 2000 to 2009, Milton issued 425 building permits (new construction) or an average of approximately 42 per year. As shown in **Table 12**, most of these permits were issued between 2000 and 2007 with 2006 being the year with the largest number of permits at 112. The number dropped off significantly in 2008 and 2009 when a total of only 17 permits were issued.

Table 12: Building Permits, 2000-2009

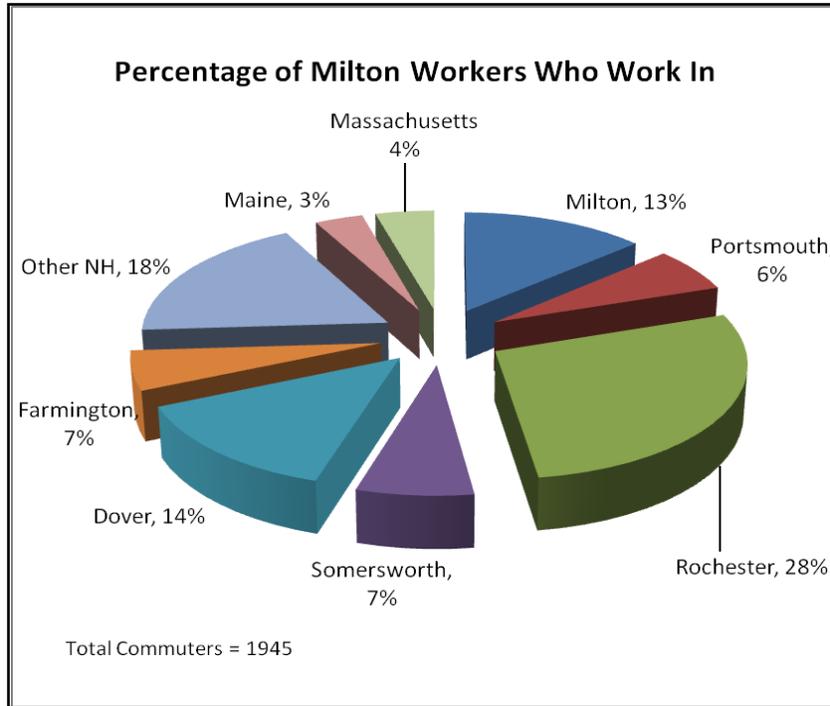
Year	Number
2000	48
2001	55
2002	52
2003	44
2004	45
2006	112
2007	52
2008	15
2009	2
Total	425

Source: Town of Milton, Building Department

Commuting Patterns—Over 85% of Milton’s workers travel out of town to work

As shown in **Figure 3**, most of Milton’s workers leave town for employment. Of the 1,945 workers in town, 546 or almost 30% commute to Rochester.

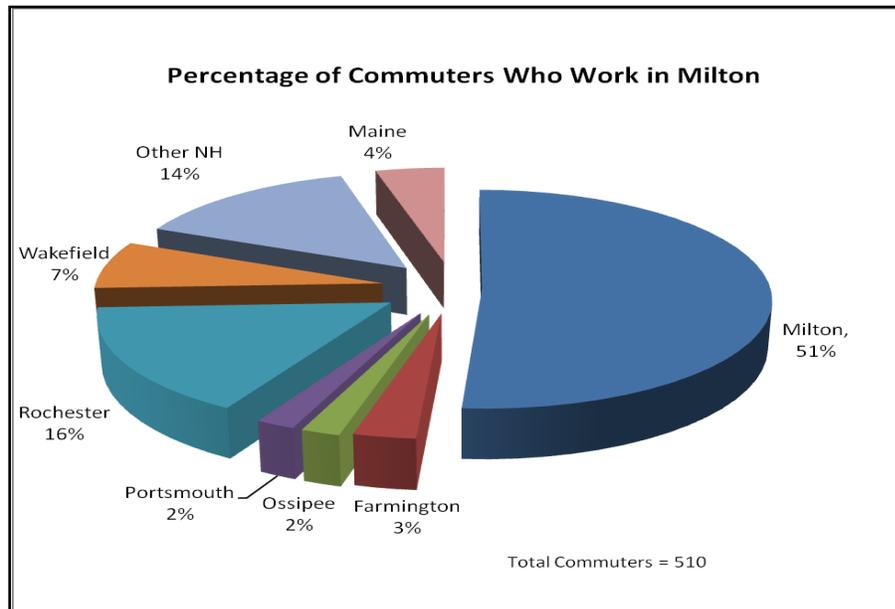
Figure 3: Where Milton Residents Work



Source: 2000 US Bureau of Census. These data represent the most recent data on commutation.

On the other hand, over half of the 510 workers who work in Milton, more than 50% are drawn from Milton as shown in **Figure 4**. The next highest number of commuters come from Rochester—16% or 82. Most of the others come from nearby Seacoast communities with only a small number from Maine—22 or 4%.

Figure 4: Where Workers in Milton Live



Source: 2000 US Bureau of Census. These data represent the most recent data on commutation.

This data on worker commuting patterns suggest a strong economic link between Rochester and Milton with many of Milton's workers finding employment in Rochester while the largest number of workers commuting into Milton come from Rochester.

Summary—*Milton's economic base indicators are mixed, but generally indicate need for improvement.*

- ✓ Both the number of firms and jobs have increased since 2000, although job growth has slowed considerably since 2005.
- ✓ Weekly wages have continued to grow since 2000, particularly in the public sector.
- ✓ Milton's unemployment rate has been higher than Strafford County since 2000 and particularly since 2009 when rates were at least two percentage points higher than the county.
- ✓ Index Packaging is the largest private sector employer and Milton School District is largest public sector employer. Most firms have 20 or fewer employees.
- ✓ Milton's family income and educational attainment lag most communities in Strafford County.
- ✓ The town's assessed value has increased only 0.5% from 2005 to 2010
- ✓ Milton's full value tax rate is higher than other communities in the county.
- ✓ Residential building activity has slowed significantly since 2007

D. Recent Economic Development Initiatives

Cost of Community Services Study Committee

In 2006, the Town of Milton formed the Cost of Community Services Study Committee to produce recommendations to:

“promote balanced growth among residential, commercial /industrial, and open space/conservation land uses in order to more closely balance the Town’s revenues and expenses so the Town’s property tax burden becomes more stabilized. ”

These recommendations were to include policies, programs, and processes and mechanisms based upon analyzed data.” This action came as a result of a recommendation of the Cost of Community Services Study completed in September 2005. This committee included the following individuals:

- Bruce Woodruff
- Susann Foster Brown
- Cynthia Wyatt
- Stephen Frisselle
- Brian DiMambro
- Cherie Corbett
- Charlie Karcher
- Emery Booska
- Tom Gray
- Roger Burkhart
- Ellen Lankhorst
- Larry Brown

Over the course of two years and many meetings the Committee worked to coordinate its efforts with those of the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. The Committee focused on several zoning articles some or all of which were adopted in subsequent Town Meetings.

- Increasing the minimum lot size in the Low Density Zone from 1 1/2 to 2 acres and frontage from 150 feet to 200 feet.
- Conservation District Ordinance
- Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance

The Committee noted that these changes would help:

- Reduce municipal costs,
- Protect and enhance property owners’ equity,

- Stabilize the town's revenues/expenses,
- Protect critical environments and establish a regulatory process for review and advice as covered under RSA 483:B (shorelands) and 474:55 (wetlands)

The Committee also began to pursue other initiatives including zoning district amendments for

- a multi-use village district and,
- office/commercial/light industrial districts.

Natural Resource Outreach Coalition—Environmentally Sound Economic Development

In 2007, Milton undertook a community planning process aimed managing the rapid growth that had been occurring in the Seacoast during the period of 2000-2005. This process involved a program of assistance from the Natural Resource Outreach Coalition (NROC) coordinated by the UNH Cooperative Extension. NROC facilitated action plans with three groups:

- Water Quality
- Better Planning and Ordinances
- Environmentally Sound Economic Development

The Environmentally Sound Economic Development Committee (ESEDC) met numerous times and discussed numerous issues that could be address to encourage economic development. The committee established the following as its mission:

The Milton Environmentally Sound Economic Development Group's mission is to promote well planned industrial, commercial and recreational growth in appropriate sections of Milton that maintains the rural character of the community and protects natural resources.

This committee identified a number of concerns that might inhibit economic growth including:

- Septic systems contributing to water quality problems
- DPW salt pile
- Recreation use of ponds creating shoreland erosion
- Flooding – where is it from human error?
- Development that contributes to environmental degradation—clear cutting
- Threat of invasive species river is a threat –
- Winter recreation threat
- Consequences of control of the dam
- Plume from landfill
- Lack if industrial land
- Limited extent of water and sewer

The group also prepared and sent out a survey to Milton businesses in 2007 that resulted in numerous responses encouraging not only promoting certain types of new businesses, but also protecting open space. The following table is a summary of some of the results where the majority of respondents indicated the item was important or very important:

Item	% Responding as important or very important
Conduct promotional activities to attract new business	55%
Business directories/brochures/maps	50%
Attract agricultural businesses	65%
Attract offices	55%
Promote tourism	60%
Promote industry	55%
Create "Main Street" area for businesses	60%

When asked about their businesses:

- 25% indicated they would be adding new products,
- 30% indicated they would be adding new space, and
- 20% indicated they would be adding new employees

These are indicators that in spite of the recession, numerous businesses were positive about future growth.

The ESEDC members present decided that they would take action on their priorities in this order:

1. Sustain existing businesses
2. Expand existing businesses
3. Grow new local businesses

Finally, the Committee recommended two very specific, low cost projects.

1. Expand park abutting northern end of Charles Street and create additional parking. Would support tourism and complement existing businesses.
2. Redesign of northern end of Dawson Street so that all traffic enters and exits NH Route 125 just to the north of Veterans Park. Would improve safety in downtown area and add additional parking spaces.

E. Current Business Situation in Milton

Existing Areas for Business and Commercial Growth

Major economic centers include the Index Packaging facility and the Milton Industrial Park both of which are off NH Route 125. The largest employer in Milton, Index Packaging is sited on 40 acres of land and has several buildings. The Milton Industrial Park has five (5) businesses and a day care center. The park will be full once a new business for wooden boat storage is constructed.

In or close to Milton's town center along the waterfront are Ray's Marina and MI-Te-Jo Campground. These two businesses are important economic components of the boating and outdoor recreational community. As noted the NH Farm Museum, in conjunction with local farms, provides a focus for increased agricultural activities.

Water and Sewer-

Water

Milton's water system includes two well sites, a 300,000 gallon storage tank, and all related distribution lines. The new well site at Rocky Point and Well #5 are both set up to draw, treat and pump approximately, a daily average of 100,000 gallons a day. This amount meets customer usage demands and maintains the storage tank at a level necessary to provide enough pressure in the system when the pumps are not running.

When the system is free of leaks the average daily usage is 90,000 gallons a day in the summer, and approximately 75,000 gallons in the winter. At these levels, pressure can be maintained for about 6 hours on an average day. During the past 2 plus years, due to major leaks, we have only operated for 5 months within our design limits, since December of 2011. While the system can reach a capacity of 200,000 gallons a day, it requires the pumps to run virtually 24 hours a day to fill the storage tank. This volume also exceeds the capacity of the treatment equipment.

The Water Department feels that the system is at about 90% capacity. In order to expand the system, the town would need to increase storage capacity and upgrade the treatment system.

Sewer

The Milton wastewater plant was designed to treat 100,000 gallons of domestic wastewater. At present, the plant treats approximately 55,000 to 60,000 gallons per day (GPD). The recommended

maximum daily flow is approximately 90,000 GPD or a 45% increase over the current flows. Consequently, there is substantial capacity for growth in the community. Should the plant approach this maximum flow the #1 and #2 lagoons would need to have the current sludge build up removed. The Sewer Department has some money set aside for this work. The system infrastructure (pipes, manholes, pump station, plant equipment) is in very good shape.

There also appear to be some groundwater inflow into the collection system, probably a result of illegally connected sump pumps rather than broken system pipes or bad joints. If the plant started to receive higher domestic flows, then this groundwater problem should be further investigated.

The treatment plant discharge permit with EPA is still pending. The Department filed for a renewal of the existing EPA discharge permit in 2005 and have not heard from EPA or NHDES. It is not clear if the Town will receive the same permit or a new permit with revised total phosphorus and total nitrogen effluent limits. These limits may be determined by the level of water quality degradation in Great Bay and the level of treatment required by EPA for other communities discharging treated wastewater into the Bay. Depending on the EPA recommended nutrient limits for one or both of these, the plant might require major capital improvement.

In 2011 the Strafford Regional Planning Commission prepared a Comprehensive Economic Development Study (CEDS) which investigated the economic state of Strafford County. One of the recommendations from that study was the development of a feasibility study for Milton's water and sewer service expansion. This project is summarized below. At present, there are no funds for such a study

2011 CEDS Recommended Project--Short term 0-36 months

Feasibility Study for the Extension of Water and Sewer Service in Milton 2011-006

Project Description

The Town of Milton is interested in exploring the feasibility of extending the Town's water and sewer service area. At present, the Town has sufficient capacity for both water and sewer and the intent would be to encourage additional non-residential development. The study would investigate the design, environmental, engineering and financial components related to the extension of water and sewer service. This is an important element of the Town's economic development effort.

Description of Goals met:

- Economic Development the expansion of the Town's water and sewer service will be targeted to those areas that have the potential for non-residential development. The overall goal is to encourage private investment in a manufacturing facility that will lead to new job creation, investment in new developments that will create new employment opportunities
- Resource and Environment --- overall improvement to the environment through the use of public water and sewer.

Access to Business

Milton has direct access to a regional roadway network. It is served by the Spaulding Turnpike a limited access roadway from Portsmouth where it connects directly to I-95 to Wakefield with two exits in Milton--#’s 17 and 18. It is also served directly by a major state highway—NH Route 125 (the White Mountain Highway) —that runs north-south through Milton including the village from the Massachusetts border north to Milton. The link to I-95 allows convenient access to markets in Portland, Maine and Boston, Massachusetts as well as other markets via the interstate system

Opportunities for Growth and Economic Development

There are a number of opportunities for economic growth and development in Milton. These include the following:

Access to the Spaulding Turnpike

Described elsewhere in this report, Milton has excellent access to the Spaulding Turnpike with two interchanges. Both of these have available land near the exits that could provide business development opportunities.

Rail

Northcoast Railway, which originates in Ossipee, NH passes through Wakefield, Milton, Rochester and Somersworth. This short freight railroad is accessible to a number of potential business parcels in Milton. In Rollinsford this line connects with a main line operated by Pan Am Railways, formerly known as Guilford Transportation. Pan Am owns the rail line on which Amtrak’s Down-easter operates through New Hampshire and provides rail freight services connecting to Portland and Boston area rail terminals.

The SRPC CEDS project recommended a rail siding in Milton as a means to take advantage of shipment of product by rail, especially by some of the businesses in Milton. Below is a description of that project.

2011 CEDS Recommended Project--Mid-Term Priority Projects (3-5 year Completion)

Milton Rail Siding 2011-022

Project Description

At present, Index Packaging in Milton, NH employs approximately 160 persons and ships about four (4) trucks a week to Boston for rail shipment to the Chicago area. Index has expressed an interest in using a local rail siding for shipment of its products directly by rail to the mid-west. The ability to ship product by rail from its Milton, NH facility will likely enable the company to expand its employment base. If there is interest in this project among potential funding agencies, the Town will contact other companies in the Milton and surrounding area to determine the potential level of demand for a public rail siding.

Description of Goals met:

- Economic Development: an increase in the number of jobs at companies who use rail.
- Resource and Environment: use a more energy efficient method of transportation of products to the client.
- Infrastructure: provide an infrastructure incentive for companies to use rail who may consider a location in Milton.

Good Municipal Services

In addition to water and sewer services in the village area, Milton also has what are considered to be good fire and police departments as well as libraries in both Milton Village and Milton Mills and a good Department of Public Works. Having such services are important both current and prospective businesses.

Recreational Infrastructure

Milton is blessed with the series of ponds—Milton Three Ponds—which can be accessed by boats and other recreational vehicles through private and public access points. Associated with this resource are such private entities as Ray's Marina and Mi Te Joe Campground.

The town has also set aside large land holdings through conservation easements or purchase. Many of these are managed by the Moose Mountain Regional Greenways that has hiking and walking trails on many of these parcels. This group also sponsors events and activities on these lands.

The Branch River Valley Trail

This 14 mile trail is a state identified Cultural and Scenic Byway that runs through Milton and Wakefield primarily on NH Routes 125, 153 and 16 with a branch over to Milton Mills on Applebee Road. This byway highlights the history of industrial, agricultural and tourism development in New Hampshire. The primary southern node is the New Hampshire Farm Museum. This route with the associated attractions and working farms and museums could provide a tourist opportunity for Milton.

Organizations Involved in Economic Development Assistance

There are numerous organizations that can provide economic development assistance to local communities, including Milton. Some these include:

Federal

- Northeastern Developer's Association
- US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Small Business Administration
- Workforce Opportunity Council
- US Department of Agriculture (Rural Development Program)
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (Community Development Block Grant Program)

State

- NH Department of Resources and Economic Development
- NH Office of Energy and Planning
- NH Department Employment Security
- NH Business Finance Authority
- New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority
- New Hampshire Community Loan Fund
- New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority

Regional

- Southeast Economic Development Corporation
- Wentworth Economic Development Corporation

Local

- Milton Business Association

Action Plan

Vision

Milton will promote a sustainable, diversified local economy that is consistent with the Town's rural and village character. Milton will work to retain its current businesses, foster business expansion as needed, and encourage new businesses to locate in the Town to broaden the Town's employment opportunities and tax base.

Objective 1: Retain Milton's existing business and industrial base.

Actions

- ED1.1: Establish an ongoing business visitation program to retain existing businesses.
- ED 1.2: Establish a local business outreach program whereby volunteers and town leaders meet with local industries and businesses to identify, assess and work to resolve local needs and overcome obstacles to future growth and expansion within the community.
- ED 1.3: Develop a business assistance program, which provides small business owners with networking opportunities, technical assistance, and practical education in business management. Available resources include:

Technical Assistance

- International Trade Resource Center
- Vendor Matching Program, Office of Business and Industrial Development
- Procurement Technical Assistance Program, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED)
- NH Industrial Research Center

Business Planning and Management Workshops and Counseling

- UNH Small Business Development Center
- Service Corps of Retires Executives (SCORE)
- Great Bay Community College at Pease International Tradeport

- ED 1.4: Develop formal links with graduate and undergraduate business and technical programs at the University of New Hampshire MBA programs, the New Hampshire College MBA Program and the NH Community College System to facilitate technology and information transfer. Such relationships facilitate the

matching of student academic and community service projects with local business needs.

Objective 2: Encourage and attract development of new diversified business and industry consistent with the Town's vision.

Actions

- ED 2.1: Conduct an inventory of underutilized, vacant commercial and industrial parcels and buildings within the Town.
- ED 2.2: Undertake a full evaluation of the land areas adjacent to Interchanges 17 and 18 of the Spaulding Turnpike for business development. Assess the feasibility of development based on ease of access, environmental impact and development capability.
- ED 2.3: Become involved in the "economic development network" of the Seacoast area. Find out what other communities are doing and work collaboratively with industrial developers and federal, regional and state agencies engaged in economic development.
- ED 2.4: Expand development of the Milton Industrial Park or locate additional areas for industrial development.
- ED 2.5: Undertake a marketing program to attract new businesses to Milton and retain existing businesses. This program should include:
- Developing an economic development brochure in paper and flash drive format to provide information about the economic development assets of the town.
 - Continue to develop and maintain a separate page for economic development on the Town's web site. This site should include the town's point of contact for economic development, a community profile, Milton's current economic conditions, setting, trends, and factors affecting economic development as well as a current listing of available business space. The site should also include a public relations information section promoting Milton as a place to do business.
 - Add the completed Strategic Economic Development Plan to the website.
- ED 2.6: Develop a checklist of business characteristics that would be suitable for Milton and prepare a marketing strategy to attract such businesses development that offers high skilled jobs.

This type of business marketing should be done in the context of the following questions:

- What type of impact will this type of use have on future commercial and industrial development of the Town and the immediate area?
- What types of employment opportunities are promoted by the proposed activity?
- How does the type of activity affect the character of a community?
- What service does the proposed use provide the citizens of Milton?
- What financial costs, if any, does the proposed use place upon the citizens of Milton?
- What environmental impacts/costs does the proposed use place upon the citizens of Milton?

Objective 3: Initiate an economic development program to oversee economic development activity in Milton.

Actions

- ED 3.1: Establish a standing Milton Economic Development Committee (MEDC) to provide policy direction and oversee the implementation of the town's economic development program.
- ED 3.2: Assist local businesses and prospective developers by providing information on grants, loans, tax credits, guarantees, equity and tax incentives and other resource information.
- ED 3.3: Seek grant funds and financing from state and federal agencies.
- ED 3.5: Prepare a listing and inventory of businesses and industries and the type and skill level of jobs provided in Milton.
- ED 3.6: Consider a regional approach to economic development working in partnership with the regional planning commission, the regional economic development corporation, and adjacent communities which may have mutual economic development goals.
- ED 3.7: Continue to participate in the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Planning Strategy) process.

Objective 4: Ensure that Milton’s land use policies and regulation are consistent with the economic development goal.

Actions

- ED 4.1: Evaluate commercial, industrial and retail zoning regulations to ensure that they are designed to encourage the type and quality of development that the Town determines it wants.
- ED 4.3: Examine and update the Table of Permitted Uses in the Zoning Ordinance as well as consider providing more flexibility in the determination of permitted uses.
- ED 4.4: Assess the development review process and modify development regulations, as appropriate, to combine and streamline the permitting process.
- ED 4.5: Promote opportunities for diverse workforce housing, assuring housing availability for workers of expanding businesses and new firms.

Objective 5: Provide a level of public infrastructure and services that enables economic development in a cost-effective manner.

Actions

- ED 5.1: Advocate for funding from the NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT) through the regional transportation planning process for a corridor study along NH Route 125 to properly coordinate development, access and traffic improvements.
- ED 5.2 Continue to invest wisely in public infrastructure such as such as roads, bridges, and sewer and water facilities.
- ED 5.3: Continue efforts to upgrade the water and wastewater systems to assure adequate water and wastewater capacity is available to meet current and future demands of residential, industrial and commercial land uses. Fund a Feasibility Study to investigate the environmental and cost feasibility of extending Town water and Town sewer to the Exit 17 area and Exit 18 area. (Consistent with CEDS recommendation.)
- ED 5.4: Install WiFi technology within and adjacent to public buildings and facilities and encourage the availability of WiFi technology for local residents, businesses, and visitors.

- ED 5.5: Advocate for a public rail siding in Milton along the Northcoast Railroad Line consistent with the CEDS recommendation.

Objective 6: Support and expand opportunities for cultural activities, recreation and tourism.

Actions

- ED 6.1 Support the programs and endeavors of the New Hampshire Farm Museum as a means to encourage agriculture and culture as an economic activity.
- ED 6.2: Work with the NH Office of Travel and Tourism to ensure that Milton is included in its state promotional activities including recognition of Milton as an historical mill and agricultural community as well as a tourist destination.
- ED 6.3: Work with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission, the NH DOT and the Office of Travel and Tourism to highlight and advertise the Branch River Trail Cultural and Scenic Byway.
- ED 6.4: Install quality signage on Route 125 at the Spaulding Turnpike exits to direct tourists to the NH Farm Museum and downtown Farmington. This may be accomplished through a collaborative effort with the high school shop class.
- ED 6.5 Continue to support events such Winter Carnival in February and initiate other special historic or cultural events in the summer months to draw tourists to retail and recreational opportunities in downtown Milton and at the NH Farm Museum.

Objective 7: Revitalize Downtown Farmington

Revitalization should also include public improvements in the downtown area. Such improvements will help to create a sense of place and improve the business climate, in turn contributing to the downtown's overall economic health. Public improvements to streets and sidewalks also tend to stimulate private investment.

- ED 7.1 Improve the aesthetic appearance of downtown Milton through the improvement of lighting, sidewalks, drainage and public signage.
- ED 7.2 Continue to beautify public green areas through the planting of flowers, shrubs, and trees to make them downtown focal points. Initiate adopt-a-spot programs whereby civic organizations and businesses agree to plant and maintain particular public spaces of a two year period.

ED 7.3 Improve the appearance of downtown commercial structures through facade improvements.

ED 7.4 Encourage downtown pedestrian use of municipal parking through enhanced signage and working with downtown businesses.

ED 7.5 Consider establishing a Downtown Business Association to:

- Act as a forum for ideas, advocacy, planning, cooperative marketing, and joint promotions.
- Cooperatively market downtown services and products, including marketing revises to employees of major employers.
- Sponsor special events.
- Link downtown retail and service businesses with employees of local businesses.

Appendix A

Memorandum

Date: May 14, 2012

To: Economic Development Advisory Committee
Board of Selectmen
Milton, New Hampshire

From: Jack Mettee, AICP
Mettee Planning Consultants

Re: Results of Community Kickoff Forum May 8, 2012
Milton Town Hall—Emma Ramsey Center

On May 8th Milton held a Kickoff Forum for the Strategic Economic Development Project at the Milton Town Hall. Approximately 7 people attended. The participants are listed on **Attachment A**. The purpose of this forum was to elicit from the participants what they see as Milton's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to economic development for the next 5 to 10 years.

The meeting was led and facilitated by Jack Mettee, AICP of Mettee Planning Consultants with the assistance of Jerry Coogan, AICP Milton's contract planner

Top Strengths-Turnpike exits, municipal services and recreational facilities

As facilitator Mr. Mettee first asked the participants to identify what they felt were Milton's strengths. Each of these was listed on newsprint sheets. All of the identified strengths with the vote tallies for those receiving votes are listed in **Attachment B**. Once all of the strengths were listed, each of the forum participants was asked to vote for priority strengths. Each participant was given five sticky dots which were to be attached beside the priority items selected by that participant. Once the voting was completed, the votes were tallied. The three highest vote getters are noted below. Each of these received four votes.

Based on these results, it would appear that the forum participants like the availability of land near the Spaulding Turnpike, good municipal services and recreational opportunities as assets to support economic development

3 Top Ranked Strengths:

- Two exits on Spaulding Turnpike, each with adjacent developable land (4)
- Good municipal services—fire, police, libraries, DPW (4)
- Local recreational facilities, e.g., Milton Three Ponds (4)

Top Challenge is Staying Small, Retaining Rural Character

The group was then asked to go through a similar process to determine the key weaknesses facing Milton in the next 5-10 years. Again each participant was given an opportunity to identify the town's weaknesses. Each of the identified weaknesses with the vote tallies for those receiving votes are also listed in **Attachment B**. Each participant was then asked to prioritize the challenges through the same type of voting process that was used for determining the top strengths.

The three highest vote getters are listed below. Each of these received four votes. Based on these results, it would appear that the forum participants feel the school system, lack of access to potential industrial land and a full industrial park are impediments to future economic development.

3 Top Ranked Weaknesses:

- School system (4)
- Lack of curb cuts on NH Routes 75 and 125 at Exit 18 (4)
- Minimal land/zoning for industry-Industrial park full (4)

Opportunities and Threats

Once these tasks were completed, the facilitator then asked each participant to identify opportunities and threats to Milton's economic development. These were also posted on newsprint sheets, but no voting occurred.

Opportunities

The following were identified as opportunities by the forum participants:

- Grow your business in small town
- Allowing development adjacent to Exits 17 & 18 of Spaulding Turnpike while leaving remainder of Milton more rural
- Widening of Spaulding in Rochester will allow greater access
- Draw on Rochester's economic growth
- Assistance from agencies such as WEDCO, NH DRED, PSNH, etc.
- Hi Tech infrastructure

- Industrial land “cook book” for development.

Threats

- Additional commercial development along NH Route 11 in Rochester/ Farmington drawing business that could come to Milton
- Potential for large scale forest/brush fire, e.g., 1946
- Fragile business climate
- Hydroelectric facility on Milton Three Ponds affecting recreational opportunities.

Next Steps

Based on the results of this exercise, the Advisory Committee will prepare a Vision for the future of Milton and general goals that will need to be achieved to reach its vision. Once this is completed the consultant will work with the Committee and the town on an action plan implement the strategic plan.

Exhibit 1

Strengths:

- Small town with small town atmosphere (3)
- Two exits on Spaulding turnpike, each with adjacent developable land (4)
- Excellent regional location—near mountains, lakes and Seacoast (2)
- Townspeople with lots to offer (3)
- Safe community; good place to live (2)
- Milton Mills—livable, human scale village with library and compact residential area (2)
- Railroad (2)
- Value of having local businesses (3)
- Not a bright light downtown
- Good municipal services—fire, police, libraries, DPW (4)
- New Hampshire Farm Museum; local agriculture (1)
- Local recreational facilities, e.g., Milton Three Ponds (4)

3 Top Ranked Strengths each with 4 votes

- Two exits on Spaulding turnpike, each with adjacent developable land (4)
- Good municipal services—fire, police, libraries, DPW (4)
- Local recreational facilities, e.g., Milton Three Ponds (4)

Weaknesses:

- Steep topography (1)
- School system (4)
- High tax rate (3)
- Lack of housing for workers (3)
- Limited availability of water and sewer (3)
- Large amount of conservation land (not current use) (1)
- No banking facility
- Lack of curb cuts on NH Routes 75 and 125 at Exit 18 (4)
- Minimal land/zoning for industry-Industrial park full (4)
- Lack of land in and poor access to downtown Milton (1)
- Lack of Master Plan Update (3)
- Town House Bridge out (2)

3 Top Ranked Weaknesses:

- School system (4)
- Lack of curb cuts on NH Routes 75 and 125 at Exit 18 (4)
- Minimal land/zoning for industry-Industrial park full (4)