

Plymouth Master Plan
Summary of Community Forum
October 25, 2004

On Monday, October 25, 2004, more than thirty people gathered at the Senior Center to discuss Plymouth's future. Brief presentations were made; power went out for 10 minutes and then the large group of people split into 3 smaller groups to answer the following two questions:

1. What attributes would make Plymouth the best town in NH in 2015?
2. What decisions, actions, and/or strategies were taken in 2005 to make it so?

After answering and discussing each question, the small groups re-grouped to share their work and rank their priorities. The summary follows:

2015 Attributes that make Plymouth a great place to live and work:

Group 1

1. Open space
2. Work and live in the same town
3. Strong schools
4. Abundant recreation options
5. Low crime
6. Vibrant village residential neighborhoods
7. Clean air and water (no sewage/septic stink)
8. Significant proportion of food grown locally (CSA)
9. Expanded Silver Arts
10. Good reliable transportation everywhere: whatever it takes – multiple options (bike, train, Segways, walkways, recreation paths)
11. Strong fire and police department
12. Superior local medical services
13. Strong local government
14. Thriving downtown – Main Street
15. Limited commercial zoned development
16. More affordable tax rate
17. Good mix of employment opportunities
18. Small population
19. "Smart Growth" principles dominate the landscape
20. Riverfront "park" (bike path, picnic area, launch)
21. College and town synergy

Group 2

1. Multi-generational diversity
2. Seniors well cared for
3. Natural resources well protected and available for public use
4. Network of greenway corridors
5. Vibrant and diverse economy to support healthy environment
6. Blend of residential, commercial and open space at town's perimeter
7. Downtown is vibrant community center and South Main Street is properly developed (mixed use)

8. Vibrant/active waterfront and variety of recreation options
9. PSU is strong, attractive and competitive institution that coexist with traditional family neighborhoods
10. Residents feel safe – controlled traffic, from crime
11. Excellent schools
12. Town has balanced maintaining small town character with welcoming new business
13. More people have pedestrian options - walk ability, esp. students
14. Town maintained varied density- compact neighborhoods with rural housing
15. Town has engaged the river – mixed uses
16. More affordable rental housing available due to PSU housing policy
17. Excellent health care
18. RR square area is revitalized – corridor to connect Green Street to Route 3 section
19. Ongoing expansion of cultural opportunities – serve as engine for economic development
20. Cornfield at end of Highland Street still used for corn
21. Greater co-existence, collaborative relating town-gown
22. RSA 672:1 – Town regulations. Address energy efficiency, including efficient land use patterns
23. Increased housing (of varied types) downtown
24. Town welcoming and supportive of small businesses, including student housing
25. Dark skies

Group 3

1. More vibrant
2. Walking friendly
3. Secure job base
4. Controlled growth
5. Small business (individuals)
6. Neighborhood with families
7. Town and PSU have common purpose
8. Affordable housing
9. Full spectrum of housing options
10. Overpass or underpass on Highland/Main Streets for students
11. Reasonable taxes
12. Greater mix of business types (besides food)
13. Uniform and attractive signage
14. Riverfront walkway/multi-use/recreation
15. Open spaces/view sheds
16. Less light pollution
17. Rezone community
18. Attractive public swimming facility
19. Train (commuter)
20. Green public building/multi-use
21. Parking

2005 Strategies, Actions, Decisions and Solutions

In addition to identifying strategies, actions, decisions and solutions, participants were asked to rank their priorities. Each participant was asked to indicate his or her priorities with 3 sticky dots. Groups 1 and 2 were allowed to apply all three dots on a particular item. Group 2 was instructed to place one dot per item. Dot totals are in [brackets] at the end of each item. The recorder has placed the item in order of dots.

Group 1

1. Use natural resource inventory – act on key findings [8 dots]
 - Town purchase land, conservation easements (Plymouth Land Trust)
 - Take steps to protect water resources (quantity and quality – surface and subsurface)
2. Identify important agricultural land (full spectrum) and protect it for future use [5 dots]
3. Create a business village that includes high tech. and incubator space [4 dots]
4. Forge a stronger relationship with state and its university for community and financial support and business development [4 dots]
5. Zoning and land use regulations [4 dots]
 - Foster regulations that allow mixed uses
 - Beef up restrictions concerning off-campus housing to protect residential neighborhoods
 - Allow student housing close to campus
 - Planned commercial development (TMH – not North Conway yet easiest development)
 - Review zoning and development regulations and enforce
6. Increase growth that does not increase taxes (i.e., second home development, elderly housing) [3 dots]
7. Make sure wastewater treatment plant is state of the art [1 dot]

Group 2

1. Changed agricultural zone from do anything [5 dots]
2. Infrastructure and services planned to support and guide growth [3 dots]
3. Start planning for continuing care facility to support charging needs of elderly [3 dots]
4. Tenney Mountain Highway re-zoned for "nodal" development [3 dots]
5. Conservation easement on cornfield (end of Highland Street) [2 dots]
6. Town adopts and implements comprehensive plan for pedestrian facility (e.g., sidewalks, paths) integrated with road network improvements [2 dots]
7. Open space protection implements natural resource inventory and master plan [2 dots]
8. PSU and town master plans are coordinated [2 dots]
9. Identify and secure grants to support waterfront [2 dots]
10. Financial/tax incentives to encourage in-town area –re-use buildings [1 dot]
11. Increased Board of Selectmen to 5 [1 dot]
12. Increased density for off-campus student housing adjacent to college – new zoning district created [1 dot]
13. Town supports economic viability of Tenney Mountain Resort
14. Master plan is used on regular basis – including boards, residents, etc.
15. Town finds way for neighboring towns to help fund town infrastructure

Group 3

1. College/town [total 11 dots]
 - Town draws college in as a business enterprise zone
 - Integrated planning – master plan should include PSU and vice versa [6 dots]
 - College pay fair share of municipal service [5 dots]
2. Overhaul all town zoning regulations [6 dots]
3. Physical procedures [5 dots]
 - traffic patterns
 - Green Street to Main Street
 - walking friendly/parking
4. Housing [total 4 dots]
 - student zone [1 dot]
 - affordable housing [2 dots]
 - full spectrum
 - stage growth for schools, capital
 - take advantage of innovative land use controls [1 dot]
5. Administrative procedures – rezoning [total 1 dot]
 - village commercial zone
 - performance standards for light pollution, signage
 - walking plan (circulation) – eminent domain
 - act on town studies and reports
 - action committee to act on prior studies [1 dot]
6. Commuter train

Priorities of Large Group - 2005 Strategies, Actions, Decisions and Solutions

The three top-ranked items in each small group were presented to the large group and recorded on flip charts for another round of ranking. Participants using three sticky dots, ranked their priority strategies, actions, decisions and/or solutions. Participants were allowed to place all of their dots on one item. The priorities follow:

1. Overhaul all of zoning regulations [15 dots]
2. Use natural resource inventory and its recommendations [12 dots]
3. Integrate PSU and community master plan [11 dots]
4. Forge stronger relationship with state and its university for community support, financial support and business development [8 dots]
5. Identify important agricultural lands and protect them [6 dots]
6. PSU pay fair share of municipal services [6 dots]
7. Create village business district [6 dots]
8. Infrastructure planned to support guided growth [5 dots]
9. Tenney Mountain Highway rezoned (nodal) [4 dots]
10. Plan for continuing care for elderly [4 dots]
11. Physical procedures – walk ability [2 dots]
12. Rezone agricultural zone from "do anything zone" [2 dots]