



TLG and LMC 2016 Case Study Application
Future Ready Communities



DUE: September 4, 2015

Email to: Ryan Spillers at rspillers@transformgov.org

COVER PAGE

1. Case Study Title: ___The City of Milton: DIY Transparency _____
2. Case Study Category (Select only one, selection identified by highlighting your choice):

Planning for Your Future	Creating an Inclusive Community
Reinventing Local Government	Community Networks
Blinders	
3. Jurisdiction Name: __City of Milton _____
4. Jurisdiction Population (US Census): _____35,907 _____
5. Would you like the application to be considered for our Rapid Fire Session? (Rapid Fire presentations are fast-paced, entertaining, interactive presentations. Each jurisdiction will have five minutes to make their presentations using 15 PPT slides set on auto-forward primarily containing photos/graphics. Participants will be seated at round tables to facilitate an energetic idea exchange. A cash bar will be available.)

YES	NO
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6. Project Leader (Primary Contact for case study notification):

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Title: _Innovation and Strategy Manager _____

Department: ___ Innovation and Engagement _____

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Twitter Account: _@cityofmiltonga _____

List additional presenters contact information below: Christopher J. Lagerbloom

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1. Presentation title and description of the innovation. *100 word maximum.*

DIY Transparency: Bringing your data and story to residents using low-cost and existing tools. In this presentation, Milton will show how to create and sustain true transparency through existing e-mail accounts, social media presence and Web sites.

2. When and how was the program, policy or initiative originally conceived in your jurisdiction? *100 word maximum.*

Milton has worked over the last six years as a cross-functional team to identify resident areas of interest and connect users with the data and stories important to them. Throughout the process, transparency was always the goal, and team members worked together to brainstorm, test and sustain ideas.

3. How exactly is the program or policy innovative? How has your innovation changed previous processes, products or services? *100 word maximum.*

More than simply a new tool or a new service, Milton's program strives to lower the barriers for public participation by producing high-quality, visualized data and processes through social and mobile platforms. And by making the process integral to team structure, it has become a key component of culture.

4. Explain how the program or initiative substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations. *200 word maximum.*

Milton realized early transparency could easily be achieved with enough money and resources. The key in our environment, however, was to provide it without breaking the bank. So whether it was simply sending e-mails and social posts about upcoming meetings and votes, providing quality live streaming, or producing videos, graphics and analytic platforms, the choice was made to always keep it simple and low cost.

We believe what's most innovative about our transparency efforts are the way they are simply woven into our normal operations. There's not a "transparency" section on the Web site. Instead key performance indicators, explanation videos, and meeting agendas are woven throughout virtually every page of the site and in social media so even casual users gain valuable insight into the operations of their municipal government. What we're trying to achieve is an unparalleled brand experience and user experience -- one that capitalizes on our efforts invisibly.

5. What individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? Were strategic partnerships and/or community networks developed as a result of the innovation? *200 word maximum.*

In Milton, the efforts were headed by the Innovation and Engagement Department. Formerly communications, the department was expanded to capitalize on the width and breadth of engagement opportunities available at low to no cost.

The team of four works with every department in the city to produce easy-to-understand, visualized information, including month by month zoning schedules, pre- and post-meeting agendas and vote tallies, capital project updates and monthly indicators of success. This information is shaped into a narrative and placed online (both through social or web) for users to access as they wish.

The department has also partnered with a local printing company to produce 40,000 copies of "The Milton Magazine and Newcomer's Guide," delivered quarterly in drive ways across the city. So whether customers access the info online or in print, they have an opportunity regardless of their previous engagement levels.

6. If a private consultant was used please describe their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. *100 word maximum.*

Milton worked with Chattanooga, Tenn.-based DesignSensory to create the city's new Web site, launched in May, 2015. This allows the department to create visual metrics and post them online for social sharing.

7. To what extent do you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please provide verification of the replication. *200 word maximum.*

We believe this program has far reaching applications in jurisdictions across the United States and Canada. Pew research indicates 65 percent of Americans in the prior 12 months have used the internet to find data or information pertaining to government. Contrast that with only 7 percent saying local governments share data well online, and the implications become clear.

Because Milton has pursued this goal without adding huge infrastructure cost, we believe it is easily adaptable to other governments looking for low-cost, implementable solutions for the public's demands of transparency.

To our knowledge, no one has tried to replicate the Milton model exclusively. However, portions of the model are used as best practice across the state. The Department Director, Jason Wright, writes a monthly column for the Georgia Municipal Association where he discusses Milton's methods of bringing government to the people. He has become a leading thinker in the state and nation, presenting social media and video seminars at GMA's Mayor's Day and 3CMA's National Conference in Atlanta.

8. What were the costs? What were the savings? *100 word maximum.*

Milton's system incurs a monthly cost of \$100. Forty dollars for a Constant Contact account and \$60 for an Abode Cloud account.

Staff handles all communications, outreach and engagement using these basic tools.

The City's Web site, its platform for engagement online, incurred an upfront cost of \$58,000. There is a recurring cost of \$3,200 a year for hosting.

The system has saved untold thousands of dollars. Examples include branding and logo work done in-house, which could have easily reached into \$80,000 for a branding study.

9. Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain? *200 word maximum.*

There has been tremendous work toward gaining buy-in from City Council and staff. Residents were quick to pick up on the usefulness of the data we were providing. However, there was some concern over loss of control and our ability to tell our story fully with so much transparency. Staff and city management scuttled efforts to produce a customized user dashboard for City Council with visualized data because it was too much change, too quick. However, as new initiatives came online and elected officials and staff members began hearing from residents how impressed they were with our ability to share data and provide insight into daily operations, they slowly came on board. We're happy to report that at our last strategic planning session in mid-August, virtually everyone agreed that the future was in Milton's low-cost transparency efforts.

There still remain numerous issues. We could do more, but funding doesn't allow it. As such, staff is always scanning its environment to find new and innovative solutions to problems.

10. What outcomes did this program or policy have? What baseline data did you collect? How did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment? *200 word maximum.*

Through the last two National Citizen surveys, Milton's overall image has risen to and remained above national benchmark. Nearly 80 percent of those surveyed found the quality of our services to be excellent or good, and nearly 70 percent view Milton positively in terms of being honest, customer service and acting in the public's interest. Additionally, over the last five years, the city has seen a more than 400 percent increase in site traffic (while keeping page counts static, meaning more users are finding information easily) and curated a social presence touching nearly 20,000 weekly.

These numbers are watched closely every survey period and every month for online statistics. They continue to grow positively, meaning Milton gains users and keeps satisfaction high despite the larger number of users.

11. Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage. *100 word maximum.*

<http://patch.com/georgia/alpharetta/transparency-tools-give-residents-inside-look-government>

12. Please provide web links where the innovation can be seen/tested (in the case of something that is web-based) *100 word maximum*.

<http://www.cityofmiltonga.us>
<https://www.facebook.com/thecityofmiltonga?ref=ts>
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/cityofmilton>
<https://instagram.com/cityofmiltonga/>
<https://twitter.com/cityofmiltonga>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofMiltonGeorgia>

13. Please provide any key references and their contact information who can be interviewed/called to discuss the innovation and its impact. *100 word maximum*.

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14. You've been to a lot of conferences. TLG should be a unique experience for everyone. Describe how your case study presentation will be different than other conference presentations. *200 word maximum*.
- How will you make the session creative and unique?
 - How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?
 - Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.

If chosen, Milton will make its session both data-driven and interactive. We would create content specifically for the conference, including videos, hand-outs and web-based presentations.

Videos would include examples of transparency materials and a step-by-step guide of how we create the metrics at no cost. Attendees would receive a fully designed, visualized, take-home tactical guide for creating a similar model in your home community.

Additionally, we would host an exercise where everyone in the session could create a cell phone video and share it from their own or city accounts talking about the importance of giving residents and customers an inside look at what happens in government daily. The aim is to break down conceptions of "formalized" programs and navigating bureaucracy in lieu of allowing transparency to flow organically and let innovation be a core part of your team structure.

15. Anything else you would like to add? *200 word maximum.*