

Plymouth Master Plan Topic Survey Summary: Land Use, Housing, and Transportation

OVERVIEW

The survey included questions similar to those asked at the November 20, 2024 public workshop on land use, housing, and transportation. Questions explore desired land uses and development types, locations for new housing, ways to reduce housing pressure, top priorities for transportation, and how to make Plymouth more pedestrian and cyclist friendly. The survey ran from late November 2024 to late February 2025 and received 43 responses.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Interest in promoting a more diversified land use mix that includes more commercial uses to balance the uptick in residential growth.
- Broad support for affordable housing that meets the needs of working families, young people, seniors, and other residents who are being priced out of the current market.
- There is a strong desire to maintain Plymouth's rural and natural character, while supporting greater economic development and more affordable housing.
- Widespread concern around preserving open spaces and natural resources while ensuring that new development is sustainable and does not burden the town's infrastructure.
- A preference for repurposing underutilized spaces, focusing development in areas with existing infrastructure, transportation, and services; and in creating smaller and more varied housing options.
- Concerns about further development without first addressing the town's current infrastructure and environmental concerns.
- Support for expanding and enhancing pedestrian and bicycling facilities throughout Plymouth.
- A desire for greater public transportation options for both local and regional connectivity.
- General frustration with traffic, congestion, and roadway safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

KEY THEMES BY SURVEY QUESTION

LAND USE

WHAT TYPES OF LAND USE DO YOU THINK ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO OUR COMMUNITY?

- Conservation Land and Open Space: Emphasis on preserving natural resources (ponds, pine barrens, aquifer), green spaces, and recreational areas.
- Mixed-Use: Combining residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create more vibrant and walkable neighborhoods.
- Residential: Creating diverse and affordable housing options, including mixed-use developments and cluster housing.

- Commercial and Industrial: Focus on light industrial, tech, healthcare, and innovative uses.
- Community spaces: Creating more spaces for arts, culture, recreation, and cross-community engagement such as libraries, community centers, and cultural hubs.

ARE THERE SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE CERTAIN LAND USE TYPES SHOULD BE FOCUSED OR RESTRICTED?

- Prioritize development:
 - Highway Interchanges: Encourage light industrial development around existing highway interchanges.
 - Revitalization: Redevelop underutilized commercial and industrial spaces, such as Cordage Park and in other parts of North Plymouth.
 - Areas with access to transportation and services: Low to medium-density residential housing, affordable housing developments, and community amenities should be developed in well-connected and serviced areas.
- Restrict development:
 - Protected Areas: Restrict development near conservation areas and other protected open spaces.
 - Waterfront and Scenic Areas: Preserve and enhance waterfronts, beaches, and parks for public use.
 - Water, forest, and wetland resources: Restrict land usage around waterways, forests, wetlands, and other sensitive environmental resources to preserve ecosystem quality.

HOW DO YOU THINK PLYMOUTH'S MIX OF LAND USES SHOULD BE BALANCED?

- Compact Housing: Preserve open space by clustering housing developments and prioritizing, mixed-use, and mixed-density development.
- Mixed-Use Developments: Integrate residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within developments.
- Support Development in Established Areas: Prioritize infill development and development in areas where infrastructure already exists, rather than expanding into undeveloped natural areas.
- Repurpose underused or vacant buildings and areas, such as former industrial sites or commercial spaces, rather than pursuing greenfield development.
- Increase proportion of commercial and light industrial uses.

HOUSING

WHAT TYPES OF HOUSING SHOULD WE FOCUS ON?

- Affordable Housing: Focus on affordable and workforce housing, including multi-family units, townhomes, smaller single-family homes, and greater rental units. Less emphasis on luxury housing developments.
- Senior Housing: Provide housing options for an aging population.
- Compact Developments: Allow for better use of open space and reduce environmental impact.

- Tiny Homes and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): Encourage smaller, affordable housing options.
- Mixed-Use commercial and residential development in village center areas.

LOCATIONS WHERE MORE HOUSING CAN BE ACCOMMODATED

- Underutilized Commercial Areas: Repurpose vacant and underutilized commercial sites for residential use.
- Village Centers
- Southern Plymouth, Cedarville, West Plymouth, and Plymouth Center
 - However, there is a need for more sewer infrastructure to support greater housing in Southern Plymouth, West Plymouth, and Cedarville
- Transit-Oriented Areas: Higher-density housing near public transit hubs.
- Compact Housing: Develop housing in clusters to preserve open space.
- Holtec and 1000 acres site
- Other comments expressed concerns about overcrowding, traffic, and the strain on existing infrastructure

HOW CAN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT BE BALANCED WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT TYPES AND THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE?

- Mixed-Use and Infill Developments: Combine housing with commercial and recreational spaces.
- Compact development and smaller lot sizes: Preserve open space by clustering housing developments and developing on smaller parcels.
- Zoning and Regulations: Use zoning to limit development in sensitive areas, promote sustainable growth, and the preservation of open space in larger scale developments

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR HELPING TO REDUCE HOUSING PRESSURES IN PLYMOUTH?

- Focus on affordable housing: Increase the availability of affordable housing options by developing moderately priced, basic units rather than luxury housing
- Support first-time homebuyers: support for first-time homebuyers, including grants and smart financing options. Explore subsidies for those who can't afford market rates.
- Mixed-use and transit-oriented developments: Promote mixed-use developments to reduce car dependency and support local businesses.
- Create incentives for developers: Encourage developers to build affordable and moderately priced housing.
- Allow for in-law apartments and second homes on larger parcels; include regulation to prevent short-term rentals.

TRANSPORTATION

SHOULD PLYMOUTH INVEST IN IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WALKING ENVIRONMENT? WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY AREAS?

- Yes! Priority areas include:
 - Sidewalks and Trails: Improve and expand sidewalk access and walking trails across town

- Crosswalks, Lighting, and Traffic Calming measures: Enhance pedestrian safety with better crosswalks, lighting, and traffic calming like speed bumps.
- Downtown and Residential Areas: Prioritize walkability in downtown, residential neighborhoods with high foot traffic, and areas near schools and parks.
- Improve connectivity between key destinations: Enhance walkability along key corridors and connecting public spaces with sidewalks and pedestrian/bicycle-friendly pathways would also improve accessibility and encourage sustainable transportation.

HOW CAN TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS IN PLYMOUTH SUPPORT OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS?

- Creating bike lanes and improving pedestrian pathways will create more walkable communities and reduce car dependency.
- Expanding public transit service, especially to South Plymouth and key destinations, will support additional housing, tourism, economic development, and more sustainable transportation options.
- Reopening the MBTA Commuter Rail would increase regional connectivity.

WHAT ARE THE LARGEST SAFETY ISSUES IN TOWN?

- Pedestrian Safety: Lack of crosswalks, insufficient sidewalks, poorly lit areas, high speed traffic.
- Cyclist Safety: Lack of bike lanes and dedicated bike infrastructure. Winding, narrow roads.
- Traffic Congestion and Speeding: Speeding, disregard for traffic laws, dangerous intersections—poor visibility, lack of signage, or unclear right-of-way rules
- Enforcement: Lax enforcement of traffic laws jeopardize safety for all road users

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- 43 people completed the survey. Most had not attended the workshop in-person (86%).
- Most respondents live in Plymouth year-round (95%), and 3 also own a local business (7%).
- 38% of respondents were between 20 and 49 years old.
- 16% of respondents have lived in Plymouth 1-5 years, and another 12% for 6-10 years. 56% have lived in Plymouth for more than 20 years.