

Preservation Networks

- **Make information on best management practices widely available** to the public. Government agencies and nonprofit organizations have created fact sheets, brochures and pamphlets for distribution.
- **Identify ponds that can accept more public access** and protect ponds that are too fragile for wide public access.

CRANBERRY NETWORK

Plymouth's historic role as the first permanent English settlement in America will always give it unique importance. But Plymouth has a cultural heritage that extends beyond the story of the Pilgrims. The Town's cultural character and history encompass its heritage as an agricultural, seafaring, and mill community. In addition to historic buildings and sites, Plymouth's landscapes of meadows, cranberry bogs, rural gravel roads, and pine woods should be considered an integral part of the Town's cultural character and heritage.



GOALS:

- **Create a Cranberry Network of culturally and historically significant buildings and landscapes with markers, a mapped route, and interpretive materials.**
- **Enhance public awareness of Plymouth's history and historic sites dating from after the colonial period.**
- **Preserve historic sites that are not in the Local Historic District.**
- **Preserve scenic landscapes characteristic of Plymouth's heritage, such as cranberry bogs and working farms.**

HOW?

- **Maintain an inventory of all historic sites**, coordinating with the Massachusetts Historical Commission
- **Pass a Demolition Delay Bylaw** to encourage alternative uses of historic buildings: demolition permits for structures deemed of historic significance and preferably preserved by the Historical Commission (according to criteria spelled out in the bylaw) must be delayed for a period of six months or a year while alternatives to demolition are pursued.
- **Consider Neighborhood Conservation Districts, a Landmarks Bylaw and preservation easements** to preserve buildings and sites outside the Town's Local Historic District.
- **Designate Scenic Roads.** On designated scenic roads, cutting of trees and changes in stone walls within the road right of way cannot be made without a public hearing before the Planning Board.
- **Explore official recognition for historic landscapes** under the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program. The state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative has published a guide, *Reading the Land*, to assist communities in identifying, documenting, evaluating and protecting historic landscapes.
- **Create a town-wide historic preservation organization**, building on the existing Historic Alliance.



Smarter growth protects

BUILDING ON THE VILLAGE CENTERS PLAN: HOUSING WITH QUALITY OF LIFE

CREATE A BALANCE BETWEEN VILLAGE AND RURAL SETTLEMENTS

- Establish restrictions on infrastructure expansion and improvements, including paving of rural roads.
- Continue to refine the town's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.
- Downzone rural areas consistent with the optimum functioning of the TDR system.
- Establish mandatory, by-right conservation subdivision zoning with site plan review in rural areas in order to preserve large blocks of open space.
- Upzone and allow mixed use development in selected areas of Village Centers.
- Zone to encourage compact development on the edges of the Village Centers.
- Zone to encourage multifamily and mixed-use development in new economic opportunity centers.

Rural Settlements

Plymouth outside the Village Centers should remain rural in character. This does not mean that no one should live there but that further development should be limited as much as possible to the carrying capacity of the land without substantial infrastructure. Zoning requirements should reflect that character and the town should not encourage more development by upgrading infrastructure. Where possible, the town should support farming and other resource-based economic activities, as long as operators use best management practices to protect the environment. Zoning should also provide for small nodes for rural service retail. Rural areas include Chiltonville, South Pond, Six Ponds, Ellisville Harbor, Bourne Road, and Federal Furnace.

GOAL:

Retain the rural land use, scenic, and environmental character of areas outside the Village Centers.

HOW?

- **Continue making Rural Areas the sending areas for Transfer of Development Rights.** Plymouth's existing TDR program should be continued and its existence publicized to landowners and developers. A study should be undertaken to determine the right balance between zoned development capacity in rural areas and the goal of directing the use of that development capacity to the Village Centers and Economic Development Centers.
- **Use mandatory, by right conservation (cluster) zoning based on low rural densities and with site plan review to ensure compatibility with resource and open space preservation networks.**

When subdivisions are allowed, they should be designed so that large blocks of open space remain intact and linked with other parts of the Green Network. Site plan review will provide the Town with oversight on design and development standards.

- **Zone for hamlets.**

Rural areas need small service areas so that residents do not have to drive long distances for convenience retail and zoning should reflect that need.

- **Work with conservation nonprofits such as the Wildlands Trust and The Nature Conservancy to preserve rural landscapes.**

Except for Myles Standish State Forest Plymouth does not have a large amount of permanently protected open space. Nonprofit conservation organizations have already become active in Plymouth and they can collaborate with the Town to create a model of sustainable levels of rural settlement.

quality of life in the People Network

Village Centers

The 1980 Village Centers Plan is a good foundation that needs more effective implementation. Residents generally like their neighborhood quality of life and will be naturally concerned about what directing growth to their village center might mean for their quality of life. Good design and development standards will result in attractive new housing that fits into existing neighborhoods.



GOALS:

HOW?

- Focus significant infrastructure investments in Village Centers.

- Accommodate new housing within Village Centers or at their edges.
- Promote development that mixes retail with housing above.
- Include housing in mixed-use commercial centers.
- Make all Village Centers into walkable environments.

- Continue making the villages receiving areas for development rights transferred from rural areas. Density bonuses can be calibrated as incentives for development of different sites.
- Create design and development guidelines for non-residential development in each of the village areas. Design guidelines appropriate to each village's scale, character, and infrastructure capacity should be included as performance standards in the zoning by-law.
- Promote mixed-use development, including residential above retail, to mitigate the traffic impacts of new growth. People who live in commercial districts add to the liveliness of those areas without taking out their cars.
- Provide infrastructure in support of appropriate growth, such as parking, attractive and walkable streets, and neighborhood-oriented green spaces. In addition to design guidelines, successful infill and compact development needs high quality public spaces.
- Create zoning incentives or Planned Development Districts under special permit processes to encourage residential mixed-use redevelopment in Economic Opportunities Areas such as Cordage Park and commercially-zoned sites near highway interchange areas.
- Accommodate compact growth at the edges of the villages through greater density inside the infrastructure limits. Consider providing for potential future expansion of village centers as the edges become built out.
- Create greenways and green belts outside the village area infrastructure limits by pursuing conservation restrictions.



PLYMOUTH CENTER

- Development on infill sites
- Housing above shops
- Parking

NORTH PLYMOUTH

- Development on infill sites
- Transit oriented housing in a mixed use Cordage Park redevelopment project

WEST PLYMOUTH

- Sidewalks
- Incentives for redevelopment of the commercial corridor with multi-family housing and shops

MANOMET

- Pedestrian friendly village center
- Development on infill sites

CEDARVILLE

- Development of a compact village center near Route 3, Exit 2
- Development on infill sites

PINEHILLS

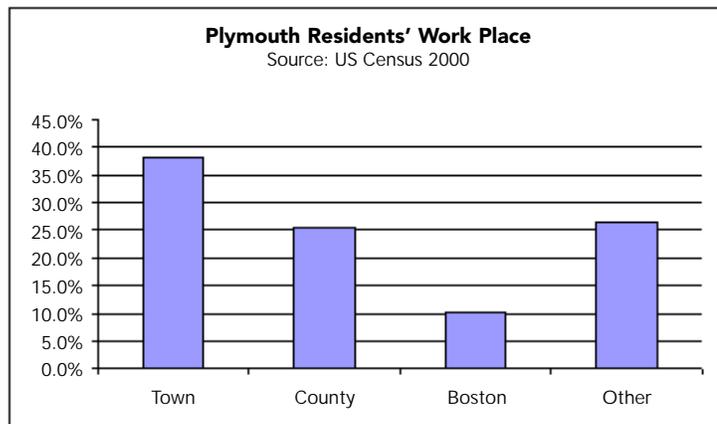
- Planned buildout of the residential community and village center.
- Formalize as a Village Center by appointment of a Steering Committee

Smarter growth creates economic

During the last twenty years, Plymouth proved it could attract new businesses, employment and commercial and industrial development. During every year in the 1980s, the Town attracted, on average, nearly 190,000 square feet of new industrial and commercial development. Although the rate of new construction during the 1990s did not reach this level, between 1992 and 2000 the Town attracted more than 230 new companies and 4,100 jobs.

New business growth is almost entirely in services and trade, rather than manufacturing. New and emerging sectors in Plymouth need different resources and different kinds of facilities than the Town has traditionally depended on. One of the most important resource needs is for a larger and more highly skilled work force. In addition, Plymouth's regional market is very competitive: neighboring communities have affordable development sites in good locations, the potential to expand the supply of land and buildings, and aggressive local development programs.

Smarter growth offers the potential to create an economic development policy that makes Plymouth a regional employment center while providing a range of housing opportunities to satisfy the labor force that would be needed. At the time of the 2000 Census, 64% of Plymouth residents already worked either in the Town of Plymouth or in other Plymouth County locations.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY CENTERS

Smart growth provides for economic growth that promotes fiscal stability, offers more quality jobs for Town residents so they can reduce commuting time, and helps create lively, animated places for retail shops.

GOALS:

- Promote compact, dense growth in and around existing commercial and industrial nodes.
- Promote compact, dense growth including multi-family residential development at most Route 3 interchanges.
- Enhance the traditional commercial districts of older Village Centers.

HOW?

- **Make Economic Opportunity Centers** the receiving areas for development rights in the TDR system.
- Use **Economic Opportunity Area incentives** to assist new business development that meets town goals.
- Use **District Improvement Financing designations** to fund infrastructure and other public investment where needed.
- **Redevelop underutilized nonresidential sites** such as Cordage Park.
- **Identify revitalization and redevelopment opportunities for older retail and service centers.**
- **Create and/or enhance pedestrian friendly retail areas** with attractive streetscapes and public spaces and supporting infrastructure such as well-placed parking.
- **Explore the use of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)** for retail areas. BIDs are organizations of business and property owners in commercial districts that develop, fund and manage programs and services targeted to improve the commercial district.

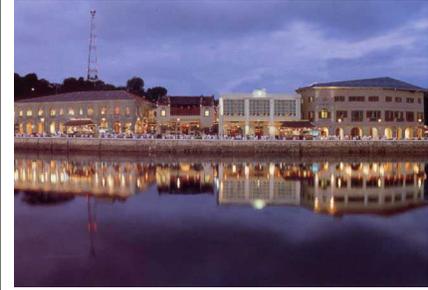
opportunity in the People Network

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS FOR COMPACT, MIXED-USE GROWTH

Cordage Park—A Major Waterfront Opportunity for a Mixture of Residential and Commercial Uses

The combination of waterfront property, with an underutilized mill complex redolent of Plymouth's history and proximity to the Town's commuter rail station is a potent opportunity for Plymouth.

Cordage Park could be an exciting residential and retail destination. Drawings courtesy Cordage Commerce Center



Industrial Development

- Plymouth Industrial Park
- Plymouth Municipal Airport

Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Development

- Route 3/Route 44, exits 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7
- Encourage more retail, office and hospitality uses

IMPROVEMENTS TO VILLAGE CENTER COMMERCIAL AREAS

DOWNTOWN PLYMOUTH

- Enhanced retail for residents and visitors.
- Encourage office and residential uses.
- Parking garages in unobtrusive but convenient locations.
- Protection of historic scale and character.

NORTH PLYMOUTH

- Revitalize small scale retail businesses with business development programs like façade improvement and signage assistance.

MANOMET CENTER

- Reinforce compact, small-scale retail and services for residents and visitors.

PINEHILLS VILLAGE GREEN

- Pursue buildout of the 178-acre planned retail and service district.

CEDARVILLE ROUTE 3/EXIT2

- Use zoning to promote creation of a compact, walkable retail and service district primarily for residents.

WEST PLYMOUTH

- Use zoning to promote creation of a compact, walkable, village-style commercial district.



Smarter growth supports



Plymouth's natural and cultural resources are major economic assets, with tourism contributing more than \$300 million per year to the Town's economy. These assets nevertheless can be damaged by sprawl development: growth pressures threaten the sustainability of natural systems town-wide, while sprawl development in some areas has already compromised the quality of the water and wildlife habitats. Careless development can also damage the integrity of the Town's historic and cultural heritage, sometimes preserving a structure but destroying its surroundings.



Plymouth's waterfront is primarily oriented towards tourism-related uses. Given conditions in the Massachusetts fishing industry and conditions at other ports in the region, Plymouth is unlikely to see an expansion of its commercial fishing industry. However, retention of existing commercial fishing is important to Plymouth's character and diversity on the waterfront. Plymouth is the regional center for excursion boating with whale watches, harbor tours, amphibious duck tours, and party fishing. There is also a summertime daily ferry to Provincetown.



Strengthening this aspect of Plymouth's economy requires preserving and enhancing the waterfront economy, both commercial and recreational, and integrating the Cranberry, Green, and Blue networks in ways that make them visible and accessible to visitors. Heritage and nature routes, with signs, maps, and interpretation; additional access to ocean and inland waters and to scenic views; carefully managed access to important rural sites; and support for the development of tourism infrastructure are all needed in order for Plymouth to encourage visitors to venture beyond Plymouth Rock, the Mayflower and Plimoth Plantation.



the waterfront and tourism economies

GOALS:

- **Support the waterfront economy, including commercial fishing, excursion boating, and recreational boating.**
- **Diversify and enhance Plymouth's appeal as a tourist destination.**
- **Expand tourism infrastructure to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more money in Plymouth.**

HOW?

- **Commission a tourism market study**, possibly funded by a public-private partnership, to identify:
 - How to enhance Plymouth's profile as a heritage tourism destination.
 - Methods to attract tourists to stay longer and spend more.
 - Optimum locations, regulatory changes and other conditions necessary for the establishment of new hotels, B & Bs, a conference center, restaurants, and other tourism infrastructure.
 - Opportunities to promote Myles Standish State Forest as a tourism and recreational asset.
 - Marketing strategies for Plymouth as a destination for visitors outside eastern Massachusetts.
- **Identify select waterfront sites appropriate for tourism and recreational development** and make regulatory changes and infrastructure investments needed to create the conditions for this development.
- **Create marked and mapped heritage and recreational routes and trails** for visitors.
- **Establish a tourism commission supported by a liaison position within the town's Department of Planning and Development** to strengthen tourism's position as an economic engine for Plymouth.



Smarter growth depends on integrating

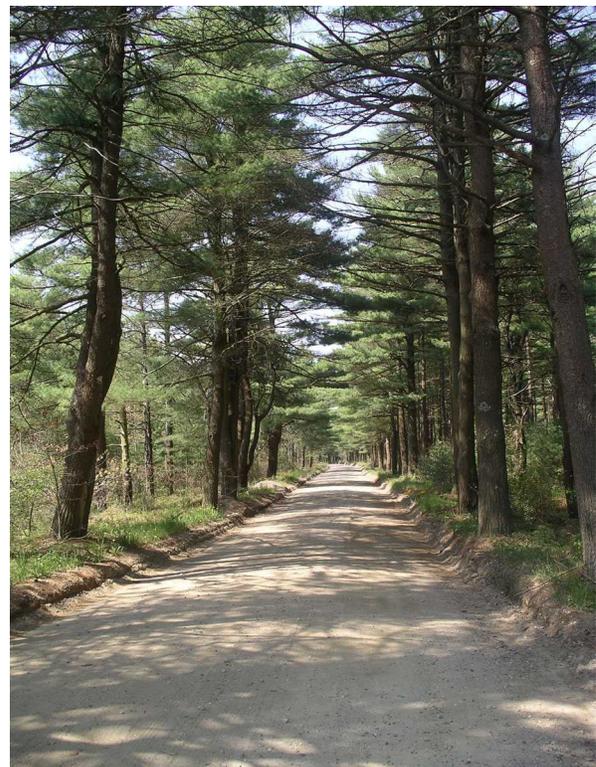
Infrastructure facilitates growth and development. In a smart growth plan for Plymouth, the Town needs to ensure that infrastructure planning and implementation complements the land use and development goals of the community. This means that infrastructure improvements and expansions will be focused in the Village Growth Centers and Economic Development Opportunity Areas and limited in the Rural Preservation Areas.

GOALS:

- Focus infrastructure to encourage compact development in growth focus areas, which is more cost-effective and has less impact on natural resources.
- Facilitate infrastructure in growth focus areas and constrain it in preservation focus areas.
- Encourage provision of infrastructure by private developers where it fits into the smart growth plan, but do not accept infrastructure development simply because a developer is willing to fund it.

Goals for transportation include:

- Provide safe pedestrian routes in Village Centers and economic development zones.
- Discourage speeding.
- Promote efficient traffic flow, which is not necessarily high speed.
- Designate truck routes.
- Advocate for improved local access to transit.



new infrastructure with land use goals

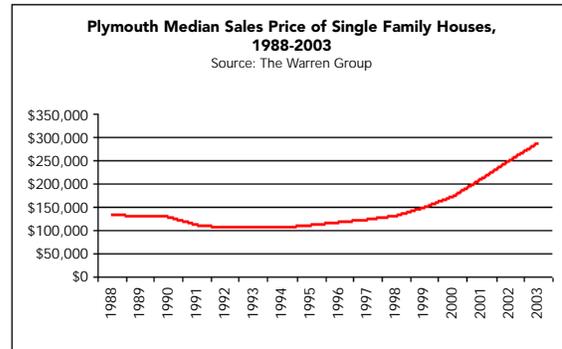
HOW?

- **Prepare a Transportation Master Plan.**
 - Develop a comprehensive road improvement plan consistent with growth objectives and new road development.
 - Implement a traffic-calming program.
 - Plan transportation and parking capacity sufficient for additional development in growth areas.
 - Maintain rural roads and rural centers at current levels and resist efforts to upgrade capacity.
 - Work with regional transportation groups to improve local access to commuter rail stations in order to reduce dependence on single occupant vehicles.
 - Create a town-wide network of marked bicycle and pedestrian routes linking open space, historic, community, and recreational destinations and implement in phases.
 - Encourage development of alternate transport modes, including commuter boats.
- **Commission a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Study** to make recommendations on sewer, community septic systems, and new technologies appropriate to the Smart Growth plan.
 - Incorporate study of the need to protect natural resources.
 - Identify the right balance between and locations for sewer and septic systems.
 - Implement the recommendations through the capital plan, Board of Health regulations, and other appropriate methods.
- **Prepare a Water Supply Study and Master Plan**, including attention to the impact of water withdrawals on surface waters such as fragile ponds.
- **Plan to reserve right of way and easements for future transportation and utility needs**, including telecommunications infrastructure and wind energy potential.



Smarter growth fosters balanced housing opportunity

Although Plymouth housing prices remain relatively affordable compared to much of eastern Massachusetts, since the late 1990s prices have been rising steeply. The new housing being built is almost all single family houses and they are bigger and more expensive than most of Plymouth's older housing. Plymouth needs to offer more housing choice for all kinds of households and at a variety of prices. Like most other communities in Massachusetts, the Town has not met the state's 10% goal for permanently affordable housing under Chapter 40B and is therefore open to potential affordable housing projects that could override the Town's zoning requirements.



GOALS:

- Encourage diversity of housing types through zoning.
- Work towards fulfilling the Chapter 40B goal of 10% permanently affordable housing.
- Work with existing for-profit and non-profit affordable housing providers to create additional 40B-eligible affordable housing in Plymouth.

HOW?

- Designate the Fair Housing Committee as the Plymouth Housing Partnership to develop and oversee affordable housing policy and advise on affordable housing activities.
- Create and adopt an affordable housing plan that meets the criteria of the state Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Use the existing expertise of the Redevelopment Authority (which operates first time homebuyer programs) and the Housing Authority.
- Seek planning and other assistance from housing organizations such as the Massachusetts Housing Partnership and Citizens Housing and Planning Association.
- Attract affordable multifamily housing with incentives and direct it to Village Growth Centers or Economic Opportunity Centers with pedestrian-friendly design standards.
- Exempt affordable housing projects from the building permit cap.
- Establish inclusionary/incentive zoning for all projects of 10 or more units.
- Provide for affordable accessory apartments, single or duplex houses on nonconforming lots, and other zoning strategies to encourage affordable housing production, subject to overall smart growth, wastewater management, and design standards.
- Work with the Community Preservation Committee to direct CPA funds to affordable housing projects.



Affordable housing photos from Massachusetts communities courtesy CHAPA

Invest in people and institutions for smarter growth



To grow smarter successfully the Town will have to make an investment in people and in institutions to sustain the greater organizational capacity needed for success over the long term. Both the public and the private sector can contribute to achieving the vision for Plymouth's future. Public-private efforts are essential for environmental protection and land preservation, preservation of historic and heritage resources, and economic development planning and implementation.

In general, Town and school staff levels have not kept pace with development. An investment in additional municipal staff will have the following benefits for the Town:

- More grant proposals and more grant funding
- Coordination and staffing of public-private efforts
- More planning assistance to businesses who seek to invest in a Smart Growth Plymouth
- More assistance and coordination of land protection and preservation efforts
- More technical capacity to review, regulate, and monitor development
- More time for strategic infrastructure planning and investment
- More efficient regulation for projects that meet smarter growth goals

At the same time, volunteers and the private for profit and nonprofit sectors can take the lead in the following areas:

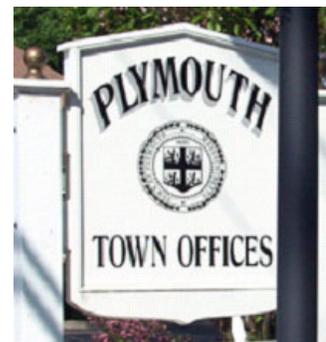
- Creation of a town-wide historic preservation organization
- Raising awareness among property owners in Rural Preservation Areas about the benefits of transferring development rights or donating conservation restrictions
- Raising public awareness about best landscape practices to protect water resources
- Leading marketing, promotional and human resource development efforts for economic development

GOALS:

- **Use the Master Plan to guide Town decision-making**
- **Strengthen Town departmental capacity where needed**
- **Enhance economic development planning and implementation capacity.**

HOW?

- **Create a long-term planner position**, as required by the Town Charter, to guide Master Plan implementation.
- **Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee to be the stewards of the Master Plan.** The Committee should report on Master Plan implementation progress to the Planning Board and Town Meeting annually and sponsor public meetings every five years to confirm or revise the goals and evaluate both the achievements and obstacles to achievement that have occurred thus far. If needed, the plan should then be revised to reflect changed circumstances or goals.
- **Use Master Plan policies to guide town decision making** and incorporate Master Plan action items into departmental work plans and the town's capital plan.
- **Strengthen planning capacity at staff levels.**
- **Continue to support a strong Economic Development Corporation** to lead economic development efforts



Can we afford smarter growth?

Sprawl costs Plymouth more than smarter growth:

The Cost of Services Study found that the average cost to service single family homes in the rural areas of Plymouth, where most residential growth is occurring, is more than double the cost of servicing the higher-density houses in older village centers. Commercial, service, retail, office, and industrial development generates more revenue than costs to the Town. Plymouth will need to make major improvements to its school buildings in the near future—regardless of population growth. Less sprawl and more compact, mixed-use development will help the Town use resources effectively.

- Smart growth is more efficient and cost-effective than sprawl because more people are served at lower costs per household and per person.
- "Smart" planning objectives, regulation, and administration attract high-quality private investment.
- Public investments can be leveraged by future revenue gains.
- Smarter growth maximizes the value of existing developed areas for economic opportunity before opening up new "greenfield" areas.
- Market conditions guide the pace of public investment.



What do we do now? Critical early actions

- Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee.
- Designate the geographic limits of focus areas for preservation and growth.
- Establish infrastructure expansion limits.
- Establish design, development and density standards for village centers, preservation areas, and economic opportunity growth areas.
- Refine Plymouth's Transfer of Development Rights program and expand definition of sending and receiving areas.
- Provide for open space in village centers and economic opportunity growth areas.
- Provide for rural service convenience centers in preservation areas.
- Develop comprehensive wastewater, water supply and transportation plans.
- Finalize and implement an affordable housing plan.
- Strengthen planning department capabilities in technology and long-range planning (i.e., GIS, transportation, grant-writing) to keep pace with development challenges and opportunities.



