

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY WIDE ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The City of Milton, the county seat of Santa Rosa County, is located near the center of this western Florida Panhandle County, adjacent to the Blackwater River. The City of Milton is among the oldest cities in Florida, incorporated in 1844 under the Florida Territorial Acts of 1844. In founding days, the Blackwater River served as the main transportation artery for timber, lumber, brick, naval stores and ship building industries. Milton roots go back to the early 1800's when people began settling along the banks of the river. In its earliest days, the settlement may have been referred to simply as "Blackwater." The origin of the name Milton is uncertain, but was likely a derivation of "Milltown," demonstrating the importance of the lumber industry in the area. Legend has it that the area was also referred to by one of its most irritating features: the brambles and briars that once grew along the banks of the river. Hence, in early days Milton was referred to as "Scratch Ankle."

The Civil War had a catastrophic effect on progress in the city, being most commercial facilities were destroyed early in the war to prevent their use by Federal troops. Many residents fled to Alabama during the war and many lost their estates.

In the early 1880's, the railroad came to town, bringing a new dimension to the commercial activities of the area. Soon, railroad tracks covered the county, extending deep into the forests north of town as timber related industries flourished. Small towns such as Munson and Belandville began to spring up along the tracks. As virgin forestlands were cleared, farming became a major industry, with cotton and peanuts becoming the staple crops.

The first Courthouse in Milton, located on Berryhill Road on the site of the current Berryhill School Administration building, served as the Town Hall. Three devastating fires struck Milton in 1885 and 1892. Each largely destroyed the commercial sections of town. The worst fire of all, in 1909, razed almost every building within two blocks of the river, including the Town Hall. One of the few buildings remaining was the old courthouse. Downtown Milton today reflects the aggressive rebuilding effort that took place in the years following after this fire.

In the early part of the 20th Century, the City of Milton began to provide many of the services and conveniences of larger cities. In 1910, an electrical plant was installed at the edge of town on Berryhill Road. Shortly after, a modern waterworks, with 110-foot tall steel water tower, was erected at the same site. The Milton Fire Department was established in 1914. Over the next several years infrastructure began as sewer lines were laid, and streets were paved. A bridge was built across the Blackwater River at the foot of Grace Street, replacing the ferry which operated from the end of Berryhill Road for over 70 years.

As World War II approached, the trees were disappearing and the lumber industry began to decline. But war produced the need for Naval Aviators and the U. S. Navy built N.A.S. Whiting Field north of Milton. Over time, Whiting Field, and its associated outlying fields, became the preeminent training facility for Naval Aviators, and a vital part of our community. Census estimates put Milton's population at over 9,000 residents for the roughly five square mile city. Milton operates with a Council - Manager form of government. Manufacturing, service, farming and military are now major industries of the area. Milton is a vital, progressive city able to maintain the fine balance between small town charm and modern urban life. While the growth in new housing continues, historic preservation remains important, as exhibited in the City's Downtown Historic District.

A. POPULATION TRENDS AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1. Population Trends

The rate of population growth in Milton has been higher than the statewide rate of growth. Between 2000 and 2010 the State of Florida grew at approximately 1.76 percent and Santa Rosa County grew at nearly 2.86 percent. During the same time period Milton grew at a rate of 2.53 percent. The growth rate of Milton from 1990 to 2000 was -0.2 percent but over 2.00 percent in the decade following. Of the 3 municipalities in Santa Rosa County, Milton has had the highest rate of population growth since 2000.

2. Current and Projected Population

Table 1 displays historic and projected population figures for Milton. In 1990 the City had a population of 7,216. The 2010 census population for Milton was 8,826, and represents a 20.18 percent increase over the 2000 Census population. This growth is a result of new development within the City, as well as annexations of portions of unincorporated Santa Rosa County and the subsequent development of those lands. The population figures shown below are taken from the US Census; they were collected and calculated by the Shimberg Center of the University of Florida.

Table 1.1:
City of Milton Population Estimates, 1990-2025

Year	Population Estimates	Population Change
1990	7,216	N/A
2000	7,045	-171
2007	7,717	+672
2010	8,826	+1,109
2015	9844	+950
2020	10923	+1079
2025	11980	+1057

University of Florida, Shimberg Center

For the next decade the population is projected to maintain a growth rate of 3 percent. After 2015, the population growth rate is projected to be less than the previous period, but only moderately. By 2025, the City is projected to have a total population of 11,980 residents.

3. Housing Demand & Development

Table 2 highlights the projected housing needs for Milton through 2025. The demand for housing units was projected by dividing the population estimate (permanent residents) by the average number of persons per household for the City, or 2.31 persons according to the U.S. Census (2007-2011 American Community Survey). The projected housing demand should only be used for planning level analyses. In addition, housing demand is dynamic and is affected by many influences, including market conditions, household income, and inflation.

**Table 1.2:
Projected housing Demand, 2010-2025**

Year	Population Estimate	Projected Demand for Housing Units
2010	8747	3786
2015	9844	4261
2020	10923	4728
2025	11980	5186

University of Florida, Shimberg Center

Table 3 below illustrates the number of households in the City in 2009 according to the proportion of a household's annual income paid for housing, by ownership type. Around 21.8 percent of the owner occupied households are "cost-burdened," while 32.1 percent of the renter occupied households are "cost-burdened." A household that is "cost-burdened" is spending more than 30 percent of its income on housing. The proportion of all owner-occupied households that are "severely cost-burdened" is 8.5 percent. The proportions of all renter-occupied households in Milton that are "severely cost-burdened" are 14.9 percent, and nearly double the proportion for owner-occupied households. A household is considered "severely cost-burdened" if it spends more than 50 percent of its income on housing.

**Table 1.3:
City of Milton Households,
Amount of Income Paid for Housing by Ownership, 2009**

Ownership Type	0-30%	30-50%	50% or More	Total
Owner	1426	241	156	1823
Renter	866	219	190	1275

University of Florida, Shimberg Center, 2010

Table 4 shows the households in Milton by income level and the approximate percentages of income those households paid for housing. Nearly 74 percent of all households in the City are not classified as cost-burdened, and more than 58 percent of all households fall into those affordable for moderate income levels. The proportion of households that are “cost-burdened” is approximately 26 percent, and the vast majority of those are within the very low and extremely low income categories.

Table 1.4: City of Milton Households, Proportion of Income Paid for Housing, 2009, Household Income as Percentage of Area Median Income

Income Category	0-30%	30-50%	50% or More	Total
Extremely Low AMI	115	33	209	357
Very Low AMI	188	145	88	421
Low AMI	330	145	35	510
Moderate AMI	1659	137	14	1810
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	2292	460	346	3098

University of Florida, Shimberg Center, 2008

Those households in the extremely low income category as well as the very low income category likely have a difficult time finding affordable housing within the City. The percentage of extremely low income households that are not cost-burdened is less than one third of all households in that income category, though for very low income households the percentage rises to 44.3 percent.

Generally, the availability of affordable housing within the City is adequate based on only 11 percent of the City’s total households contribute 50 percent or more of their income towards housing.

B. CHANGES IN LAND AREA

1. Annexations

In 1990 the total acreage of the City was 2,487.31 acres. The current City acreage stands at 3,702 acres (2012). This increase of 1,214.69 acres is attributed to annexations of County land. The majority of these annexations include several large areas and developments, including 83 parcels along Highway 90. The City currently owns 256.3 acres within the city limits. Table 5 presents the annexations since 1998.

**Table 1.5:
Recent City of Milton Annexations**

	DESCRIPTION	ORD #	Effective Date	Land Area Acres
1.	HWY 90 ANNEXATION, 83 PARCELS 496.22 ACRES	1032	12-14-99	496.22
2.	COMP PLAN AMENDMENT RE: 1959 ANNEX 53.8 ACRES	1137-03	12-09-03	53.8
3.	ASHTON WOODS ANNEXATION 52.79 ACRES	1056	08-08-00	52.79
4.	ADJACENT LOT TO RUSSELL HARBER EXTENSION	1110-03	02-11-03	40
5.	SUMMERTOWNE ANNEX 26.36 AC	1224-06	11-14-06	26.36
6.	TARYN'S ESTATE, 19.5 ACRES	1170-05	05-11-04	19.5
7.	RUSSELL HARBER LNDG EXTENSION 35-2N-28-0000-01301-0000	1106	12-10-02	3.74
8.	ANNEXATION OF 6 PARCELS OFF DOGWOOD/WISTERIA/HONEYSUCKLE (APRX 4 ACRES 4 PARCELS – MOONEY, PET #2 6396 WISTERIA, PET #1 6391 HONEYSUCKLE, PET #3	1267-07 1268-07 1269-07	01/08/08 01/08/08 01/08/08	3.38
9.	6339 HONEYSUCKLE	1296-08	10/14/08	0.986
10.	6373 HONEYSUCKLE	1272-08	03/11/08	0.826
11.	TOM THUMB ANNEX – GLOVER LN	1093	06-11-02	0.819
12.	RENTION POND ADJ VANITY FAIR .74 ACRES	1133-03	12-09-03	0.74

13.	PARCEL ADJ FORSYTH HS, BHILL RD SN-28-0000-03604-0000 .47 ACRES	1115-03	04-08-03	0.47
14.	JACKSON LANE ANNEXATION, 2 LOTS	1015	8-10-99	0.3
15	NFWFMD PROPERTY	1338-10	12-14-10	67.82
16	NFWFMD	1339-10	12-14-10	3.14
17	4917 GLOVER LANE	1364-12	1-10-12	1.14

City of Milton, Department of Planning and Development

Total Area in Square Miles: 1.206293

Total Area in Acres: 772.031 Acres

2. Location of Actual and Anticipated Development

During the last planning period, most of the growth in Milton was along the City's northwestern edge. This is expected to continue, even though growth is targeted toward infill and redevelopment. According to the Santa Rosa County EAR, the County expects future growth activity for its territories to occur along the city's corridors. In addition to the City's designated redevelopment areas, Milton does possess vacant land which will likely be a major contributor to the future growth of the City.

FLUM Amendments Since 1998

Table 6 below displays the approved FLUM amendments from 1998 to 2012. The FLUM amendments range in size from 67.82 acres to less than 1.00 acres. Two other amendments were over 50 acres (50.3 acres and 52.79 acres respectively), and one amendment in 2003 changed the FLU designation of 40 acres. Six of the 14 amendments were less than an acre. For those 14 amendments half were considered small scale (less than 10 acres). The largest by far 496 acres was the annexation of commercial property along the city's principle east west corridor U.S. 90 amendments resulted in approximately 118 acres of increases in density and intensity, and decreases for approximately 67 acres.

Table 1.6:
Future Land Use Map Amendments, 1998-2012

Year	Acres	Existing FLU Designation	Amended FLU Designation
1999	3.84	Single-Family Residential	Multi-Family Residential
2002	1.08	Single-Family Residential	Multi-Family Residential

2003	18.48	Industrial	SFR; Multi-Family Res. & Commercial
2004	N/A	Commercial	Multi-Family Residential
2005	2.41	Single-Family Residential	Commercial
2006	2.21	Single-Family Residential	Residential-Commercial
2007	2.02	Single-Family Residential	Residential-Commercial
2007	0.51	Single-Family Residential	Commercial
2008	2.68	Multi-Family Residential	Commercial
2010	67.82	NWFWMD	Public
2010	3.14	NWFWMD	Public
2012	1.14	County	Commercial

City of Milton, Department of Planning and Development (2012)

The overall effect of the large scale amendments on the City was a general maintenance of the status quo. Even though the amendments produced an overall increase in the density and intensity in uses on the FLUM, the effects of these amendments are only significant when their location relative to each other and to existing uses are taken into account.

The great majority of the land use changes occurred in 1999. This accounted for nearly 64 percent of the total land use changes. More than 496 acres of the 772.03 acres was one land use change. Therefore, the City of Milton's Future Land Use Map has anticipated where development will occur relatively well.

Over the next several years, commercial growth will continue to occur along the city's corridors and around their interchanges. As soon as the residential markets come back, the majority of the future residential development is predicted to be largely in the north and east.

Other types of development that will occur within the City include small-scale development within the City's Central Business District in the older, southeastern part of Milton, and larger, high-profile commercial/office/distribution.

3. Land Use Analysis

The City maintains an Existing Land Use (ELU) map and a Future Land Use (FLU) map of all parcels within the City, as well as for the Santa Rosa County enclaves within the City. Currently, one of the largest existing land uses in the City is Single Family Residential which covers over

37.00 percent of the City’s total land. This percentage speaks to the residential character of the City. Additionally, the City has over 500 acres of existing Commercial land uses (nearly 15.00 percent), and approximately 37 acres of existing Industrial land uses, or approximately 1 percent of the City’s total area. The low percentage of industrial land uses is indicative of a “commuter town”.

**Table 1.7:
Existing Land Use, 2012**

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Commercial	599.54	16.19%
Industrial	37.18	1.00%
Institutional	229.34	6.19%
Mixed Use (RC)	49.46	1.34%
Multi-Family Residential	58.42	1.57%
Planned Development	68.76	1.86%
Public	143.33	3.87%
Recreational	135.72	3.67%
Single-Family Residential	1416.40	38.26%
Transportation	451.39	12.19%
Undeveloped	513.61	13.87%
Water Features	131.29	3.55%
Total	3702.05	100.00%

Santa Rosa County, 2012

Vacant Developable Land Analysis

The City of Milton is approximately 77 percent built out. There are roughly 830 acres of undeveloped land, representing approximately 23 percent of the City’s land area. The figure for

'Undeveloped' land in Table 7 reflects land acreage that is not currently classified as another land use though there are roughly 300 additional acres presently vacant or undeveloped in the other various land use categories. Table 8 presents the City's undeveloped land by future land use.

**Table 1.8:
Undeveloped Land by Future Land Use**

Future Land Use	Acres
Commercial	120.44
Industrial	24.79
Public Lands	160.79
Recreation	4.79
Rural Urban	.45
Single-Family Residential	292.25
Multi-Family Residential	217.39
Residential-Commercial	10.04
TOTAL	830.94

City of Milton Department of Planning and Development, 2013

C. FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

Section 163.3191(2) (c), F.S. requires that the EAR evaluate the City of Milton's ability to achieve and maintain their adopted level-of-service (LOS) standards for all public facilities. The EAR is also required to present the financial feasibility of implementing the plan to meet the demands of growth on public services and facilities.

1. *Financial Feasibility of Comprehensive Plan Implementation – Retrospective*

The City has been sporadically preparing annual Concurrency Management Reports (CMRs) since at least 2005. Based on a review of past CMRs, and following analysis of current data there are no public facilities with identified LOS issues. Regarding transportation, a LOS issue was identified on Highway 90 at its intersection with Stewart Street around 2007. The City was relying on data derived from Santa Rosa County to track potential transportation concurrency issues. The county working through DCA developed a different methodology for determining concurrency

and the road segment in question met standards as a result of the change. The following information presents the current LOS for public facilities and the projected LOS to demonstrate the changes that will be needed for the EAR-based amendments to adopt a financially feasible comprehensive plan.

2. *Financial Feasibility of Comprehensive Plan Implementation – Future*

The Capital Improvements Element (CIE) contains objectives and policies designed to achieve and maintain adopted LOS standards for public facilities. The CIE policies describe the City's process for ranking projects according to community need, as well as debt management and annual budget. The CIE Data and Analysis outlines the structure and functions of the Concurrency Management System, and *CIE Policy 2.1.1* incorporates this analysis and description by reference. The Data and Analysis also contains the City's Capital Improvement Schedule for projects related to maintaining public facility concurrency in that document's Table VIII-1, as noted in *Capital Improvement Element, Policy 1.3.2*.

3. *Maintenance of Adopted Level of Service Standards*

The City of Milton has adopted LOS standards for each of the following types of public facilities and services:

- Roads
- Potable water
- Wastewater/sanitary sewer
- Stormwater
- Solid waste
- Recreation and open space
- Public school facilities