

PLYMOUTH TRANSPORTATION PROFILE

October 4, 2005

1. Summary

- Single-occupancy vehicles are the dominant mode of transport in Plymouth.
- The average Plymouth commuter spends about 18 minutes traveling in one direction or 28% less time than the average New Hampshire commuter.
- More than half of the Plymouth resident labor force (53% of 3,027) works in Plymouth while the remaining percentage commutes out-of-town. About 51% of those commuters are employed in Grafton County.
- 66 miles of road and highway serve the town. Three Interstate 93 exits feed into Plymouth; one is located within the town's borders.
- Plymouth has not designated any roads as "Scenic Road" (under RSA 231:157 which provides protection of features located within rights-of-way,) although Old Hebron Road is treated as a scenic road.
- Traffic volumes east of the West Plymouth traffic circle on Routes 3A and 25 increased by 61% from 1982 to 2003. Traffic on other roads seems to be increasing as well, particularly on Highland, Langdon and Thurlow Streets and Reservoir Road.
- The *Route 25 Plymouth Tenney Mountain Highway Access Management Study* recommends a number of techniques to improve traffic along TMH.
- Unlike most rural NH towns, Plymouth has public transportation options.
- Downtown parking and parking in nearby neighborhoods are problems that need to be addressed.

This transportation profile includes information about commuting patterns, road network, operation, maintenance and special issues concerning Plymouth roads, traffic, transit and public transportation, alternative means of travel, and parking. It incorporates data from the 1980 through 2000 US Census, North Country Council, traffic counts from the state, data and comments from the town and the Transportation Profile Review Committee, and public input to provide information to develop goals and recommendations for Plymouth's future.

2. Commuting Patterns

Like most rural places in the United States, automobiles are the dominant mode of transportation in New Hampshire. Compared with the county and state as a whole, however, Plymouth residents are more likely to walk, bicycle, and take public transit to work or work at home. According to the 2000 US Census:

Mode of Travel to Work	Plymouth	Grafton County	New Hampshire
Drove Alone	60.6%	72.8%	81.8%
Carpooled	14.0%	12.2%	9.8%
Transit	1.2%	0.7%	0.7%
Bicycle	1.2%	0.6%	0.2%
Walk	15.7%	7.7%	2.9%
Work at home	6.2%	5.3%	4.0%
Other	1.1%	.7%	0.6%
Mean Travel Time (one direction in minutes)	18.3	21.3	25.3
<i>Source: US Census 2000</i>			

- Plymouth residents are more likely to carpool than residents of the county as a whole, and the rate of carpooling is nearly 5 percentage points greater than that of the state.
- About three-quarters of Plymouth's resident labor force drive to work.
- The mean travel time of Plymouth residents' commute is 7 minutes less than the state average commute and 3 minutes less than that of the county.
- Nearly half (46.7%) of Plymouth's resident labor force traveled to jobs located in other communities. Of these commuters 51.3% were employed elsewhere in Grafton County; an additional 20% traveled to communities in Belknap County. The remainder traveled to jobs located in seven NH counties, with a few town residents holding jobs in other states (see Economic Profile Figure 4.)

3. Road and Highway Network

Given the dominance of the car for local transportation, roads and highways are key networks in Plymouth. Approximately 66 miles of roads and highway serve the town. There are 14.4 miles of state highway and 35.57 miles of maintained town roads. An additional 5.49 miles of Class 6 town roads are not maintained on a year-round basis by the municipality, although private landowners maintain some segments of Class 6 roads.

State and local roads serve different transportation functions depending upon their design. The functional classification of a particular road is defined by the degree of access to adjacent land, the mobility it provides, and particularly in the case of rural highways, the region or area it serves. A simplified functional classification system applicable to Plymouth includes limited access highways, arterial highways, collector roads and local roads. These may be described as follows:

Type	Classification Description	Name of Route (examples)	Miles	Speed (Mph)
Limited access highways	Designed for rapid movement of heavy volumes of traffic. Direct access to adjacent property is not allowed nor is parking, cycling nor walking along the right-of-way.	Interstate 93 Exits 25 and 26 serve Plymouth with full north/south access	1.0	45-65
Arterial highways	Regional and statewide routes, linking cities, larger towns, and other major traffic generators. Generally, provides direct access to abutting properties and may be subject to some regulation.	Tenney Mountain Highway (Route 25), Routes 3, Main Street, 3A and 175A	13.4	30-50
Collector roads	Serve local community and links to neighboring towns and region, rather than statewide travel. Also provides access to abutting properties, although access may undermine transportation function of busy collector routes.	Highland Street (through "truck traffic" restricted), Thurlow Street, Reservoir Road	10.23	25-35
Local roads	Provide access primarily to adjacent land and roads of higher classification and provide for travel over relatively short distances when compared to collectors. Local roads offer the lowest level of mobility.	All of Plymouth's rural highways - Class 5 roads	35.57	20-25
Class 6 roads	Roads discontinued as open highways, highways subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained for year-round vehicular travel for five successive years or more. Not maintained with town highway funds.	Pike Hill Road, portions of Binks Hill, Hunt, Chaisson and Old Stagecoach (Thurlow Extension) Roads	5.53	
Total Road Mileage			65.73	

Source: NH Department of Transportation

Class 6 Roads

Class 6 roads may be upgraded to serve property development needs, provided such an upgrade meets the town's road construction standards and is paid for by the developer. In the past, a request to upgrade a Class 6 road has been reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Subdivisions are discouraged unless the road is brought up to town standards.

In March 2005, the town began drafting a written policy to help guide development of land served by Class 6 roads. In addition to road conditions, the written policy may include standards for the provision of community services (police, fire, ambulance, school busing), as some outlying areas may be excessively expensive to provide these services. To date, the Selectmen have not adopted a policy.

Scenic Roads

Plymouth has not designated any road segments as “Scenic Roads” under RSA 231:157, which provides protection of features located within the right-of-way that contribute the road’s scenic character. However, the town has treated Old Hebron Road as "scenic."

4. Town Road and Bridge Maintenance: Highway Department

Plymouth's roads are maintained by the Highway Department, which is located at 32 South Street currently adjacent to the Plymouth Village Water and Sewer District sewage treatment plant. The 50' by 122' foot steel building houses the offices and equipment required to maintain the streets and sidewalks. There are 5 full-time employees including the Highway Department Manager. Part-time employees and contractors are hired during the winter for snow removal.

In addition to local funding through property taxes, the state provides highway block grants to communities to assist with road maintenance. The amount of funding is based upon highway mileage. In fiscal year 2004 (which ended June 30, 2004), Plymouth received \$114,764 in state highway assistance. This constitutes about 20% of the annual operating budget. Other state assistance is available for bridges.

Maintenance expended on roads while they are still in good condition costs less than repairs when roads are deteriorated.

According to the 2005 Community Attitude Survey, the Plymouth Highway Department is doing a relatively good job of taking care of the town's roads (51% of total respondents were satisfied while 39% were not). This is an 11 percent increase in resident satisfaction compared with the 1995 survey that identified 50% of the respondents dissatisfied with Plymouth roads.

Road Standards

All new roads built to serve development in Plymouth must be constructed to road construction standards set forth in Plymouth's Subdivision Regulations. The town also has a Road Acceptance Policy (adopted 1994) that outlines the procedure for acceptance of a private road by the Selectmen. There are several private roads in town that are developed but are not up to town standards and therefore, have not been accepted as public streets (i.e., Reservoir Heights.) The Highway Department Manager or a consulting engineer for the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen inspects roads to determine compliance with such standards.

Bridges

There are twenty bridges in Plymouth, eight of which are State owned and maintained. These include:

- Holderness/Plymouth Bridge
- Smith Millenium Bridge (strongest covered bridge in the state)
- Yeaton Road Bridge
- Two bridges on Interstate 93
- Route 3 over Exit 26 off ramps
- Route 3A near Tenney Mountain Resort
- Route 25 (over the Baker River).

Plymouth owns and is responsible for maintaining the other bridges in town.

In the past five years, the Highway Department has rebuilt a number of bridges that qualified for Municipal Bridge Aid from NH Department of Transportation. The bridges were rebuilt and box culverts were installed. Five bridges have been completed or are scheduled for construction.

These include:

- New Hebron
- Cummings Hill Road
- Morse Road
- Old Hebron Road (summer 2005)
- Reservoir Road (2006).

5. Town Road Issues

There are a number of issues relating to roads that the town needs to address.

- a. Downtown congestion on Main Street is increasing which may dictate the need for a bypass roadway between Route 175A and Route 3 at the southerly end of Main Street. A bypass would relieve congestion and provide an alternate route that could improve public safety and emergency relief when the downtown area along Main Street becomes impassable.
- b. Highland Street reconstruction is a multi-phased project. Phase I, from Langdon Street to Broadway Street, has been completed. It was funded using a Disaster Recovery grant from the Community Development Block Grant program. Phase II (the most expensive phase ~ \$1.35 million), from the Tenney Mountain Highway intersection improvements eastward to Reservoir Road/Ward Hill Road, will go to bid in 2006. The project was funded through ISTEA with 20% of the project's cost being raised through taxes by the town. The town has been very fortunate to receive these grants. Phase III between Broadway westward to Reservoir Road/Ward Hill Road is un-funded. Although Phase III is a high priority project for the town, it is unlikely that ISTEA grant funds will be available in the near term to complete the improvements.
- c. Route 3 north of Plymouth, from Pearl Street to Foster Street has pedestrian/bicyclist issues, as well as an intersection/rail crossing alignment issues at the Foster Street intersection with Route 3 (across from Exit 26 on ramp to I-93). There are also vertical and horizontal sightline deficiencies and roadway width issues in vicinity of the National Guard Armory. No funding or projects have been established by the State to address these situations to date, although they have been discussed at the District and Commissioner's office level. There is also a snowmobile trail issue in this area that involves connection of the north-south corridor with the east-west corridor.
- d. Route 3 south of Plymouth has road width and shoulder problems in accommodating bicyclists. There also is a flooding issue in some areas where the roadway needs to be raised above the 100-year flood elevation. Parker Street intersects with Route 3 at an oblique angle that creates extremely limited sight line to the south and classified as a high-risk intersection.
- e. There is growing concern about the adequacy of Bell Road (unpaved and very narrow, less than 20-foot travel width) to handle growing traffic volumes from residential development and local residents using this roadway to Route 3A south, as a result of the increased congestion on TMH. If the town wants to upgrade Bell Road, in addition to the costs of construction, it will be necessary to acquire rights-of-way. New development and property owners along the roadway will likely "share in the cost" to upgrade.
- f. Cummings Hill Road is also a narrow, dirt road that has experienced a significant increase in traffic volumes due to the Walter Newton Recreational Area development and some growth in residential homes in the area. Any new residential development off this road should pay for road improvements. Roadway improvement options are limited by topography, ROW and will be very costly, much the same as noted for Bell Road.

- g. Webster Terrace and Gould Street, both located off of Russell Street, are steep, narrow roads that present public safety issues. These roads currently have limited usage (off-campus housing traffic) but are likely to be upgraded (ways yet to be determined) to provide access to potential parking on a terrace level to the rear of properties fronting on the west side of South Main Street. This would need to be accomplished by developers involved in new or redevelopment projects on the west side of South Main Street. These roads provide pedestrian connections to Main Street from Russell and Pleasant Street areas and will need to be preserved and upgraded when redevelopment occurs.
- h. There are also pedestrian walkway issues between the central downtown area and the Green Street parking areas, the Courthouse and the Riverfront/Senior Center area. The roadways that connect Main and Green Street (north side of Senior Center) also need to be improved to provide defined vehicular lanes and sidewalk repairs. The current rail crossings (pedestrian and roadway) have been discussed with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's rail division and an agreement reached for needed improvements to be done immediately or during the new bridge construction.

6. Traffic

Volumes

Traffic volumes on local roads and highways have generally increased in the past two decades, although irregular traffic counting has made the identification of trends difficult.

Traffic Counter Location	1982	1985	1990	1994	1998	2003
NH 25 & 3A West of Highland Street	NA	NA	NA	10,000	12,000	NA
US 3 North of Warren Street	NA	NA	NA	3,400	3,100	3,800
US 3 North of Fairgrounds Road	NA	NA	NA	2,700	2,300	NA
Highland Street west of Birchwood Drive	4,800	5,500	5,200	5,600	5,500	5,900
NH 3A (Mayhew Turnpike) at Hebron TL	1,740	1,500	2,200	2,000	2,400	NA
NH 3A & 25 East of Plymouth Traffic Circle (SB/NB)	5,270	6,500	7,000	7,500	8,200	8,500
River Road South of US 3 and NH 25	NA	NA	300	520	490	520

Source: NH DOT Note: NA means traffic counts not available

It appears, however, that:

- Traffic on Route 3 north of Warren Street increased by 13% between 1994 and 2003.
- Traffic east of the traffic circle on Routes 3A and 25 has also increased in excess of 13% during the same time period. Since 1982 traffic along this stretch of road has increased by 61%.
- South of the traffic circle at the Hebron town line, average daily counts have increased about 38% between 1982 and 1998. This trend has probably continued to date.
- Traffic counts on local roads are too infrequent to identify clear trends, although the limited data and increases in traffic on state routes likely indicate increasing traffic on many local roads.

A traffic counter system has been purchased by the town to develop a consistent data base to track future trends and travel patterns.

Access Management

The frequency, location and design of highway accesses – or curb cuts – have a direct bearing on the safety and efficiency of both town roads and state highways. The design of curb cuts also is important with regard to storm water management and road maintenance. Managing access can improve safety and better maintain highway capacity over time.

From 2002-2003, the town working with North Country Council prepared the *Route 25 Plymouth Tenney Mountain Highway Access Management Study*. A number of techniques to improve traffic along Tenney Mountain Highway were recommended, some of which may be applied through zoning ordinances, road permits and policies, and additional land use regulations (e.g., subdivision regulations). These include requirements for:

- minimum sight distance at a driveway or street intersection;
- maximum number of driveways per lot;
- mandatory shared driveways;
- maximum width of curb-cuts;
- minimum and maximum driveway lengths;
- minimum or maximum on-site parking, shared-parking, and parking design;
- minimum area for loading and unloading; and
- landscaping and buffers to visually define and enhance access points.

Implementation of these recommendations could help mitigate increasing traffic congestion on this roadway.

Traffic Calming

Techniques to maintain relatively slow traffic speeds in settled areas, enhance pedestrian safety, and improve the overall environment are often referred to as “traffic calming.” Such techniques include narrower vehicle traffic lanes, wider sidewalks, medians, on-street parking, roundabouts, raised and/or textured crosswalks, bulb-outs, and street-tree plantings and street furniture. Traffic calming is especially important in downtown and neighborhoods, and where pedestrians may be present.

As traffic congestion increases on Tenney Mountain Highway, motorists may avoid it and travel on Bartlett Road to Reservoir Road to Highland Street. This issue needs to be considered as traffic on Reservoir Road is already too fast (62 mph was recorded last summer.) Also, Townspeople have expressed a concern for maintaining rural character. To do this, it will be necessary to take a proactive approach to calm traffic before it becomes too much to handle.

The new intersection of Bridge and Main Street will be Plymouth's first roundabout. It has been designed to improve traffic flow as well as clearly define the entrance to downtown Plymouth and the PSU campus.

7. Transit and Public Transportation

Public transportation options are often somewhat limited in rural areas and even when available public transit is under-utilized. In the 2004 Community Attitude Survey, respondents often asked "what public transportation system?" In fact, Plymouth does have a number of public transportation options including:

- a free shuttle service provided by Plymouth State University during the school year;
- two handicap accessible vans for seniors provided by Plymouth Regional Senior Center;
- a private bus line;
- local taxi service;
- limited scenic rail service; and
- airport facilities (Plymouth, Laconia, Concord, Lebanon and Manchester.)

Transit

The Plymouth State University on-campus shuttle service began providing service in 1989 when the campus core was closed to vehicle traffic. The shuttle runs approximately 34 weeks of the year with service during the fall and spring academic semesters. There is no shuttle service during Winterim or over the summer. The service consists of two Ford shuttle buses holding 20 passengers and 2 wheelchair passengers. The shuttle service is free for students, faculty and staff as well as residents and visitors.

During the 2004-2005 school year, PSU on-campus shuttle carried a total of 120,126 passengers and made 16,651 runs for a total of 35,000 miles. Table 4 shows ridership increases of nearly a factor of 3 since 2001 (or 198% increase.) This increase is due to double shuttles making campus runs every 7-1/2 minutes for most of each day Monday through Friday. In 2001 a single shuttle made runs every twenty minutes.

Academic year	# of people transported
2001-2002	39,529
2002-2003	63,166
2003-2004	103,687
2004-2005	117,804
<i>Source: PSU 5/05</i>	

Bus Lines

Plymouth is served by Concord Trailways bus service. From the front of Town Hall, buses arrive and depart once a day to Littleton in northern New Hampshire, and twice a day connecting with Concord, Manchester, Boston and Logan International Airport to the south. Passenger tickets can be purchased on the bus or at the Chase Street Market.

Taxi

A private taxi company provides taxi service in Plymouth. However, it does not operate on a 24-hour, 7-day per week basis.

Charter Vans/Coaches

Charter service on both a scheduled and arranged basis between Plymouth and Concord, Manchester, Boston and other areas is available from a private transportation company.

The Plymouth Regional Senior Center also operates two handicap accessible vans for senior citizen transportation needs throughout the region. Senior citizens can arrange for transportation for doctor's appointments, shopping, and travel to/from the senior center

Rail Service

The **Concord to Lincoln Line** originally became part of the New Hampshire railroad system in 1895. In 1977, the state purchased this line from the Maine Central Railroad, including all 75 miles of track rights-of-way (ROW) between Concord and Lincoln. The state also owns rail ROW for an abandoned length of track (rails removed) extending off the Concord and Lincoln Line just north of the Baker River and running west into Rumney (see *Map ___*.) The State leases to the Plymouth and Lincoln Railroad Company (Hobo) and New England Southern Railroad.

The **Plymouth and Lincoln Railroad (Hobo)** has the operating rights and offers passenger trips along the scenic Pemigewasset River on the State-owned Concord to Lincoln Line. The train departs and returns to the Hobo station located on Route 112 in Lincoln. It operates primarily during the summer months and holidays. Other special excursions along the Concord and Lincoln Line can be arranged. The old Plymouth train station, renovated as the Plymouth Regional Senior Center, serves as a pleasant stopping place for these tourist trains.

On the north side of the Baker River floodplain is about five miles of state owned rail right-of-way (no rails). It currently serves as a recreational trail for winter snowmobile traffic. There are no known plans to revert back to a railway. It does have the potential of being converted into a multi-use recreational path. The rail-to-trail would provide an excellent public access across the entire floodplain and serve to link east side biking/walking corridors with west side transportation lanes.

New England Southern Railroad, in a non-subsidized agreement with the State, leases rights to operate on the Concord to Lincoln line. They currently provide rail freight service from Concord to Meredith while interchanging with the Boston and Maine in Concord. They have the capability of extending their hauling services north to Plymouth with minor upgrades to the bed and track beyond Meredith.

Air Transport

The **Plymouth Municipal Airport** caters to recreational aircraft and is one of 15 publicly-owned airports in New Hampshire. It is a federally classified, state approved and town authorized airport. The authority to operate the airport comes through the Plymouth voters, who have voted since 1941 to raise and appropriate the funds necessary to repair, maintain and operate the airport. The airport is further regulated as a licensed and approved "landing area," through the authority of the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics.

The airport is a unique municipal infrastructure resource. During the 3-year period between 2001-2004, its revenues (\$24,807) exceeded its expenses (\$13,350).

The airport is located on 125 acres of town land in the northwestern part of town (see *Map _ .*) Aircraft Operation Facilities, which are located on 50 acres on the south side of Quincy Road, include:

- a 90' x 2,350' turf landing field;
- an aircraft parking apron with 14 aircraft tie-downs;
- a 40' x 50' hanger with a 10'x 20' office; and
- a privately-owned 3,300 square foot hanger on property leased by the town.

The remaining 75 acres on the north side of Quincy Road is undeveloped.

The airport serves small single engine and twin-engine aircraft weighing 12,500 pounds or less. Air taxi passenger service is currently not available. The airport operates seasonally. It is closed in the early spring and winter due to the turf landing fields (soft conditions or snow and ice.) An appointed airport manager who reports to the Town Administrator manages the airport. The Flight Service Station in Bangor, Maine serves it. Since the airport committee was terminated, the airport does not have an active planning program for long-range goals or objectives for improving the airport facilities or its use.

Although passenger service is not locally available, there are three municipal airports (Laconia, Lebanon and Concord) and one international airport (Manchester) within 60 miles of Plymouth that provide passenger air service.

The **Manchester International Airport** is the nearest international airport to Plymouth. Served by seven major airlines, four regional carriers and six freight and cargo airlines, Manchester has experienced some of the fastest growth in the number of passengers served in the nation in recent years. In 2003, 3.6 million passengers arrived or departed the airport - up from 777,258 in 1990 (or 363% increase in 13 years.) More than 162 million pounds of cargo also went through the airport, up from 45 million pounds in 1990.

There are **two approved heliports in Plymouth**. One belongs to the Spere Memorial Hospital and a private landowner owns the other one. Heliports provide facilities that allow helicopters to airlift patients to and from hospitals, and to specialized hospitals. Helicopters can also provide emergency airlift services in time of disaster.

8. Pedestrians

When walking is a pleasant experience, there is greater incentive for people to leave their cars at home and spend more time on foot, rather than behind the wheel. Downtown Plymouth is relatively pedestrian friendly. In the downtown area, there are sidewalks, crosswalks, and walking paths to the public schools and on the PSU campus. Traffic along Main Street and around the Common travels slowly which allows for street crossings with relative ease. However, downtown neighborhoods have seen a decline in pedestrian friendliness. Curb cuts have increased not only in number but also in size, which makes it more challenging to walk safely, especially for children and the elderly.

Results of the 2004 Community Attitude Survey indicate some dissatisfaction with sidewalks. Respondents spoke loudly for the need to improve the current sidewalks, particularly along Highland Street, and to construct new sidewalks where there are discontinuities in the village sidewalk infrastructure. Construction is scheduled for 2006 of a sidewalk from Reservoir Road and the Old Ward Bridge Road intersection on Highland Street to Hatch Plaza.

9. Bicycling

Bicycling has increased significantly in the past decade due to an increase in the public's interest in both human and environmental health, and new technology that makes cycling easier. It has become a transportation alternative for a growing segment of the population. The percentage of Plymouth residents who bike-commute is twice that of the county and six-times the state percentage.

Bikeways or designated bicycle paths provide a safe place for a non-polluting and inexpensive way to get around, may help decrease traffic congestion, parking problems, provides a means for improved physical and emotional health, and provides inexpensive recreation. These benefits make an area more attractive for living, shopping, business, and working. Plymouth, however, does not have any designated bike paths and restricts bicyclists from using public sidewalks. A range of strategies to expand bicycle opportunities might include:

- improving transportation facilities to better accommodate bicyclists;
- educating the public regarding the benefits of such programs;
- enhancing safety through education and enforcement of existing laws; and
- encouraging concentrated development and discouraging sprawl.

10. Parking

Providing access to convenient and adequate parking in the downtown for residents, visitors and employees as well as Plymouth State University has been the subject of considerable discussion over the years. It is recognized that the health and vitality of downtown is linked to the ease of access. However, it has also been said that a perceived parking problem in a downtown area is a sign of a busy, active downtown.

According to the 2004 Community Attitude Survey, 61% of the respondents are not satisfied with downtown parking. The town, Main Street Plymouth, Inc. and PSU are working to improve the parking situation. PSU and the town have built additional parking areas in recent years. More facilities are being planned in conjunction with new construction activity and future Main Street and downtown improvements.

The town has recently completed a town-wide public parking inventory and base map, with the assistance of PSU. Table 5A shows the Downtown public parking supply.

Location	Existing Spaces
Main Street	204
Green Street	54
Highland Street	28
Court Street	19
High Street	9
Total	314
<i>Source: Town of Plymouth with assistance from PSU Summer 2005</i>	

In the November 2004 Campus Master Plan, PSU presents a parking plan that includes an inventory of its existing parking supply and identifies future parking spaces. Table 5B identifies the zone, existing spaces and future spaces. It is envisioned that Main campus parking will increase from its current 623 spaces to 740. The North Campus residential complex will more than double its parking supply while parking in Holderness will be reduced by 85 spaces.

Zone	Existing Spaces	Future Spaces	Change
South	195	238	43
South Center	158	274	116
North Center	270	228	-42
<i>Subtotal Main Campus</i>	<i>623</i>	<i>740</i>	<i>117</i>
North residential	432	991	559
North Holderness	459	447	-12
South Holderness	627	554	-73
<i>Subtotal Holderness</i>	<i>1,086</i>	<i>1,001</i>	<i>-85</i>
Total	2,141	2,732	591
<i>Source: PSU Master Plan November 2004</i>			

The PSU Master Plan also recommends that the University: "Provide sufficient PSU parking to alleviate stress on local residential streets; explore options for shared parking."

The parking ordinance was revised in 2004 to restructure parking fees and to make town fees similar to PSU in some areas. In the past, PSU fines were very high (approximately \$50) while the town's fines were very low (\$5.) In addition, the town has been more aggressive in patrolling parking.

Finally, the design of new public parking facilities and simply, parking for residential use, needs to be addressed. At the June 2005 Land Use Forum, participants citing downtown parking as well as neighborhood parking as serious land use problems. State enabling legislation does authorize the Planning Board to regulate driveways and parking (see RSA 236:13.) Provisions that address landscaping, lighting, storm water, signs, backing onto a street, width of curb cuts would help provide neighborhood safeguards and help address safety issues.

11. North Country Council Transportation Improvement Program

At a regional level, the Town of Plymouth is an active member of the North Country Council's Transportation Advisory Committee. In the NCC 2003-2004 Transportation Improvement Program, three Plymouth projects were recommended:

1. **Renovation and Restoration of Second Floor of Plymouth Regional Senior Center (PLY-01 - \$259,922):** This project is a Phase 2 project where funding for the exterior façade, walkways and first floor renovation were originally granted through a Community Development Block Grant. The entire community has access to the Senior Center as well as serving as a senior citizen center for the region. It is also a stop for the Hobo Scenic Railroad. The Grafton County Senior Citizen Council submitted the application to complete the project by renovating and restoring the second floor including the installation of an elevator. The building is widely used and additional space is needed to serve the program needs. The plan is to maintain the integrity of the old railroad station and restore it's historic value while renovating the space for use. This project received many letters of support; the match is in place, and the requested funds for construction in FY 2007 has been awarded through a Transportation Enhancement Historic Restoration Grant.
2. **Merrill Street Sidewalk Project (PLY-03 - \$216,800):** The Town of Plymouth submitted two sidewalk improvement projects. This project was the top priority of both Plymouth and the town's Safety Committee. This project includes the replacement of one section of old sidewalk that has outlived it intended use period as well as construction of a new sidewalk. This project ties a residential neighborhood to the two schools and was featured at the Bike and Pedestrian Conference on the "Safe Route to School" mobile tour. At that time it was a top priority project for the town and suggestions from the mobile tour participants included improvements to the existing sidewalk and an extension of that sidewalk to the school. The match for this project is in place through the town's Sidewalk Capital Reserve funds and the project received many letters of support. This application did not receive funds, but will be re-submitted for consideration in 2005-2006.
3. **Langdon Street/Fox Park Sidewalk Project (PLY-02 - \$72,000):** This project was Plymouth's second sidewalk priority in town. It links a residential neighborhood to Fox Park, a town owned recreational area. This section of road also is a popular walking loop for patrons and workers in downtown Plymouth. Like the Merrill Street Sidewalk project, cost estimates were derived from SEA Consultants and the town has the match in place through their Sidewalk Capital Reserve funds. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the project and the need to have a sidewalk connecting through the town but ranked it lower than the other projects due to the need to have projects more reflective of the whole region and not just one area of the region. The Committee did choose this project to be the lower priority of the two Plymouth sidewalk projects based on the fact that it was the town's second priority. This project will likely be restructured and other funding arrangements made.

In addition, an application for funding of the Phase III Highland Street Improvements, to complete the work on this high traffic volume collector road, will be submitted for consideration in the 2005-2006 funding cycle.

12. Planning Considerations

Goal: A safe, efficient and cost effective transportation network that provides accessibility for all residents and is designed to maintain the historic, rural character of the community.

- (1) Continue to maintain the town road network in a manner that maintains safe and efficient traffic conditions for current and future demand.
- (2) Retain the current scale, rural quality and capacity of town roads when undertaking improvements and maintaining roads. Address the needs of cyclists whenever road reconstruction projects are undertaken or new roads are built.
- (3) Coordinate with local, regional and state entities – including the North Country Council’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) – to plan for Plymouth’s transportation needs in a comprehensive manner. Continue to designate a representative to the North Country Council’s TAC, and be active in transportation proposals.
- (4) Seek state and/or federal transportation funds to help make the downtown core safer for residents, pedestrians and school children (KidsWalk - Safe Routes to School.)
- (5) Continue the town’s active involvement in all NH DOT proposals to improve roads and bridges to ensure that any proposal enhances Plymouth’s rural character and in no way detracts from it, also, to ensure actions by NH DOT in surrounding towns in no way diminishes Plymouth’s quality of life.
- (6) New development shall not result in adverse impacts to traffic or pedestrian safety or a significant decline in the level of service of the impacted road network. The cost of mitigation to avoid such impacts will be the responsibility of the developer.
- (7) The intersection of Highland Street and Langdon Road should be reviewed to address increasing traffic volumes at the intersection. Future development in the Thurlow Street area and in Downtown needs to look at impacts on this intersection.
- (8) Ensure safe and efficient traffic movement along principal roads by controlling access, concentrating development within designated villages and avoiding strip development.
- (9) Explore opportunities to slow traffic, to increase opportunities to safely cycle and to provide for pedestrian access downtown and between the downtown and TMH along Highland Street. Cost effective solutions (e.g., traffic calming including sidewalks, bike paths and trails) should be developed before new infrastructure (e.g., new roads).
- (10) Support the efforts of local, regional and state organizations, including the Heritage Trail, to provide safe alternative transportation opportunities.
- (11) Consider working with NH Department of Transportation to establish a park-and-ride lot near Exit 25 or 26.

- (12) Maintain the public's interest in Class 6 roads and access to legal trails. At a minimum, require that new development served by a Class 6 road be only permitted if the road is upgraded to town standards, costs of community services are addressed, and that the developer funds the cost of the upgrade. Consider re-designating currently undeveloped portions of Class 6 roads to Class A trails.
- (13) Develop a Class 6 road policy to clearly set forth the terms under which such roads may be upgraded and property served by such roads developed.
- (14) New development should provide adequate parking opportunities to accommodate employees, residents and/or patrons.
- (15) Continue to work with PSU to provide sufficient parking to alleviate stress on local residential streets.
- (16) Currently downtown area has no parking requirements per the zoning ordinance. Explore the need to require parking for residential uses in the downtown.
- (17) Require driveway regulations that are administered by the Planning Board in accordance with RSA 236:13.
- (18) Given the high cost of road construction, the town needs to develop a long-term capital improvement plan based on a thorough inventory of town roads, bridges, and sidewalks for the Board of Selectmen and town to use in budgeting. Include proposed municipal road and bridge reconstruction projects in annual capital budget and program.
- (19) Develop a database to better understand the condition and use of Plymouth roads, as well as parking and driveways. Data, at a minimum, should include:
 - location of road development activity,
 - # of curb cuts and driveway permits issued,
 - traffic volumes by site,
 - condition of town roads, and
 - other data that may be available and relevant.
- (20) Support and expand alternative transportation networks.
- (21) Apply for technical support grants from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation as well as Transportation Enhancement funds for pedestrian and bike path improvements.
- (22) Consider forming an Ad Hoc Committee to work with the Planning Board to develop a sidewalk/walkway improvement plan, priorities, and implementation goals and strategies.