

Plymouth Master Plan Topic Survey Summary: Economic Development and Public Infrastructure/Services

OVERVIEW

The survey included questions similar to those asked at the October 24, 2024 public workshop on economic development and public infrastructure/services. Questions explore desired job and industry sectors, how access to Plymouth's waterfront should be shared, top infrastructure and service needs, and what parts of town can or should accommodate new growth. The survey ran from late October 2024 to late February 2025 and received 57 responses.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There is a desire to diversify the local economy, reduce reliance on seasonal tourism, and ensure that future growth and development aligns with the town's long-term vision.
- Balancing growth with preservation of the town's character and natural resources, managing traffic, and keeping taxes manageable are central concerns.
- The need for growth and development to be paced with the infrastructure required to support it.
- Respondents' strong preference for prioritizing growth in already developed areas.

KEY THEMES BY SURVEY QUESTION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHAT TYPES OF JOBS OR INDUSTRIES SHOULD PLYMOUTH FOCUS ON?

- Tourism: Emphasis on restaurants, entertainment, and more interactive and eco-tourism experiences
- High-Tech Industries: Robotics, cybersecurity, renewable energy/clean tech, AI, and related education in these sectors
- Healthcare: Including telehealth services and medical research
- Education: Skilled labor training (i.e. for technology and healthcare), higher education, and related institutions
- Green & Blue Economy: Clean/renewable energy, marine trades, maritime tech, aquaculture, etc.
- Small Businesses: Retail shops, restaurants, coffee shops, and small business incubators
- Professional Services: Finance, insurance, and corporate headquarters
- Light Industrial/Manufacturing: Encouragement for specialty manufacturing, light industrial jobs

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE NEW OR EXPANDING BUSINESSES? WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESSES?

- Potential Priority Locations:
 - Industrial Parks: Denser use of existing industrial parks and creation of new light industrial zones
 - Revitalization and Densification of Existing Areas: Focus on underused buildings and lots in already developed areas like Cordage Park, North Plymouth, and West Plymouth
 - Commercial Centers: Development around highway exits and existing commercial centers like Shops at 5, Commerce Center, as well as business districts in existing Village Centers like Cedarville and West Plymouth
 - Downtown Plymouth: More diversity of businesses
 - Large Undeveloped Areas: Holtec site, 1000 acres site
 - Mixed-use Development: Combining commercial spaces with housing, especially in areas like Cordage Park
- Types of Businesses Desired:
 - Retail: Wider variety of retail stores beyond big-box; small businesses should especially be encouraged
 - Food & Dining: Greater diversity and quality of restaurants across all of Plymouth (not just downtown) and especially near waterfront areas
 - Entertainment and Recreation: Indoor and outdoor sports and entertainment venues such as movie theaters, live music venues, and spaces for youth sports programs
 - Creative/Artisan Enterprises: Coffee shops, antique stores, and art studios
 - Healthcare Services
 - Tech
 - Light Industrial

GROWING TOURISM – WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE TOURISM IN TOWN?

- Of the 49 written responses, 18 (37%) said yes, 20 (41%) said no, and 11 (22%) had a mixed or indirect response to the question.
- Following a Balanced Approach: While some respondents support more tourism, others emphasize the need for it to be managed properly to avoid overcrowding, traffic issues, and pressure on infrastructure. Some also highlighted the need to focus on year-round commerce and amenities that benefit residents instead of seasonal tourism.
- Need for Infrastructure Improvements: More and higher quality hotels to support longer stay visitors (vs. day trippers), parking facilities, marina access, and activities and events to attract tourists were all mentioned as needed tourism infrastructure.
- Ideas to Support Growth: Focus on eco-tourism, improving waterfront access, increasing festivals and events, revitalizing existing historic resources, and attracting higher-end tourists that have higher incomes and greater spending potential.

WHAT USES SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED FOR WATERFRONT ACCESS?

Respondents were asked to rate five types of uses on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning waterfront access was most important.

Use	Weighted Average
Tourism/Recreation	3.31
Open Space/Conservation	3.22
Blue Economy	3.19
Commercial	2.87
Housing	2.62

- Tourism/Recreation: High importance placed on making the waterfront accessible and attractive for tourists and recreational users.
- Commercial Use: Moderate importance for commercial development along the waterfront.
- Housing and Open Space: Mixed opinions, with some emphasizing preservation and protection of the waterfront and others supporting some limited housing development.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

WHAT INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS?

- Road infrastructure: Improving roadways and sidewalks.
- Water and Sewer Systems: Protecting water resources and upgrading sewer systems.
- Climate Resilience: Preparing for coastal flooding, protecting water resources, and ensuring effective stormwater management, and other climate-related challenges.
- Renewable Energy: Investing in solar and other renewable energy sources, especially for municipal buildings.
- Beach and Waterfront Improvements: Calls for better beach facilities, including bathrooms and bathhouses, along with clean-up efforts and improved access to waterfront areas.
- Public Safety and Emergency Services: Concerns about police, fire, and medical services in the face of population growth and an increasing stress on services.
- Traffic Management: Addressing traffic congestion.
- Public Transportation: Enhancing public transit options and reducing reliance on cars.

HOW SHOULD PLYMOUTH APPROACH EXPANDING THE SERVICES IT PROVIDES FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY?

- Affordable Housing: Increasing the availability of affordable housing.
- Public Services: Improving schools, healthcare, public transportation, and roadway safety.
- Sustainable Development: Ensuring new developments are environmentally sustainable, well-planned, and have the water/sewer infrastructure to support them
- Government Transparency and Accountability: Increasing transparency, accountability, and resident participation in town decision-making processes

WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO GROW THE TAX BASE?

- Commercial Development: Prioritizing commercial growth to reduce the residential tax burden.
- Retail and Tourism: Leveraging retail and tourism to generate revenue.

- **Balanced Residential Growth:** Ensuring residential growth does not outpace the capacity of infrastructure and municipal services

WHERE SHOULD NEW GROWTH TAKE PLACE?

- **Areas with Existing Infrastructure:** Growth should focus on areas where infrastructure is already in place, such as existing industrial parks (e.g., Plymouth Industrial Park, Cordage Park, and Camelot Park), former industrial sites, or underused buildings and spaces and not in places where destruction of natural landscapes or open space is required
- **Underutilized Sites:** Revitalizing and rehabilitating vacant or underdeveloped spaces in the downtown area and commercial districts should be prioritized. Redeveloping old office spaces, vacant lots, or shopping malls, for example.
- Growth should be concentrated around highway interchanges and major roads, such as Route 3, Route 6, and former power station site, where access is easier, and existing infrastructure can handle increased demand.
- Specific locations mentioned include Plymouth Industrial Park, Holtec Site, Village Centers
- Limit excessive development, particularly new residential projects or large-scale expansions in undeveloped areas

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES

- Plymouth should facilitate more affordable housing
- We need a long term vision for what Plymouth wants to be and focus less on short term gains
- Economic development should not jeopardize the Town's natural resources
- Better infrastructure and maintenance planning is needed for water, sewer, and roads
- The Town should invest in infrastructure and services that benefit both residents and visitors and that can support Plymouth in becoming a destination
- Investments in preserving and protecting natural resources, open space, and water quality (aquifer) are paramount
- There is a need to expand the Town's mental health services and resources

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- 57 people completed the survey. Most live in Plymouth year-round (95%), and 7 also own a local business (12%).
- 43% of respondents were between 30 and 49 years old.
- 27% of respondents have lived in Plymouth 1-5 years, and another 14% for 6-10 years. 38% have lived in Plymouth for more than 20 years.