



At a Glance:

Plymouth's Existing Conditions

April 2025

Want more information? - Visit the Master Plan Website:
<https://engagestantec.mysocialpinpoint.com/plymouth-master-plan>



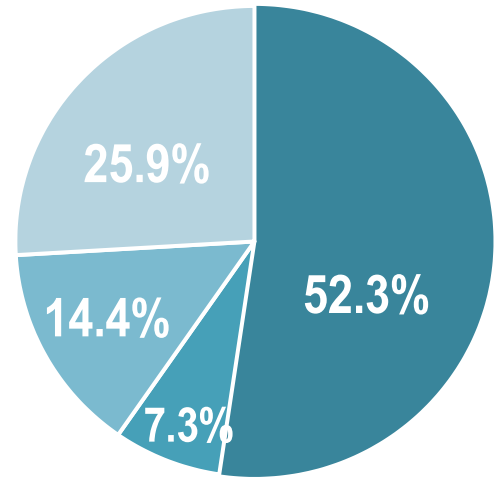
Plymouth is in the process of updating its Community Master Plan – the document that identifies what the residents want to see for the next decade of our Town. The first phase of the process consisted of establishing the “existing conditions” in Plymouth, meaning gathering the facts regarding all aspects of life in Plymouth. This extensive summary will be included as part of the final Community Master Plan document.

This “at a glance” document provides just a few of the more ‘significant’ pieces of information, some of which you might expect and some which may surprise you:

1. Demographics

While the total number of households in Plymouth has increased, the composition of those households has changed:

- Married and cohabitating couple households has increased from 2010, now making up 60% of Plymouth households.
- Households with children under the age of 18 now make up 22% of Plymouth households, an 11% decline since 2010.
- About one-quarter (26%) of Plymouth households are now one-person households, with half of these residents being 65 years of age or older.



- Married Couple Households
- Cohabiting Couple Households
- Male Householder, No Spouse/Partner
- Female Householder, No Spouse/Partner

2. Land Use

Plymouth covers nearly 66,000 acres, the majority of which is open space or residential development. About 3% of Plymouth that is zoned for development (residential, commercial, industrial) remains vacant. Beyond that, another 5.5% of Plymouth is temporarily protected from development, some of which could be converted into developable land.

Existing Land Use

CATEGORIES	PERCENTAGE	AREA [ACRES]
Open Space [Includes Chapter 61 lands]	43%	28,177
Residential	28%	18,122
Multiple-Use	9%	6,178
Exempt Property	7%	4,634
Industrial	2%	1,319
Commercial	2%	1,233
Other [includes water bodies, streets and roadways]	9%	6,078
Total land use area	100%	65,742

Area Remaining for Potential Additional Development

- Plymouth has approximately 2,100 acres of developable or potentially developable vacant land currently zoned for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Plymouth has another 3,623 acres which are currently categorized as Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lands (forest, agricultural, and recreational uses). Some of these properties could be developed should property owners decide to withdraw their land from the Ch. 61 program and should the property not be subject to other restrictions (such as wetlands or access limitations).

3. Housing

Despite the perceived proliferation of multi-family housing, Plymouth remains a predominantly single-family community.

- 71.1% of Plymouth's housing is single-family, detached homes.
- 18.7% of Plymouth's housing is multifamily homes (2 or more units)
- Mobile homes and attached single-family homes account for the remaining 4.9% and 7.4%, respectively.

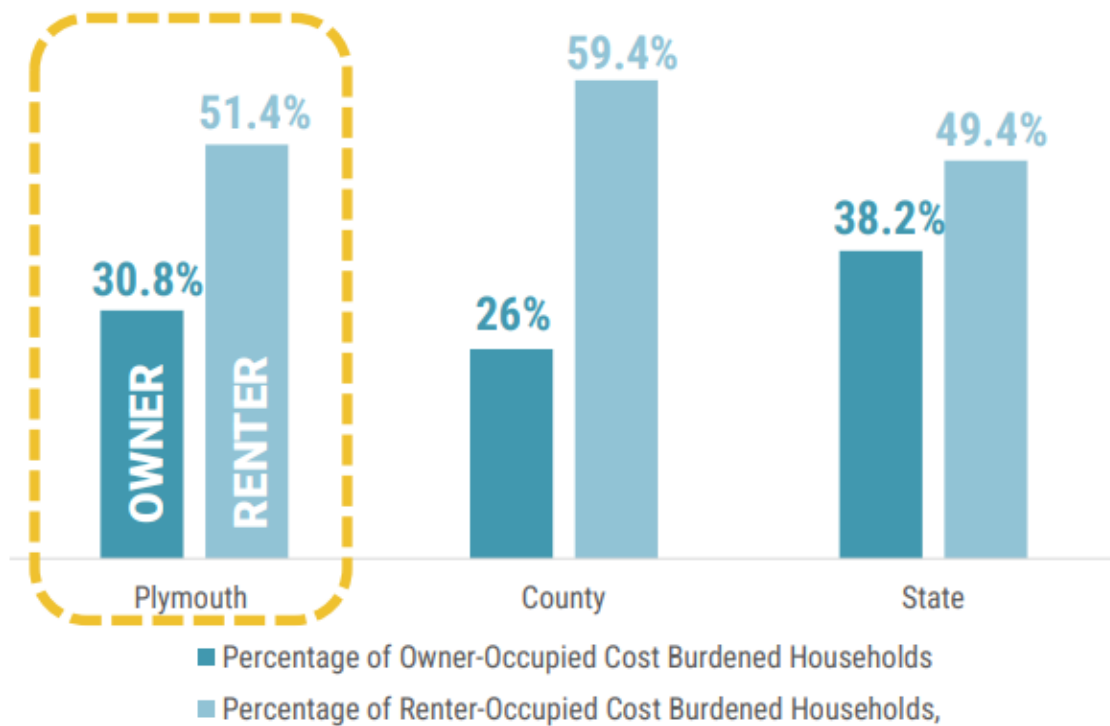
Additionally, even though Plymouth continues to grow, most of its housing is older.

- The bulk of Plymouth's housing development occurred after 1969.
- 30.5% of Plymouth's housing was built after 1989.
- Only about 10% of Plymouth's existing housing stock was built in the last 20 years.

Housing costs are rising in Plymouth

- In 2023, the median value of a housing unit was \$494,700. The median gross rent was \$1,832, which is higher than in all surrounding communities except Duxbury.
- Over half of renters (51.4%) and nearly one-third (30.8%) of homeowners in Plymouth are considered cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of household income on housing costs such as mortgage, rent, and utilities.

Cost Burdened Households : 2021



Cost-burdened households are those paying more than 30% of household income on housing costs.

4. Transportation

Plymouth has over 300 miles of roadways including highways, rural roads (paved and unpaved), and town streets.

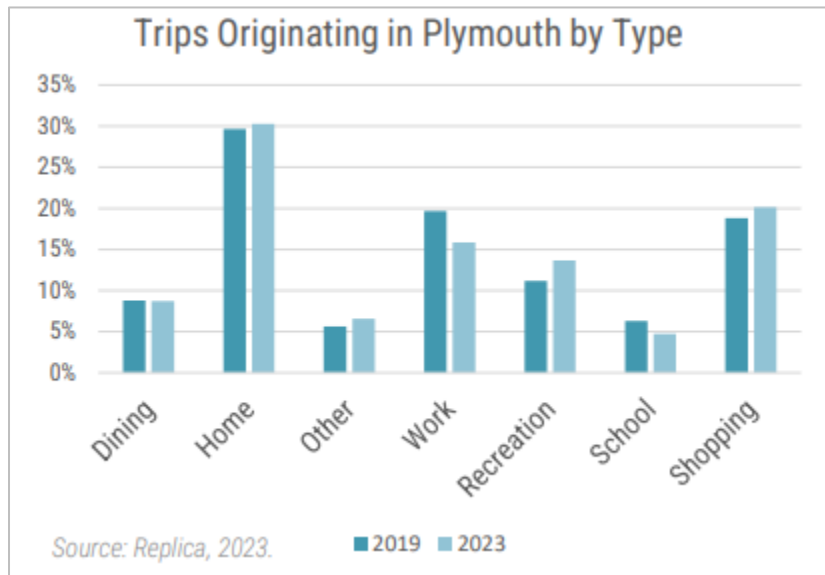
- Roads can be state owned, town owned, unaccepted, or private.

Route 3 spans 18 miles through Plymouth, creating a barrier between the eastern and western areas of Town.

- Only 10 streets cross under or over Route 3 in Plymouth.
- Ponds, forests, and topographic features also limit roadway connectivity.

Most trips in Plymouth (including trips by those other than residents) are by car.

- Despite the number of tourists, the majority of trips are between work and home.

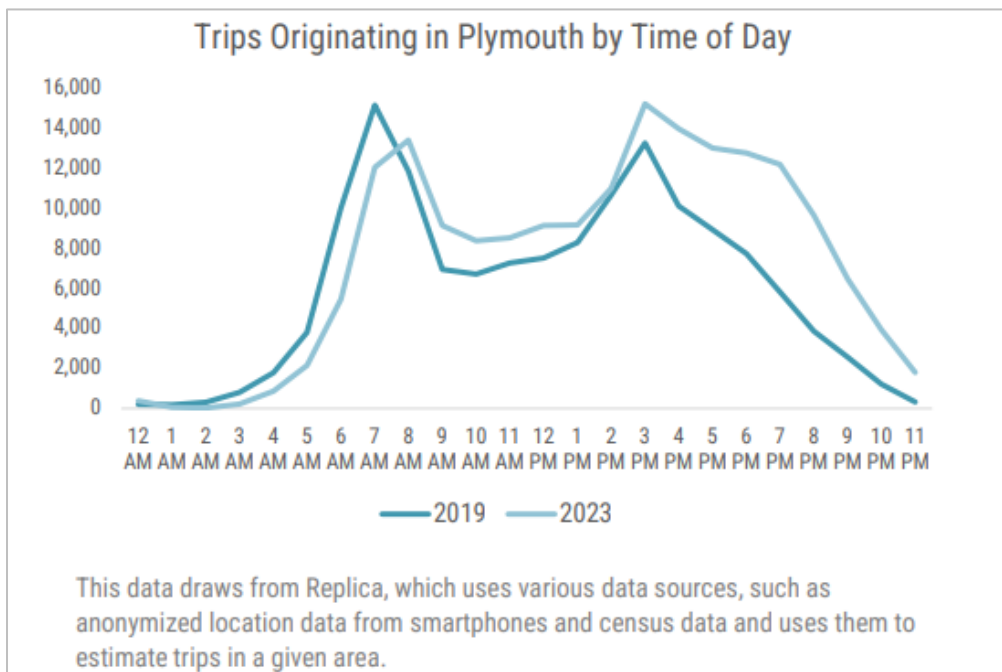


For Plymouth residents, nearly 65% of trips that originate in Plymouth also end in Plymouth, highlighting the local nature of most travel in Plymouth.

- The average trip length is 26.5 minutes, and the average trip distance is 10.7 miles.

Changes in work since 2019 have changed traffic patterns.

- Greater work-from-home trends mean that there are slightly fewer people with trips to work overall.
- As a result, the number of trips in the morning has decreased slightly, while trips at the end of the day have increased overall and remain higher for longer into evening hours.



5. Economic Development

Healthcare, social services, retail, and hospitality dominate as Plymouth's local industries. This presents challenges as there have been significant changes in some of these sectors to which Plymouth has yet to adapt.

Based on recent data, Plymouth's retail sector appears to have reached its peak

- Total merchandise sales declined by 6.4% from 2018 to 2022.

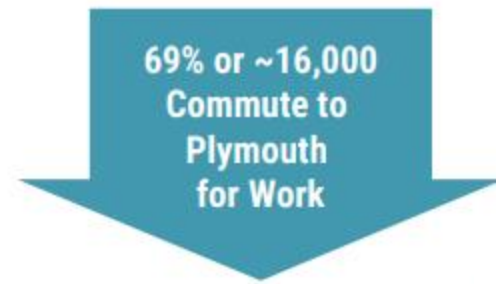
Similarly, Plymouth is facing a challenge in expanding tourism revenue.

- Traditionally, Plymouth's historic, cultural, and waterfront assets have supported its tourist economy.
- However, in recent years, however, Plymouth County has fallen behind the state average, Cape Cod, and neighboring towns like Bristol, in total tourist revenue.
- Between 2017 and 2022, tourist revenue increased by only 12%. When accounting for inflation, actual expenditures are down by \$23 million.

Additionally, jobs in the tourism, hospitality, and retail tend to be lower wage, presenting a challenge for employees in those sectors to afford to live in Plymouth.

In contrast, Plymouth residents now work predominantly in the education, professional services, technology, finance, and insurance industries as well as in positions at corporate offices.

- However, the availability of these types of jobs in Plymouth is limited, forcing Plymouth residents to work elsewhere.



Almost 50% commute
more than 25 miles

Source: Based on 2021 OntheMap data

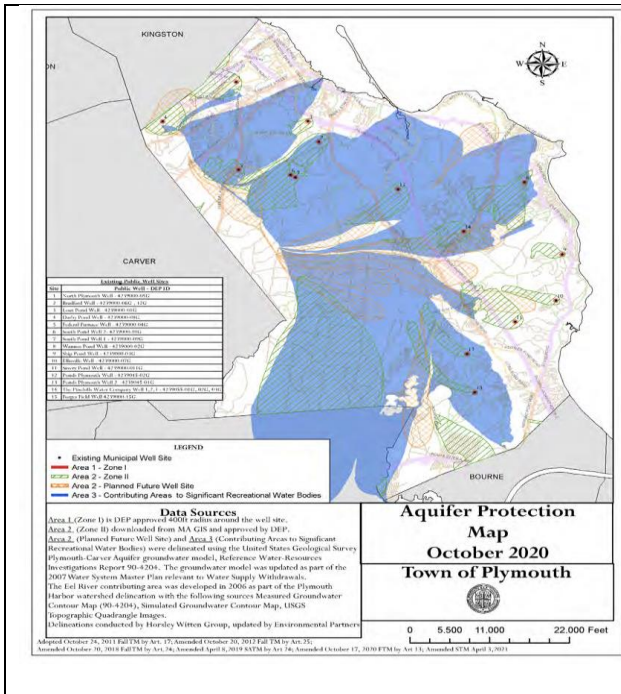
6. Natural Resources

Plymouth is both a coastal and wooded inland community.

- It has 36 miles of coastline (most of which is inaccessible to the public).
- It has more than 365 inland ponds (facing varying levels of water quality concerns due to private septic systems, runoff, and agriculture).
- It has forested land that includes rare pine barrens.

Another critical feature is the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer

- This is the second largest sole-source aquifer in Massachusetts.
- It provides all of the drinking water for Plymouth (as well as residents of Bourne, Carver, Kingston, Plymouth, Plympton, Middleborough, and Wareham).
- To support its protection and preservation, the Town of Plymouth created an Aquifer Protection Overlay District with 3 different zones to manage development and maintain the quality of the Town's existing groundwater supply.
- Nearly 80% of Plymouth's total land area is located within one of these Aquifer Protection zones.



Zone I - The area closest to a well; a 100-to-400-foot radius proportional to the well’s pumping rate. Development in this area is restricted for other than well operation.

Zone II - The primary recharge area for the aquifer. This area is defined by hydrogeologic studies that must be approved by DEP. Any development in this zone must be limited to non-polluting activities.

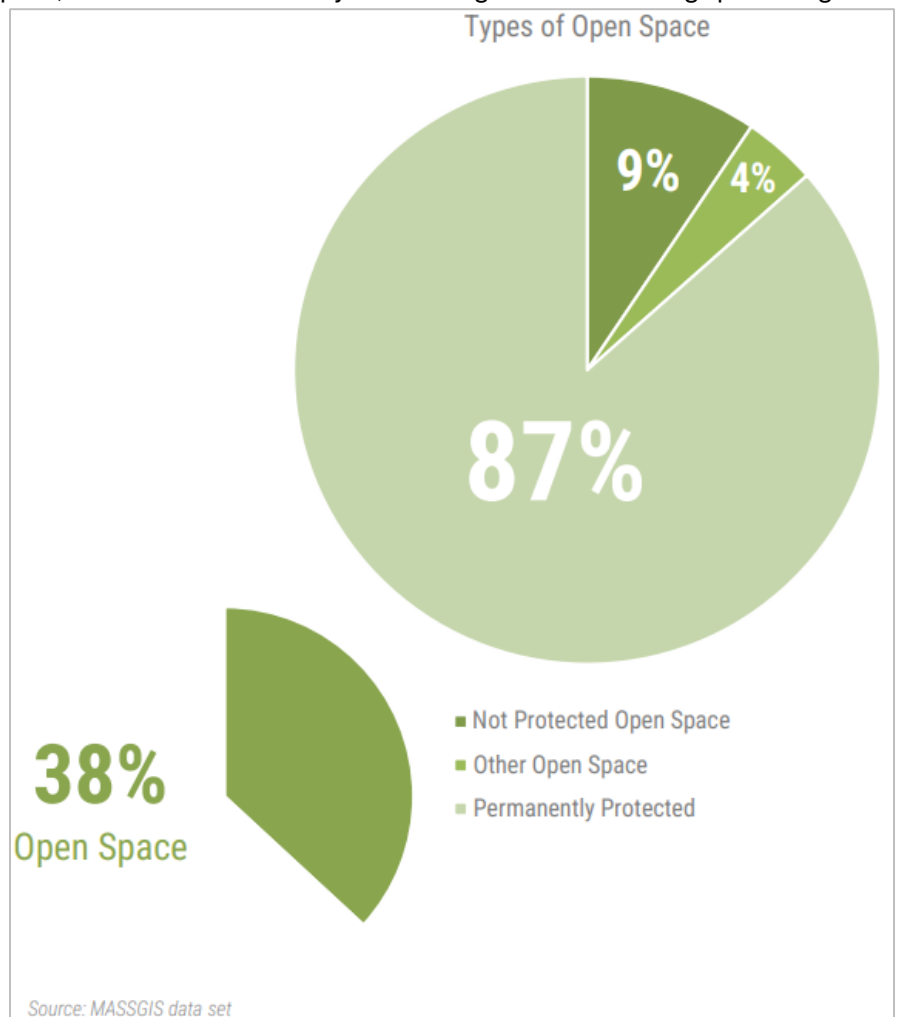
Zone III – Contributing area to significant recreational water bodies. Development in this zone must be consistent with the ongoing uses of the adjacent lake, pond, river, or stream.

7. Open Space/Recreation

Plymouth has a median of 10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Due to Plymouth’s large land area and high percentage of publicly owned open space and recreational land, Plymouth has about 95 acres of Town-owned parkland per 1,000 residents and 323 acres of publicly owned parkland (Municipal, County, State, Federal) per 1,000 residents. This places Plymouth far above similarly sized communities.

- Despite the high ratio of parkland to residents, Plymouth’s geographic size limits the accessibility of parkland to residents. That is why Plymouth’s Open Space Plan prioritizes:
 - o Preserving and creating more open space resources around village areas;
 - o Balancing conservation and preservation of open and recreational space with economic development; and
 - o Connecting existing open spaces with trail ways and bike paths.

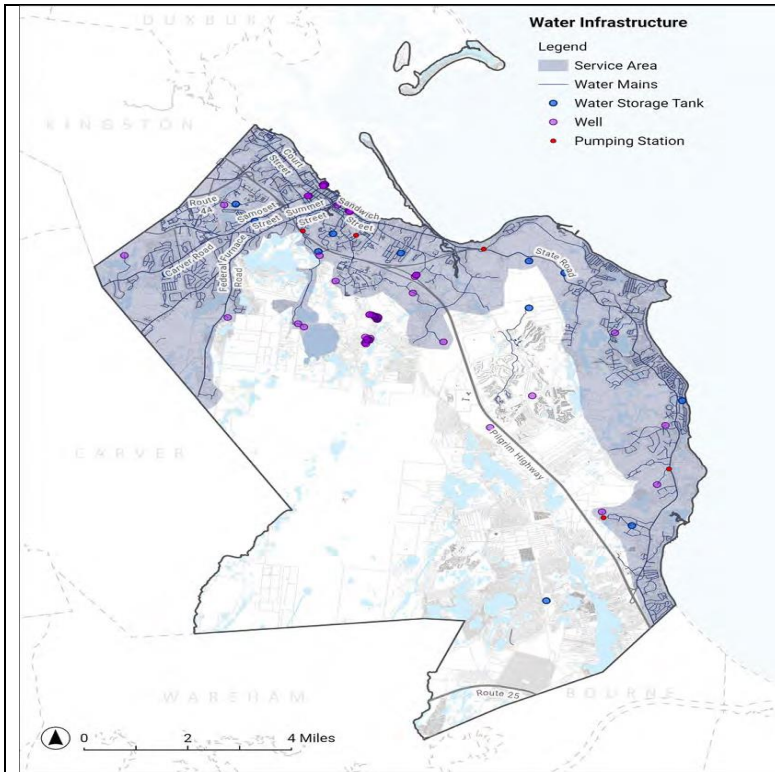
Plymouth has done a good job creating recreational open space, with 38% of the entire Town designated as open space for recreation, 87% of which is permanently protected.



8. Public Facilities and Services

Changes in population, demographics, and growth in new areas of Town are resulting in changing needs for services and infrastructure.

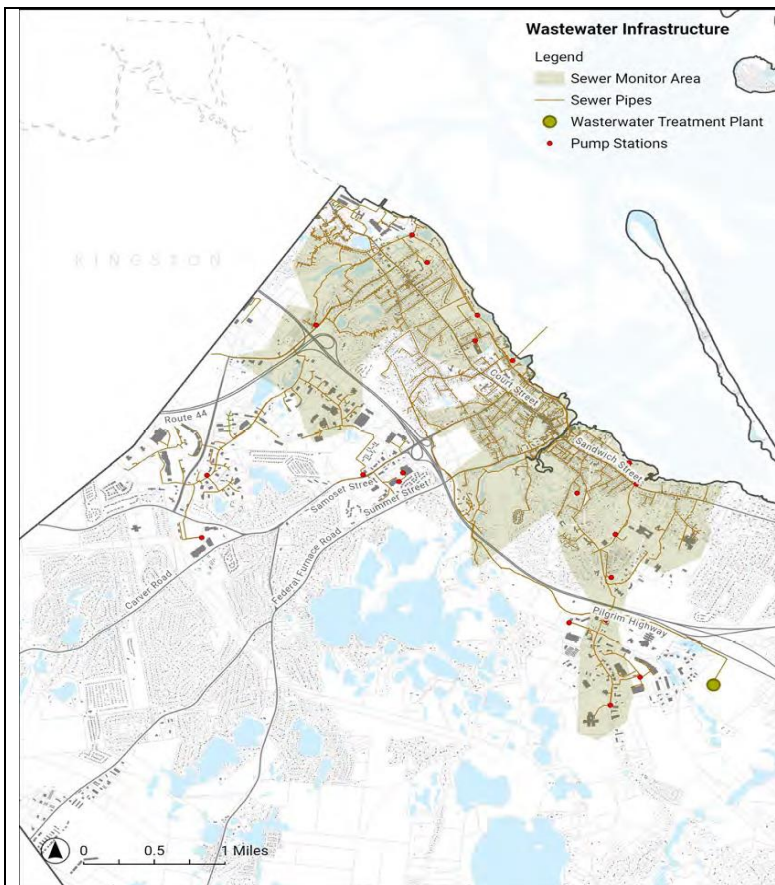
A. Water/Wastewater



Plymouth's water supply is sourced from the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer which provides drinking water to Plymouth and several other communities.

Plymouth' water system includes 13 water wells, 8 pumping stations, 245 miles of water main, and 12 water storage tanks providing about 14,900 service connections.

This infrastructure supports 44,170 residents, which is about 63% of the town's population.



Plymouth's wastewater collection and treatment facilities include 1 wastewater treatment plant, 21 pump stations, and 82 miles of sewer main.

Town sewer serves only 14,000 residential customers. There is existing capacity considered adequate for moderate growth in the northern part of Town.

There are also several small- scale sewage treatment plants, known as "package plants" and "small community systems," that operate in Plymouth.

These plants achieve cleaner discharge levels than individual "Title V" septic systems, which do not remove nitrogen and phosphorus—the primary pollutants degrading water quality.

B. Public Safety

The 2023 data for our first responders is as follows:

List of Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Care [EMC] Incidents in 2023

Police Incidents

Calls for service	40,729
NIBRS offenses	4,018
Felonies	969
Arrests	659
Traffic Citations	4,152
Traffic Citations Offenses	4,684

Fire Incidents

Fires	205
Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat	17
Alarm Activations	1,389
Assist the Public	1,139
Rescues / Motor Vehicle Accidents	580
Hazardous Conditions	333
Investigations	683
Medical Emergencies	7,996
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	16
Special Incident Type	13
<i>Total Fire Incidents</i>	<i>12,371</i>

Emergency Medical Care Incidents

Advanced Life Support	7,812
Basic Life Support	6,322
<i>Total Emergency Medical Care Incidents</i>	<i>14,134</i>

C. Schools

- Plymouth has had an overall decline in enrollment over the past decade. This is likely attributed to the declining child population. Despite this, some schools are at capacity, especially in the southern parts of town.
- Four of Plymouth's schools are classified as Title 1 schools, meaning that 35% or more of the student body is economically disadvantaged.

Want more information?

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