

Executive Summary

Welcome to the Town of North East and Village of Millerton Comprehensive Plan

About the Plan

This Plan, created with extensive involvement of residents, business and community leaders, and elected and appointed officials describes a vision for a vibrant future that maintains a high quality of life for our residents in a way that is both environmentally and economically sustainable. The following statement represents a shared consensus of North East and Millerton’s vision for the future.

The enduring theme of North East and its historic, vibrant Village of Millerton is its entrepreneurial spirit that benefits from its location within 100 miles of a major metropolitan area and its resource-rich landscape guided by a strong commitment to preserve the environment and ecosystems. By 2035, we will have drawn on our social, cultural and economic diversity in a supportive, creative, and forward-thinking way to enable our residents and visitors to experience a community proud of its agricultural heritage and supportive of its future. We are committed to providing our current and future generations with opportunities, sustainability and compassion.

This Plan is a policy document that will be used by Town of North East and Village of Millerton leaders, developers, business owners, and citizens to help make decisions about future growth, regulations, and capital improvements. The policies contained in this Plan are intended to inform and guide future decisions by providing sound information, principles, and agreed-upon goals, strategies, and priorities. The organization of this plan is designed so different audiences, such as citizens, Town or Village Board members, Planning Board members, business owners, or developers can easily find the information they need:

- **Introduction** – This Chapter explains the process used to develop the Plan, why it is important to have a plan, and how North East and Millerton can use the Plan.
- **Planning Process** – This Chapter outlines the diverse and extensive public input collected to identify the issues needing to be addressed in this Plan.
- **Influential Trends Facing North East and Millerton and Public Opinion** – These Chapters summarize the issues and challenges facing the community and outline what topics the Plan addresses. These are organized into a table outlining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to be addressed.
- **Updated Vision and Goals** – Building on the 1990s Comprehensive Plan, this Chapter describes the community’s vision for its’ future and offers guidance by articulating policies and capital improvement priorities.

- **Strategies and Recommendations** – This Chapter describes how North East and Millerton and their partners will go about accomplishing the ambitious goals set by this Plan. Sub-chapters cover different topics such as economic vibrancy, infrastructure/transportation, environment, housing, vitality of Millerton, farmland/agriculture, rural character/scenic resources, cultural/educational/recreational opportunities, and civic involvement/volunteerism/local government. Each sub-chapter describes specific goals and strategies that can be pursued in order to accomplish the vision outlined in the Plan.
- **Action Plan/Implementation** – This Chapter offers specific action steps the Town and Village governments and their partners can take over the next 10 to 15 years to realize the Plan.
- **Maps** – A diversity of maps graphically show where and what resources and features can be found in the Town. These maps will be important tools to help decision-making be consistent with the many resources the community hopes to preserve.
- **Appendices** – This extensive ‘community database’ articulates in detail the current conditions, natural resources, development patterns, existing infrastructure, and cultural/historic features in North East and Millerton. It also includes other plans, guides, supporting studies, information, and tools that will be helpful to the Town and Village as they work to implement this Plan.

Plan Highlights

This Plan outlines many actions the Town of North East and Village of Millerton can take over the next 10 to 15 years to meet its vision and goals. While the Town and Village Boards are the ‘owner’ of this Plan, they should forge strong partnerships with each other and with area organizations, agencies, and individuals.

The Plan organizes all the recommendations by whether they are a program or project, a capital improvement, or a regulatory action. Each is further identified as either a short-term or long-term action. Short-term actions are those that can be accomplished within one year easily without a lot of time, funding, or research. Long-term actions are more complex or need additional funding or steps in order to accomplish. While these strategies can be started soon after adoption of the Plan while the Town and Village are working on some of the easier short-term strategies, these will take longer to plan for, fund, and be fully implemented. The Plan details all recommended actions. Some highlights are:

Economic Vibrancy. To encourage development of a thriving, vibrant, stable and diverse economic base that offers ample employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for all, the Town and Village will plan for public sewers, update zoning and subdivision laws, develop a comprehensive parking plan in the Village, enhance signage to venues and parking areas, create marketing and promotion programs, 5G wireless technologies, and work with area businesses to implement targeted economic development programs that are recommended in the Plan. Area businesses and business organizations along with leadership from a Town/Village economic development committee can work together to implement these actions.

Role of Millerton in the Town. To recognize and support the Village of Millerton’s charming character, its role as the primary center for commerce, culture and social interaction in the Town, and as a place where businesses are prosperous and meet the needs of both residents and visitors, the Town and Village will update zoning and subdivision laws to allow for mixed use of buildings in some districts, to increase lot coverage in the Village, to ensure that lot sizes and dimensions foster traditional style development patterns, and to ensure new development promotes traditional designs, walkability, community character, and streets suitable for bikers, walkers, and vehicles.

Housing. To promote a variety of housing alternatives to meet the needs of all residents and recognize and encourage the Village of Millerton and the areas immediately adjacent to it as the primary location for higher density development, the Town and Village will update zoning and subdivision laws to incorporate ideas such as allowing for a wider variety of housing types. They will strive to work regionally with other towns and agencies to create housing programs such as a housing trust fund or a homeownership program. Addressing tiny houses, short term rentals and allowing for adaptive reuse of existing structures can also help address housing needs.

Protection of Farmland and Support of Agriculture. To protect our valuable farmlands, support our farms and their products, and encourage the continuation and diversification of agricultural activities, the Town and Village will update zoning and subdivision laws to be more farm-friendly, support a feasibility study on the need for a shared community kitchen, promote use of conservation subdivision design for major housing developments to protect important farmlands, reestablish the Agricultural Advisory Committee, address farm worker housing, expand allowed agricultural uses, and adopt a right-to-farm law.

Protection of the Natural Environment. To protect the natural environment, ecosystems and open spaces in a resilient and sustainable way, the Town and Village will update zoning and subdivision laws to enhance protection of streams, wetlands, steep slopes, important habitats, and other important natural resources, implement Climate Smart projects, protect stream flows through culverts and bridges, and consider making the Tenmile Watershed a critical environmental area.

Protection of Rural Character and Scenic Resources. To maintain and protect the natural beauty, rural character, and scenic resources of the community, the Town and Village will update zoning and subdivision laws to ensure that new development is sensitive to and is consistent with our character by, for example, adding in siting criteria and design standards for new commercial development, standards for use of LED lighting, and processes that minimize impacts to rural roads and historic resources. Creation of a map showing important viewsheds can also be used by planning and zoning boards to minimize impacts.

Infrastructure and Transportation. To provide for safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular transportation networks, accessible and up-to-date communication technologies, and public utility services that support a vital economy and quality of life, the Town and Village will work to install public sewers in appropriate locations in and near the Village, develop a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan to plan for and budget capital improvements, improve sidewalks in the Village, promote more rail trail amenities such as benches and composting toilets, and work with County agencies to increase public transportation options, and improve the Routes 22/44 intersection.

Preservation of Historic Resources. To recognize, promote and maintain the historic character of the community. The Town and Village will work to create an inventory and map of historic places, promote historical resources through educational materials, plaques, and tours, enhance how project reviews address potential impacts to historic resources. They will also encourage restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures and establish design standards for new commercial buildings so they can be compatible with the setting, scale and design of surrounding architecture and landscape features. The Town and Village can also designate overlay districts in zoning to protect historically significant areas.

Cultural, Educational, and Recreational Opportunities. To recognize, promote and maintain the historic character of the community and to encourage accessible recreational, cultural and educational opportunities that meet the social and community needs of all segments of the population. The Town and Village will support ongoing improvements at Eddie Collins Memorial Park, create bike lanes and more biking opportunities, promote more educational classes, support community based non-profit organizations, create a historic roadside marker program, and inventory historic places.

Civic Involvement, Volunteerism, and Local Government. To encourage active civic involvement, promote volunteerism, and provide for local government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens, the Town and Village will find more ways to share services between the Town and Village and surrounding municipalities, create a unified community calendar, seek grants to support initiatives, host an annual Town/Village Hall meeting, develop written descriptions for volunteer roles, and develop town-wide email lists to enhance communications.

The Plan details several important steps that the Town and Village should take to implement this plan. These are:

- Inform the public, Town and Village Boards, and working committees of the Plan and ensure it is readily available to all.
- Provide maps and other tools so people can use the information contained in this Plan.
- Form a steering committee to coordinate the work of other committees or sub-committees as needed to assist the elected officials.
- Review the progress made on plan implementation and set new implementation goals and priorities on an annual basis so that work to realize this Plan progresses.
- Update the Plan every 10 years to keep it current and meeting the needs of the North East and Millerton community.

This Comprehensive Plan is not an end-product – but one important step in the Town and Village’s ongoing efforts to provide for a community that has ample, sustainable, and compassionate opportunities for its citizens. Implementation of the Plan is the most critical step and will continue over time through the involvement of elected officials, agencies, organizations, and individuals working together.

The full Plan is available on both the Town and Village websites.