

**CITY OF PLYMOUTH  
AGENDA  
Regular Planning Commission  
Council Chambers  
3400 Plymouth Boulevard, Plymouth, MN  
May 20, 2026, 7:00 PM**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
  
- 2. PUBLIC FORUM** - Individuals may address the commission about any item not contained on the regular agenda. A maximum of three minutes is allotted per individual with a total of 15 minutes for the forum. If the full 15 minutes are not needed for the forum, the commission will continue with the agenda. The commission will take no official action on items discussed at the forum, with the exception of referral to staff for future report.
  
- 3. APPROVE AGENDA** - Planning Commission members may add items to the agenda for discussion purposes or staff direction only. The commission will not normally take official action on items added to the agenda.
  
- 4. CONSENT AGENDA** - These items are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a commission member or individual so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and placed elsewhere on the agenda.
  - 4.1** Approve the April 15, 2026, minutes.
    1. Minutes
  
  - 4.2** Review Community & Economic Development Department 2025 Annual Report
    1. 2025 CED Annual Report
  
- 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS**
  
- 6. NEW BUSINESS**
  - 6.1** Variance request to the bluff setback to allow the construction of a deck at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West (Jill Topeff - 2026019)
    1. Planning Report
    2. Zoning Map
    3. Variance Standards Responses
    4. Site Plan
    5. Resolution Approval
  
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**



**To:** Planning Commission

**Prepared by:** Lori Sommers, Planning Manager

**Reviewed by:** Grant Fernelius, CED Director

**Item:** **Approve the April 15, 2026, minutes.**

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**1. Action Requested:**

Motion to adopt the minutes.

**2. Background:**

The Planning Commission met on April 15, 2026.

**3. Budget Impact:**

N/A

**4. Attachments:**

1. Minutes

# Proposed Minutes Planning Commission Meeting April 15, 2026

Chair Boo called a Meeting of the Plymouth Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 3400 Plymouth Boulevard, on April 15, 2026.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Michael Boo, Marc Anderson, Julie Olson, Greg Hansen, Neha Markanda, and Jim Willis

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Josh Fowler

STAFF PRESENT: Planning Manager Lori Sommers

Chair Boo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Call to Order**

## **Public Forum**

Joe Lafranz, ward 1, commented that he is a coach of the Wayzata mountain bike program and spoke about the growth of the sport. He expressed interest in partnering with Plymouth on a discovery effort related to natural surface trails within the community. He provided additional information on the team and the sport, as well as more information on what the discovery process could look like.

Chair Boo commented that it is great to see advocacy for additional outdoor opportunities. He encouraged the resident to work with staff to get this item on the agenda for the parks commission.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he welcomed the resident to come forward to the commission with their suggestion.

Commissioner Olson also encouraged the resident to bring this idea forward to the parks commission and noted that Three Rivers could be another partnership opportunity.

Planning Manager Sommers noted a tool that is available on the website, along with a community survey, in preparation for the comprehensive plan.

## **Approval of Agenda**

Motion was made by Commissioner Willis and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the agenda. With all Commissioners voting in favor, the motion carried.

## **Consent Agenda**

### **(4.1) Planning Commission minutes from meeting held on March 18, 2026.**

Motion was made by Commissioner Markanda and seconded by Commissioner Olson to approve the consent agenda. With all Commissioners voting in favor, the motion carried.

## **Public Hearing**

### **(5.1) Planned unit development (PUD) amendment to allow an indoor sports/fitness/commercial recreation business at 2155 Niagara Lane (Thorney Training LLC – 2026012)**

Planning Manager Sommers presented the staff report.

Chair Boo introduced the applicant, Brett Thorney, who stated that he had been before the commission before, as he had previously considered a different location for this business. He stated that the business plan remains the same, and this building better suits the proposed use.

Commissioner Willis asked about the planned business hours.

Mr. Thorney replied that the business would typically operate from 4 to 9 p.m. during the winter and school year, with a more open schedule in the summer, maximizing at 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. He provided additional information on how the keyless system operates, noting that there is generally a staff person present.

Commissioner Willis asked if a customer could come into the business at 1 a.m.

Mr. Thorney replied that, technically, someone could do that if they purchased a full membership.

Commissioner Willis asked if the applicant would oppose the inclusion of hours when they would not be open.

Mr. Thorney replied that he would not object to that, noting that they could implement that from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Commissioner Markanda asked the number of employees who could be on-site at any time.

Mr. Thorney replied that generally they would have one employee, but during the summer, there could be no employees after 5 p.m. He stated that at the most, they could have five employees. He noted that the number of employees would vary based on the time of day.

Commissioner Markanda asked if the applicant would agree that at least one employee should be present.

Mr. Thorney replied that they could do that.

Commissioner Markanda asked for more information on the frequency and types of camps and clinics.

Mr. Thorney replied that they do not offer many camps or clinics and used the example of offering a holiday camp during winter break. He noted that the business is more of a membership-based training program.

Commissioner Markanda referenced the comment that someone with a full membership would have access to the building. She agreed with Commissioner Willis that there should be set hours when the building is not accessible and asked that an employee be on-site if the business is open. She asked the youngest age of children in the program.

Mr. Thorney stated that generally ten is the youngest they take, although they have one nine-year-old team right now. He noted that parents or staff are required to be with children younger than 16.

Commissioner Markanda asked the number of employees for the business.

Mr. Thorney replied that there are currently 14 part-time employees, and he is the only full-time employee.

Commissioner Hansen asked the applicant believes that the lighting is adequate for the evening.

Mr. Thorney commented that he does believe the lighting is adequate, but they could add a solar panel light if additional lighting is needed.

Commissioner Hansen asked if there would be security cameras.

Mr. Thorney stated that they would have security cameras in the entrance area where members put in their code to enter the building.

Commissioner Hansen asked if the bathrooms on the plan are existing.

Mr. Thorney confirmed that those bathrooms are already in the building, and the fixtures will be updated.

Chair Boo opened the public hearing.

There were no comments.

Chair Boo closed the public hearing.

**Motion was made by Olson, and seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to recommend approval of the planned unit development (PUD) amendment to allow an indoor sports/fitness/commercial recreation business at 2155 Niagara Lane, subject to the**

**conditions within the draft resolution with the added condition to have a staff person on-site during business hours and for the business to be closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.**

**Further discussion: Commissioner Markanda commented that she would also support having an employee on-site and asked the applicant if that would be feasible.**

**Mr. Thorney commented that other businesses of this nature do not require a staff person to be on-site at all times. He commented that there have not been any issues at other locations.**

**Chair Boo commented that he finds it difficult to dictate the business model, as there are other businesses that allow members to be on-site without staff being present. He stated that if there were issues that arose, the city could still address that through other mechanisms. He stated that while he agrees that the building should be closed during the recommended hours, he did not believe that a staff person should be dictated. He asked Commissioner Olson to remove that condition from her motion, noting that if she desires, she could make a second motion to add that condition.**

**Commissioner Olson agreed to remove the condition requiring a staff person to be on-site.**

**With all Commissioners voting in favor, the motion carried.**

**Motion was made by Markanda, and seconded by Commissioner Willis, to recommend an additional condition requiring a staff person to be present during business hours. With a vote of 3 -3 (Boo, Anderson, and Hansen opposed), the motion failed.**

It was noted that this item will move forward for City Council consideration at the April 28, 2026, meeting.

### **New Business**

### **Adjournment**

Chair Boo adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

**To:** Planning Commission

**Prepared by:** Jennifer Erickson, Economic Development Coordinator

**Reviewed by:** Grant Fernelius, CED Director  
Lori Sommers, Planning Manager

**Item:** **Review Community & Economic Development Department  
2025 Annual Report**

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**1. Action Requested:**

No formal action required. The CED 2025 Annual Report is being routed to the Planning Commission as informational.

**2. Background:**

The 2025 Annual Report includes information from the Community and Economic Development Department on planning, economic development, and housing-related items for the year.

**3. Budget Impact:**

NA

**4. Attachments:**

1. 2025 CED Annual Report



COMMUNITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
ANNUAL REPORT

2025



City of  
Plymouth





# WELCOME

On behalf of the Community and Economic Development Department, I am pleased to present our 2025 Annual Report. This past year has been a period of continued progress, as we witnessed several milestones which are highlighted in this report. Our department remains committed to its core mission of ensuring a high quality of life, protecting the health and safety of our residents, businesses and visitors through robust planning, housing services, building codes and economic development. Our team was actively engaged in support of the City Council's strategic priorities, including:



*Grant Fernelius*

- **A Connected and Thriving Community:** The city received a 2-year grant to administer a new rental assistance program that will expand housing opportunities for lower income residents. In addition, the city approved a mixed-use redevelopment plan for Plymouth Plaza, that allows for preservation of existing commercial businesses, while at the same time offering new apartments. In addition, the City Council established a Housing Trust Fund, which will provide a source of funding for future affordable housing activities.
- **Economic Stability and Vitality:** We continued to foster a business-friendly environment that encourages innovation and supports local growth. The city was successful in securing state grant funding for a global microchip testing company; received environmental investigation funds for redevelopment opportunities; and completed a small area plan to help guide future development of the southeast quadrant of I-494 and Highway 55.

The achievements detailed in this report are the result of collaborative efforts between the City Council, Planning Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), city staff and the broader community. We look forward to continuing this work in 2026 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Grant Fernelius  
Community and Economic Development Director



# ABOUT PLYMOUTH

Plymouth is a nationally recognized city located just 12 miles west of Minneapolis. Plymouth has built a reputation as a thriving community offering an excellent quality of life, first-rate park system, picturesque open spaces, highly regarded school districts, and innovative companies and industries.

Boasting Minnesota's fourth largest economy, the city is home to an established commercial-industrial base, with thriving manufacturing, med-tech, healthcare and professional services sectors, and access to talent from the University of Minnesota and other nearby colleges and universities.

## City Strategic Themes

The Plymouth City Council has identified five strategic priorities to fulfill our vision to be, "A city where exceptional living, stewardship and service come together." The Community and Economic Development (CED) Department focuses our work in support of these priorities.



## Plymouth by the Numbers

- 80,038 population
- 32,380 total households
- \$133,900 median household income
- \$81,568 annual average wages in Plymouth
- 4th largest economy in Minnesota
- Lowest tax rate of peer cities
- 53,202 total jobs
- 65% of residents have a four-year college degree or higher



# INDUSTRY PROFILE

Industry Sector	Number of Establishments	2025 Jobs
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	497	10,575
Professional and Business Services	669	10,165
Manufacturing	186	9,344
Education and Health Services	426	8,721
Construction	163	3,306
Financial Activities	324	3,151
Leisure and Hospitality	173	2,995
Public Administration	6	2,042
Other	403	2,396
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,847</b>	<b>52,695</b>

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Data is for 2025. According to DEED, there were 52,695 jobs in Plymouth in 2025, down from 52,973 in 2024. The Trade Transportation and Utilities sector accounted for the largest number of jobs, followed by Professional and Business Services. Manufacturing businesses make up 6.5% of the establishments but are responsible for 17.7% of jobs in the city.



## Business Outreach and Support

Plymouth supports businesses of all sizes to help them thrive and grow here. In 2025, Economic Development staff responded to business inquiries and site requests, provided connections and resources, and conducted outreach meetings and tours of medtech and advanced manufacturing companies. Additional efforts included:

- Hosting 11 Small Business Networking Meetings in 2025, averaging 26 attendees per meeting.
- Organizing or supporting 12 ribbon cuttings and groundbreaking ceremonies.
- Hosting CEO Start Bootcamp in partnership with Elevate Hennepin for 16 entrepreneurs launching businesses.



# COMPLETED PROJECTS

## | Trillium Woods

Independent living retirement community Trillium Woods completed their \$56 million expansion. The 160,321-square-foot, five-story expansion consists of 18 assisted living units, 16 assisted memory care units, and 52 independent living units.

## | ALTER Technology

Supported by the Minnesota Investment Fund and Job Creation Fund, ALTER Technology established its first U.S. presence in Plymouth to provide semiconductor testing solutions to serve the state's semiconductor and microelectronics industries.

## | The Gardner School

An academically focused preschool and childcare center, the Gardner School opened in late 2025 following redevelopment of the former Score Sports site. Three existing lots were combined into a new lot for construction of the 11,500 square-foot facility.

## | Danfoss

To accommodate consolidation of local employees into their Plymouth location, Danfoss expanded into additional space at 3550 Annapolis Lane N., building out 22,000 square feet of office space and 33,000 square feet for production, testing, and research and development.

## | Summit Orthopedics

Summit Orthopedics began seeing patients in October 2025 at their 78,000 square-foot clinic, surgery center and urgent care facility, the first completed building in The Boulevard redevelopment project.



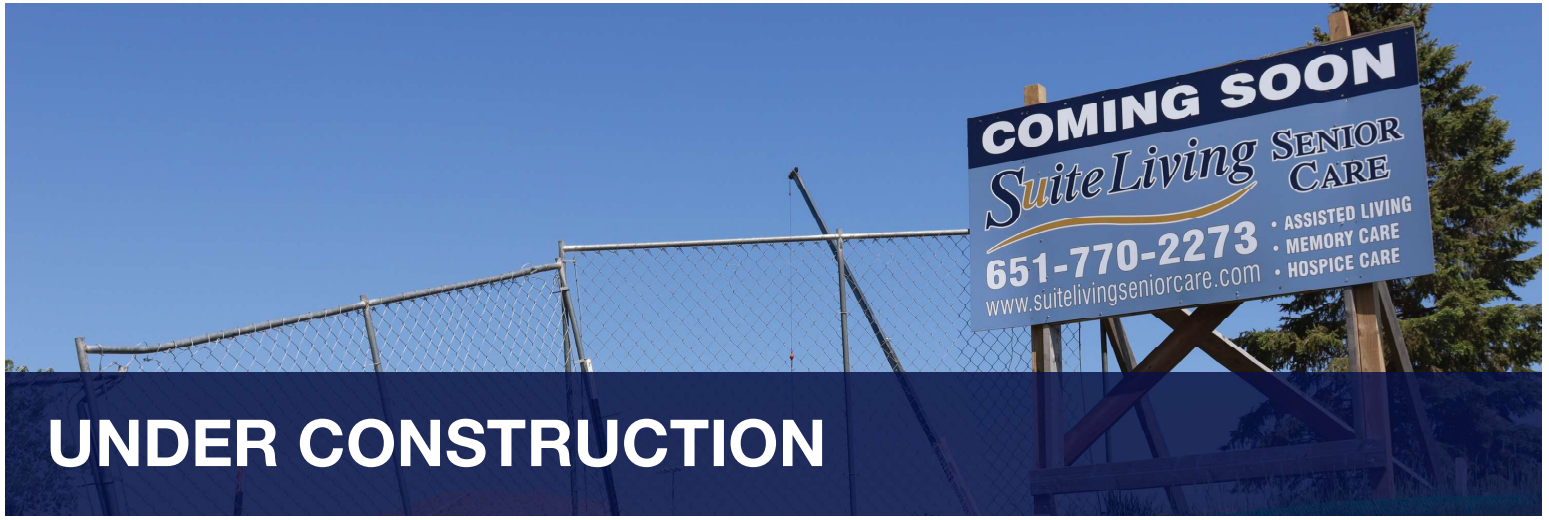
## | Jet 6 Tech Center

This 90,000 square-foot building was completed early in 2025 as infill development and was subsequently leased to White Cap.

## | The Brooks

Completed in April 2025, the Brooks is a four-story, 219-unit market rate apartment building offering a pet-friendly environment with significant amenities, including a pool, sky lounge with outdoor deck, and community clubroom.





# UNDER CONSTRUCTION



## Doran Harbor Lane

Construction is underway on the first of two new market-rate apartment buildings with 176 units each on the northwest corner of Harbor Lane and Fernbrook Lane. The first building, the Rone, is expected to be completed in 2026, with the second breaking ground in 2026 for completion in 2028.

## Belleston Residence

A building permit was issued in December 2025 for a 19,882 square-foot, 28-unit, single-story building at 18035 Old Rockford Road. This will be a Solbakken assisted living facility for adults requiring complex care.

## Brinda Subdivision

Located on the site of the former Silver Buckle Saddle Club, the first two building permits have been issued for this 22 single-family home subdivision on 10-acres located north of Chankahda Trail at Everest Court.

## Sunset Bluff

Construction is underway for a residential development on the southwest corner of Chankahda Trail and Vicksburg Lane, consisting of 19 villa style single-family homes and 19 townhomes.

## Suite Living

Construction is nearing completion on this 32-unit assisted living and memory care facility off Zachary Lane and Rockford Road, anticipating to open in April 2026.



## Daikin Applied

Daikin Applied broke ground in December 2025 on a 71,000 square-foot addition to

its facility at 13600 Industrial Park Blvd., to expand its research and development and testing capabilities. Completion on the project is expected in 2027.

## The Boulevard

A new construction, mixed-use redevelopment is underway for the 75-acre, former Prudential Campus site off Chankahda Trail and I-494. Estimated to draw \$300 million in investment, the site will consist of residential units, mixed retail, dining, groceries, high-tech industrial and office park space centered around nature trails and greenspace.

## Coborn's

Coborn's Market & Table is a new prototype store for the company and their first location in the Twin Cities metro area. Designed to offer an immersive experience and meal solutions for any time of the day, the store



will include a café and fast-casual restaurant concepts.

## Belterra

Construction began in 2025 on the first of four apartment buildings in the Boulevard. Comprised of 207 units, this building will feature an amenity deck, walkout units and balconies. Supported by Tax

Increment Financing, 20% of the units will be reserved for those earning 60% or less of area median income (AMI).

## Chase Bank

The first of several retail establishments in the Boulevard, Chase Bank broke ground in 2025 and is expected to open in 2026.



## Building Inspections

The Plymouth Building Division completed inspections across a wide range of building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing projects. Their involvement helps ensure construction is performed safely and in compliance with building and city code requirements. From

the early stages of construction to final occupancy, inspectors support a smooth and efficient transition for both builders and occupants.

- Plymouth has 2,015 rental properties which include over 9,700 rental dwelling units. 383 new multi-family dwelling units were added in 2025.

- Nearly 20,000 building inspections were completed and 11,313 permits were issued.
- The city experienced over \$427 million in construction value in 2025.
- 45 new single-family and townhouse buildings constructed.



# HOUSING



## Resident Support

The Housing Division utilizes a variety of resources including federal and local dollars to support the housing needs of Plymouth residents.

In 2025, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) leveraged CDBG funds to help four first-time buyers purchase homes in Plymouth and assist with the purchase of the city's sixth land trust property.

CDBG funds were also utilized to make necessary repairs for four households.

## Service Partnerships

The HRA partnered with five local agencies to provide residents with funding, counseling and tenant advocacy services. 553 individuals received financial or legal

counseling services related to their housing. 9 households experiencing hardship, at risk of eviction, received direct rental and/or utility assistance. 73 Elderly Households received household and/or outdoor maintenance services.

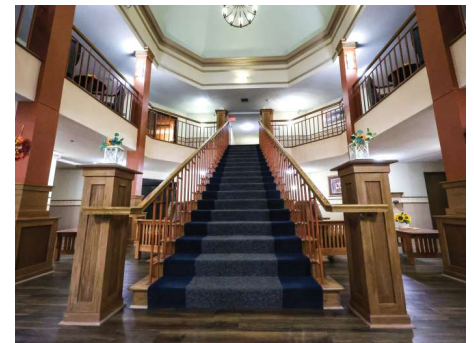
## Architectural Design Program

The city also offers an Architectural Design Service Program to assist homeowners in their efforts to update older homes, providing technical assistance to ensure those updates are of sound quality and design. There were three clients for this program in 2025.

## Home Energy Squad Visits

Plymouth partners in the Home Energy Squad program to help residents save energy. The HRA subsidizes the cost of an in-home visit where specialists install

energy-saving products and make other recommendations. 163 households used this service in 2025.



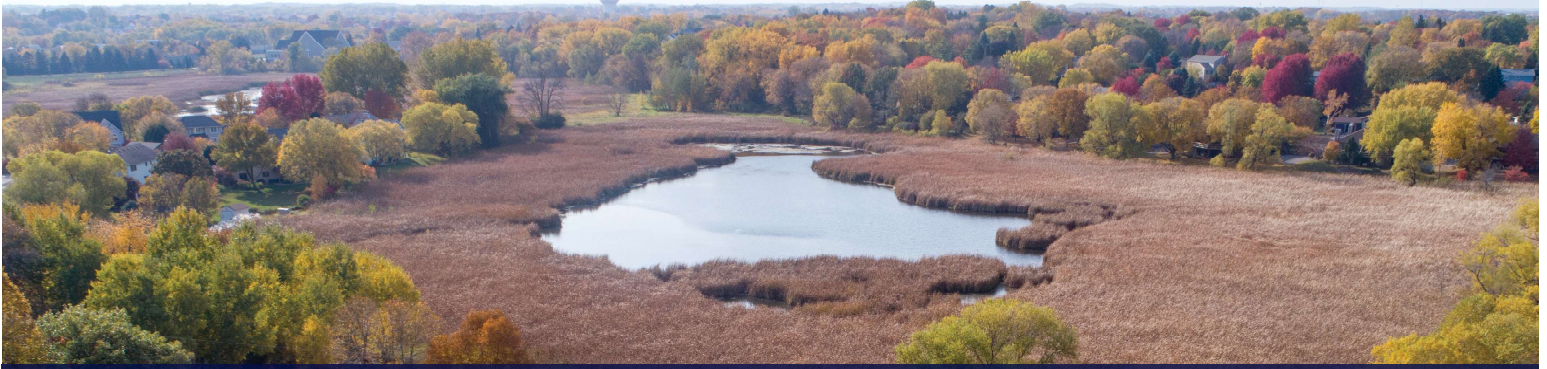
## Plymouth Towne Square

Plymouth Towne Square is an HRA owned, 99-unit, 100% affordable multifamily building for seniors aged 55 and older. In 2025, more than \$600,000 in capital improvements were completed on the building, including painting of all interior common areas, elevator modernization, fire panel update, and complete roof replacement.

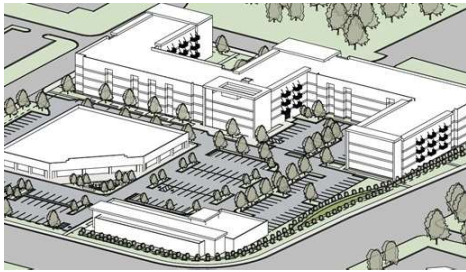
## Looking Ahead

Bring it Home is a new state-run rental assistance program utilizing state appropriations

and a regional sales tax. Plymouth HRA has been awarded funding for 36 rental vouchers for the 2026-2027 grant period.



# ON THE HORIZON



## I-494/Highway 55

Anticipating redevelopment of the southeast corner of Highway 55 and I-494, the city purchased and demolished the former Red Roof Inn in 2025. This corner is guided mixed-use and the city has worked with a consultant on a small area plan to build a vision for the proposed redevelopment that would include office, retail and multifamily residential uses.

## Plymouth Plaza

This proposed redevelopment of the Plymouth Plaza site at the southwest corner of Highways 101 and 6 would involve constructing a new medical office building on the corner, preserving a portion of the existing building for the current

retail tenants, and demolishing another part of the building to construct a new 195-unit apartment building. The development would be supported by Tax Increment Financing and 20% of the apartment units would be reserved for those earning less than 60% of the adjusted median income (AMI).



## Reimagine Plymouth 2050 Comprehensive Plan

All cities in the metro region must prepare a comprehensive plan every 10 years that guides the city for the next 20 years. The Reimagine Plymouth 2050 Comprehensive Plan will outline Plymouth's existing conditions, describe future goals for development, and include an action plan on how

to achieve these objectives. The city is committed to involving residents, businesses and workers in the process to craft a community vision for Plymouth's future. Work on the initial phases of the plan will begin in early 2026 with anticipated completion in the summer 2027.

**To:** Planning Commission

**Prepared by:** Geoff Solomonson, Associate Planner

**Reviewed by:** Lori Sommers, Planning Manager  
Grant Fernelius, CED Director

**Item:** **Variance request to the bluff setback to allow the construction of a deck at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West (Jill Topeff - 2026019)**

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**1. Action Requested:**

Review variance request to the bluff setback for a deck in the rear yard at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West.

**2. Background:**

See attached staff report

**3. Budget Impact:**

Not applicable

**4. Attachments:**

1. Planning Report
2. Zoning Map
3. Variance Standards Responses
4. Site Plan
5. Resolution Approval

**To:** Plymouth Planning Commission

**From:** Geoff Solomonson, Associate Planner (763-509-5455)  
Community and Economic Development Department

**Subject:** Jill Topeff –variance request to the bluff setback to allow the construction of a deck at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West (2026019)

**Ward:** 3

**Deadline:** August 6, 2026

**Summary**

Request for a bluff setback variance to allow the construction of a deck located west of the home, that would be 22 feet from the top of the bluff, where a minimum of 30 feet is required at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West.

An aerial view of the site is included on the right for reference on the site context.

**Recommended Action**

Community and Economic Development Department Staff recommend approval of the variance for the bluff setback to allow for the construction of a deck.



## Site Information

### Zoning and Land Use

The property is zoned RSF-3 (single-family detached dwelling) and guided LA-1 (living area 1).

	Use	Zoning	Land Use Designation (2040 Comprehensive Plan)
Subject Property	Single-family residential	RSF-3	LA-1
North, South, and West	Single-family residential	RSF-3	LA-1
East (across Medicine Lake)	Undeveloped	RSF-1	LA-1

### School District

The site is in the Wayzata School District (#284).

### Natural Characteristics of Site

The lot is located in the Bassett Creek watershed. It is a lot within the Shoreland Management Overlay District. There are no wetlands on the property and the property is not in a floodplain.

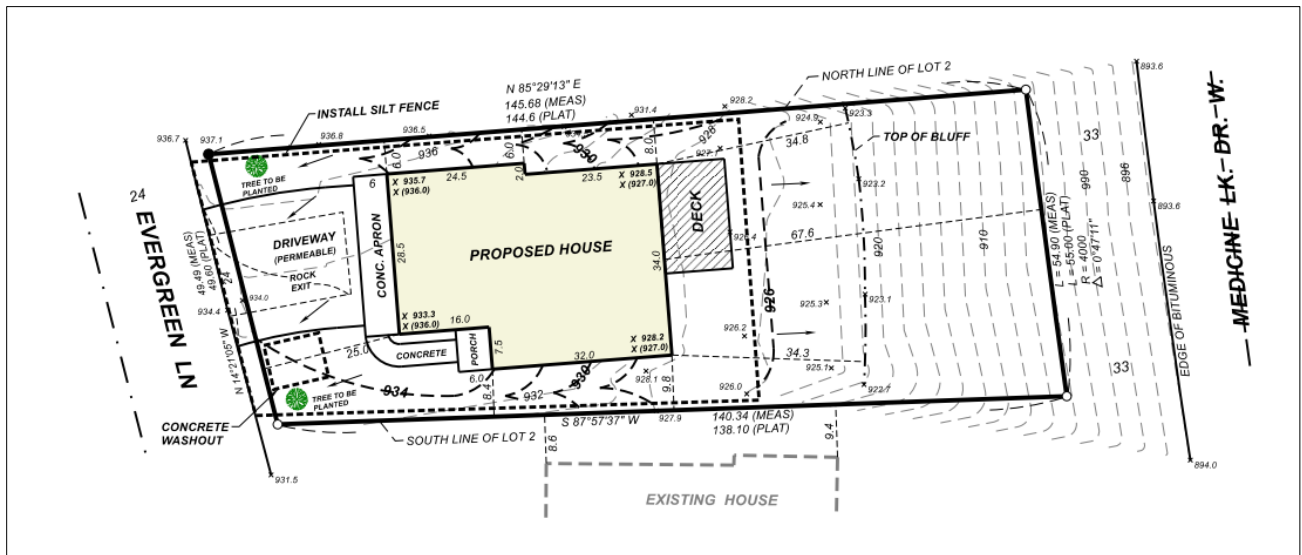
### Previous City Actions Affecting Site

The Elmhurst Gateway 2nd Addition was platted in 1933 and the original house on site was constructed in 1949. A building permit was issued in 2025 to redevelop the property with a new house.

### **Analysis of Request**

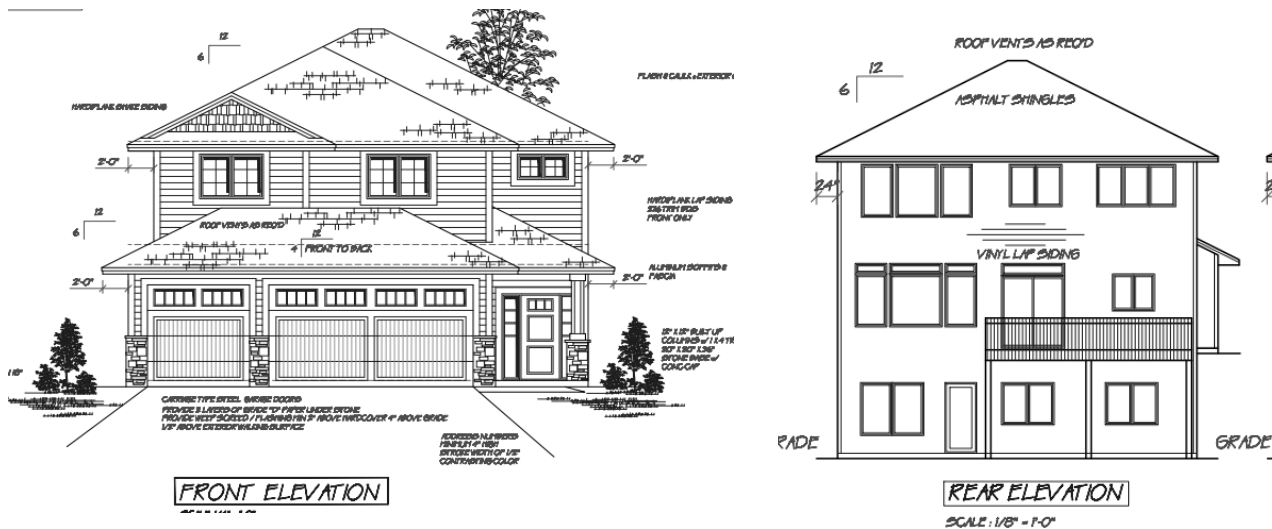
The subject property is a riparian lot adjacent to Medicine Lake, zoned RSF-3, and contains 7,315 square feet. While the property has access off of Evergreen Lane from the west, the property is addressed off Medicine Lake Drive West, which runs along the eastern edge and separates the property from Medicine Lake.

The applicant is requesting a bluff setback variance to allow the construction of a 12 by 20 foot deck in the rear yard of the property which would be 22 feet to the top of the bluff, where 30 feet is required by the zoning ordinance.



The Elmhurst Gateway 2nd Addition was platted in 1933, prior to the current zoning regulations and the top of bluff setback regulations, which were implemented through the Shoreland Management Overlay District in 1994. Several properties throughout the neighborhood have received similar variance or administrative permit approvals due to the topography surrounding Medicine Lake.

The applicant was approved in 2025 for a building permit to demolish the original house and construct a new home on the property. The Shoreland Management Overlay District limits development to a maximum of 25% impervious surface coverage. In the approved building permit, the applicant shows an impervious coverage of 24.94% including the house, porch, sidewalk, and apron. The proposed driveway was approved to be of permeable construction materials. Open decks do not count towards the impervious coverage when the ground cover underneath the deck is shown to allow water to penetrate the surface.



The properties to the north and south of the subject property have also had similar permits approved to demolish and construct new homes on their respective properties. The applicant’s proposal would be in character within its direct neighbors.

**Findings**

The Planning Commission must review the variance request for compliance with the standards outlined in the zoning ordinance. In review of the request, staff finds that all the applicable variance standards would be met, as follows:

1. Would the variance, and its resulting construction or project, be in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and be consistent with the comprehensive plan?

*Finding: Staff finds that the request the general purpose of the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan. Decks are a permitted accessory use in residentially zoned properties.*

2. The variance applicant has satisfactorily established that there are practical difficulties in complying with this Chapter. “Practical difficulties” means that:

- a. Does the applicant propose to use the property in a reasonable manner permitted by this Chapter?

*Finding: Staff finds that the request is reasonable. The property would be used in a reasonable manner, as permitted by the zoning ordinance. Upon the granting of the variance, the project will comply with the zoning ordinance.*

- b. Is the plight of the landowner due to circumstances unique to the property that were not created by the landowner?

- Finding: Staff finds that the property characteristics were not caused by the applicant as they are not the original owners, and that the proximity of the home to the bluff limits the area for reasonable expansion and usability of the rear yard.*
- c. The variance, if granted, would not alter the essential character of the locality?  
*Finding: Staff finds that the request would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood given the number of homes within the development with existing non-conforming setbacks to the bluff, the reasonable distance of the variance request, and the number of other properties in the neighborhood that have received approval for similar requests.*
3. Is the variance request based exclusively upon economic considerations?  
*Finding: Staff finds that the request is not solely based on economic considerations but based upon existing characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood and the want for additional useable outdoor recreational space.*
4. Would the variance, and its resulting construction or project, be detrimental to the public welfare, or would it be injurious to other land or improvements in the neighborhood?  
*Finding: Staff finds that the request would not impact the neighborhood as the distance request is reasonable and there are other properties within the neighborhood that have received approval for similar requests.*
5. Would variance, and its resulting construction or project, impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties? Or would it substantially increase traffic congestion in public streets, increase the danger of fire, endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish property values within the neighborhood?  
*Finding: Staff finds that the request would not impair light and air, nor increase traffic, risk of fire, nor endanger the public safety, nor diminish property values in the neighborhood.*
6. Is the variance requested the minimum action required to address or alleviate the practical difficulties?  
*Finding: Staff finds that the variance is the minimum action required to address the practical difficulties. The placement of the deck is based upon existing topographical conditions and would meet or exceed all other zoning requirements.*

**Level of Discretion in Decision-Making**

The City’s discretion in approving or denying a variance is limited to whether or not the proposal meets the standards for a variance. The City has a relatively high level of discretion with a variance because the burden of proof is on the applicant to show that they meet the standards for a variance.

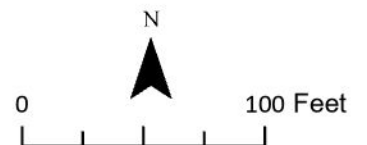
**Public Notice**

Notice of the public meeting was mailed to all property owners within 200 feet of the site.





- |                                    |                              |                               |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| FRD, Future Restricted Development | RMF-3, Multiple Family 3     | CC, City Center               |
| RSF-1, Single Family Detached 1    | RMF-4, Multiple Family 4     | B-C, Business Campus          |
| RSF-2, Single Family Detached 2    | O, Office                    | I-1, Light Industrial         |
| RSF-3, Single Family Detached 3    | C-2, Neighborhood Commercial | I-2, General Industrial       |
| RSF-4, Single and Two Family       | C-3, Highway Commercial      | I-3, Heavy Industrial         |
| RMF-1, Multiple Family 1           | C-4, Community Commercial    | P-I, Public/Institutional     |
| RMF-2, Multiple Family 2           | C-5, Commercial/Industrial   | PUD, Planned Unit Development |



**What is the proposed project? Explain what you're doing and why you need a variance.**

We have a new home being built at the address and would like a variance to have a usable sized deck on the back of the house. With the current property parameters near a bluff, we are able to build a 6.3ft x 10ft or a 4.3ft x full house length deck which is not practical. We are asking to build a 12t x 20ft deck.

**Would the variance, and its resulting construction or project, be in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and consistent with the comprehensive plan? Explain.**

Yes, the purpose of the zoning ordinance is to protect the bluff at the edge of our property. This deck would have no effect on the bluff, the road, or our neighbors while allowing a reasonable use of our property

**Would the variance, and its resulting construction or project, be detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to other land or improvements in the neighborhood? Explain.**

No, the deck will be completely within our own property and also within all the parameters of allowable distance from neighboring properties.

**Would the variance, and resulting project, impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties, substantially increase traffic congestion in public streets, increase the danger of fire, endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish property values within the neighborhood? Explain.**

No, the deck will have no effect on the neighbors or public, or the environment or drainage around our house. We are asking for a modest sized deck that is set back farther from the road than many of the other houses and decks on the block. As examples, I am attaching a photo taken from our yard of the deck two houses down from ours and also a photo of another deck a few houses down from the street view.

Explain the “practical difficulties” present by answering the following questions:

**Is the variance the minimum action required to address or alleviate the practical difficulties? Explain.**

We have the tentative deck in our initial plans for the house and it will not require any further changes to the property other than installing it.

**Do you plan to use the property in a reasonable manner, permitted by the Zoning Ordinance? Explain.**

Yes, this is a deck for our own personal use within our own yard.

**Would the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the locality?**

No, we are asking for a standard deck that is in character with the rest of the neighborhood. Many of the homes along the street have decks that are much closer to the bluff than ours will be. Most of the houses and their decks are outside of these current zoning ordinances due to being grandfathered in by older ordinances.

**Is the variance request based exclusively upon economic considerations? Explain.**

No, this deck is only for our personal recreational use.

**Is the difficulty due to circumstances unique to the property and was the issue created by the property owner? Explain**

While the previous structure on the property was removed due to safety and code concerns, the need to comply with modern zoning, impervious surface limits, and driveway requirements further restricted available space. As a result, accommodating a functional deck within the current zoning is not feasible without a variance. Many of the homes in the neighborhood have been rebuilt with decks in a similar way.

Crop







# CITY OF PLYMOUTH

## RESOLUTION No. 2026-

### RESOLUTION APPROVING A BLUFF SETBACK VARIANCE FOR JILL TOPEFF FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1519 MEDICINE LAKE DRIVE WEST (2026019)

WHEREAS, Jill Topeff has requested approval of a bluff setback variance for a deck to be located 22 feet from the top of the bluff where 30 feet is required; and

WHEREAS, the variance would allow construction of a deck to the west of the existing home in the rear yard; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is legally described as Lot 2, Block 1, Elmhurst Gateway 2nd Addition Hennepin County, Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed said request at a duly called public meeting,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA, that it should and hereby does approve the request by Jill Topeff, of a bluff setback variance for deck that would be 22 feet from the top of the bluff where 30 feet is required, for property located at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West, subject to the following:

1. The requested bluff setback variance to allow a bluff setback of 22 feet from the top of the bluff, where 30 feet is required, to allow the construction of a deck in the rear yard, west of the home at 1519 Medicine Lake Drive West, is hereby approved, in accordance with the plans received by the city on March 17, 2026, and additional information on April 7, 2026 except as may be amended by this resolution.
2. The requested variance is approved based on the finding that all applicable variance standards have been met, specifically:
  - a) The requested variance, and its resulting construction project, would be in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance, and would be consistent with the comprehensive plan. Staff finds that the request the general purpose of the zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan. Decks are a permitted accessory use in residentially zoned properties.
  - b) The applicant has demonstrated that there are practical difficulties in complying with the ordinance regulations, because:
    1. The applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner, as permitted by the zoning ordinance. Upon the granting of the variance, the project will comply with the zoning ordinance.

2. The request is due to unique circumstances not created by the property owners as they are not the original owners, and that the proximity of the home to the bluff limits the area for reasonable expansion and usability of the rear yard.
  3. The variance would not alter the essential character of the lot or neighborhood given the number of homes within the development with existing non-conforming setbacks to the bluff, the reasonable distance of the variance request, and the number of other properties in the neighborhood that have received approval for similar requests.
- c) The requested variance is not based upon economic considerations but rather, based upon the existing characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood and the want for additional useable outdoor recreational space.
  - d) The variance, and its resulting construction, would not be detrimental to the public welfare, nor would it be injurious to other land or improvements in the neighborhood as the distance request is reasonable and there are other properties within the neighborhood that have received approval for similar requests.
  - e) The variance, and its resulting construction, would not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties, nor would it increase traffic congestion or the danger of fire, endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish property values within the neighborhood.
  - f) The variance requested is the minimum action required to address the practical difficulties. The placement of the deck is based upon existing topographical conditions and would meet or exceed all other zoning requirements.
3. **A separate building permit is required prior to construction of the deck.**
  4. Any subsequent phases or expansions are subject to required reviews and approvals per ordinance provisions.
  5. The variance shall expire one year after the date of approval, unless the property owner or applicant has commenced the authorized improvement or use, or unless the applicant, with the consent of the property owner, has received prior approval from the city to extend the expiration date for up to one additional year, as regulated under section 21030.06 of the zoning ordinance.

APPROVED by the Plymouth City Council on this 9th day of June, 2026.

STATE OF MINNESOTA)  
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN) SS.

The undersigned, being the duly qualified and appointed City Clerk of the City of Plymouth, Minnesota, certifies that I compared the foregoing resolution adopted at a meeting of the Plymouth City Council on June 9, 2026, with the original thereof on file in my office, and the same is a correct transcription thereof.

WITNESS my hand officially as such City Clerk and the Corporate seal of the City this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk