

Northeastern University  
Dukakis Center *for* Urban & Regional Policy

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL (EDSAT)

**EDSAT REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF  
PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS  
NOVEMBER 2016**



## THE PARTNERS

### **About the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy**

The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University conducts interdisciplinary research, in collaboration with civic leaders and scholars both within and beyond Northeastern University, to identify and implement real solutions to the critical challenges facing urban areas throughout Greater Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the nation. Founded in 1999 as a “think and do” tank, the Dukakis Center’s collaborative research and problem-solving model applies powerful data analysis, a bevy of multidisciplinary research and evaluation techniques, and a policy-driven perspective to address a wide range of issues facing cities and towns. These issues include affordable housing, local economic development, workforce development, transportation, public finance, and environmental sustainability. The staff of the Dukakis Center works to catalyze broad-based efforts to solve urban problems, acting as both a convener and a trusted and committed partner to local, state, and national agencies and organizations. The Dukakis Center is housed within Northeastern University’s School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs.

### **About the National League of Cities**

The National League of Cities is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for more than 1,600 member cities and the 49 state municipal leagues, representing 19,000 cities and towns and more than 218 million Americans. Through its Center for Research and Innovation, NLC provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences, and learn about innovative approaches to urban governance.

For additional information about the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT), please visit <http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/econdev/edsat> or contact:

#### **Catherine Tumber, Ph.D.**

Northeastern University  
Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy  
310 Renaissance Park  
360 Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA 02115  
617-373-7868 (v)  
617-373-7905 (f)  
[c.tumber@neu.edu](mailto:c.tumber@neu.edu)

#### **Christiana McFarland**

Center for Research and Innovation  
National League of Cities  
1301 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20004  
202-626-3036 (v)  
[mcfarland@nlc.org](mailto:mcfarland@nlc.org)

Report authors: Grace Ndalla-Watino and Catherine Tumber

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
Project Overview .....	1
Methodology .....	1
SUMMARY OF RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES .....	4
Plymouth’s Strengths and Potential “Deal-Makers” .....	4
Plymouth’s Weaknesses and Potential “Deal-Breakers” .....	6
DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS.....	7
Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets.....	9
Section 2: Concentration of Businesses (Agglomeration).....	13
Section 3: Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit) .....	17
Section 4: Labor.....	21
Section 5: Municipal Process.....	23
Section 6: Quality of Life (Community) .....	28
Section 7: Quality of Life (Site).....	30
Section 8: Business Incentives.....	31
Section 9: Tax Rates.....	33
Section 10: Access to Information.....	35
NEXT STEPS.....	38

Page intentionally left blank.

## INTRODUCTION

A robust, sustainable, and adaptable local economy depends heavily on public officials who can lead in forming and implementing an economic development strategy. A thorough strategy is developed with an understanding of local business interests and regional resource availability, and a careful assessment of the community's ability to attract new business investment and jobs. Participating in the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) is an important step public officials can take to assess their jurisdictions'<sup>1</sup> strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of planning for viable, long-term economic growth. Through EDSAT, public officials and business leaders collaborate as a team, assessing each of their roles in creating a business-friendly climate.

By participating in this self-assessment, Plymouth will not simply better understand its economic development assets and challenges, but learn to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. This report contains a thorough analysis of the responses provided by Plymouth to the EDSAT questionnaire.

**The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy will keep all individual-municipality results in this report strictly confidential.**

### Project Overview

Since 2005, Northeastern University's Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (Dukakis Center) has sought to identify the "deal-breakers" that impede private investment in local municipalities. Based upon research on the resurgence of older industrial cities, the Dukakis Center has identified two crucial elements in economic development. First is a municipality's ability to respond opportunely to ever-changing market forces. Second is local government's skill in working collaboratively with regional agencies, business leaders, and academic institutions to lessen municipal weaknesses and market the city or town's strengths. These conclusions led to the development of EDSAT, an analytical framework for providing practical, actionable feedback to public officials. In its current form, EDSAT resulted from a partnership between the Dukakis Center and the National League of Cities (NLC).

### Methodology

The foundation for the 200-plus questions that make up the EDSAT questionnaire was established when the Dukakis Center surveyed more than 240 members of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, now known as NAIOP and CoreNet Global. These leading professional associations represent site and location experts, whose members research new sites for businesses and other institutions. Members were asked to identify those factors that are most important to businesses and developers when evaluating locations. This process generated a set of 38 broad factors relevant to economic growth and development. Examples include highway access, available workforce, and the timeliness of permit reviews. Based on rankings by these location experts, EDSAT factors are identified as *Very Important*, *Important*, or *Less Important* to businesses and developers. We denote these rankings as follows: A filled circle (●) indicates *Very Important*, a half-filled circle (◐) indicates *Important*, and an unfilled circle (○) indicates *Less Important*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jurisdictions are usually categorized as individual towns and/or cities. A "jurisdiction" can also consist of several small municipalities, a geographic region, or a county—as long as each plans and strategizes its economic development efforts as a single entity.

## RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EDSAT LOCATION FACTORS

<p><b>Very Important</b> ●</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway Access</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Traffic</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Rents</li> <li>• Workforce Composition</li> <li>• Timeliness of Approvals</li> <li>• Website/Access to Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of Available Space</li> <li>• Land</li> <li>• Labor Cost</li> <li>• Industry Sensitivity</li> <li>• Sites Available</li> <li>• Predictable Permits</li> <li>• Fast Track Permits</li> <li>• Citizen Participation in the Review Process</li> <li>• Cultural and Recreational Amenities</li> <li>• Crime</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Local Schools</li> <li>• Amenities</li> <li>• State Business Incentives</li> <li>• Local Business Incentives</li> <li>• Local Tax Rates</li> <li>• Tax Delinquency</li> </ul>	<p><b>Less Important</b> ○</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airports</li> <li>• Rail</li> <li>• Water Transportation</li> <li>• Proximity to Universities and Research</li> <li>• Unions</li> <li>• Workforce Training</li> <li>• Permitting Ombudsman</li> </ul>
<p><b>Important</b> ◐</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Transit</li> <li>• Physical Attractiveness</li> <li>• Complementary / Supplemental Business Services</li> <li>• Critical Mass Firms</li> <li>• Cross Marketing</li> <li>• Marketing Follow-Up</li> </ul>		

Each question in EDSAT addresses a particular location factor and provides three ways to interpret that factor relative to the response in your own community:

1. The level of importance businesses and developers place on that location factor
2. How other jurisdictions participating in EDSAT have typically responded to that question
3. How your jurisdiction's response compares to the typical response and the importance of the location factor

The EDSAT analysis compares your jurisdiction's responses with those of Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM)—that is, all of the jurisdictions that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire. With regard to the Permitting Process, for example, your jurisdiction may offer significantly shorter review times than the CGM. In this case, the EDSAT analysis suggests that on this measure your jurisdiction may possess a relative advantage in what is a *Very Important* location factor. However, if permit reviews take significantly longer, then your jurisdiction may be at a disadvantage, because businesses are interested in “time-to-market”—the time it takes to get up and running in an ever-increasingly competitive environment.

EDSAT assigns a color code to highlight the results of your jurisdiction compared to the median response among the CGM. Colors—green, yellow, and red—indicate a municipality's relative strength on each specific location factor. Green indicates that your jurisdiction is quantitatively or qualitatively stronger than the CGM response; yellow indicates that your jurisdiction is average or typical; and red indicates a relative deficiency.

**SAMPLE RESULT, DRAWN FROM SECTION 1: ACCESS TO MARKETS/CUSTOMERS**

<input type="radio"/> <b>E. Airports</b>		
Report of [REDACTED] as compared to all jurisdictions		
Question	[REDACTED]	Comparison Group
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	yes	no

The interaction between the importance of a location factor and your jurisdiction’s relative strength yields powerful information. With respect to businesses and developers, a comparison yielding “red” for a *Very Important* factor represents the potential for a “deal-breaker,” while a comparison resulting in “green” for a *Very Important* factor represents the likelihood of a “deal-maker.” There are several important considerations to keep in mind when reviewing a jurisdiction’s EDSAT results:

1. If your jurisdiction is at a disadvantage in certain *Very Important* location factors, such as possessing a slow permitting process, a workforce that lacks necessary skills, and infrastructure that lacks the capacity to support growth, it is considered to have three distinct “deal-breakers,” regardless of its geographic location.
2. Your jurisdiction should look at its EDSAT results as an overview, and not focus on a particular location factor. One “deal-breaker” does not mean that your jurisdiction should abandon its economic development efforts. At the same time, your jurisdiction cannot rely solely on one or two “deal-makers.” Economic development is a dynamic process and should be managed in such a way that a community continually responds to the changing needs of local and prospective businesses.
3. The interpretation of comparisons and color assignments depends on your jurisdiction’s context in answering the question and its objectives for economic development. For example, if there are significantly more square feet of vacant commercial space than the CGM median, EDSAT assigns “red” because large amounts of space may indicate outdated facilities in a stagnant local economy. However, the empty space may actually be an asset if your jurisdiction is focusing on attracting businesses that would benefit from large spaces, such as a creative mixed-use complex. Thus, your jurisdiction’s context is important in understanding EDSAT results.

For some questions, the red and green color assignments serve to highlight the response for further consideration within the context of your jurisdiction’s objectives and circumstances. Several questions have no comparison at all. They tend to be lists of potential incentives, resources, or regulations associated with the municipality and will be discussed in corresponding sections of the report.

## SUMMARY OF RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This section summarizes Plymouth's primary strengths and weaknesses in the realm of economic development. EDSAT does not provide an overall grade for a jurisdiction, but rather assesses a jurisdiction's unique set of strengths, weaknesses, and economic development objectives.

The Dukakis Center staff create a list of significant or notable responses for each of the *Very Important*, *Important*, and *Less Important* location factors, emphasizing strengths and "deal-makers," which are not organized in any particular order of importance. Dukakis Center staff suggests that your municipality review these lists and use them to highlight, enhance, and market your town's strengths.

Tasks on the weakness and "deal-breaker" lists, however, are prioritized to emphasize the importance of their mitigation. The Dukakis Center staff arranges the tasks according to feasibility, with consideration of the latitude and abilities of local, county, or regional levels of government. For example, in a jurisdiction with limited highway access, building a new highway interchange or connector would likely be cost-prohibitive, time-consuming, and an inefficient use of local resources. However, other tasks are more feasible with modest investments in time and resources. For example, streamlining the permitting process and making related development information readily accessible to both location experts and businesses could be accomplished without significant capital investments. Although location experts rank both highway access and the timeliness of permitting as *Very Important* location factors, in the prioritized list of potential "deal-breakers," the permitting process is given a higher priority due to its feasibility in implementation.

### **Plymouth's Strengths and Potential "Deal-Makers"**

The following three lists of Plymouth's strengths are its powerful economic development assets. The town should build upon these assets and promote them to prospective businesses and developers. Plymouth should first consider those in the *Very Important* group, then the *Important*, and finally the *Less Important* group. Please note that strengths are **not listed in any particular order** within each list.

#### **Strengths among *Very Important* Location Factors**

**TRAFFIC:** Although your town's traffic management is similar to that of the CGM, it appears to perform better, with faster average rush hour speeds.

**WORKFORCE COMPOSITION:** Plymouth's workforce is well-balanced, with a relatively large proportion of technically skilled workers.

**WEBSITE:** Overall, Plymouth's website provides extensive information about the town. Unlike municipalities in the comparison group, your town provides local development policies and procedures, an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers, a list of available land and building sites, and a link to other local development resources. However, since each town department is in charge of updating its own pages, Plymouth's website is updated less frequently than websites among the CGM.

#### **Strengths among *Important* Location Factors**

**PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS:** Plymouth is a physically attractive community thanks to your town's efforts to reserve a large percentage of acreage for parks, your involvement with the arts community in the design of open space, and a low percentage of vacant industrial space.

**COMPLEMENTARY/SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS SERVICES:** In this location factor, Plymouth covers all the bases and slightly outperforms municipalities in the CGM thanks to the vigorous involvement of your regional and local Chambers of Commerce in economic development activities.



**CROSS MARKETING:** Similar to municipalities in the CGM, your town is actively engaged in cross-marketing efforts to attract new firms by participating with regional planning and development organizations and collaborating with state agencies and organizations in marketing efforts.

**LAND:** Your town has a great deal of vacant developable land zoned for commercial/industrial use as well as large-scale commercial development sites.

**SITES AVAILABLE:** Plymouth has an active strategy for reclaiming land banking tax delinquent properties, regularly engages with commercial real estate brokers and developers, and maintains an up-to-date list of sites that are ready for development.

**CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES:** Unlike municipalities in the comparison group, your town offers a variety of recreational and cultural amenities, making it rich in leisure time activities for tourists and residents alike.

**CRIME RATES:** In comparison to the CGM, your town's crime rate is on the lower side across all categories, in homicides and burglaries.

**HOUSING:** Although few major officers of local firms live in Plymouth, your town's homeownership rate is higher than those in the comparison group. In addition, median apartment rental and home sale prices in Plymouth are similar to those in the CGM.

**LOCAL SCHOOLS:** Although a high percentage of your K-12 pupils qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch, Plymouth public schools perform slightly above those in the comparison group. Ninety-five percent of your town's high school student population graduate within five years and 75 percent and above of those graduates went to a four-year college. In addition, unlike the CGM your town is home to charter schools, which brings some variety to the educational mix.

**SITE AMENITIES:** Despite lacking existing development sites for retail shops, fast food restaurants, fine dining, and child care services are available within one mile of most sites.

**LOCAL BUSINESS INCENTIVES:** In comparison with the CGM, Plymouth is actively involved in attracting local, state and federal facilities, securing financing for businesses with commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms, and granting TIFs for retail development.

**LOCAL TAX RATES:** Your town outperforms the CGM by collecting hotel room and meal taxes. Additionally, Plymouth has a unitary tax structure, with industrial, commercial, and residential properties all paying the same rate—although it is higher than that paid in other comparison group municipalities that have a unitary tax policy.

### **Strengths among *Less Important Location Factors***

**RAIL:** Plymouth has a commuter rail station that runs through stops leading to Boston.

**PROXIMITY TO UNIVERSITIES & RESEARCH:** Unlike other municipalities in the CGM, your town is home to two private four-year colleges (although they are satellite campuses without the full complement of programming) and two community colleges.

**WORKFORCE TRAINING:** Similar to the jurisdictions in the comparison group, Plymouth offers a wide variety of training resources including public-private partnerships and adult education programs.

**WATER TRANSPORTATION:** Although Plymouth does not maintain any water transportation facilities at present, your town is pursuing an active strategy to expand fishing, ferry, and public transit services by the year 2020.

## **Plymouth's Weaknesses and Potential "Deal-Breakers"**

Despite many advantages, Plymouth has a number of apparent weaknesses that can pose a challenge to successful development. The factors in the *Very Important* group are the ones that the town should consider addressing first because they are the most critical potential "deal-breakers." Again, the town should next consider those in the *Important* group, and finally those in the *Less Important* group.

Unlike the above itemization of Plymouth's strengths, this three-part list of weaknesses is **arranged in order of priority**. We suggest that, while reviewing this prioritized list of challenges, participants keep in mind Plymouth's economic development objectives and the feasibility (economic and otherwise) of upgrading "deal-breakers" and other weaknesses.

### **Weaknesses among *Very Important* Location Factors**

**TIMELINESS OF APPROVALS:** Overall, your jurisdiction's review processes are far slower than those in the CGM, and thus significantly reduce new or expanding firms' "time to market."

**PARKING:** Although your town has applied for federal parking grants with the intention of creating additional parking spaces, Plymouth is currently unable to meet parking demand, especially among those businesses and residences located in Downtown Plymouth and during peak tourist seasons. In addition, hourly parking rates in your central business district are higher than those in the CGM.

**INFRASTRUCTURE:** Plymouth's infrastructure profile is weak compared to the ones in the CGM. Your town face challenges meeting the current demand for water, water treatment, and public sewer, especially during the summer. In addition, you have limited growth capacity due to a lack of hook-ups and networks needed for a potential expansion.

**RENTS:** Commercial rents are relatively high across all types of properties in both the central and highway business districts.

### **Weaknesses among *Important* Location Factors**

**PREDICTABLE PERMITS:** Similar to the CGM, your town provides a checklist of permitting requirements, but also like them you do not provide a flowchart of the permitting process or a development handbook, nor do you allow for single presentation of development proposals to all review boards and commissions.

**INDUSTRY SENSITIVITY:** Even though Plymouth engages local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of the town, you do not have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, or industry concentrations.

**FAST TRACK PERMITS:** Consistent with municipalities in the comparison group, your town does not market fast track permitting nor do you have an overlay district that allows expedited permitting, own pre-permit developments in certain areas, or hold any publicly or cooperatively owned parks that have their own permitting authority.

**MARKETING FOLLOW-UP:** Similar to the CGM, Plymouth does not have a debriefing process with firms that either chose to locate in your jurisdiction or chose not to. In addition, your town does not have formal procedures for collecting information about existing local firms' level of satisfaction or for tackling existing dissatisfaction.

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW PROCESS:** Unlike municipalities in the comparison group, abutters and neighborhood groups tend to slow the permitting process. In addition, you do not establish a specific time frame and procedure for abutters and neighborhood groups' response in the initial process.

**PUBLIC TRANSIT:** Although Plymouth is accessible via commuter rail, your town does not offer public transit services comparable to those in the CGM. Despite pursuing an active strategy to improve such services, Plymouth is experiencing trouble meeting the demand of college students who currently rely on private modes of transportation, especially during the weekend. In addition, your town offers little transit access within a quarter mile of retail trade, general offices, and manufacturing sites.

**STATE BUSINESS INCENTIVES:** Plymouth is eligible for all of Massachusetts’ special tax incentives, which include investment, job training and R&D tax credits, low subsidized loans, workforce training, and loan guarantees, but your town takes minimal advantage of them.

**CRITICAL MASS FIRMS:** Although Plymouth has an active strategy to attract firms from specific industry types and sectors, your town does not have an aggressive industrial attraction policy.

**LABOR COST:** In comparison to the CGM, your town’s average labor costs are higher, especially for mid-level clerical workers. Yet Plymouth pays its teachers less than the CGM, and site location specialists like to see well-paid teachers in a community for it suggests that the municipality is committed to educating its residents and workforce.

**TAX DELINQUENCY:** Although Plymouth’s proportion of residential, commercial, and industrial properties that are tax delinquent is comparable to those in the CGM, your town does not have a defined process for conducting auctions and ensuring that they are successful nor do you conduct auctions on tax titles in under 5 years.

### **Weaknesses among *Less Important* Location Factors**

**PERMITTING OMBUDSMAN:** Although, your town requires a general license for all businesses, you do not have dedicated local officials or an executive officer empowered to ensure the efficiency of your local permitting process.

**UNIONS:** Unlike jurisdictions in the comparison group, unions in Plymouth exercise some influence due to their significant presence in the local labor market and their involvements in major strikes over the past three years.

**AIRPORTS:** Although Plymouth’s municipal airport serves more than 150 aircraft and corporate jets, the closest major airport, Logan International, is more than 30 miles away. Since the commuter rail gets to Logan only indirectly, automotive transportation is necessary—whether by express bus or car—and requires battling Boston traffic, as the airport is located on the other side of the city.

## **DETAILED ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

The following is a ten-part section-by-section analysis of the EDSAT results comparing Plymouth’s self-reported responses with the median response among the CGM. Each location factor is ranked with three possible symbols: The shaded circle (●) denotes a *Very Important* factor, the half-shaded circle (◐) denotes an *Important* factor, and the unshaded circle (○) denotes a *Less Important* factor.

This ten-part portion of the report—its heart, really—is presented in the same order as the questions listed on the EDSAT questionnaire, with the tabular printout of Plymouth’s results appearing first, and our narrative summary and interpretation of the results appearing second. The tabular results are displayed in four primary groupings of information:

**Group 1** identifies a location factor (such as Highway Access), a circle indicating the relative importance of the location factor, and questions related to the factor that your town has already answered.

**Group 2** shows Plymouth’s responses to the EDSAT questions.

**Group 3** is the median (or majority, for yes/no questions) response among the “comparison group municipalities” (or CGM) that have completed the EDSAT questionnaire.

**Group 4** is a series of green, yellow, or red blocks indicating how Plymouth compares to the CGM. A built-in function in EDSAT allows a municipality to compare itself against a subset of the CGM by other criteria such as population, median income, or size of operating budget. For purposes of this analysis, however, Plymouth is compared with all the CGM.

Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets

**A. Highway Access**

Report of Ludlow as compared to all jurisdictions

Question		Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	75%+
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	75%+
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75%+	75%+
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	yes	yes

**Importance To Market**  
 Very Important   
 Important   
 Less Important

**Your Performance Relative To Peers**  
 Strong   
 Average   
 Weak

Group 1
Group 2
Group 3

Group 4






## Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets

In order to minimize transportation costs and time-to-market, businesses want adequate access to uncongested transportation corridors for their shipping needs, customers, and employees. Highway access, congestion, and parking are *Very Important* factors in location decisions. Public transportation is *Important*, while proximity to airports, rail, and water transport are *Less Important*. The overall physical attractiveness of public spaces, enforcement of codes, and condition of housing and commercial real estate are *Important*, as they are indications of general economic health and quality of life in a community.








### Plymouth MA

October 31, 2016

## Section 1: Access to Customers/Markets








 <b>A. Highway Access</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: What percentage of available sites for retail trade, including your central business district, are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	50-74%		75% or greater
2: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
3: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 2 miles of an entrance or exit to a limited-access major highway?	75% or greater		75% or greater
4: Does your jurisdiction impose weight restrictions on streets or access roads?	no		no

<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---


## B. Public Transit

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
5: What percentage of available sites for retail trade are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		50-74%
6: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		26-49%
7: What percentage of available sites for general office space are within 1/4 mile of public bus or rail rapid transit?	1-25%		50-74%
8: Is there a transit-oriented development strategy in your plans for attracting new firms?	yes		no
9: Is there a commuter rail or bus stop within 5 miles of your jurisdiction's boundaries?	yes		yes
10: Do you offer any shuttle services to other public commuting stations?	yes		no
11: Is public transit service available on nights and weekends?	no		yes

## C. Parking

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What percentage of available sites for retail trade have on-site parking?	50-74%		75% or greater
13: What percentage of available sites for manufacturing have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
14: What percentage of available sites for general office space have on-site parking?	75% or greater		75% or greater
15: Does your jurisdiction offer parking facilities near development sites?	yes		no
16: Have you used state or federal infrastructure grants to improve parking in your jurisdiction?	no		no
17: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Hourly	1/hour		0
18: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Daily	1/hour		0
19: How much is typically charged for parking in your central business district? \$/Monthly	1/hour		\$0

## **D. Traffic**

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
20: Do you have regular access to a traffic engineer or transportation planner, such as one who is on staff or with a regional organization of which your jurisdiction is a member?	yes		yes
21: Do you routinely use the services of a transportation consultant?	yes		yes
22: Do you have access to traffic count data for the major roadways in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
23: Do you require firms or developers to provide traffic mitigation beyond the streets adjacent to the site? (e.g. installing traffic signals, metering flow)	yes		yes
24: How would you rate traffic into and out of your jurisdiction during a typical weekday rush hour?	Moderately congested		Moderately congested
25: What is the average speed of automobile commuter traffic during a typical weekday rush hour?	26 - 35 mph		11 - 25 mph
26: Do you require a traffic impact analysis for large-scale development or redevelopment projects?	yes		yes

### Importance To Market

Very Important  
 Important  
 Less Important

### Your Performance Relative To Peers





Strong  
 Average  
 Weak  
 No Comparison





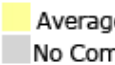


## **E. Airports**












Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
27: Do you have a local (municipal/ general aviation) airport?	yes		no
28: The closest regional airport is how many miles away?	31 miles or more		11-20 miles
29: The closest major/international airport is how many miles away?	31 miles or more		20-30 miles
30: Is the major/international airport accessible by public transportation?	yes		yes
31: How long does it take to drive to the major/international airport from your town center?	61 minutes to 90 minutes		21 minutes to 60 minutes



<b>F. Rail</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
32: Do you have rail freight service available?	no		yes
33: Do you have intercity passenger rail service? Check all that apply.			
- Commuter	yes		no
- Intercity/Interstate(Amtrak)	no		no
- None	no		no

<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---

<b>G. Physical Attractiveness</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
34: To what extent do you enforce codes and regulations on abandoned properties, abandoned vehicles, trash disposal within your jurisdiction?	Moderately		Moderately
35: To what extent does your jurisdiction maintain streets, sidewalks, parks, etc., near available development sites?	Moderately		Moderately
36: Is there a hotline available for reporting code violations and maintenance needs within your jurisdiction?	no		no
37: Is there a system for monitoring the timeliness and quality of responses to reported violations within your jurisdiction?	no		no
38: Do you involve the arts community in the design of open space (street furniture, murals, etc.)?	yes		no
39: What percentage of the acreage within your jurisdiction is reserved for parks?	21% or greater		6-10%
40: What percentage of your housing stock is considered dilapidated?	0-5%		0-5%
41: What percentage of your commercial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
42: What percentage of commercial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	6-10%		6-10%
43: What percentage of your industrial buildings are boarded up or closed down and would need renovations to reopen?	0-5%		0-5%
44: What percentage of industrial space is presently vacant (not currently occupied)?	0-5%		6-10%



<input type="radio"/> <b>H. Water Transportation</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
45: Do you have water based transportation facilities within your jurisdiction? Check all that apply.	Sea port	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None

<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
---	--

## Section 2: Concentration of Businesses (Agglomeration)

Agglomeration refers to the number of complementary and supplemental services and related firms—including academic institutions—that are available within a jurisdiction to support new or existing companies. A concentration of similar or supporting companies creates a critical mass of businesses within an industry, making it easier for that industry to thrive in the local community, regionally, or on the state level. The scale of agglomeration within a jurisdiction can be enhanced by the intensity of its efforts to attract companies, its coordination of marketing plans with regional or state efforts, cross marketing among stakeholder organizations, and follow-up with existing and potential businesses.

<input checked="" type="radio"/> <b>A. Complementary/Supplemental Business Services</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: Is your local chamber of commerce or business association actively involved in the economic development activities of your jurisdiction?	Vigorously	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderately
2: Does your jurisdiction have an active volunteer economic development committee or nonprofit center for economic development?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
3: Is there an incubator or other form of cooperative space for start-up businesses in your jurisdiction?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
4: Are there CPA, business advisory or financial services firms in your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
5: Are there law firms in your jurisdiction specializing in commercial law, intellectual property rights, or patents?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
6: Are there branches of major commercial banks in your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
7: To what extent are the business services (e.g. venture capital, business planning, specialized recruiting, etc.) in your jurisdiction capable of working with emerging technical and scientific firms?	Moderately capable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately capable

<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
---	--



## B. Critical Mass Firms

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
8: Does your jurisdiction have an up-to-date development strategy, an overall economic development plan (OEDP), or an economic development plan within your community master plan?	yes		yes
9: Is your jurisdiction part of a county or regional OEDP or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)?	yes		yes
10: Does your state have a development strategy or economic development plan?	yes		yes
11: If yes, are there firms within specific industry types or sectors that are targeted in your jurisdiction's, your county's or your state's development strategy?	yes		yes
12: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your municipality's development strategy? Other, please specify (Your Municipality)	Travel and Tourism; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare; Other, please specify		
13: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your region/county's development strategy? Other, please specify (Regional/County)	Travel and Tourism; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare; Alternative Energy		

14: If yes, what specific industry types or sectors are targeted by your state's development strategy? (State)	Information Technology; Traditional Manufacturing; Other Life Sciences, including Biotech; Healthcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------

15: Which of the following jurisdictions have development specialists to assist in interpreting the needs of these clusters? (Choose all that apply)

- Your Municipality	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
- Regional/County	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- State	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
16: How aggressive is your industrial attraction policy?	Weak	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate

<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
---	--

**C. Cross Marketing**

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
17: Do you actively enlist the services of firms already resident in your jurisdiction to assist in attracting new firms?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
18: Do you engage local and regional business organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
19: Do you engage regional planning and development organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
20: Do you engage state agencies and organizations to participate in marketing your jurisdiction?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes

**D. Marketing Follow-Up**

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
21: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
22: Is there a formal de-briefing process with firms that chose not to locate in your jurisdiction about what made the difference?	no		no
23: Do you have a formal procedure for contacting existing local firms about their satisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no
24: Do you have a formal procedure for intervening when early news surfaces about firm dissatisfaction with your jurisdiction?	no		no

<b>Importance To Market</b> Very Important     Important     Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> Strong     Average Weak     No Comparison
--	---

**E. Proximity to Universities & Research**








Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions



























Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
25: How many public or private four-year college or universities are located within your jurisdiction?	2		0
26: How many public or private four-year college or universities are located within 10 miles of your jurisdiction?	1		2
27: How many community colleges are located within your jurisdiction?	2		0
28: How many vocational/technical schools are located within your jurisdiction?	1		1













<b>Importance To Market</b> Very Important     Important     Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> Strong     Average Weak     No Comparison
--	---





### Section 3: Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit)

The cost of land to a firm includes two *Very Important* factors: Infrastructure and Rent. Updating civil, utility, and telecommunications infrastructure is costly, and firms do not like to incur these expenses. Therefore, if a municipality does not already have adequate capacity in place, a potential firm could decide to locate somewhere else with stronger capacity. Likewise, Rents are *Very Important* as they contribute heavily to operating expenses. Location experts consider the quality of available space and amount of available land for development *Important* factors.








 <b>A. Infrastructure</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: Are there significant limitations to any of your existing infrastructure systems? - Water Supply	Capacity for current needs only		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
2: Public Sewer	Capacity for current needs only		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
3: Wastewater Treatment	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
4: Natural Gas	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
5: Electric Power	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service
6: Data/Telecommunications - Land Lines	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service





7: Data/Telecommunications - Cellular	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		
8: Data/Telecommunications - Fiber optic / Cable / DSL	Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		Sufficient capacity for growth & reliable service		
9: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Residential					
10: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Commercial					
11: What is the average retail cost in cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential, commercial, and industrial end users in your municipality? Industrial					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <b>Importance To Market</b>   Very Important     Important     Less Important </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>   Strong     Average   Weak     No Comparison </td> </tr> </table>				<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison				

<b>B. Rents</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	15.50		12
13: What is the current average square foot cost for existing retail space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?	22.50		between 13 and 14.00
14: What is the current average square foot cost for existing manufacturing space (Triple Net/Lease)?	7.05		6
15: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS A	17.50		16
16: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS B	13.00		12.00
17: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your central business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS C	9.75		9
18: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS A	23.50		16.00
19: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS B	14.00		between 12.00 and 12.50
20: What is the current average square foot cost for existing general office space in your highway business district (Triple Net/Lease)?: CLASS C	10.25		9.00
21: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS A	10		12
22: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS B	60		40
23: Of all the available office space in your jurisdiction, what percentage is: CLASS C	30		40

<b>C. Quality of Available Space</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
24: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered contaminated or brownfield sites?	0-10%		0-10%
25: What experience does your jurisdiction have with the redevelopment of contaminated or brownfield sites?	Limited		Limited
26: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered vacant or severely underutilized shopping centers?	0-10%		11-20%
27: Approximately what percentage of available sites in your jurisdiction would be considered unused open land or greenfield sites?	0-10%		21-35%

<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---

<b>D. Land (space)</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
28: Approximately how much vacant developable land in your jurisdiction is currently zoned for commercial/industrial uses?	451 acres or more		1-150 acres
29: Approximately how much vacant useable industrial or warehouse space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1-250,000 sq. feet		1-250,000 sq. feet
30: Approximately how much vacant useable office space exists in commercial/industrial buildings in your jurisdiction?	1-250,000 sq. feet		1-250,000 sq. feet
31: What proportion of the parcels available for industrial development or large scale commercial development are of 5 acres or more?	21-35%		11-20%



## Section 4: Labor

The effect of labor factors on location decisions runs somewhat contrary to popular belief. An available labor force that is adequately trained (Workforce Composition) is a Very Important factor, while the cost of labor is Important and the presence of strong unions is Less Important. Conventional wisdom often holds that higher labor costs and strong unions negatively affect a firm's location decision. However, if the workforce is adequately skilled, these factors are not as detrimental as the conventional rule of thumb suggests. Workforce training resources is Less Important relative to other location factors. However, having a technically trained workforce whose skills align with the industries a municipality wants to attract is a valuable selling point.




<b>A. Labor Cost</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for semi-skilled, blue-collar manufacturing workers?	\$17.26-\$22.25		\$12.26-\$17.25
2: What is the prevailing average hourly wage rate for mid-level clerical workers?	\$22.26 or higher		\$12.26-\$17.25
3: What is the prevailing average annual salary for public high school teachers?	\$50,001-\$60,000		\$60,001-\$70,000
4: Is there a local minimum or living wage statute?	no		no

<b>Importance To Market</b> Very Important               Important               Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> Strong               Average Weak               No Comparison
--	---

<b>B. Workforce Composition</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
5: What percentage of your workforce is Unskilled?	1-25%		1-25%
6: What percentage of your workforce is Semi-skilled	1-25%		26-49%
7: What percentage of your workforce is Technically skilled	26-49%		26-49%
8: What percentage of your workforce is Managerial	1-25%		1-25%
9: What percentage of your workforce is Professional	1-25%		1-25%
10: What percentage of your workforce are current English language learners?	0-10%		0-10%

**C. Unions**

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
11: Have any employers in your jurisdiction had a major strike or work stoppage within the last three years?	yes		no
12: Has there been a major union organizing drive among public or private workers in the last three years?	no		no
13: Do labor unions have a significant presence in the labor market of your jurisdiction?	Very much		Somewhat

**Importance To Market**



Very Important     Important     Less Important

**Your Performance Relative To Peers**

 Strong     Average  
 Weak     No Comparison

**D. Labor (available)**

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
14: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a high school diploma?	85% or greater		85% or greater
15: What percentage of residents age 25 or older have earned at least a bachelor's degree?	21-35%		21-35%

<input type="radio"/> <b>E. Workforce Training</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
16: Which of the following workforce training resources do you interact with to respond to skill development needs of firms?			
- Regional employment board or state employment services department	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Area High schools	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Voc-tech schools or community colleges	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Human service or nonprofit career training centers	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17: Do you support public-private partnerships to provide specific workforce training?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes
18: Is there an adult education program readily available to residents of your jurisdiction?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes






<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input checked="" type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison
--	---

## Section 5: Municipal Process

The municipal process section covers several themes relating to marketing and permitting. Public officials who aggressively market their jurisdictions strengths and collaborate with firms already located in their town or city may have significant advantages in attracting new investment. Local firms can speak firsthand about their own experiences and market conditions to interested companies and investors. Likewise, they can advise municipal leaders about industries with which they are intimately familiar. Additionally, municipalities that have established transparent and efficient permitting processes, minimizing startup time and costs, are also ahead of the game. Among the factors examined in this section, the timeliness of approvals is *Very Important* to location experts and all but one of the remaining factors (Permitting Ombudsman) are ranked *Important*.



## A. Industry Sensitivity

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
1: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on the needs identified by industrial or office location specialists?	no		no
2: Does your jurisdiction have a marketing program based on existing core strengths, identified opportunities, or industry concentrations?	no		no
3: Do you have a quick response team available when negative data, stories, or incidents about your jurisdiction make the news?	no		no
4: Do you actively engage local business spokespersons to speak on behalf of your jurisdiction?	yes		no
5: Do you have a strategy for engaging your jurisdiction's racial or ethnic populations in unique businesses, festivals, etc., as a way to attract regional niche shopping?	no		no

## B. Sites Available

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
6: Does your jurisdiction own sites that it is currently marketing for development?	no		no
7: Is there a readily accessible, up-to-date, complete list of sites that are available for development in your jurisdiction?	yes		no
8: Do you maintain an active relationship with commercial real estate brokers, developers, or agents with sites in your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
9: Do your land use regulations protect land currently zoned industrial from encroachment by residential or other incompatible uses?	yes		yes
10: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming or land banking tax delinquent and tax title properties?	yes		no
11: Do you have an active strategy for reclaiming vacant or underutilized shopping plazas?	no		no

### Importance To Market

 Very Important  Important  Less Important

### Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong  Average  
 Weak  No Comparison





<b>C. Timeliness of Approvals</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
12: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Site plan review	13-16 weeks		5-8 weeks
13: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Zoning variance	37-48 weeks		5-8 weeks
14: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Special permit	9-12 weeks		9-12 weeks
15: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Building permit	9-12 weeks		0-4 weeks
16: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for new projects?: Appeals process	48 or more		5-8 weeks
17: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Site plan review	9-12 weeks		5-8 weeks
18: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Zoning variance	37-48 weeks		5-8 weeks
19: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Special permit	48 or more		9-12 weeks
20: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Building permit	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks
21: What is the average time (in weeks) from application to completion of the review process for existing structures?: Appeals process	48 or more		5-8 weeks

<b>D. Predicable Permits</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>
22: Do you provide a checklist of permitting requirements to prospective developers?	yes		yes
23: Do you provide a flowchart of the permitting process to prospective developers?	no		no
24: Do you provide a development handbook to prospective developers?	no		no
25: Do you allow for a single presentation of a development proposal to all review boards and commissions with relevant permit authority?	no		no

<b>Importance To Market</b> Very Important             Important             Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> Strong             Average Weak             No Comparison
--	---








## E. Fast Track Permits

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
26: Do you pre-permit development in certain districts?	no		no
27: Are there any publicly or cooperatively owned industrial parks in your jurisdiction that have their own expedited permitting authority?	no		no
28: Do you have an "overlay" district that allows expedited permitting of certain uses?	no		no
29: Do you market "fast track" permitting to potential developers or firms?	no		no

## F. Citizen Participation in the Review Process

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
30: To what extent do abutters slow the permitting process in your jurisdiction?	Very much		Somewhat
31: To what extent do organized neighborhood groups slow the permitting?	Very much		Somewhat
32: To what extent do elected officials in your jurisdiction expedite development by facilitating dialogue with community groups?	Very little		Very little
33: Do you establish a specific time frame and procedure for abutter or neighborhood response in the initial stage of the process?	no		yes
34: Do interested parties get multiple opportunities for review and comment during the various development review processes?	yes		yes
35: Has a development proposal in your jurisdiction been stopped by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the past 5 years?	yes		yes
36: Have officials from your jurisdiction intervened to rescue a development proposal that was endangered by abutter or neighborhood opposition in the last 5 years?	no		no

### Importance To Market

 Very Important  Important  Less Important

### Your Performance Relative To Peers

 Strong  Average  
 Weak  No Comparison









G. Permitting Ombudsman			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
37: Does the chief executive officer of your jurisdiction play a significant role in ensuring the efficiency of your local permitting process?	no		between yes and no
38: Are there other local officials empowered to ensure the efficiency of your local permitting process?	no		yes
39: Is there a "development cabinet" or "development team" that is convened to review major developments?	yes		yes
40: Do you have an established training program for development staff that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
41: Do you have an established training program for boards, commissions, authorities, districts, and elected officials that regularly identifies critical adjustments in policy or regulation to accommodate changing needs of firms?	no		no
42: Is your jurisdiction involved in the process for businesses that require state or federal permitting or licensing?	yes		yes
43: Do you provide technical assistance for businesses in the state or federal permit or license application process?	no		no








44: Does your jurisdiction require any local licenses for specific businesses or industries?			
- General license for all businesses	yes		no
- Auto dealership	no		no
- Barber shop	no		no
- Bar/Tavern	no		no
- Beauty salon	no		no
- Child care services	no		no
- Construction contractor	no		no
- Home health care	no		no
- Massage therapist	no		no
- Real estate agent/broker	no		no
- Restaurant	no		no
- Skilled Trades (electrician, plumber, etc)	no		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
45: Approximately how long (in weeks) is your local licensing process for businesses?	0-4 weeks		0-4 weeks








## Section 6: Quality of Life (Community)








The quality of life within the community is an *Important* location factor because companies want to be able to offer employees a safe community with affordable housing, good schools, and a rich selection of cultural and recreational opportunities.








 <b>A. Cultural and Recreational Amenities</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: Is there a professional sports team resident within your jurisdiction?	no		no
2: Is there a major art, science or historical museum?	yes		no
3: Is there a professional repertory theater company?	yes		no
4: Is there a civic center, arena or major concert hall?	no		no
5: Is there a golf course within your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
6: Is there a symphony orchestra, opera, or ballet company?	yes		no
7: Are there public beaches or boating activities within 5 miles of your jurisdiction?	yes		yes












<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---

































 <b>B. Crime</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
8: What was the residential burglary rate per 100,000 residents last year in your jurisdiction?	2		265
9: What was the auto theft rate per 100,000 residents last year?	42		83
10: What was the robbery rate per 100,000 residents last year?	18		between 30 and 31
11: What was the homicide rate per 100,000 residents last year?	0		1



 <b>C. Housing</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
12: What was the median sale price of a single-family home in your jurisdiction last year?	\$251,000-\$350,000		\$251,000-\$350,000
13: What was the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in your jurisdiction last year?	\$1001-\$1250		\$1001-\$1250
14: What is the homeownership rate?	76% or greater		66-75%
15: What is the vacancy rate for rental housing?	3-5%		3-5%
16: What percent of homes are for sale?	Less than 3%		Less than 3%
17: Approximately what proportion of the major officers of firms located in your jurisdiction live in the community?	Few		Some



























<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
--	---

 <b>D. Local Schools</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
18: What is the average K-12 per pupil expenditure in your jurisdiction last year?	\$12,001 - \$14,000		\$12,001 - \$14,000
19: Does your state mandate an assessment or proficiency test as a prerequisite for high school graduation?	yes		yes
20: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in English?	66-80%		66-80%
21: If yes, what percent of students in your jurisdiction tested at least "proficient" in Mathematics?	66-80%		66-80%
22: If yes, are the tests used as a measure of performance within your local school district for teacher assessments or teacher evaluations?	no		no
23: What percentage of your jurisdiction's K-12 students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch last year?	26-49%		1-25%
24: What was the average combined (reading, math, and writing) SAT score last year?	976-1050		
25: What was the average composite score (English, math, reading, and science) for the ACT last year?	We do not offer the ACT. Most New England schools do not		

26: What percentage of high school freshmen normally graduate within 5 years?	95% or more		81%-94%		
27: What is the high school dropout rate last year?	1-25%		1-25%		
28: Are there any schools in your jurisdiction that are currently deemed "underperforming?"	no		no		
29: What percentage of high school graduates from last year's class went on to a four-year college?	75% or greater		50-74%		
30: Are there any charter schools in your jurisdiction?	yes		no		
31: What types of private schools are there in your jurisdiction?					
- Parochial	yes				
- Non-sectarian	no				
- Boarding	no				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Importance To Market</b>   Very Important     Important     Less Important </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>   Strong     Average   Weak     No Comparison </td> </tr> </table>				<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison				












## Section 7: Quality of Life (Site)







This section reviews the amenities and services available within one mile of existing development sites. Having a variety of amenities, restaurants, stores, and services near employment centers enhances the location, adds convenience, and allows employees more social opportunities.

 <b>A. Amenities</b>					
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions					
<i>Question</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>		<i>Comparison Group</i>		
1: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fast food restaurant	All		Most		
2: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Fine dining	Most		Some		
3: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Day care	Most		Most		
4: What proportion of existing development sites within your jurisdiction have the following within 1 mile?: Retail shops	Some		Most		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Importance To Market</b>   Very Important     Important     Less Important </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>   Strong     Average   Weak     No Comparison </td> </tr> </table>				<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison				

## Section 8: Business Incentives

When companies are evaluating various jurisdictions for site location, business incentives (mainly subsidies and tax credits) are *Important* considerations. However, contrary to conventional wisdom, these incentives are not the first factors on which an investor makes a location decision—nor are they decisive. Factors such as infrastructure, workforce composition, and timeliness of permitting are of the utmost importance and can all too easily become “deal-breakers.” A municipality must be at least adequate in these areas before a company will advance negotiations. While investors value a broad portfolio of business incentives as possible “deal-closers,” they might not initially attract them.





































 <b>A. State</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: Are businesses in your jurisdiction eligible for any of the following special state tax incentives? Check all that apply.			
- Investment tax credits	yes		no
- Job training tax credits	yes		no
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	yes		no
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	yes		no
- Loan guarantees	yes		no
- Equity financing	yes		no
- Workforce training grants	yes		no
- Other, please specify	no		no
2: To what extent does your jurisdiction actively take advantage of any special state business incentives?	Very little		Somewhat
3: Does your state allow for priority funding for distressed economic areas?	yes		yes

 <b>B. Local</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
4: Does your jurisdiction offer existing businesses property tax abatement?	yes		no
5: If yes, what proportion of existing businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
6: Does your jurisdiction offer new businesses property tax abatement?	yes		no
7: If yes, what proportion of new businesses are offered abatements?	1-25%		1-25%
8: Who negotiates the tax abatement?	Legislative		Legislative

9: Does your jurisdiction offer any of the following incentives for businesses to locate in your jurisdiction? (Check all that apply)								
- Revolving loan fund	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Loan guarantees	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Revenue bonds	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Equity participation	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Business district group loans	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- None	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Investment tax credits	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Job training tax credits	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Research and development (R&D) tax credits	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Low (subsidized) interest loans	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Workforce training grants	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
10: Does your jurisdiction actively pursue federal and/or state programs designed to assist in attracting and retaining businesses?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes					
11: Does your jurisdiction use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other programs to provide tax breaks to businesses?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes					
12: Does your jurisdiction grant TIFs or similar programs for retail development?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no					
13: Does your jurisdiction assist in securing financing for businesses with commercial lenders or state industrial finance mechanisms?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no					
14: Do you actively try to attract local, state, and federal facilities to your jurisdiction?	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no					
15: Is any part of your jurisdiction in a designated Enterprise Zone?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no					
16: Do you participate in a regional brownfield revolving loan fund or offer your own?	No brownfields funds utilized	<input type="checkbox"/>	between No brownfields funds utilized and Regional					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <b>Importance To Market</b>  <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important    <input type="radio"/> Important    <input type="radio"/> Less Important </td> <td colspan="2"> <b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong    <input type="checkbox"/> Average  <input type="checkbox"/> Weak    <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison </td> </tr> </table>				<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important			<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison	
<b>Importance To Market</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Very Important <input type="radio"/> Important <input type="radio"/> Less Important			<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Weak <input type="checkbox"/> No Comparison					










## Section 9: Tax Rates

Municipalities often think that if tax rates are too high, they will have a hard time attracting businesses—that high taxes are a “deal-breaker.” Like financial incentives, however, the tax rate is not one of the *Very Important* location factors. If the *Very Important* factors are satisfied, then a business will likely request a more favorable tax rate during later-stage negotiations. Yet negotiations are unlikely to get to that point if the *More Important* location factors have not been satisfied.

 <b>A. Local</b>					
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions					
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group		
<b>1: What types of taxes are collected by your jurisdiction to pay for local services?</b>					
- Property tax	yes		yes		
- Local sales tax	no		no		
- Local income tax	no		no		
- Hotel room tax	yes		no		
- Meals tax	yes		no		
<b>2: Of the potential commercial and industrial property tax revenue your jurisdiction could collect, what percent is currently abated?</b>	1%-10%		1%-10%		
<b>3: Does your jurisdiction tax property in industrial or commercial uses at a different rate than residential properties?</b>	no		yes		
<b>4: If yes, what is the tax rate on industrial/commercial property? \$ /\$1,000</b>	-		between 19.68 and 19.89		
<b>5: If yes, what is the tax rate on residential property? \$ /\$1,000</b>	-		between 11.29 and 11.37		
<b>6: If no, what is the tax rate on all property?</b>	16.27		between 13.97 and 14.2 mills		
<b>7: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Industrial %</b>	8.9				
<b>8: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Commercial %</b>	9.3				
<b>9: What % of your tax revenue is derived from: Residential %</b>	78.8				
<b>10: Does your jurisdiction impose impact fees on new commercial or industrial development?</b>	no		no		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <b>Importance To Market</b>   Very Important               Important               Less Important         </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>   Strong               Average   Weak               No Comparison         </td> </tr> </table>				<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison
<b>Importance To Market</b>  Very Important  Important  Less Important	<b>Your Performance Relative To Peers</b>  Strong  Average  Weak  No Comparison				

## B. Tax Delinquency

Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions

Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
11: What proportion of residential property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
12: What proportion of commercial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
13: What proportion of industrial property in your jurisdiction is more than one year delinquent in taxes?	0%-3%		0%-3%
14: How many properties are tax defaulted or subject to the power of sale?	0-50		0-50
15: When do you choose to auction tax title properties?	5-10 years		1-5 years
16: Do you have an organized and defined process for conducting such auctions and ensuring that they are successful?	no		yes
17: Do you auction the "right to foreclose" on tax delinquent properties?	no		no
18: Do you seek tax abatement on tax title properties to allow the liens to clear for new owners?	no		no
19: If a tax delinquent or tax title property serves as an impediment to development, does the property receive special attention?	no		no

### Importance To Market



Very Important



Important



Less Important

### Your Performance Relative To Peers



Strong



Weak

Average














No Comparison



## Section 10: Access to Information

A town's website could offer a business location expert his or her first impression of what the area has to offer. In today's digital age, a location expert could use a municipality's website to gather initial information, and if it is not available, easy to find, and easy to understand, the researcher may reject the town as a potential location without further consideration. While a town's website may rank *Less Important* as a factor in decision making, it can be this initial source of information that entices a location expert to probe deeper and to contact a municipality to seek additional information. At that point, the municipality's economic development leader or permitting ombudsman has an opportunity to step in and develop one-on-one rapport with the developer or company representative.

 <b>A. Website</b>			
Report of Plymouth as compared to all jurisdictions			
Question	Plymouth		Comparison Group
1: Does your jurisdiction's website list all local development policies and procedures?	yes		no
2: Does your website have contact information for key officials?	yes		yes
3: Does your website have general information about your jurisdiction?	yes		yes
4: How frequently is your website updated?	Monthly		Weekly
5: Does your website include an explicitly designed economic development tool aimed at businesses and developers?	yes		no
6: Is there a development permit checklist or flow chart on the website?	yes		no
7: Are permit applications available for downloading on the website?	yes		yes
8: Are applications and other forms date certified to ensure that they are the most recent versions (i.e. the same versions that you would get in person)?	no		no
9: Is it possible to file permit applications electronically?	no		no
10: Is there a list of available land and building sites on the website?	yes		no

11: If yes, check the types of information available about each site. (Check all that apply)			
- :Owner	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Square footage of vacant land	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Square footage and quality of existing buildings and structures	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Abutters	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Zoning	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Assessed value	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Tax rate	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Current tax status (e.g. paid up, delinquent)	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Contamination	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Aerial photos	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- GIS links	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
12: Is there a posting of current hearings available on the website?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes
13: Is there a posting of pending applications available on the website?	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
14: Is there a listing of current members of development review boards and staff contact information?	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	yes



15: Are there links to other local development resources? (Check all that apply)			
- State finance agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- State permitting agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional planning agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Regional development organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Workforce training organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Local public or quasi-public financing resources	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Demographic information	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Economic development agencies	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
16: Are there links to other locally-based private or non-profit organizations?			
- Colleges and universities	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Chambers of Commerce	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Community development corporations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Arts and cultural organizations	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Sports and recreation venues	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Convention and tourist organization	yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no
- Other, please specify	no	<input type="checkbox"/>	no
17: Is there a designated webmaster or staff person responsible for maintaining the website?	no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	yes

## NEXT STEPS

It was in 1620 during the reign of King James I that about one hundred Pilgrim Englishmen and -women boarded the Mayflower in search of religious freedom in the Americas. Their trip ended when they anchored at Plymouth Rock, where they established the first lasting European settlement in North America. Plymouth, also known as “America’s Hometown,” has maintained its historic charm centuries after the arrival of the settlers. Now home to over 56,000 inhabitants, the town has more than tripled in population over the past 40 years. In addition, the municipality attracts an average of 100,000 visitors from across the globe each year, most drawn to Plimouth Plantation and other historical sites and recreational activities.

Plymouth is the largest town in Massachusetts, a large city with an overall size of 134 square miles, 96 square miles of which is land. Located 34 miles Southeast of Boston, it is accessible via commuter rail, and Routes 3 and 3A, which all run across the town from North to South. Although not accessible via ferry, Plymouth’s municipal airport is home to around hundred and seventy aircraft and has an estimated annual activity of sixty-five thousand aircraft operations.

Plymouth possesses a vibrant downtown filled with shops, restaurants, and museums in addition to a cultural district located in Plymouth Bay. The town is surrounded by golf courses, the Myles Standish State Forest, and the Indian Cook reservation. All of these characteristics have greatly contributed to making this municipality attractive to new residents. The town also has a well-educated population with graduation rates that surpass municipalities in the comparison group. Plymouth is a physically attractive, well-maintained community, thanks to the town’s enforcement of codes and regulations on abandoned properties, abandoned vehicles, and trash disposal, and maintenance of public spaces, that has excellent economic development potential.

The Dukakis Center’s Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) creates a snapshot of Plymouth’s economic revitalization efforts at a critical moment in the town’s development history. The following is an overview of where your town is getting it right, and where improvements can be made. Outlined below are the top recommendations and their respective levels of priority for your economic development efforts.

### CORE STRENGTHS

Plymouth has an exceptionally well-populated **website**. Unlike other municipalities in the comparison group, Plymouth lists information regarding the square footage of available vacant land, square footage and quality of existing buildings and structures, and zoning and other local development resources that may be useful by firms potentially interested in locating or expanding in Plymouth. In addition, your economic development team offers a valuable development permitting checklist and recently assembled handbook, among other useful tools. Furthermore, it also provides a dedicated webpage for tourists—“Discover Plymouth—that lists all the sites and activities offered to visitors. As good as it is, though, the website should be updated weekly rather than monthly, a schedule that might be enforced by a staff member dedicated to this oversight role. Moreover, the economic development features of the website are not easy to find. We strongly recommend establishing a portal on the home page that is dedicated to “doing business” in Plymouth and leads to the relevant information gathered in one place.

Similar to the CGM, your town engages in **cross-marketing** efforts to attract new firms by working with regional planning and development organizations and collaborating with state agencies and organizations in marketing efforts, although the town should do more to enlist local firms in promoting Plymouth as a good place to do business, for the town has many assets. Among them are a **workforce** that is well-balanced with a higher-than-usual technically skilled component, capacity for **workforce training** (including two community colleges and two satellite campuses for Quincy and Curry Colleges), an array of **supplemental business services**, excellent **traffic** flow during rush hours—even during the summer tourist season—strong **local business incentives**, and nearby **site amenities**. In addition, Plymouth has an abundance of vacant **land** zoned for industrial and commercial development, and does an exceptionally good job of maintaining a current list of **available sites**.

Plymouth also offers sound quality of life to employees of prospective business firms. It is **physically attractive** and well-maintained, with a flourishing central business district, low **crime rates**, and high-performing **local schools**. The town’s **cultural and recreational amenities** are also outstanding—as attested by its popularity as a tourist destination.

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Plymouth is entangled in some significant weaknesses, but the good news is that remedying most of them is feasible, a matter of will and organization. Your town’s biggest relative weaknesses lie within the realm of permitting. The **approvals process** in Plymouth is extraordinarily long and could easily deter firms from growing or moving their business activities to the town. So many parties, committees, and neighborhood groups are involved in approvals and appeals that managing everyone’s input extends out businesses’ “time to market” to nearly a year. It is critical that you select or appoint a dedicated staff member—a **permitting ombudsman**—to coordinate the permitting needs of businesses while vigorously engaging with all parties to achieve consensus in a shorter amount of time. **Citizen participation in the review process** can be a sign of civic engagement and thus encouraged, as long as it doesn’t systematically and repeatedly slow permitting to a virtual halt. Likewise, town officials could do more to enhance **predictable permitting** and to offer **fast-track permitting** to businesses in industries you are trying to develop. These measures, among others, should be taken as a way of mounting a more aggressive industrial attraction policy for the **critical mass of firms** in targeted industries that you seek to attract.

Plymouth’s lack of available **parking** weakens the town’s performance compared to the CGM. Residents’ frustration over the lack of available space, especially during peak tourist seasons, is a weakness your town should make a priority of improving. We commend your pursuit of funding to create an additional parking facility, and recommend that design sensitive to the continuity of the urban fabric commence with all due speed.

Third, Plymouth’s current **infrastructure** profile poses several treats to your ability to adapt to a potential increase in economic activity. Indeed, already experiencing water shortages during the summer and lacking the proper hookups for extensions, your town could restrict the types of businesses that might otherwise want to set up shop in your community. Collaborating with current firms in order to expand your public sewer and water networks and facilities should be integrated in your strategic economic development plan.

Plymouth’s **labor cost** and **rents** are particularly high, especially those for Class A general office space in your highway business district. In addition, most municipal employees belong to **unions**, as do a number of employees in the private labor market. They too should be drawn into economic development conversations so as to avoid last-minute planning complications. It could deter potential firms to locate to your municipality. Actively engaging with unions and building owners to find middle grounds in order to assist future businesses could alleviate the risks of experiencing other strikes. Additionally, cultivating **industry sensitivity** and **marketing follow-up** strategies will help you collect valuable information from businesses already located in your jurisdiction in order to evaluate your municipality’s strengths and weaknesses from an economic development perspective. Finally, your **transportation** services are not sufficient to respond to the existing demand. Although you have successfully implemented a strategy to expand **water transportation services**, your **public transit** services are not sufficient to meet demand from students during evenings and Sundays.

Recommendations	Priority
Appoint a designated permitting officer or a group of local officials charged with coordinating the various parties involved in the permitting process in order to expedite the timeliness of approvals for future requests.	High
Expand infrastructure capacity to meet the demand for water and tackle the higher usage for public sewer and water treatment during peak tourist seasons	High
Provide additional parking facilities, especially in downtown Plymouth, for residents and tourists	High
Expand public transit and transportation services	Medium

