

DOWNTOWN VILLAGE CENTER/ WATERFRONT AREA MASTER PLAN

SPRING 2004



Drawn by J.W.Barber.

EASTERN VIEW OF PLYMOUTH FROM THE HARBOR.

The first church on the left, is the Orthodox, the next south, the Robinson church, between these is seen, Watson's Hill, the Universalist, and the Unitarian church (a Gothic structure) appear in the central part, back of which is seen Burying Hill: the Pilgrim Hall is on the right, the Court House with a spire is seen westward, of the Long Wharf.

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Since its beginning, downtown Plymouth has been the economic, cultural and activity center for residents and guests.

This postcard depicts Plymouth around 1910 and the vibrancy of its downtown is already being affected by the introduction of the automobile.

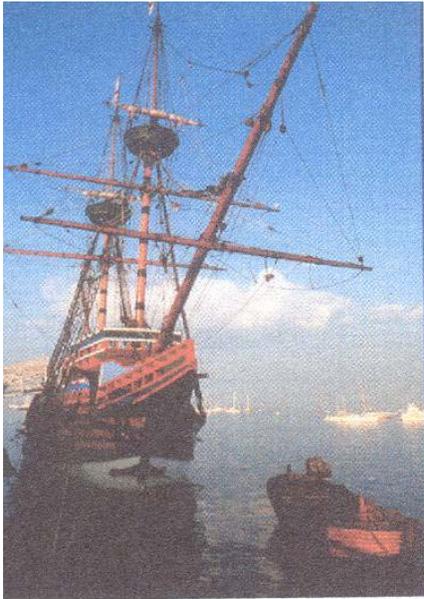
Running through the center of Main Street is the trolley which connected people to the center and adjoining towns.

Similarly, the waterfront area has always been considered part of the downtown center with its fishing and shipping activities, as well as a transportation port to Boston, the Cape or other seaside communities.

This postcard depicts a steamboat landing, with tourists visiting the site of Plymouth Rock just visible on the right.



INTRODUCTION



The Planning Board in its *Plymouth Center Strategy Report* initiated the process of preparing a comprehensive master plan for the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront area consistent with its *Village Centers Plan*. The Planning Board appointed a task force comprised of nine individuals with the following make-up: (3) commercial/business representatives, (4) residents, (1) planning board member and (1) selectmen designee.

Prior to this committee's formation, other groups took up the task of writing plans that encompass parts of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront area. Most notably, the Master Plan of 1989 was the last in-depth analysis of the area. A number of initiatives suggested in the 1989 document were enacted; these include the Visitor Service Board and the Plymouth Development Corporation (PDC).

As our group has looked at the area as a whole, we have divided our categories of study and analysis into these sections: retail/commercial, recreational, residential, environmental and zoning. Each section was written to stand alone. Taken individually, each section is complete but when added to the whole the entire plan is strengthened.

We sought the input of members of this community as well as other communities addressing concerns similar to ours. It is our hope that we have written a master plan for the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area that will be a guide to positive development and a blueprint for what is possible.

THE PLYMOUTH CENTER TASK FORCE

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Barbara Mulvey-Welsh, Chair | Resident, Selectmen Designee |
| Bobbi Clark, Vice-Chair | Resident, Planning Board Designee |
| Nicholas Filla | Planning Board member |
| Wendy Garpow | Resident, Planning Board Designee |
| Patricia McCarthy | Commercial/Business Representative, Planning Board Designee |
| Susan Melchin..... | Commercial/Business Representative, Planning Board Designee |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who supported and continue to encourage our effort; this document is better for their input. The results will be better for their, and your, involvement.

Ed Angley for help with the Zoning Section.

David Gould for help drafting the Environmental Section.

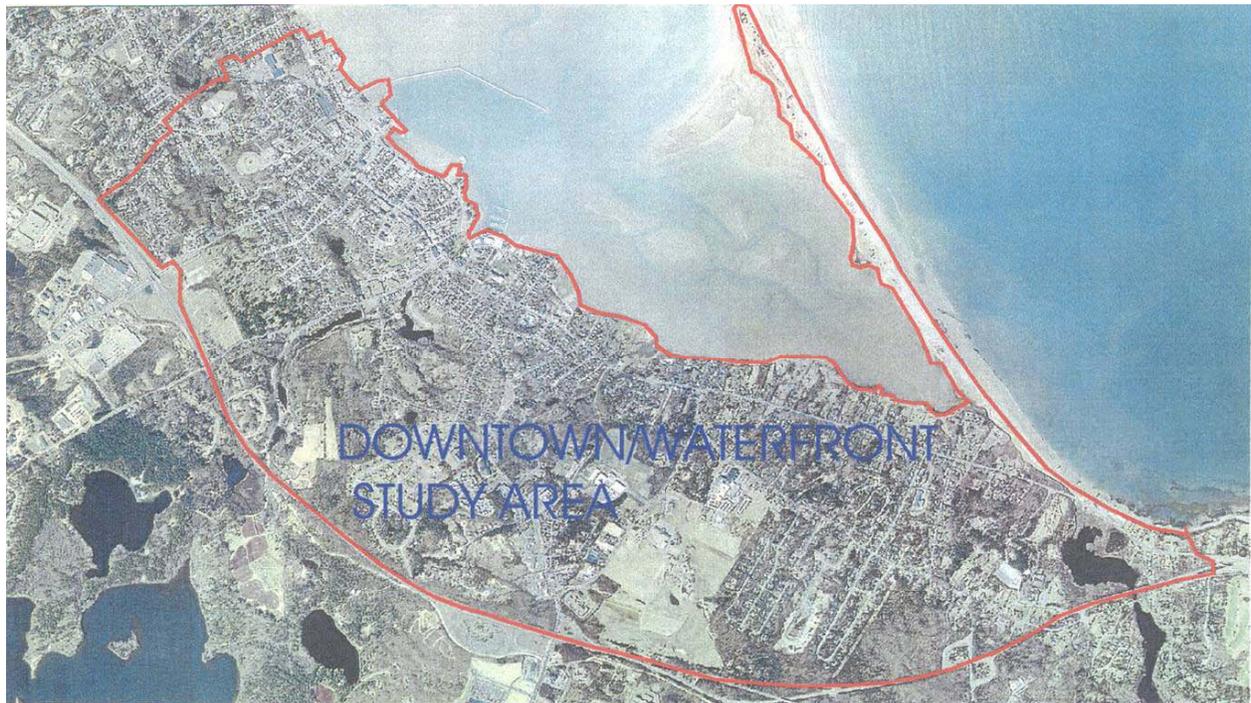
John Howland for photography.

Todd Lee for proofreading.

Paul McAlduff for photography.

Newburyport Mayor Lisa Mead and Planning Director Nancy Colbert for their participation in the public workshop.

STUDY AREA



The Plymouth Center Strategy Report of May 1998 defines the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront area as bounded to the north by Nelson Street and Alden Street, to the west by Route 3, to the east by Plymouth Harbor and to the south by Plymouth Beach, Eel River, and the Plimoth Plantation Highway.

VISION

Every town has its story, but the story of Plymouth is bigger than most, and is forever tied to the discovery of the New World. And today, it is indeed a new world economically and sociologically that we confront in devising a master plan for the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area. In doing this, we look to accommodate the realities of 21st century life where the sense of place has diminished, and retain the inviting charm of an earlier century, when people had both motivation and time to mingle, meander and socialize. Throughout Plymouth's history, much of that was done downtown; a model for what was good in our country in the 19th and 20th centuries.

What is Plymouth's Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area today? Many agree it's a place where families, friends, and guests gather on summer and winter evenings to dine, entertain, and reminisce; where local merchants are as well known and well liked as your nextdoor neighbor. It is also a place where children skate and ride on bikes; where senior citizens sit on historic porches and watch the daily activities of commercial and social life.

Life in Plymouth's downtown becomes more vibrant when the seasonal influx of visitors from all over the world is added to the mix of activities. They add a unique and ever-changing tapestry that is wonderful to experience. The perspective of those who travel from near or far in order to experience and enjoy the area should be assured of a consistent as well as an exciting aesthetic landscape.

Throughout all of its history, the focal point of that landscape has been the economic heart of Plymouth's downtown — an area that has been a magnet for guests and visitors from Boston to Bangkok. For this area to maintain its standing as the economic heart of the town and the region, it must have a vision that incorporates those traditional aspects of village life which have been its strength for decades and even centuries. It must be a place where residents can live, work, and play; a place where merchants can successfully meet the challenge of changing economic times; a place where history is preserved, enhanced and renewed; a place where the visitor and guest feel as much at home as the residents.

For both guests and residents, any vision of the area will be incomplete if it fails to consider societal changes from its considerations. While our Main Street today is not all that it can be, it is well to remember that it remains a place Walt Disney could only hope to re-create in his imaginary Main Streets.

Our vision reunites, reconnects and reestablishes the downtown village center with its residents, merchants and visitors. This vision provides the economic, social, and cultural opportunities that will maintain and further strengthen the downtown village as the vibrant heart of Plymouth.

This plan puts within our grasp a strategy for achieving these widely held goals.

RETAIL/COMMERCIAL



INTRODUCTION

Plymouth is widely acknowledged as an historic and significant place. Over time it has experienced many developmental changes in its evolution as a small downtown.

Historically, the diversity of its shops, businesses and commercial activities has grown naturally and purposefully, responding to the needs of its merchants, workers and residents. The business community has adapted its industrial and commercial activities with a gradually changing waterfront and downtown business main street.

As with many other small downtowns, ours served the traditional role as the center of shopping, services and other business activities but has been dramatically eroded and replaced by automobile oriented shopping malls, plazas, strips, and parks.

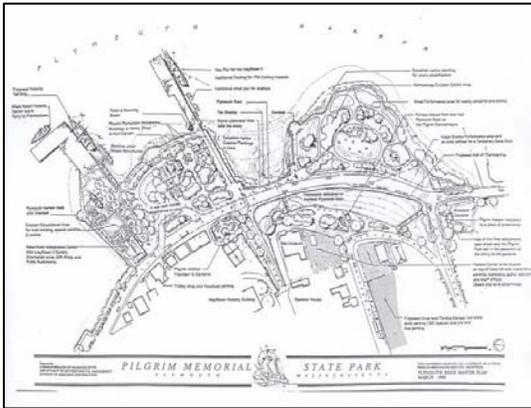
Nevertheless, there are significant traditional remnants that remain vibrant, attractive and desirable. Going downtown provides a unique experience, a way of life where one walks to restaurants, banks and take-out establishments, nightlife of entertainment and people watching. Specialty shops provide a variety of goods and services, places to shop for clothes, jewelry, cosmetics, flowers, gifts and perhaps a tattoo — a place where the automobile is an inconvenience for the traditional downtown guest.

The commercial goals set forth here reflect a desire and need to preserve commercial and business activities, to protect and nurture them, and to implement goals and policies that will insure the continued vitality of the village center.

GOALS

- I. Promote uses that compliment and enhance the national and regional significance of the Town of Plymouth, that maximize the economic potential of the area;
- II. Provide parking, traffic and implementation strategies throughout the year and meet the needs of the entire business community, including consumers and employees;
- III. Maintain and expand ocean-related businesses including commercial and recreational fishing, whale watching, and harbor sightseeing;
- IV. Promote and expand the hospitality facilities, including convention, conference, and meeting space. Interconnect and coordinate with other entertainment, recreation and cultural activities;
- V. Develop, expand and promote the entertainment, recreation, retail and dining activities at different venues and locations throughout the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area; and
- VI. Invest in and expand infrastructure including parking, docking facilities, lighting, signage, street furniture, landscaping, drainage, utilities and paving.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

I. Promote uses that compliment and enhance the national and regional significance of the Town of Plymouth, that maximize the economic potential of the area.

1. Complete waterfront time-line master plan, Pilgrim Memorial State Park, prepared by the state.
2. Designate potential sites for hospitality and conference facilities and propose new zoning to accommodate and attract such development.
3. Coordinate regional and national historic, cultural, entertainment, and recreation activities as a total year-round package.
4. Foster creation of new facilities that will have a regional and/or national attraction, such as an aquarium, swan boats, conference center, etc.
5. Promote and expand ocean sightseeing and deep sea fishing facilities, which have a regional and national attraction.
6. Advertise a weekly summer evening shopping destination supported with music, strolling, vendors, and later hours for restaurants and shops.

II. Provide parking and implementation strategies throughout the year that meet the needs of the entire business community, including consumers and employees.

1. Provide abundant year-round parking spaces/facilities/structures that are integrated into the scale and fabric of the existing street patterns and building sizes.



2. Make available employee stickers or parking permits, or dedicated employee lots.
3. Establish alternate financial means to provide sufficient revenue to construct and maintain parking facilities.
4. Support the development of a parking management plan that implements the overall goal in a series of planned stages.
5. Provide alternative parking areas not immediately in the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area and provide means of access to such facilities including trolleys, shuttles, etc.
6. Provide proper identification of parking locations including street graphics and printed maps.

III. Maintain and expand ocean-related businesses including commercial and recreational fishing, whale watching, and harbor sightseeing.

1. Establish new piers along the waterfront between the State Pier and the Town Pier. Coordinate with state plan and new commercial facilities.
2. Provide for central fish cold storage with historically accurate pier/warehouse style architecture.
3. Explore the feasibility of additional docking facilities on north side of breakwater.
4. Introduce coordinated graphics, lighting, sidewalks, boardwalks and street furniture throughout the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.



IV. Promote and expand the hospitality facilities, including convention and meeting space. Interconnect and coordinate with other entertainment, recreation and cultural activities.



1. Designate potential sites for hospitality expansion and/or conference facilities. Propose new zoning to accommodate development of such facilities.
2. Provide location maps and other graphics. Interconnect and coordinate with other entertainment, recreation and cultural activities.
3. Provide infrastructure as required or anticipated, including parking, shuttles, etc.

V. Develop, expand and promote the entertainment, recreation, retail and dining activities at different venues and locations throughout the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

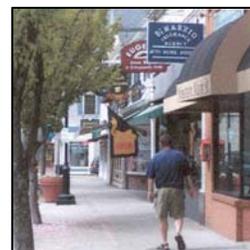
1. Establish a small dinner/theatre facility or small theatre in the round.
2. Coordinate scheduling of all entertainment productions at all venues throughout the year.
3. Construct a permanent outdoor band shell facility.
4. Create a venue for a farmers/crafters market.
5. Produce tourist maps that locate all commercial venues.
6. Promote and coordinate with street graphics, lighting, trolleys, etc.
7. Maintain, promote and coordinate shopping with maps and advertising.
8. Coordinate location of convenience stores with street graphics and lighting.



VI. Invest in and expand infrastructure including parking, docking facilities, lighting, signage, street furniture and landscaping, drainage, utilities and paving.



1. Improve and establish gateway roads from the highway to the downtown along Samoset and South Streets. Repave and rebuild sidewalks using brick insert (as in North Plymouth), install signage and appropriate graphics, and place antique-style light posts along their entire lengths.
 2. Incorporate stormwater treatment systems into all new and renovated parking facilities and roadways to prevent runoff from polluting our water resources.
 3. Expand dock facilities for commercial and recreation users with coordinated parking and graphics.
 4. Establish a long-range priority schedule to bury overhead utility lines.
5. [Identify locations for additional antique-style street light locations throughout all of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.](#)
 6. Establish a complete, safe, and well-lit strollway, pathway and/or boardwalk along the entire length of the waterfront area.
 7. Establish a minimum of three well-designed and identified pedestrian links from the waterfront to the downtown that offer shopping, restaurants, signage, art galleries, and other activities along their lengths.
 8. Improve gateway welcome sign located at the intersection of Route 44 and Court Street (Depot Park).
 9. Establish an *Adopt A Roadway* program to promote stewardship of our main roadways.



RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

Plymouth's Downtown Village Center/Waterfront area has long been a destination – nationally and internationally – because it is recognized for its historic significance as the place of the Pilgrims' landing in America. Over time, the number and types of entertainment and cultural activities have increased to the benefit of the town's residents and many yearly visitors.

These recreation goals reinforce and expand on existing recreational activities, so that our guests will lengthen their stay in town and spreading the word that Plymouth's Downtown Village Center/Waterfront area offers a wide variety of opportunities for entertainment and enjoyment.

The goal is to make this village center so charming, tempting and exciting that people will find will be reluctant to leave. This has been a guiding principle in forming the goals and policies that follow.

GOALS

- I. Provide sufficient active recreation spaces and places to meet the residential demand for athletic fields, parks and playgrounds;
- II. Provide sufficient passive recreation and open spaces to enhance the scenic beauty of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area and its residential neighborhoods;
- III. Provide a variety of pedestrian pathways, connections, links, information kiosks and destinations throughout the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area;
- IV. Promote, expand, connect and enhance the primary commercial, recreation, and entertainment facilities within the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area;
- V. Promote and integrate the cultural/historic facilities and events into the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area experience for both visitors and residents; and
- VI. Provide adequate and convenient off-street and on-street parking facilities and implementation strategies for long and short-term needs of tourists, visitors, and residents using the recreation, entertainment and cultural venues of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

I. Provide sufficient active recreation spaces and places to meet the residential demands for athletic fields, parks and playgrounds.

1. Investigate potential locations for additional recreation fields and playgrounds that are within walking distance of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area neighborhoods.
2. Improve, enhance and maintain existing recreational facilities.
3. [Research potential location for additional small “tot lots” and playgrounds in residential neighborhoods and tourist locations.](#)
4. Establish design guidelines and standards for signage, street lighting and furniture, pavement materials and landscaping.

***II. Provide sufficient passive recreation and open spaces to enhance the scenic beauty of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area and its residential neighborhoods.***

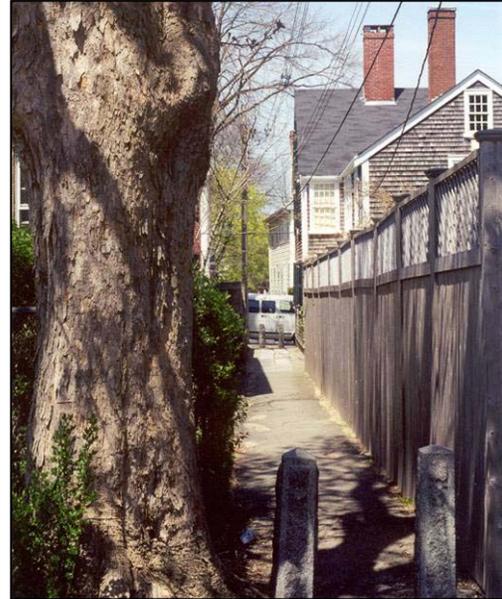
1. [Protect additional open space along Town Brook, Jenney Pond, and the Eel River.](#)
2. Preserve and expand open space areas along entire length of waterfront.
3. Secure conservation restrictions around streams and ponds such as Murdock’s Pond, Dyer’s Pond, and Cold Spring to create small parks or pathways.

4. [Include existing historic cemeteries into open space network.](#)
5. Evaluate the possibility of Plymouth Beach and the Gurnet as being part of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area experience.



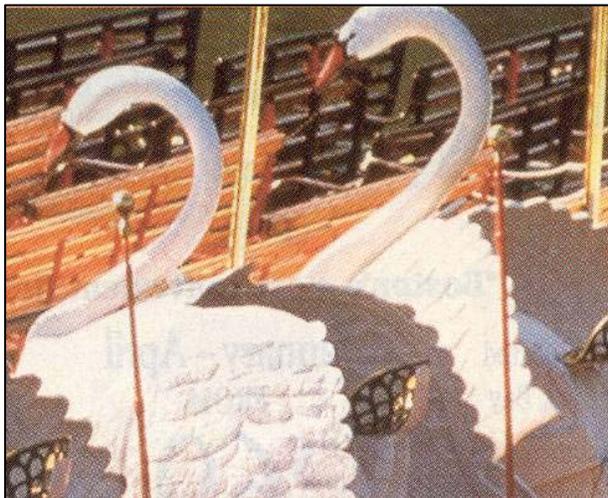
III. Provide a variety of pedestrian pathways, connections, links, information kiosks and destinations throughout the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

1. Create a major waterfront strollway and/or bike path from Cordage/North Plymouth to Stephen's Field.
2. Provide major pedestrian pathways between Morton Park, State Forest, Plimouth Plantation and other outlying areas as part of a comprehensive pathway system.
3. Improve and enhance downtown/waterfront/residential pathways, street furniture and lighting and graphics.
4. Connect pathways to parking areas, trolley and bus stops.
5. Establish a series of lighted information kiosks that promote recreation, entertainment, cultural and historic facilities and events throughout the year.



IV. Promote, expand, connect and enhance the primary commercial recreation and entertainment facilities within the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

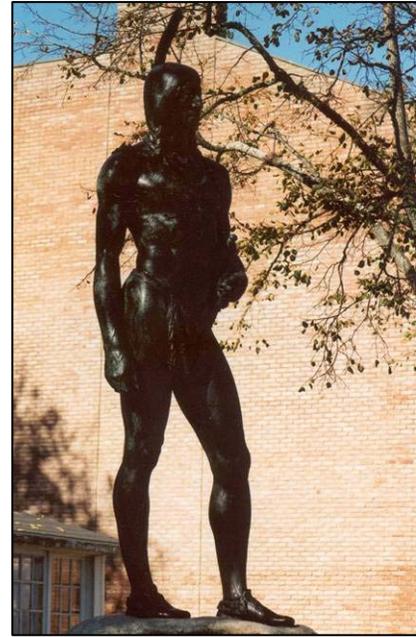
1. Create a new Town Pier dedicated to commercial, recreational and entertainment facilities similar in concept to Chicago's Navy Pier.



2. Establish a small theatrical venue.
3. Establish swan boat rides at Jenny Gristmill that includes a new gazebo, bridge and dock.
4. Create a permanent outdoor band shell along waterfront.
5. Create a major tourist/education aquarium at the site of Revere Copper and Brass.
6. Promote Memorial Hall as a major entertainment center for the entire South Shore.

V. Promote and integrate the cultural/historic facilities and events into the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area experience for both visitors and residents.

1. Coordinate and promote events by historic societies, religious groups, art groups and service organizations throughout the year.
2. Provide for a permanent location for year-round art and craft galleries and the annual art show.
3. Produce a map and guide to all historic buildings, trails, statues and other cultural points of interest.



VI. Provide adequate and convenient off-street and on-street parking facilities and implementation strategies for long and short-term needs of tourists, visitors and residents using the recreation, entertainment and cultural venues of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

1. Provide all-day parking areas associated with ocean-oriented businesses that are serviced by shuttle and/or trolley lines.
2. Provide adequate signage to indicate long and short-term parking areas.
3. Provide designated drop-off areas for tourist and school buses.



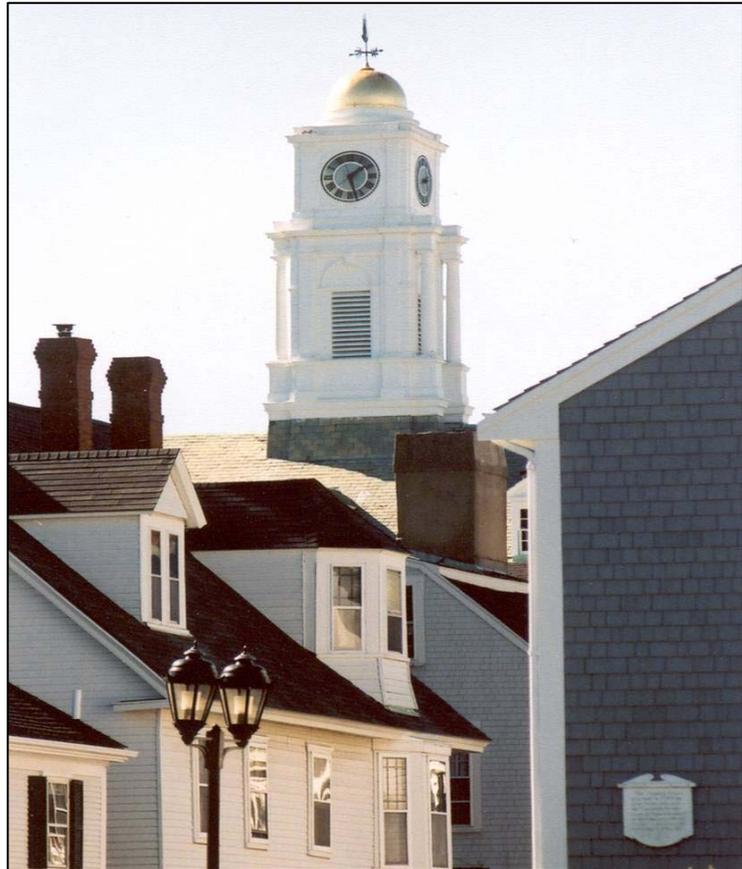
RESIDENTIAL

INTRODUCTION

There is a certain charm to living downtown: to be in the thick of commercial activity, watching people bustle in and out of shops, to catch bits of conversation floating in the air, perhaps some in foreign accents; to be so close to the harbor one can hear the plea of gulls and catch a whiff of salty air; to never have to get behind the wheel to experience any of this.

It is the residents who live in the midst of such commerce who provide the stability that is an essential ingredient to the success of the Main Streets of America.

Such is the quality of life on our main boulevard. But for downtown to continue to thrive, residents need to be involved in and supportive of Plymouth's Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area. To that end, we subscribe to the following goals and actions:



GOALS

- I. Identify, protect and enhance the characteristics of existing residential neighborhoods that embrace the quality of life;
- II. Provide a balanced mix of housing to meet all lifestyles, age groups, and income levels of residents of the downtown/waterfront area;
- III. Provide a variety of pedestrian pathways, connections, and links from residential neighborhoods to shopping, dining, and recreation activities and facilities within the downtown/harbor area;
- IV. Promote, expand, connect and enhance the hospitality residential facilities within the downtown/waterfront area;
- V. Support alternative community housing connected to public and quasi-public local agencies; and
- VI. Provide adequate and convenient off-street parking facilities and implementation strategies to serve the residents of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

I. Identify, protect and improve the characteristics of existing residential neighborhoods that enhance the quality of life.

1. Identify existing neighborhoods as to historical origin, purpose, location, relationship to schools, parks, playgrounds, shopping, jobs, etc.
2. Encourage and support the Neighborhood Watch program in all areas of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.
3. Educate residents and visitors, and enforce bylaws that ensure a high quality of life, such as noise, dogs, waterfowl, and littering.
4. Encourage and support funding of the police department through public and/or private sources to ensure safe neighborhoods.

***II. Provide a balanced mix of housing to meet all lifestyles and incomes of residents of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.***

1. Compile a comprehensive inventory of housing types within the area, i.e. such as single family, two-family, multi-family, apartments, subsidized, age-restricted, etc. Inventory will help determine housing availability, demand, price, location, condition, etc.
2. Rehabilitate existing housing where possible and coordinate with state and town programs for such purposes.
3. Construct infill housing in character with existing neighborhoods.
4. Adjust zoning bylaws to permit greater flexibility of housing types, such as accessory apartments, mixed use, affordable, age-restricted, multiple buildings, etc.



III. Provide a variety of pedestrian pathways, connections, and links from residential neighborhoods to shopping, dining, and recreational activities and facilities within the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.



1. Improve and enhance pathways, street furniture, and lighting and signage.
2. Provide attractive signage to identify neighborhoods.
3. Maintain and identify existing and new pedestrian pathways.



IV. Promote, expand, connect and enhance the hospitality residential facilities such as bed & breakfasts within the downtown/waterfront area.

1. Produce an inventory of types of hospitality units available and show on map.

V. Support alternative community housing connected to public and quasi-public local agencies.

1. Encourage and support anonymous emergency shelters.
2. Encourage and support community-housing partnerships.

VI. Provide adequate and convenient off-street parking facilities and implementation strategies to serve the residents of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.

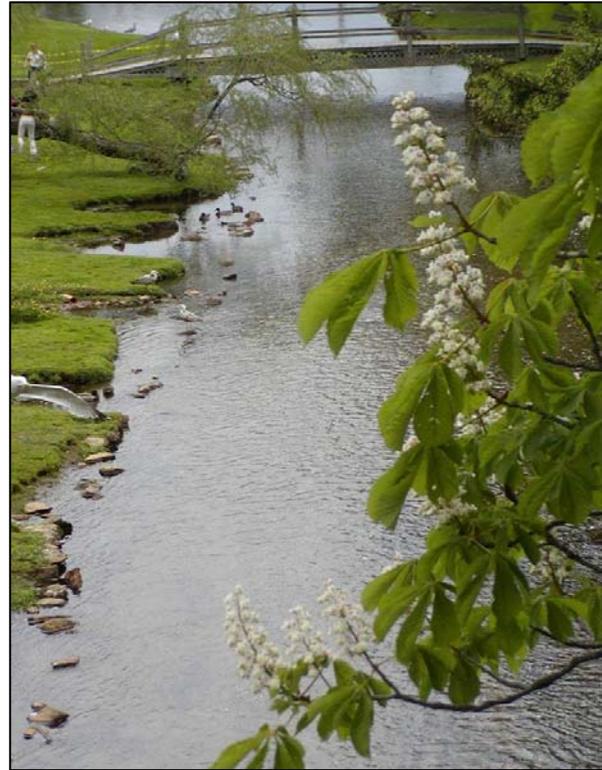
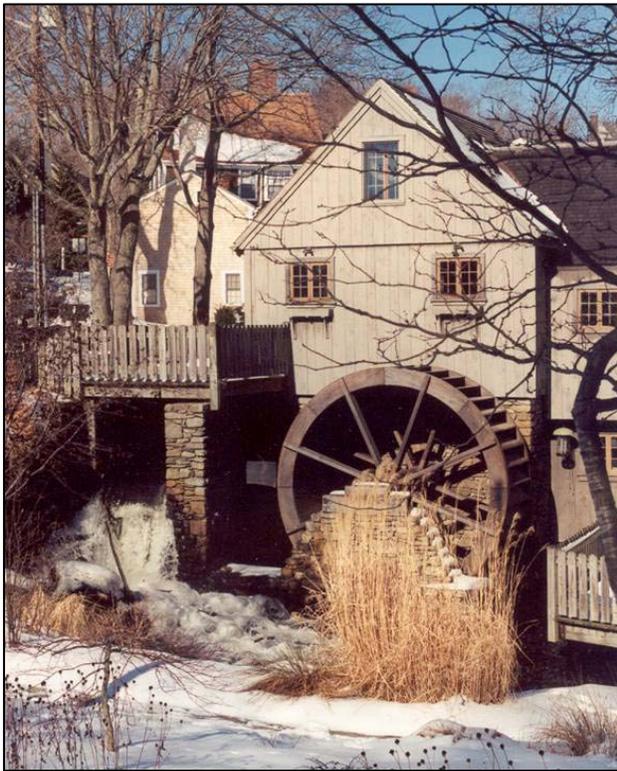
1. Identify off-street parking areas or portions of parking areas to be used exclusively by residential users. Parking areas might include lots and/or garages.
2. Provide identification stickers for residential users.
3. Provide adequate signage and lighting to identify resident parking areas, including hours of enforcement.

ENVIRONMENTAL

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Village Center/Waterfront area is the oldest and most densely developed village center in Plymouth, yet it remains an area rich in natural heritage.

The area's wealth of natural resources include shellfish beds, eelgrass beds, salt marsh, barrier beaches, riparian areas and open water that provide habitat for a variety of fish, marine mammals and migratory shorebirds.



The proximity of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area to these natural resources helps make it a truly unique area. Where else can you go boating, fishing or nature watching within such close proximity to public parks, restaurants, stores and residences?

The challenge is to protect and enhance the Downtown's natural resources for the benefit of the Town's present and future residents, while creating a vibrant and accessible downtown where people can live, work and play.

GOALS

- I. Enhance and improve the water quality of Plymouth Harbor, thereby protecting public health and eliminating the closure of swimming beaches and shellfish beds.
- II. Protect and enhance Plymouth's habitat resources for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- III. Nurture an environmental ethic by educating residents and visitors about Plymouth's natural resources.

POLICIES/ACTIONS

I. Enhance and improve the water quality of Plymouth Harbor, thereby protecting public health and eliminating the closure of swimming beaches and shellfish beds.

1. Reduce the impacts of stormwater pollution through the implementation of “best management practices” at existing paved areas, catch basins, and outfall pipes. Prevent new sources of non-point source pollution by treating stormwater on-site at newly developed or redeveloped areas.



2. Encourage residents and visitors to clean up after their pets through education, signage and the enforcement of the town’s “pooper scooper” bylaw.
3. Educate residents and visitors on the problems caused by feeding waterfowl and enforce the town’s waterfowl feeding bylaw. Develop and implement a waterfowl management plan for the public waterfront areas such as Brewster Gardens, Stephens Field, Jenney Pond, and Nelson Park.
4. Encourage boaters to utilize the pumpout facilities (boat and shore side) to dispose of their onboard wastes. Work with the harbormaster and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to designate Plymouth Harbor as a “No Discharge Area”.

II. Protect and enhance Plymouth’s habitat resources for the benefit of people and wildlife.

1. To prevent and treat non-point source pollution (as stated under Goal #1) to restore the historic shellfishing beds in Plymouth Harbor.
2. Control the invasion of non-native plant species, such as purple loosestrife and phragmites, along the banks of Town Brook, the Eel River, Jenney Pond, Stephens Pond and Billington Sea.
3. Complete the restoration of the historic anadromous fish run along Town Brook – restore the fish ladder at the Jenney Grist Mill and install a fish observation platform. Explore the potential for additional river restoration projects such as dam removals and/or daylighting projects.
4. Restore the historic anadromous fish run along the Eel River by repairing the fish ladder at the Russell Mill Pond Dam, exploring the need to upgrade the fishway at Hayden Pond, reducing NPS pollution, controlling invasive plant species, controlling erosion, etc.



5. Acquire additional open space along the newly designated Pilgrim Trail along Town Brook, between Brewster Gardens and Morton Park. Expand the Pilgrim Trail and open space network to connect the waterfront, Morton Park, State Forest, Town Forest, Plymouth Plantation, Plymouth Long Beach and other open space areas.
6. Improve the wildlife habitat and aesthetics of Jenney Pond, Stephens Pond, and Billington Sea through the management of non-point sources of pollution, and restoration efforts that may include the dredging of sediments and increase of flushing/aeration.
7. Limit the input of nutrients into the Eel River and monitor the effluent generated from the sewage treatment plant, onsite septic systems, golf courses, and landscapes in the watershed.

III. Nurture an environmental ethic by educating residents and visitors about Plymouth's natural resources.



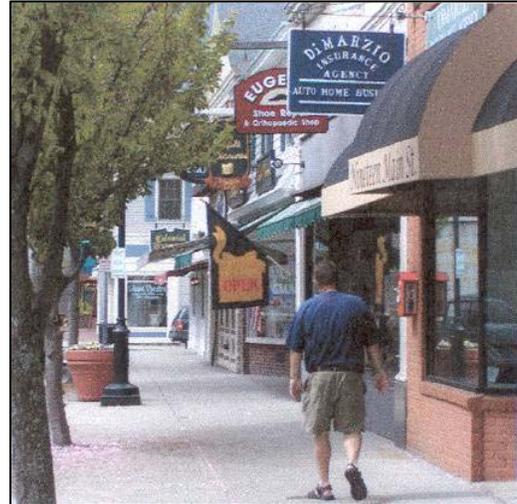
1. Create a municipal arboretum in the Jenney Pond recreation area that highlights native plant species and environmentally-friendly landscaping practices.
2. Develop interpretive signage on the waterfront to educate locals and tourists about the natural resources visible along Plymouth's coastline, such as fish, birds, vegetation, and marine mammals.
3. Celebrate the annual migration of herring and other anadromous fish that are important to Plymouth's heritage through festivals and events such as a "Herring Run" road race along the Pilgrim Trail and a community fish fry.
4. Beautify public areas while celebrating Plymouth's natural heritage through decorative murals painted on walls, underpasses (Main St. Extension, Summer Street, Route 3 to Morton Park), and other public spaces.
5. Involve school children in the community's environmental restoration efforts, to help foster an environmental ethic in the next generation of Plymouthers.
6. Support the development of a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting Plymouth's natural heritage and promoting environmental education of all community members.



ZONING

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area was created to encourage economic development in Plymouth Center. In order to implement many of the goals and objectives of this master plan that relate to land use strategies, a series of amendments to the Zoning Bylaw must be enacted by the Town Meeting. The zoning changes that are proposed here will serve as a guideline for the Planning Board to define the parameters of zoning modifications. This plan does not prioritize the zoning changes nor place a timetable on such. Moreover, all of the proposed zoning changes should be part of a collaborative process involving the Downtown Steering Committee, the Planning Board, Chamber of Commerce, and other committees, business, civic organizations and residents who would be affected by such changes.



The existing zoning in the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area consists of seven zoning districts, three of which are residential with varying degrees of lot sizes and density. The four other zoning districts consist of commercial, waterfront, and harbor districts that permit a variety of non-residential and mixed-use residential uses. The existing zoning districts are summarized at the end of this section, following the Goals and Policies/Actions below.

The goals of this Master Plan represent a desire to strengthen, improve and enhance the sense of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area as a place where the resident and guest can together enjoy the many opportunities and activities that truly make it “America’s Hometown”. These guidelines for proposed zoning changes reflect an implementation strategy from a land use perspective that would help achieve the overall goals.

GOALS

- I. Provide zoning changes to strengthen, improve, and enhance the sense of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area by attracting and retaining viable commercial/retail entities to the area;
- II. Provide zoning changes to promote active and passive recreation;
- III. Provide zoning changes to maintain existing neighborhoods and attract and retain residents; and
- IV. Provide zoning changes by using innovative strategies to restore and enhance the area’s environmental resources.

POLICES/ACTIONS

- I. Provide zoning changes to strengthen, improve, and enhance the sense of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area by attracting and retaining viable commercial/retail entities to the area.***
 1. Rezone Samoset Street for higher use with a gateway orientation.
 2. Establish a hospitality overlay zoning district.
 3. Modify off-street parking requirements and encourage shared parking for compatible uses.
 4. Re-evaluate types of uses in each zoning district: allowed, special permit, special permit subject to environmental design conditions.
 5. Re-evaluate the sign bylaw relative to the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.
 6. Re-evaluate 35' height requirement relative to views and proximity to existing buildings.
 7. Re-evaluate location of transitional commercial zoning districts and changes to a higher and better use, depending on location.

- II. Provide zoning changes to promote active and passive recreation.***
 1. Modify off-street parking requirements and encourage shared parking for compatible uses.
 2. Establish density, tax and/or other incentives to encourage meaningful open space and/or recreational resources within the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.
 3. Require site plan approval with additional environmental and open space criteria.

- III. Provide zoning changes to maintain existing neighborhoods and attract and retain residents***
 1. Facilitate and encourage the transfer of development rights from other residential zoning districts into the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area.
 2. Establish inclusionary zoning for affordable housing in all zoning districts in the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area. All new housing proposals should contain a meaningful percentage of affordable housing that meets the criteria established in M.G.L. Chapter 40B.
 3. Establish mixed-use zoning within existing commercial zoning districts within the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area, and encourage the use of transferred development rights from other parts of town.
 4. Establish off-street parking requirements relative to residential uses, proximity to public parking, shared parking, etc.
 5. Allow "as-of-right" multi-family and infill housing in locations that are defined to be appropriate.
 6. Allow and encourage accessory apartments, mixed use, affordable, age-restricted, multiple buildings, etc.

7. Establish new setback requirements for existing small lots to allow for new or expansion of existing housing.
8. Establish minimum setback and design requirements for new development, to ensure new development patterns are in keeping with historical New England village building traditions.

IV. *Provide zoning changes by using innovative strategies to restore and enhance to area's environmental resources.*

1. Re-evaluate alternative drainage requirements for impervious surfaces (such as parking lots, driveways, and rooftops) in proposed developments.
2. Provide density, tax and/or other incentives to encourage innovative drainage systems.
3. [Provide density, tax and/or other incentives to encourage enhanced landscaping.](#)



EXISTING ZONING

The existing zoning districts in the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area are as follows. Included is the intent section of each zoning district to aid in explaining the districts.

1. 401.09 Waterfront: To encourage the development of marine, history or tourism related land uses and activities which take advantage of the peculiar characteristics of the waterfront as well as its central location in Plymouth Center and its proximity to the historic area.
To aid in revitalization of the central area by encouraging uses which attract people into the area and generate pedestrian-oriented activity. To require proper emphasis on a pedestrian environment, adequate pedestrian links, high standards for site planning and architectural design.
2. 401.21 Downtown/Harbor: To encourage a mix of commercial and residential uses on individual lots and throughout the district that complement the Town's rich historical background. To create a pedestrian oriented environment by creating links between existing and proposed areas of activity.
To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places in the history of Plymouth.
3. 401.12 General Commercial: To provide centralized areas in which a full range of retail, service, office and other clean use establishments can function in an efficient fashion to their mutual advantage.
4. 401.11 Transitional Commercial: To preserve the residential amenity of existing residential streets which are undergoing pressures for commercial development.
5. 401.05 R-25 Medium Lot Residential: To retain suburban residential development of adequate spaciousness within close proximity of the several village centers of the Town.
6. 401.06 R-20SL Small Lot Residential: To preserve rural portions of Plymouth by allowing compact, single family development within existing village centers in keeping with the historical New England building traditions.
7. 401.08 R-20MF Multi-Family: To encourage compact development. To provide alternative types of housing for people of differing housing needs.