

## **Summary of Plymouth Public Forum Results "Land Use Suggestions" June 2, 2005 at Plymouth Elementary School**

More than sixty Plymouth residents met at the Plymouth Elementary School on June 2, 2005 for a forum sponsored by the Plymouth Planning Board to answer the following questions:

1. How do we maintain a vibrant downtown and quality neighborhoods?
2. How do we manage development along highway corridors & maintain Plymouth's character?
3. How do we protect Plymouth's natural resources ~ especially in rural areas ~ while accommodating development?

After a brief overview of the 2005 Master Plan project, and a presentation about development patterns and land use challenges, Burnt Rock staff asked participants to answer the aforementioned questions. The participants wrote their suggestions on "post-its," then attached each post-it on one of two maps of Plymouth. More than 250 post-its were attached to the two maps. Widge Kent recorded the suggestions on flip charts. The suggestions were written on flip charts and taped to the wall and, with the assistance of participants, consolidated into several categories to eliminate redundancies. Participants were given four sticky dots to use as ballots to cast their vote for the four highest priority suggestions that the Town should address in the next 5 years. The top items from each group are presented below.

Three colors were used to differentiate between the three land use challenges: downtown, highway, and natural resource. Below is the summary, which was prepared with associated votes (or yellow dots) in parentheses. The complete list of comments is presented following the summary.

### **Some notes on the process:**

Although the process used at the forum has been shown to be valuable for promoting dialogue, a few words of caution are in order. The results of this idea-generating meeting are neither a poll nor a consensus decision. They may be used as the basis for building consensus, but not before a more complete airing of issues and their implications.

The tabulation of votes (dots) from each suggestion may be helpful in getting a sense of the importance participants place on different issues on June 2, 2005. But because only four dots were issued to each person, the combined results, although interesting and useful to the planning process, should not be taken as definitive.

# Summary of Suggestions for Addressing Land Use Challenges in Plymouth Participants of June 2, 2005 Plymouth Public Forum

(Greatest # of dots indicate greatest level of support from 6/2 participants)

## 1. How do we maintain a vibrant downtown & quality neighborhoods? (87 total dots)

### Student Housing (58 dots):

### Parking (17 dots):

Stop encroachment of off-campus housing into neighborhoods (20)	Parking garage on campus (7)
Work with PSU to keep students on campus (16)	No parking on lawns (4)
Increase fines for enforcement of number of residents (11)	Require PSU to increase parking for faculty & commuters (2)
Student housing zone (4)	Limit curb cuts and widths (2)
Limit student cars - underclassmen (2)	Student parking only at PSU lots (1)
Single family zone should be for SF or duplexes (2)	Enforce/change parking codes (1)
Decrease enrollment at PSU (1)	Parking facilities on/off Main Street (0)
Decrease family conversions (1)	Limit parking to residences (0)
Incentives for conversion to single family use (1)	
Town must have control of college expansion (1)	
Incentives to PSU to keep students on campus (0)	
Disincentives to off-campus housing - tax (0)	
Build dorm space (0)	
Intensify zoning in residential neighborhoods (0)	

### Commercial Activity (11 dots)

Develop old RR property behind Treehouse (3)
Encourage global & local businesses (2)
No big box stores (2)
Work in conjunction with PSU on appropriate development (2)
Maintain downtown businesses (1)
Promote downtown businesses that would not compete with TMH businesses (1)
Develop waterfront park on Green Street (0)

## **2. How do we manage development along highway corridors & maintain Plymouth's character? (51 dots)**

Land trust/conservation easements (natural resource protection) (13)
Rezone highway corridors/agricultural zone (11)
Improve character of commercial development, design standards & dark skies (10)
Limit size of retail stores (7)
Keep highway corridors commercial (4)
Increase nodal development (3)
Use other successful towns as models (3)

## **3. How do we protect Plymouth's natural resources ~ especially in rural areas ~ while accommodating development? (76 dots)**

Protect critical resources (19)
Drinking water - water quality and floodplain (18)
Zoning changes or rezoning (18)
Protect steep slopes (11)
Recreation (7)
Protect agricultural uses and buildings (3)
Cluster development & open space incentives (3)

**Complete List of Suggestions to Deal with Land Use Challenges  
Offered by Participants at the Plymouth Public Forum  
Plymouth Elementary School - June 2, 2005**

**1. Maintain vibrant downtown & quality neighborhoods**

(total = 105 post-its (ideas/suggestions) on the Downtown map)

**Student Housing (54 post-its)**

Work with PSU to keep students on campus	Protect single-family zoning
Work to get PSU to keep students on campus!	Recapture & revitalization of downtown/village neighborhoods
Require Freshmen & Sophomores to live on campus	Stop encroachment of off-campus housing into neighborhoods
Student sprawl in residential neighborhoods - PSU must enforce on-campus residence for freshmen & sophomores	Stop encroachment of off-campus housing into traditional neighborhoods
Make PSU require <u>all</u> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> year students live on campus so parents won't buy houses	Study constitutionality of restricting single family homes to only 3 non-related people
Require PSU students to on-campus living.	Strengthen zoning to restore integrity (keep students out)
All PSU freshmen required to live on campus	Single family zone should be only single family or duplex homes
Work with PSU to keep younger students on campus - decrease home sales to students	Have residential neighborhoods restricted to single family or double <u>only</u>
Influence PSU that students need to live on-campus a min. of 2 years	Intensify zoning in residential neighborhoods
PSU require students to live on campus at least first two years	Need to limit the conversions
Restrict PSU students from living in residential neighborhoods	Decrease multi-family conversions
Require 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> students to live on campus. This makes parents buying houses in residential areas not profitable.	Zoning has to be defined - single family residential means no rentals
Students move on campus	Change definition of family
Limit student housing. Require that PSU make all fresh/soph live <u>ON</u> campus	Lower zoning allowed from 3 non-related members in a home to 2 non-related members
Protect neighborhoods for <u>families</u>	No students in small one- or two-family houses
Limit student cars for underclassmen	Encourage quality low-income housing for working families

## 1. Maintain vibrant downtown & quality neighborhoods (continued)

### Student Housing (continued)

No cars for freshmen	Encourage ownership, mixed communities
Limits on student automobiles	Create a student housing zone
Decrease enrollment at PSU	A student-housing zone?
Continue town committee looking into housing being bought for students	Minimum unit size should be established for residential uses - particularly where downtown conversions are occurring
Must slow or reverse conversion of single-family homes to student housing - create disincentives to conversion by stronger regulation of occupancy	No mixed uses - neighborhoods need to be protected as a resource. Student housing is a different use from normal residential uses.
Provide disincentives to off-campus housing - taxes	No condos, apt bldgs - limit private to multifamily changeovers
Discourage further residential-to-student conversions with lodging taxes, income based valuation & property taxes	Tax break for student & multi-family homes converted <u>back</u> to single family
Increase fines for enforcement of # of residents per house	Provide incentive for conversion back to single family use
Raise values on homes used for other than single-family homes	Provide incentives to PSU to keep students on campus
Build dorm space	Provide incentives to PSU - use bargaining clout, to get the students back on-campus housing & out of the residential housing market (possible to make an off-campus housing tax as disincentive to use residential housing?)
PSU to build dorm space for all increases in enrollment	Town must have control of college expansion
Require more college dorm space, salvage our neighborhoods	

# 1. Maintain vibrant downtown & quality neighborhoods (continued)

## Parking & Roads (15 post-its)

## Commercial Activity (16 post-its)

Limit curb cuts & curb cut widths (this is a PB responsibility by statute)	More of the same - e.g. concerts on the green, town-wide yard sale, other Downtown merchant-sponsored events
PSU should ban freshmen from having vehicles on campus. If they won't cooperate, seize some of their property for public parking.	Zoning issues need to be addressed. Need to have more variety of stores downtown - less pizza shops, no more banks - encourage new businesses
Enforce parking code	Work in conjunction with PSU on appropriate development
Define & purchase roadway on Railroad Square to Route 3	Downtown Plymouth should be totally re-designed
Targeted parking facilities on/off Main Street	Revitalization & in-fill development of Main Street
Parking must be limited to residents	Don't allow anymore pizza or beer joints downtown
Have student vehicle parking limited to a few PSU lots and <u>not</u> where lawns use to be!	Encourage/provide incentive for business to fully utilize area's downtown that have already been developed.
No parking for town folks trying to do business downtown b/c PSU	Coordinate Downtown with large national stores
Require PSU to triple available parking for faculty & commuters on campus	Promote Main St businesses least likely to be in competition with TMH businesses
Make Green Street bypass for busy downtown area	Set permanent moratorium on box stores
Improve Dirt Road from Rt 3 south to KTM	Shift retail from competing with big boxes to more specialty stores
Create a walking/bike path that continues from South Main all the way to North Main (towards McDonald's)	Encourage "hometown" feel by maintaining our downtown businesses. Big boxes put them out of business!
Concern with pedestrian safety on streets in heart of town. With only 2 N-S streets above Main, Langdon & Emerson = main thoroughfares.	Encourage businesses which mix bricks, mortar & internet; appeal to world-wide market from Plymouth base
Keep roads restricted in size, provide nearby parking & walkways to encourage pedestrian use of the Common area.	Develop the old railroad property behind the Treehouse restaurant
Parking garage on campus	Green Street: a nice waterfront park is needed!
	Develop Riverfront park

# 1. Maintain vibrant downtown & quality neighborhoods (continued)

## Aesthetics (8 post-its)

## Miscellaneous (7 post-its)

Pemi water corridor in downtown area - clean up & provide opportunities for recreational use	Shared warrant articles to raise adequate revenues to fund shared resource for youth (i.e. recreation youth center)
More trees on sidewalks downtown (a couple are needed in front of Rand's)	Not so much unrestricted development potential; Agri-resid. Residential, Agri, Current zones in real downtown (village)
In future building on Main Street require more sidewalk space, it's a pity the new bank doesn't have more space	Keep police & fire depts. in central locations, not necessarily same place
Require design review to preserve architectural character - develop strict architectural standards (i.e. limit fire escapes)	Plymouth has done much more than its fair share of supporting tax-exempt uses.
Put University Welcome gate back on Main Street at the bottom of High Street	Encourage cluster development with mixed demographics (Srs & families), streets/parking on perimeter & shared open space in ctr
Clamp down on poor upkeep of multi-family buildings - somehow	Impeach Pres. Wharton
Shade trees in large parking areas	Town must have control of college expansion
Keep grass strip between roads & sidewalks	

## Enforcement (5 post-its)

Strong consequences for noise violation - \$ is a strong motivator
Establish "Maginot Line" beyond which every sale will prompt an automatic building inspection by land use officer within a year
ZBA must become more strict in its use of the special exception & variance requirements
Strictly enforce 3-person limit. Large fine for violation - \$2,000, second violation \$4,000
Enforce parking regulations & set new priorities in parking lots

## 2. Manage commercial development along highway corridors & maintain Plymouth's character (76 post-its (ideas/suggestions) on Town map)

### Land trust & conservation easements (natural resource protection) (13 post-its)

### Rezone highway corridors & agricultural zone (13 post-its)

Start an area land trust to purchase land that is important to keep our water clean and to keep rural character	Rezone environmentally sensitive areas along Tenney Mtn Hwy to restrict commercial development
Preserve prime ag lands	Change zoning along Baker river to protect from development on both banks
Save the north side of TMH for actual agriculture	Rezone to prevent commercial development on aquifers
Need to look at environmental issues so they don't flow into the rural areas rivers, erosion, wildlife, etc.	Coordinate NRI info with highway commercial maybe change zoning
Protect our rivers from salt from roads & fertilizers from development	Growth is necessary to alleviate the tax burden - but it should be zoning in a certain fashion respecting wetlands, etc.
Protect floodplain areas	Rezone to save natural land.
Protect floodplains & floodway along TMH	Steer commercial development to land less valuable as farmland, floodplains, or aquifers
Think about delaying development until natural resources better known	The illogical portion of highway development (along our valuable aquifer) needs to be acknowledged & highway corridor development <u>NOT</u> happen along the aquifer.
Protect our water supply - top priority - and wetlands	We need to carefully rezone what is now Ag. Zone to allow "considered" growth in 2/3 of town.
Do not build on floodplains	Protect valuable farmland. Redefine what "Agricultural Zone" is
Protect Baker River corridor & aquifers. This is our main water supply.	Zone Rte 3A - condos, cluster housing (towards Bristol), limit commercial development to TMH
Do not sacrifice farmland to businesses	Change (keep) 3A zoning to single-family residential
Development should take into account water resources, particularly floodplains since town water source is from there	Tenney Mtn (3A) = 4 season resort & recreational development - multi-family, hotel, golf course & other amenities
SAVE THE CORNFIELD!	No big box development on 3A south of traffic circle

## 2. Manage commercial development along highway corridors & maintain Plymouth's character (continued)

**Improve character of development, design standards & dark skies** (16 post-its)

**Limit size & # of retail stores** (12 post-its)

Build commercial development in clusters on south side of Tenney Mtn Highway with a band of trees between roads & stores (like Hitchiner's) to keep the appearance of rural area	Don't count on regional customers & travel to justify box store expansion. The economy & gas prices might not support that approach.
Preserve the appearance of a NE landscape as opposed to a mish-mash of modern downtowns	Use unoccupied buildings first! Don't develop new property until existing property filled
Encourage/create shared driveways, entrances & parking	Find a tenant for the Ames bldg
Have development work more with natural landscape rather than make complete alterations	Utilize current (retail) box store space before allowing more box store growth
Require small front setback & large rear setback to pull buildings up to street	Limit size of retail establishments to 40,000 s.f. to encourage development of "small" business
Connect & share parking lots	Limit building footprint size
Require parking lots to have trees	Keep big box stores out!
Development along hwy corridor needs to be WELL planned. Address traffic patterns. TMH is an accident waiting to happen.	Make use of existing empty spaces before starting new development
Require LID practices	No more big box stores
We all know what "typical" hwy development looks like - Exit 20! Who wants to LIVE there? So why not try something different - limit store size, limit curb cuts, parking hidden	No more 'box' stores. Welcome business/industry that fit existing/smaller facilities
Require "Dark Sky" lighting for new development	We have one large "box store," lets keep other stores smaller
Shade trees in large parking lots	Limit number of big box stores
Require landscaping buffer between buildings and highway	Place value on the small, unique stores as a draw for tourists
Landscaping - keep more of what exists, use native species	Encourage local businesses & community members/leaders by discouraging chain store/box store growth. More local pride will result
Smart Growth commercial development (joint parking lots, etc.)	
Parking at businesses along TMH in rear of building	

## 2. Manage commercial development along highway corridors & maintain Plymouth's character (continued)

<b>Increase nodal development (14 post-its)</b>	<b>Keep hwy corridor commercial (5 post-its)</b>
To minimize traffic "issues" limit # of curb cuts on major highways	Use TMH as commercial land - farming is not profitable in this area
Commercial, light industrial & commerce business park development - some mixed use in nodal development	Don't allow any more small tin buildings or car lots; allow national business to use it.
Make immediate plan for roads leading off of 25 for commercial development	Determine amount of traffic current road systems can handle and set growth limits <u>under</u> that
Have a road go off traffic circle into an area with commercial development rather than scatter new stores along highway	Stop small businesses from building whatever they want along Tenney Mtn Highway
Much of strip development takes path of least resistance - force access road development off the highway	Encourage or provide incentives for development to occur in areas that already have development
Encourage a commercial/industrial park off Tenney Mtn Highway	
Minimize highway cuts	<b>Miscellaneous (5 post-its)</b>
Cluster boxes on hwy to eliminate patchwork quilts development	Eliminate conservationist from the PB - conflict of interest
Consolidate small commercial into managed sites with limited driveway cuts	How can we plan anything when the College can take whatever they want?
Develop non-floodplain areas for multi-businesses (1 entrance)	Allow that guy to put a pizza place at Lionel's Market
Reduce the amount of paved parking & impervious surfaces to protect runoff impact to water quality	Use other successful towns as models
Minimize curb cuts! Driving from point A to point B on TMH is already tedious - especially if you have to make a left turn. Better to make side roads feeding store "hubs."	Invite open public discussion of large highway development
Minimize # of entrances on highway & # of acres of developed land.	
Install town roads where we want them for access off the road instead of driveways.	

### 3. Protect natural resources while accommodating development (82 post-its (ideas/suggestions) on Town map)

#### Protect critical resources (24 post-its)

Avoid land uses that deplete natural resources	Planting for the future: trees - green space
<u>Priority #1, all else follows from this:</u> Immediately revise our zoning laws to better protect environmentally sensitive land, aquifers, and agricultural land!!	Develop as much as makes sense, but don't ruin the beauty of critical key natural areas i.e., the river. The environment & natural beauty, combined with well-developed cultural/education pretense make Plymouth unique. Let's not become W. Lebanon!
Keep water from being polluted from parking lot run-off	Protect the "cornfield" from built on
Planning Board needs to respect Conservation Commission input & knowledge.	Implement land use & management practices that are compatible with natural potential.
Preserve Clay Bog Area as a wildlife refuge	Retain large contiguous areas of critical habitat
Use Natural Resource Inventory to "fix" our zoning	No development on steep slopes - learn from California
Understand implications of NRI before more development	Limit development in "protected" areas
Leave natural resource areas <u>Natural</u>	Keep forests alive
Drastically restrict any development on sites affecting critical resources (e.g. agriculture, water)	Rezone areas to protect our water supply & keep best agricultural land unpaved
Declare areas of natural resources that will not be developed	Rezone sensitive areas
Honor <u>existing</u> guidelines for preserving natural resources, especially near waterways	No development on any floodplain or wetland (mitigation is not a good solution)
Continue to protect sensitive areas & special areas as has been done by the Conservation Commission	Keep habitats open for wildlife (moose, bears, turkeys, birds, etc.)

### 3. Protect natural resources while accommodating development (continued)

**Drinking water - water quality & floodplains**    **Zoning changes or rezoning** (12 post-its)  
 (13 post-its)

Create a Baker (& Pemi?) River Watershed commission to study water quality issues, & make recommendations to affected owns (like Waukeewan/Meredith group)	The agricultural zone is a joke. It is basically unregulated land. The number of subdivisions indicates little control of the pace. Land must be rationally regulated.
Expand the protection area for our water to include the aquifer	Encourage cluster development by incentives
Protect drinking water supply	Rezone prime farmlands to restrict commercial development
Protection of our aquifer - not just of our wellhead, by rezoning North Tenney Mtn Highway now.	Rezone prime farmland overlay district to preserve agricultural uses
Protect aquifers!	Create overlay zone to protect designated view sheds
Protect floodplain & water resources (drinking water, etc.)	Rezone areas to reflect environmentally sensitive areas
Zoning protection for town wells	Designate specific areas to be protected & limit development
Disallow subdivision of plots containing or abutting wetlands, etc.	Reval. environmental safety zones
Where does fertilizer & lime go from farmlands? Rivers should be protected from this	Restrict building and development of agricultural & flood plain land. We might need farmland someday.
Declare floodplain & a certain buffer around rivers & floodplain out-of-bounds to commercial development	Measures to protect undeveloped bottom land (farmland) from development. Need to think about looming energy crisis & local food supply in 20-year plan
Save the "cornfield" as farming land to protect the river & the town drinking water well	Rezone stratified drift aquifers to restrict development over wellhead & potential groundwater sources
Create aquifer/surface water overlay protection zone to limit erosion & flood damage & protect water quality	Not so much should be allowed in the Ag. zone - make some residential & light commercial
If we have an ample supply of water (I understand we need to locate more aquifers), could Town not bottle & sell "Plymouth Springs"?!! (Like town which produces Aquafina) - this would help our tax woes!!	

### 3. Protect natural resources while accommodating development (continued)

#### Protect steep slopes (9 post-its)

#### Cluster development/open space incentives (7 post-its)

Preserve steep slopes of Plymouth & Tenney Mountains	Develop additional incentives to encourage land redevelopment rather than conversion of sensitive areas
Protect Plymouth Mtn - no development	Cluster housing with large natural areas
Limit housing & commercial buildings on viewsapes, but also manage. Accommodate communications & energy infrastructure (e.g. cell towers, wind energy)	Increase the amount of protected land (e.g. conservation easements) in environmentally sensitive areas
Preserve rare elements - limit development on steep slopes	Smaller minimum house lots if land put into conservation
Limit development of upper slopes to limit erosion & protect views	Provide incentives for open space building layouts
Visual quality of area should be protected i.e. view across the valleys	Encourage landowners to conserve own natural resources - give tax break as incentive
Restrict further development on steep slopes	Consider purchasing development rights
Protect Stinson Mt. viewsapes	
Try to permit existing vistas to remain	

#### Protect agricultural uses & bldgs (6 post-its)

#### Recreation (7 post-its)

If farmland is developed require a bond to finance future restoration when agricultural uses will be valuable	Develop small neighborhood parks - natural areas - respites for resident & employees
Save & protect agricultural bottom land	Develop river front park on Pemi & Baker River with bike paths
Eliminate any obstruction to agriculture in town	Use river corridor for recreational path - walking, biking, snowmobile with access to businesses
Support the preservation of agriculture buildings	Develop more opportunities like Plymouth Mt. trail & Newton-Walter CC for citizens to access natural resources
Farming is the future in the post-carbon age	Make use of vacant Fairgrounds for Town recreation
Visual quality of area should be protected i.e. view across the valleys	Have a park or public-owned area along the rivers, with wide riparian zone & walking/biking paths
	Create pedestrian and bike paths/routes.

### 3. Protect natural resources while accommodating development (continued)

#### Miscellaneous/general comments (4 posts)

Actively encourage development of Tenney Mountain
Strictly enforce PSU students in Freshman & Sophomore year to be housed on-campus
Recognize that every development of land is also a loss of natural resources. Conservation is also major portion of planning board's job
We want to be a community, rather than a tax base so we need to save beautiful areas such as the cornfield. Lowes should use the Ames space!