

2009 Milton Planning Board Questionnaire

1. WELCOME!

Thank you for taking this questionnaire. This is the first step in a multi-year process of creating a new Master Plan for the Town of Milton. The Milton Planning Board will use your responses to help us prioritize areas for consideration by the town.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41 Section 81D specifies nine areas that the Master Plan should cover. Questions in this questionnaire touch on six of those areas and ask for information about you. It is intended to give the Planning Board information needed to determine the next step in the process.

Questions have been determined by Planning Board members, other elected officials and Milton department heads. All answers are confidential - we do not ask you for your name or address. If you have any questions, or would like to be involved in the ongoing process, please email William Clark, the Town Planner, at wclark@townofmilton.org.

Responses are due by 31 March 2009. The Planning Board plans to issue a summary of the initial results at the Annual Town Meeting and schedule a public meeting to discuss the results in more detail in June.

Please encourage your friends and family to answer this questionnaire as well. The more responses we receive, the more valuable the process will be.

Milton Planning Board
Emily Innes, Chairman
Peter Jackson, Secretary
Edward Duffy
Bernard Lynch
Alexander Whiteside
William Clark, Town Planner

2. Directions

Part I gives a short history of planning in Milton, defines some terms used in the survey, and asks some general questions about you and about how you view the town. It consists of 17 questions.

Part II asks more detailed questions on land use, parks and open space, housing, and economic development. It consists of 25 questions.

Part III asks even more specific questions on protection of open space, housing, economic development (including new business zones), bicycling and town services. It consists of 40 questions.

Most questions require you to answer "yes", "no", or "no opinion". Some ask you to rank your answers in order.

You will have an opportunity at the end of each section to quit the questionnaire or go on to the more detailed sections.

You may also leave the questionnaire and come back to it.

Once you press "Done", you cannot go back to the questionnaire. You must press "Done" prior to 31 March 2009 or your survey will not be recorded.

The Planning Board understands that your time is valuable. However, the more detail you provide, the more valuable this survey becomes. The time to take the full survey is about an hour.

3. A Very Short History of Planning in Milton

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Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41 Section 81D requires the Planning Board to create a master plan for the town, although the state does not provide any funding for this mandate. Milton's last formal master plan process took place in the 1970's and is now outdated as there have been a number of changes to the town, and many changes in municipal planning practice.

The Town of Milton and the Planning Board have been involved in several studies over the last few years. The Urban Land Institute Boston studied the Central Avenue Business District in 2005 and the 2004 Community Development Plan examined aspects of housing, economic development, open space and transportation. These studies can be found on the Planning Board's page on the town's website: www.townofmilton.org.

However, these studies do not cover the same range of elements required for a master plan. There is a need for a new master plan. Members of the Planning Board, other town officials, and residents of the town have often discussed this need.

Cost estimates for a full master plan have been as high as \$200,000. Funding of this order is highly improbable given the fiscal realities for the state and local municipalities in this economic environment.

The Planning Board hopes that by using the information received from this survey, we can target the elements of most concern to the residents of Milton and apply for grants or other funding so as to make a start in the master planning process.

4. Definitions

Planning Board Terms

ZONING is the classification of areas of land so as to permit certain types of buildings and uses in those areas.

A SPECIAL PERMIT is a procedure by which the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals applies specific standards and criteria to a development proposal and issues a permit for the development only if those standards and criteria have been met.

SITE PLAN REVIEW is a procedure by which the Planning Board reviews the design of a development and may order changes in order to ensure a quality development.

SUBDIVISION CONTROL is the system (1) for limitation of new building lots to lots which have the requisite area and street frontage specified in the zoning and (2) for construction of new streets.

5. Tell Us About Yourself

1. The vast majority of Milton is zoned for single-family residential houses. The residence zones AA, A, B and C require respectively lots of 80,000, 40,000, 20,000 and 7,500 square feet for construction of single-family homes. In addition, there is provision for elderly housing at Unquity House, Winter Valley and Fuller Village and for housing at Home Inc. and condominiums at Quisset Brook. Special condominium provisions also apply to several other sites. The Milton Housing Authority leases a number of rental units. Rental and ownership housing is also permitted in the business district.

I live in the:

<input type="checkbox"/> AA zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Winter Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> A zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Fuller Village	<input type="checkbox"/> The business district
<input type="checkbox"/> B zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Inc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<input type="checkbox"/> C zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Quisset Brook	<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> Unquity House	<input type="checkbox"/> Other condominium	

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2. Check all that apply:

I am a Milton resident.

I am a Milton business owner.

I work in Milton.

I am a student in Milton

I used to live in Milton.

I do not live in Milton.

3. If you are a resident, how long have you lived here?

0-5 years

6-10 years

11-20 years

21+ years

All my life

4. How old are you?

0-13

26-35

65-74

14-18

36-54

75+

19-25

55-64

5. In which precinct do you live?

1

5

9

2

6

10

3

7

11

4

8

Not sure

6. If you currently have school-age children, where do they attend school?

Public

Private in Milton

Private outside Milton

Home-schooled

Not Applicable

6. Business Owners

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7. Do you own your own business?

Yes

No

8. If yes, is it

	Yes	No
located in Milton?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
home-based?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. If your business is not located in Milton, would you move your business to Milton if space were available?

Yes

No

Not sure

10. What kind of business do you own?

Retail

Office

Other (please specify)

7. Your commute

11. Do you commute to work?

Yes

No

12. If so, how? (Check all that apply.)

Car

Commuter Rail

Bicycle

Bus

Ride Sharing

Trolley/T

Walking

8. Tell Us Your Vision for Milton

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13. How do you feel about living in Milton?

	Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Most satisfied
1. as a place to live	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
B. as a place to raise children	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
C. as a place to do business	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
D. Buildings/places of historical character	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
E. Community pride and friendliness	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
F. Passive recreation facilities	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
G. Protected open space	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
H. Reputation of public schools	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
I. Small town rural New England character	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
J. Overall appeal of the community	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

14. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following municipal services in Milton:

	Not at all satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Most Satisfied
A. Public Schools	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
B. Law enforcement	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
C. Fire Protection and Prevention	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
D. Street Lighting	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
E. Road Maintenance	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
F. Yard Waste pick-up	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
G. Trash pick-up	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
H. Library	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
I. Senior Center	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
J. Parks and Recreation	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

15. Please tell us how you feel about Milton. What are its strengths and weaknesses? What do you like best about Milton? What do you like least? Why do you live here? What would you change if you could? What do you want to remain the same? How do you see Milton in the years to come?

9. Help Us Plan!

16. Would you be willing to serve on a committee that would gather data and work with the Planning Board on one of the topics in Question 17?

jn Yes

jn No

jn Not sure

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17. If you would be willing to help, please rank your interests, with 1 being the most important issue to you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Land Use	jn						
Housing	jn						
Economic Development	jn						
Cultural, Historical and Natural Resources	jn						
Open Space	jn						
Town Facilities and Services	jn						
Traffic Circulation	jn						

Because this questionnaire is completely confidential, please email the chair of the Planning Board, Emily Innes, at ekimilton@gmail.com or the Town Planner, William Clark, at wclark@townofmilton.org if you wish to participate in further master planning activities.

10. Part I: Finished

* 18. You are now finished with Part I of the survey.

Part II will ask more detailed questions on land use, housing, parks and open space, and economic development (including current business districts).

Part III will ask about new business zones, more specific types of housing, protection of open space, town services and bicycling.

Do you want to continue?

jn Yes

jn No

Remember, you can come back and finish the survey later. Just don't hit the "done" button at the end of the survey.

11. Current Land Use

Answers to this section will indicate how you feel in general about land use in Milton and how you feel about changing land use. Possible uses of land include residential, business, municipal, open space, and institutional. Significant changes to land use will, in general, require changes to the zoning bylaws.

19. Are you satisfied with the current land use

	Yes	No	Maybe	No Opinion
in your neighborhood?	jn	jn	jn	jn
in other areas of town?	jn	jn	jn	jn

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20. If you are not satisfied, is the reason for your dissatisfaction that the current zoning is too restrictive?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Are there any other reasons?

21. Do you believe Milton's current zoning needs to be changed?

	Yes	No	Maybe	No Opinion
in areas zoned residential	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in areas zoned for business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Do you believe Milton's current land uses can be significantly changed without any adverse impact to the quality of life of its residents?

	Yes	No	Maybe	No Opinion
in residential zones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in business zones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Do you believe that changes in land use could improve the quality of life of Milton's residents?

	Yes	No	Maybe	No Opinion
for residential use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
for business use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Would more dense development of a significant scale result in a significant improvement in Milton's ability to meet its expenses?

	Yes	No	Maybe	No Opinion
in residential zones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in commercial zones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

25. Do you use the parks, recreation areas, and other open spaces in Milton?

Yes

No

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26. How often?

Daily

Monthly

Weekly

Occasionally

27. Which activities do you use the parks, recreation areas and open spaces for?

Athletic Activities

Bicycling

Family Activities

Youth Sports

Walk Dog

Hiking or Walking

Nature Observation

28. Does the Town offer a wide variety of recreation programs?

Yes

No

No Opinion

If not, are there other programs the Town could reasonably provide?

29. Do you feel all areas of Milton have

Yes

No

No opinion

adequate parks and recreation areas?

Yes

No

No opinion

adequate natural open space areas?

Yes

No

No opinion

If not, where would you add parks or open space?

Specific questions on protecting open space can be found in Part III.

13. Housing

30. In existing large houses with adequate parking, where the homeowner has more space than is reasonably needed for the household, should the Town allow the following:

Yes

No

No Opinion

condominium units?

Yes

No

No opinion

rental apartments?

Yes

No

No opinion

bed and breakfasts?

Yes

No

No opinion

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31. Would Milton be a more desirable community with increased development in residential zones

	Yes	No	Maybe	No Opinion
of condominium units?	ja	ja	ja	ja
of rental apartments?	ja	ja	ja	ja

32. Does your household include

	Yes	No
adult members of more than one generation?	ja	ja
one or more unrelated boarders?	ja	ja

33. Would more relaxed zoning allowing creation of a separate apartment in your house be potentially helpful to you?

ja Yes ja No ja Maybe ja No Opinion

34. The affordable housing income limits are:

- 1 person household: \$46,300
- 2 person household: \$52,950
- 3 person household: \$59,550
- 4 person household: \$66,150

Should the Town take reasonable measures to require more housing for households at or below the affordable housing income limits?

ja Yes ja No ja Maybe ja No Opinion

14. Economic Development

35. Please rate the following objectives in zoning for businesses:

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Important	Very important
More jobs	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja
More retail space	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja
More office space	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja
Better quality of life	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja
Increased tax revenue	ja	ja	ja	ja	ja

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36. How do you feel about the effect of business expansion on the overall quality of life in Milton under the following circumstances:

	Quality of life would improve	Quality of life would decrease	Not sure
Enlarge current business districts into nearby residential areas	ja	ja	ja
Allow grandfathered businesses in residential areas to expand	ja	ja	ja
Allow under-utilized parcels in residential areas to be zoned for business	ja	ja	ja

37. Are the existing business districts (East Milton, Central Avenue, Milton Village) adequate to serve the town?

ja Yes

ja No

ja No Opinion

38. Does the need to shop for certain items in other communities adversely affect Milton's residents?

ja Yes

ja No

ja No Opinion

39. Milton is currently a residential town with an extremely low commercial tax base (2.8% of the total base). This places the cost of town services solely on the residents. What percentage increase from the base in the amount of business development would you be comfortable with?

ja 1%

ja 2%

ja 3%

ja 5%

ja 10%

40. Would the creation of new and/or bigger business districts hold promise of a significant net increase in commercial tax revenue without a lessening of the quality of life of residents?

ja Yes

ja No

ja Maybe

ja No Opinion

41. Should existing town zoning bylaws for the existing business districts (East Milton, Central Avenue, Milton Village) be reviewed and revised to maximize business development in existing business districts?

ja Yes

ja No

ja Maybe

ja No Opinion

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42. Should the Town explore expanding the area zoned for business into some of the surrounding residential area?

	Yes	No	No opinion
in the East Milton business district	ja	ja	ja
in the Central Avenue business district	ja	ja	ja
in the Milton Village business district	ja	ja	ja

43. Should the following business needs be permitted in nearby residential zones?

	Yes	No	No Opinion
on-street parking	ja	ja	ja
new parking lot	ja	ja	ja
parking of small commercial vehicles (such as pick-ups and vans)	ja	ja	ja

44. Should a Design Review Board of resident design professionals be established to help with the review of business development proposals?

ja Yes

ja No

ja No Opinion

The focus of this section is on current business districts. Part III asks questions about grandfathered businesses in residential zones and the creation of new business zones

15. Part III: Finished

* 45. You have now finished Part III.

Part III covers more detailed questions on protection of open space, housing, economic development (including the creation of new business zones), bicycling and town services.

Would you like to begin Part III?

ja Yes

ja No

Remember, you can come back and finish the survey later. Just don't hit the "done" button at the end of the survey.

16. Protection of Parks and Open Spaces

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46. Should the Town adopt a zoning bylaw that would provide incentives for development of all parcels over a specified size to be done in a way which would preserve some open space and the most significant natural and/or historic resources of the site?

Yes

No

No Opinion

47. The Planning Board is currently considering zoning that would further restrict development on open space, including conservation and recreation lands. Would you support such zoning?

Yes

No

No Opinion

48. Do you support acquisition of open space to prevent future land development?

Yes

No

No opinion

49. Should the Town accept the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and increase property taxes by no more than 3%, as determined by a ballot vote, to fund open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing projects?

Yes

No

Maybe

No opinion

17. Existing Business in Residential Zone

50. Should the restrictions on existing businesses in residential zones be relaxed to permit expansion of those businesses?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

51. Should the permitted business use of grandfathered business parcels in residential areas be increased?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

52. Should certain types of new businesses, which seem compatible with residential use, be permitted in the residential zones?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

18. New Business Zones

53. Should long term planning investigate and highlight town parcels that could be developed for business without a major effect on residents?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

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54. Should new business zones be created out of certain open areas currently zoned residential in order to provide space for new businesses?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

55. Should the Town establish new commercial zones in an effort to expand the commercial tax base?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

56. Would the establishment of new business zones be likely to result in a significant increase in the collection of commercial real estate taxes?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

57. If any new business districts are established, should all buildings be allowed only upon issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board under standards specified in the new zoning?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

19. Types of New Business Zones

58. Should the Town consider re-zoning the Milton Hospital area as a new "Healthcare" district, with permitted uses to include medical offices, hospital and out-patient medical services and associated activities?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

59. Should the Town try to establish new "neighborhood retail" zoning districts, which would allow retail/office activities which address the needs of town residents without detrimental impacts on residents in the area?

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

60. Should the Town explore new zoning to allow taxable development associated with the mission of the various tax-exempt institutions via a Special Permit process. For an educational institution, allowed uses under the Special Permit might include an inn, conference center, professional office, and/or retail for the students.

Yes

No

Maybe

No Opinion

20. General Zoning

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61. Do you believe changes in the zoning

	Yes	No	No Opinion
should only be undertaken with careful study and evaluation of the consequences to the town?	jn	jn	jn
for specific sites are properly undertaken in order to enable proposed developments which appear desirable?	jn	jn	jn

62. Do you believe Milton's current zoning has

	Yes	No	No Opinion
impeded development with adverse consequences?	jn	jn	jn
has created an obstacle to the town in raising sufficient funds for its needs from the real estate property tax?	jn	jn	jn

21. Condominiums

63. Should housing developments with three or more units on a single lot of land be allowed in residential zones if there is sufficient area for the buildings and parking and if provision is made for significant open space for conservation and recreation?

Yes No No Opinion

64. If such housing development with three or more units should be allowed on a lot, should a developer be permitted to build more of these units than would be allowed under a conventional subdivision under existing zoning?

Yes No No Opinion

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65. If such housing development with three or more units should be allowed on a lot, should a developer be permitted to build more units than would be allowed under a conventional subdivision only if at least 10% of the units are made affordable to moderate-income households as specified below?

The affordable housing income limits are:

1 person household: \$46,300

2 person household: \$52,950

3 person household: \$59,550

4 person household: \$66,150

Yes

No

No Opinion

22. Two-Family Houses

66. Existing two-family dwellings are legal in Milton's residential zones, but new two-family dwellings are not allowed, except in very limited circumstances. Should new two-family dwellings be allowed in some or all of the residential zones?

Yes

No

No Opinion

67. If two-family dwellings should be allowed, should there be strict limits for where and when they can be built?

Yes

No

No Opinion

23. Elderly and 55-and-Over Housing

68. Does the town need more housing restricted to elderly persons?

Yes

No

No Opinion

69. Should the town encourage development of housing restricted to persons aged fifty-five and over?

Yes

No

No Opinion

70. If the town should encourage fifty-five-and-over housing,

Yes

No

No Opinion

should it be limited to specific sites specified in new zoning?

Yes

No

No Opinion

should it be allowed in any residential zone in the town?

Yes

No

No Opinion

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24. Lot Size

71. Do you believe the size of building lots in the C zone (7,500 square feet) is too small?

Yes

No

No Opinion

72. Do you believe the size of building lots in the AA zone (80,000 square feet), where lots do not have sewer connections, is too large?

Yes

No

No Opinion

73. Do you believe the size of building lots in the town has had a major impact on the town's quality of life?

Yes

No

No Opinion

74. Do you believe changes in the size of building lots are likely to cause changes in the town's quality of life?

Yes

No

No Opinion

Comments

25. Questions from Town Departments

As part of this questionnaire, the Planning Board asked department heads and board and committee chairs to give us questions for this section, which looks at various needs for services and facilities in Milton. Some questions from department heads have been moved to more specific topics.

75. If you were in a serious car accident or were having a medical emergency or house fire, how long would you be willing to wait for the fire department to arrive?

76. Should planning be initiated to determine the feasibility of

Yes

No

No Opinion

renovating or replacing
the three existing
firehouses in the Town?

Yes

No

No Opinion

renovating or replacing
the existing Town DPW
Yard and offices?

Yes

No

No Opinion

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77. Are there any additional services for elders that the Town could reasonably provide?

78. The Milton Cultural Council makes grants for arts and cultural programs. What should be the most important priorities that the council should consider for funding?

79. Is there any particular population group or groups that the Milton Cultural Council should aim to reach through public funding of cultural projects?

80. Are there additional arts and cultural programs or services that the Town could reasonably provide?

81. Do you consider the historic character of the town of Milton to be an important factor to consider in any new improvement of facilities and services used by the public?

Yes

No

No Opinion

26. Bicycling

82. Should the Town implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements to improve access to public transit?

Yes

No

No Opinion

83. Are you satisfied with the location and quality of bike lanes in this town?

Yes

No

No Opinion

If not, what would you change?

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84. In the last year, how many times have you or your family used a bicycle for each of the following:

	0	1-4	5+
Recreation/fitness	jn	jn	jn
Shopping	jn	jn	jn
Errands	jn	jn	jn
Commute to Work	jn	jn	jn
Take a child to school	jn	jn	jn

85. What factors might discourage you or your family from riding a bike in Milton more often? Rate each from 1 (not a factor) to 5 (very discouraging).

	1	2	3	4	5
Don't own a bike	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Riding in traffic	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Lack of bike lanes	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Condition of roads	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Distances too far	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Too hilly	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Could get sweaty/dirty	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
No place to leave bike	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

List any other factors:

86. If the above factors could be addressed, list two or three places you might be interested in riding a bike to:

27. Thank you!

87. Are there any other comments which you have on Master Planning?

Thank you again for taking the 2009 Planning Board Survey.

Again, the Planning Board plans to issue a summary of the initial results at the Annual Town Meeting and schedule a public meeting to discuss the results in more detail in June. Please encourage your friends and family to answer this questionnaire as well.

Please press the "Done" button only if you have finished answering all the questions you wanted to answer. Once you press "Done" you will be unable to return to this questionnaire.

Survey must be completed by 31 March 2009. If you have not pressed "Done" by 31 March, your survey will not be counted.