

Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts
West Plymouth Master Plan
November, 1993



Billington Sea

**Produced by the West Plymouth Task Force
for the Plymouth Planning Board**

West Plymouth Master Plan

The West Plymouth Master Plan was prepared by the West Plymouth Task Force consisting of the following citizens volunteered their time to serve on the committee.

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Introduction

The West Plymouth Master Plan was prepared through the West Plymouth Task Force with the assistance of the residents of West Plymouth in partnership with the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen. This community based plan highlights the issues most important to the village. The plan shall be the primary justification for capital investments, growth management, community development, and economic development in West Plymouth.

West Plymouth is heavily developed, containing twenty-five percent of the Town's population. However, it still retains many areas of natural beauty and open space, and its sunsets are unrivaled by the other village centers. Preservation and protection of the remaining open space and natural resources are essential to the future of this village.

The community's most pressing need is for a village focal point. West Plymouth's focal point could include a recreation area, a community center or a village green. A focal point would identify the village, serve as a meeting place, and promote community interaction. Some of the other concerns in the village relate to the quality of life in the neighborhoods and the potential composition of the commercial development that will someday occur in the Village Center.

The need for residents to become more active in shaping West Plymouth's future is equally important. Residents must become active at the family, neighborhood, precinct, Town, and state levels to effect positive changes in West Plymouth. Precinct Representatives should meet regularly to discuss matters relating to West Plymouth. Open communication is encouraged as a tonic for the vitality of the village.

In response to these issues as well as many others the West Plymouth Task Force prepared this master plan. In preparing the plan the Task Force held 23 open meetings, two public hearings, circulated a questionnaire, and interviewed many residents.

Following adoption of the plan, a standing committee should be created. Similar Steering Committees have been established for the Downtown/Harbor District, Manomet, Cedarville, and North Plymouth. The charge of the Steering Committee should include the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this master plan. The committee should serve as a focus for Town Meeting members. Town Meeting members from the West Plymouth precincts should be ex officio members.

Background Information

In July 1977, the Town initiated the Plymouth Goals Project. This was the first step in a continuing process enabling local residents to shape the future of the community. The Goals Project succeeded in clarifying the issues of primary concern to the townspeople. These issues were translated into specific goals to be pursued by the Town. After a series of open meetings and a newspaper poll, the broad issues identified and endorsed by Town Meeting for priority action were: Growth Management, Tax Rate Control, Public Facilities, Economic Development, Town Center/Waterfront, and the Village Center Concept.

Significant progress has been made by the Town in addressing many of these concerns. The Village Centers Plan was adopted in 1979. In 1987 Growth Management Bylaws were enacted. In 1988 the Capital Improvement Program was initiated. In 1989 the Plymouth Center/Waterfront Area Master Plan was adopted. In 1990 The Manomet Village Master Plan was adopted. The Cedarville Master Plan was prepared in 1991 and adopted at the 1992 Annual Town Meeting. The North Plymouth Master Plan was adopted in the fall of 1992.

It was the intention of the Town's Village Centers Plan to develop comprehensive plans for each of the five designated village centers. The West Plymouth Task Force was established in the spring of 1993 with appointments from the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen. The charge of the Task Force was to draft the West Plymouth Master Plan for Town Meeting adoption.

The 1979 Village Centers Plan established several "functional" areas. The functional areas found in and adjacent to West Plymouth are: the Commercial Center, the Village Growth Area, and Economic Development Areas.

The Village Centers Plan states that "a village center should serve as the commercial, institutional, political, and public focus of its village. Its form should be such that it provides a physical identification for the village, in addition to being its physical focal point." The General Commercial District located at the intersection of Carver Road (Route 44) and Plympton Road (Route 80) is designated to be the West Plymouth Village Center. A portion of the center has been developed and is known as the West Plymouth Square. The remainder of the center consists of 57 acres of vacant land located between the existing square and Jamie's Path. This 57 acre parcel is in single ownership. The challenge to the Town and the developer of the land is to create a development in a manner that fulfills the communities definition of a village center consistent with the character of West Plymouth and addresses the needs of the businesses and residents of the community. The need to establish a village center identity is perhaps the most difficult and challenging task to be considered by the Town.

The Village Growth Area is zoned for relatively dense residential development and surrounds the Village Center. It is impossible to provide services uniformly throughout the Town because it is so large (103 square miles). Therefore, the theory is that by creating growth areas the Town can concentrate on providing services to specific areas.

In addition to the General Commercial area situated in the village center and the surrounding residential districts, the West Plymouth Village Service Area includes an Arterial Commercial District and two areas of economic development. The Arterial Commercial District encourages commercial uses of a traffic-oriented nature that are inappropriate in a pedestrian oriented General Commercial District. This district is generally located along the Carver Road (Route 44) corridor west of Route 3 and east of Pilgrim Hill Road. Economic Development Areas are areas where employment and economic activities are encouraged. The Plymouth Industrial Park and Airport District are the Economic Development Areas located in West Plymouth. The other areas related to West Plymouth are the outlying Rural Residential Districts. These areas are located in the northwestern corner of the Town, in the Federal Furnace area, and in the Billington Sea area.

The Village of West Plymouth is bounded to the north by the Town of Kingston, to the east by Route 3, to the west by Plymouth Municipal Airport and the Town of Carver, and to the south by Billington Sea and the Myles Standish State Forest. The Village Service Area shown on the Map #1 is the official boundary recognized by the Town for planning purposes; however, it should be noted that the historical boundaries of West Plymouth may differ.

According to the 1990 Census, the neighborhoods of West Plymouth contain approximately 25 percent of the entire population of the Town, with a year-round population of 11,067 people (see Table #1). Unlike Plymouth's other village centers, West Plymouth does not have a "traditional" or historical commercial center. In fact, before 1965 land used within West Plymouth was confined largely to seasonal recreational and agricultural uses with virtually no commercial development. During the ten year period between 1970 and 1980 West Plymouth's population grew at a staggering rate of 378 percent. In 1970, the population was estimated to be 1,793. By 1980 the population swelled to 8,569. The population grew at a lower, but still brisk, rate of 29 percent from 1980 to 1990.

In analyzing the age groups of West Plymouth it was found that over sixty percent of the population is under the age of 39. This statistic has even greater significance when it is considered in conjunction with the fact that 81 percent of Plymouth's mobile homes are found in West Plymouth. These homes are occupied by citizens 55 years or older.

This village exemplifies the impact that automobile transportation has had on the pattern of residential and commercial development. More than any other portion of Town, West Plymouth and its development pattern was influenced by the demand for suburban homes occurring in the late 1960's and the 1970's. The commercial development found along South Meadow Road and Route 44 caters to the automobile with large parking areas and easy off-street access. Some of the catalysts for growth included the village's natural beauty, its immediate access to Route 3 and the availability of inexpensive developable land along such major roads as Carver Road (Route 44), South Meadow Road, and Federal Furnace Road.

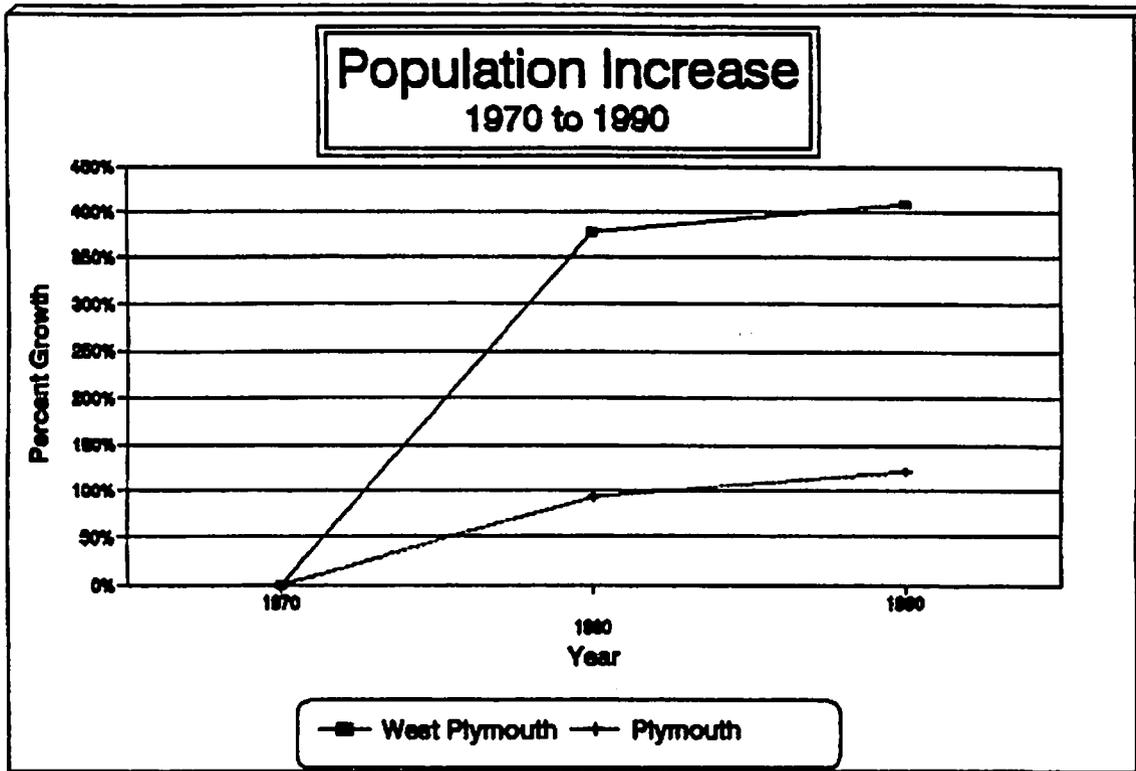


Table #1

Public facilities scattered throughout the Village as shown on Map #2 at the end of this report include: West Elementary School, Federal Furnace School, Plymouth Municipal Airport, and Seven Hills Fire Station. The area is almost entirely serviced by Town water. The Town's Recreational Facilities Report notes that "Additional (recreational) facilities beyond those existing school grounds are badly needed".

The village's housing stock is relatively young with eighty-five percent of the homes found in neighborhoods of West Plymouth less than twenty years old and ninety-five percent less than thirty years old. The most common types of housing found in West Plymouth are larger multi-bedroom, wood framed, single family homes and mobile homes all with private septic systems.

In conclusion, West Plymouth is a relatively "new" community. The explosive growth rates of the 70's and 80's have created a relatively dense residential development with little open space or recreational facilities. As a result, West Plymouth faces a number of challenges related to long term septic system performance, pedestrian and vehicular circulation and the need for a community focal point. The West Plymouth Master Plan highlights these issues and suggests alternatives to address them.

Traffic, Parking, and Pedestrian Circulation

The traffic problems of West Plymouth have reached almost legendary proportions. Improvements to the existing traffic patterns have been in the planning stages for many years. Several of these projects will most likely occur within the next few years. The Village of West Plymouth has no municipal parking. However, the commercial developments in the village have adequate on-site parking. Throughout this planning process the need for sidewalks has been stressed repeatedly by the residents.

Historically, the road development pattern in West Plymouth can best be described as radial. The center or hub of this radial road network is the Seven Hills Road, Samoset Street, Carver Road intersection. The various major roads of West Plymouth (Carver Road, Plympton Road, Seven Hills Road, Federal Furnace Road, Summer Street, and Samoset Street) radiate from this center. This development pattern makes it extremely difficult to travel from one section of West Plymouth to another or to other parts of the Town. These major roads are not interconnected due to historical development patterns and natural barriers. For example, a trip from the southern end of Federal Furnace Road to the southern end of South Meadow Road (a straight line distance of 1.9 miles) requires 5.9 miles of travel. It is equivalent of travelling from Plymouth Center to the Manomet Village Center.

The Route 44 corridor has long been known for its traffic problems. Over the past few decades plans have been proposed to address the acute traffic problems in this area. Unfortunately, some of these proposals have never been brought to fruition. The proposed improvements include such projects as the new Route 44, the reconstruction of the existing Route 44, the reconstruction of the Route 3 (exit 6) interchange, the completion of the Christa McAuliffe Boulevard, the construction of the Maypact Property connector road from Route 44 to Route 80, redesign of the Federal Furnace Road, South Meadow Road intersection, and the construction of Pilgrim Hill Road.

The Town has recently completed the redesign and signalization of the Federal Furnace Road, South Meadow Road intersection. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has begun improvement projects to the Route 3 (exit 6) interchange and Pilgrim Hill Road. Work on the reconstruction of the existing Route 44 from Route 80 to the interchange is expected to begin in the fall of 1993. The construction of the new Route 44 is expected to be completed by 1998.

The commercial development that has occurred in West Plymouth has occurred on large lots. Unlike an established village center, these large lots provide the opportunity to create ample on-site parking. The need for municipal parking areas in West Plymouth is not anticipated. Furthermore, usefulness of such parking is questionable due to the scattered nature of the commercial development.

With the exception of the newer subdivisions in West Plymouth there are few sidewalks in the community. Sidewalks do not exist on the major roads such as Carver Road, Federal Furnace Road, South Meadow Road, Plympton Road, Seven Hills Road, and Summer Street. The lack of sidewalks creates a hazardous situation for residents who chose to walk to other neighborhoods or commercial establishments. In addition, the lack of sidewalks increases the volume of vehicular traffic on the road as residents are forced to drive to every destination. It also contributes to the isolation of various neighborhoods and inhibits the development of a sense of community.

GOALS

- Improve Pedestrian Safety.**
- Improve Traffic Flows and Vehicular Safety.**
- Encourage pedestrian links between neighborhoods.**
- Encourage Unified, Shared Approach to Commercial Parking.**
- Reduce the Community's Dependency on the Automobile for Transportation.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the exception of a portion of Samoset Street, there are no sidewalks on major thoroughfares in West Plymouth. Sidewalks are badly needed all over the community. Throughout the master plan process an overwhelming demand for sidewalks was noted. The construction of sidewalks on the major streets will give residents the opportunity to travel between subdivisions or to the commercial areas without automobiles. This will help to limit the number of vehicles on these streets. The installation of sidewalks in West Plymouth is encouraged. However, the following roads should have priority for new sidewalks: Carver Road, Federal Furnace Road, Plympton Road, Samoset Street, Seven Hills Road, South Meadow Road, and Summer Street. Once sidewalks are constructed on these streets, sidewalks should be installed on the older secondary roads located in and adjacent to West Plymouth. Whenever possible concrete should be the material of statement.

Crosswalks should be installed to complete the village's pedestrian walkway systems. Better enforcement of crosswalk laws are also necessary.

Pedestrian links between abutting subdivisions should also be encouraged. Such links could utilize utility easements, abandoned and undeveloped right-of-ways.

There are a number of proposed traffic improvement projects. Each proposal has its own traffic management plan, however, there is no single management plan bringing these projects together. In light of the many traffic improvement projects proposed, a traffic management plan should be developed immediately. The proposed plan should identify, coordinate, and integrate each phase of the improvement projects to minimize the impacts on the residents of Plymouth. In addition, such a plan should identify for improvements other problem roads and intersections. Potential solutions to those problems should also be suggested in the plan. Any

new developments or road reconstruction projects should include provisions for sidewalks and improvements to line of sight distances at problem intersections.

The majority of the streets located in West Plymouth have been constructed within the last twenty years. A large percentage of these streets are private because of their comparatively young age. The Town is encouraged to aggressively embark on a program of accepting these private streets as public ways. Private roads that service high traffic volumes should be given priority. The use of eminent domain proceedings should be considered to complete the acceptance of these priority streets when impediments arise.

The Town should use the adopt an island, intersection, field, or road program. Individuals, businesses, associations, service groups, clubs, civic organizations, etc. would maintain the area. In return, a sign noting this is placed nearby.

Christa McAuliffe Boulevard is the partially constructed access road from Route 80 to the Industrial Park. This connector road was approved in conjunction with a connector road from Route 80 to Route 44. Construction of the Route 80 to Route 44 connector road is not expected for several years. To mitigate the traffic congestion associated with the proposed Route 44 road improvements the Town should consider opening Christa McAuliffe Boulevard without the connector road. If such an option is considered, particular consideration must be given to the Charlotte Drive neighborhood.

The need for better streetscaping is stressed especially along main corridors such as Samoset Street, Summer Street, Carver Road, and Plympton Road. Streetscaping could include large trees, sidewalks, grass, shrubs, and benches.

An active street maintenance program is needed. A schedule of repairs, renovations, and improvements should be developed and aggressively pursued.

West Plymouth has few north/south access roads. Those that exist such as Drew Road, Black Cat Road, and Rocky Pond Road are completely inadequate. Whenever possible, the Town should explore options to create new north/south links between Carver Road, South Meadow Road, Federal Furnace Road, and Long Pond Road. In addition to improving emergency responses for fire, ambulance, and police vehicles, such roads will provide a more convenient access for West Plymouth residents to the various portions of Plymouth. At this time only the idea of connector roads is supported. When considering such roads, the quality of life of citizens living in existing and proposed neighborhoods is paramount. This is especially important in the more rural portions of West Plymouth. When creating such links in new developments every effort must be made to inform the potential residents of the possibility of a new connector road.

A uniform public signage system should be implemented. The Downtown/Harbor Corporation has recently installed a professionally designed signage system. West Plymouth should also develop or adopt such a signage system.

Bicycle access is to be encouraged throughout the community. One of the best locations in Massachusetts for bicycling, Myles Standish State Forest, is located in Plymouth. The creation of bicycle trails and lanes will provide access to existing recreational resources. Every effort should be made to preserve environmental quality. Off-trail vehicles use is frequently destructive to the Town's natural resources as well as being contributory to noise pollution. Continued restrictions on the use of these vehicles should be pursued.

Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services are deemed to include socially, municipally, and physically important places such as Plymouth Airport, the Seven Hills Fire Station, West Elementary School, and Federal Furnace School, as well as services such as drinking water, fire and police protection.

Public structures serve as focal points, landmarks, and meeting places. However, West Plymouth lacks a community focal point like the Old Schoolhouse in Cedarville.

PLYMOUTH AIRPORT

Plymouth Airport, originally known as Sherman Field, was in use as early as 1935. However, it was not until the outbreak of World War II that the airport began to resemble today's facility. In 1942 the United States Navy purchased the airfield and established a training base. The airfield was in use throughout the war. After the war, it was decommissioned and sat idle. The Board of Selectmen in 1950 purchased the airfield for one dollar. It has remained an active municipal airport since then. In the early 1950's the Town established the Airport Commission.

Currently, the airport is situated on 740 acres of land on the Plymouth, Carver boundary. Approximately 200 acres are located in Carver. The remainder is located in Plymouth. Approximately one third of the land has been developed. The Airport property and other nearby privately owned lands on South Meadow Road are in the Airport (AP) Zoning District. The Airport District provides for a mix of office, commercial, and industrial uses with an emphasis on aviation related businesses.

The airport is open seven days a week twenty-four hours a day. Over 200 aircraft are based at the airport. These aircraft are used for recreational, corporate, instructional, agricultural, and cargo purposes. A medical evacuation helicopter service is also stationed at the airport. Sixteen businesses employing 125 employees are located on the airport. Of the over 13,000 airfields in the United States, Plymouth is ranked in the top nine percent for the quality of service.

In May, 1992 the Board of Selectmen adopted the Airport Commission's Airport Master Plan. Issues relating to the operation and on-site planning have been dealt with in that document. The plan was prepared by the Airport Commission through professional consultants. Thirty-one public hearings were held during its preparation. One of the goals of the Airport is to become self sufficient. The Town budgets for the airport are being progressively reduced each year with the goal that the airport will be self sufficient (operated on funds generated by the airport) by 1995.

Employees of the airport are trained as first response personnel for fire and accidents at the airport.

SEVEN HILLS FIRE STATION

The Seven Hills Fire Station was constructed and manned in 1975. The station is manned twenty-four hours a day. When the population of West Plymouth was 8,569 in 1980 the Seven Hills Fire Station was staffed with twenty-four fire fighters (six per group with four groups). Although the population has grown by 2,677 people to 11,246 since that time the fire station staff has been reduced to 16 fire fighters (four per group with four groups). An ambulance with trained emergency medical technicians (EMT's) are also housed at this station. In addition, the Fire Department's maintenance and repair facility is located in this structure.

The maximum recommended distance between a dwelling and a fire station is 2 1/2 miles. The distance from the Fire Station to the end of Carver Road or South Meadow Road is approximately 3 miles. The distance to the end of Federal Furnace Road is over 4 miles. Taken in conjunction with the concerns for possible incidents at the airport and the adjacent commercial area, the need for an additional West Plymouth fire fighting facility becomes significant.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Two elementary schools are situated in West Plymouth, West School and Federal Furnace School. In addition to the primary goal of education, these facilities serve other important roles in the community. They are landmarks in the community and are closely associated with West Plymouth. Various organizations meet in these schools. Currently, they also serve as the primary source of recreational facilities.

TOWN WATER

The water pressure and supply problems that occurred during the summer months in the mid to late 80's have been addressed in part by the new Darby Pond Well. The Darby Pond Well went on line in 1991. The activation of the new Great and Little South Pond wells will also help to improve the water situation in West Plymouth.

The Town's 1991 Water Master Plan identifies low water pressures in the Sparrows Hill area. In addition, town water is not available in the Micajah Pond, Pawtuxet Acres and Kings Pond Plain Road areas. These areas should be considered for Town water in the near future.

The Town's 1991 Water Master Plan outlines the following improvements to the West Plymouth water system.

Proposed improvements for 1992 through 2001:

- Installation of a 12 inch water main in Cherry Street from Industrial Park Road to Squanto Road.

- Installation of a 12 inch water main connecting Christa McAuliffe Boulevard to

Plympton Road.

-Installation of a 12 inch water main connecting Yale Avenue to Plympton Road.

-Installation of a 12 inch water main on Charlotte Drive from the existing main to Plympton Road.

Proposed improvements for 2002 through 2011:

-Installation of a 12 inch water main in Samoset Street from Pilgrim Hill Road to Westerly Road.

-Installation of a 12 inch water main connecting Carver Road to South Meadow Road.

-Installation of a 12 inch water main connecting South Meadow Road to Federal Furnace Road.

The entire Plymouth system is interconnected. Improvements to the nearby water service zones will reduce the need for transfers from West Plymouth.

POLICE COVERAGE

Twenty-five percent of the Town's population is located in West Plymouth. However, only 8 1/2 percent (1,700 out of 20,000 yearly) of the total number of police calls originate from West Plymouth. Based on population, the crime rate is far lower than other parts of Town. Furthermore, the police protection in West Plymouth appears to be adequate, however, the Town should strive to improve the response to incidents. Community cooperation and participation is also needed to improve the Police Department's effectiveness.

GOALS

- Provide adequate and appropriate staffing for the different departments and facilities.
- Continue and increase the availability of the public facilities to the residents.
- Provide public water to all neighborhoods in and directly adjacent to the village service area.
- Support and encourage mass transportation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A **COMMUNITY FOCAL POINT** should be developed for the village. Such a focal point could be in the form of a physical structure such as a community center or meeting room or open land such as a green or recreational facility. This focal point could be used for a host of community

oriented meetings and activities coordinated as need be with private enterprise. When the vacant portion of the General Commercial District is developed such a focal point should be required. The Town should also remain vigilant and acquire open space when it becomes available.

The Fire Department has noted that the response times to portions of West Plymouth are longer than the recommended standards. Land should be set aside on the western end of South Meadow Road for a future fire station. Such a facility is important for the Airport. If the Airport Commission moves ahead with the construction of a fire station the Town should cooperate and participate in the construction of such a facility. The construction of such a facility should be done in conjunction with an access road to Federal Furnace Road. The Seven Hills Fire Station should be manned in accordance with accepted manpower standards. The community should continue to support the ambulance service housed at the Seven Hills Fire Station.

The Airport Commission should continue and expand their efforts to make the facilities at the airport available to the public. The airport should continue to operate in a manner consistent with municipal airport operations. The Airport Commission is encouraged to continue with its master planning process. The airport should continue to be sensitive to the needs and life styles of the residents of the community. The Airport Conference Room is one of the more heavily used meeting places in Plymouth. To continue to meet the needs of the airport and the community as a whole it should be renovated. Due to the high non-airport (Town) use, the Town should participate in the renovation.

The medical evacuation helicopter service housed at the airport is a valuable resource to the community. The operation of a medical evacuation helicopter service from the airport is supported and should be encouraged.

The improvements to the water system outlined in the Water Master Plan should be supported. In addition, the Town should consider developing a plan to provide public water to all homes within and directly adjacent to the West Plymouth Village Center including homes in Pawtuxet Acres, the Micajah Pond area, and the Kings Pond Plain Road area.

Several steps can be taken to improve the current police coverage. Most of these steps are citizen oriented. When necessary, neighborhoods in cooperation with the Police Department should form crime watches. A lack of uniform visible street numbers on homes is a primary reason for delays in emergency response times. Homeowners should be educated on the importance of house numbers. The importance of visible house numbers will increase once the Town's enhanced 911 system is activated. Homeowners are encouraged to install visible and uniform house numbers. The Town could consider assessing fines against residents who refuse to install house numbers.

Street signs are also important aids for emergency responses. Efforts should be made to reduce the occurrence of street sign thefts. Vandalism resistant design alternatives to the standard signs and posts should be considered.

Due to the dense development pattern of West Plymouth most of the roads have slower speed limits. Better enforcement of speed limits by the police is encouraged.

A large segment of the village's population is located in the various retirement mobile home parks. This older populations coupled with the graying of many of the area's residential neighborhoods highlights the need to provide services to the elderly. Programs such as the meals on wheels, shuttle buses, etc. should be supported. The development of a community center is central to meeting these needs.

The installation of underground utilities is encouraged whenever possible. The "Push Back" concept should be used for utility poles whenever possible. The "Push Back" concept refers to the placing of utility poles several feet off the road or sidewalk where they are less visible.

Some of the homes in West Plymouth are serviced by natural gas. The extension of natural gas lines is encouraged. The use of natural gas will reduce the proliferation of propane tanks. The availability of natural gas will also encourage oil users to convert and remove existing underground oil tanks, limiting the risk of leaks in West Plymouth.

Developers of new projects should be encouraged to participate in the installation of new water and natural gas lines to or near their developments.

The continued evening indoor use of the schools is supported and encouraged. Installation of additional lighting should be considered.

Sewer lines should be extended along Route 44 to the present Arterial Commercial area to encourage commercial and industrial economic development. It has been noted that several of the septic systems in the area are failing. This situation must be addressed. All commercial uses within the Arterial Commercial District should be surveyed. Those with inadequate septic systems should be brought into conformance. In general, at this time sewerage does not appear to be needed in other parts of West Plymouth; however, the impact on West Plymouth's groundwater must be monitored closely. Sewerage should remain a consideration especially for environmentally sensitive areas.

Drainage areas in projects should use curvilinear lines to give them a more natural appearance.

The Seven Hills Fire Station should be re-named the West Plymouth Fire Station to enhance the community's sense of identity.

A community day should be held annually. It could be incorporated with the annual Airport Day.

Commercial Building and Site Design

Unlike Plymouth's other village centers, virtually all of West Plymouth's commercial development has occurred over the last twenty-five years. The building architecture and site layout lack the diversity of age, style, materials, and location typically found in older commercial areas. In addition, there is little integration of the various commercial sites. For example, each building has its own parking area and its own driveway. To shop in two buildings on adjacent lots often requires getting into a vehicle and traveling to a second parking lot.

The various zoning designations in West Plymouth provide for a range of uses, each with different design expectations. The Light Industrial District and the Airport District are zones that encourage economic development. Large scale businesses and warehousing are typically found in these areas. The Arterial Commercial District is designed to allow for high vehicular traffic generators such as automobile sales, hotels, motels, and planned shopping centers. Usually, these structures are large and require expansive parking areas. Again, the scale and size of these uses dictate certain designs, however, due to the area's visibility, the appearance and design of these properties rank high in importance. The final area is the General Commercial District. This District was created in part to serve as the social, institutional and commercial focal area of West Plymouth. The highest expectations for design and appearance are in this area.

GOALS

- Encourage diversity in design and style.
- Encourage the use of traditional building materials.
- Encourage future development in the general commercial district designed to achieve a village center effect.
- Encourage an integrated approach to development.
- Promote sensitivity between commercial and residential uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The greatest potential for commercial development in West Plymouth is located in the 57 acres of undeveloped General Commercial land directly behind the West Plymouth Square. These two parcels comprise the village center for West Plymouth. The development of the vacant land could be of unparalleled importance. The challenge to the community is to create a commercial development that approximates the look, feel, and use mix of a "typical" village center. Design criteria should be added to the Zoning Bylaw to strongly encourage alternatives to conventional strip mall development.

An integrated approach to parking lot design is recommended. Existing as well as new parking areas should be linked via internal drives. This approach would reduce the traffic occurring on the major streets of West Plymouth. Pedestrian links are equally as important. Currently for

example, a resident purchases coffee and doughnuts at a popular coffee shop on Route 44 and then decides to buy a container of milk at the abutting convenience store. The resident must either climb an earthen embankment and walk through shrubs or enter by vehicle onto Route 44 and turn into the adjacent parking area to reach the store. Pedestrian and vehicular access between commercial uses should be constructed whenever possible. Such links are to be pursued between the existing West Plymouth Square and any future development on the abutting commercial land. These vehicular and pedestrians links will reduce the number of vehicles and turning movements onto the major roads.

Landscaping should be emphasized. It should be aesthetically attractive and in keeping with the residential character of West Plymouth. Liberal use of greenbelts in the village center is encouraged. Stronger enforcement of the bylaw's requirements for landscaping is also needed. The recent adoption of a requirement for certification by a landscape architect or other professional that the required landscaping has been properly installed has helped. Property owners should be encouraged to maintain and improve their landscaping.

Additional site landscaping and landscaped buffers for parking areas are recommended. They will improve the appearance of the entire commercial area. The appearance of the properties in the industrial park could also be improved with additional landscaping.

Developers should be required to vary building setbacks and locations in relationship to its road frontage. In conjunction with the building's location, parking areas should be placed to the rear of the site. Buildings developed in this fashion will be more aesthetically pleasing. Furthermore, the vast expanses of asphalt that always accompany such development will be less visible.

Parking areas should be accessed through a defined (curbed) driveway. The various parking areas should be segmented by landscaped islands and accessed by the main drive. Such designs promote safer traffic flow patterns and reduce the vehicle speeds in the parking area. Strip malls are to be discouraged. Buildings should be placed closer to the road. This will reduce the sense of openness and decrease traffic speeds.

The use of traditional building materials such as clapboard, shingles, clay brick and wood are encouraged in commercial areas and industrial areas that are visible from major roads.

The Planning Board should consider shifting selected allowed uses to the special permit category in the Arterial and General Commercial Districts to provide additional protection against improper uses and site layouts.

Public Space, Conservation, and Recreation

West Plymouth is the largest of the five villages in area and population yet there is surprisingly little publicly owned open space within its boundaries. Town owned land includes Plymouth Airport, West School, Federal Furnace School, Parting Ways, and various other tax title parcels and land used by the Department of Public Works. In addition, the 180 acre Morton Park and the 14,635 acre Myles Standish State Park are directly adjacent to the village. These adjacent recreational areas are also important community resources.

In part, West Plymouth's charm is linked to its open spaces. The majority of the undeveloped land in West Plymouth is privately owned. Major privately owned open space parcels include Barengo's Farm on Route 44, Pinewood Campground, the Plymouth Rod and Gun Club, the Boy Scouts of America land near Darby Pond, and approximately 700 acres held in Chapter 61, 61A and 61B tax programs (including cranberry bogs). These privately held undeveloped lands total over 1000 acres.

PLYMOUTH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

The most significant publicly owned area of open space is the 740 acre (540 acres in Plymouth and 200 acres in Carver) airport. The airport's undeveloped and wooded buffers are visually important, however, due to strict Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, most non-aviation uses of this land are discouraged or prohibited.

WEST SCHOOL

West School was constructed in 1975 and is situated on approximately 30 acres of land on Plympton Road (Route 80). In 1992 West School had a student population of 570. The Town's "Life Skill" program operates from the West School. The Life Skill program was initiated to address the needs of students with special needs while keeping them in the community's educational system. The school is supported by an extremely active Home/School association. An extensive adult volunteer program is also in place.

The recreational facilities available at the school include: a baseball field, 2 tennis courts, a basketball court, and three soccer fields. The soccer fields are maintained by the Plymouth Youth Soccer Association. The association maintains these fields and in return has exclusive non-school hour use of the fields.

The baseball diamond has also been improved through private funds. Recently, private investments have been made in new materials for the field.

During the school season the indoor gymnasium is available for use. A fee to pay for custodian time may apply. The gymnasium is used almost every night of the week by either West Plymouth Youth Basketball league, other leagues, or adult groups. In addition, the cafeteria and

other rooms are used by a wide variety of groups and organizations.

The recreational facilities at West School represent one of only two recreational areas in West Plymouth. The primary use of these areas is associated with daily school activities. Summertime, evening and weekend use of the facilities also occurs. Due to a lack of funds and manpower, the fields are only minimally maintained. The soccer fields are privately maintained by the Plymouth Youth Soccer Association.

FEDERAL FURNACE SCHOOL

Constructed in 1977 the Federal Furnace School is located on Federal Furnace Road on the outskirts of the village. The school is situated on approximately 20 acres of land. This elementary school also has a student population of approximately 570. The recreational facilities on this site include a baseball field, two tennis courts and a basketball court. Indoor uses of this school are similar to those at West School.

The school grounds comprise the second recreational area. This field is located in a secluded area of the property. It is also minimally maintained especially during the summer months.

PARTING WAYS

Five hundred seventy two black slaves served in Massachusetts' armies during the Revolutionary War. In return for their service they were freed from slavery. In 1792 the Town of Plymouth awarded a grant of 106 acres of land to four of these former slaves, Plato Turner, Cato Howe, Prince Goodwin, and Quamony Quash. They constructed homes and farmed and were subsequently buried on the land. Ownership of the land reverted back to the Town because some of the conditions of the grant were never fully met. Despite the reversion, descendants of the veterans continued to live on the land until the early 1900's. In the 1950's the four graves were identified. In 1969, a granite marker was erected to indicate the participation of the four in the Revolutionary War.

An archeological excavation of the area was undertaken in 1975, bringing national attention to the site. Several important findings relating to early African American life were revealed by the study.

(Source: The Massachusetts Teacher May/June, 1981, Karen Martin)

In 1979, the Town, through the Town Meeting, conveyed 15 acres of these 106 acres to the Museum of Afro- American Ethnohistory, Inc. for the purpose of constructing a historical museum and educational resource center for Afro-American studies. This transfer provided that the title of said premises shall automatically revert to the Town of Plymouth in the event the grantee herein:

1. shall sell or offer the said premises for sale;
2. shall either be dissolved or fail to perform its corporate purpose or cease to function for any reason whatsoever,
3. shall fail to obtain the approval of the Board of Selectmen of all plans necessary for the construction of said museum and center within five (5) years after the date of transfer of said premises to the grantee herein, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld, or
4. shall not commence construction of said museum and center within ten (10) years from the date of said transfer to the grantee herein;

said right of reverter shall rest upon recording by the Board of Selectmen at the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds of notice of the occurrence of any of the conditions stated above.

Conditions #3 and #4 were never met.

MORTON PARK

Morton Park consists of 180.2 acres of park land. Billington Sea and Little Pond are located in this park. Billington Sea received its name in the 1620's when Francis Billington a passenger of the Mayflower climbed a tree upon the top of a hill and saw this large body of water which he thought to be a sea. Since this observation the lake has been humorously referred to as Billington Sea. Morton Park can be accessed by Summer Street or by Billington Street.

Morton Park was originally created in 1889 through a series of acquisitions and land transfers. Additional land has been periodically added to the park since that time. A series of gravel roads and parking areas service this park. Bathrooms are also located in this park. Uses of the park include: swimming, small boating, fishing, picnicking, and hiking. It is one of the more heavily used recreational areas in Town.

MYLES STANDISH STATE PARK

The Myles Standish State Park delineates the southern boundary of the Village of West Plymouth. Myles Standish State Park is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and operated by the Department of Environmental Management. Myles Standish is one of the oldest, largest and most diverse properties in the state park system. It is the State's second largest park with a total of 14,635 acres (12,635 acres are in the Town of Plymouth and 2,000 acres are in Carver). Purchased in 1916, this park has become extremely popular for picnicking, camping, swimming, fishing, and boating. The park boasts many miles of trails for bicycling, cross-country skiing, trail bikes, four wheel drive vehicles, snowmobiles, horses, and hiking.

OTHER HOLDINGS

The Town owns several other parcels in West Plymouth totalling approximately seventy acres. These parcels tend to be either landlocked or small neighborhood parcels taken as tax title land.

GOALS

- To acquire land for recreation, open space, and greenbelt purposes.
- To encourage public and private investments and maintenance of recreational facilities.
- To develop additional recreational facilities for the community.
- To actively pursue the acquisition of land held in Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B tax programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One quarter of the Town's population resides in West Plymouth but few recreation facilities and little public open space exist in this portion of Town. There is a need for public open space and recreation land. A limited amount of undeveloped land exists in West Plymouth. If this land is developed, there is the potential for the creation of 550 homes with 1,300 new residents. Such development will not only eliminate the possibility of creating a recreational facility but, will also increase the demand for new recreation areas. The Town needs to develop and actively pursue a town-wide acquisition program. Tools such as landbanks and impact fees should be used if they become available through the state. Federal and state funding should be actively pursued. Land should be acquired for current needs as well as for future needs.

The Town's Recreational Facilities Report dated November, 1992 notes that a new recreation area in West Plymouth is the Town's first priority. A West Plymouth recreation facility is also high on the Town's Capital Improvements Program. The Recreation Facilities Report recommends a little league field, softball and baseball fields, basketball and tennis courts, soccer and football fields, and a tot lot playground. The plan also notes that a youth center/community center would also be appropriate. Such a center could include indoor basketball courts, game rooms, exercise facilities and a swimming pool. The need for a recreational facility is supported as well as the concept of appropriate user fees.

The schools have been the surrogate suppliers of recreation in Plymouth because the facilities and land already exist around the schools. However, at this time the School Department is not properly equipped or funded to be the primary supplier of community recreation. Additional funding for better security, irrigation, fertilization, and maintenance are needed. An option to be considered is to pool town and school resources to maintain recreation areas. At the 1993 Annual Town Meeting (Article 19), the "Consolidated Service Task Force" was created to examine Town /School facilities consolidation alternatives. This task force began work in September. They should be encouraged to specifically consider how the recreational needs of the community may be better addressed.

West School soccer field is privately maintained. The Town should take the steps necessary to assume the maintenance of the fields and make them available to all residents.

The recreation areas at the Federal Furnace School have no visible connection with the community. Lighting, improved maintenance, year round use, and better facilities are needed. Although more visible, the West School is faced with similar situations.

Morton Park is an extremely popular recreational facility. To protect this resource the Town should continue to address the water quality issues at Billington Sea and Little Pond. The bathroom facilities, playground equipment, lighting, and trash receptacles must be up-graded. Better maintenance of Morton Park is also needed. The park could be an excellent test case area to begin an adopt a facility program.

The process of transferring the ownership of the Parting Ways land back to the Town should be completed.

The many parcels of open space owned by various associations could be used for neighborhood recreation. Vacant tax title properties could be used in a similar fashion. Such facilities should be designed in a manner sensitive to the neighborhood.

Increased after school security is needed at West School and Federal Furnace School to curb the recurring amount of vandalism occurring.

The Town should work with cranberry bog owners and utility easement owners to make better use of these existing open space areas. The Town should discuss with the Boston Edison Company the potential of using the areas in and around utility easements for recreation. The cranberry bogs of West Plymouth are great sources of open space. Four acres of open land are typically needed to support every acre in production. The Town should support and encourage the use of these economically and aesthetically important open space areas. If used, steps must be taken to ensure the public's safety from potentially hazardous uses such as off-road vehicles and firearms.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has established three tax incentive programs (Chapter 61 Forestry, 61A Agriculture, and 61B Recreation). These programs are designed to encourage landowners to operate agriculture and forestry related businesses and maintain open space. In return, the property owner receives a reduced tax rate. In addition to maintaining open space, the Town also has the first option to purchase the property if it is offered for sale. If the property owner withdraws the land from the program a substantial tax penalty is assessed. The lands held in the Chapter 61, 61A and 61B program are important pieces of West Plymouth's open space. Funds should be set aside in the capital outlay program for Town wide acquisition of lands in the Chapters 61 (forestry), 61A (agriculture), and 61B (recreation) tax programs.

The initiation of an "adopt a facility" program should be considered. As noted previously in Chapter 3, the Town should use the adopt an island, intersection, field, or road program.

Again, individuals, businesses, associations, service groups, clubs, civic organizations, etc. would maintain the area. In return, a sign acknowledging the contribution and service is placed nearby.

The linking of publicly and privately owned open space is recommended throughout West Plymouth. The linking of these areas will help to maintain a rural appearance.

The Town should also support and encourage the State to invest in improvements to the Myles Standish State Park. Improvements should include new land acquisitions as well as new facilities. Access and use of the park should be encouraged. Hiking trails in particular should be developed. In an area presently lacking many facilities, the opportunities found in the park should not be overlooked.

Zoning and Use Mix

The zoning districts found in West Plymouth allow for a variety of uses ranging from low density single family homes on 1 1/2 acres to intense industrial development near the airport and in the industrial park. Land designated as commercial is located near the Route 44/Route 3 area, between Route 80 and Route 44, and to some extent, the land near the airport.

In addition to the conventional use districts, a significant amount of land in West Plymouth is located within the Town's Aquifer Protection District. This overlay district was created to protect the public wells serving this section of Plymouth. The district requires larger lots and protective drainage systems. Additionally, it provides strict regulations on the use of hazardous materials. Residential and industrial development must be monitored carefully to guarantee a high level of ground water quality.

GOALS

- Continue to manage residential growth.
- Encourage commercial development that is consistent with the village centers concept.
- Provide zoning incentives for better building and site designs.
- Continue to protect West Plymouth's natural resources.

RECOMMENDATION

New commercial development typically occurs as large homogeneous structures with expansive parking lots. In new developments, an emphasis should be placed on public uses. New design criteria should be considered to encourage development consistent with a village center. A preferred option for the undeveloped General Commercial land on Carver Road (Route 44) would be a center servicing West Plymouth and not a regional market. The vehicular and pedestrian circulation pattern for the commercial uses on the property should be internalized using the proposed connector road between Route 80 and Route 44. A means should be developed that discourages individual (Form A) lots along these major streets. A process to encourage master planned developments should also be created.

In recent years the re-zoning of the land on the west side of Pilgrim Hill Road from residential to Arterial Commercial has been proposed. To date, such a change has not been supported by the Town, however, it may be appropriate following the completion of the reconstruction of Route 44. This residential district is surrounded by Light Industrial, Arterial Commercial and multi-family residential. This residential district may not be appropriate. If such changes are again proposed to this District then access should be via Pilgrim Hill Road and discouraged on Samoset Street.

Over the past few years there have been discussions about re-zoning the R-20-MD land located on the northern side of Samoset Street to Light Industrial. Concerns were raised about the potential of creating another traffic problem on Route 44 by allowing a tie-in to the industrial

park via the R-20-MD land located on the northern side of Route 44. In addition, residential areas abut this land in the east and west. This area should remain residential.

Maximum lot setbacks should be considered to force the placement of parking areas to the rear of lots.

The Planning Board should consider shifting some of the allowed uses into the special permit category in the commercial districts to provide additional controls on the type and intensity of uses.

Uses in the Airport District that enhance and support the airport should be encouraged.

The groundwater quality should be carefully monitored. The Town should continue to review and update its regulations for development in the Aquifer Protection District.

The Town should consider adopting an open space development bylaw. An open space residential development would allow the same number of residential units as allowed in a conventional subdivision but it also establishes open space areas. Open space developments create less roads and utilities, etc., and therefore cost less to maintain.

Commercial developments near residential areas should have less intensive lighting.

More aggressive enforcement of all requirements in the Zoning Bylaw is necessary.

Historic Identity

There is very little documentation of West Plymouth's history. Several historically significant areas exist in West Plymouth such as Darby Train Station, Parting Ways, Plymouth Airport, the cranberry bogs, and the ponds and lakes. In addition, several older homes can be found in the area.

West Plymouth has been associated historically to the smelting of iron ore in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the book Cannonballs & Cranberries by Fredrika A. Burrows (1976), the author states: "the iron ore discovered by the early settlers in New England was of the brown hematite variety. It lay, loose and porous, in bogs and on the bottoms of ponds and streams, or layered in marshes and low lying meadows. The Pilgrim fathers called it 'bog iron'." (p. 13).

Further she recounts that in the War of 1812, Benjamin Ellis obtained a contract to furnish iron cannon balls for the American Army. One of the furnaces put into use for this product was the Federal Furnace located near the source of Crane Brook which is in the vicinity of Sampson Pond in Carver - that area being a recognized source of iron ore, as was Wenham Pond and the area off South Meadow Road. This blast furnace put demands on West Plymouth as well as the waterfront for it consumed huge areas of woodlands. Clam shells served as the flux to remove impurities. It also gave its name to the roadway leading out of Plymouth, connecting with South Carver and Wareham.

As for Ellis, (he) "made a fortune out of his dealings with the government and, at the end of the war, Ellis Company owned its own ships, sailing out of Wareham and Plymouth. The Ellis Company continued making ironware for domestic use and manufactured stoves and hollow-ware for the foreign trade. Benjamin Ellis died in 1852 leaving a fortune of \$200,000.00, a fabulous sum in those days." (p.36)

Brides Hill is not shown on current maps but is said to be located on Plympton Road (Route 80) near Parting Ways. It was so named in the early days of the colony when the minister of Plymouth, walking to Plympton to visit some of his congregation, met a couple walking to Plymouth to be married, and he married them on the spot.

Source: William T. Davis, Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth, dated 1883.

The Narragansett Pond and the adjacent Narragansett Ridge derive their ancient names from a battle fought on the ridge between the Narragansetts and the Pockonokets. A large number of Narragansetts were killed and their bodies thrown into the pond.

Source: William T. Davis, Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth, dated 1883.

GOALS

- Document the history of West Plymouth.
- Identify historically significant buildings and sites.
- Encourage historic preservation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the many suggestions made to the West Plymouth Task Force was to rename West Plymouth to Darby Station. Although such a suggestion would be difficult to adopt, it does note an important point. By associating the communities past with the present, a sense of identity and place is developed.

In preparing the master plan, an extremely limited amount of information was found relating to the history of life in West Plymouth. The community should continue to research and document the area's history to help develop a sense of identity.

Historical sites or buildings should be identified using a system of plaques and markers.

Housing

West Plymouth is a new, young, residential community. Eighty-three percent of the dwellings are less than twenty years old. The caliber of the community is closely related to the physical condition of its homes and infrastructure. The constant maintenance and up-grading of both the infrastructure and homes is necessary.

Eighty-one percent (530 units) of Plymouth's total number of mobile homes are located in West Plymouth. Residential mobile home park resident's must be 55 years of age or older. The high mobile home population in West Plymouth should be considered when town wide decisions are made relating to elderly, police, and fire/medical services.

In addition to concerns about the existing housing stock, future development could also alter the appearance of the community. If the land currently enrolled in the Chapter 61, 61A and 61B programs as well as the land held by non-profits organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America and various churches were developed, 550 new lots could be created resulting in approximately 1300 new residents in West Plymouth.

An effort is needed to create and enhance the sense of community within and between the various neighborhoods. Many neighborhood associations no longer meet on a regular basis and never existed in other neighborhoods.

GOALS

- Promote the investment of capital in the existing housing stock.
- Protect the remaining open space in the community.
- Foster a sense of community in and between the various neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town should expand its educational program relating to the proper use and maintenance of septic systems. Since most of West Plymouth is located within the recharge areas of several of the Town's wells, the septic system maintenance issue is extremely important. If systems fail at high rates it could create major problems. An educational program on the proper use and care of septic systems should be created. This type of information is currently available from the Board of Health to residents who ask or who are repairing a failed septic system. Video tapes and cable television programs could be used to educate the residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems. Septic systems in the older subdivisions should be monitored for failures.

The Town should continue to participate in the state's low interest/no interest housing rehabilitation loan programs. These loans are available to income qualified homeowners. The loans can be used for up-grading and replacing substandard or failed septic systems. In addition, these programs are used to up-grade, improve, and rehabilitate homes.

An increased awareness and sense of community is needed in the neighborhoods. It is apparent that many of West Plymouth's homeowners associations have become inactive; other subdivisions never had associations. Residents are encouraged to resurrect old associations and form new ones. The Plymouth Police have recommended the formation of neighborhood watch associations which provide protection and reduce police costs. The interaction between the various associations and town government is an important element in community development.

A host of community oriented activities are needed. Community recreation programs, neighborhood watch associations, childcare groups and clubs can be established to foster and develop a spirit of community in West Plymouth. Communication between these various organizations will create a more cohesive community.

West Plymouth has a large number of elderly residents which will increase as residing families mature. When increases in staff and services for the Fire Department and Police Department are requested, the Town should take this elderly population into account. Elderly services and transportation services should be supported for the older residents of the community.

The Planning Board and the Building Department should continue to encourage a mix of residential building designs and varying setbacks. On a community wide basis, appropriate town personnel should monitor conformance with the Town's health codes, building codes, and bylaws. Particular attention should be paid to illegal dumping and waste removal including derelict vehicles and discarded appliances.

Economic Development

The Plymouth Industrial Park, the Arterial Commercial District on Route 44, the Airport District, and the Village Center are the areas available for commercial and industrial development. Currently, the businesses in these areas have not developed a unified approach to marketing or development.

GOALS

- Develop a cohesive approach to market West Plymouth's commercial and industrial uses.
- Encourage the investment of private funds in West Plymouth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

West Plymouth has three separate and distinct business areas; the General Commercial Zone centered above the intersections of Routes 44 and 80, the Arterial Commercial Zone at the intersection of Routes 3 and 44 (Samoset Street), and the Airport District. One or more business associations should be formed in order to coordinate and focus activity between businesses and the immediate community. These associations should lead the community by providing private funds for improvements and marketing, as well as approaching and influencing the local and state decision making processes. They should join with the Town to explore options for incentives to encourage businesses to locate in Plymouth, especially, in the two West Plymouth economic development areas; the Airport District and the Plymouth Industrial Park.

There is already an airport business association. Ultimately, a single West Plymouth business association may be established which could develop a unified approach to marketing, bearing in mind the West Plymouth sentiment that business owners should be sensitive to the complaints of area residents. In reference to previous observations, the association could serve as an effective forum to review complaints, particularly at a community center which would serve as a focal point for the coordination of residential and business activity.

It has been noted in response to a public inquiry that several types of businesses have appeal to West Plymouth residents, among which would be a family style restaurant, casual wear clothing stores, and a bowling alley. Success of operation to some measure would depend upon appearance and design. To that end, zoning is often a poor tool to encourage better building and site designs. However, an effective business association would greatly facilitate development of appropriate design and construction, as well as patronage.

The residents and businessmen should view the town infrastructure as an important component for economic development. The Town should continue to update and improve the infrastructure serving the areas of economic development.

The Town must protect the environment while encouraging industrial development. The issues

relating to sewage and water quality are a priority and need to be addressed immediately by each and every business coming into the village. West Plymouth has an intimate and binding tie to the sole source aquifer.

Summary

West Plymouth is an emerging village which is now beginning to sense its identity. As such its economic, social and political needs are in the process of formulation. This process is in need of a physical focal point in order to focus and enhance a sense of community activism. All of the recommendations noted below are discussed in detail within this master plan.

First and foremost the West Plymouth Steering Committee should be created in order to carry out the responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the master plan. The committee would also serve as a link, if not a catalyst, between the West Plymouth residents, Town Meeting Members, and Town government.

In a general sense, many of the recommendations of the Task Force are pointed in the direction of improving communications and access throughout West Plymouth. All agree that the construction of sidewalks throughout the community is one of the more pressing needs of this village. Sidewalks along major roads should be a priority. Crosswalks and pedestrian links between neighborhoods are also emphasized to allow for ease of foot traffic from one neighborhood to another.

Motor vehicle traffic may be reduced with improved walkways, but an integrated traffic management plan should be development to minimize the impact of current and proposed projects. Whenever possible the Town should explore options to create new north/south road links in and through West Plymouth. Such roads will improve emergency response time for fire, ambulance, and police vehicles as well as savings provide residents with a reduction in travel time and distance.

As noted previously, a community focal point should be developed for the village. The focal point could be in the form of a community center, meeting room or open land such as a green.

Public investments are needed to increase the fire and police coverage in the village. The improvements outlined in the Town's water master plan are supported. In addition, the Town should consider developing plans to provide public water to all homes within or directly adjacent to the village.

The potential development of the 57 acres of vacant General Commercial land located between Carver Road (Route 44) and Plympton Road (Route 80) will be of great importance to the village. The challenge to the community is to create a commercial development that approximates the look, feel, and use mix of a "typical" village center. Design criteria should be added to the Zoning Bylaw to strongly encourage alternatives to conventional strip mall development.

Commercial development should be developed using integrated parking areas and linked walkways. Increased landscaping and buffers should be encouraged whenever possible. To

create a more aesthetically pleasing development, parking areas should be placed to the rear of buildings.

Few recreational facilities exist in West Plymouth. There is a need for public recreational facilities and open space in the village. The Town needs to actively pursue a program of land acquisition. Tools such as landbanks and impact fees should be considered as a source of funding.

The use of an "adopt a facility" program should be considered for roads, traffic islands, parks, etc. Individuals, businesses, service groups and civic organizations maintain the area. In return, a sign noting this is placed nearby.

The Town should encourage the state to invest in improvements and land acquisition in the Myles Standish State Park. The use of the park should be encouraged.

The history of West Plymouth is not well known by its residents. The community should research and document the area's history to help develop a sense of identity.

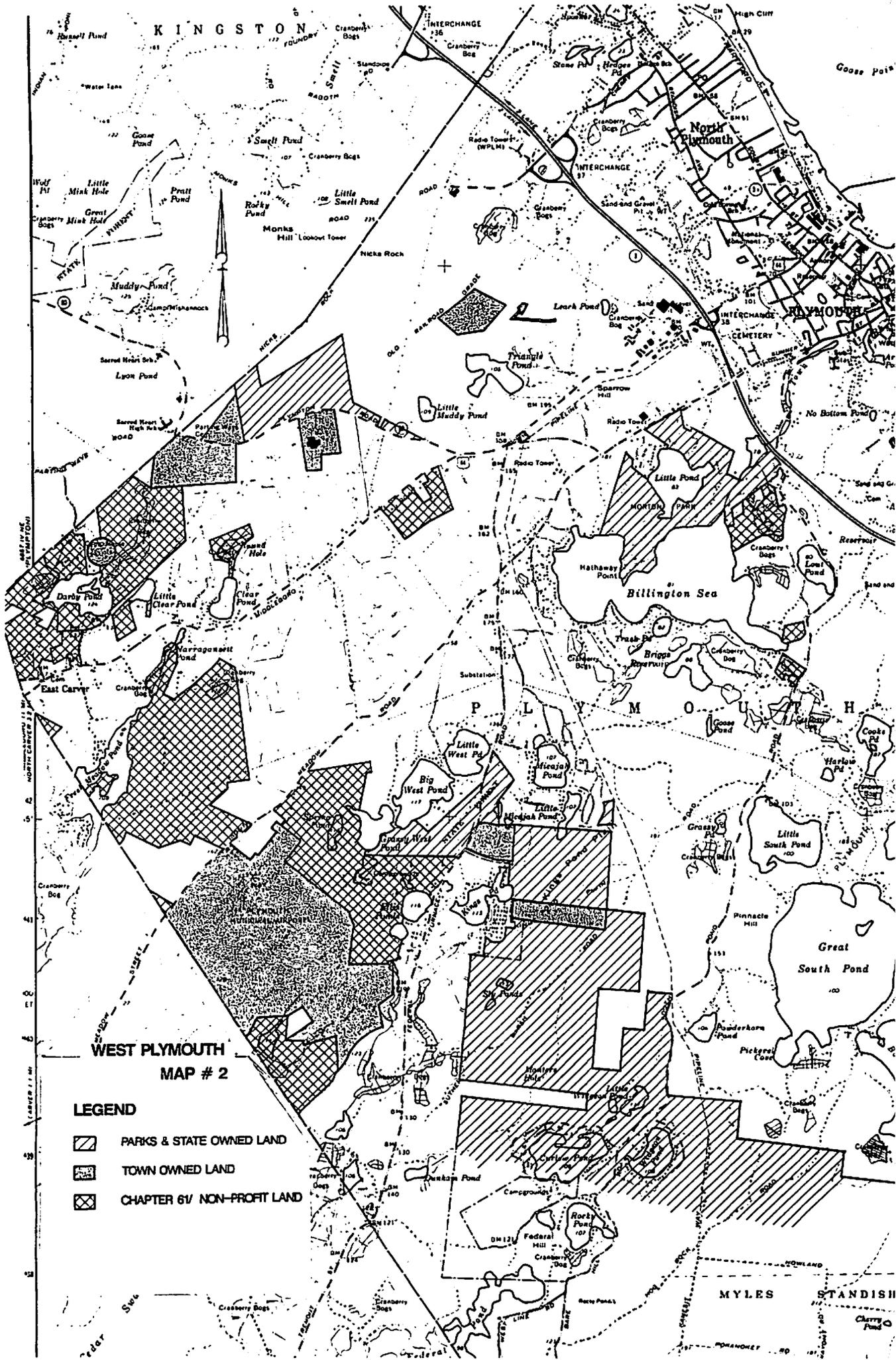
The majority of homes and businesses in West Plymouth are serviced by individual septic systems. Most of West Plymouth is located within the aquifer recharge area for several public wells. The Town should expand its educational program relating to the proper use and maintenance of septic systems.

The neighborhoods, through homeowner associations, should become more active. The interaction between the various neighborhood associations and town government is important. A host of community oriented activities is needed. Community recreation programs, neighborhood watch associations, childcare groups and clubs could be established to foster and develop a spirit of community.

The business owners and operators of West Plymouth should form a business association to coordinate and focus community activities between businesses and the community. The association should lead the community by providing private funds for improvements and marketing, as well as approaching and influencing the local and state decision making processes.

The community of West Plymouth should view the Town infrastructure as an important component for economic development. The Town should continue to update and improve the infrastructure serving the areas of economic development.

In conclusion, by becoming more active in and focused on the community the residents of West Plymouth can improve and enhance the quality of life that exists in West Plymouth today. The adoption of the West Plymouth Master Plan is the first of many steps in that process.



KINGSTON

North Plymouth

WEST PLYMOUTH
MAP # 2

LEGEND

-  PARKS & STATE OWNED LAND
-  TOWN OWNED LAND
-  CHAPTER 61/ NON-PROFIT LAND

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MYLES STANDISH

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