

Master Plan Task Group

A Committee of the Plymouth Planning Board

Gap Analysis Report

November 30, 2022

Committee Members:

Steven Bolotin (Chair)
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Staff Members:

Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning & Development
Robin Carver, Town Planner

Executive Summary:

In conducting interviews relating to issues facing the Town, the Master Plan Task Group (MPTG) confirmed that Plymouth is a unique community. This comes as no surprise to those who live here. What they may be surprised at is the level of knowledge, dedication, and enthusiasm of our Town officials, staff, community groups and residents regarding those issues.

Another potentially surprising factor is the level of consistency in some of the statements made by those with expertise in differing areas. Regardless of discipline, they all identified certain issues which require ongoing attention, such as:

- Housing,
- Transportation,
- Water use, and
- Financing

These issues were cited as factors affecting all aspects of the Master Plan, reinforcing the “interconnectedness” of what can sometimes be perceived as discordant issues.

The current version of our Community Master Plan (CMP) is over 16 years old. While the sentiments and aspirations of the existing CMP are still relevant, the document has exceeded its useful lifespan. Changes locally, regionally, and globally warrant updates to the scope, substance, and form of the CMP.

The Town has recognized the need to update its long-range planning and strategy, and such efforts are currently underway in the community. The Select Board has established goals for the next 5 years, the Charter Commission has called for regular updates of the CMP, and other boards and commissions are working on similar efforts.

As the Town's CMP provides overarching guidance for the community's goals and priorities, the Planning Board created the MPTG in 2021, and charged it with assessing the extent to which the current state of the Town reflected the goals of the current CMP. The MPTG held a total of 16 meetings, reviewed numerous planning documents and interviewed a diverse group of community stakeholders. This Gap Analysis identifies a path forward for conducting a Master Plan update.

The MPTG recommends moving forward as expeditiously as possible with a CMP update. To expedite that process the committee respectfully recommends that the Planning Board charge the MPTG with continuing to hear from stakeholders, drafting a scope of services, and seeking funding through the Capital Improvements process as soon as is possible.

Overview:

A. State Master Plan Requirements

Per Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, section 81D, all municipalities with a Planning Board are required to have a Master Plan. Massachusetts defines a Master Plan as:

A statement, through text, maps, illustrations or other forms of communication, that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.

Municipalities can choose to focus their Master Plans on a variety of issues, but currently, at a minimum, they must include:

1. A Goals and Policies Statement

Just as it sounds, this is a statement which identifies the goals and policies of the Town for its future growth and development.

2. A Land Use Plan

Identify present land use and designate the future location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses.

3. A Housing Analysis

Identify existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives.

4. An Economic Development Assessment

Establish policies and strategies for the economic base and promotion of employment opportunities.

5. A Natural and Cultural Resources Overview

Create both an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such resources.

6. An Open Space and Recreation Summary

Again, develop an inventory of recreational resources and open space areas as well as policies and strategies for their management and protection.

7. A Services and Facilities Plan

Identify and analyze existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.

8. A Circulation Guidance

By circulation, they mean an inventory of existing and proposed transportation systems.

9. An Implementation Program

Set forth the specific actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master plan, including identifying costs and sources of funding.

The goals and objectives for any areas contained in the Master Plan must be based on information obtained directly from the residents. In a municipality the size of Plymouth, that is done with the aid of a consultant through in-person events (town forums, focus groups, etc.) and surveys (mail and online), typically taking 12 to 24 months to complete.

B. The Plymouth Community Master Plan

Plymouth has been engaged in creating documents setting forth a Town vision for over 70 years. It adopted its first such statement, *A Guidebook to Plymouth's Future*, in 1949. That document was updated in 1961 and 1966.

In 1980, Plymouth formally adopted its first CMP, which established the Village Centers Concept and has been the basis for Plymouth planning efforts for over forty years. That Master Plan contained objectives relating to 7 categories:

Land use
Natural resources
Open Space/Recreation
Historic/Cultural Resources
Economic Development
Public Facilities/Services
Transportation

These were the categories called for by State law at the time as being the minimum needed for a Master Plan. The Town elected not to create any additional categories addressing issues unique to Plymouth. The prioritized objectives identified in the CMP were:

Growth Management
Tax Rate Control
Public Facilities Needs and Priorities
Economic Development
Town Center/Waterfront Development
Village Centers Concept

Following the adoption of the first CMP, Plymouth added Section 3-14-4 to the Town Charter, which provides that “The CMP shall be updated periodically to address current issues concerning the physical, environmental, community and economic development of the town...”

With funding provided by the Commonwealth through a “Challenge Grant”¹, Plymouth began the process of updating its CMP in 2002. At that time, a committee was formed to create a scope of work for a consultant to follow in preparing the update. That scope consisted of updating the 7 categories identified in its prior Master Plan. It did not address the topics of “Housing” and “Implementation”, which had since been added to State statute as being “required” topics for Master Plans, nor did it add any “Plymouth specific” categories.² A consultant was subsequently retained and began collecting information for the updated CMP.

Following that process, Plymouth issued its updated CMP in 2006. Plymouth has not done a further update to the CMP since then, instead addressing only segments of the Town such as

¹ In 1997 the State of Massachusetts offered \$3.5 million as matching funds to help the Town buy the 3,200 acres of Digital Equipment Land, which was an article at Town Meeting. The land was either to be purchased by the Town or sold for development. The Town voted *not* to purchase the Digital land, now known as the Pinehills Community. In 1999, the State indicated its satisfaction with much of the progress made by the town in its negotiations with The Pinehills, the Rural Trails concept plan, and various planning efforts, and agreed to fund the Challenge Grant, which included funding for a Master Plan consultant.

² As this was technically an ‘update’ to our existing Master Plan, the Town was not statutorily required to add these topics. Additionally, housing was referenced as an ‘Overall Goal’ in the CMP, but was not explored in any detail, nor were there substantive recommendations provided.

Village Master Plans (which address portions of the Town), Open Space and Recreational Plans, and Housing Plans.

C. The Master Plan Task Group

In 2020, the Plymouth Planning Board determined that given the changes experienced in Plymouth, it was time to consider a full update of the CMP. However, rather than immediately form a committee to begin that process, it first wanted to assess the extent to which the current state of the Town reflected the goals of the CMP. To that end, it created a committee, the Master Plan Task Group.

The MPTG was not intended to create a new Master Plan, or even the scope for such a plan. Rather, the purpose of the MPTG was to perform an investigation to determine whether a Master Plan update was needed, and if so, what might the Town do to make the updated Master Plan even more successful. To that end, the MPTG was charged with performing a “gap analysis” of the existing Master Plan.

A gap analysis is a process by which organizations determine how to best achieve their goals. It compares the current state with an ideal state or goals, and highlights shortcomings and opportunities for improvement. In the context of the Plymouth Master Plan, the gap analysis was to look at the goals identified in the existing Master Plan, compare them to the current state of the Town, and make recommendations regarding the process for the next Master Plan.

Those wishing to be on the MPTG applied to the Planning Board, which held a public hearing to allow the candidates to present their credentials and explain their interest in the process. Community members from all areas of Town were selected. Additionally, the Planning Board and the Advisory and Finance Committee appointed representatives.

D. The Master Plan Review Process

The MPTG first reviewed a series of documents relating to ongoing Town goals. The materials are identified in Appendix A. A number of MPTG members also attended (at their own expense) an online seminar regarding the master plan process. After digesting all of this information, the committee conducted a series of meetings to establish (a) the scope of its gap analysis and (b) the process by which it would perform its gap analysis.

Considering the age of the Master Plan, the areas it covered, and changes to the Town in the interim, the MPTG decided to address four areas in its gap analysis:

1. The status of existing CMP goals;
2. Additional topics for potential inclusion in future Master Plans;
3. Suggestions for formalizing the Master Plan process; and
4. What the Master Plan should look like.

To obtain information about the topics contained in the existing Master Plan, as well as other matters of public concern, the MPTG conducted a series of forums, each addressing particular areas. The MPTG, through its staff representatives, invited both public and private sector guests to discuss generally three issues within their areas of expertise:

In what areas has Plymouth been successful?

In what areas has Plymouth not been successful?

What other areas should Plymouth consider matters of concern in the future?

These forums, which were open to the public, were conducted over a series of 5 meetings.

E. Gap Analysis Preparation

The MPTG first considered whether any of the categories included in our existing Master Plan should not be part of future Master Plans. As our existing Master Plan contained only statutorily required categories, all of which are relevant to Plymouth's future, the answer was "no".

The MPTG next considered whether there were any categories not included in our Master Plan which should be presented for consideration by the public in future Master Plans. Given changes in State law, and the unique aspects of Plymouth both geographically and demographically, the answer was "yes".

Following completion of the forums, staff representatives took the information provided and created a draft of the Gap Analysis Report for review and revision by the MPTG. The committee members then met to discuss the draft, provide comment, and reach consensus on the conclusions and recommendation the MPTG would be offering.

Gap Analysis:

A. The Status of Existing CMP Goals

The existing CMP identifies 'Overall Goals' for each topic and key actions to achieve those goals. It also separately identifies 6 'Priority Goals'; continuing objectives which form the "foundation blocks of the plan." In addressing the status of ongoing efforts toward the Overall Goals referenced, the MPTG considered each of these both separately and as part of the Priority Goals stated. The status determination is based upon the materials reviewed, the statements of invited guests, and public sentiment as expressed before Town boards and committees:

1. Land Use

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Create pleasant, safe, and desirable residential neighborhoods, village centers, commercial, and industrial areas with an emphasis on fostering a sense of community for residents and property owners.
- Use incentives and land use controls to prevent conversion of open lands and discourage sprawling patterns of development.
- Support a balanced and sustainable mix of housing, shopping, and employment opportunities, community and cultural facilities, and natural systems.
- Promote growth within or near existing village service areas, with an emphasis on directing development to areas that can accommodate growth with minimal extensions to existing infrastructure.
- Promote mixed-use development linked to public transport.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- Control sprawl by guiding future growth to Town-designated growth areas and by restricting development in areas with priority natural resources.
- Limit extension of infrastructure into rural areas and encourage compact development. Encourage construction of housing which is less costly to service than single family residences on large lots.

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- Plymouth continues to be a desirable community in which to live, as evidenced by its continuing population growth.
- Plymouth has also been more successful than most towns in its efforts to preserve open space.

Challenges:

- As one speaker noted, due to Plymouth’s growth, it faces competing land use challenges

Housing
 Energy
 Jobs
 Climate Resilience
 Access to Water

Plymouth has had a difficult time identifying land and locations best suited to address these various goals.

- Plymouth has not been good at limiting urban sprawl. It has one of the fastest growing single-home markets in the state. It has consistently opposed increasing commercial density to allow for greater economic development in areas with existing infrastructure.
- Plymouth has also not utilized the Transfer Development Rights program implemented to its full potential, which could exchange development rights in the Rural Residential districts for rights in or near Village Centers.

2. Natural Resources

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Protect natural and scenic features, including air, land, plant, wildlife, and water resources, and improve their conditions. Preserve the Town's scenic beauty.
- Encourage and support energy, water, and soil conservation by residents, businesses, and governmental agencies.
- Minimize pollution.
- Protect wildlife habitats from growth pressures.
- Protect drinking water quality.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- Restrict development in areas with valuable natural resources. Work collaboratively with private and nonprofit entities to preserve priority resources with a focus on areas of greatest environmental sensitivity, including rare species habitats and Pine Barren forests. Develop a program of transferable development rights (TDR). Mitigate stormwater discharges into wetlands, ponds, and coastal waters. Prevent degradation of groundwater and surface water from inappropriate land use. Pursue wastewater planning. Pursue wildlife management planning.

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- Plymouth has also been more successful than most towns in its efforts to preserve environmentally sensitive areas.

- Plymouth maintains the largest Rural Residential lot zoning allowable by law.
- Plymouth has performed significant upgrades to its main wastewater treatment facility and airport treatment facility.
- Larger commercial/residential developments such as The Pinehills and Redbrook have been required to construct and maintain water and sewer facilities which monitor (and when appropriate restrict) water usage and protect the environment.

Challenges:

- Plymouth currently has the greatest single family home growth of any town in the Commonwealth. This growth has resulted in ongoing development in rural areas.
- Continued development of single family homes utilizing wells and Title 5 septic systems presents a threat to water conservation and quality, as there is no limit to water amounts being used and no restriction on, or capture of, potentially hazardous materials such as microplastics and PFAS chemicals.

3. Open Space and Recreation

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Protect natural and scenic features, including air, land, plant, wildlife, and water resources, and improve their conditions. Preserve the Town's scenic beauty.
- Encourage and support energy, water, and soil conservation by residents, businesses, and governmental agencies.
- Minimize pollution.
- Protect wildlife habitats from growth pressures.
- Protect drinking water quality.
- Increase the supply and accessibility of active and passive recreational facilities throughout Town.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- Restrict development in areas with valuable natural resources. Work collaboratively with private and nonprofit entities to preserve priority resources with a focus on areas of greatest environmental sensitivity, including rare species habitats and Pine Barren

forests. Develop a program of transferable development rights (TDR). Mitigate stormwater discharges into wetlands, ponds, and coastal waters. Prevent degradation of groundwater and surface water from inappropriate land use. Pursue wastewater planning. Pursue wildlife management planning.

- Expand coastal and pond access, increase recreation options, improve the appearance and vitality of Village Centers, and increase the number of cultural venues.

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- Plymouth has also been more successful than most towns in its efforts to preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Plymouth maintains the largest Rural Residential lot zoning allowable by law.
- Plymouth has performed significant upgrades to its main wastewater treatment facility and airport treatment facility.
- Larger commercial/residential development such as The Pinehills and Redbrook have been required to construct and maintain water and sewer facilities which monitor (and when appropriate restrict) water usage and protect the environment.
- The Town has utilized CPA funds for new and upgraded parks and recreational facilities.

Challenges:

- Plymouth has created, but not utilized its TDR system to move development into areas with existing infrastructure. At the same time, Plymouth has consistently opposed efforts to increase density in residential developments. As a result, there is no incentive for developers to forego development of rural areas.

4. Historic and Cultural Resources

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Recognize, preserve, and enhance the historic and cultural heritage of Plymouth and the surrounding region.
- Support use and enjoyment of the Town's historic and cultural resources by residents and visitors. Maintain, manage, and expand resources to maximize the fiscal and economic benefit of these resources for the Town.

- Expand efforts to develop and market Plymouth as a heritage tourism destination for national and international travelers.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- Preserve and promote historic resources so that Plymouth’s rich history is more readable in the environment. Create a coalition of the historic preservation groups in Plymouth and work with groups to create a coordinated approach to the preservation and marketing of Plymouth’s historic resources. Preserve scenic roads and encourage compatible design in Village Centers and near historic resources.

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- Tourism is the number 1 industry in both the Town and the County of Plymouth – although even those involved in the tourism industry stress that its status as the top industry is not completely positive.
- Plymouth knows its history and culture and encourages its preservation.
- Plymouth has worked to develop its waterfront area to create a more positive experience for visitors.
- Plymouth has expanded its reputation for natural tourism (trails, hiking, camping).

Challenges:

- How to get here, and then how to get around. Public transportation is fragmented and unreliable.
- Tourism as an industry is weekend and seasonally focused, leaving businesses financially unsecure and in competition for the same customers and staff.
- Need to expand the arts scene which draws both locals and repeat tourism. To do so would require an arts center with flexible space for performance and display.
- Historic preservation is fragmented (as one speaker stated, there is a disconnect between the various groups responsible).
- There is always a stated interest in expanding the historic district and to create districts outside of downtown, but on a practical level people when this has been proposed residents have objected when their property is included.

5. Economic Development

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Identify and optimize economic benefits from existing and potential economic assets in Plymouth and provide for their sustainability.
- Designate local and regional economic activity areas and sustain their viability and vitality through appropriate Town and business property owner actions.
- Create and sustain adequate organizational and resource capacity in the Town to implement long-term economic development strategies.
- Balance economic development goals with other master plan priorities and promote a coordinated approach to their implementation.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- Encourage new commercial development through expanded commercial zones. Significantly enhance the tourism industry by investing resources in new tourist attractions and accommodations, especially along the waterfront, and by developing a single entity to coordinate tourism initiatives and promote Plymouth as a travel destination. Encourage redevelopment of major opportunity sites.

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- All speakers commented that Plymouth has done a good job in supporting its traditional businesses, such as seasonal and cultural tourism.

Challenges:

- Speakers noted that Plymouth had not adapted to address changes in the way business, and the workforce, function. As a result, Plymouth is at a competitive disadvantage in attracting new business when compared to some other South Shore communities.
- Speakers have heard from businesses that there are consistent impediments to bringing new business to Plymouth:

A. Zoning

In competing with other towns in the area, zoning is the largest barrier to new business. Specifically, our current zoning is not well suited to address hybrid businesses, home businesses,

or the gig economy model. Instead, Plymouth zoning continues to focus on a “single business/single structure” approach, which is time consuming to get approved, cost prohibitive to construct, and inefficient in use of land. The recommendation was made that Plymouth look at a form based zoning code, which would allow for multiple uses in a building so long as the building was designed to accommodate those differing uses.

B. Permitting

The permitting system was described as cumbersome, often requiring multiple visits to different boards and departments which sometimes present contradictory requirements. This creates the impression that Plymouth is intentionally discouraging new business. It was noted that Plymouth has started the process of addressing this issue with the adoption of an on-line building permit application system. However, this still does not address the lack of coordination among those departments. The recommendation made was twofold:

Create an online tool kit for businesses seeking to locate in Plymouth which contains both the necessary forms depending on the type of business;

Establish regularly scheduled joint department meetings attended by decision makers to discuss new business applications and work out what is needed to advance a proposal.

C. Housing

For all the new housing that is being built in Plymouth, it does not address the needs of many businesses considering start-up, relocation, or expansion. Plymouth lacks housing affordable to a variety of levels of employee. The recommendation was to follow prior CMP directives to create zones allowing for greater density where housing was mixed with non-retail commercial development.

6. Public Facilities, Infrastructure and Services

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Plan for capital investments and preventative maintenance in an orderly manner to optimize provision of facilities and services while maintaining an even level of expenditure from year to year.
- Provide and maintain public facilities, services, and amenities with an emphasis on efficiency and on securing new, nontraditional sources of funding to offset costs.
- Encourage the continued growth of Plymouth as a regional governmental and service center.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- None

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- Plymouth has concentrated its public facilities, infrastructure, and services in or near its five Village Centers.
- Plymouth has created a dedicated fund for use in performing needed maintenance and repairs to public facilities and infrastructure.
- Plymouth has prepared a facilities and infrastructure plan setting forth expected costs for the next 20 years.

Challenges:

- Plymouth's geographic size and population growth have necessitated the expansion of facilities and services faster than revenue has grown to cover those expenses.
- Plymouth has a significant number of facilities and infrastructure which due to age and/or deferred maintenance need to be overhauled or replaced, meaning level annual expenditures are not currently possible.
- Plymouth's reliance on residential property taxes as its principal source of revenue has grown, placing a greater burden on moderate income families and fixed income seniors.
- Plymouth has not planned for sufficient space for needed facilities and infrastructure growth. As one speaker told the MPTG, Plymouth doesn't manage conservation space properly; its reliance on CPA funds for purchase of open lands has resulted in a situation where areas that are appropriate for Town facilities, such as wells, cannot be utilized.

7. Transportation

Overall Goals stated in the Existing CMP:

- Develop transportation alternatives to the private automobile and encourage use of environmentally friendly transportation options.
- Maintain automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle routes throughout Town to ensure safety and attractiveness.

- Reduce traffic volume on Town roadways.
- Minimize road expansion.

Priority Goals Stated in the CMP:

- None

Status of Goals:

Successes:

- Plymouth has done a good job of addressing traffic issues on a case by case basis.

Challenges:

- With a town as large and complex as Plymouth, addressing broader transportation issues is challenging. Unfortunately, due to limited resources, an overall examination of the entire transportation network has not been conducted.
- Public transportation alternatives have received limited attention.
- Parking was cited as an issue for both commercial development in Village Centers and recreational use of ponds, beaches, and open space.

B. Potential Future Master Plan Topics for Consideration

Other than those subjects mandated by State statute, the determination as to which issues are to be addressed in the Town CMP is made by the residents. However, the MPTG believes that certain areas are of such vital importance to the Town that they should be suggested to the residents to determine their level of concern for inclusion in the future updates of the CMP.

The subjects which should be included, both by statutory necessity and importance to the Town are:

- **Housing:** This includes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives (including issues of affordability). Recent discussions in the community have stressed the need to focus on affordable housing, workforce housing, senior housing (over 55 communities) and challenges posed by MGL Chapter 40B and the State’s new MBTA communities requirements.
- **Implementation:** This sets forth the specific actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master plan, including identifying costs and sources of funding (for both public facilities/equipment and broader programs).

Other subjects which the MPTG believe are of vital importance for future planning for the Town are:

- Climate Change and Resilience: Both taking action to reduce carbon emitting energy usage and planning for the effects of acceleration of extreme weather conditions.
- Water resource protection, usage and conservation: Both the conservation and protection of groundwater and surface water and the usage of our coastal regions for appropriate economic development (blue economy).
- Public health and safety: Development of more flexible facilities and procedures to address the broader **range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes**, as well as training for exposure to risks associated with changing threats (such as the pandemic and opioid crisis).
- Regionalization opportunities: Consideration of Plymouth serving as a hub for Southeastern Massachusetts services such as public safety, municipal services, and transportation.
- Enhancement of airport opportunities: Exploring the potential opportunities for commercial use of the Plymouth airport created by new aviation technologies.
- Changing Demographics: How Plymouth will address the aging of its population (currently 40% of the population is over 55 years of age) and the associated medical, emotional support, isolation and mental health issues while keeping opportunities for youth to grow and remain in the community.

C. Master Plan Process

Because the Master Plan is intended to address the changing needs of the Town, State law provides for it to be updated. However, State law does not provide for a specific time for that to occur. That is left to individual municipalities to decide.

The Town Charter places the responsibility to maintain the CMP with the Planning Department. Town Charter Section 3-13-2. But the Town does not identify when or how this is to be accomplished. The MPTG has looked at how other Towns manage their Master Plan updates and found:

Some towns maintain standing committees which do regular updates.

Some towns provide for updates at mandated periods and identify how those updates are to be undertaken.

The remaining towns (including Plymouth) have neither a specific timeline nor a procedure for updating the Master Plan.

In the absence of such requirements, the CMP has only been revisited on average every 18 years since 1966. This has resulted in the CMP becoming stale, and of lesser value to Town boards and committees over time. Accordingly, the MPTG is recommending establishment of a formal process for future CMP updates.

The first approach considered was continuous monitoring of the CMP goals by a standing committee. However, given the size and complexity of Plymouth, by necessity the responsibility for such monitoring would fall on municipal staff. This is consistent with other towns with standing committees, as they have town staff whose principal responsibility is monitoring their town's master plan. In practical terms for Plymouth, that would likely require multiple full and part time Town employees reporting to a committee which would have to meet weekly, which the MPTG recognizes as impractical.

Accordingly, the MPTG recommends that a process be formally put in place to require that the CMP be periodically updated by a committee appointed by the Planning Board working in conjunction with the planning Department. The suggested time period is every 5 years, which is long enough to recognize trends but short enough to be able to focus on achievable goals.

Additionally, the MPTG recommends that any governmental body (board, committee, or Town Meeting) making a recommendation or decision regarding Town policy be required to certify that such action is consistent with the CMP, identifying the provision of the CMP it supports.

Finally, the MPTG notes that tracking of the implementation of the Master Plan has not been formalized. Therefore, the MPTG recommends that all Boards and Committees institute a process by which they perform an annual assessment as to their progress in achieving those aspects of the Master Plan within their purview to be presented publicly to the Planning Board.

D. Form of Future Master Plans

Historically, the CMP has been used (to varying degrees) primarily by Town officials and departments in planning and policy making. This is due partly to its form, which is heavily reliant on statistical analytics and is worded in 'management speak'. The MPTG believes this should change.

Assuming adoption of the 5 year (or similar) update period, the form of the CMP would be able to change to become a more focused document. While broad goals would remain (as such reflect the ongoing aspirations of the community), it is suggested that more efforts be made on identifying shorter term, actionable, and measurable items. Those should be expressed in clear, concise wording and prioritized (as done in the Short Range Recommendations section of the current CMP), which would allow better identification of resident identified goals and

measurement of progress toward them. These could then be considered by the Select Board, Planning Board, and Town committees when preparing their own priorities plans, and encourage greater coordination of such efforts.

Conclusion

The Master Plan is one of the most crucial documents the Town produces. It is not just a snapshot in time or a reflection of a limited proportion of the population, but rather a thoughtful expression of the concerns of residents from all segments of Town, both geographically and demographically. It is based on information obtained directly from the residents in multiple events, using different forms, over an extended period of time.

Given the information it provides, it has the ability to serve multiple purposes. Primarily, it should serve as guidance for our elected and appointed officials in setting policy and enacting procedures. But secondarily, it is an educational document, one which can be used within the Town as a means to assess whether government is following the wishes of the people, and outside the Town to show others the goals of our community.

In modern parlance, the CMP serves as an extended Vision Statement for the Town; an expression of our values, an identification as to how we seek to support them in the goals we set for ourselves, and an invitation to those who share our aspirations. For these reasons, the MPTG respectfully seeks support for the immediate updating and long-term maintenance of our Town Master Plan.

Appendix A

Materials Distributed to the MPTG

A Non-Motorized Transportation Plan for Plymouth Massachusetts, February 2014

Cedarville Village Center Master Plan Update, June 15, 2009

Climate-Ready Healthy Plymouth, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, June 2020

Creating a Master Plan for Your Community – Citizen Planner Training Collaborative

Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area Master Plan, Spring 2004

Economic Development Strategy, Plymouth County, Massachusetts – RKG Associates, Inc.

EDSAT Report for the Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts, November 2016

Housing Production Plan, January 2019

Manomet Village Center Master Plan Update, June, 2014

North Plymouth Village Center Master Plan Update, Fall 2011

Open Space Corridor Plan, November 1999

Plymouth Downtown Waterfront Business & Development Plan, April 2002

Plymouth Public Lands Report, August 28, 2008

Plymouth Public Space Action Plan, May 2007

Plymouth Town Charter

Plymouth Town Bylaws

Select Board FY23 Goals & Priorities

Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts Master Plan, 2004-2024

Town of Plymouth, Massachusetts Master Plan, 2000-2020

Town of Plymouth Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2017 Update

Town of Plymouth Open Space and Recreation Plan, Climate Change Resiliency Addendum,
December 3, 2020

West Plymouth Village Center Master Plan Update, October 2016

Appendix B

Guest Speakers

Land Use

- Karen Grey, Executive Director, Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts
- David Gould, Director of the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs
- Malcolm MacGregor for his work mapping hiking trails throughout Town.

Water

- Jonathan Beder, Public Works Director
- Eric Cody, Water Conservation Committee

Housing

- Peggy Whalen, Director of Community Development
- Tony Green of the Pinehills

Transportation

- Jonathan Beder, Director of Public Works
- Mary Ellen DeFrias, Administrator, GATRA
- Charles Kilmer, Assistant Director & Transportation Program Manager, OCPC

Historic/Tourism

- Lee Filson, Executive Director, See Plymouth
- Michael Tubin, Chair, Historic District Commission
- Malissa Kenney, Plymouth Bay Cultural District
- Ellie Donovan, Executive Director, Plimouth Patuxet Museum

Economic Development

- Stephen Cole, Executive Director, Plymouth Regional Economic Development Foundation
- Amy Naples, Executive Director, Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce
- Laurie Muncy, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, OCPC

NOTE: Additional speakers from other Town committees were invited to speak, but due to scheduling conflicts were unable to present. However, they were generous with their time in answering questions posed through Lee Hartmann