



The City of Plymouth Strategic Plan Summary Report

Presented by Cory Poris Plasch
President



The City of Plymouth

September 20, 2023

Dear Mayor Pohlman:

I am pleased to submit to you the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and Summary Report for the City of Plymouth. This plan reflects the organization's goals, commitment to measurable outcomes, and the delivery of quality services to the community.

It has been a pleasure assisting the City of Plymouth with the community's first Strategic Plan. I particularly wish to thank City Administrator, Timothy Blakeslee, for his assistance during the process. Elected and staff leadership displayed focused effort and commitment that led to the formulation of a clear, actionable Strategic Plan for the City of Plymouth.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Poris Plasch". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Cory Poris Plasch

President

CP2 Consulting

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Strategic Plan Summary	5
Vision, Mission, Values.....	7
The Strategic Planning Process	8
Assessing the Current Environment.....	9
Operating Review, Stakeholder Engagement	10
Environmental Scan	11
Focus Group Results.....	13
Understanding the Environment	15
SWOT Analysis.....	16
Targets by Strategic Goal	18
Strategic Plan Implementation	20
Strategic Plan Participants	21

Executive Summary

From April through August 2023, the city of Plymouth engaged in a Strategic Planning Process. The process generated a Strategic Plan covering 2023-2026.

The Plan consists of four Strategic Goals, identified as the issues of greatest importance to Plymouth over the next three years. Each goal has an associated outcome, key outcome indicators, and performance targets. These were determined through a facilitated process including the elected board and staff, and incorporated stakeholder feedback from two focus groups.

As part of the Strategic Planning Process, the vision, mission, and values were evaluated. The City of Plymouth chose to update their mission, vision, and values.



A cross functional team of staff helped to further develop the Strategic Plan by identifying initiatives to achieve the Strategic Goals. This team will continue to work to develop and implement project plans for each initiative and create a communication plan to ensure that all City of Plymouth staff understand the overall goals, as well as being able to meaningfully incorporate action steps to achieve those goals into their overall responsibilities.

Strategic Summary

DESIRED OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR (KOI)	PERFORMANCE TARGET	STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Strategic Goal: Efficient Operations			
Increased service load capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # mw of electric - # of miles of water main and sanitary service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # 5 mw by 2026 - # 1 mile of new water main and sanitary sewer by 2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Infrastructure Improvement Plan to meet future demands - Develop Infrastructure Expansion Financial Plan - Create Street Improvement Strategy - Develop Comprehensive Technology Strategy - Develop Outage Management System
Technology enhanced service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of new technologies implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ≥ GIS, water, and electric technologies implemented by 12/26 	
Improved critical systems monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of outages - time between technology failures - street condition rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease number of outages by 5% - Increase mean time between failures by 10% - Increase average street rating to > 7 	
Strategic Goal: Financial Sustainability			
Sufficient finances for future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$ Capital Improvement Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$1.5M in Capital Improvement Fund by 12/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create Closure Strategy for Existing TID - Update current Comprehensive Financial Policy based on GFOA guidelines - Create a Levy Strategy - Create a New TIF Strategy - Create a Commercial/Industrial Key Sites Development Plan - Develop a new RLF Marketing Program
Expanded economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$ Commercial / Industrial (C/I) tax value - # new C/I permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C/I tax value increased by 10% by 12/26 - C/I permits increased by 10% by 12/26 	
TIF District utilization expanded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of repurposed sites - % increase in incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of repurposed sites increased by 5% by 12/26 - Incentives increased by 15% by 12/26 	

Strategic Summary (Continued)

DESIRED OUTCOME	KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR (KOI)	PERFORMANCE TARGET	STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Strategic Goal: Enhanced Quality of Life			
Increased housing options for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of Senior housing units - # of workforce housing units - # of affordable housing units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two development agreements by 12/26 - Ten building permits by 12/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Comprehensive Housing Strategy - Develop Residential Key Sites Marketing Plan - Create Public Safety Training Program - Create Web-based City Newsletter - Develop City of Plymouth Outreach Strategy
Expanded safety education for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of Safety Education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three education programs established by Police, Fire, and Utilities by 12/26 	
Increased community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of public events - # social media followers - # of website hits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three public events by 12/26 - Increase by 25% in social media followers by 12/26 - Increase by 15% in website hits by 12/26 	
Strategic Goal: Workforce Recruitment and Retention			
Staff capacity to meet service demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time to fill open positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time to fill decreased by 25% by 12/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update Hiring Practices and Procedures - Implement Referral Tracking System - Create Employee Satisfaction Survey - Create a Benefit Enhancement Strategy - Create an Employee Recognition Program
Enhanced organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of employee referrals for open city positions - % positive rating on employee survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employee referrals for open positions increased by 25% by 12/26 - Employee survey positive rating increased by 25% by 12/26 	
Increased employee retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of years of service by employees not eligible for full retirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase by 25% in years of service by employees not eligible for full retirement 	

Vision, Mission, Values

DRAFT VISION

A friendly small town where everyone wants to be! In Plymouth, all are connected, cared for, and able to thrive in a beautiful, safe community that values opportunity and a high quality of life for all.

DRAFT MISSION

Our mission is to support a high quality of life for the city and build long-term sustainability for the future. We continually improve by engaging our community, leveraging partnerships, and maintaining high quality staff to provide our community with safe and cost-effective services.

CORE VALUES

Respect: *We treat others like we want to be treated.*

Integrity: *We honor our commitments in our words and actions.*

Safety: *We prioritize the wellbeing of all in our community.*

Community: *We work on behalf of everyone and treat everyone like family.*

Honesty: *We value truth and transparency in our interactions.*

Openness: *We listen to what others have to say.*

Fun: *We enjoy the work we do together.*

Innovative: *We are open to new ideas and ways of doing things.*

The Strategic Planning Process

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Strategic Planning Process seeks to answer five questions:

- Where are we right now? (Plan Development)
- Where do we want to be? (Plan Development)
- How do we get there from here? (Plan Implementation)
- How will we know when we get there? (Plan Implementation)
- Are there changes in the future external environment that we need to consider?

DEVELOPMENT

Where are we now?

Scan the Environment
Conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)
Analysis
Develop a Strategic Profile
Identify Strategic Challenges

Where are we going?

Determine our Mission
Define Core Values
Establish our Vision
Identify Key Intended Outcomes

IMPLEMENTATION

How will we get there?

Develop Initiatives
Define Performance Measures
Set Measurable Targets
Cascade throughout Organization

How will we know?

Create detailed Project Plans
Establish Accountability: Who, What,
When
Identify Success Indicators
Determine Reporting Structure

Assessing the Current Environment

The Strategic Planning Process began with a meeting with the consultant and Plymouth senior staff. The meeting included a review of strategic planning principles, a discussion of organizational value proposition, the status of vision and mission statements, and a tutorial on preparing an Environmental Scan. The session concluded with a timeline for the planning process, assignments for preparation of the Environmental Scan, and a process for conducting the stakeholder outreach.



This was followed by interviews with the Common Council members, which were conducted by the consultant. The interviews revealed perspectives on the state of the community, city operations, current challenges, and opportunities for the future.

Operating Review, Stakeholder Engagement

To answer the question “Where are we now?,” the Strategic Planning Process began with gaining an understanding of the operating environment. This is the first activity in developing a Strategic Plan as internal and external forces, dynamics, and constraints must be considered to arrive at the most effective strategy.

Assessing the environment included:

- An Environmental Scan
- Focus Groups

The Environmental Scan was conducted by staff in collaboration with the consultant and the consultant facilitated the Focus Groups.

As environmental factors change over time, they need to be evaluated and incorporated into the strategic thinking and planning process using current data. As a result, the Focus Groups were limited in scope and consisted of Plymouth staff. Each Focus Group discussed what participants saw as strengths of the community along with opportunities for change. The questions for the Focus Groups centered on city services and the quality of life within the community — the core responsibilities of the city and the focus of strategic planning.

The results of these efforts were presented to the Common Council at the first Strategic Planning Session on June 27, 2023. They are summarized below along with links to the complete results.

Environmental Scan

The Environmental Scan is a description and analysis of the City of Plymouth, including both internal and external forces and constraints. As the initial phase of the Strategic Planning Process, it provides an opportunity to understand how current and emerging trends interact and provides a framework for understanding relevant issues in planning its future. Staff presented a review of internal operations and current challenges facing the organization.

Key Takeaways:

- Several takeaways from the Environmental Scan center on personnel. It's important that Plymouth maintains competitive wages, benefits, and flexible work policies in order to recruit and retain high-quality employees.
 - Seasonal staffing may pose a problem, and lead to the reduction or elimination of City services, if Plymouth cannot find and hire seasonal workers.
 - Healthcare costs for both the City and employees continue to rise. Costs do not show any indication of slowing down and could impact labor negotiations, employee attraction and retention, and budgets for years to come.
 - In the past, the Police Department was not fully staffed. However, recently, the Police Department has reached full staffing and a new Police Chief was hired. The DPW and Utility Crew are currently fully staffed. The Finance Department, however, has several current vacancies due to turnover in several positions. It's important that Plymouth adds staff as needed to maintain service levels as the City expands.
- The financial overview of Plymouth was also a key takeaway from the Environmental Scan. Through a Capital Improvement Plan, the City is working to identify the funding needs and solutions to maintain its current service levels, address its needs as a growing city, and provide budget stability.
 - Two goals relating to the finances of Plymouth are to minimize annual variation in the tax levy and to reduce debt.
 - The primary priorities of the Capital Improvement Program include infrastructure replacement, equipment replacement, and facilities management.
 - Several large Capital Improvement Program projects include 1) a ladder truck, 2) a utility storage facility, 3) the Mill Pond dam, 4) the substation project, 5) WWTP Digester cover, and 6) City/utility large trucks. Street maintenance and replacement funding is also on the City's radar.
- Overall, Plymouth is in a good place with a solid general fund reserve balance and adequate staffing.

Focus Group Results

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

As part of the City of Plymouth's Strategic Planning Process, Focus Groups were conducted on May 16, 2023. Participants were employees recruited by City staff. Plymouth's Focus Group discussed the subject of the city's strengths and challenges. Each meeting ran for approximately 90 minutes.

A Focus Group is a small-group discussion guided by a trained facilitator. It is used to gather in-depth information about a community's thoughts and opinions about a designated topic. The interaction enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences. The facilitator's role is to gather information in an impartial and confidential manner, manage the pace of the discussion, and ensure that everyone has a chance to participate. The process included a set of questions and follow-up discussion within the small group.

Key Takeaways:

- There were a handful of themes mentioned in the Focus Group, including public safety, roads, infrastructure, City services, economic development/downtown, affordable housing, schools, and employee recruitment and retention.
- The feedback on public safety was generally positive. People feel safe in Plymouth, but there is some concern surrounding an increase in the development of low-income housing, a perception of increasing drug use, domestic violence, violence within schools, and high speeds on narrow roadways.
- There was a lot of discussion surrounding the City's roads. Though there is an acknowledgement that road conditions are often not controlled by the City, there was concern surrounding traffic on Eastern Avenue, PP, and Fleet Farm, discussions about a potential roundabout, and concerns with narrow roads.
- Participants were very satisfied with the City's layout and amenities. However, concerns relating to fixing the dam and the rivers being cleaned and maintained were mentioned. Increasing the number of trails and walkable paths and reviving Eastern Avenue were also mentioned.
- When it comes to City services, a hot topic for the Focus Group was more activities for Plymouth's teenaged youth. Public transportation, and other resources, especially for the elderly, were a concern as well. Better broadband connection in certain regions of the City was also a topic.

- When it comes to downtown/economic development, the Focus Group thinks there is an abundance of jobs in the City, including high paying ones. There is a variety of businesses and restaurants, and the downtown area is visually appealing, but more “mom and pop” businesses should be located downtown. Quality childcare within Plymouth was also mentioned as a concern.
- Housing was a topic of focused discussion. There are concerns that there is not enough housing options for the middle class and there is a gap between apartments and luxury housing. If Plymouth wants to attract and retain workers, there needs to be housing available that suits their needs and budgets.
- With the topic of schools came concerns relating to drug use and action being taken to combat increasing drug use. A solution focused on eliminating violence in schools was also discussed. The implementation of trade and skill building as academic options were brought up in the Focus Group as well.
- City employee recruitment and retention was also a topic discussed in the Focus Group. It is difficult to find quality, qualified employees. Younger workers are more likely to leave for the City for higher wages elsewhere. It was also mentioned that if it works, don't fix it. Not all change is good.

Understanding the Environment

UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT AND SETTING STRATEGIC GOALS

An integral part of the Strategic Planning Process is a SWOT Analysis, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It provides a situational overview of the environment in which strategic planning takes place and allows a systematic examination of factors impacting the community. Strengths and Weaknesses examine the internal operating environment, while Opportunities and Threats evaluate the external operating environment.

To provide ample opportunity for reflection, a SWOT survey was distributed to the Common Council and senior staff prior to the Strategic Planning session. During the Strategic Planning Retreat, the SWOT data was reviewed to determine key themes and strategic issues.



SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experienced Staff - Strong Leadership - Strong Finances - Cohesiveness - Teamwork - Technology - Potential to do and achieve - Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing / Retention / Wages - Limited budget - Infrastructure - Strategic direction - Citizen communication - Online municipal code (difficult to use) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop all levels of housing - Use technology for better communication and functionality - Community development of retail, industry, and recreational facilities - Improve community relations and communication - Financial opportunities with TIDs - Staff retention, development, market pay / benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost pressures / economic conditions (increasing costs, tight budgets) - Housing- lack of housing overall - Employee retention/staffing - New and changing regulations - Poor planning/resistance to change - Polarizing political environment/lack of community interest

The strategic issues brought to light by the SWOT Analysis include finances, housing, staffing and retention, economic development, public communication, infrastructure, public safety, the dam on Eastern Avenue, quality of life, and operations.

The Strengths and Opportunities groups then combined to discuss how internal strength coupled with external opportunities could be enablers of success. The Weaknesses and Threats groups combined to discuss how internal weaknesses coupled with external threats could be challenges to success.

Finally, the groups combined, and all participants reviewed the key themes. A list of strategic issues was determined, and finally the most important organizational priorities were finalized taking into account information gathered throughout the process, including the Environmental Scan. Through this analysis, four Strategic Goals were identified: Efficient Operations, Financial Stability, Enhanced Quality of Life, and Workforce Recruitment and Retention.

Participants then were divided into cross-functional groups. They determined desired Outcomes (what success looks like), Key Outcome Indicators (how to measure progress towards success), and Performance Targets (a measurable goal achieved by a defined date) for each strategic priority.

Targets by Strategic Goal

STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal: Efficient Operations

1) *Outcome: Increased service load capacity*

Key Outcome Indicators: # mw of electric; # of miles of water main and sanitary service

Performance Targets: Five mw by 2026; One mile of new water main and sanitary sewer by 2029

2) *Outcome: Technology enhanced service delivery*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of new technologies implemented

Performance Targets: GIS, water, and electric technologies implemented by 12/26

3) *Outcome: Improved critical systems monitoring*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of outages; time between technology failures; street condition rating

Performance Targets: decrease number of outages by 5%; increase mean time between failures by 10%; increase average street rating to > 7

Strategic Goal: Financial Sustainability

1) *Outcome: Sufficient Finances for Future Needs*

Key Outcome Indicators: \$ Capital Improvement Fund

Performance Targets: \$1.5M in Capital Improvement Fund by 12/26;

2) *Outcome: Expanded Economic Development*

Key Outcome Indicators: \$ C/I tax value; # new C/I permits

Performance Targets: C/I tax value increased by 10% by 12/26; C/I permits increased by 10% by 12/26

3) *Outcome: TIF District Utilization Expanded*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of repurposed sites; % increase in incentives

Performance Targets: # of repurposed sites increased by 5% by 12/26; incentives increased by 15% by 12/26

Strategic Goal: Enhanced Quality of Life

1) *Outcome: Increased Housing Options for All*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of Senior housing units; # of workforce housing units; # of affordable housing units

Performance Targets: Two development agreements by 12/26; Ten building permits by 12/26

2) *Outcome: Expanded Safety Education for the Community*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of Safety Education Programs

Performance Targets: Three Education Programs Established by Police, Fire, and Utilities by 12/26

3) *Outcome: Increased Community Engagement*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of public events; # of social media followers; # of website hits

Performance Targets: Three public events by 12/26; increase by 25% in social media followers by 12/26; increase by 15% in website hits by 12/26

Strategic Goal: Workforce Recruitment and Retention

1) *Outcome: Staff Capacity to meet Service Demands*

Key Outcome Indicators: Time to fill open positions

Performance Targets: Time to fill decreased by 25% by 12/26

2) *Outcome: Enhanced Organizational Culture*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of employee referrals for open City positions; % positive rating employee survey

Performance Targets: Employee referrals for open positions increased by 25% by 12/26; Employee survey positive rating increase by 25% by 12/26

3) *Outcome: Increased Employee Retention*

Key Outcome Indicators: # of years of service by employees not eligible to retire

Performance Targets: Increase by ___% in years of service by employees not eligible for full retirement

Strategic Plan Implementation

Implementation is the final step in the Strategic Planning Process and consists of staff developing Initiatives to support the Strategic Goals determined during the Strategic Planning Process. The following Initiatives will be reported on regularly, showing the measurable progress Plymouth is making towards their Strategic Goals and associated Performance Targets.

Efficient Operations

- Develop Infrastructure Improvement Plan to meet future demands.
- Develop Infrastructure Expansion Financial Plan.
- Create Street Improvement Strategy.
- Develop Comprehensive Technology Strategy.
- Develop Outage Management System.

Financial Sustainability

- Create Closure Strategy for Existing TID.
- Update current Comprehensive Financial Policy based on GFOA guidelines.
- Create a Levy Strategy.
- Create a New TIF Strategy.
- Create a Commercial / Industrial Key Sites Development Plan.
- Develop a new RLF Marketing Program.

Enhanced Quality of Life

- Develop Comprehensive Housing Strategy.
- Develop Residential Key Sites Marketing Plan.
- Create a Public Safety Training Program.
- Create a Web-based City Newsletter.
- Develop a City of Plymouth Outreach Strategy.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

- Update Hiring Practices and Procedures.
- Implement Referral Tracking System.
- Create Employee Satisfaction Survey.
- Create a Benefit Enhancement Strategy.
- Create an Employee Recognition Program.

Strategic Plan Participants

The City of Plymouth Strategic Plan was developed with the hard work of many individuals. The Common Council focused time and attention to the process of understanding key data, confirming the vision and mission for the city, and then working collaboratively to determine the strategic priorities and resulting outcomes that are most important to their community stakeholders.

The City's senior staff supported the City's elected officials and offered an operations perspective, as well as their professional subject matter expertise. All participants were enthusiastic about the process and committed to creative and innovative thinking to establish the outcomes that would most benefit Plymouth.

Plymouth Elected Officials

Donald Pohlman, Mayor
Angie Matzdorf, Council
Bob Schilsky, Council
Dave Herrmann, Council
Diane Gilson, Council
Greg Hildebrand, Council
Jeff Tauscheck, Council
John Nelson, Council
Mike Penkwitz, Council

Plymouth City Staff

Anna V. Voigt, City Clerk
Cathy Austin, Public Works Director
Leah Federwisch, HR Specialist
Ryan T. Roehrborn, Electric Operations Manager
Ryan Pafford, Fore Chief
Leslie Jochman, Library Director
David Augustin, IT Manager
Chris Russo, Finance Director
Ken Ruggles, Police Chief
Ryan Suemnicht, GIS Specialist
Timothy Blakeslee, City Administrator / Utilities Manager

Respectfully Submitted,

Cory Poris Plasch
President
CP² Consulting, Inc.