



Appendix A: Existing Conditions

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission prepared this appendix as part of the "*Plymouth Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines Project Recommendations*" report.

Draft: December 2022

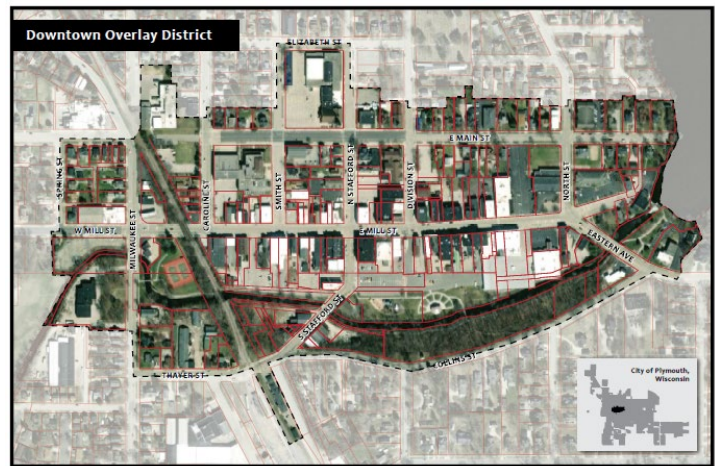
Downtown Plymouth: Assessment of Existing Conditions

To help inform the direction of the downtown design project (and any resulting recommendations), the BLRPC documented a baseline of existing conditions to learn what is currently working well and what could be improved upon in the downtown planning area (see Exhibit 1).

1. METHODS

The BLRPC evaluated existing conditions through site visits, conversations with City of Plymouth staff and Ad-Hoc Committee members, and the review of relevant planning documents. Documents reviewed as part of this project are summarized below.

Exhibit 1. Downtown Planning Area



- **Plymouth Comprehensive Plan (2021 – 2022).** The BLRPC is concurrently developing a 20-year comprehensive plan for the City of Plymouth. The comprehensive plan will guide planning and development decision over the next 20 years. Public input received during this planning process has helped to explain the community's desires for its downtown. These findings can shape the direction and/or recommendations of Plymouth's downtown design project.
- **Mullet River Corridor Study (2015).** MSA Professional Services, Inc. prepared a study in cooperation with the City of Plymouth to (among other objectives) evaluate "the costs and benefits of implementing a number of infrastructure improvement projects along Mullet River in the Downtown." Many, but not all, of the recommended actions in this study have been implemented.
- **Plymouth, WI Downtown Design Guidelines (2013).** Pfaller Architectural Associates, Inc. developed Plymouth's existing downtown design guidelines for the Plymouth Redevelopment Authority. The document identified the boundaries for a downtown overlay district; defined key design, administrative, and regulatory terms and concepts; established guidance for site design and building design elements; and created procedures and an application for design review. Any design standard recommendations, established as part of this project, can build off this document.

- **Plymouth Downtown Revitalization Master Plan (2002).** Downtown Professionals Network, in association with Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. developed Plymouth's downtown revitalization plan for the City of Plymouth, the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, and the Plymouth Advancement Association. The intent of the plan was to help establish Plymouth's downtown as a "charming and pedestrian-friendly business district." Following a downtown audit and market analysis, the plan established a set of objectives and a strategy to encourage redevelopment and revitalization that would achieve the community's vision for the area (copied in the sidebar to the right).
- **Zoning Map and Ordinance (existing).** The City of Plymouth's current regulatory framework to control physical development is its zoning map and zoning ordinance. These tools work by assigning each parcel in Plymouth with a district zone (e.g., R2 – Single Family and B3 – Business Highway). The zoning map displays the location of each zone. Properties located in a particular zone must adhere to a set of specific requirements. These requirements are listed in the City of Plymouth's zoning ordinance (Title 13 of Plymouth's Municipal Codes). Many requirements are specific to a certain zone, some are specific to a particular area (which may be composed of multiple zones), and some are mandated for the entire city. This project will evaluate zoning requirements that fall within the downtown planning area to better understand the planning area's existing regulatory environment.

The Community's Vision for Downtown

"Downtown Plymouth will be known in the future as a vibrant, friendly, and inviting center of community life – the "soul" of this proud and energetic city. Downtown will be celebrated as the place where people create and relive warm memories that last a lifetime.

Restored historic buildings, an attractive streetscape, alluring links to the Mullet River, and inviting parks and public spaces will intertwine to provide a charming and unique background against which the bustling activity of downtown life plays out.

Sidewalks will be teeming with visitors and shoppers frequenting an array of exceptional retail establishments, service businesses, and professional offices. Shoppers will take time out to dine at downtown restaurants, refresh themselves with sidewalk cafes, stroll along the Mullet Riverwalk, and enjoy downtown's recreational amenities. The streets stay alive at night as young and old alike intermingle between the downtown's exceptional dining and vibrant entertainment offerings.

People from all walks of life will choose to live in this active center of community life. Residents and visitors alike will be excited to spend an hour, an afternoon, or a day discovering the many things to see and do in Downtown Plymouth."

Source: Plymouth Downtown Revitalization Master Plan.

2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PROJECT

This section summarizes the assessment of existing conditions in the downtown planning area (see Section 3 for more details). It is intended to highlight specific conditions of the planning area that warrant discussion.

Exhibit 2. Summary of Existing Conditions and Project Considerations

Existing Condition	Considerations
<p>Walkability: The downtown planning area is very walkable, with a wide variety of shops, business services, parks, public buildings, and entertainment options in proximity. However, individuals who are less familiar with downtown may not be taking advantage of the entire district.</p>	<p>Strategic streetscape interventions can improve walkability, how the downtown is used, and how long people stay in the downtown area when visiting. As one example, distinguishable crosswalks in the planning area (e.g., colored/patterned) can provide the visual cue to pedestrians that they are in a “special” place, and there is more to the district than E Mill Street. Getting visitors and residents to see the entire district as a destination (including W. Mill Street, Main Street, the area around Veterans Memorial Park/ Easter Avenue, and Collins Street) can add life to the district, encourage visitor spending at more local businesses, and promote increased use of downtown parks and Veterans Memorial Trail.</p>
<p>Parking areas: Off-street parking requirements are more relaxed in the downtown’s B2 and CB zones. A parking study, conducted in 2002, indicated that parking in the planning area was sufficient. A parking occupancy study conducted in 2015 concluded that there was an over supply of parking in the downtown area.</p>	<p>Given the sufficiency (and potential over supply of parking) in the district, several existing parking lots in the district may be ripe for redevelopment to a more productive use. It would be important to have design standards in place before those areas redevelop to ensure new buildings fit the desired character of downtown.</p>
<p>Building setbacks and orientation: The planning area is primarily built out, and most of the downtown contains a strong building to street edge.</p> <p>Buildings (rear sides) which face the Mullet River and Stayer Junior Park may warrant improvement. Here, rear setbacks of buildings are not uniform. Some of these buildings offer rear entrances while other buildings use their back area for storage or personal use. The mismatch in use means attention to maintenance and design is inconsistent. In addition, it becomes</p>	<p>The City of Plymouth may want to work with the property owners of buildings adjacent to the Mullet River and Stayer Junior Park to work on ways to improve urban form. Options to improve these spaces might include the implementation of fencing, landscaping, colored pavement, and decks/patios to establish a stronger edge.</p>

Existing Condition	Considerations
unclear where public parking stops, and private property begins.	
Varying zoning rules: Plymouth's current regulatory framework in the planning area varies between seven zones (which do not prescribe rules about building aesthetics). Existing downtown design guidelines currently lack teeth and are not codified in Plymouth's zoning ordinance.	An overlay district for the planning area could be established to provide a secondary, but consistent, regulatory and design framework for the area.
Architecture and facades: Building facades in the district are generally well-designed, although some buildings more architecturally significant than others.	Requiring certain design features can help to ensure buildings in the planning area complement each other (as well as the existing historic character of the area). Stringent design standards are more likely to create a strong identity for the area, however, design improvements would come at a greater cost to property owners.
Building materials: Building materials vary in the planning area but largely include brick, traditional siding, stone, and stucco.	Plymouth can require specific materials as the primary materials for street-facing exterior walls, with more flexibility on building sides that are less visible. Materials standards are relevant if Plymouth adopts architectural standards because building materials help to create cohesion and they can break up elongated walls and building stories.
Infill and redevelopment: The planning areas has very limited vacant lots or underused spaces that can benefit from infill and redevelopment. This suggests that building design improvements will occur when property owners renovate or rehabilitate their properties.	Implementing design standards could help to ensure that new development and redevelopment of underused spaces and buildings is completed in a way that fits with the community's vision for the area.
Pedestrian amenities: The district contains pedestrian amenities including public seating, sidewalk lighting, trash receptacles, a public restroom, etc. Although space is limited, some businesses maintain displays or seating outside of their storefronts on the sidewalk.	Plymouth could establish a parklet program which would allow private business owners to establish platforms on the curbside and on-street parking areas to provide for more pedestrian space, to use for outdoor dining, to create displays, etc.

Existing Condition	Considerations
<p>Limited public funding: Money is needed to support beautification and design projects. However, Plymouth's existing sign and façade improvement grant programs lack funding, and the award amounts are not sufficient to incentive the desired design improvements that property owner were not already intending to make.</p>	<p>One or more funding sources should be established for the district to funnel dollars into existing grant programs. The City of Plymouth can continue to seek grant funding for major projects as well, however, the pursuit of grants (and grant management procedures – if the grant is received) would require staff time which may not be readily available.</p>
<p>Maintenance and beautification: Some areas of the district could benefit from beautification projects. These areas include the area under the parking ramp, the sides of buildings oriented toward the river, some alleyways, and some exterior-front building facades. Beautification projects in these areas fall more on the “nice to have” side of the spectrum, rather than the “maintain health and safety” side.</p>	<p>Identifying a selection of beautification projects to implement into the future can help enhance the quality of life and identify of the planning area.</p>
<p>Potential, future projects: The City of Plymouth continues to consider new project ideas and public investments in the downtown area.</p>	<p>Example projects may include the City of Plymouth “donating” some public parking stalls for the electric vehicle charging stations and redeveloping a building north of Stayer Park into an open-air park shelter.</p>

3. DOCUMENTATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section documents the details of BLRPC's evaluation and assessment of existing conditions of the downtown Plymouth planning area ("planning area").

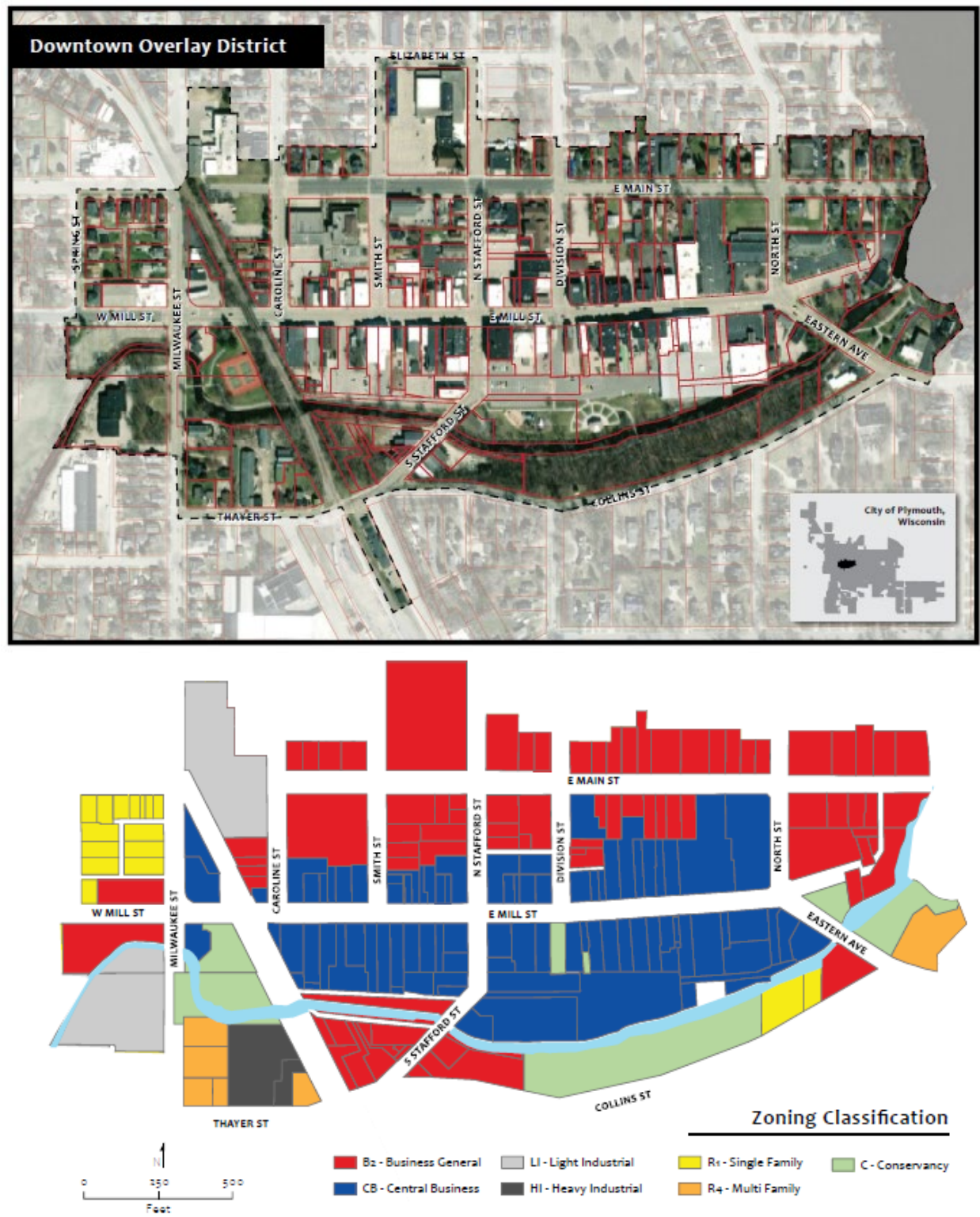
3.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLANNING AREA

To orient the reader, this section describes a few, general characteristics of the planning area.

- **Geographic Area:** The planning area is centrally located in Plymouth and bounded by E Main Street to the north, Collins Street to the south, Mill Pond and Veterans Memorial Trail to the east, and Spring Street/Milwaukee Street to the west (see Exhibit 3). The planning area is composed of 162 parcels (which comprise 42.17 acres). The Mullet River carves through the southern portion of the planning area from Mill Pond out toward Milwaukee Street.
- **Ownership:** Of the planning area's 162 parcels, 28 parcels are owned by the City of Plymouth (17 percent) and 134 parcels are privately owned or owned by a non-profit (83 percent).
- **Redevelopment Potential:** The BLRPC assessed redevelopment potential¹ in the planning area. Since the planning area is predominately built out (except for parcels used for parking lots or parcels which are zoned for conservation), very little land presents redevelopment opportunities (i.e., less than five acres).
- **Property Values:** As of 2020, the entire assessed value of the planning area was about \$20,435,800.

¹ This analysis defined redevelopable parcels as parcels which (1) are greater than 0.1 acres; (2) have land values greater than their improvement values; (3) are not currently vacant; and (4) are zoned for commercial, industrial, or multifamily residential uses. Parcel data derived from the Sheboygan County Assessor.

Exhibit 3. Downtown Planning Area and Existing Zoning District Characteristics



Source: BLRPC using 2021 parcel data from Sheboygan County, 2017 data from the City of Plymouth's approved zoning map, and area boundaries determined in Plymouth, WI Downtown Design Guidelines (2013).

3.2 EXISTING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

This section assesses components of Plymouth's zoning ordinance. It focuses on allowed and non-conforming uses, development standards, and parking requirements in Plymouth's Central Business (CB), Business General (B2), Conservancy (C), Heavy Industrial (HI), Light Industrial (LI), Single Family Residential (R2), and Multifamily Residential (R4) zones. The BLRPC assessed these zones as they are the seven zoning districts located in the planning area (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 4 shows that about 74 percent of the planning area is zoned for commercial uses (CB and B2), 14 percent is zoned for conservation purposes (C), eight percent is zoned for industrial uses (HI and LI), and five percent is zoned for residential uses (R2 and R4).

Exhibit 4. Zoning-based Land Characteristics, Planning Area

Zoning District	Number of Parcels	Total Acreage	Share of Acreage
CB – Central Business	85	18.72	44%
B2 – Business General	57	12.34	29%
C – Conservation	8	5.70	14%
HI – Heavy Industrial	2	1.38	3%
LI – Light Industrial	2	2.10	5%
R2 – Single Family	3	0.73	2%
R4 – Multifamily	5	1.20	3%
Total	162	42.17	100%

Source: BLRPC using 2021 parcel data from Sheboygan County and 2017 data from the City of Plymouth's approved zoning map.

Allowed and Non-Conforming Uses

Zoning ordinances define **allowed uses** to limit land use conflicts and to support planning goals. Downtowns are typically purposed to attract people and consumers to the area on a regular basis. They do this by restricting certain uses that are not compatible for a downtown, by encouraging active ground floor uses (e.g., markets, salons, cafes) in the downtown core, and by promoting a close-knit building environment that limits large gaps or expansive parking along prime street frontage. Communities are sometimes stricter about the types of uses that are allowed in high activity areas of the downtown. In Plymouth's case, this would be Mill Street (between North Street and Caroline Street). Transitioning away from the high activity area, a wider variety of uses may be allowed.

Exhibit 5 presents a summary of the allowed uses in the zones that comprise the planning area. For a full list of allowed uses (including conditionally allowed uses), refer to Plymouth's zoning ordinance.

Non-conforming uses are uses that were once allowed, but requirements have since changed and the use became "grandfathered" in. A non-conforming use is technically legal, but it only remains legal if it is not extended, enlarged, reconstructed, moved, or structurally altered. It may, however, be repaired if the damage was caused by wind, vandalism, fire, flood, ice, snow, mold, or infestation.

As an example, gas stations are typically discouraged from downtown cores because they cater primarily to the automobile, they can be unsightly, and/or they may generate pass-through trips only. The planning area contains a Mobil Gas Station at the corner of Division Street and East Mill Street and an Amoco station at the corner of E Mill Street and N Milwaukee Street. Both stations are non-conforming uses, as they are not currently allowed in the CB zone.

Underused spaces and buildings are not technically non-conforming, but they are important to highlight, nonetheless. They include parking lots, vacant buildings, and vacant lots (see examples within the planning area in Exhibit 6). In the future, these spaces may be developed or redeveloped. It would be important to have the desired zoning and design

Exhibit 5. Summary of Allowed Uses, Planning Area

Zoning District	Allowed Uses
CB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lodging Professional offices Retail, services, and restaurants Amusement, theaters, museums Government buildings Medical buildings Residential uses (above ground floor) Telephone and utility buildings
B2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lodging Professional offices Retail, services, and restaurants Amusement, theaters, museums Government buildings Medical buildings Residential dwellings Telephone and utility buildings
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive recreational and fishing uses Environmental conservation activities Parks and preserves Dams, power stations, transmission lines
HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automotive uses Cleaning, pressing, and dyeing Commercial bakeries and greenhouses Processing, distribution, storage, warehousing, and wholesaling Laboratories Heavy industrial and manufacturing
LI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light industrial and manufacturing
R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential uses (single-family only) Museums Government buildings Telephone and utility buildings
R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential uses Museums Government buildings Telephone and utility buildings Medical buildings

Source: Plymouth Zoning Ordinance, Title 13, Article C.

standards in place before development/redevelopment occurs to ensure these spaces align with the community's vision for the area.

Exhibit 6. Underutilized Spaces in the Planning Area



This parking lot is currently located in a commercial (B2) zone.



This vacant building is currently located in an industrial (I1) zone.



This parking lot is currently located in a commercial (B2) zone.

Source: BLRPC. Top to bottom: parking lot adjacent to Mullet River, vacant building along S Milwaukee St, and parking strip adjacent to Mill Pond.

Development Standards

Development standards dictate the size and location of structures in relation to the lot. Key development standards within the planning area are summarized below and in Exhibit 7.

- **Setbacks:** Building setbacks vary between zones. In the commercial core (CB and B2 zoned areas) buildings may border the street (i.e., there is no minimum setback standard), there are no maximum setbacks, and no requirements for side setbacks (which help enable a continuous street frontage). Setbacks are more flexible around the downtown commercial core.
- **Height:** Plymouth is a small city. Buildings in the planning area are primarily limited to three stories (45 ft) in height.
- **Building Orientation:** Plymouth's zoning code does not regulate building entrances. However, as a best practice, in downtown areas, buildings should all be oriented toward the street or toward intersections if the building is situated on a corner.

Plymouth's 2013 design guidelines discuss the importance of front entrances and visible points of entry. The guidelines also mention that some buildings may warrant rear and side entrances (with appropriate walkways), and some buildings may benefit from "double fronting" (a front entrance and a rear or side entrance). Given the location of the Mullet River in the planning area, the 2013 design guidelines also noted that buildings could benefit from orienting toward the street as well as the river. To accomplish this, the rear entry point (facing the river) would need to be as attractive and inviting as the front entrance.

Exhibit 7. Development Standards for Principal Structures

Zoning District	Setbacks			Maximum Height
	Front	Rear	Side	
CB	No min. or max.	No min. or max.	No min. or max.	45 ft
B2	No min. or max.	No min. or max.	No min. or max.	45 ft
C	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
HI	40 ft min. and no max.	40 ft min. and no max.	30 ft min. and no max.	45 ft (80 ft with conditional use permit)
LI	25 ft min. and no max.	40 ft min. and no max.	20 ft min. and no max.	35 ft
R2	30 ft min. and no max.	25 ft min. and no max.	9 ft min. and no max.	35 ft
R4	30 ft min. and no max.	25 ft min. and no max. (40 ft min. if adjacent to R1, R2, or R3)	15 ft min. and no max.	45 ft

Source: Plymouth Zoning Ordinance, Title 13, Article C.

Parking Requirements

Parking availability is a critical component of a successful downtown. Too little parking and too much parking (including too much parking in the wrong spot) can lead to problems. Requiring private off-street parking should always be done strategically as it will typically be accommodated in the form of surface parking lots which can lead to unattractive gaps in a downtown area.

In Plymouth, off-street parking requirements (Exhibit 8) are triggered for: new buildings, existing buildings (when the intensity of use or building size is increased), and any building which is converted to a different use (note: B2 and CB zones are exempt from this provision).

Exhibit 8. Off-Street Parking Requirements

Use	Parking Requirement
Residential Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2 spaces per dwelling unit (or 1 space per dwelling unit for senior multifamily housing)
Hotels Motels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 stall per guest room + 1 space for each employee
Hospitals, lodges, boarding houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 space for each bed
Rest, assisted living, nursing homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 space for 2 beds
Medical and dental clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 spaces for each doctor
Churches, theaters, banquet halls, restaurants, places of public assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 space for 2 seats
Retail stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 space per 125 SF of retail floor area
Office buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 space for each 250 SF of office space
Manufacturing plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 space for each employee in the most populous shift of employment
Unlisted uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Same as a similar use or determined by Plan Comm.
Combined uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compute each space separately, and add together

Source: Plymouth Zoning Ordinance, SEC.13-1-92(g).

The 2002 Downtown Revitalization Plan cited that the supply of public parking in the downtown was adequate based on current uses and demands. An updated evaluation of the sufficiency of parking was not conducted in this project, however, there does appear to be a range of parking options available in the district (on-street, public, and private). The most prominent areas for public parking are on-street parking options, the parking structure adjacent to E Mill Street, and the parking lot behind between the Mullet River and the buildings fronting E Mill Street.

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the built environment of the planning area. The built environment refers to aspects of the planning area which are man-made (e.g., buildings, parks, sidewalks, transportation routes, etc.).

- **Landmarks:** While the Mullet River is the primary (natural) landmark for the district, other notable landmarks include the gateway located on Eastern Avenue and the cow located on S Milwaukee Street. There are multiple, prominently known buildings in the district that may serve as landmarks as well. These buildings include City Hall, the library, and the Plymouth Art's Center.
- **Streets and alleys:** E Mill Street is the primary corridor defining the planning area. It contains two lanes of traffic and on-street parking on both sides of the street. Several streets intersect E Mill Street, providing north/south connections.

The planning area also contains multiple alleys and passageways between buildings. Many of them lead to parking areas behind buildings. Many of these alleys are viewable from E Mill Street. Exhibit 9 presents a few examples of these alleys to show how maintenance levels vary.

- **Public spaces:** The planning area contains ample park and public space including the tennis courts at S Milwaukee and E Mill Street, Stayer Junior Park, a plaza at the Caroline and E Mill Street intersection, Veteran's Memorial Park, Veteran's Memorial Trail, and a dog park (behind the planning area's parking structure). These spaces are well linked but improved wayfinding signage could increase usage and connectivity. Comments from a community survey for Plymouth's 2022-2042 Comprehensive Plan indicated that Veteran's Memorial Trail could also be more inviting.
- **Urban form:** E Mill Street is the planning area's high activity corridor. Buildings on this street are appropriately close knit. Few gaps in the urban fabric exist on E Mill Street. Building heights range from single to three stories and generally transition well. Buildings along E Main Street and other north/south

Exhibit 9. Example Alleys in the Planning Area



Source: BLRPC.

oriented streets in the planning area contain buildings that are much less closely knit (i.e., the urban fabric contains more gaps to accommodate parking lots abutting the street). Accordingly, some visual continuity is lost as one leaves E Mill Street and enters other areas of the planning area.

Building setbacks along E Mill Street are uniform, which gives the appearance of a clean edge (see delineation in green in Exhibit 10). In rare cases, there are breaks in the setback pattern (see delineation with red lines), however, these breaks are often mitigated with landscaping and/or public seating areas (see blue polygons) to provide the illusion of uniformity. Rear building setbacks (i.e., building sides facing the Mullet River) are disjointed (see delineation with yellow lines), delivering a chaotic impression. The implementation of urban design, landscaping, and other streetscaping interventions can help create the illusion of building uniformity in this area.

Exhibit 10. A Review of Building Setbacks in a Portion of the Planning Area



Source: BLRPC's annotations on Google Earth satellite imagery.

- **Architecture:** The planning area contains Plymouth's historic district meaning many of the buildings in the planning area are historically significant as well as architecturally intriguing. Some examples of prominent architectural features that stand out in the district include cornices (e.g., decorative, finished edges of roofs where it meets the exterior wall), double hung second story windows, recessed entries.

Some buildings present a humbler style. However, these buildings tend to still encompass basic architectural design features including display windows and/or upper story windows, sign bands, and vertical and horizontal detailing to break up facades.

Building facades are generally higher quality facing Mill Street. However, the facades of buildings facing the river / Stayer Jr Park, tend to decline in quality.

As buildings are renovated or redeveloped in the future, design standards or guidelines can help guide development toward a specific style. However, stringent parameters can have the unintended consequence of making renovations too costly to take on.

- **Pedestrian-oriented design and amenities:** Pedestrian-oriented design features and amenities make walking through an area more pleasant. These features and amenities typically include lighting and signs at heights which are appropriate for pedestrians, ample window coverage on building facades, weather protection devices like awnings, building materials used to intentionally break up elongated buildings or walls, the consistent placement of benches and trash receptacles, and the appropriate placement of curb ramps and marked crosswalks.

While not every building in the planning area encompasses every pedestrian-oriented design feature, an assessment of the planning area's high activity corridor (E Mill Street) finds that a suitable supply of these features is present. For

Exhibit 11. Example Architectural Styles in the Planning Area



Source: BLRPC.

example, some buildings do not have pedestrian-oriented lighting, but light poles have been implemented to illuminate the street/sidewalk. Not all buildings have awnings or entrance coverings, however, this element is not integral to downtown Plymouth's identity. Importantly, most of the buildings encompass substantial window coverage and building materials are distinguished enough to break up storefront walls and street blocks.

Furthermore, a range of public seating areas and benches exist in the planning area overall (in parks, in front of select stores, in front of public buildings, and at the Arts Center). The planning area includes a few trash receptacles along Mill Street and in public parks. Crosswalk marking could be improved; however, simple, white crosswalk lines are painted at many intersections and crosswalk pop up signs are present at key intersections.

- **Building materials:** Exterior materials on buildings will influence the feel of the area. For instance, materials can add or detract from a community's desired identity. Building materials in the planning area vary widely but primarily contain brick, traditional siding, stone, and stucco. Despite variations in the materials used throughout the planning area, there are enough similarities such that no single building serves as a major detractor. Some buildings, however, encompass both high quality materials and an architectural style that heightens their appeal when compared to other buildings in the area (e.g., The Fig and The Pheasant building and Cheese Counter building).
- **Beautification:** Beautification is about making visual improvements to an area through landscaping, maintenance, décor, etc. The implementation of a cohesive beautification scheme can help to establish a common theme for an idea, can enhance the pedestrian environment, and can help to increase visitation and tourism. Exhibit 13 shows some examples of existing beautification elements in the planning area. Exhibit 14 shows certain elements that may be detracting from the area (which could

Exhibit 12. Example Building Materials in the Planning Area



Source: BLRPC.

potentially benefit from beautification). Development efforts paired with beautification efforts, can make a huge impact in the feel and function of an area. For example, in recent years, the community and several key partners invested in constructing Stayer Park, repaving the adjacent parking area, and putting power lines underground.

Exhibit 13. Beautification Elements in the Planning Area



Source: BLRPC.

Exhibit 14. Opportunities for Beautification in the Planning Area



Source: BLRPC.

3.4 EXISTING LOCAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Plymouth offers the following funding opportunities:

- **Sign and Façade Grant Program:** The City of Plymouth offers sign and façade improvement grants to eligible applicants. Sign grants are limited to 50 percent of the total cost and up to a maximum of \$250. Façade grants are limited to 50 percent of the total cost, and up to a maximum of \$1,000. The City of Plymouth has awarded some Sign or Façade Improvement Grants, but the program is underutilized due to lack of funding. Further, while the application process is not an extensive, award amounts are not likely to incentive property owners to make improvements. They can, however, help offset some of the costs for projects that property owners were going to pursue regardless of the grant program.
- **Revolving Loan Fund Program:** The City of Plymouth offers low interest loans, equity capital, and grants to help property owners locate, maintain, and/or expand existing operations in the Plymouth.
 - *Low Interest Loan Program.* The loan program is intended to serve as leverage for applicants to secure private capital sources. Repayment would involve a similar process to a traditional bank loan (with scheduled payments at regular intervals).
 - *Equity Capital.* The equity capital option provides applicants with direct investments. Repayment is based on the profitability of the business. The City of Plymouth would maintain a share of the business, and the business would reacquire that share when financially feasible.
 - *Grants.* The grant program is available for select projects such as removing public facility constraints (e.g., utility extensions).