

Chester

2015 Master Plan



Prepared by The
Chester Planning Board

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SNHPC

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Chester Master Plan is an important planning tool that sets forth the community's vision, goals and objectives. Most importantly, the master plan is a statutory responsibility for the town as it gives legal standing for its planning activities, ordinances and regulations. A master plan is a living document. It identifies key community issues and challenges and enumerates various planning objectives and statutory amendments to assist the town in achieving their land use and development goals. This plan also encourages community engagement, civic responsibility and an increased appreciation for the town today and in the future.

The Town of Chester last master plan was prepared in 2006. This Updated 2015 Master Plan incorporates current information about many aspects of Chester, including a vision for the community, and relevant goals and objectives for the planning board to follow in guiding the growth and development of the town. The vision, goals and objectives as set forth in the plan will help the town in maintaining and expanding existing infrastructure, preserving the environment and promoting sustainable development and appropriate fiscal policies.

Organization of the Plan

This 2015 Master Plan includes twelve (12) major plan chapters organized in the following order: vision and goals; demographic trends; land use; community facilities; housing; transportation; natural resources; economic development; historic and cultural resources; energy; regional concerns; and an appendix. These chapters review each topic area and identify areas where improvements are needed and how such improvements can be made or implemented. The planning horizon for this master plan is 2015 through 2025.

Key Planning Themes & Strategies for the Community

As presented and discussed in each chapter, the 2015 Master Plan identifies the following key planning themes and strategies for the Town of Chester to consider and implement in the town's day to day actions and activities, and long term initiatives and projects.

Overall Vision

- Retain Chester's Small Town Charm and Rural Character
- Create a Livable/Walkable and Vibrant Village/Town Center

Demographic Trends

- Monitor the Town's population growth
- Address the town's changing demographic needs – growing elderly and shrinking youth populations
- Continue to monitor and project the Town's student enrollment

Land Use

- Continue to manage the Town's overall rate and amount of growth and development
- Promote Mixed Use Development in appropriate locations
- Promote medical, business, office and various types of personal services to support the town's growing population
- Encourage and concentrate commercial development along or near Route 121/102 intersection
- Concentrate development into already developed areas to preserve rural character
- Change the zoning in the Village area to provide opportunities for Mixed Use within the same building and expand opportunities to promote a livable/walkable Town Center with path to the Chester Academy
- Continue to regulate the number of new residential building permits allowed each year to manage the town's growth
- Permit higher density residential development as a bonus for creating elderly housing, particularly in the Village/Town Center
- Develop design guidelines to suggest appropriate development styles consistent with historic character of the Village/Town Center
- Create a Town Common in the Village/Town Center
- Establish and Maintain a Conservation and Agricultural Corridor in the northern part of the Town
- Consider and provide areas for moderate density residential development - examine opportunities for one acre residential zoning
- Consider various innovative zoning techniques such as Density Transfer Credit (DTC) and Village Plan Alternative development to maintain and protect Chester's rural and small town character

Community Facilities

- Update the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on an annual basis
- Involve the School District in the Town's Capital Improvement Program
- Develop and adopt a School Impact Fee
- Continue to upgrade the Town's existing Fire and Police Department facilities
- Update the Town's Impact Fees annually
- Consider mutual arrangements with other towns in sharing GIS tax mapping and appraisal software systems and reappraisal services to reduce costs
- Continue to maintain and update the town's existing facilities and services and solid waste transfer station

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- Continue to implement the town's mandatory recycling program
- Continue to maintain and upgrade the town's roads, recreation facilities, library and historic buildings
- Create Safe Community Gathering Spots for the Youth
- Continue to send Chester students to Pinkerton Academy

Housing

- Create Elderly and Workforce Housing Opportunities
- Maintain adequate housing supply to meet diverse housing needs of the community
- Expand opportunities for manufactured housing in Chester, including manufactured housing parks

Transportation

- Address Traffic Congestion at Rt. 121/102 Intersection
- Increase Roadway Safety for Pedestrians and Bicyclists
- Increase the quality and maintenance of the town's roads and drainage structures
- Identify Class VI Roads Suitable as Recreational Trails
- Develop a Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan for the Town
- Continue to support and work to Implement Scenic and Historic Byways
- Address safety issues at NH 102 and Webster Lane; NH 121 and Pulpit Rock Road; NH 102, North Pond Road and Old Sandown Road; and NH 102 and East Derry Road
- Continue to support and participate in regional public transit and transportation programs and initiatives involving Chester
- Continue to use the UNH Technology Center's Road Surface Management System

Natural Resources

- Continue to make conservation of open space and forests, agricultural lands and drinking water supply a high community priority
- Keep the Town's groundwater and wetland protection regulations current and up to date
- Continue to participate in state and regional Brownfields Program actions to assess and clean up contaminated properties
- Develop a local wildlife habitat protection plan
- Keep the Town's Natural Resources Inventory current and up to date
- Continue to support regional conservation protection efforts and funding
- Continue to utilize the full current use change tax penalty funding for town conservation and open space protection

Economic Development

- Identify Zoning Changes to Allow for Small Scale Commercial Development
- Protect/Expand Home Businesses
- Increase Town's Tax Base

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- Increase local jobs and employment opportunities
- Maintain good relations with existing businesses
- Attract new businesses in keeping with the Town's land use and development goals
- Consider areas which might be eligible for state designation as an Economic Revitalization Tax Credit Zone
- Continue to participate in the greater Access Manchester regional economic alliance

Historic and Cultural Resources

- Continue to make the protection and preservation of the Town's Historic and Cultural Resources a high priority
- Look for funding to conduct a comprehensive and detailed historic survey according to state and federal standards
- Consider seeking Certified Local Government status for historic preservation activities
- Support local and regional scenic road designation and historic/scenic byways
- Consider developing transfer development rights and alternative village plan ordinances
- Evaluate various opportunities to promote the arts and cultural opportunities to expand tourism and Chester's creative economy
- Encourage and implement public art and creative spaces, such as a Town Common and outdoor art displays and murals
- Consider establishing an Arts and Cultural Commission and an Arts and Cultural District

Energy

- Continue to improve energy efficiency of Chester's municipal buildings
- Support regional, state and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Plan for energy efficient growth and development patterns and incorporate solar energy and other forms of renewable energy into local regulations
- Establish an Energy Committee and work with Board of Selectmen in benchmarking energy use and consumption and promote energy efficiency and cost savings
- Implement recommendations to municipal buildings from energy audits
- Streamline building permit procedures and regulations to promote renewable energy
- Consider opportunities to participate in community solar projects under the state's new group net metering laws

Regional Concerns

- Continue to monitor and designate development proposals of regional impact
- Continue to monitor development proposals along or near town lines
- Continue to participate in state and regional planning initiatives and partnerships which directly benefit Chester such as the New Hampshire Municipal Association, the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, NH Office of Energy and Planning, Access Greater Manchester, Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire and the NH DOT Transportation Advisory Committee

- Continue to participate in and support various state and regional environmental initiatives and associations such as the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee and activities of the Rockingham County Conservation District and the Piscataqua Estuaries Partnership

Implementation Schedule

The following implementation schedule is prepared as a general guide to help the town implement the key planning themes and strategies of this plan. The schedule identifies the key parties, funding sources and general timeframe – short, mid and long term for who, how and when the key planning themes and strategies of the plan should be considered and addressed. It is recommended that the Planning Board review this implementation schedule annually to identify and develop their annual work plan and planning priorities for the year.

Chester 2015 Master Plan: Prepared September 2015		Implementation Schedule			
Key Planning Themes & Strategies for the Community		Level of Government	Potential Partners	Funding Sources	Time Frame
Demographic Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the town's population growth • Address the town's changing demographic needs • Continue to monitor and project the town's student enrollment 	Local	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen & School Board	General Fund	Ongoing
Land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development along or near 121/102 intersection • Establish and maintain conservation and agricultural activities • Promote mixed use development in appropriate locations 	Local	Planning Board & Agriculture Commission	General Fund & Grants	Medium (3-5 years)
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the town's Capital Improvement Program annually • Continue to maintain and upgrade existing facilities and services • Update the town's impact fees annually 	Local	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee	General Fund, Impact fees & Grants	Short (1-2 years)
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create elderly and workforce housing opportunities • Maintain adequate housing supply to meet diverse housing needs • Expand opportunities for manufactured housing 	Local and Regional	Planning Board	Public / private partnerships	Medium (3-5 years)
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address traffic congestion at the Rt. 121/120 intersection • Increase roadway safety for pedestrians and bicyclists • Continue to support and participate in regional public transit programs 	Local and Regional	Planning Board, SNHPC, NH DOT	Grants	Short (1-2 years)
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to make conservation of natural resources a high priority • Continue to participate in state and regional brownfields program • Keep the town's natural resources inventory up to date 	Local and Regional	Planning Board, NH DRED, Planning Board NH DES, SNHPC	Conservation Commission, General Fund & Grants	Short (1-2 years)
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify zoning changes to allow for small scale commercial development • Attract new service-related businesses without compromising community goals • Identify eligible locations to receive economic revitalization tax credits 	Local and Regional	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	General Fund	Long (5-10 years)
Historic and Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to make historic preservation in Chester a high priority • Consider enacting transfer development rights and other planning ordinances • Encourage and implement public art and creative spaces 	Local	Planning Board, Board of Selectmen & State	General Fund & Grants	Medium (3-5 years)
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support regional, state and national initiatives to reduce GHG emissions • Streamline building permit regulations to promote renewable energy • Establish an Energy Committee to promote energy efficiency and cost savings 	Local and Regional	Town Heritage Commission & State	General Fund & Grants	Short (1-3 years)
Regional Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor and designate development proposals of regional impact • Continue to monitor development proposals along or near town lines • Continue to engage in state & regional planning and environmental initiatives 	Local and Regional	Planning Board, SNHPC, NH DES & NH DOT	General Fund	Medium (3-5 years)

Vision and Goals

Introduction

This Chapter sets forth Chester’s vision statement and goals for the community. The vision statement and goals articulate the desires of the citizens of the Town of Chester based upon (1) the public input obtained at the master plan visioning workshop; and (2) the

public feedback received through the master plan survey, including (3) the general findings and recommendations contained within the master plan chapters. The vision statement and goals are important elements of the master plan as they set forth the guiding principles and planning priorities for the Town of Chester today and in the future.

Planning for Sustainable Growth

Chester today is an attractive town and residential bedroom community offering residents a peaceful, rural sense of place with lots of open space and quiet residential neighborhoods, quality education and public facilities and services. While Chester’s population growth has increased by twenty-five percent or more over the past decade (2000 to 2010), the planning board has actively worked to manage and guide the town’s growth to preserve and complement Chester’s existing rural character and small town charm.

Managing growth and development to preserve and complement Chester’s existing character is a central challenge for the planning board. Many of Chester’s boards and commissions continually strive to provide the “highest quality public service possible” given existing

constraints and limited resources. Likewise, identifying ways to maintain and improve public facilities as fixed costs continue to increase at higher rates is equally challenging to town officials and staff.

Over the years, the Town of Chester has done an excellent job of planning for and responding to new growth and development within the community. Through this master plan, Chester is continuing its diligent effort to ensure that the community and its future generations will enjoy adequate public services and facilities and a high quality of life. This mission is rooted in the principle of sustainability that is to meet today’s needs in a manner which does not compromise the ability of tomorrow’s residents to meet their own needs.

Master Plan Requirements

There are two required elements per NH RSA, Chapter 674:2 which must be included in all Master Plans: a vision statement and a land use analysis. The main reason behind these requirements is that a community's vision statement and goals have a significantly higher chance of being achieved when residents and town officials can see what the town's desired future is and can imagine and support the steps and actions needed to implement the vision.

A vision section that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.

NH RSA Chapter 674:2

The Community Visioning Workshop

The Chester Planning Board and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) worked together to hold a community wide visioning workshop on January 7, 2015 in the multi-purpose room at the town office building.

Nearly forty people came out to voice their opinions about Chester's future. Robin LeBlanc, Executive Director with Plan NH, facilitated the workshop and led early discussions about what a town's vision is supposed to look like and how town residents feel about their community. Opening ideas and thoughts were identified and deliberated in a large group setting for approximately one hour. Some of the opening thoughts discussed included:

- The goals of the visioning workshop;
- Theory of Growth: e.g. Traditional thinking suggests growth is necessary, but growth may not be right for every community;
- What residents envision for a celebration of the town's incorporation?

In addition to these opening discussion thoughts, a number of assumptions about the town were identified and discussed. Some of the popular assumptions about Chester include: there is always a need for: public safety; road improvements; volunteers; and that local property taxes will increase.

Another important and telling question asked during this first part of the workshop was "Why did you move to Chester or why did you decide to stay? This question generated much discussion relating to the advantages of settling in Chester. According to town residents the town's school system, rural character, low crime rates and good location/access to highways for commuting to work were identified as some of Chester's greatest assets.

A large portion of the group discussions was also focused on the expansion of Chester's tax base to make the town less reliant on residential property taxes as its main source of capital. Many residents

voiced their interest in creating economic opportunities in the town, including mixed use development with apartments and small scale shops and restaurants in the same building. Others were opposed to the idea that the town needed more commercial development, citing Chester's small town charm and relative proximity to commercial areas in the adjoining towns of Raymond and Derry.

Discussions held during the first part of the workshop also connected values present among the community to the decision-making process affecting the town's growth and development.

To plan for the future, it is important to take a look at the past. "How has Chester changed over the past 40 years?" In response to this question, many residents expressed concerns with issues related to increased development, including traffic congestion and more residential subdivisions. Other residents voiced the need for positive changes, including the town's efforts in the past to conserve natural areas and to increase involvement of families in recreational activities.

The larger group discussions came to an end shortly after 8 pm when residents stopped for a break and divided into small groups of about 6-8 people. The small group discussions focused on two key questions:

- (1) What is important to you?
- (2) What are your assumptions about the future?

As residents discussed these questions, SNHPC and Plan NH staff recorded the

comments on flip charts (a complete list of all the comments recorded on the flip charts is provided in the Appendix). In a review of these comments, many similar themes appeared throughout the small group discussions, including:

- Increase tax base;
- Promote some commercial development;
- Create a walkable village center;
- Retain rural character and community feel;
- Identify zoning changes to allow for commercial development in other zones;
- Address traffic congestion, specifically near Rt. 121/102 intersection;
- Increase roadway safety for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Promote mixed use development and promote reuse of the old Chester College property and buildings.

As residents identified the advantages and disadvantages of these comments and themes; overall, residents feel there is much opportunity in the town, whether it is protecting Chester's open space and natural areas or the possibility of creating a walkable village center.

In addition to these themes, affordable housing was also identified as a major concern during the visioning workshop. Chester has experienced a recent decrease in school enrollment, particularly at the elementary age level. Many residents at the workshop believe this to be attributable to the lack of affordable housing in town.

Young families are finding it difficult to live in Chester and as a result must move to surrounding towns. Some residents however believe Chester does not need affordable housing and the Town should stay the way it is.

After nearly a half hour of small group discussions, the entire group rejoined as a whole and each small group reported out what some of their findings were. At the end of the workshop, discussions continued about how the town needs a walkable village center and to expand the town's tax base. Closing remarks were made just before 9:00 pm and residents were provided with notecards to write down their final thoughts for the vision statement (a summary of all the notecard comments is also provided in the Appendix).

Some of the similar themes expressed on the notecards include:

- Preserve Chester's rural character
- Maintain Chester's small, quaint village
- Protect/expand home businesses
- Create safe community gathering spots for the youth

Chester Today/Chester Tomorrow

Overall, the following themes emerged from the visioning workshop to illustrate some of the ideas discussed and brought forward:

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Retain rural character and community feel.
- Preserve land through conservation easements.

Economic Development

- Create/allow mixed use development – both within a building and on a lot.
- Promote some forms of commercial development that fit best the community and existing land use patterns.
- Increase the town's tax base.
- Approve zoning changes to allow for some commercial development in appropriate zones.

Transportation

- Create a livable and walkable town center.
- Promote roadway safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Address traffic congestion, specifically near Route 121/102 intersection.

Housing

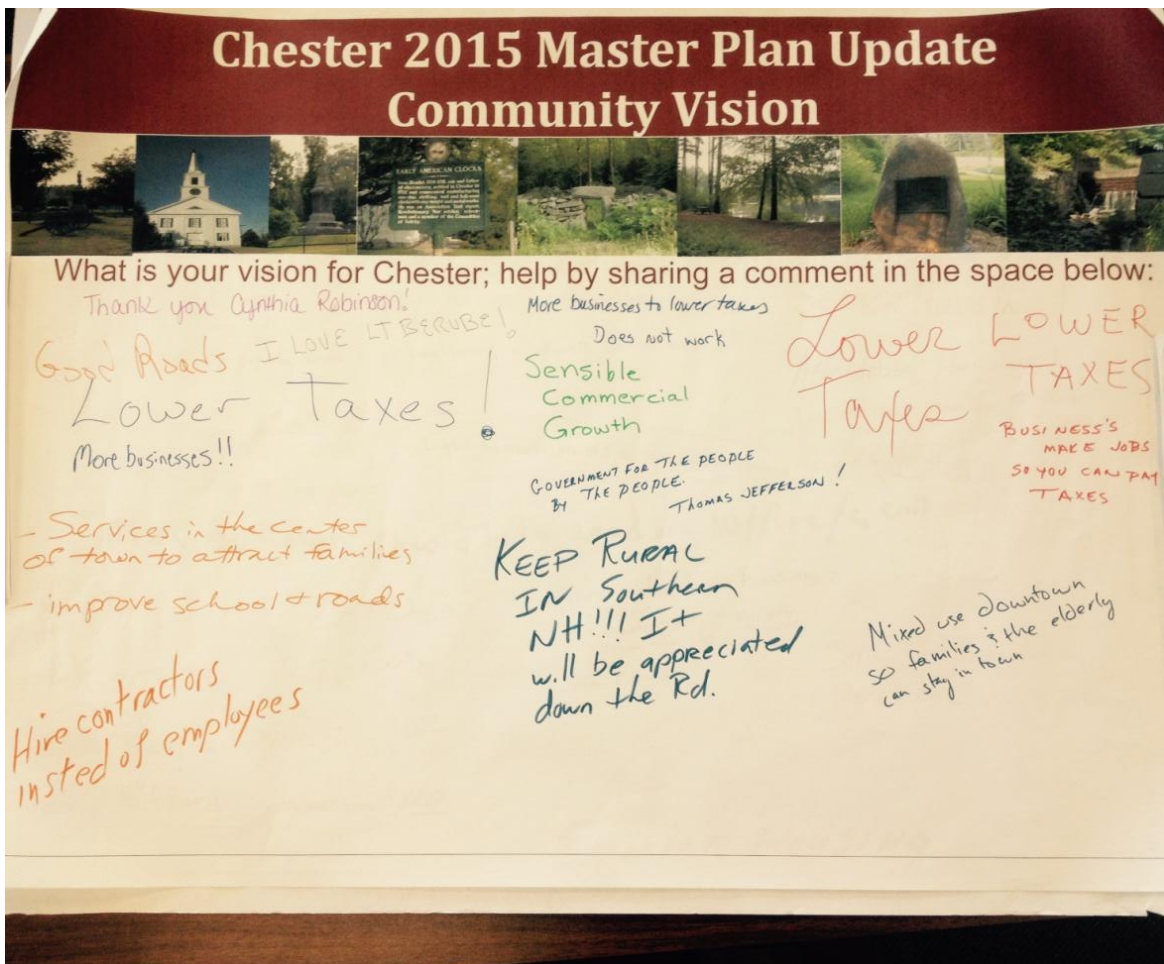
- Address the lack of affordable housing in the community.

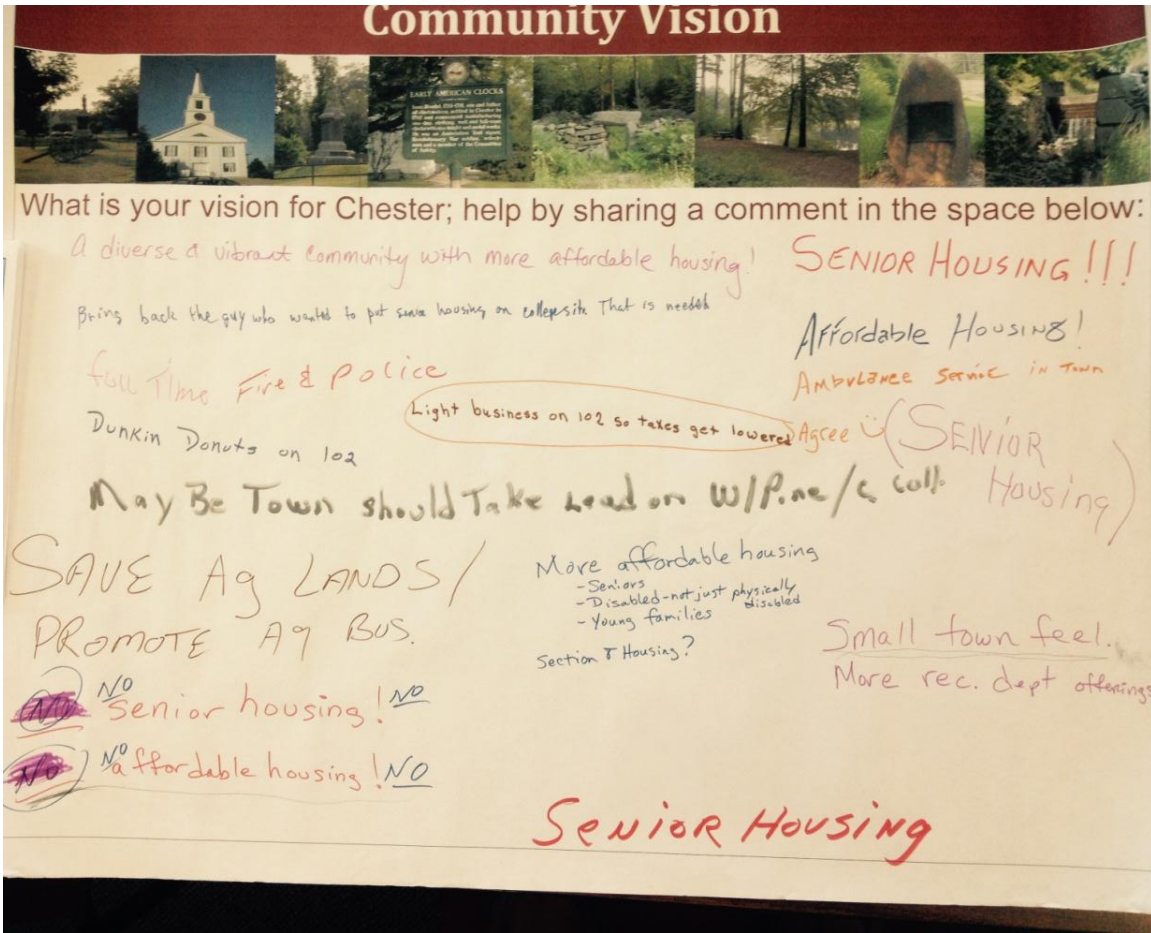
Community Facilities and Utilities

- Update Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) annual basis.

Public Comments on Town Bulletin

In addition to the vision workshop, SNHPC and the Chester Planning Board set up large bulletin boards in the Town office building. The public was invited to make comments about the community on these boards.





The following themes illustrate these comments:

- Increase commercial development such as agricultural but maintain small town rural feel
- Lowering of taxes
- Increase housing options, including affordable and senior housing

The Master Plan Community Survey

The Chester Planning Board and the SNHPC prepared and distributed a community-wide master plan survey as part of the development of this plan. During January 2015, the community survey was mailed to all of Chester’s residents’ and property owners -- both local and out of town. The survey was made available to the public on the Town website, as well as at the Town Hall. Among all the surveys distributed, the Town received a total of 201 responses. The following responses were received as relating to a vision for the Town of Chester (see Appendix in this Plan for complete survey results).

Question #1: What, in your opinion, are the most important general issues that must be addressed in Chester over the next five years? Please check up to five items from the list.

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Table 1: General Issues						
General Issues	Create elderly housing	Create affordable housing	Increase Housing Variety	Increase recreational opportunities	Preserve agricultural lands	Increase school capacity/facilities
Total Responses	62	18	17	55	146	14
General Issues	Upgrade or create new town facilities	Protect historic properties and sites	Protect drinking water supply and quality	Preserve open space and forests	Attract new retail or office development	Attract new industrial parks
Total Responses	19	123	140	169	84	34
General Issues	Improve road quality and traffic control	Provide public transportation	Provide sidewalks in key areas	Decrease the rate of residential growth	Increase areas zoned for commercial/ industrial uses	Create a vibrant town center
Total Responses	113	8	33	76	43	85

Question #2: Are you a Chester full-time resident, seasonal resident or business owner?

Table 2: Residency Status				
Residency Status	Full-time resident	No Response	Full-Time/Business Owners	Land Owners
Total Responses	273	4	2	2

Question #3: If you are a business owner, on what street is your business located?

Table 3: Location of Business											
Street Name	No response	Church Road	Old Sandown Road	Chester Street	Fremont Road	Harantis Lake Road	Raymond Road	Lane Road	Twin Fawn Road	North Pond Road	East Derry Road
Total Responses	267	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Question #4: Do you own or rent your home?

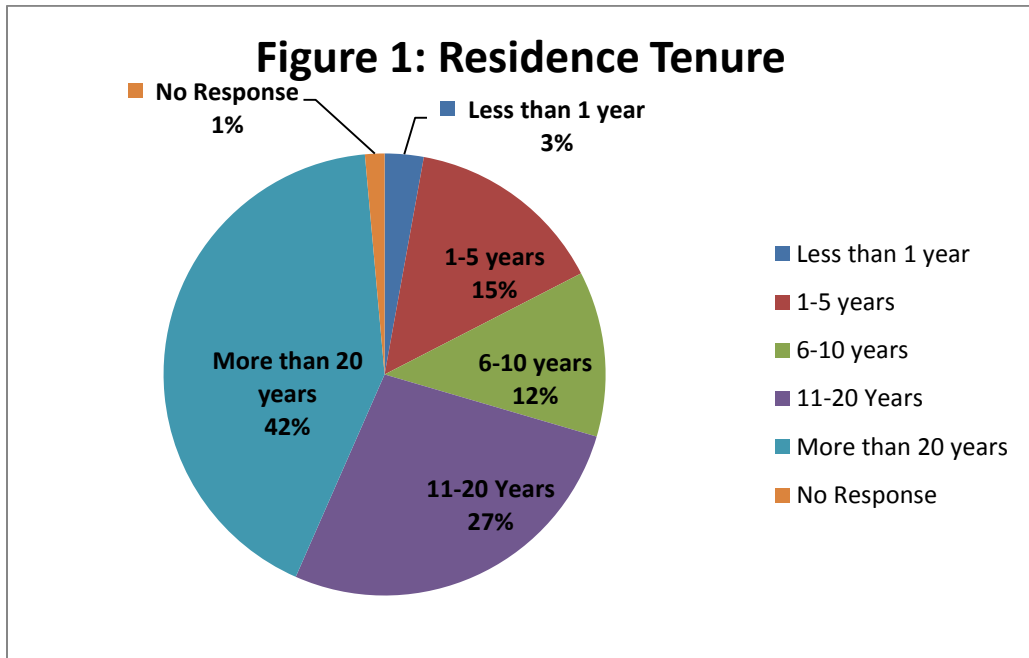
Table 4: Home Ownership			
Ownership Status	Own	Rent	No Response
Total Responses	272	2	7

Question #5: What type of home do you live in?

Table 5: Type of Home						
Home Type	Single Family Houses	Townhouse/ Condominiums	No response	Duplex	Manufactured	Apartment
Total	267	4	5	1	3	1

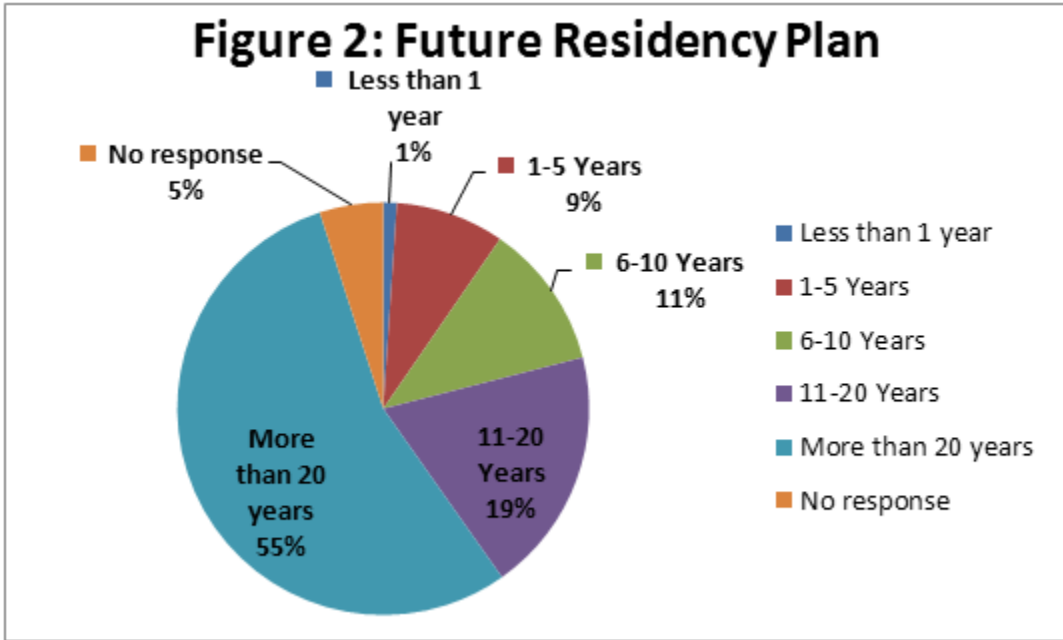
Question #6: How long have you lived in Chester?

Table 6: Residence Tenure						
Time	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 Years	More than 20 years	No Response
Total	8	41	34	76	118	4



Question #7: How long do you plan to stay in Chester?

Table 7: Future Residency Plan						
Time	Less than 1 year	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	More than 20 years	No response
Total	3	24	32	54	154	14



Question #41: What’s the best thing about Chester?

RESPONSE	NUMBER
Rural / Small Town Feel	115
Sense of Community	19
Natural and / or Built Beauty	18
History	17
Schools	11
Safety	7

Question #42: What’s the worst thing about Chester?

RESPONSE	NUMBER
Roads / Traffic	51
Taxes	46
Lack of Businesses / Retail / Service	19
Politics	11
Too Much Growth	9

Question #43: If you could identify one vision for Chester what would it be?

Common themes for Chester Residents Vision for the Town:

1. Retain small town charm and rural character.
2. Improve village center/downtown area.
3. Increase elderly housing options.
4. Small business growth to broaden tax base but limited to retain rural character.
5. Utilize Chester College property.
6. Lower tax burden for residents.

In short, from the feedback received through the survey, the following general issues, assets and themes were identified for Chester today and in the future.

General Issues Identified as being of Highest Priority:

- Preserve open space and forests
- Preserve agricultural lands
- Protect drinking water supply and quality
- Protect historic properties and sites
- Improve road quality and traffic control
- Attract new retail or office development
- Decrease the rate of residential growth
- Create a vibrant town center
- Create elderly housing

Best Things about Chester:

- Rural/small town feel
- Sense of community
- Natural and or built beauty
- History
- Schools
- Safety

Worst Things about Chester:

- Roads/traffic
- Taxes
- Lack of businesses/retail/service
- Politics
- Too much growth

Overall Common Themes Expressed by Chester Residents for Inclusion in Vision Statement for the Town

- Retain small town charm and rural character
- Improve village center/downtown area
- Increase elderly housing options
- Promote small business growth to broaden tax base but limited to retain rural character
- Utilize Chester College property
- Lower tax burden for homeowners

Vision Statement

Based upon the themes expressed above as well as the input received from town residents in the master plan survey and public comments, the following Vision Statement has been prepared for this master plan. This vision statement offers the community overall guidance and direction in shaping Chester's growth and development today and in the future.

Vision Statement for the Town of Chester, NH

Based upon all the public input received in developing this master plan, the following vision statement for Chester is presented for inclusion in this master plan.

Chester residents acknowledge that growth will happen and they realize they must plan for it in a way that promotes and preserves the Town's existing historic and rural character.

One of the first observations Chester residents make when asked to describe their Town is that they enjoy having a strong sense of community. Chester residents seek a community that is a desirable place to live, work and play. They want to continue to retain the small town charm and rural character that Chester has long been known for, which means valuing and protecting the built and natural environment. They want a vibrant village center and encouraging development to occur in areas that have already been developed. They want a variety of housing options which reflect diversity in age and income of the town's population. Lastly, residents want to continue to promote job creation and expand economic development opportunities, which will help the Town attract and retain residents and businesses.

In addition, Chester residents have also identified some of the challenges facing the Town. These include addressing increasing traffic growth, maintaining adequate public facilities and services, lowering the tax burden on town residents, and most importantly maintaining Chester's unique character – its small town charm and feel, its history and New England style architecture.

Community Goals and Objectives

The community goals and objectives presented here are from the Town's prior master plan (2006) and provide a baseline for the planning board to make changes and additions. A few new goals and objectives are also included based upon the new master plan chapters and the visioning workshop.

Demographic Trends

Goal: Maintain a diverse population with adequate housing and economic opportunities for all ages representative of national or state trends.

Objectives:

1. Review local ordinances to investigate their impact on local land use and housing development and how this shapes Chester's resident population.
2. Review land use and housing policies and regulations for opportunities to promote a diverse population.
3. Promote economic opportunities for Chester's residents through local land use policies and regulations (i.e. continue to support Chester's existing home business base).
4. Review the Chester Growth Control Ordinance to ensure its ability to guide future growth consistent with, and not exceeding, regional trends and averages.

Goal: Increase the Town's proportion of younger households who will bolster the local economy, keep multiple generations of the Town's families living in Chester, and create a renewed sense of civic involvement.

Objectives:

1. Ensure housing ordinances allow opportunities for young adults, often the children of Chester's residents, to live in Town.
2. Encourage and actively seek civic involvement from Chester's younger populations.

Community Facilities

Goal: Maintain the town departments and offices level of service to adequately meet residents' life, health, safety, cultural, and educational needs.

Objectives:

1. Provide sufficient public services in a cost effective manner that meet the needs of Chester's residents.
2. Coordinate the expansion of public facilities in accordance with the growth of the Town.

3. Update the Town's Capital Improvements Plan to respond to the needs of town departments as identified in the Community Facilities chapter.
4. Support the Town's library so that it may grow with the Town and continue to provide excellent local services.
5. Promote the use of Chester's community kitchen.
6. Continue to improve the technical quality of Chester's Community Access Television (CTV-21 and 22).
7. Preserve Stevens Hall as the historical center of the community, including restoration of roof and other structural needs.

Goal: Provide adequate educational facilities to support future growth in the Town.

Objectives:

1. Coordinate the timing and location of new educational facilities as they become necessary in accordance with the residential growth of the Town.
2. Provide excellent educational opportunities in a cost effective manner.

Goal: Maintain, expand and encourage a range of cultural diversity and recreational opportunities for Chester residents of all ages and abilities.

Objectives:

1. Support Chester's local community service facilities, i.e. food pantry and community clothes closet.
2. Continue to support Chester's Recreation and Athletic programs and efforts to create new playing fields.
3. Support Chester's *community* center and senior activities.

Housing

Goal: Support and enable a diversity of housing types and styles that will include starter homes, rental units, multi-family residences, and other relatively lower cost housing types to ensure a broad range of housing costs and opportunities in Chester.

Objectives:

1. Review Chester's existing open space development provisions in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure opportunities for diversity while protecting open space and enhancing the rural character of the community.
2. Review Chester's existing inclusionary housing provisions to ensure opportunities for diverse and affordable housing are viable.

3. Review Chester's zoning ordinance to identify additional housing types that may be permitted to promote diversity in the Town's housing stock and identify appropriate locations for the selected housing typologies.
4. Review area and dimensional requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision, and Site Plan Review Regulations to ensure feasible opportunities for smaller single-family housing units.

Goal: Evaluate and promote housing opportunities for an aging population so that Chester's longtime residents can remain in Town without needing to move elsewhere to find affordable and handicap accessible housing.

Objectives:

1. Review existing building, zoning, site plan and subdivision regulations and identify mechanisms to promote accessibility in new development proposals.
2. Establish design guidelines that will ensure senior housing is accessible.
3. Review the Zoning Ordinance to identify additional housing types that may be permitted, as part of senior housing, to establish lower cost units in Town.

Economic Development

Goal: Promote environmentally sound light industry.

Objectives:

1. Define what industrial uses could be permitted as environmentally sensible.
2. Review the Zoning Ordinance to identify areas appropriate for industrial uses consistent with those identified as part of the previous objective.
3. Establish new regulations to guide environmentally sound light industry.
4. Encourage and recruit environmentally sensitive light industrial businesses to locate in Chester as a means of reducing the local tax burden through non-residential sources while retaining a rural atmosphere.

Goal: Review and clarify existing light industrial and commercial zones.

Objectives:

1. Examine and review current permitted uses within the two zones to better clarify what is permitted in the zones.
2. Update the Zoning Ordinances to promote light industrial and commercial development consistent with the Master Plan vision.
3. Review additional areas for expansion.

Goal: Allow for the development of the town center that is consistent with the existing historic New England town center aesthetic.

Objectives:

1. Develop a Town Center Plan that could facilitate the creation of a more integrated center and embrace the principles of smart growth and promote the image of a traditional New England town center.
2. Review and amend the Zoning, Subdivision, and Site Plan Review Regulations to permit development consistent with the existing historic structures (i.e. setbacks, lot sizes, building heights, etc.).
3. Review additional non-residential uses that could be permitted within the Town Center to further support the community's economic wellbeing, provide services to Chester's residents, and still retain the Town's New England village charm.
4. Develop a new zoning district for the Town Center to support economic development consistent with the Town's existing historic character.
5. Develop design guidelines for the Town Center that will ensure all new development is consistent with the existing historic fabric of the center.

Transportation

Goal: Encourage appropriate road sizes within subdivisions to minimize paving where appropriate while ensuring adequate and safe access for emergency response vehicles.

Objectives:

1. Develop low impact road design standards for Chester using a functional classification system.

Goal: Promote connected and rational road networks between new developments and existing roads.

Objectives:

1. Develop a set of design guidelines demonstrating preferred development types.
2. Create a handout demonstrating preferred development for applicants coming before the Planning Board.

Goal: Promote pedestrian and bicycle opportunities throughout the Town of Chester.

Objectives:

1. Investigate and examine currently available bicycle and pedestrian opportunities
2. Create a bicycle and pedestrian recreation plan for the Town.
3. Look at converting some Class VI roads to trails.
4. Explore Safe Routes to School.
5. Work with NH DOT and SNHPC to develop safe pedestrian crossing along NH Route 102 and 121 (Town Center Area).

Goal: Promote roadway safety improvements.

Objectives:

1. Review and implement intersection improvements identified in the Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan.
2. Update or redo the Town's UNH-based Technology Transfer Center Roadway Surface Inventory.
3. Evaluate traffic calming techniques and best practices in appropriate locations throughout the community.
4. Consider participation in NH DOT's context sensitive solutions program.

Natural Resources

Goal: Protect Chester's valuable water resources including wetlands, water recharge areas, and drinking water supplies.

Objectives:

1. Update groundwater protection ordinance and consider well-head protection areas.
2. Develop a water resources management plan.
3. Adopt wetlands regulations that will support the Conservation Commission's goals of the protection of these features.
4. Seek grant funding from Federal and State sources to retain the State Geological Survey and the NH Department of Environmental Services to produce a water quality mapping information for the town with well water testing.

Goal: Promote the preservation and utilization of open space land, giving careful attention to water resources, steep slopes and agricultural lands.

Objectives:

1. Promote the protection of Chester's remaining agricultural lands.
2. Provide incentives to local farmers to maintain farming and other agricultural ventures as viable means of self-employment.
3. Review the permitted agricultural uses in Chester's ordinances to ensure a variety of opportunities exist that may include tree farms, community supported agriculture and forestry.
4. Identify or inventory remaining undisturbed ridgelines via GIS-based scientific analyses and consider regulations to prohibit development on those locations.
5. Encourage school use of outdoor resources for field trips and science Studies (Wason Pond), as well as educate future citizens of the importance of natural resource protection.
6. Encourage access to and use of the Exeter River and its tributaries.
7. Implement the Chester Open Space Plan and identify local priorities for open space protection that will conserve water resources, steep slopes and agricultural lands.
8. Continue to support funding of conservation easements.

Goal: Encourage development in Chester to be sensitive to its surrounding natural environment.

Objectives:

1. Review and revise local ordinances to ensure that all subdivision and site plan proposals minimize storm water runoff.
2. Review and revise local ordinances to encourage dark sky preservation.
3. Review and revise local ordinances to ensure future development will promote noise reduction.

Historic Resources

Goal: Encourage access to and use of Spring Hill Farm.

Objectives:

1. Publicize access and amenities available for residents.
2. Support local policies and regulations to ensure adequate access is allowed for residents to fully enjoy the farm.
3. Develop a community produce-garden program

Goal: Promote the preservation of Chester's historic resources.

Objectives:

1. *Consider establishing a heritage commission to:*
 - a. Seek National or State Historic Register or State Historic Markers designation for eligible properties in conjunction with the Chester Historical Society.
 - b. Participate in programs such as the Scenic Byways, the New Hampshire Barn Survey Program or a comprehensive historic resource inventory that will help document and preserve Chester's resources.
 - c. Promote educational programs for Chester's residents and students highlighting the valuable historic resources in town.

Regional Concerns

Goal: Maintain adequate shared solid waste disposal systems to sustain long-term waste needs.

Objectives:

1. Support cooperative efforts to develop new opportunities for regional recycling processing facilities, especially for household hazardous waste.

Goal: Promote continued communication with other communities in the Exeter River Watershed.

Objectives:

1. Maintain participation in the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee.
2. Continue dialogue with Derry regarding the Beaver Lake Watershed.
3. Continue participation in the Great Bay Estuaries project and *the Southeast Watershed Alliance*.
4. Support protection and prevent encroachment within Manchester Water Work's lands.

Goal: Support the need for a regional groundwater supply study.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the Southern NH Planning Commission and/or other organizations to look at long term sustainability of groundwater.

Goal: Actively participate in regional initiatives that may be of benefit or concern to Chester so that the town's needs and interests are shared and heard at the regional level.

Objectives:

1. Actively participate in I-93 and Exit 4A forums.
2. Promote communication with neighboring communities regarding developments of regional impact.
3. Plan for future traffic increases and impacts of regional developments.
4. Plan for growth overflows from other towns at or near build-out.

Land Use

Goal: Identify appropriate areas for future growth, town facilities, and land protection.

Objectives:

1. *Update* Future Land Use during Master Plan review.
2. Identify potential growth or development patterns such as open space subdivision or village plan alternatives that would allow future growth to occur consistent with the goals of this Master Plan.
3. *Review* the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations to support and implement the land use goals established in the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map.
4. Utilize the results of the build-out analysis and open space preservation goals and objectives to preserve the status of the Class VI roads.
5. Encourage residential, commercial and industrial growth in limited areas of Chester, as identified on the Future Land Use Map, in order to prevent scattered and premature development in town that would threaten the community's rural character.

Goal: Utilize build-out scenarios and analyses to consider future development alternatives for the Town.

Goal: Encourage land use decisions that support the open space plan components of the Master Plan.

Objectives:

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1. Review and revise the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations to support the principles of minimum impact development.
2. Utilize the site plan review process to highlight the protection of natural and community resources.
3. Selectively identify and purchase land or easements consistent with the priorities of the Master Plan's Natural Resources Chapter and associated goals, as well as those of the Open Space Plan.

Chester

2015 Master Plan



Demographic Trends

Demographic Trends

Introduction

This Chapter of Chester's Master Plan identifies the most current population, housing, and other demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the town. Population and housing unit changes from 2000 to present-day, and future projections to 2035 are also included. This Chapter provides the necessary background information and data to support the other chapters of the Master Plan.

Population change is driven by two factors, natural changes including births and deaths and

the net migration or change in persons entering or exiting a community. Many local and regional factors such as employment opportunities, provision of municipal services, transportation networks, natural features, cost of living, and other quality of life issues may influence net migration and ultimately impact local population growth or decline. In turn, changes in population will drive the demand for housing, future land development, and the need for community services for age specific populations such as schools and elder care. Population growth is both directly and indirectly tied to all aspects of local planning.

Population Growth

Chester was home to over 2,000 residents in the early 1800s, reaching a peak in 1820 with 2,262 persons. Two major events, the opening of the Amoskeag Mills and the sectioning off of the Town Auburn from Chester, led to the greatest initial population declines. The continued impacts of events such as the Civil War, two depressions and a flu epidemic caused continued population loss through 1930, following which growth was gradual through 1960. After the completion of the Interstate 93 highway system in 1963, the town grew at unprecedented rates. By 1980, the town once again exceeded 2,000 persons for the first time in 140 years (See Figure 1).

Chester's population has experienced rapid growth over the past 50 years, increasing by nearly 400% since 1960. Between 2000 and

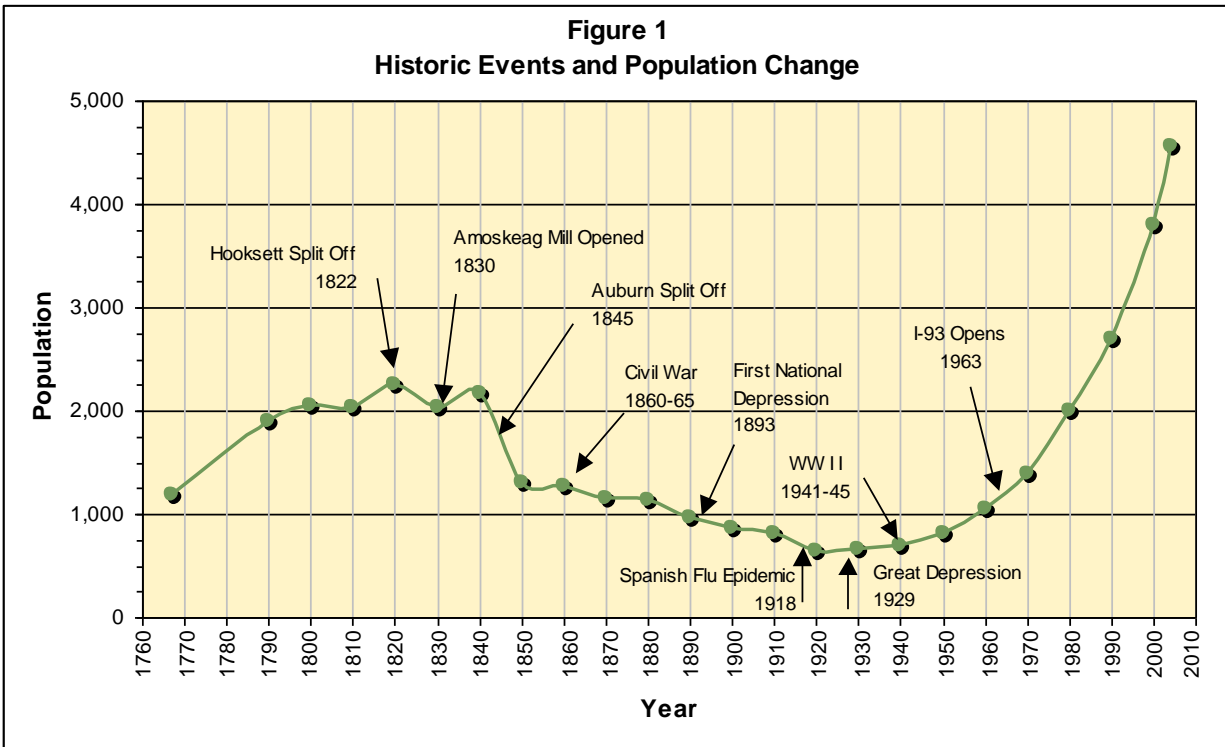
2010, the town added 976 new residents representing a growth rate of 25.7%. This rate far exceeded the population growth rates of Rockingham County, the SNHPC Region, and New Hampshire.

Chester's population, as of the 2010 Census, is 4,768 persons. The most current population estimate of the town as of 2014 is 4,822 according to the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP).¹ As shown in Table 1, Chester grew 20.15% between 2000 and 2013, increasing in population from 3,792 persons in 2000 to 4,556 persons in 2013. However, this is only a 1.68% annualized growth rate so the town is not growing at a fast pace today. However, Chester's population growth has been

¹ The most recent 2014 NH OEP population estimate for the Town of Chester is 4,822.

faster than the SNHPC Region (0.56% annualized growth rate); Rockingham County

(0.61% annualized growth rate); and New Hampshire (0.59% annualized growth rate).



Source: For the years 1767 through 1940, "New Hampshire Municipal Abstracts"; 1950 through 2010, U.S. Census.

Table 1: 2000 to 2013 Population Change

	Population 2000 Census	Population 2010 Census	Population 2013 OEP Estimate	2000-2013		
				Absolute Change	Percent Change	Annualized Growth Rate
Chester	3,792	4,768	4,762	764	20.15%	1.68%
SNHPC Region	261,117	276,416	278,810	17,693	6.78%	0.56%
Rockingham County	277,359	295,223	297,626	20,267	7.31%	0.61%
New Hampshire	1,235,786	1,316,470	1,323,459	87,673	7.09%	0.59%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Population Estimates, New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning

Recent growth in Chester is predominantly attributable to in-migration, as is the case throughout the SNHPC Region and New Hampshire. Chester’s population composition based on place of birth has remained nearly constant in the last couple of decades. As of the 2009-2013 American Census Survey, 32% of Chester’s residents were New Hampshire natives (it was 33% in 2000); 68% were born in other states in the United States; 88% of which came from other northeastern states.

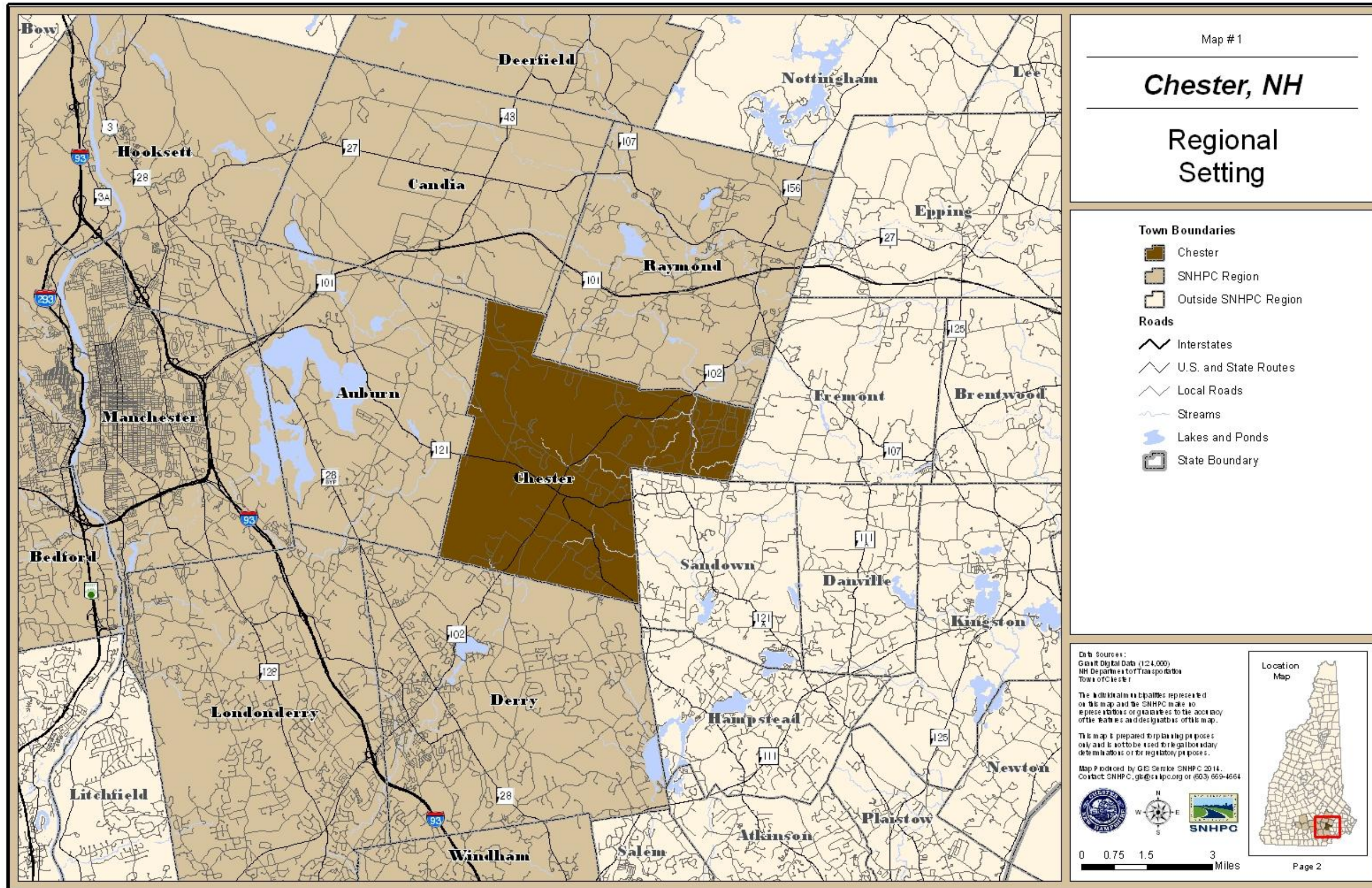
Natural increase is defined as the number of births in the resident population minus the number of deaths. This would be the natural growth of the population, exclusive of the influence of in- and out-migration. Although natural increase has had both negative and positive impacts on Chester’s population growth, the greater influence has been in-migration.

Table 2: Chester Birth Rates 2000-2009

Year	Total Number of Births	% Change
2000	48	N/A
2001	61	27%
2002	70	15%
2003	56	-20%
2004	41	-27%
2005	43	5%
2006	41	-5%
2007	34	-17%
2008	32	-6%
2009	39	22%

Source: New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Map #1: Regional Setting



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Compared to the adjacent towns of Candia, Fremont, Derry, Raymond and Sandown, Chester is in the middle range of land area in square miles, with 26.12 square miles, as shown in Table 3 below. The Town of Derry is Chester's largest neighbor with 36.29 square miles. The Town of Fremont is Chester's

smallest neighbor with 17.41 square miles. In regards to population, Chester is also in the middle range for population compared to its neighbors. The Town of Raymond has double the population of Chester with 10,138 persons, and Derry is six times larger with a population of 33,109.

**Table 3: Chester vs. Adjacent Towns
Population and Land Area Comparison**

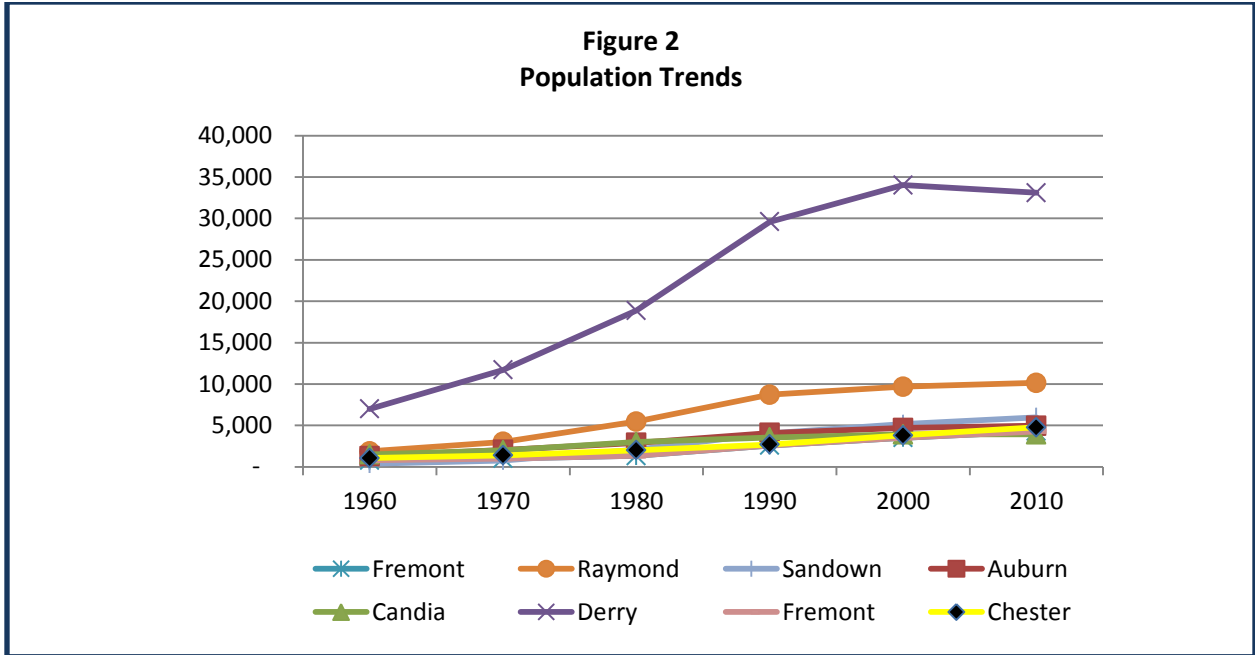
Town	Population 2010	Land Area (Sq. Miles)
Chester	4,768	26.12
Auburn	4,953	28.81
Candia	3,909	30.56
Raymond	10,138	29.6
Fremont	4,283	17.41
Sandown	5,986	14.42
Derry	33,109	36.29

Source: NH OEP, 2010 U.S. Census

Table 4: Population Trends in Adjacent Towns

Town	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Chester	1,053	1,382	2,006	2,691	3,792	4,768
Auburn	1,292	2,035	2,883	4,085	4,682	4,953
Candia	1,490	1,997	2,989	3,557	3,911	3,909
Derry	6,987	11,712	18,875	29,603	34,021	33,109
Fremont	783	993	1,333	2,576	3,510	4,283
Raymond	1,867	3,003	5,453	8,713	9,674	10,138
Sandown	366	741	2,057	4,060	5,143	5,986

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Source: US Census Bureau

Population Projections

There are a variety of methods available for projecting population growth. The most scientifically accepted method is the cohort, or age group, component projection. This method produces age and sex-specific projections while accounting for natural population changes and net migration. Using this method, SNHPC has projected that Chester will grow gradually from 4,768 in 2010 to an estimated 6,234 persons by 2035 (see Table 4). See the Chapter Appendix for more information on the population projection methodology.

The largest population gains will be in age cohorts over the age of 60 as the baby-boomer generation ages. There will also be significant declines in the age cohorts under the age of 19.

The NH Office of Energy and Planning and the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) have also produced population projections. For the sake of comparison, those projections are

plotted in Figure 3 along with the projections developed by SNHPC for this Master Plan. NHOEP also utilizes the cohort-component method to project population growth, the total New Hampshire population, is allocated to the counties according to their share of the state’s population change. Municipal projections are based upon a community’s historical share of its respective county’s growth.

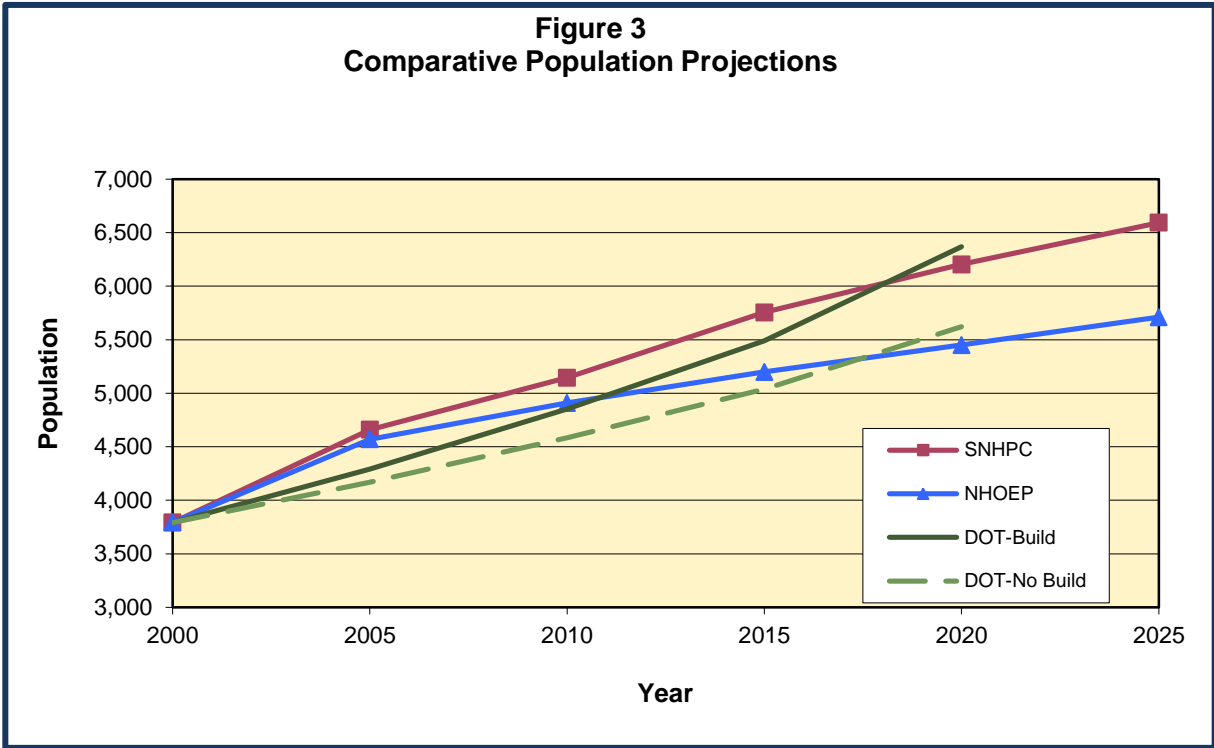
Table 5: Population Projections

Age Cohort	Census 2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
0 to 4	194	247	260	276	294	309
5 to 9	354	223	276	293	309	331
10 to 14	441	391	260	319	336	357
15 to 19	461	464	415	287	346	366
20 to 24	294	444	447	395	268	324
25 to 29	150	270	419	419	367	237
30 to 34	169	185	304	458	458	411
35 to 39	270	207	223	347	500	506
40 to 44	442	303	240	261	384	541
45 to 49	550	470	332	275	295	422
50 to 54	460	556	477	344	287	309
55 to 59	338	456	550	474	343	288
60 to 64	285	325	440	529	456	330
65 to 69	153	265	303	411	495	426
70 to 74	98	138	240	275	374	450
75 to 79	56	86	120	209	238	324
80 to 84	32	41	64	89	158	180
85+	21	27	34	51	74	127
Total	4,768	5,097	5,404	5,711	5,982	6,239

Source: SNHPC Population Projections

As part of the I-93 expansion efforts, NHDOT produced projections for the year 2020, but not for the intervals between 2000 and 2020. Using the Delphi technique or the average of a panel of expert’s opinions on potential growth, NHDOT produced population projections for both a build and no-build scenario to demonstrate the potential impacts of I-93 to the region and state.

While SNHPC’s and NHOEP’s population projections are fairly close in the early years, SNHPC’s projections for the years after 2010 are based on an increased in-migration in response to the I-93 widening. SNHPC projections exceed both NHDOT and OEP projections (see Figure 3).



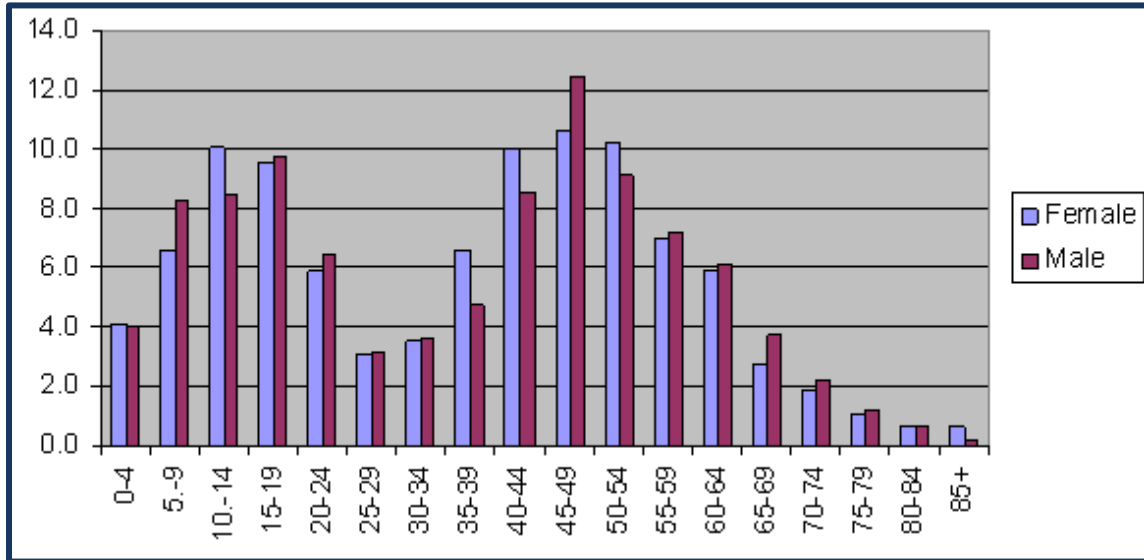
Source: SNHPC

Male and Female Age-Cohorts

Figure 4 presents a chart showing the distribution of male and female population by age-cohort in Chester based on the 2010 Census. The proportion between males and females with a few noteworthy digressions is

relatively balanced. There are significantly more males than females 10-14 and 35-44 age cohorts. There are more females in the 45 to 54 age group.

Figure 4
2010 Male and Female population by Age Cohort



Source: U.S. Census 2010

Age and Race

Like much of the New England and New Hampshire, Chester’s population has aged steadily over the past several decades. In 2000, the median age of Chester’s residents was 35.7 years, increased to 39.8 years in 2009; in 2010 it increased to 40.6 years, and in 2013 increased to 43 years. This represents an annual

percentage increase of 20% over 30 years. Correspondingly there has been a noticeable decline in the number of individuals between the ages of 25 and 44 (the age cohort most likely to have children.) This age cohort is also responsible for a significant proportion of Chester’s workforce (See Table 6).

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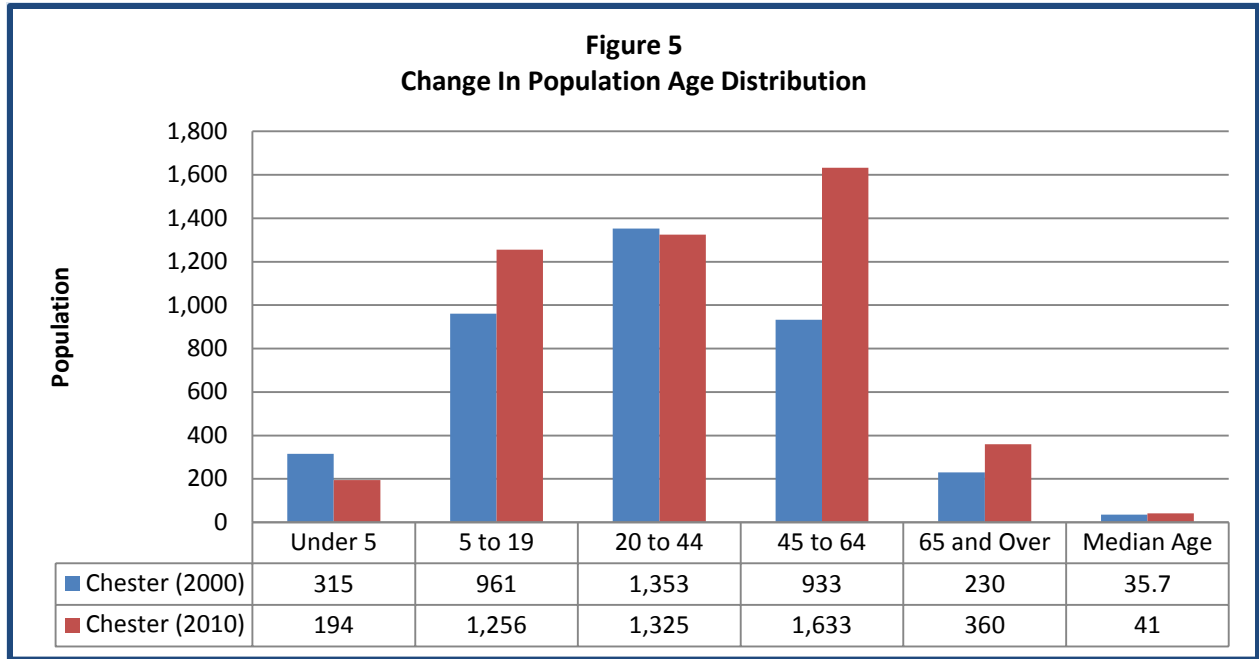
Table 6: Population Distribution and Change by Age Group

Age Group	2000			2010			2000-2010 Percent Change	
	Chester %	Chester #	New Hampshire %	Chester %	Chester #	New Hampshire %	Chester	New Hampshire
<5	8%	315	6%	4%	194	5%	-38%	-8%
5 to 9	9%	353	7%	7%	354	6%	0%	-12%
10 to 14	9%	325	8%	9%	441	6%	36%	-9%
15 to 19	7%	283	7%	10%	461	7%	63%	8%
20 to 24	4%	137	6%	6%	294	6%	115%	23%
25 to 34	11%	427	13%	7%	319	11%	-25%	-10%
35 to 44	21%	789	18%	15%	712	14%	-10%	-19%
45 to 54	17%	633	15%	21%	1010	17%	60%	23%
55 to 59	4%	167	5%	7%	338	7%	102%	54%
60 to 64	4%	133	4%	6%	285	6%	114%	74%
65 to 74	4%	146	6%	5%	251	7%	72%	24%
75 to 84	2%	64	4%	2%	88	4%	38%	10%
85+	1%	20	1%	0%	21	2%	5%	36%

Source: U.S. Census 2010, 2000

Between 2000 and 2010 the 25 to 34-year old age cohort declined by nearly 50% while the number of town residents in the 45 to 49 age cohort jumped 74%. The greatest population increases occurred in the over-45 age groups. The aging of the population may be attributed to young person’s leaving the area in search of employment and more residents aging in place.

The Table 6 compares Chester’s population distribution to the State of New Hampshire. Chester’s age demographics in 2000 to 2010 are similar overall to New Hampshire without any noticeable exceptions. Between 2000 and 2010, it is significant that Chester experienced a far greater decline than New Hampshire in children less than 5 years old; a greater increase in young adults 18 to 24 years old; and baby boomers 45 to 54 (see Table 6 and Figure 5).



Source: US Census 2010, 2000

Like most of Rockingham County, Chester is primarily white, 97.1%. Only 0.4% of the population is black. 0.1% American Indian and 0.8% Asian, according to Table 7 below (U.S. Census, 2010).

Table 7: Population By Race

	White	Black or African American	American Indian	Asian	Other	Two or More races
Chester	4,632	19	4	38	16	57
Percent of Town Population	97.1%	0.4%	0.1%	0.8%	0.3%	1.2%
Rockingham County	281,966	1,996	486	4,943	1,678	4,054
Percent of County Population	95.5%	0.7%	0.1%	1.7%	0.6%	1.4%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Educational Attainment

Residents of Chester have a variety of educational backgrounds. According to the latest Census data (ACS 2012): 10.5% of the population 25 years of age and over have a graduate or professional degree; 26.8% have a Bachelor’s Degree; 11.3% have an Associate Degree; and 22.6% have some college but no degree (see Table 8). About 24.8% town

residents have graduated from high school and only 2.7% have no High School diploma. Compared to the SNHPC Region, Rockingham County and New Hampshire there is a greater percentage of residents in Chester with college, associate and bachelor degrees but fewer with high school and graduate/professional degrees (see Table 8).

Table 8: Educational Attainment, 2012
Percent of Population 25 years of Age and Over

Attainment Level	Chester	SNHPC Region	Rockingham County	New Hampshire
Less than 9th grade	1.4%	2.1%	1.6%	2.8%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2.7%	4.6%	4.4%	5.8%
High school graduate (or equivalency)	24.8%	27.1%	28%	29.3%
Some college, no degree	22.6%	17.7%	19.2%	19.1%
Associate degree	11.3%	9.6%	10.1%	9.6%
Bachelor's degree	26.8%	21.0%	23.5%	21.2%
Graduate or professional degree	10.5%	11.3%	13.2%	12.3%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Income

About 84% of households in Chester earned \$50,000 or more in 2012 compared to 68% of households in 1999². Chester has a higher proportion of households in upper income levels (\$75,000 to \$200,000 or more) than Rockingham County and New Hampshire (see Table 9).

As shown in Table 9, roughly 31% of the town’s households earn between \$100,000 and \$149,000. And 16% of households earn \$75,000 to \$99,000 and 14% earn \$200,000 or more. Chester’s largest population between 45 years

of age (considered to be the age category where people reach their peak earning potential) and 64 shows the relationship between educational attainment levels and income levels. These are indicative of the attractiveness of Chester as a bedroom community for those who are able to afford to be more selective of the environment in which they wish to live, and who can also afford to commute to their places of employment outside of Chester.

² Per U.S. Census, household income is not based on yearly inflation

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Table 9: Distribution of Households by Income in 2012

Income Range	Chester		SNHPC Region		Rockingham County		State	
	Households	% of Total	Households	% of Total	Households	% of Total	Households	% of Total
Less than \$10,000	33	2%	3,848	3.69%	3,546	3.10%	22,805	4.40%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	21	1%	3,640	3.49%	3,290	2.80%	20,623	4.00%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	95	6%	8,241	7.90%	7,276	6.30%	42,981	8.30%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	77	5%	8,382	8.04%	8,298	7.20%	45,855	8.90%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	36	2%	11,789	11.30%	12,618	10.90%	66,216	12.80%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	194	12%	18,816	18.04%	20,050	17.40%	95,654	18.50%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	256	16%	15,643	15.00%	17,629	15.30%	75,050	14.50%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	504	31%	19,787	18.97%	23,799	20.60%	86,889	16.80%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	173	11%	8,175	7.84%	10,784	9.30%	33,928	6.60%
\$200,000 or more	229	14%	5,984	5.74%	8,262	7.20%	26,844	5.20%
Median Household Income:	\$68,571		NA		\$77,939		\$64,925	

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Chester’s median household income of \$108,204 as shown in Table 10 below, is the highest income among all Chester’s neighbors: Towns of Auburn, Candia, Raymond, Fremont,

Sandown and Derry. Between 2000 and 2012, Chester had the highest percent change in median household income with an increase of 58%.

Table 10: Chester vs. Adjacent Towns, Median Income

Adjacent Municipalities	Median Household Income (2000)	Median Household Income (2012)	Percent Change From 2000
Chester	\$68,571	\$108,204	58%
Auburn	\$70,774	\$94,275	33%
Candia	\$61,389	\$94,559	54%
Raymond	\$48,829	\$63,902	31%
Fremont	\$62,171	\$83,922	35%
Sandown	\$67,581	\$84,628	25%
Derry	\$54,634	\$68,300	25%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Table 11 provides a comparison between median household income of \$108,204; median family income of \$112,500 and per capita income of \$41,261. According to the U.S. Census, per capita income is the mean income received in the past 12 months computed for every man, woman, and child in a geographic

area. It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years and older in the geographic area by the total population in the area

Table 11: Chester's Household, Family and Per Capita Income

2012 Income	Dollar Amount
Median Household Income ³	\$108,204
Median Family Income ⁴	\$112,500
Per Capita Income	\$41,261

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

³ Household income is the householder and all other people 15 years or older's income whether or not they are related to the householder. The median is the point that divides the household income distribution into halves, half with income above others and half below.

⁴ Median family income is the amount as many families earning more than that amount as there are earning less than that amount.

Housing

The total number of occupied households in Chester increased from 1,214 to 1,534 (about 26%) between 2000 and 2010 (see Table 12). This growth was roughly proportional to the town’s increase in population. Average household size decreased slightly during the past decade, but still remained significantly higher than that of Rockingham County or New Hampshire. Likewise, the ratio of family to non-family households in Chester remained higher than county and state averages. Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of vacant properties increased from 2.6% to 3.9%, but this figure was still fairly low compared to state and county figures.

The total number of households in Chester increased by 26% from 1,214 in 2000 to 1,534 in 2010. During the same period single family

households experienced a significant increase of 40% followed by married-couple family households at 25% (see Table 12). At the same time, there has been a slight drop in the number of persons per household from 3.09 to 3.04 and persons per family household from 3.38 to 3.28.

As shown in Table 13, the greatest number of homes built in Chester occurred between 2000 and 2009 with a total of 447 housing units. This represents an increase of 26.9% of the total town units. Between 1990 and 1999, the total number of housing units increased by 376 or 22.7%. There was also a significant increase in housing units during the 1980 to 1989 period. During that 10 year span, 316 units were added representing 19 percent of the Town’s total housing stock.

Table 12: Households and Families

	2000	2010	Change
Total Households	1214	1534	26%
Persons per Household	3.09	3.04	-2%
Family Households	1011	1286	27%
Persons per Family Household	3.38	3.28	-3%
Married-Couple Family Households	890	1116	25%
Single-Parent Family Households	121	170	40%
Non-Family Households*	203	248	22%

* Includes Single Person Households
Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Table 13: Housing Units by Year Built

Year Built	Number of Units	Percent
Built 2010 - 2013	72	4.16%
Built 2000 to 2009	447	25.82%
Built 1990 to 1999	376	21.72%
Built 1980 to 1989	316	18.26%
Built 1970 to 1979	156	9.01%
Built 1960 to 1969	81	4.68%
Built 1950 to 1959	61	3.52%
Built 1940 to 1949	37	2.14%
Built 1939 or Earlier	185	10.69%
Total Housing Units	1,731	100.0%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

As shown in Table 14, 90.31% of Chester’s housing stock is made up of a detached one unit houses. There are approximately 88 units consisting of attached units, 18 with 3 or 4 units and 13 with 20 or more.

Table 14: Housing Units

Unit Type	Units	Percent
1 Unit, Detached	1,509	90.31%
1 Unit, Attached	88	5.27%
2 Units	0	0.00%
3 or 4 Units	18	1.08%
20 or More Units	13	0.78%
Mobile Home	43	2.57%
Total⁵	1,671	100.00%

Source: 2009-2013 ACS

⁵ There are two different totals in Table 13 and Table 14 for total number of housing units because Table 14 only uses data up to 2012 and Table 13 uses 2013 data also.

As reported by the U.S. Census there are a total of 1,618 occupied housing units in 2012 (See Table 15). Of these 94.10% are owner-occupied and only 5.9% are renter-occupied. The average household size of owner-occupied housing in Chester is 2.92 persons and the average household size of renter-occupied housing is 2.19 persons.

Roughly half of the owner-occupied housing in Chester, 773 units, are valued between \$300,000 and 499,000 (see Table 16). A quarter of the housing, 438 units, are valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999. The balance of the town’s housing units of 150 units are valued between \$500,000 and \$999,999.

Table 15: Housing Tenure

Housing Tenure	Numeric	Percent
Occupied Housing Units	1,618	100%
Owner-Occupied	1,522	94.10%
Renter-Occupied	96	5.90%
Average Household Size of Owner-Occupied Unit	2.92	N/A
Average Household Size of Renter-Occupied Unit	2.19	N/A

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Table 16: Owner Occupied Housing Value

Value	Number of Units	Percent
Less than \$50,000	7	0.50%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	17	1.10%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	37	2.40%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	91	6.00%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	438	28.80%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	773	50.80%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	150	9.90%
\$1,000,000 or More	9	0.60%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

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The median purchase price as of 2013 in Chester was \$305,000 according to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) Purchase Price Database (see Table 17). Existing housing averaged \$267,000 and new homes averaged \$363,000⁶. Between 2008 and 2012, the median purchase price dropped from \$290,000 to \$267,000 reflecting economic declines during the recession. The median purchase price between 2012 and 2013 jumped significantly from \$267,000 to \$305,000; however still not as high as 2005 to 2007 values.

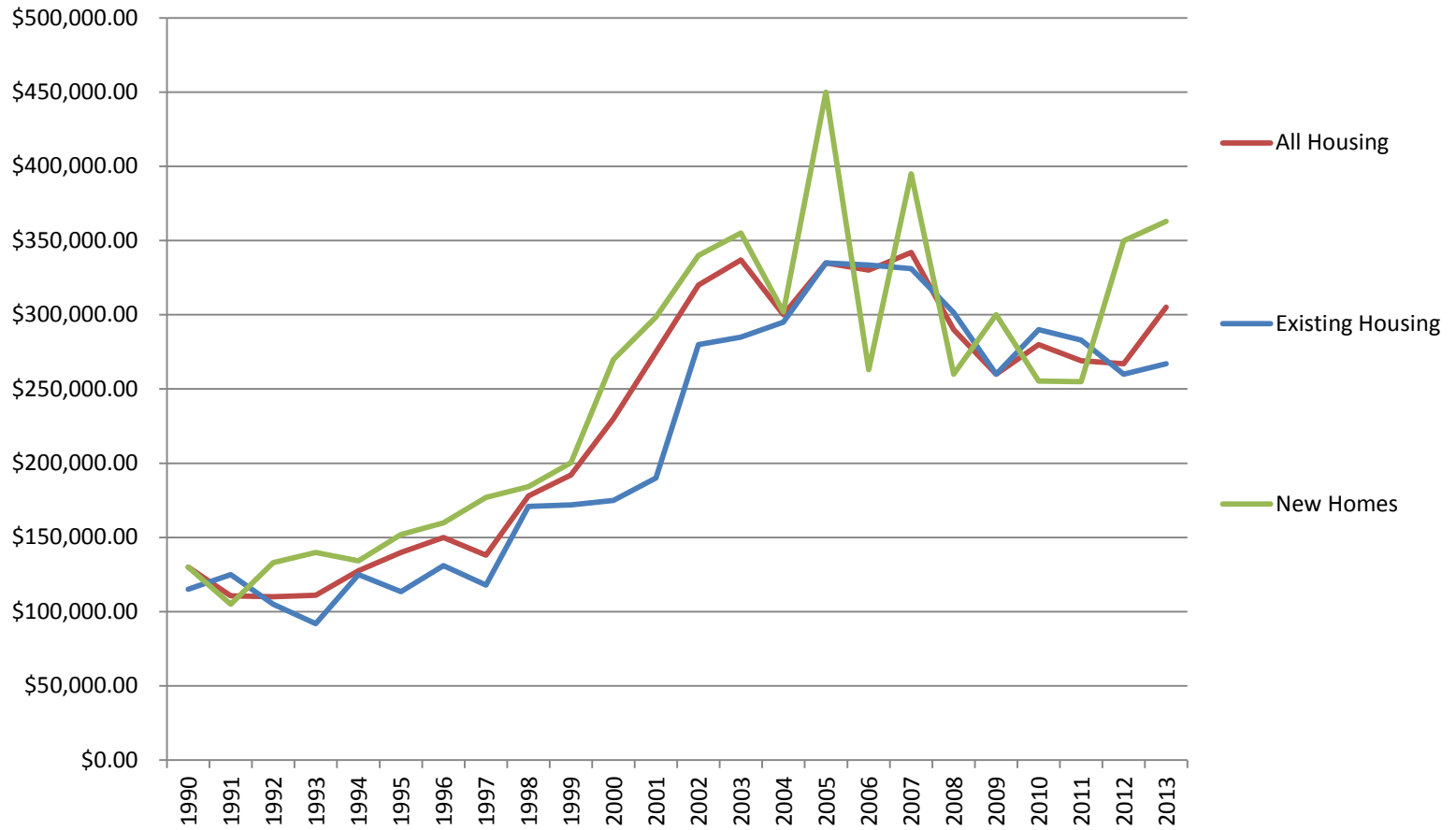
Table 17: Median Purchase Price

Year	All Housing	Existing Housing	New Homes
2013	\$ 305,000.00	\$267,000.00	\$ 363,000.00
2012	\$ 267,000.00	\$260,000.00	\$ 349,900.00
2011	\$ 269,000.00	\$283,000.00	\$ 255,000.00
2010	\$ 279,900.00	\$290,000.00	\$ 255,400.00
2009	\$ 260,000.00	\$260,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
2008	\$ 290,000.00	\$301,500.00	\$ 259,900.00
2007	\$ 342,000.00	\$ 331,000.00	\$ 395,000.00
2006	\$ 330,000.00	\$333,500.00	\$ 263,000.00
2005	\$ 335,000.00	\$334,900.00	\$ 449,900.00
2004	\$ 300,000.00	\$295,000.00	\$ 301,840.00
2003	\$ 337,000.00	\$285,000.00	\$ 355,000.00
2002	\$ 319,933.00	\$280,000.00	\$ 339,900.00
2001	\$ 274,800.00	\$190,000.00	\$ 298,400.00
2000	\$ 229,933.00	\$175,000.00	\$ 269,900.00
1999	\$ 192,000.00	\$172,000.00	\$ 200,320.00
1998	\$ 178,000.00	\$171,000.00	\$ 184,215.00
1997	\$ 138,000.00	\$118,000.00	\$ 177,000.00
1996	\$ 149,900.00	\$131,000.00	\$ 159,900.00
1995	\$ 139,900.00	\$113,500.00	\$ 152,000.00
1994	\$ 127,500.00	\$125,000.00	\$ 134,200.00
1993	\$ 111,000.00	\$92,000.00	\$ 139,905.00
1992	\$ 110,000.00	\$105,048.00	\$ 132,952.00
1991	\$ 110,667.00	\$124,952.00	\$ 105,048.00
1990	\$ 129,900.00	\$115,143.00	\$ 129,900.00

Source: NHHFA Purchase Price Database

⁶ New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA Database, 2013)

Figure 6
Median Purchase Price



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The SNHPC has projected (see Table 18) that Chester’s total number of dwelling units in 2010 will increase from 1,596 units to 2,304 units in 2050. This projection is an arranged straight line estimate based on the town’s historic annual percent numbers and also reflects on

Table 18: Chester Dwelling Unit Projections

Year	Number of Units	Increase
2010	1,596	-
2015	1,635	39
2020	1,731	96
2025	1,826	96
2030	1,922	96
2035	2,017	96
2040	2,113	96
2045	2,208	96
2050	2,304	96

Source: SNHPC Dwelling Unit Projections

According to the Town Assessor, in 2011 the style of home in Chester with the highest average sale price, \$345,000 was for modern/contemporary home styles, but there were only 2 of these units sold. In 2011, the

past building permit trends (see Table 19). New home construction declined during the recession and is starting to increase slightly.

Table 19: New Home Building Permits

Year	Number of Units
2000	90
2001	80
2002	47
2003	30
2004	34
2005	28
2006	21
2007	17
2008	20
2009	4
2010	12
2011	16
2012	23
2013	21

Source: Town of Chester Assessor

next highest average sale price, \$299,900, was the colonial style which makes up the most home styles sold, 29 housing units. Antique and Cape Cod styles follow with average sales prices of \$275,000 and \$260,000 respectively.

Unemployment and Employment

As of 2014, the Town of Chester had a 4.5% unemployment rate as shown in Table 20 below. This rate has dropped slightly from 5% in 2013 to 4.5 percent in 2014. Between 2009 and 2013, Chester’s unemployment rate averaged around 5.3%. Between 2000 and

2008, Chester’s unemployment rate was fairly low at 3.45%⁷.

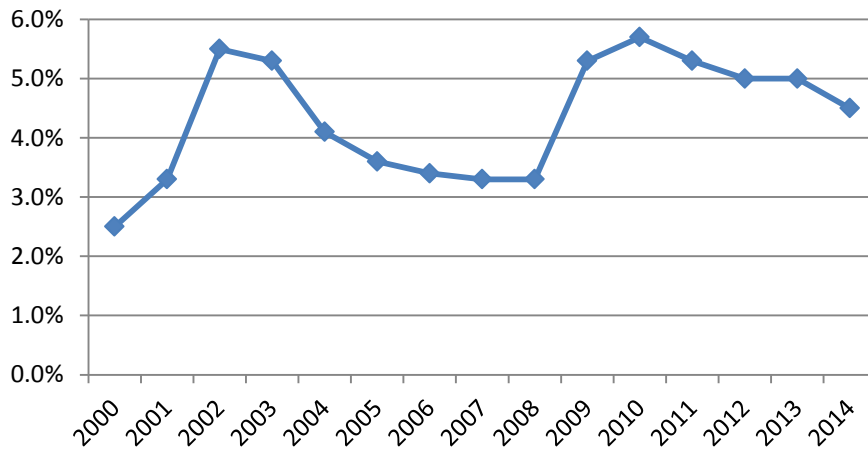
⁷ New Hampshire Employment Security ELMIB, 2014.

Table 20: Unemployment Rates

Year	Unemployment Rate
2000	2.5%
2001	3.3%
2002	5.5%
2003	5.3%
2004	4.1%
2005	3.6%
2006	3.4%
2007	3.3%
2008	3.3%
2009	5.3%
2010	5.7%
2011	5.3%
2012	5.0%
2013	5.0%
2014	4.5%

Source: NH Employment Security ELMIB

Figure 7
Unemployment Rate



Source: NH Employment Security ELMIB

In 2013, the largest employment industries in Chester were service producing, which includes financial, real estate, banking, etc., representing 43% of Chester’s total employment. Government jobs represent 39% of the Town’s

total employment and goods producing only 18%. There are roughly a total of 396 people working in Chester when private and government jobs are combined as shown in Table 21. Of this amount 170 jobs are in the

service providing industries followed by local, state and Federal government jobs and 72 jobs

in the goods-producing industries.

Table 21: Average Employment

2013	Average Employment
Goods Producing Industries	72
Service Providing Industries	170
Total Government (Federal, State, and Local)	154
Total, Private plus Government	396

Source: NH Employment Security ELMIB

It is important to note that employment opportunities outside Chester and within a reasonable commuting distance of Chester can

positively contribute to the town’s population growth and economic prosperity.

School Enrollment

According to the School Administration Unit (SAU 82) which oversees the Chester School District, total enrollment at Chester Academy for the 2014-2015 school year decreased from 540 students to 512 students (see Table 22). Since the 2009-2010 school year Chester Academy has experienced an average decline of about 21 students per year. This small drop in enrollment numbers can be attributed to the

overall decline of the under 5 age cohort (see Table 22). The town’s school-age population in the SAU82 shows that there will also be a decline in numbers for 2015-2016. As shown in Table 22 and Figure 7 since 2001/2002 Chester Academy’s enrollment has been steadily increasing with slight annual ups and down based on class sizes.

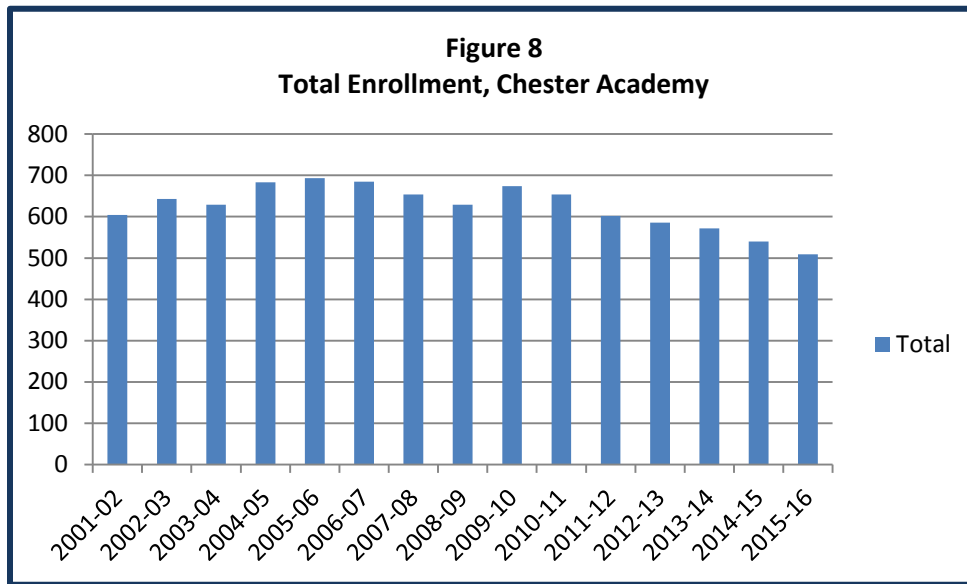
Table 22: Elementary School Trends, Chester Academy

Year	Preschool	Kindergarten	1st - 8th Grade	Total
2001-02	7	27	570	604
2002-03	17	15	611	643
2003-04	12	13	604	629
2004-05	12	13	658	683
2005-06	18	13	662	693
2006-07	16	13	656	685

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2007-08	16	16	622	654
2008-09	14	11	604	629
2009-10	14	35	625	674
2010-11	14	39	601	654
2011-12	-	32	570	602
2012-13	-	35	551	586
2013-14	-	32	540	572
2014-15	-	28	512	540
2015-16	-	35	474	509

Source: SAU 82



Source: SAU 82

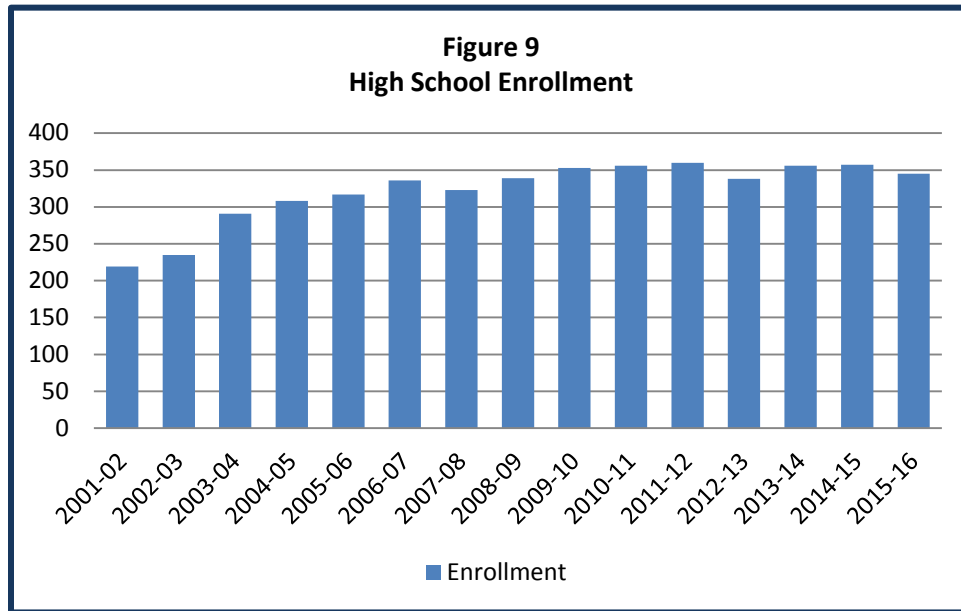
Unlike Chester Academy, Chester’s High School student enrollment at Pinkerton Academy has been steadily increasing in the past since the 2001-2002 school year. With a peak of 360 students in 2011-2012 (see Table 23 and Figure 8 after which it has been slightly declining.

Table 23: High School Enrollment Trends

Year	Total Enrollment and Projection, Pinkerton Academy (Grades 9-12)
2001-02	219
2002-03	235
2003-04	291
2004-05	308
2005-06	317

2006-07	336
2007-08	323
2008-09	339
2009-10	353
2010-11	356
2011-12	360
2012-13	338
2013-14	356
2014-15	357
2015-16	345

Source: SAU 82



Source: SAU 82

Commuter Data

As shown in Table 24, 83.5% of Chester employees drive to work alone and 6.8% carpool. Less than 1% (0.30%) take public transit because of the rural nature of Chester and the lack of public transit. The data in Table 25 indicates there are 2,117 total commuters in Chester and the most common commute is to

Manchester, followed by Derry and Salem. The mean travel time to work is 33.5 minutes.

Table 24: Commute to Work, 2010

Commute to Work	Percentage
Drive Alone	83.50%
Carpool	6.80%
Public Transit	0.30%
Walk	0.60%
Other	1.90%
Work from Home	6.90%

Source: NH Employment Security ELMIB

Table 25: Commuting Out of Town - 2010

	Total Commuters	% of Labor Force Commuting OOT*	Most Common Commute To	2nd Most Common Commute To	3rd Most Common Commute To	Mean Travel Time to Work
Chester	2,117	79.80%	Manchester	Derry	Salem	33.5

*Out Of Town

Source: NH Employment Security ELMIB

Tax Rate

A town’s tax rate is often another factor in a community’s growth, albeit a small one, as it affects decisions to locate homes and businesses. Chester’s 2014 tax rate was \$25.56 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. This rate is

higher than Candia (\$21.20), Auburn (\$21.31), Londonderry (\$21) and Raymond (\$24.33), but lower than Derry (\$29.42) and Sandown (\$27.59).

Conclusion

In summary, this assessment of Chester’s socio-economic data display a portrait of a small town located in the rural outskirts of the City of Manchester, New Hampshire. Being close to Manchester, Chester has a well-educated and well-employed population with both higher educational and income levels than the rest of the region. While the town’s population growth has slowed from 3.8% to 1.68% per year at the

end of the last recession, Chester's overall growth is still among the highest of all the towns in the region (0.56%).

In addition, it has only been recently that the town is experiencing a decline in the number of children under the age of 5, which is beginning to impact local school enrollment.

Correspondingly Chester is growing older as many (43%) of the town's residents are now over the age of 45 years. These two population trends will have an impact of the future growth and development of the community, particularly the provision of necessary community facilities and services. Through this master planning project, the Town of Chester has an opportunity to begin to plan for and address these trends.

Chapter Appendix

Population Projection Methodology

The cohort-component method disaggregates the existing population into male and female age cohorts that span a five-year period. New Hampshire's average age- and sex-specific survival rates are available for each cohort from the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP) and the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Vital Statistics. Birth or fertility rates are computed for each town based on the town's actual number of births for a five year period based on the female age 15 to 44 population. Each cohort is then aged forward toward the final projection year, with birth and survival rates applied at five-year intervals. This method provides good age-specific detail for determining future needs for schools, jobs, housing and services.

A significant contributor to Chester's population increases is the effect of migration. A net in-migration factor is entered into the cohort-component model to produce refined projections. The variable for net migration is generated by SNHPC based upon 30 years of historic migration data. Four possible future net migration outcomes are generated: high, middle, low and the historical average. The most probable of the four are selected to generate the final projections. For Chester, the middle net migration projection was selected.

These population projections produce a mathematically plausible portrait of potential growth. As such they are critical for municipal planning efforts and while it is impossible to foresee any unpredictable future events or circumstances in the municipality, region, or state that may alter the course of population growth, projections are a planning tool and not necessarily a guarantee of actual population. Additionally it is necessary to make assumptions about future trends within the community and its surroundings. Some of the assumptions made in the projections produced by SNHPC for the Chester Master Plan include:

- There is a considerable amount of developable land available and zoned for residential use in the town.

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- Current regional economic growth, and the job opportunities available, will not experience significant declines in the immediate future.
- Chester will continue to provide the municipal facilities and services necessary to support planned growth.
- Chester's land use, zoning and development regulations will remain relatively unchanged and growth control provisions beyond what is currently in place will likely not be implemented.
- Birth rates will continue to be consistent with those of recent years, and in-migration will be the major factor contributing to population growth, especially after 2015/2016 when the I-93 widening is slated to be complete.
- Survival rates will be consistent with those projected by the NHOEP for the State of New Hampshire.

Chester

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Land Use

Land Use

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify existing land use patterns within the Town of Chester; evaluate current development trends and zoning districts; identify potential future build out conditions; and evaluate existing and future land use opportunities within the community. Familiarity with existing and future land use and development patterns can help municipal officials and planners anticipate which areas of the community are likely to grow the faster and expand requiring new police, fire and other municipal services and facilities, or to which school transportation may have to be provided. This chapter of the Master Plan examines the more significant land use changes which have occurred since the 1996 and 2006 Town Master Plans and identifies current land use patterns and potential future land use and development opportunities to proactively plan for anticipated community growth.

Community Survey Questions and Responses

As reflected in the public responses received through the Master Plan Community Survey, many Chester residents believe in the continued residential growth of the community but want some commercial growth primarily in the way of needed services. Many residents believe that there are not adequate commercial services, business, medical or other office related development within Chester to support the town's residential growth. It also appears that many residents that are equally split between those that feel the town's current growth is "just right" vs. some that feel it is "too fast".

Additionally, public opinions also vary whether a particular land use is in the wrong location or what land use or zoning changes are needed within the community for a specific site or property. Many of the opinions cited in the survey favoring some commercial services include: encouraging more office/retail development along Route 102 or near the Route 121/102 intersection; changing zoning within the center of town to allow light commercial or retail or mixed use within the same building; and consolidating business and retail development in one location. Many survey respondents also identified the potential future re-use of the former Chester College property and buildings as either a concern or as a potential opportunity for the town. Just as important to many residents is maintaining the town's rural residential character and small town and historic charm.

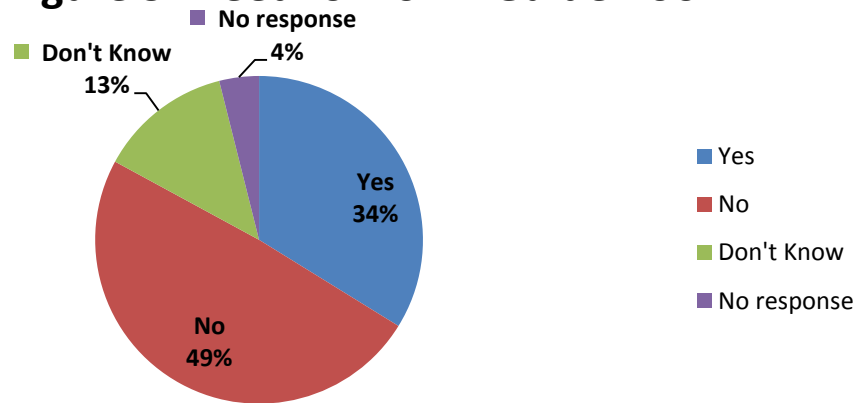
When asked questions about the level of importance that the town should give to future land use and specific land use planning techniques, the majority of survey responses noted that it is very important for the planning board to regulate the number of residential building permits allowed each year and to concentrate development into already developed areas in order to preserve rural character elsewhere. Allowing commercial and residential uses (mixed use) within the same building or on the same lot is considered somewhat important but allowing commercial and residential development in the same zoning district was not supported by survey respondents. Permitting higher density residential development as a bonus for creating affordable housing was not deemed to be as important to many town residents, however there is public support for allowing higher residential density in creating

elderly housing particularly within the town center. Additionally many survey respondents support creating a town center with mixed use and a livable and walkable town commons. The survey results also confirm that a majority of the survey respondents do not want to see cluster development in Chester or the creation of a Town Guide Book describing the town’s planning and development review process. A summary of the questions and public responses received as related to land use and zoning in the master plan community survey are noted as follows.

Question #12: Should Chester have a Town Guide Book for residents and businesses?

Town Guide Book				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	95	138	37	11

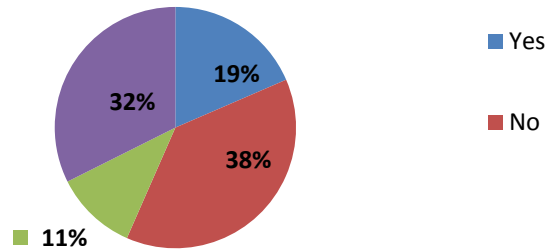
Figure 5: Need for Town Guide Book



Question #13: Should the Town Guide Book be funded through general tax revenues?

Guide Book Funded Through Taxes				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	52	107	31	91

Figure 7: Guide Book Funded Through Taxes



Question #16: Do you feel that adequate amounts of land have been zoned for the following uses?

Existing Land Use						
	Too Much	Just Right	Not Enough	Enough But Wrong Location	Don't Know	No Response
Residential - single family	59	136	5	0	60	21
Residential - 2 & multi family	64	82	33	1	84	17
Residential - Cluster housing	97	64	19	1	79	21
Residential - rural	8	135	37	2	76	23
Commercial - business and office	11	75	102	4	69	20
Commercial - retail	8	80	111	0	62	20
Industrial - manufacturing	17	78	55	9	96	26
Industrial - sand and gravel excavation	22	102	16	2	114	25
Industrial - industrial parks	27	75	51	3	101	24

Question #17: If you feel that zoning for a particular use is in the wrong location, what changes would you suggest?

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1. Better Consistent enforcement of zoning and building rules, fewer variances granted. Do not expand commercial district further. Need full time code enforcement officer who actually enforces the codes.
2. Encourage more office/retail near 121/102 intersection
3. Do not add retail because close enough to malls and larger towns
4. Increase retail/business in center of town
5. Need some business, along 102, to increase tax base
6. If they own it and can make a living, leave them alone!!
7. Chester College
8. Developing Rte. 102 for retail
9. Use the college area to increase small business, office and retail. OR use college area for elderly housing
10. Expand this home cottage type of businesses or manufacturing in historic looking buildings. Must maintain character of historical rural town. Many others do-look at Lexington MA. As good example.
11. Make more space available for business retail to lower tax rate.
12. Don't know enough about the whole process. See town and land use above.
13. Allow small clean business scattered throughout town, not necessarily concentrated. Support home (cottage industry) as was the case in earlier times.
14. Very careful with town growth
15. Keep Rural character - we don't need multi-family or businesses. Both would change Chester into another Derry.
16. Rte. 121 and Rte. 102 should all be business areas. Abutting dump should be industrial.
17. Radius around center should allow for Apartments/duplex and retail business. Especially Rte. 102 to Raymond.
18. Highway Dept. more centralized
19. Include/change zoning along the center of town to allow light commercial or retail to encourage business development.
20. Disappointed to see neon lighted sign at Your Variety Store. Does not fit in with the town's character.
21. Industrial not addressed - causes too much home businesses in residential areas. Retail not addressed.
22. Consolidate business, manufacturing and industrial in one location.
23. Zoning in town should be higher density
24. Your Variety Store is sitting right on the aquifer.
25. Would suggest mixed use be allowed in some areas for business/office or retail to have residential apartments on 2nd floor - but with good quality design.
26. Prohibit industrial uses in residential zones.
27. We don't need industrial parks and traffic that it brings.
28. None at this time.
29. Rather not comment-just say need change
30. Reduce cluster developing.
31. Open land businesses/golf courses or garden center or nurseries
32. Non-residential business should not be able to operate in residential zone especially when the businesses are commercial and are not permitted/no certificate of occupancy issued not

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permits pulled for construction.

33. Lower property taxes! Cut Spending!
34. Change zoning regulations to encourage industrial development.
35. I have no doubt that you are looking at the closed college to create a plush set of public offices. I do not support it. Work in conditions like those who pay your salaries must work.
36. Future zoning should consider business, office and retail in just a few locations around town.
37. Zoning regulations cannot be determined by driving the roads so I have no idea what they are.
38. Enlarge commercial zoning to draw in new business.
39. The town should promote growth (or plan for growth) above the Rte. 102 corridor. A commercial/industrial presence would benefit the community and its tax revenue/base
40. Concerned about Maintenance of Chester College property.
41. Yes, Town center-mixed use
42. Attract manufacturing and commercial businesses to reduce residential tax burden.

Question #18: Please indicate the level of importance that the town should give to the following land use development methods for guiding future growth in Chester?

Future Land Use Development						
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Allow commercial and residential uses on the same lot or same building	31	54	81	73	23	19
Allow commercial and residential in the same zoning district	31	59	58	83	29	21
Concentrate development into already developed areas in order to preserve rural character elsewhere	115	86	36	20	10	15
Regulate the number of residential building permits allowed each year	130	70	39	23	4	15

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Continue to permit higher residential density as a bonus for creation of affordable housing	12	45	50	127	23	24
Continue to permit higher residential density as a bonus for creation of elderly housing	40	66	52	87	16	20
Village center with more residential and or commercial development	46	63	57	72	13	30
Village Center with Smaller residential lot sizes	26	26	38	147	15	29
Village Center with Creation of a livable/walkable town commons	64	55	63	70	8	21
Village Center with elderly housing	56	53	76	58	11	27
Village Center with mixed use	25	55	62	62	22	55

Other Uses – Write-In Responses:

1. Require new structures to comply with historic/rural look
2. Allow in-law apartments in single family homes
3. Maintain scenic views and rural nature
4. Route 121 & 102 should be commercial use
5. Important to develop guidelines for the types of commercial uses allowed in mixed areas.
6. Beauty Salon, Market Basket, Kohl's, Restaurants open after 2 pm
7. Maintain bridle paths for horses

Question #28: Should the Town require cluster subdivisions?

Cluster Subdivisions				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	45	157	65	14

Question #29: Is Chester’s residential growth occurring too fast, too slow, or just right?

Table 26: Residential Growth				
	Just Right	Too Fast	Too Slow	No Response
Total	129	124	10	18

Historic Growth and Development

Chester, like many of the communities in Southern New Hampshire, was originally founded as an agricultural community and in the early 19th century it, like many other communities in the region, was poised to develop in a different direction. In 1820, the communities with the greatest populations in the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) Region, were Londonderry/Derry at 3,127; Weare at 2,781; Chester at 2,262; and Deerfield at 2,133. Manchester had the fewest residents, with 761.

The opening of the Amoskeag Mills in 1830 in Manchester however initiated dramatic population shifts and land use and development changes in the region. Towns that were once population leaders in 1820, or were at least experiencing population increases between 1820 and 1830, experienced regular declines over the subsequent 100-year period, indicating a migration to Manchester’s growing urban center and away from Chester and other communities. Chester was described in the New Hampshire Municipal Abstracts of 1944 as an agricultural community with up to 25 percent seasonal residences.

Since 1944, agriculture in general has declined in importance in Chester and there are also fewer seasonal residences now. Existing land use in Chester today is predominantly residential in character and the town has seen significantly more residential than non-residential development. These patterns of existing land use and development are evidence of the historic legacy of economic growth and decline in the region, as well as the expanding urban center of Manchester and Boston, and the resultant bedroom communities in the region.

As reported in the town’s 2006 Master Plan, since 1962, Chester has grown from 576 acres of developed land to 3,991 acres of developed land in 2005. The Town has seen significant increase in residential, commercial-industrial, and new roadways over the last four decades. As a result, some agricultural land has been lost, yet in 2005 nearly 60 percent of the town’s 1962 farm land remains untouched. In 2010, there still remains approximately 872 acres of farmland within the community. This is a significant feat of accomplishment for the Town given the high development pressures felt on agricultural land within the community and throughout southern New Hampshire. The following maps identified as Figures 10.1

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through 10.4 from the Town's 2006 Master Plan are included here to depict the changes in Chester's growth and development in 1962, 1974, 1998 and 2005. These maps can also be compared to the 2010 Existing Land Use Map prepared for this updated master plan (see Map #2).

As reported in the town's 2006 Master Plan, a future land use possibility raised by the community survey conducted at that time was to establish village centers or clusters in the town. When residents were asked if they supported such initiatives 40 percent responded maybe and another 24 percent said yes, compared to 37 percent absolutely stating no. Village centers and clusters today in Chester could channel development into designated areas leaving greater undisturbed areas elsewhere within the community, thus protecting the more rural areas of Town. Support for this concept is also evident in the master plan survey conducted for this Master Plan Update.

Existing land use activities can influence future development patterns in many ways. For example, agricultural land may continue to be subjected to development pressure during construction booms, such as the ones experienced by many southern New Hampshire communities during the 1970s, 1980s, and early part of the 2000s. Agricultural land presents few, if any, constraints to development and can generally be suitable for many types of residential and non-residential uses. Continued population growth will require still more acres to be devoted to residential and non-residential uses. Additional acres will be consumed for expanded utilities and streets.

In addition, there are other ways to channel future development to existing developed areas thus protecting rural areas of the town for lower density development and/or land protection. These include Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as well as Density Transfer Credit (DTC) – both zoning provisions designed to concentrate development in specific areas and provide for open space protection in other parts of the community. Other techniques include the Village Plan Alternative -- a subdivision provision that the town could consider to provide opportunities in crating and expanding the village centers and cluster concept. Also equally important is infill development and impact fees. All of these planning and zoning techniques will be discussed in the Future Land Use section of this chapter.

As noted in the Housing Chapter of this Master Plan, Chester has experienced significant residential growth since the 1990s. In the community survey conducted for the 2006 Master Plan, town residents overwhelmingly supported capping residential building permits each year as part of the town's growth management ordinance to manage the town's growth and cost for services. In this 2010 Master Plan Update, town residents again overwhelmingly supported maintaining the town's growth management ordinance and capping building permits each year (see Question #18). These survey responses clearly indicate that town residents favor controlling and managing the town's future growth and development and keeping growth in check so that it does not result in increased costs for additional public services and facilities.

Figure 1: 1962 Existing Land Use

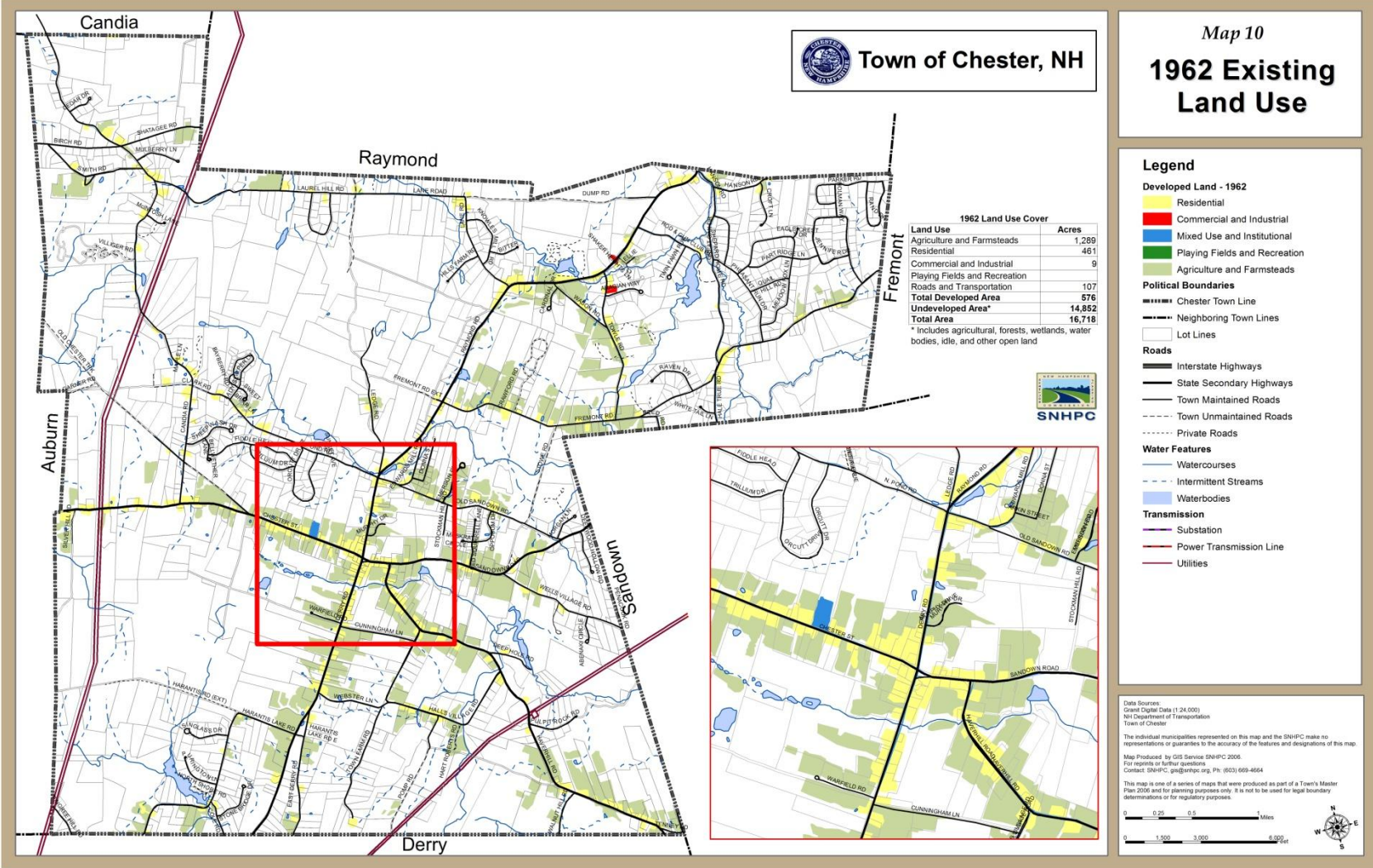


Figure 2: 1974 Existing Land Use

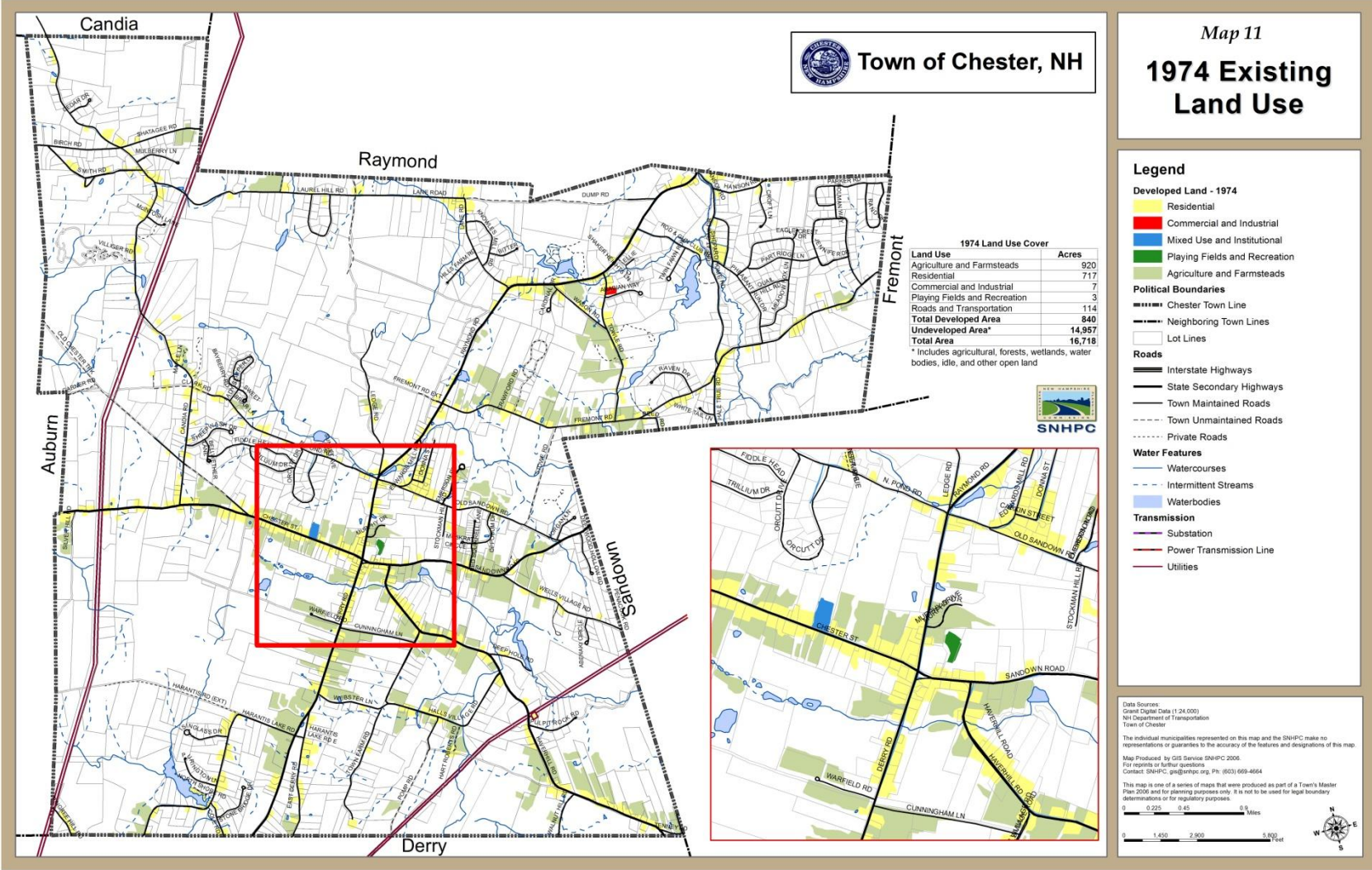


Figure 3: 1998 Existing Land Use

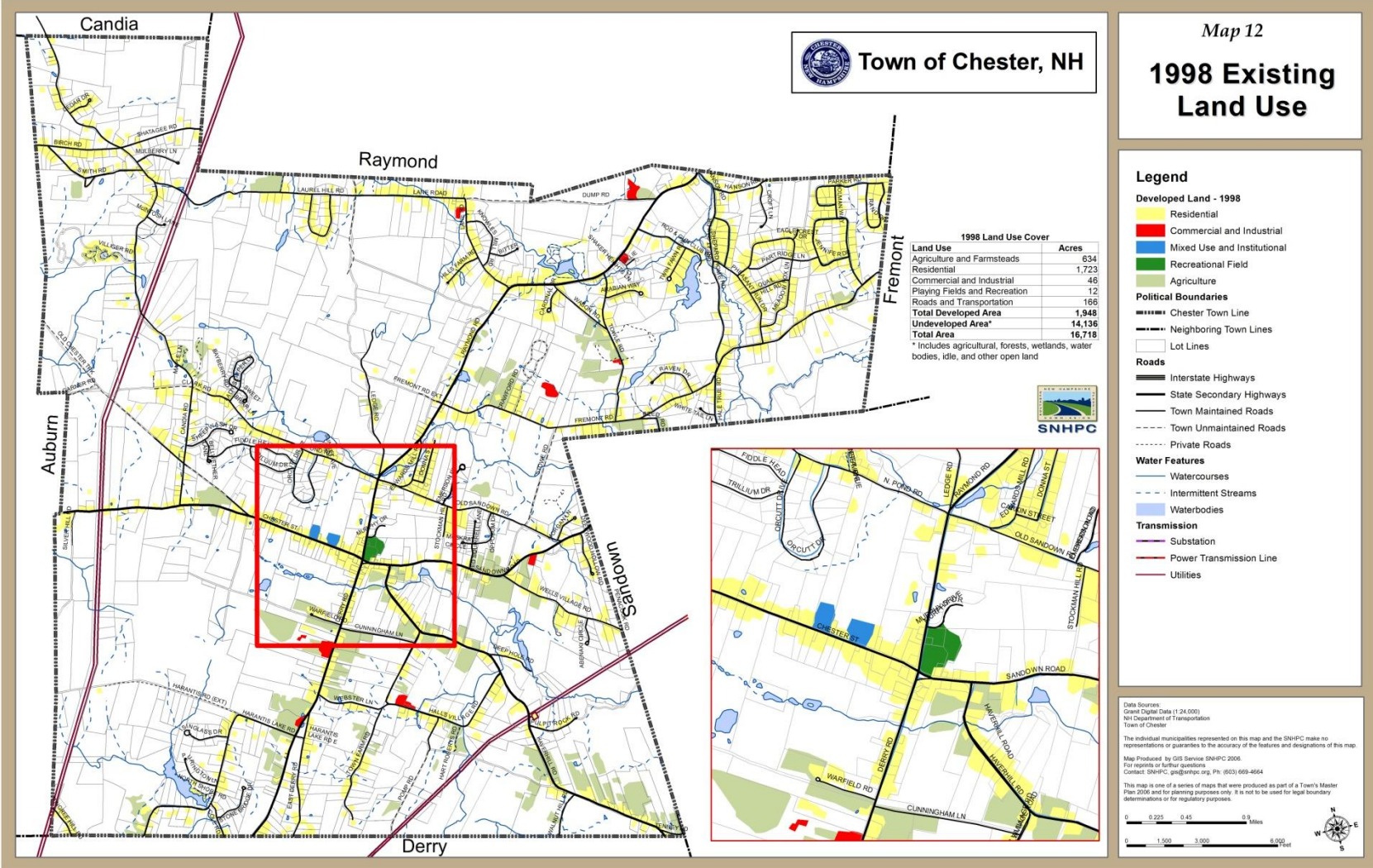
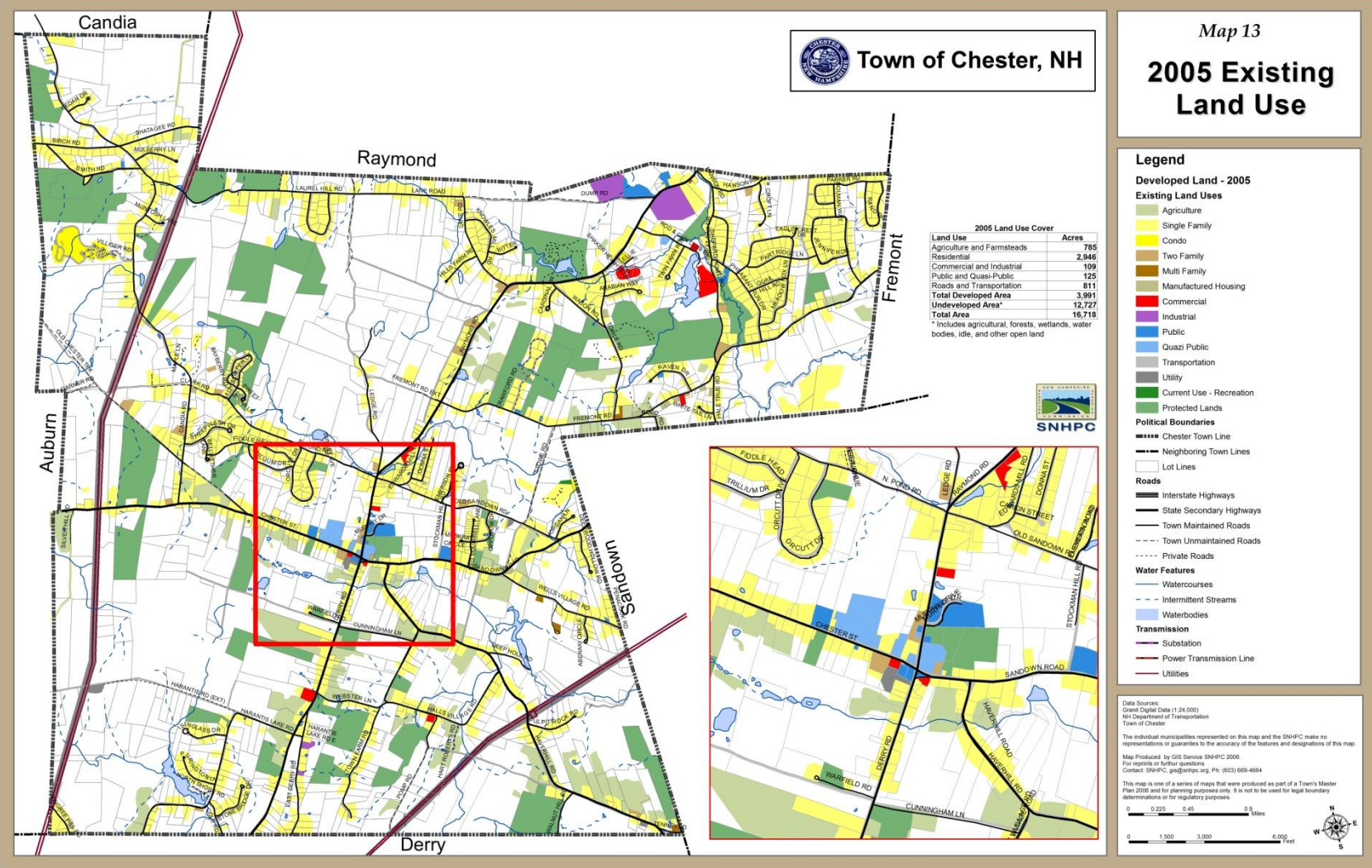


Figure 4: 2005 Existing Land Use



Existing Development Trends

Existing and future development in Chester is tied directly to market demand and the attractiveness of the community for new growth. As noted in the 2006 Master Plan, residents identified the town's greatest community assets as the Exeter River, the wetlands of the North Pond area, the South Woods, historic properties found along Chester Street and within the village center, and the recently purchased Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Area formerly Silver Sands Campground.

Conversely the Town's problem areas, identified by the Chester Planning Board, include several major road intersections, contaminated land at Rt. 102 at North Pond Road and again along Fremont Road, and the former town landfill site. The greatest and possibly most important problem facing the Town is the impact of future growth and development which is anticipated to occur as a result of the widening of I-93 and future expansion of Exit 4A (See Transportation Chapter).

The results of the master plan survey conducted in 2015 identified similar town assets and problems with additional focus on the former Chester College lands.

As far as new growth and development within the community, the 2006 Master Plan, reported that Chester was experiencing increased residential growth in a number of parts of town including pressure for continued residential growth despite rising land values. At that time, the identified high growth areas were:

- North Woods region, north of North Pond Road and west of Raymond Road;
- Along Derry Road;
- Along Wells Village Road; and
- South of the Exeter River in the eastern corner of town.

As of 2015, according to the Chester Planning Board, there are roughly 13 new subdivision and development proposals in the works to be submitted and/or currently under consideration by the planning board. These proposals would result in a total of approximately 251 new residential homes in Chester. While these proposals are scattered around the community, many of the proposed new developments are located within or near the town's previous identified high growth areas. A summary of the existing proposals is provided below. The Crowley Road Development proposal in Chester may be considered by the planning board as a development of regional impact.

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Development	Location	TMP	Number of Units
Jenkins Farm I & II	Haverhill Road	2-88	62
Downing	Sandown Road	5-107-3	7
McLean	Sandown Road	5-107-3	7
Abdallah	Candia & Clark Rds.	7-21	4
Hadik	Candia Road	7-21	2
Mill Pine Village	Woodbury Lane	10-1	38
Ruth Ray	Haverhill Road	3-6	12
Jig Saw	Reed Road	9-12	9
JBS Properties	Raymond & Ledge Rds	8-8,8-7-1,8-57	18
Crowley Road Development	Crowley Road	11-30 & 11-35	67-72
J J Properties	Rt. 102 & Wason Rd	9-46-47	11
Jenkins Farm III	Haverhill Rd	2-87	10
GBS Properties	North Woods	--	8 lots on 462 Acres; 135 lots total

Existing Land Use

Various datasets were acquired to examine Chester’s historical and contemporary land use trends. Current land usage does not reflect past applications and conflating the datasets would yield inaccurate results. Yet separating the datasets (parcel and assessing records) chronologically and analyzing them in isolation provides decision makers with the opportunity to observe prior developmental trends, identify underutilized or inappropriately classified lands and enhance existing zoning regulations to meet contemporary demands.

The new land use data collected for this 2015 Master Plan Update is not based on the town’s existing parcel or assessing records. The first source of data is based on the Generalized Existing Land Use Map #2 which was prepared by the SNHPC based on the most current 2010 aerial photography available of the town as flown by NH DOT. SNHPC utilized this aerial imagery and digitized all developed land areas within the town. This includes all disturbed land that was not in its natural state, including farms, residential properties, yards, commercial and industrial, roads, and any other active uses. This aerial photo based GIS information was used to tabulate the 2010 Generalized Existing Land Use data as presented in the following table (see Table #1).

Table #1 also includes the existing land use data as presented in the town’s 2006 master plan. Some of the existing land use data and categories presented between the 2005 and 2010 data do not match up and as a result direct comparisons cannot be made due to differences in the way the data was generated. In particular, it is important to note that the process in digitizing developed areas from aerial photography requires land use interpretation decisions which may not agree with the actual land use on the ground, particularly various types of residential structures (single family, duplex, multi-family etc.) and commercial and industrial structures/buildings or how many acres might be counted as part of a residential or commercial property e.g. the amount of acreage calculated surrounding the structure(s).

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The second source of data the SNHPC obtained and analyzed was the Town’s most recent MS-1 report which was prepared in 2014. This data provides some information on the town’s land use (current use, residential, commercial/industrial lands) in terms of actual acreage in use and total valuation as reported by the Town of Chester to the NH Department of Revenue Administration (see following Table #2). Because this data is based on the town’s parcel and assessment records, it provides a more realistic estimate of the town’s residential/commercial/industrial lands as opposed to the GIS-based aerial data prepared on the Existing Land Use Map (Map# 2)

**Table 1
Generalized Existing Land Use**

Land Use	2005 Developed Area (acres)	2010 Developed Area (acres)	2010 Percent (%) of Total Land Area
Agricultural	785	872	5.2%
Residential	2,946	1,683	10.1%
Single Family	2,829	N/A	
Two Family	49	N/A	
Multi-Family	9	N/A	
Condominiums	44	N/A	
Manufactured Homes	16	N/A	
Commercial and Industrial	109	103	0.62%
Commercial	42	16	
Industrial	67	84	
Mixed Use	N/A	3	
Public and Quasi-Public	125	217	1.30%
Public	96	61	
Quasi-Public	29	150	
Recreation	N/A	6.4	
Roads and Utilities	811	416	2.50%
Roads	560	192	
Utilities	251	224	
Total Developed Area	3,991	2,413	14.5%
Undeveloped Area	12,627	14,205	85.5%
Total Land Area	16,618	16,618	100%

Source: 2005 Master Plan; 2010 Aerial Photography, GIS Data

**Table 2
Town of Chester, MS-1 Report, 2014**

Land Use	Number of Acres	Assessed Valuation
Current Use	7,308	\$718,900
Farm Land in Current Use	685	\$188,300
Forest Land In Current Use (including documented stewardship)	6,349	\$526,100
Residential Land	6,775	\$161,968,200
Commercial/Industrial Land (excluding Utility Land)	275	\$3,914,600

Source: Town of Chester, Assessing Department

Utilizing the existing land use data contained in Table #1, approximately 2,413 acres or 14.5% of the town is currently developed. This is less developed land as reported in the 2005 master plan. If the residential data of 6,775 acres from Table #2 is used in place of the 1,683 acres reported in Table #1, than approximately 7,511 acres of the town is developed which represents 45% of the community.

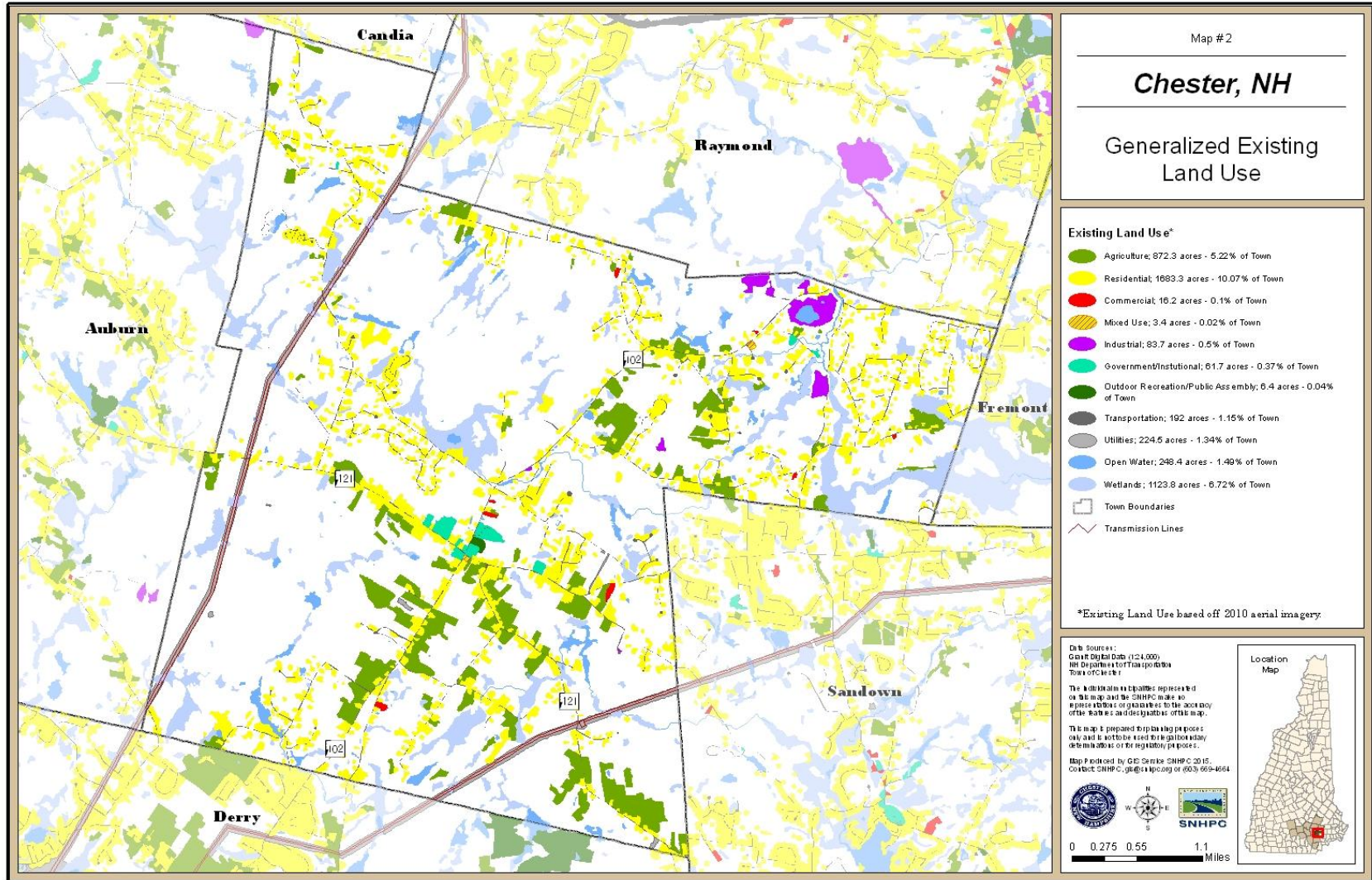
As the existing land use data demonstrates, the Town of Chester is predominantly a residential community. In 2005, a total of 2,946 acres were identified as residential. In 2010, the total amount of residential land identified was 1,683 acres. The differences between these two numbers can be attributed primarily to the way residential land within the town was identified from the aerial photos in 2005 and 2010.

Overall the total amount of residential land in Chester has not decreased, but actually increased since 2005 according to the town’s 2014 MS-1 report.

The 2005 Master Plan identified that new residential growth in Chester at that time was occurring along virtually every pre-existing road, as well as moving away from those roads and necessitating new road construction. Residential development was taking place in the northeastern most portion of Chester, as well as many other isolated locations in northern Chester. Since that time, many new residential developments have occurred in the vicinity of North Pond Road and Candia Road, shifting development south and westward.

Another notable characteristic of the existing development in Chester is the extent to which residential and non-residential activities share the same premises. These occurrences, which for existing land use identification purposes are classified as being mixed uses, have been identified throughout the community. While the primary use of the property is for residential purposes, the Zoning Ordinance allows a wide range of home occupations as accessory uses. Typical of these are shops for electricians, plumbers and similar tradesmen; offices for lawyers, doctors, dentists, accountants, etc.; a variety of

Map #2: Existing Land Use



craft shops; riding stables; and numerous personal and professional services such as beautician and music teacher.

Another important land use trend is that Chester has been experiencing a loss or no gain in commercial land use. As reported in the 2006 Master Plan, the town had roughly 42 acres. As reported in 2010, there is a total of only 16 acres of commercial land. In 2005, 92 percent of the town's commercial establishments were home based compared to 74 percent in 1995. For commercial establishments, home based operations are becoming more prevalent in Chester, despite decreases in the acreage and number of standalone commercial operations.

While commercial businesses saw some increases in home based enterprises, industrial establishments or acreage in industrial use in Chester increased slightly from 67 acres in 2005 to 84 acres in 2010. However, these numbers for both commercial/industrial lands are far less than the total reported in the town's 2014 MS-1 Report.

The greatest land use changes within the community have been within quasi-public land increasing from 125 acres in 2005 to 217 acres in 2010. Quasi-public land consists of institutions of privately owned and tax-exempt uses such as private schools, colleges, religious facilities, etc. Decreases in public land may be attributable to the varying developed area calculations as opposed to actual acreage loss.

The existing land data also indicates that there has been an increase in farmland in Chester increasing from 785 acres in 2005 to 872 acres in 2010. This could be attributable to new agricultural activities including goat farming and horticultural practices.

Surprisingly the existing land use data indicates that there has been decline in the total amount of land in roadways decreasing from 560 acres in 2006 to 192 acres in 2010. Again this is most likely attributable to the varying aerial photo interpretations employed between 2005 and 2010 and does not reflect existing conditions.

Approximately 14,205 acres of land or 85.5% of Chester is currently undeveloped. However, this is not to suggest that all of this acreage is capable of supporting development, nor does it suggest that all portions which are capable of supporting development should be developed. Included in this category are an estimated 872 acres of land, which have been identified as being used as farmland. This estimate of undeveloped lands also includes areas of prime farmland soils, wetlands, flood hazard areas, and steep slopes that need to be recognized as land that should not be developed. The following zoning analysis explores in greater detail, the constraints to development presented by these land characteristics and generally how much developable land is currently available in each of the town's zoning districts.

Zoning Ordinance Analysis

The Town of Chester's original Zoning Ordinance, which helps to guide and direct growth and development in Chester, was adopted by vote of at the Town Meeting held on November 15, 1960. The zoning ordinance was first amended at the March 9, 1965 annual Town Meeting. Over the course of the last 55 years since 1960, changing conditions within the community as well as the broader interests of

the state continually contribute to the need for the Planning Board to present numerous zoning amendments to the town voters.

As reported in the 2005 master plan, approximately half (51 percent) of the survey respondents in the master plan survey indicated that they did not know if Chester's Zoning Ordinance was working well. Additionally, 48 percent of respondents did not know if the Town was adequately zoned. Of the 27 percent who thought Chester's Zoning Ordinance was not working well, most felt the reason was the result of too much development or out of control development within the community.

More recently as part of the 2015 Master Plan Survey, a variety of new public responses has been submitted about Chester's zoning. These survey responses are specific to the question whether the town's zoning for a particular use is in the wrong location and if so what changes should be made? All the survey responses received to this question are identified and summarized below.

1. Better Consistent enforcement of zoning and building rules, fewer variances granted. Do not expand commercial district further. Need full time code enforcement officer who actually enforces the codes.
2. Encourage more office/retail near 121/102 intersection
3. Do not add retail because close enough to malls and larger towns
4. Increase retail/business in center of town
5. Need some business, along 102, to increase tax base
6. If they own it and can make a living, leave them alone!!
7. Chester College
8. Developing Rte. 102 for retail
9. Use the college area to increase small business, office and retail. OR use college area for elderly housing
10. Expand this home cottage type of businesses or manufacturing in historic looking buildings. Must maintain character of historical rural town. Many others do-look at Lexington MA. As good example.
11. Make more space available for business retail to lower tax rate.
12. Don't know enough about the whole process. See town and land use above.
13. Allow small clean business scattered throughout town, not necessarily concentrated. Support home (cottage industry) as was the case in earlier times.
14. Very careful with town growth
15. Keep Rural character - we don't need multi-family or businesses. Both would change Chester into another Derry.
16. Rte. 121 and Rte. 102 should all be business areas. Abutting dump should be industrial.
17. Radius around center should allow for Apartments/duplex and retail business. Especially Rte. 102 to Raymond.
18. Highway Dept. more centralized
19. Include/change zoning along the center of town to allow light commercial or retail to encourage business development.
20. Disappointed to see neon lighted sign at Your Variety Store. Does not fit in with the town's character.
21. Industrial not addressed - causes too much home businesses in residential areas. Retail not

addressed.

22. Consolidate business, manufacturing and industrial in one location.
23. Zoning in town should be higher density
24. Your Variety Store is sitting right on the aquifer.
25. Would suggest mixed use be allowed in some areas for business/office or retail to have residential apartments on 2nd floor - but with good quality design.
26. Prohibit industrial uses in residential zones.
27. We don't need industrial parks and traffic that it brings.
28. None at this time.
29. Rather not comment-just say need change
30. Reduce cluster developing.
31. Open land businesses/golf courses or garden center or nurseries
32. Non-residential business should not be able to operate in residential zone especially when the businesses are commercial and are not permitted/no certificate of occupancy issued not permits pulled for construction.
33. Lower property taxes! Cut Spending!
34. Change zoning regulations to encourage industrial development.
35. I have no doubt that you are looking at the closed college to create a plush set of public offices. I do not support it. Work in conditions like those who pay your salaries must work.
36. Future zoning should consider business, office and retail in just a few locations around town.
37. Zoning regulations cannot be determined by driving the roads so I have no idea what they are.
38. Enlarge commercial zoning to draw in new business.
39. The town should promote growth (or plan for growth) above the Rte. 102 corridor. A commercial/industrial presence would benefit the community and its tax revenue/base
40. Concerned about Maintenance of Chester College property.
41. Yes, Town center-mixed use
42. Attract manufacturing and commercial businesses to reduce residential tax burden.

As can be seen by these responses, the majority of the survey comments received suggested that the town should promote some form of non-residential growth and development along or near the Routes 121/102 intersection; expanding home cottages and home businesses within the community as well as making necessary zoning accommodations to allow alternative use or re-use of the former Chester College, including the village center. There were also as many survey responses received which favored not adding more retail business and keeping the town as rural as possible.

As reported in the town's 2005 master plan, by and large, the characteristics of the land use activity in the Town of Chester are consistent with the listings of permitted and special exception uses contained in the current zoning ordinance. The only major exception to this lies in the Town's center. Current zoning in the center is strictly residential, which contradicts some of the existing retail, business and public institutional land use in this area. To allow the town center to evolve and maintain its classic New England character the zoning of this area should be reviewed to allow for development consistent with both the existing historic fabric of the town and new opportunities for both residential and non-residential development, including livable and walkable development.

The Town of Chester Zoning Ordinance is currently made up of four main zoning districts: General Residential and Agricultural District (Zone R-1); Commercial District (Zone C); Limited Commercial/Light

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Industrial Zone (C-2); and a Telecommunications District. These zoning districts are shown on the following Existing Zoning Map# 3.

As reported in the 2006 Master Plan, the General Residential and Agricultural District encompasses about 98 percent of Chester's land area. This has not changed substantially today. The zone permits single-family and two-family residential development including open space subdivision development along with other compatible uses such as home businesses, educational facilities and general farming and forestry activities. The zone requires a minimum lot size of two acres for single-family and three acres for two-family residential.

Under the Town's Open Space Subdivision Regulations (Article 6), a minimum area of 25 acres is required and the density permitted and types of land use are similar to in a conventional subdivision with the exclusion of wetlands and floodplains. All housing units are then allowed to be concentrated within a more compact area of the site reducing the need for road length, infrastructure improvements, or site area disturbed. In addition a minimum of 50% of the parent lot must remain as a permanently protected conservation area through deeded restriction enforceable by the Town of Chester.

Also under the Open Space Subdivision Regulations, Chester provides incentives for the provision of Senior Housing as well as Workforce Housing to promote households within environmentally sound developments; and to enable the Town to better accommodate a fair share of the region's workforce housing needs.

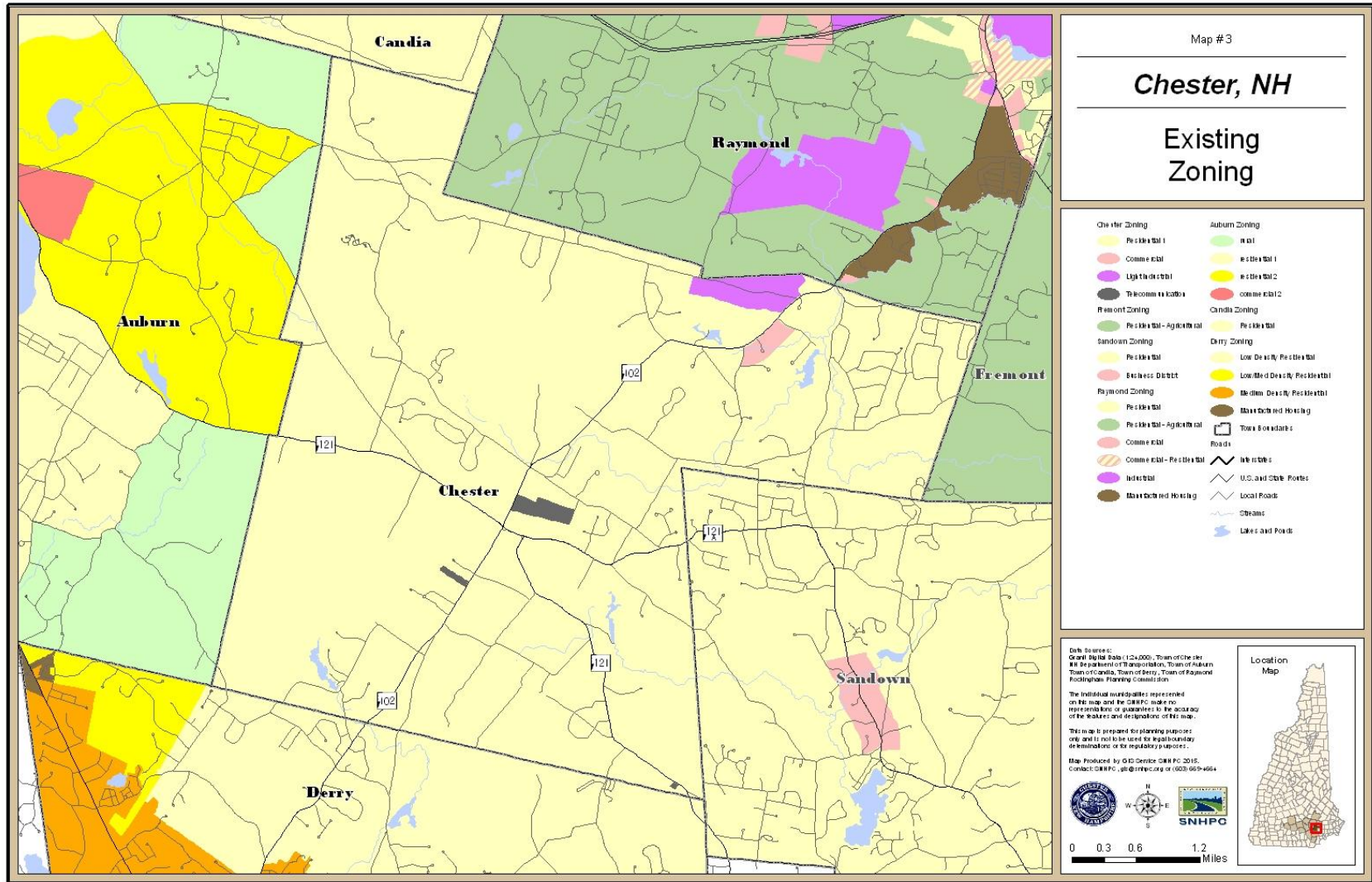
Chester's Commercial District (Zone C) is the smallest district in the community with a total of 56 acres, of which only 22 are developable as of 2005. Much of the Town's Zone C is concentrated in one location located on the south side of Route 102 within the northeast corner of the town. Much of the land that remains however, is behind existing development leaving very little frontage available to meet the district's minimum regulations. This zone is essentially at build-out, despite the 22 acres of land available. Given land availability the regulations permit many of the small retail or business oriented uses that Chester's residents called for in the Community Survey conducted for this Master Plan.

The Limited Commercial/Light Industrial Zone (Zone C-2) was created to address the near build-out conditions of the small Commercial District. Since it is located near the town's dump and transfer station, the permitted uses were extended beyond those of the Commercial District to include warehouses, light manufacturing, and repair shops. While this district is roughly 177 acres in size, only 82 are developable land. However, given the town's requirement that all new development be accessed by a town approved road, development could only be permitted on one of the seven parcels in the district. Since the one lot is only partially zoned for this district, and subtracting natural constraints, there are only 17 acres available for this zone. The remaining 65 acres could be opened up to development if a portion of Dump Road were upgraded to a Class V road.

Chester's Telecommunication District is slightly larger than the Commercial District, 68 acres and has a total of roughly 29 developable acres. This district was established to provide "general guidelines for the siting of telecommunications towers and antennas." The ordinance strives to reduce the visual impact of communication towers. While the district is restricted to three lots, only one of the three has developable area just north of the town center.

Chester's General Zoning Ordinance also includes two overlay districts: a Flood Plain Conservation District (Zone FP) and Wetlands Conservation District. Zone FP applies to all lands designated as special

Map #3: Existing Zoning



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flood hazard areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its Flood Insurance Study for the County of Rockingham, NH dated May 17, 2005, as amended. The Wetlands Conservation District applies to all land areas subject to standing water or extended periods of high water table and basically follows the state's statutory definition of a wetland. The Town of Chester has also designated as part of this zoning district, prime wetlands as provided for by the State of New Hampshire Wt. 701.04, including vernal pools. The town's zoning ordinance requires natural buffers along the Exeter River and in accord with the ordinance's setback and no cut and no clearing zones.

Overall, the Town's Zoning Ordinance provisions directly support two goals of this and past Master Plans – to promote economic development and local farming. The provisions include a "Right to Farm Ordinance" in order to protect the existing farms in the Town of Chester and to encourage others who might want to farm. The only restrictions placed on farming enterprises, as defined in the ordinance, are that the business must meet state sanitary codes and follow best management practices.

Economic development within the town is supported primarily by the town's agricultural industry and the Home Occupation/Home Business regulations within the General Zoning Provisions. The regulation acknowledges the need for commercial and business opportunities at appropriate scales for the community. Chester has a thriving home business base and these regulations support the continuation of these and future businesses. The regulations are designed to ensure that any home based businesses meld with the surrounding residential and agricultural environment.

The following Table #3 provides an analysis of each of the Town's major zoning districts, the total land area in each zone; the amount of existing developed land in each zone; the total amount of existing vacant land in each zone; the total land area subject to specific natural constraints (such as wetlands, steep slopes, FEMA floodplain, farmland soils and conservation lands, etc.); and an estimate of the actual developable land available in zone after subtracting out for these natural constraints.

As can be seen by this analysis, there is essentially little to no suitable unconstrained land remaining within the Town's Telecommunication District and only 17 acres of suitable unconstrained land remaining in the Town's C1 zone.

On the other hand, there is approximately 67 acres of unconstrained land remaining in the Town's C-2 zone and 5,471 acres of suitable land for future residential growth and development. How this land area is build out in the future will have a tremendous impact on the Town's land use and development patterns, public services and facilities and schools. The next section of this chapter focuses on the Town's future land use.

Table 3

Zoning Analysis of Existing Zones, Developed and Vacant Lands, Constrained and Unconstrained (Developable) Land

Zoning District	Total Land Area in Each Zoning District	Existing Developed Land in Each Zoning District	Existing Vacant Land in Each Zoning District	Total Land Area Subject to Natural Constraints	Actual Developable Land Available Less Natural Constraints*
R1 - General Residential/Agricultural	16,317	2,206	14,111	8,640	5,471
C1 - Commercial	56	25	31	14	17
C2 - Commercial/Light Industrial	177	20	157	90	67
T1 - Telecommunications Facility District	68	23	45	45	0
Total Area	16,618	2,274	14,344	8,789	5,557

*Natural Constraints include: hydric soils; steep slopes; FEMA flood; farm soils, and conservation lands

Source: SNHPC Existing Land Use and Zoning GIS data layers

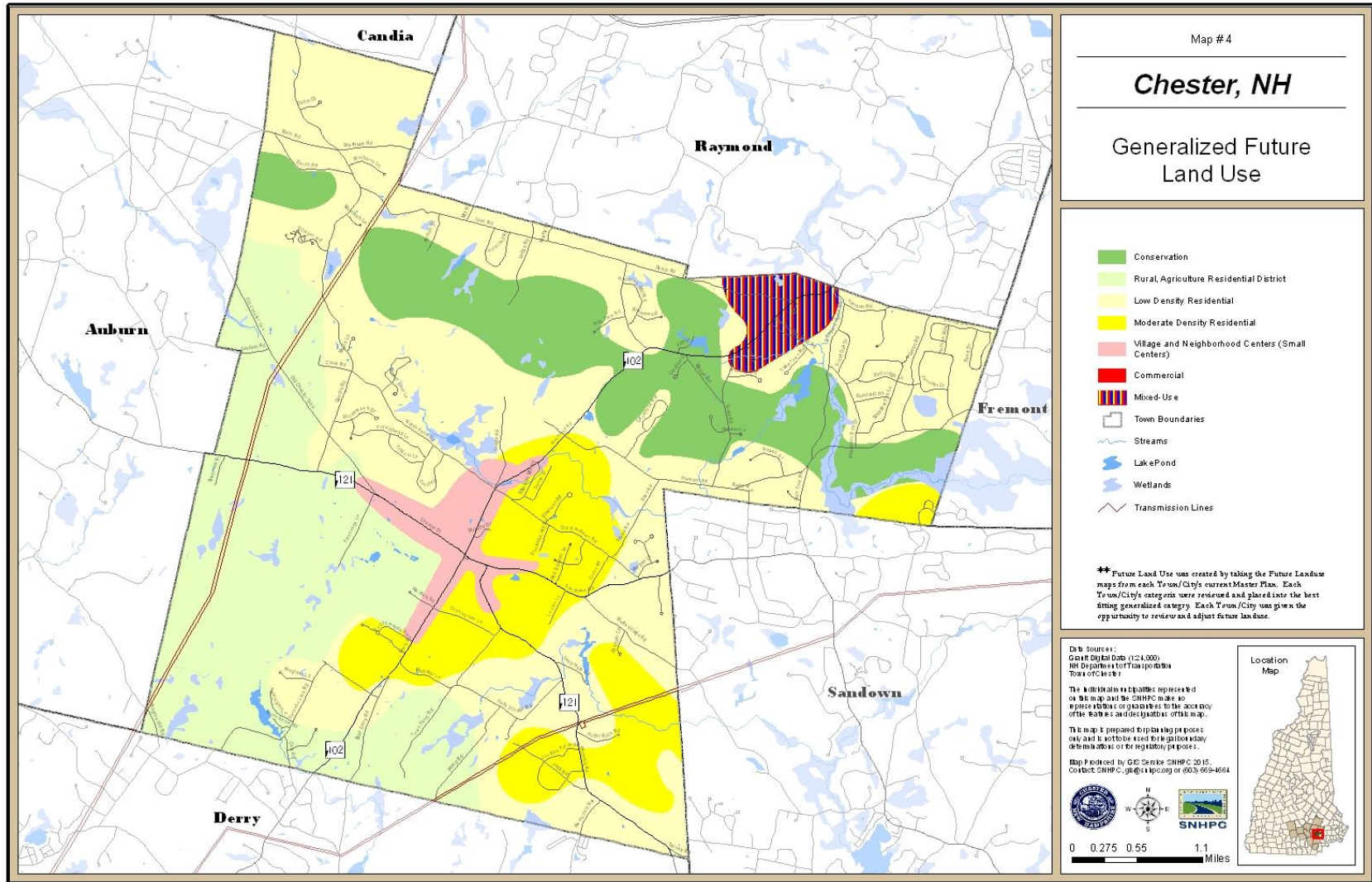
Future Land Use

There are two important future land use planning tools which are included in this 2010 Master Plan Update. The first tool is a Generalized Future Land Use Map which was prepared as part of the town’s 2006 master plan (see following Map# 4). The purpose of a Future Land Use Map is to graphically identify and display where future growth and development of a town could likely occur and what type and density of development is envisioned or preferred by the community.

The Generalized Future Land Use Map prepared for Chester in 2006 is still valid today and this map has been incorporated into various regional planning studies and activities, including the Granite State Future project and the SNHPC’s Regional Comprehensive Plan. Chester’s Generalized Future Land Use Map identifies where future conservation efforts ideally should be focused in the community; where rural, agricultural residential areas exist and should continue; where future low and moderate density residential development exist and should continue; where future commercial/mixed use development could occur; and where the village and neighborhood centers (small centers) exist and could expand within the community.

The identification of these future growth areas reflect the goals of the Planning Board and community to maintain the town’s rural residential and historic character; preserve open space; protect the community’s natural resources; and provide areas for economic opportunities and growth by preventing unnecessary haphazard development and sprawl within the town. In addressing these goals, the Planning Board focused on implementing five planning themes for the community as incorporated into the Future Land Use Map. These themes are described below and could provide the basis for future changes to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map.

Map #4: Future Land Use



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The second future land use planning tool developed by the Chester Planning Board is a Build Out Study prepared for the town (see following Town Scenario CTAP Building Out Study Map# 5 prepared in November 2008). A Build Out Study takes a look at a town's future growth and development given the amount and capacity of available developable land and then estimates what the ultimate growth and development of the town could be (e.g. number of future homes, building units, lots and population, etc.) considering various zoning standards (e.g. minimum lot size and dimensional setbacks, etc.).

The Build Out study prepared for Chester was conducted as part of the NH DOT Community Technical Assistance Project (CTAP) considering future growth impacts to the region as related to I-93 widening project. Utilizing GIS-based Community Viz software and the town's existing zoning standards and the Generalized Future Land Use Map, the study estimated that the Town of Chester could experience a build out of 5,762 homes resulting in a future population of around 14,751.

The distribution and location of these future homes and buildings is graphically displayed on Map# 5 in both red (residential) and black (nonresidential) dots. Under this future growth build out scenario there are heavy concentrations of black dots along all the major roadways in Chester (Rts. 121 and 102) as well as within the village center and the north east corner of town. Red dots however are spread out all throughout the community with the heaviest concentration within the areas identified for future moderate residential growth and development.

While it is highly unlikely that the Town of Chester will grow and develop in this fashion, the build out study and Map# 5 portrays an important picture and message that Chester must continually be active in planning for and guiding its future growth to avoid the creation of scattered and haphazard future development.

To avoid this potential future build out and to achieve balanced future land use, the following is a description of the five major land use themes as set forth in this master plan update. These themes are carried forward from the town's 2006 Master Plan and are expanded upon as identified. As such they provide the community and the planning board with guiding principles in considering and implementing future land use and zoning changes, open space protection, economic development and natural resources protection.

Establish a Conservation and Agriculture Corridor in Chester

Chester has a long history as an agricultural community. This heritage is important for Chester's future both as part of the natural landscape but also for the economic and food production benefits to the community. To protect and set aside land for future conservation and agricultural use it is suggested that a Conservation and Agricultural Corridor be established, maintained and protected within Chester as shown on the Generalized Future Land Use (Map #4).

This natural corridor is an expanse of land located mostly within northern Chester from the PSNH right of way in the west to the Fremont town line in the east, ranging in vertical extent. The corridor encompasses many existing conservation lands within the town, connecting them with adjacent areas. By maintaining connections between existing conservation lands, the town can maximize the benefits of this large expanse of unfragmented land and preserve the natural wildlife corridor. The region selected has many co-occurring natural features such as steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and

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others as identified as part of the Town's Open Space Plan and the Natural Resources chapter of the Master Plan.

Maintain a Historic Village and Town Center

Chester's existing Historic Village area and Town Center encompasses much of the intersections of Routes 102 and 121. It extends from Edwards Mill Road down Route 102 to south of Warfield Road, from a point east of Candia Road to approximately Stockman Hill Road on Route 121 and partway down Haverhill Road.

Current zoning for this area is inconsistent with the existing land use patterns of the area. Promote a future land use consistent with the area's historic character, the Historic Village area could be designated a mixed-use area, permitting both commercial and higher density residential development. This would allow for some small scale commercial development and necessary services that were highly requested by the town's residents in both the 2005 and 2015 Community Surveys.

The former Chester College land is located directly within the most important part of the Town's Historic Village and Town Center. This land area must be proactively planned working in concert with current and future land owners. Ideas for creating a town commons and considering various alternative land uses, including mixed use, elderly housing and educational activities.

The Planning Board can develop design guidelines to suggest appropriate development styles that are consistent with the historic character of this area. The idea is to allow greater opportunities for development other than 2 acre residential while preserving that which the town values most.

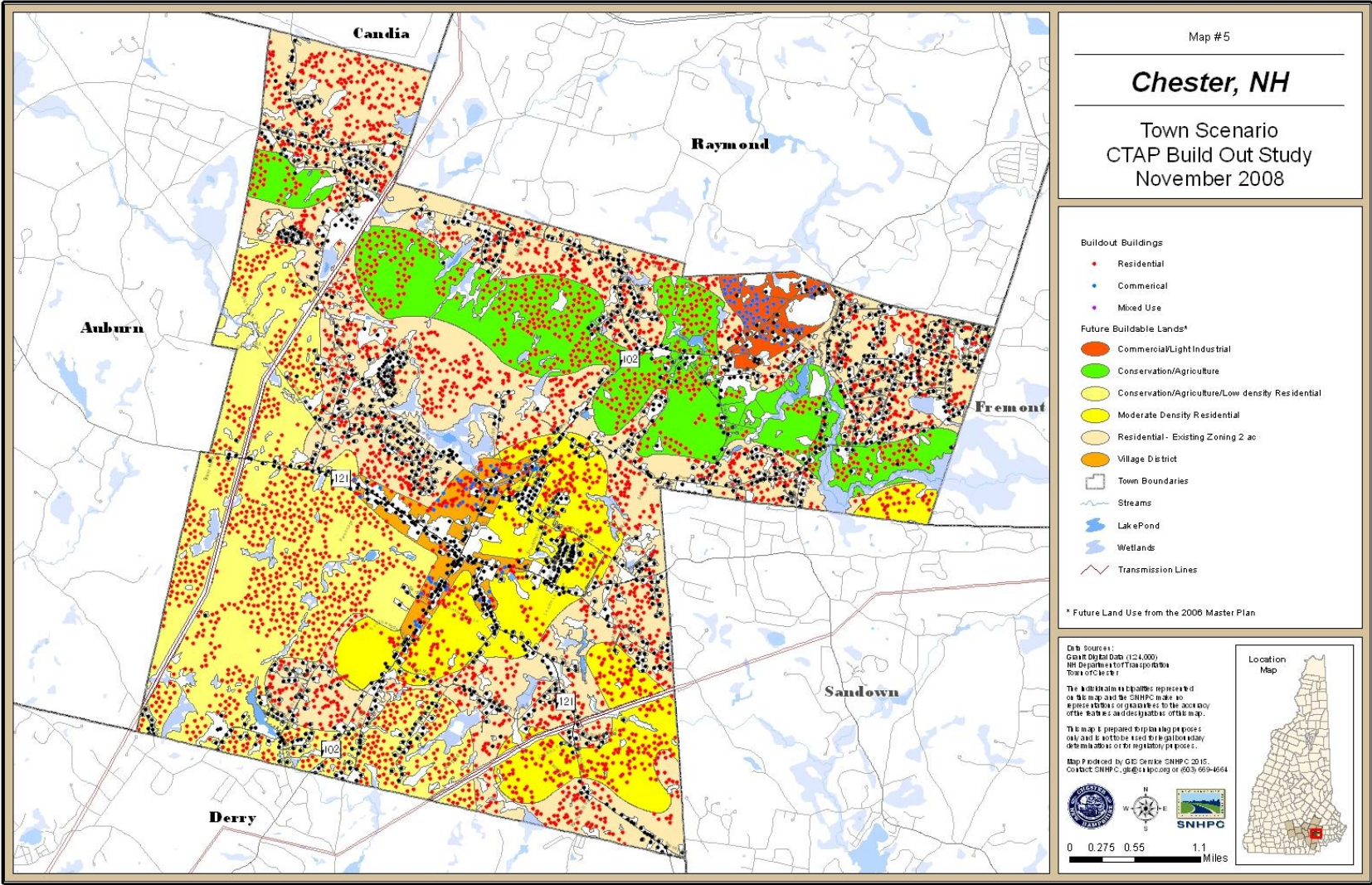
Provide Areas for Moderate Density Residential

Three locations were selected as shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map where residential development would be consistent with existing development and would not significantly impact the green, natural or rural qualities of the Town. One identified area surrounds the Historic Village to the north, east and south. A second area identified is in the south-east corner of Chester and the third area is in the north-east near Sandown and Fremont. The intent is to permit enough room for the growth that Chester anticipates while preserving the rural character. These areas would either function as an extension of the town center or as smaller satellite villages, channeling new growth away from valued green or rural areas.

Promote Conservation and Agriculture with Low Density Residential

The land along the Auburn and Derry town lines is currently very rural and low density residential. Additionally, Chester's zoning in this area is more permissive than in the adjacent towns; Chester has a smaller minimum lot size. By matching the efforts and zoning of the adjacent towns a larger green pocket of land, transcending municipal bounds, could be retained as rural and lessen potential development pressures.

Map # 5: CTAP Build Out Study, November 2008



Provide for Commercial and Light Industrial Expansion

This area is virtually the same location as the existing Commercial (C1) and Commercial/Light Industrial (C2) district however, slightly expanded since the Commercial (C1) land is virtually entirely developed. The area should be increased to allow opportunities for development to broaden the existing tax base and reduce the individual property tax burden as called for by citizens responding to the Community Survey. Additionally, proximity to Raymond and similar developed uses will allow for a larger pool of potential “customers” making commercial development more viable in this location than in others.

Future growth through this proposed future land use map is channeled into already developed areas and valuable natural environments are preserved. Additionally, zoning revisions are proposed for the Town Center to allow any future growth or development to be consistent with its existing historic and municipal center character. This also bolsters goals to promote additional small commercial or professional opportunities in town.

Creation of these five new land use categories, and associated physical locations, in Chester acknowledges that growth will happen; growth is always inevitable. The future land use map proposed here allows the Town to plan for growth in a way that promotes and preserves Chester's existing historic and rural character.

Innovative Zoning Techniques

There are two innovative zoning techniques that could be explored by the Chester Planning Board and the Town of Chester in the next several years in achieving the goals of this plan and the Generalized Future Land Use Map and themes identified above. These techniques include: the Density Transfer Credit (DTC) and the Village Plan Alternative. The advantages and disadvantages of these zoning measures and how they could be applied in Chester are discussed below.

Density Transfer Credit (DTC)

As described in the *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development*, prepared in October 2008 by the NH DES, many communities in Southern New Hampshire have master plans that advocate protecting natural resources and important conservation lands, open space and saving rural character and working landscapes from sprawl. However, no matter how well-crafted most town zoning ordinances are not going to achieve these goals. This is particularly true for many towns located in Southern New Hampshire which thought they had protected themselves from with increased development pressure by adopting low density zoning standards and minimum lot sizes.

These towns, Chester included, have now found themselves faced with sprawling residential and commercial development occurring across the landscape everywhere that land is available and developable. Under conventional zoning, the only sure way to permanently protect land from development is to acquire it – and increasingly this means buying it. Yet, it is unrealistic to expect that sufficient public funds will continue to be ever available in the future to acquire and protect important community assets and natural resources and preserve open space.

The concept of transferring development rights and the density transfer credit was devised several decades ago as a potential solution to this issue. While it has seen limited use in New Hampshire new variations show promise. The density transfer credit is a promising new zoning technique which can redirect future growth and development from one location within a town to another in a way that is fair and equitable to the landowners involved.

The model density transfer credit as presented in the Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Handbook focuses on residential development only and is designed to transfer density credits from where land conservation and the creation of higher density neighborhood or village development are the primary objectives. To set up such a program in Chester, the Planning Board would identify specific sending and receiving zones. These could be for example the Conservation and Agricultural Corridor as the sending zone and the Moderate Density and Village and Neighborhood Centers (as shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map) identified as the receiving zones.

In a small rural residential town such as Chester, the zoning ordinance could allow for an incremental density increase request from a developer as a condition of approval or as a certificate of density credit in order to build at certain allowed densities in the receiving area. The density increase could be in the form of moderate increases in building height and lot coverage or smaller minimum lot sizes in the order of 30 to 50 percent – depending on on-site septic systems. These credits are issued by the planning board in exchange for conservation easements on land in the sending area obtained by the developer. The developer is responsible for obtaining the easements on which the credits are issued.

Since the exchange must occur upfront it often discourages developers from paying for the conservation easement prior to development approval. This can be a barrier to the widespread use of DTC. However, if the developer already owned the land or easement in the sending area the concept would be very popular. An alternative form of exchange could be a density transfer fee in place of the actual easement. Under this approach, the town and planning board would need to know what land they want to protect and how much it is going to cost in order to negotiate the exchange. In a town such as Chester, which has a very active Conservation Commission, this obstacle could be overcome and a fair transfer fee could be set through a market analysis or land appraisal.

If a DTC ordinance is established as an optional technique and not a mandatory requirement, it could meet with greater local acceptance and support from town residents and developers. The DTC zoning technique can be enacted in accordance with RSA 674:21 and authority of granted by RSA 674:16 and 674:21(l) relative to conditional use permits.

Village Plan Alternative

The Village Plan Alternative is a planning tool that can be used to promote livable and walkable development and compact development and mixed use, including residential, small-scale commercial, recreation and conservation in close proximity within a neighborhood or village center. It has the advantages of being scaled to a rural residential community and historic village center such as Chester.

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Several model ordinances are presented in the *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development*.

It also can be useful where a new village, or an extension of an existing village, would be an appropriate outcome and offers the Town of Chester an opportunity in redeveloping the former Chester College land and expanding the Village Center. The Village Plan Alternative is administered as a Conditional Use Permit through the planning board.

Generally, three areas are established as part of the zoning ordinance: village residential areas; small-scale retail areas; and village conservation/historic areas. The village residential areas provide for continued use and protection of existing housing and accessory buildings. The village conservation/historic areas are recognized permanently protected open spaces, greens, commons and private non-common acreage within larger estates, country properties, or other parcels used for agricultural uses such as wholesale nurseries, tree farms, equestrian facilities, etc.

The small-scale retail areas are set up for existing or new uses intended to serve the retail and service needs of a traditional village and its vicinity. These areas also include civic and institutional uses of community importance such as town halls, post offices, libraries, etc. Basically everything the Town of Chester already has in place in its Village Center. Such a small-scale retail area could also include the lands of the former Chester College.

In setting up such a zoning ordinance, design standards including density limitations and bonuses and other dimensional requirements are developed for each of these three areas. Development proposals are submitted as conditional use permits to the planning board for review and approval. All and all this zoning technique has a lot of merit for consideration in Chester as a means to fairly and equitably treat and address existing and new uses in the town's existing Village Center as well as protect existing residential and historic areas. The key in making the village plan alternative zoning work are the building and architectural design standards themselves. These standards must be tailored to fit the needs of the specific area and address all elements of a development, including building use, form and function, overall layout and street frontage, building orientation and appearance.

Chester

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Community Facilities

Community Facilities

Introduction

This Chapter of the Chester Master Plan identifies the current status of community facilities and infrastructure and identifies community needs and improvements recommended for the Town's facilities and various departments. The provision of community facilities is an important responsibility and necessity for local government to maintain services and protect the public's health, welfare and safety. Failing to identify, plan and provide for necessary community facilities and improvements often places communities in a catch-up mode given the demands and consequences of growth and public expectations.

Most of the information in this chapter was obtained through a memorandum distributed to town officials and town department heads; a master plan survey distributed to town departments and residents; and the Town's 2008-2014 adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

A Capital Improvement Programs is a financing tool to help communities plan to fund necessary facilities and capital projects by dedicating funds and phasing expenditures several years in advance to minimize the impacts and costs of such facilities on the local property tax rate. All new or proposed community facilities and capital projects in Chester are brought forward to the annual town meeting for authorization. Community Facilities are defined in the Town of Chester's CIP as having the following characteristics:

- Outside of normal operations and maintenance; and
- A gross cost of at least \$5,000; and
- A useful life of at least 3 years; and
- Is non-recurring (not an annual budget item); or
- Any project requiring bond financing.

Community Survey

In early 2015, a Master Plan Community Survey was mailed out to all Chester residents and out-of-town property owners. The survey was also made available to the public on the Town website as well as at the Town Hall. A total of 281 surveys were received and the tabulated results have been used to develop the chapters of the Master Plan. The following questions and responses related directly to Community Facilities and Services in the Town of Chester are summarized as follows (see Appendix in this master plan for the complete survey results).

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Question #1: What, in your opinion, are the most important general issues that must be addressed in Chester over the next five years? Please check up to five items from the list. Responses highlighted in Bold Italics pertain to the town's community facilities and infrastructure.

Write-In Responses:

1. Pay Teachers more Money
- 2. *Cell Phone Tower***
3. Improve Town management
4. Reduce Full time police officers
- 5. *Bike Paths/Trails***
6. Need Something in Chester to tax other than houses
7. Limit Cluster Development
- 8. *LANE ROAD NEEDS TO BE PAVED***
9. Gas Station
- 10. *Street Light at center to cut down on accidents***
11. Keep 2 acre lots single family
- 12. *Lane Road Needs Improvements***
13. Lower property taxes
14. Allow More Home Businesses
15. Improve Town Management
16. Restaurant
- 17. *Improve Main Roads***
18. Keep Chester rural.
19. Don't Become Derry.
20. Lower taxes, create jobs
21. Stop Cluster housing and reduce taxes
22. Develop a more professional rapport between departments + boards of Chester.
23. Stop Spending, Lower taxes
- 24. *Road maintenance program***
25. Convert Chester College to professional park
26. Reduce School budget by putting more students per class
- 27. *Install a traffic light at the dangerous intersection of rte. 121 and rte. 102.***
28. Diversify tax base. Keep Chester from becoming bedroom community. More places to work during the day and more places to socialize at night.
29. Spend Less Money!
30. Lower/maintain taxes
31. Protect and keep Chester college land
32. Preserve Country Setting
- 33. *Community Rubbish Pickup***
34. Raise pay for teachers

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Question #8: Please rank the following town departments, facilities and services as excellent, good, adequate, or poor by checking the appropriate box. Please indicate, “Don’t Know” if you are uncertain.

Ranking of Community Facilities and Services						
Facilities and Services	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't Know	No response
School System	66	106	36	2	63	8
Fire/Rescue	93	127	33	1	17	10
Police	81	124	45	9	13	9
Library	66	99	60	3	43	10
Recreational areas & facilities	37	104	77	25	28	10
Recreational programs for seniors	18	43	33	21	154	12
Recreational Programs for youths	33	72	47	16	96	17
Road maintenance & reconstruction	15	58	104	82	9	13
Transfer station & recycling	113	80	43	12	22	11
Building inspections/ code enforcement	18	83	61	18	89	12
Land use planning	8	61	72	25	102	13
Health, welfare & animal control	12	62	69	16	110	12
Tax assessing & collection	30	99	103	15	23	11
Town Administration	21	102	99	24	23	12
Cemetery Maintenance	38	100	52	2	80	9
Town forests	32	96	47	5	91	10
Community Access TV	4	24	54	62	125	12

Question #10: Should we improve...

Improvements to Town Buildings					
	Renovate Existing Structure	Build New Structure	No Improvements	Don't Know	No Response
Town offices	39	9	185	34	14
Police facilities	31	20	154	62	14
Fire/public safety facilities	222	9	2	38	10
Highway Dept.	14	15	145	92	15

Other Write-In Responses:

1. Better Planned Maintenance
2. Renovate: Library
3. Lane Road Is a Major issue
4. Renovate MPR Room
5. Renovate Community Building
6. Renovate Existing Building: Stevens Hall
7. Build New Structure: Library
8. Library
9. Consolidate as much as possible
10. Town Clerk Needs More Hours
11. Community center & Rec. buildings. Stevens hall. Library
12. Reduce taxes
13. Build new structure: intersection of routes 121 & 102
14. No improvements: Transfer station
15. Build New Structure: Recreation

Fire Department

The Chester Fire Department has operated out of 27 Murphy Drive Fire Station since it opened in 1999. The station has 9 bays, a kitchen, meeting room, 4 offices, 3 bathrooms, 2 bedrooms, an exercise area and a day room. In 2014, the station saw the completion of 2 additional smaller bays.

The Chester Fire Department is staffed by 2 full-time certified Fire Officers, 1 part-time administrative assistant and approximately 35 paid-call employees. The 2 full-time employees serve as firefighters, emergency medical technicians and inspector. One of the full-timers also serves as an investigator. The part-time employee works days as an administrative assistant. The 35 paid-call employees respond to emergencies as needed.

The Chester Fire Department contracts all dispatch and ambulance service to the Town of Derry. Personnel use pagers that allow the dispatcher to describe the details of the emergency. During weekday working hours, between two and five members can be expected to respond to a call with more members available during the evening and weekends. The number of personnel summoned for medical emergencies varies based on the nature of the emergency and time of day.

Chester participates directly and indirectly in several mutual districts, including the Interstate Emergency Unit, the Border Area Mutual Aid District, the Southern New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District and the New Hampshire Federation of Mutual Aid. Chester provides assistance to other members in these districts as well as receives assistance for emergencies and fires in Chester. Chester is divided into quadrants for mutual aid purposes, drawing on assistance from the nearest sources. These quadrants do not apply to general services and firefighting response within the town.



The Chester Fire Department responds to approximately 450+ calls per year. Primary water sources for firefighting are Edwards's mill, Spring Pond, the Exeter River at Hanson Road, North Pond and Wason Pond. However, the department is not limited to these sources and will use the most readily available source for fire suppression. All new subdivisions of nine lots or greater must provide a water supply for firefighting.

Since the last Master Plan was adopted in Chester (2005), the Fire Department has upgraded a rescue vehicle, ladder truck, forestry truck, command car, zodiac boat and gator.

Table 1: Current Inventory

Item	Vehicle Year	Life Expectancy in Years
Structural Tanker	1990	20
Command SUV	2009	7
Utility Pickup	1993	10
Gator and Trailer	2007	8
Engine Pumper	2003	20
Forestry Truck	2004	10
Rescue Truck	2010	10
Engine Quint	2009	20
Forestry Tanker	1989	10
Radios (30)	N/A	N/A
Defibrillators (3)	N/A	N/A
Thermal Imagery Cam (3)	N/A	N/A
Gear (40)	N/A	N/A
Air Packs (25)	N/A	N/A
Pagers (40)	N/A	N/A

Source: Chester Fire Department

Future Needs

The Fire Department’s most pressing need for the future is a new Tanker, with other related requirements being:

- New Gear
- Radios

Police Department

The Chester Police Department used to be housed in the former Stevens Memorial Hall. The Department now occupies about 3,000 square feet of the former Chester Elementary School at 84 Chester Street, sharing the building with the Town Offices. This facility has three rooms for offices and a conference room. The department has a booking area and two temporary holding areas. Persons unable to make bail are brought to the Rockingham County Correctional Facility in Brentwood, NH. The Department currently has five full-time officers, a Chief, and six to seven part-time police officers. There is one full-time administrative assistant.

The Chester Police Department utilizes dispatch services from the Rockingham County dispatch facilities. The county provides this service to its towns with populations under 5,000 persons. In

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the future, if the town's population exceeds 5,000, service may still be available from the county on at least a part-time basis.

The Police Department responds to an average of 3,500 calls and 2,500 motor vehicle stops per year. The department provides 24-hour coverage to Chester's residents when at full staffing capacity. The Police Department has a mutual aid agreement with all the towns in Rockingham County.



In 2001, the Police Department relocated to its current facility at 84 Chester Street and implemented other improvements, including updates to the phone and computer systems and installation of a new radio system. These systems have the ability to interface with state and county dispatch emergency services, office and agencies.

In addition to its building improvements, the department maintains a fleet of vehicles. The Police Department owns five vehicles

including a 2016, Ford Utility, 2015 Ford Utility, a 2014 Ford Utility, a 2011 Ford Crown Victoria, and a 2008 Ford Expedition. All cruisers are equipped with radio and siren equipment, emergency lighting, and a defibrillator. The Police Department is now in the process of replacing one cruiser per year. Typically, police vehicles last four years and accumulate greater than 130,000 miles during that time.

Future Needs

The greatest need of the Chester Police Department is personnel. The Chief wants to expand the force to include up to 11 part-time officers. Chester's population has increased in recent years to 4,822 residents as of 2014. The department has not expanded to meet the increased need. FBI statistics suggest that the town should employ one and a half Officers per one thousand residents. The Police Department also hopes to improve the housing and maintenance of its vehicles. Proper vehicle care and maintenance ensures the longevity of the vehicles, keeping departmental and taxpayer costs down. A multi-purpose garage, used for routine maintenance work and storage of vehicles and supplies, would address this concern. A sally port would also be effective for safety reasons as the Department is now taking prisoners through the front door of the police station which could be a huge liability.

Other needs of the department include the maintenance of the computer system and compatibility with the county and state systems. The police department's server was replaced in 2014 and is on a break and fix plan with a local I.T. company. The police vehicles will be equipped with laptops or mobile data terminals in the near future.

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Finally, the department needs to create a space they may use as a mini laboratory where property can be dusted for fingerprints and the Department can conduct other examinations, without contaminating other parts of the facility. The evidence room will also have to be expanded in the upcoming years as it is a relatively small area and is quickly reaching its capacity.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

The Town Clerk/Tax Collector Window office hours are open 5 days a week from 7 am to 12:30 pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Tuesday, the window hours are extended to 3:30pm.

The Town Clerk is an elected official position and is held by a full-time employee who also has the title and responsibilities of the town's Tax Collector. Additionally there is one part-time position under the supervision of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

The Department is responsible for collecting property taxes, current use tax, timber tax, gravel tax and places municipal liens on personal property. This office also registers your car, registers you to vote (with the exception of 10 days before an election), licenses your dog, provides you with your marriage license, fill and dredge permits, and provides certified copies of marriage, births and deaths. The Town Clerk also maintains the minutes for all Boards in the Town of Chester. In addition, the Town Clerk provides absentee ballots, collects parking tickets, etc. As the keeper of town records the office space includes a secure vault, office files, and a private storage room.

Educational Facilities

Schoolchildren in grades K-8 attend Chester Academy while high school students are tuitioned to Pinkerton Academy in Derry. Chester Academy also accommodates a half-day kindergarten program and a preschool program for children aged three to five with educational disabilities. It is an inclusionary program where typical developing students are role models and pay a tuition fee.

Chester Academy located at 22 Murphy Drive opened in September of 1999 with 24 instructional classrooms for grades 1-8. In 2003, the school opened a ten-classroom addition. The facility at Murphy Drive replaced the former school building (built in 1948) at 34 Chester Drive which is now used for town offices and the police department. Chester Academy's maximum core capacity is 800 students based upon New Hampshire State Standards (510 at the middle level and 390 at the elementary level) can be accommodated in the 34 instructional classrooms. The school also houses seven additional classrooms for music and art, technology integration, physical education, library skills and two kindergarten rooms. Elementary Music, Health, Title 1, Enrichment, and Speech and Language are floating programs which use unoccupied classrooms. There is also a cafeteria and full kitchen on site. The average class size

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for grades one through four is 18 students. The average class size at the middle level is currently 18. Chester Academy’s enrollment history 2006-2015 is provided in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Chester Academy Enrollment History 2006-2015

Grade	Academic Year									
	6-May	7-Jun	8-Jul	9-Aug	10-Sep	11-Oct	12-Nov	13-Dec	13/14	14/15
Kindergarten						39	32	35	32	27
1	73	75	61	64	68	46	55	65	49	44
2	79	81	70	67	63	71	47	55	40	60
3	84	78	82	68	65	63	69	50	61	40
4	78	82	73	82	67	66	62	75	51	66
5	90	80	81	76	84	69	65	64	81	56
6	89	91	81	84	75	87	74	70	72	82
7	84	88	83	81	84	77	90	76	74	67
8	85	81	91	82	84	83	76	91	80	74
Total	662	656	622	604	625	601	570	551	540	516

Source: Chester Academy

From the fall of 2005 to the fall of 2014, Chester Academy’s student population (excluding pre-school) decreased from 662 to 516 students, As of October 2014, the school can now host an additional 284 students, a thirty six percent increase, before reaching its core capacity (see Table 2). Chester students in grades 9 through 12 are accommodated by Pinkerton Academy in Derry. Unlike Chester Academy’s recent enrollment decline, there has been a 13 percent increase in the number of Chester’s high school students enrolled at Pinkerton Academy (see Table 3).

Table 3: Chester Students Tuitioned to Pinkerton Academy, 2005-2015

Grade	Academic Year									
	6-May	7-Jun	8-Jul	9-Aug	10-Sep	11-Oct	12-Nov	13-Dec	13/14	14/15
9	69	99	89	103	92	98	98	84	108	91
10	74	64	99	78	101	94	91	88	76	99
11	103	77	64	100	72	90	92	90	92	82
12	71	96	71	58	88	74	79	76	80	85
Total	317	336	323	339	353	356	360	338	356	357

Source: Chester Academy

To track the future student population demand on Chester Academy, the school board has prepared two sets of projections for the school. The first simply moves the existing number of students in each grade through to the next grade (see Table 4). The second adds a two percent increase in each grade level onto the first age-progression-based projection (see Table 5).

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Table 4: Chester Academy Population Progression 2015-2019

Grade	Academic Year				
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
K	27	35	35	35	35
1	44	44	44	44	44
2	60	44	44	44	44
3	40	60	44	44	44
4	66	40	60	44	44
5	56	66	40	60	44
6	82	56	66	40	60
7	67	82	56	66	40
8	74	67	82	56	66
Total	516	494	471	433	421

Source: Chester Academy

Table 5: Chester Academy Population Progression Two Percent Growth - 2015-2019

Grade	Academic Year				
	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
K	27	35	35	35	35
1	44	44	44	44	44
2	60	45	45	45	45
3	40	61	46	46	46
4	66	41	62	47	47
5	56	67	42	63	48
6	82	57	68	43	64
7	67	84	58	69	44
8	74	68	86	59	70
Total	516	502	486	451	443

Source: Chester Academy

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Education represents the largest expenditure of public funds by the town. For the 2014/15 academic year, the approved school budget was \$11,907,747 of which \$7,223,777 was raised locally through taxation.

Future Needs

The Town of Chester adopted two Warrant Articles at the March 2015 Town Meeting which directly pertain to Chester Academy. The first Article appropriated \$25,000 to be placed in the School Buildings Maintenance Fund (established in March 2000). The second Article appropriated \$6,000 for the completion of an impact fee methodology study for the school district to be completed on or before June 30, 2019. These



Articles, according to the School District Superintendent, are needed to address the future repair of the Chester Academy school building gym and cafeteria roof.

Chester Academy was built in 1999 and the facility remains in good condition although there are needed repairs and projects being planned as identified in the Chester Academy Five/Ten Year Facilities Improvement Plan adopted by the School Board on June 3, 2015. According to this plan the goal of this Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is to collect, analyze, estimate cost and prioritize facility and equipment needs over a five to ten year period. The projects currently being planned include:

1. Gym/Cafeteria Flat Roof: Projected date to be determined. The current roof warranty is active through May 2019. Over the past several years the school has experienced roof leaks over the gym and cafeteria. The flat roofs over the gym and cafeteria are approximately 16,300 square feet in area and will require an engineering study to assess roof load capability, etc. The school is also reviewing possibilities to include a solar project in this build out.
2. Roof Wall Joints: Project ongoing. Caulking has been deteriorating and drying out. Patching is performed where needed and further observation is required.
3. Repair, Reseal and Re-Stripe Parking Lot: Projected Date of project FY 2017. Estimated Cost in order of \$15,000 to \$20,000.
4. Replace 18,000 gal. Propane Tank: Project recommended for removal from CIP.
5. Heating and Cooling Ventilation Units: Projected date of project – TBD. There are 13 heating and ventilation units spread out in the building which may need to be upgraded. Interior units are in need of repair and upgrading. Roof top units need to be evaluated.
6. Building Lighting: Projected date of project: FY 2017. Changing gym lighting from metal halide to LED technology to obtain savings in electricity cost, including reviewing possible install of occupancy sensors in some areas of the building.
7. Sediment Sand Separator for Water Well: Projected date of project – FY 2017. Install stainless steel separator to collect sediment. Estimated cost \$5,000.

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8. Add Storage Space: Projected date of project – FY 2017. Exploring options for location and building size. Cost to be determined.
9. Replace Cafetorium Tile: Projected date of project – FY 2018. Replace approximately 3,900 square feet of tile. Cost to be determined.
10. Replace Library Carpet: Project date of project – FY 2019. Replace approximately 3,300 square feet of carpet. Cost to be determined.
11. Replacement of Stage Curtain. Projected date of project – FY 2020. Cost to be determined.
12. Network Switch, Hub Room. Projected date of project – FY 2020. Replace existing switches in east wing of building to include more 10 GB options. Estimated cost \$30,000.
13. Wireless Network: Projected date of project – FY 2024. Current network controller and access points will reach end of life in FY 2024. Estimated replacement cost \$35,000.
14. Loading Dock Canopy Repair/Replacement. Projected date and cost of project to be determined.
15. Modular Building Replacement. Projected date and cost of project to be determined.

The school board is continually working with the School District to review these projects and to update this CIP.

Stevens Memorial Hall

The Stevens Memorial Hall is the site of the former Town Hall, from 1910 to 2001. Currently it is home to the Chester Historical Society, and Chester Lions Club, all of whom are trustees of the



building. The building hosts meetings for the Rockingham Herb Society every month, weekly AA meetings, a monthly Lions Club meeting and the Historical Society meets once every other month. The Lifestone Church also has services every Saturday evening at 6:00 P.M. and the Chester Dancers hosts bi-weekly dance classes for children and young adults in Chester and the surrounding area for no cost involved to join. The building is also rented for special events and used by local groups and organizations. The Chester

Historical Society opens the building to the public on the second Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and the museum is open for two hours once a month with a member of the Historical Society present; the building is also open when one of the above organizations is present.

The Chester Historical Society has been instrumental in facility improvements of the Hall over the past decade. The ceiling was repaired prior to painting the interior of the building for the 2010 rededication of the building in which the Historic Society shared in this expense. The ceiling and walls in the auditorium were also painted at that time. New window shades were purchased for the auditorium by the Historic Society. Paneling from the dining room was removed and at that time the plaster walls as well as the fluorescent lighting was also replaced in the dining room. The stove in the kitchen was replaced with a new stove last year donated by the Lifestone Church and the

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exterior of the building was scraped and painted for the 2010 rededication. Work was also done on gutters and down spouts at that time.

The building is equipped with an elevator to provide handicapped access to the second floor. This elevator is nearing the end of its life cycle and will eventually need to be replaced. The first floor and parts of the second floor have storm windows, but the building is not completely well-insulated due to its age.

Future Needs

The priorities for improvement of Stevens Memorial Hall include replacing the exterior front porch on the building.

Chester Planning Board

The Planning Board currently consists of 5 voluntary board members and 1 alternate member. The Planning Board office continues to be staffed with one full-time planning coordinator and funding for consulting help as needed. Office space is shared with the Assessing Department. There is desk space for four people and/or additional file space. Office hours are from 8am-4-pm, Monday-Friday.

Future Needs

The future needs of the Planning Department involve staffing, which will be based on increased development and changes in statutory requirements. It is no longer feasible for the Planning Coordinator to transcribe Planning Board minutes so a regularly scheduled minute taker is needed. There continues to be the need for a part-time planning consultant who would be responsible for the annual update of specific land use documents. A part-time clerk is also needed in order to provide backup for the one full-time staff member. At some point in the future, the planning board records will be housed in 12 four drawer fire-proof cabinets.

Chester Zoning Board of Adjustment

The Zoning Board of Adjustment currently consists of three volunteer board members, three volunteer alternate board members, and a part-time administrative assistant. Since 1997, the Zoning Board has gained permanent office space, as well as regular hours of operation. Office hours are Wednesday -Friday from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Future Needs

In the short term, the ZBA needs two volunteer board members and two volunteer alternate board members. Long term needs include an increase in the number of part-time office hours to 24 hours per week.

CTV-20 & CTV-21 Studio; CETV-22

The CTV-20 Government Channel and CTV-21 Public Access Studio are located at the Town Office building in two adjoining former classrooms. Two thirds of the 1,200 square foot space is shared as studio space for production of Cable programming and Town meeting room while the other third serves as a control room and an editing suite. Comcast Communications owns the core equipment, as part of the first Franchise Agreement from 1988, which enabled this Public Access Television (PEG) station to begin. The Town of Chester owns all additional cablecast, video, and audio e

quipment. All funds supporting Public, Educational and Government television in Chester is generated by franchise fees of 1 percent paid by subscribers, collected by Comcast, and returned to the Town for exclusive use by Public Access Community Television (PACT).

CETV-22 is located at Chester Academy. A portion of equipment is owned by the Town of Chester by virtue of their share of franchise fees toward Education Access Television. The remainder of the equipment is owned by the School District.

The town's cable television renewal franchise was recently updated and granted in June 2014 to Comcast by the Board of Selectmen. This franchise agreement is for ten years expiring on June 18, 2024, unless terminated according to the terms of the agreement. The agreement provides that Comcast shall extend automatically at their sole cost and expense to any and all areas of the town containing twenty subscribers per aerial mile of cable plant or fractional proportion thereof, and/or twenty-five Subscribers per underground mile of cable plant or fractional proportion thereof as measured from the existing trunk and distribution system.

There is also a provision in the agreement which provides that Comcast shall further extend to all areas of the town that do not meet these requirements upon request of prospective Subscribers in such areas utilizing a specific cost calculation which takes into the account the cost of wiring; capital cost of installation and extending service divided by the number of subscribers in the such area less the costs of extending service to 20 subscribers per aerial mile or 25 subscribers per underground mile of cable as a factional proportion thereof.

The agreement also includes free connections and monthly service to all public buildings and schools as well as public, educational and governmental access programming and access. The franchise fee outlined in the agreement is equal to one percent of Comcast's gross annual revenues, on a quarterly basis and paid to the town on a quarterly basis.

At the 2015 Town Meeting, the voters approved special warrant article #11 – PACT to raise and appropriate \$65,000 for the purpose of providing public, education and governmental access television in the Town of Chester. These funds are to be withdrawn from the Special Revenue Fund established as the "PACT" Fund separate from the General Fund and is funded by Comcast subscribers in the Town of Chester.

Future Needs

All three stations need to be upgraded from VHS to digital. In the coming year CTV-20/21 hopes to purchase the following equipment which will bring CTV-20/21 into the digital age: a New TriCaster 8000 \$40,000 (switcher); the UltraNEXUS™ \$12,000 (programmer); JVC GYHM600U \$4,500 (camera) and miscellaneous equipment for a total of \$64,000. All future plans for CTV-22 facilities are under the auspices of the School District, unless funds from PACT fees are used. This station is only used to broadcast School Board meetings and the equipment being used is adequate for this job. It was suggested to the School Board that if they would like to start an Educational Broadcast program with a match with Pinkerton school, the cost would be about \$74,000.

Chester Assessing Department

The Assessing Department currently consists of one full-time, Assistant Assessor and contracts with an assessing firm, Municipal Resources, Inc. for additional support at 8hrs monthly. The Assessing Department also contracts yearly with a Utility Appraiser for public utility properties and a tax mapping company to update the town's tax maps yearly. Chester does not currently have digital mapping capabilities, so the need for outside mapping service is essential. The town's property information is processed using Vision Appraisal software which also provides a webhosting service that enables taxpayers and other interested parties to access all of town's parcel information via the web. The department currently receives the webhosting service free of charge, but as of 2016 there will be a fee. The assessing department is currently located in the same office space as the Planning Board.

Future Needs

In addition to the current staff in the future a part-time clerk will be needed as the town grows. The clerk could be used for the more clerical aspects of the assessing department, including but not limited to: preparation and processing of the yearly Inventory of Taxable property forms, customers service, filing and phone management. This would free up the Assistant Assessor to concentrate more fully on the more advanced assessing functions that need to be performed. A new vision appraisal computer system with oracle will be needed as the staff increases so that two people could work in tandem on a live database. A GIS mapping system, in conjunction with the Vision Appraisal software, should be implemented. Additionally, the office space should be reconfigured to have a public area and a restricted area accessible to employees only. The Planning Board is suggesting that the Town of Chester could perhaps look into a mutual sharing arrangement with other towns in sharing a GIS mapping system that could be used with the Vision appraisal software. This could reduce costs for such a system to both municipalities. Additionally, the towns could look into sharing contracts for reappraisal services as another opportunity to reduce costs in the future.

Chester Building Inspector

The Building Department currently has one full-time building inspector/code enforcement officer. Staffing needs could increase as the amount of approved building sites (subdivisions) provides for a significant inventory of available buildable lots. The Town of Chester remains a “draw” – as a desirable community to live and work in – annual new construction starts are likely to increase. The Building Department has been provided with a town vehicle for use by the building inspector. The department receives annual ratings from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) based upon the qualifications of the building inspector, the stringency of the building codes, and code enforcement safety levels. In 2013, the department received an ISO rating of 4 on the residential scale and a 5 on the commercial scale (1 being the least risk posed and 10 the greatest). Since 2010, the building department has updated its office space and computers and is located in the town office building on 84 Chester Street.

Future Needs

If the present rate of construction continues or increases, the department will need administrative assistance and possibly an additional inspector role to insure adequate coverage. Possibly the town could choose to augment the building department with a code enforcement/environmental compliance officer as it continues to grow. The current vehicle used by the Building Department is a retired police department cruiser and while it is a good source and method of meeting the needs of the department; replacement and upgrading will need to be anticipated from time to time. Fire-rated storage cabinets, for property file maintenance, should replace the existing file storage method. While the department upgraded a number of these in 2013 – a number remain to be upgraded. Computer system upgrades that could link the department’s computer with other departments, as well as share information such as building permits, construction, and tax map information on a network could become a desirable service at some time in the near future. Such systems might also incorporate GPS placement information.

Chester Town Office Building

The Town Office Building was established in 1999 as part of a move from 1 Chester Street (now Stevens Memorial Hall) to 84 Chester Street which was the former Chester Elementary School. This building accommodates most of the town’s departments and boards as well as recreation programs, community functions, and outside group activities. The entire building is handicapped accessible and has networked computers, a security system, and a heat/smoke detection system. The former elementary school gymnasium with an attached kitchen is now utilized as a multi-purpose room and state-approved commercial kitchen.⁸ In 2010, an emergency generator was installed and the multi-purpose room with use of the Chester Kitchen is designated as the town’s state-approved emergency shelter facility. The Multi-Purpose room serves a 600-person capacity. At the 2015 town

⁸ This is one of the very few town halls in NH with a commercial grade kitchen available for rent for farm to table organizations and activities.

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meeting, voters approved a special warrant article #5 to raise and appropriate \$110,000 to repair, replace and renovate the floor in the Multi-Purpose room. In addition, voters approve a warrant article #8 to raise and appropriate \$18,500 to repair the municipal complex heating system (oil tank).

The Town Office Building occupies the following department offices and rooms:

- Town Clerk/Tax Collector
- Administrative Office
- Cable TV Studio
- Finance Department
- Planning Board
- Police Department
- Assessing Department
- Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer
- Supervisors of the Checklist
- Maintenance Department
- Recreation Department
- Commercial Kitchen
- Gymnasium
- Community Food Pantry and Cloths Closet



Administrative Office

The administrative office is located in the Town Office building at 84 Chester Street and hosts one full-time employee who assists the five-member Board of Selectmen and is the Welfare Director, Health and Safety Coordinator, Chester Kitchen Site Administrator, and all-around general contact for Town Commissions who do not have an assistant. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8am to 4pm. The use of the town's two meeting rooms is scheduled through this office with Cable TV airing ability through arrangement with P.A.C.T. Committee members. The Selectmen's Meeting Room has a 68-person capacity and a large meeting table with microphones.

Finance Department

Chester's Finance Department holds two rooms in the Town Office Building, one for a contracted part-time Finance director, and one for a full-time bookkeeper. These offices handle all invoices, payroll and benefit administration, bookkeeping and, and accounting for the town's budget. The bookkeeper's office is open Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm; the Finance Director's office is open on Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30 am to 3:00pm.

Maintenance Department

Chester's Maintenance Department has one office in the Town's Office Building. The office space includes storage shelves for supplies and desk space for one full-time employee who supervises two part-time employees and two seasonal employees who work throughout the town.

Recreation Department

The Recreation Department is located within the Town Office Building next to the Multi-Purpose room and is occupied by a part-time Recreation Coordinator having office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to 1pm. There is a large table used during the Recreation Commission Meetings twice a month in the evening.

The Recreation Coordinator schedules all activities in the Multi-Purpose room including Town Meeting, Recreation Programs, special events such as "Breakfast with Santa" hosted by the Chester Public Library, and other requests such as American Blood Cross blood drives. An activities room is located in the annex next to the police department and has a 25-person capacity used by the Recreation yoga classes at this time.

Recycling and Solid Waste Transfer Station

In 1997, the Town of Chester completed the closure of the Town's former landfill. The 4.5-acre site was capped and secured according to U.S. E.P.A. standards, and currently has a groundwater and surface water quality monitoring program, supervised by the State's Department of Environmental Services (DES).

A state-of-the-art recycling and waste transfer station was built to replace the former landfill and serve the needs of Chester. The facility was designed for maximum flexibility and continues to be acknowledged as being one of the most efficiently operated facilities in the state. The facility still receives several visits each year from other towns planning to upgrade their own solid waste facilities.

The facility staff consists of one full-time and four part-time employees. Two of the employees have NH DES Waste Disposal Facility Operator certifications (one Level III and one level II). The success of the recycling programs and the recognition the facility has received are directly attributable to the dedication of these employees.

The facility was designed for two below-grade solid waste compactor bays, which service four traffic lanes. At present only one compactor bay and paving for two traffic lanes has been installed. The second bay location is presently backfilled, loamed and seeded until such time as it is required.

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The Town is in the middle of a three-year solid waste disposal contract with Waste Management, Inc. The contract includes compacter rental and maintenance, hauling and tipping. The container is pulled once per week per U.S. EPA requirements, and the waste is hauled to Waste Management’s disposal facility in Rochester, NH.

Chester’s annual solid waste tonnages are now holding to relatively flat levels, despite increases in the Town’s population. Annual recycling rates in Chester range from 35 to 38 percent of the total waste stream. The recycling program has made net annual profits for a decade now. The mandatory recycling and clear bag ordinances, as well as improvements to the recycling program continue to contribute to a reduction in overall annual solid waste tonnages. For 2014, the tonnage recycled represented 35 percent of the total waste stream (see Table 11). Additionally residents are increasingly opting for the convenience of private haulers for weekly curbside pick-up or residential

**Table #6: Chester Recycling and Solid Waste Transfer Station
Tonnage Processed**

Year	Solid Waste Disposal (Tons)	Recyclables (Tons)	Total Waste (Tons)
1998	758	311	1,069
1999	788	336	1,124
2000	827	324	1,151
2001	750	390	1,140
2002	662	415	1,077
2003	671	414	1,085
2004	660	418	1,078
2005	659	401	1060
2006	590	393	983
2007	533	376	909
2008	533	332	867
2009	532	317	848
2010	522	327	849
2011	554	329	883
2012	517	310	826
2013	547	302	849
2014	550	300	850

Source: Chester Solid Waste and Recycling Committee

Chester is serviced by a number of private waste haulers. The company currently providing curbside pickup is ABI Waste Removal (603-625-8012). Residents willing to fully comply with the Town’s recycling and clear bag ordinances are serviced on Thursdays at a reduced rate and their waste and recyclables are processed by the Town’s facility.

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The primary providers of contracted residential dumpster service in town are Waste Management and Atlantic Waste. The solid waste tonnage processed by these service providers is unknown. However, this tonnage includes a lot less packaging and more people in the community are opting for this curbside service.

In 2014, the solid waste disposal cost averaged \$112.61 per ton including compactor rental and maintenance, hauling, tipping and fuel surcharges. The total cost billed to the town was \$61,925. The net profit from the recycling program was \$11,346.

In 2014 household recyclables totaled 242 tons, processed at a net profit of \$3,210, which was average revenue of \$13.26 per ton. The net savings from the household recycling program was approximately \$30,500+.

Chester's recycling commodities are classified into two categories, household and non-household recyclables. Many of the non-household commodities require a small user fee, such as tires, Freon-containing appliances, propane tanks, and many others. The sale of scrap metal, which does not require a user fee, generated an additional \$8,374 in revenue in 2014.

For the processing of recyclables, Chester uses the relatively unique approach of contracting on a per-commodity basis. Most towns contract their recycling through a single vendor, however, Chester utilizes the contractor that provides the most cost efficient program for that particular commodity. This approach means Chester makes a profit on recycling, while other towns pay an average disposal cost of \$45-\$55 per ton for their recyclables.



The success of the recycling program is highly dependent on the cooperation and support of the Town's residents. Rather than use the more common and costlier method of "single-stream" recycling, Chester residents separate out their different recycling commodities at the Transfer Station, thereby allowing the Town to obtain the best pricing for each of the commodities in the program.

The facility also operates a burn pile for brush and clean (unpainted, unstained or untreated) lumber which is burned on a regular basis, a concrete pile which is recycled, and a compost pile for leaf and yard waste. Building demolition material is not currently accepted nor are there plans to add this service.

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Future Needs

For the short and long term, Chester anticipates no in-town solid waste disposal facility needs. Like most towns in southern New Hampshire, however, the Town is highly dependent on the availability of Waste Management’s receiving landfill in Rochester, NH. This situation represents a virtual monopoly for the region, as the only two alternatives are two relatively expensive incinerators. This situation will not change until additional landfills or incinerators are licensed within the region.

The current facility is well positioned to handle the future solid waste disposal needs for Chester. Many options exist to handle future increases in tonnage. The current 50 cu. yd. roll-off does not yet get filled to full capacity on a weekly basis. Once this occurs, the lowest cost option would be to pull the container twice per week and slightly increase the hours of operation. This option should be utilized before installing the second compactor bay and the other two traffic lanes. A conservative estimate suggests this measure will not be needed at least for another 10-15 years. The current estimated cost of installing the second compactor bay and traffic lanes is \$70,000-\$100,000. After the second compactor is built, the facility could handle the Town’s tonnages for the next 30-50 years.

SNHPC contacted several surrounding communities in the region as a comparison with the Town of Chester to see what size/tonnage capacity these towns have in place for recycling compactors and what the town’s general solid waste disposal cost is on annual basis and the average household tonnage recycled. Also noted is if the town has in place a pay as you throw recycling program or not.

Towns	Size/Tonnage of Recycling Compactor	Average Household Tonnage Recycled	Total Households	Total Annual Tonnage Recycled*	Annual Solid Waste Disposal Cost	Pay-As-You-Throw Program
Chester	50 Cubic Yards	5.09	1,534	300.5	\$61,925	No
Candia	6.2 tons (baler)	1.74	1,450	831.7	\$107,328	No
Auburn	Information Not Provided	0.4	1,765	4,334.48	Information Not Provided	No
Raymond	N/A	5	3,925	355.83	\$407,447	Yes
Fremont	N/A	4.14	1,508	363.69	\$82,259	No
Sandown	9.0 tons	2.26	2,072	912.83	\$138,000	No
Derry	N/A	4.25	12,537	2,946.85	\$552,000	No

Note: N/A means the town does not have a recycling compactor. *Information obtained from 2014 Annual Facility Reports submitted to NH DES;Source: Towns and NH DES

Highway Department

The former firehouse on Chester Street serves as the center of the highway department's activities. The building is used for motor vehicle maintenance and as a place for drivers to take a break when plowing Chester's roads. The construction of a new salt-shed in 2003 on Dump Road freed up the former shed on Route 102 (Raymond Road) for storage purposes. The new shed has three bays for salt, salt/sand mix, and sand storage. Added to the shed is a heated bay for the storage of a truck and equipment.

The department has two full-time employees and one part-time winter employee who perform all the day to day departmental duties. Winter maintenance, grading, mowing and tree removal are all contracted out to private subcontractors. Current department owned equipment includes mobile radios and portables, one repeater system (radio), a 2015 freight liner dump truck with a plow wing and sander, a 2012 550 dump truck with a plow and sander and a 2000 Kamatsu WB 140 backhoe.

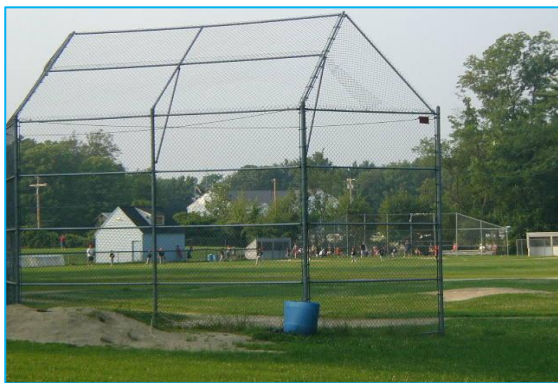
Future Needs

The department needs to build a new highway garage on Dump Road, near the new salt storage shed, to consolidate their operations within one location. Similar to many other town departments, the Highway Department needs additional personnel increasing staff to four (4) full-time employees.

Many town roads in Chester are also in need of improvement. The Town Road Agent prepares a list of roads which need improvement. This list is included and updated annually in the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Recreation Commission

The Chester Parks and Recreation Commission is an appointed voluntary organization with responsibility for French Field, Nichols Field, and a portion of the Wason Pond Conservation and Recereartion area. The Recreation Department currently has no full-time employees. The Department employs the following part-time employees: Recreation Coordinator; 2 Summer Program Coordinators; 23 summer counselors; and 4 paid referees for soccer and basketball.



Hours of operation for the Recreation Department are 9 am to 1:00 PM on Tuesday and Thursday. The Recreation Coordinator is in charge of scheduling the Multi-Purpose Room the former gym at the Town Office Building. This building has heavy usage. It hosts Town Voting, American Red Cross Blood drives, community benefit dinners, class night for Chester Academy, youth basketball, adult volleyball, adult basketball, group exercise classes, and resident usage requests.

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French Field is approximately five acres and contains two baseball fields. The fields are used by Chester Academy and local youth and adult baseball and softball programs, and the Parks and Recreation Commission manages scheduling.

Nichols Field, approximately 2.4 acres, contains a soccer field, a parking area, and a baseball or softball field. Town Maintenance is responsible for the mowing for the fields, and other maintenance is carried out by the Recreation Commission and volunteers. In 1997, the Town acquired Wason Pond as well as the Wason Pond Community Center. In addition to improvements to the physical building, the site hosts the Summer Program, Fishing Derby, Wason Pond Pounder Obstacle Race, Soccer and usage by Chester Academy for their Cross Country meets. The fields at this site address the need for more field space in Chester. The children of Chester are the largest beneficiaries of the recreation programs. Approximately 300 children, from preschool and kindergarten to grade 12, participate in the sports program each year.

Future Needs

While the fields at Wason Pond help to alleviate the need for field space in Town, these fields need to be finished in order to be properly utilized. Additionally, the existing fields at the center of Town need repairs. Also, the Store at Wason Pond where the Summer Program is hosted needs a new ceiling and floor.



Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is a strictly volunteer organization and has no paid support staff within the town offices. The Conservation Commission's primary role is to lead the Town's land conservation efforts. The Commission meets once a month (Second Tuesday of the month) and their efforts are funded through a modest annual operation budget from the town and the allocation of 100 percent of the town's funds received from Land Use Change Taxes. In the past their efforts were supplemented by land donations, a \$3 million bond and grants (Farmland Protection Grants and \$125,000 DRED Grant for Wason Pond purchase) to assist in land conservation efforts.

Wason Pond Community Center

Since 1997 the Conservation Commission has placed over 30 conservation easements and protected over 2000 acres of land through donation of land, the purchase of conservation easements, the purchase of land, and as conditions to the Planning Board's Conservation Subdivision regulations.

The Conservation Commission plays an active role in monitoring and managing several properties, both town- and privately-owned. In particular they manage the Herrick Woods, Town Forest, Muriel Church Farm, the Natural Area, the town Forests in the North and South Woods area, and the

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Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Area. The Rockingham County Conservation District as a third party monitors several of these and there conservation lands in Chester.

Since 1997, the Conservation Commission has undertaken several conservation planning projects including:

- Initiating a Strategic Land Protection Committee through a warrant at town Meeting;
- Conducting Natural Inventory Mapping;
- Identifying prime quality wetlands;
- Producing a wetland ordinance for town consideration;
- Developing an Open Space Master Plan and Ordinance in cooperation with the Southern NH Planning Commission and the Chester Planning Board;
- Developing a trails committee and conducting a public survey to identify local demand for trails;
- Securing over 30 Conservation Easements;
- Developing and securing conservation easements and agreement for obtaining Spring Hill Farm (now town owned and operated) over seen by the Conservation Commission and Spring Hill Farm Committee;
- Developing and securing conservation easements and agreement for obtaining Silver Sands Campground (now Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Area) over seen by the Conservation Commission and Wason Pond Advisory Committee;
- Assisting in creating the Chester Agricultural Commission; and
- Overseeing Town Forests.

Additionally, the Commission actively collaborates with the Chester Planning Board on project review and the Exeter River Advisory Committee to protect and review projects of impact to the Exeter River headwaters in Chester.

Future Needs

The Conservation Commission's primary needs are: additional funding for acquiring and monitoring conservation land, computer and web-based services, office space and staff support. Currently, the only space the Commission has is a storage room.

The Commission needs space, preferably at the Municipal Building, for committee meetings, a part-time staff office, and storage for files and outdoor community activity equipment. In addition to hiring a part-time staff person, the Commission will need fundamental office supplies such as telephone, internet, computer, and file cabinets.

Public Library

The number of residents served by the Chester Public Library has grown substantially since 2006. As a result, the Chester Public Library has also grown to meet the needs of its patrons. The library

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currently employs one full-time library director, one part-time assistant director and five part-time staff members, and it is open 38 hours per week.

Several projects were completed over the last 5 years including making the handicap bathroom fully functional, installation of a new air handler for the furnace, installation of a new condensing unit, the purchase of new computers, laptops and tablets. In 2013, the installation of a handicap ramp made the Chester Public Library accessible to all members of the Chester community as a result of a BSA Eagle service project.

In January of 2014, the Chester Public Library updated its online catalog software to **KOHA**, an open source integrated library system which meets the growing needs of our library and brings us up to date with current technology. Koha allows library book catalog searches, book reservations and renewals through the web from anywhere there's an internet connection. Book checkout is made quicker and easier using scanners to process newly bar coded books and library cards. This system update was at no cost to the taxpayer.



Chester Public Library

In June 2014, the Chester Public Library instituted a fine system for overdue or lost items. This system has generated additional income which is rolled into the budget and used to add to the materials collection of the library.

The collection of the Chester Public Library is composed of new and outdated materials. Weeding began in 2013 to purge items that were not checked out in many years or falling apart due to over usage. This is an ongoing project. The collection is slowly being added to with new, relevant materials or replacement materials.

In May of 2013, through the generosity of the voters of Chester, the Chester Public Library hired a part-time Assistant Director of Children's Services. Since this new position the children's programming has increased dramatically and has been well received by many library patrons as evidenced by the number of children who attend these enriching programs.

Future Needs

A pressing need is the repair of the elevator. In order to be ADA compliant this project is our top priority. Currently the roof of the Chester Public Library has reached its life expectancy (15 years) and is now being considered for replacement. A warrant article for this submitted at the May 2015 town meeting, including the installation of gutters for proper drainage and to prevent further damage to the siding of the library.

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The library is in need of exterior painting and this project was started in the fall of 2014. Due to the weather the painting project was halted but will resume in the spring of 2015. When preparing the exterior for painting it was discovered the lettering over the front door is falling apart. This will be replaced in the spring of 2015 once the painting project is completed.

Recent additions to circulation include tablets and e-readers. The library strives to stay current with emerging technology as it relates to the library mission statement.

At present the Library has adequate space for the current collection. However, there may be the need for further expansion or relocation in the future. There are current plans in place to reconfigure the space and renovate the interior to gain more usable square footage and make the interior more welcoming to its patrons. This project includes a new circulation desk. This project is projected to be completed in the next two years. The anticipated cost has not been projected at this time.

The library is expecting to extend its hours on Friday nights in the near future. There will be a need to either add an additional part-time employee or move a part-time employee to full time status to accommodate the new hours of operation.

Many of these improvements and capital projects having a cost of at least \$5,000 could be submitted and considered by the Planning Board for inclusion in the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). In addition, the Library Board of Trustees and the Town of Chester could also contact the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) in Concord to inquire if there is any funding that could assist in addressing the ADA accessibility issues to the building. Although the Town of Chester does not own the library itself, the town does contribute annually to the library to keep the building maintained and the library operating for town residents.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The Chester Planning Board is currently in the process of updating the town's CIP last adopted in 2008. A special warrant article #21 – capital improvement plan update (CIP update) was recently adopted by the town voters at the 2015 town meeting. The new updated CIP will be for the upcoming 7-year period of 2015-2021. An updated CIP is needed for many reasons, not only for many of the capital projects and improvement projects identified in this chapter of the master plan, but also in order for the town to begin to implement several impact fees (public safety; education, etc.) to recoup and assess costs for facilities and equipment necessitated by new development in the community. The CIP is also an important planning tool for implementing the town's master plan goals and recommendations and it provides basic financial data about the town's capital improvement needs and costs and identifies potential sources of revenue to help pay for these facilities in the future, including recommendations for spreading out these costs to reduce the financial impacts on the community of a sudden or one time capital cost.

A Capital Improvement Project as currently defined in the town's CIP is any capital improvement having a cost of at least \$5,000; a useful life of at least 3 years; and is non-recurring (not an annual

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budget item); or any project requiring bond financing. Eligible capital improvement projects include new buildings or additions and building renovations and improvements, land purchases, architectural and engineering studies, substantial road improvements and purchases of major vehicles and equipment. Capital improvement projects do not involve general upkeep or maintenance of public facilities and buildings. The goal of the CIP is to establish a system of procedures and priorities by which to evaluate public improvement projects in terms of public safety, public need, project continuity, financial resources, and the strategic goals for the town. The CIP also offers an opportunity for citizens and interested parties and stakeholders to voice their requests and needs for capital improvements.

The Town of Chester has taken two significant steps forward with regard to its CIP. At the 2015 town meeting, voters approved two CIP special warrant articles: #23 to raise and appropriate \$380,000 to be added to a capital reserve fund to be known as the town’s Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the town’s 2013 town meeting and: #24 to raise and appropriate \$120,000 to be placed in a new CIP Highway Capital Reserve Fund. This money will come from the State of NH’s Highway Block Grant Fund.

As part of the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission’s ***Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward 2015-2035*** Regional Comprehensive Plan a survey was conducted among the 15 municipalities in the region to determine the status of their CIPs.

Capital Improvement Plans by Municipality

The following table provides the results of this survey. Municipalities with fairly current updated and adopted CIPs include: Bedford, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester, New B

oston, Weare and Windham. Municipalities which are in need or in process of updating their CIPs include: Auburn, Candia, Chester, Deerfield and Raymond.

Municipality	Time Frame	Adoption
Auburn	2008-2014	2008
Bedford	2012-2021	2011
Candia	2006-2011	2006
Chester	2008-2014	2007
Deerfield	2005-2010	2004
Derry	2014-2019	2014
Goffstown	2013-2018	2012
Hooksett	2013-2019	2012
Londonderry	2015-2020	2013
Manchester	2013-2019	2012
New Boston	2012-2017	2011
Raymond	2005-2010	2005
Weare	2013-2019	2013
Windham	2014-2021	2013

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Housing Chapter

Housing

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the characteristics that comprise the housing market in the Town of Chester. Similar to many other municipalities in the Southern New Hampshire region, Chester is experiencing ongoing population growth. Coinciding with this recent population growth is the increase in housing units within the Town of Chester.

The Chester Master Plan Community Survey indicated that residents are satisfied with the amount of land used for residential single family housing. In fact, of the 281 respondents, nearly half believe that an adequate amount of land has been zoned for residential single family developments only. Furthermore, approximately 21 percent of respondents feel there is too much land designated for residential single family units. Chester residents place a high level of importance on single-family structures, opposed to townhouses, condominiums, and other multifamily buildings. In addition to single family residences, respondents indicated that elderly housing is important. Over 70 percent of respondents ranked elderly housing as “Somewhat Important”, “Important”, or “Very Important”.

Community Survey Questions and Responses

Question #1: Please indicate the level of importance the Town should give to the following housing types:

Table 22: Housing Types						
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Single-Family	138	83	24	12	5	19
Two-family (duplex)	19	57	73	102	9	21
Multifamily (3+ units)	14	14	54	163	10	26
Elderly Housing	68	67	65	55	9	17
Manufactured (mobile) Homes	10	15	50	174	9	23
Townhouses or Condominiums	17	44	85	109	9	17
Affordable Housing	31	44	73	109	6	18
Cluster Developments	25	33	49	141	15	18

Question #2: Does Chester need affordable housing?

Table 23: Affordable Housing Need				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	82	145	39	15

Question #3: Does Chester need elderly or assisted housing?

Table 24: Elderly Housing				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	153	70	45	13

Question #4: Should the Town require cluster subdivisions?

Table 25: Cluster Subdivisions				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	45	157	65	14

Question #5: Is Chester's Residential growth occurring Too Fast, Too Slow, or Just Right?

Table 26: Residential Growth				
	Just Right	Too Fast	Too Slow	No Response
Total	129	124	10	18

Housing Growth

Growth of the housing market in Chester has been synonymous with population growth in recent decades. Similarly to 1990-2000, percent growth in Chester was tied with the town of New Boston for third highest in the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) Region. Only topped by Bedford and Windham, the Chester housing market gained an additional 349 housing units from 2000 to 2010. In the decade leading up to 2000, Chester had a higher population growth than housing growth leading to a greater average household size. According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS), the average household size (non-rental units) had decreased to 2.89.

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**Table #1
Housing Unit Growth in Chester, 1990-2010**

Municipality	Number of Housing Units				1990-2000		2000-2010		Annualized Growth Rate (1990-2010)
	1990	2000	2010	2013	Absolute Change	Percent Change	Absolute Change	Percent Change	
Auburn	1,354	1,622	1,814	1,858	268	19.79%	192	11.84%	1.47%
Bedford	4,156	6,401	7,634	7,264	2,245	54.02%	1,233	19.26%	3.09%
Candia	1,192	1,384	1,494	1,486	192	16.11%	110	7.95%	1.14%
Chester	924	1,247	1,596	1,671	323	34.96%	349	27.99%	2.77%
Deerfield	1,227	1,406	1,743	1,661	179	14.59%	337	23.97%	1.77%
Derry	11,869	12,735	13,277	13,546	866	7.30%	542	4.26%	0.56%
Francestown	580	656	755	719	76	13.10%	99	15.09%	1.33%
Goffstown	5,022	5,798	6,341	6,510	776	15.45%	543	9.37%	1.17%
Hooksett	3,484	4,307	5,184	5,216	823	23.62%	877	20.36%	2.01%
Londonderry	6,739	7,718	8,771	8,847	979	14.53%	1,053	13.64%	1.33%
Manchester	44,361	45,892	49,288	49,025	1,531	3.45%	3,396	7.40%	0.53%
New Boston	1,138	1,462	1,967	1,957	324	28.47%	505	34.54%	2.77%
Raymond	3,350	3,710	4,254	1,858	360	10.75%	544	14.66%	1.20%
Weare	2,417	2,828	3,466	3,634	411	17.00%	638	22.56%	1.82%
Windham	3,327	3,906	5,164	5,125	579	17.40%	1,258	32.21%	2.22%
SNHPC Region	87,233	96,510	112,748	110,377	9,277	10.63%	4,264	4.42%	1.29%

Sources: 1990 U.S. Census SF1-H1, 2000 U.S. Census SF1-H1, and The American Community Survey 2009-2013

Housing Supply

A mixed supply of housing is crucial to meet the diverse housing needs of an entire community. Chester’s housing market has been dominated by single-family residences. In 2010, over 95.5 percent of units are single family homes in Chester, a slight, but steady increase from 2010 (94.5 percent). Single-family residences continue to be the predominant type of units constructed in the region as well. Public input received from the UNH telephone survey as part of the Granite State Future Project and SNHPC’s Moving Southern NH Forward Regional Comprehensive Plan indicates that over three-fourths (78 percent) of the region’s residents think their town should encourage single family detached housing. Since 2000, the total number of housing units in Chester has increased by 434 units. This recent growth can be attributed to construction of single family homes and a slight increase in the number of mobile homes in town.

Table #2 Total Housing Units by Type, 2010		
Type of Housing	Number of Units	Percent of Total
Total Housing Units	1,681	100%
1-Unit Total	1,597	95.57%
1-Unit Detached	1,509	90.31%
1-Unit Attached	88	5.27%
Multi-Unit Structure	41	2.45%
Mobile Homes	43	2.57%
Source: 2009-2013 ACS Definitions of each housing type may be found at the end of this chapter.		

Single unit attached structures are the second most prevalent housing type consisting of just under five percent of the entire housing stock. According to the Chester Community Survey, most respondents felt Chester already has enough land zoned for single family homes and more land is not needed for this purpose. Respondents also indicated that single family and elderly housing units are the most important in Chester.

Since 2000, the number of renter occupied units in Chester has steadily increased. The American Community Survey indicates 112 (7 percent) renter occupied units exist in Chester, up from 85 (6.8 percent) in 2000. The number of “other vacant and seasonal units” more than doubled from the time of the last Chester Master Plan from 14 units in 2000 to 33 in 2013. A total of 62 or four percent of all housing units in Chester were vacant at the time of the 2010 Census.

Table #3 Occupancy Status--Total Housing Units, 2010		
Type of Housing	Number of Units	Percent of Total
Owner Occupied	1,422	86.18%
Renter Occupied	112	6.78%
Vacant for Sale	21*	1.32%
Vacant for Rent	8*	0.50%
Other Vacant and Seasonal Units	33*	2.07%
Total Housing Units	1650	100%
*Total 62 dwelling units at 4%		
Source: Census 2010		

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Total households in 2010 for the SNHPC Region numbered 105,045 with an average household size of 2.56 and an average family size of 3.11. The difference between the household and the family is that a household may consist of only one person, but a family must contain at least two members and the members of a multi-person household need not be related to each other, while the members of a family are related. In 2010, Chester had the largest average household size at 3.04 and the largest average family size at 3.28. In contrast, Chester has the lowest amount of renter-occupied households at 7.3 percent.

Table #4 SNHPC 2010 Households					
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	Total households	Average household size	Average family size	Percent Owner Occupied Households	Percent Renter Occupied Households
Auburn	1,765	2.81	3.08	91.8%	8.2%
Candia	1,450	2.70	3.04	92.3%	7.7%
Chester	1,534	3.04	3.28	92.7%	7.3%
Raymond	3,925	2.58	2.98	81.7%	18.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

Housing Projections

The housing projections produced here are based upon the population projections developed by the Southern NH Planning Commission for the Chester Master Plan and assume that housing production will directly parallel population growth. Using the projected population an estimate of the total number of households or occupied dwelling units was calculated for each projected year using the 2010 average household size and assuming that household sizes will decrease by 0.5 percent every five years.

The total occupied housing units was distributed to renter and owner households for each projected year by assuming that each form of tenure would retain its 2010 share of the total dwelling units. Lastly, additional units were added to the total to allow for vacant units. This calculation assumed the vacancy rate for ownership units will be 1.5 percent and rental housing will be five percent for all projected years.

The total increase in housing units required to support the projected population growth for the Town of Chester will result in 421 new dwelling units from 2010 to 2035. In 2015, there will be an estimated 1,606 owner occupied units and in 2035, there will be an estimated 2,617 owner occupied units. These figures indicate the total number of owner occupied units will steadily increase from 2015-2035. It is projected that there will also be approximately 135 rental units available in 2015, and approximately 200 rental units available in the year 2035, which shows a projected steady increase in rental units.

While it is projected there will be an increase in rental units, it is unlikely that Chester will see a great surge of rental housing. While there may be some initial pressures to create multi-family housing as a

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lower-cost housing alternative, Chester lacks employment levels needed to support rental housing. New home and apartment construction in generally is still not keeping pace with trends prior to the recession – recovery is and continues to be very slow. Additionally, the town’s steep slopes and poorly drained soils inhibit the operation of large-capacity septic systems and make multi-family housing less feasible.

**Table #5
Dwelling Unit Projections, 2010 to 2035**

Tenure and Occupancy	2000 Census	2010 Census	Annualized Growth Rate	Projected				
				2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Total Dwelling Units*	1,233	1,596	0.02944	1,635	1,731	1,826	1,922	2,017
Total Ownership Units	1,132	1,534	0.035512	1,806	2,127	2,505	2,950	3,473
Owner Occupied Units	1,129	1,422	0.025952	1,607	1,815	2,050	2,317	2,617
Vacant Units for Sale	3	112	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Rental Units	101	122	0.020792	135	149	164	181	200
Renter Occupied Units	85	112	0.031765	130	150	174	202	234
Vacant Units for Rent	16	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Excludes Seasonal Housing

*2005 figures are projected from the 2000 U.S. Census data and may vary from actual 2005 unit estimates.

Sources: Chester Population Projections, 2000 U.S. Census

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**Table #6
SNHPC Households by Tenure – 1990-2010**

Municipality	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	Percent Change 1990-2000	Absolute Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 2000-2010	Absolute Change 2000-2010
Owner Occupied							
Auburn	1,192	1,460	1,620	22.5%	268	11.0%	160
Candia	1,076	1,255	1,339	16.6%	179	6.7%	84
Chester	778	1,129	1,422	45.1%	351	26.0%	293
Raymond	2,314	2,724	3,206	17.7%	410	17.7%	482
SNHPC Region	49,911	62,839	70,332	25.9%	12,928	11.9%	7,493
Renter Occupied							
Auburn	110	120	145	9.1%	10	20.8%	25
Candia	84	104	111	23.81%	20	6.7%	7
Chester	84	85	112	1.19%	1	31.8%	27
Raymond	685	769	719	12.26%	84	-6.5%	-50
SNHPC Region	30,089	33,888	34,713	12.63%	3,799	2.4%	825

Housing Cost

Historically, the economic downturn of the late 1980s caused residential purchase prices to plummet, rents to stabilize, and vacancy rates to increase. Much of this was due to over speculation and construction levels that exceeded demand. The region's housing market began to recover around 1994, at which time housing costs began to increase and vacancy rates decrease. High levels of in-migration during the 1990s further increased housing demand levels. Housing developers, however, continued to build new units at a slower rate than demand required due to the lasting impacts of the 1980s housing crash. The result of this was a shortage of housing units affordable to all income levels, particularly low to moderate-income families.

Following an economic recession in 2001, there was an unprecedented increase in nationwide house prices, which led to booms in both residential construction and consumption from 2001-2006. This time period, referred to as the "housing bubble," burst at some point between 2006-2007. In late 2007 it was determined that the United States economy was having a financial crisis and was in what is now called the "Great Recession." The National Bureau of Economic Research declared the end of the Great Recession in June 2009 and the U.S. economy and housing market recovery continues presently. From

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2013-2014 the New Hampshire Housing market has seen a slow and steady recovery with foreclosures declining and home prices on the upswing.

According to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Administration, during 2013 Chester's average housing purchase price was \$305,000. The average housing purchase price in 2013 for the Southern New Hampshire Region was \$312,713. This is second only to a high of \$325,958 for a new home in 2005 and indicates that purchase prices are on an upward trend again after a rapid decline during the economic recession. The cost of renting an apartment in the region has also increased in the past few years. The median gross rent, across the region, has risen approximately 34 percent from \$744 in 2000 to \$997 in 2012.

According to the 2015 Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission's Regional Comprehensive Plan telephone survey, only 9 percent of respondents find housing to be very affordable in their town, 56 percent find it somewhat affordable, 24 percent find it not very affordable, 5 percent find it not affordable at all and 6 percent don't know. When it comes to renting, only 7 percent find it very affordable, 39 percent find it somewhat affordable, 19 percent find it not very affordable, 7 percent find it not affordable at all and 27 percent don't know. Households earning less than \$40,000, those aged 18 to 39 and those who are non-white are more likely to want their town to encourage apartments.

Local and Regional Workforce Housing Needs

NH RSA 674:58 defines workforce housing as "housing which is intended for sale and which is affordable to a household with an income of no more than 100 percent of the median income for a 4-person household for the metropolitan area or county in which the housing is located as published annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. " Workforce housing' also means rental housing which is affordable to a household with an income of no more than 60 percent of the median income for a 3-person household for the metropolitan area or county in which the housing is located as published annually by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Affordable housing is defined as housing with combined rental and utility costs or combined mortgage loan debt services, property taxes, and required insurance that do not exceed 30 percent of a household's gross annual income. Cost burden data has been analyzed using these definitions in the SNHPC Region Cost Burden by Tenure data sheet.

Based 2006-2010 U.S. Census, ACS and HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS data), there are approximately 30 rental households among the town's 40 rental households earning less than 60 percent of the area median family income of \$82,800 (see following Table). Approximately 30 or all of these rental households pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. This represents 75 percent of all rental households in Chester. Among owner occupied households, 310 out of the total 1,535 owner occupied households in Chester earn less than the area median family income. Among these 310 households, a total of 250 households or 16.3 percent pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs and 180 or 11.7 percent pay more than 50 percent of their household income on housing. These numbers show that while there is a housing burden present in Chester among both

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renters and owners, the greatest burden rests among renters. This clearly indicates a need for workforce housing within the community.

In comparison with the SNHPC Region as a whole, **23.1 percent of owner households** earning 100 percent or less of the area median family income are paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing. Among **renter households** earning 60 percent or less of the median income, **33.7 percent** are paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing (see following table).

The communities in the region that have the greatest number of owner households meeting the income thresholds and paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing are Derry, Goffstown and Manchester. Communities in the region that have the greatest number of renter households meeting the income thresholds and paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing are Auburn, Candia and Chester.

Communities in the region that have the greatest number of workforce households in the region are Derry, Manchester and Raymond. Overall the SNHPC Region has 37,963 households (both renter and owner) that meet the workforce housing definition in New Hampshire.

Historically, the CHAZ data prepared for the Town of Chester in 2000, reports there were 20 rental households with household income less than 50 percent of median area family income paying more than 30 and 50 percent of their total incomes on housing costs. Among owner occupied households earning less than 50 percent of median area family income, there were 78 households paying less than 30 percent of their incomes on housing and about 62 households paying less than 50 percent of their incomes on housing.

Surrounding SNHPC Region towns in 2000 with similar or slightly more owner occupied households with housing burdens include the towns of Auburn, Bedford, Candia, Derry, Deerfield, Frankestown, Goffstown, Londonderry, Hooksett, New Boston, Raymond, Windham and Weare.

It is important to note that if SB 146 An Act Relative to Accessory Dwelling Units is adopted by the NH Legislature and is made into a law that it will help municipalities address state and local demographic trends allowing the production of more households where adult children can give care and support to parents in a semi-independent living arrangement. The production of these accessory dwelling units will help address the need for more diverse affordable housing opportunities for NH citizens, the elderly and disabled residents in need of independent living space for caregivers.

SNHPC Region Cost Burden by Tenure

Municipality	Total Households	Renter Occupied Households						Owner Occupied Households					
		Total # of Renter Households	Renter Households earning ≤60% MAI	Renter HH earning ≤60% & Pay 30%+	Percent Renter HH earning ≤60% & Pay 30%+	Renter HH earning ≤60% & Pay 50%+	Percent HH earning ≤60% & Pay 50%+	Total # of Owner Households	Owner Households earning ≤100% MAI	Owner HH earning ≤100% MAI & Pay 30%+	Percent Owner HH earning ≤100% & Pay 30%+	Owner HH earning ≤100% MAI & Pay 50%+	Percent HH earning ≤100% & Pay 50%+
Auburn	1,695	95	60	60	63.2%	40	42.1%	1600	530	390	24.4%	300	18.8%
Bedford	7,220	945	170	130	13.8%	80	8.5%	6275	1130	885	14.1%	465	7.4%
Candia	1,505	75	68	68	91.1%	15	20.0%	1430	360	225	15.7%	90	6.3%
Chester	1,575	40	30	30	75.0%	0	0.0%	1535	310	250	16.3%	180	11.7%
Deerfield	1,450	165	40	12	7.5%	0	0.0%	1285	375	265	20.6%	145	11.3%
Derry	12,545	3820	1,808	1343	35.2%	575	15.1%	8725	3005	2405	27.6%	1585	18.2%
Goffstown	5,955	1280	495	330	25.8%	195	15.2%	4675	1610	1255	26.8%	615	13.2%
Hooksett	4,660	700	263	168	24.0%	55	7.9%	3960	1225	740	18.7%	350	8.8%
Londonderry	8,375	820	440	357	43.5%	150	18.3%	7555	2240	1925	25.5%	1160	15.4%
Manchester	45,370	22395	10,868	7912	35.3%	4480	20.0%	22975	8610	6440	28.0%	3510	15.3%
New Boston	1,875	210	58	35	16.7%	20	9.5%	1665	430	340	20.4%	170	10.2%
Raymond	4,015	615	287	122	19.8%	100	16.3%	3400	1580	635	18.7%	360	10.6%
Weare	2,975	210	67	45	21.4%	30	14.3%	2765	835	208	7.5%	128	4.6%
Windham	4,515	265	73	58	22.0%	38	14.5%	4250	995	705	16.6%	570	13.4%
SNHPC Region	103,730	31,635	14,728	10,671	34%	5778	18.3%	72,095	23,235	16,668	23.1%	9,628	13.4%

Potential Opportunities to Meet Chester's Housing Needs

Chester has very few households with an identified lower income housing need, and most households can afford the high housing costs because Chester's median household income is relatively high compared with the surrounding region or county. The median household income in Chester during 2010 was \$102,527. The average home in Chester cost \$342,900 during 2010. To afford⁹ this average home price in Chester, with a 10 percent down payment, a household would have to earn \$94,000 annually, slightly higher than the median income. To afford the average single-family home in Chester, \$340,000 in 2005, also with a 10 percent down payment, the purchasing household would need to earn \$95,400.

The average priced homes would be affordable to a household earning Chester's median household income if they can afford a down payment of 13 percent or higher. Alternately, the same household earning the median income could afford a home selling for \$328,000, with a 10 percent down payment, when the household pays 30 percent of their income to housing costs including the monthly mortgage payment, homeowners insurance, and property taxes. Forty-four percent of homes sold in Chester during 2005 were at or below this price.

While it is arguable that housing in Chester is affordable to Chester's residents, it is not affordable to the now adult children of Chester's families who have completed their education and are returning home. These young adults and professionals must either live with their parents if they wish to return to Chester, or relocate outside the community to find more affordable housing. For these young professionals to live independently from their parents in Chester they need access to more affordable options, such as rental apartments and inexpensive condominiums, than is currently available.

For a household earning the median income in the Southern NH Planning Commission Region, making a 10 percent down payment, they would be able to afford a home selling for \$229,000. Only nine percent of homes sold in Chester during 2005 would have been affordable to these families. Additionally, the median income earning household in Rockingham County would be able to afford slightly more or a home selling for \$262,000. Twenty-seven percent of homes sold in Chester during 2005 would have been affordable to Rockingham County's median income household.

During the 1980s Chester developed two cluster ordinances to try to encourage a variety of housing types and costs. One of the two ordinances included provisions to encourage the development of affordable housing. Since the development of the two ordinances, three cluster developments were created under the "Article 6" provision, adding 120 new dwelling units. An additional three developments utilized the "Article 7" ordinance to create affordable units. A total of 72 units were created within these subdivisions with 13 units, or 18 percent of the units, affordable to moderate income households.

⁹ What a household can afford is calculated as the sum housing costs including mortgage, insurance, and property tax payments equaling 30% of household income. This does not account for condominium fees or utility costs that would ultimately reduce the affordable sale price.

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At the 2005 Town Meeting, the Planning Board presented a revised open space ordinance that would essentially combine the best features of the two existing cluster ordinances, maintaining incentives for affordable housing development, and make open space subdivisions mandatory for all lots greater than 25 acres. The proposed article was passed in May, 2005. A number of regulatory methods are available to create a greater variety of housing affordability in communities in NH. These methods include: inclusionary zoning; adaptive re-use ordinances; allowing for the development of non-conforming lots; mixed-use zoning; permitting accessory dwelling units; and providing greater opportunities for manufactured housing, along with other incentives and disincentives.¹⁰ While Chester already has both a cluster and inclusionary housing provision in the town Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board acknowledges that as of 2005, these two existing zoning provisions require updates.

The following is a selection of regulatory approaches or revisions to existing ordinances Chester could consider as mechanisms to achieve lower cost housing. Key to lowering home costs is reducing the land costs associated with new construction. The only absolute method of reducing land costs is to reduce the required amount of land for each dwelling unit.

Cluster or open space zoning allows developers to build units on smaller than average lot sizes in return for the remaining acreage to stay protected as open space. For instance, rather than building on the entire parcel, and spreading out the homes to encompass all the available land area, the homes are built on a reduced portion of the land area, and the remainder is preserved through easements.

For open space zoning to successfully work in Chester and reduce home prices, not only must the units be clustered to minimize infrastructure costs, but it must also permit a greater overall density than conventional subdivisions. By creating a higher density, and decreasing the number of acres per unit, the land costs are reduced per unit, thus ideally reducing the purchase price of the home. Additionally, permitting multi-family units within the open space development will add another layer of construction and purchase cost reductions. Not only does multi-family housing reduce costs, but it allows for units to be clustered on an even reduced land area, leaving more land area undisturbed and in its natural state.

In most cases, the greatest concern and opposition to increased overall density is the aesthetics or appearance of higher density development. The associated negative aesthetic values of higher density can in general be remedied through design guidelines that require varying front setbacks on all units, diversity of design styles, screening views with landscaping so that fewer homes are visible than trees, as well as other techniques to reduce the visual impact of increased density. Designing multi-family units to look like single-family units can also mitigate concerns that multi-family housing would not fit in with existing single-family developments.

Additionally, multi-family and higher density units can be buffered by undeveloped and possibly forested land, reducing the overall visual impact of density. Open space developments could help to keep Chester looking more rural than if the Town were to be further developed with conventional single-family subdivisions. Over time, conventional single-family subdivisions will permanently replace

¹⁰ Additional ideas and programs are listed in the Housing Solutions for NH Handbook at http://www.nhhfa.org/frd_housingsolutions.htm and Section 4 of SNHPC's 2005 Housing Needs Assessment.

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the Town's undeveloped and forested areas with two or three acre single-family lots, primarily cleared of all vegetation and planted with manicured lawns.

The village plan alternative, provided under NH RSA 674:21 Innovative Land Uses, allows landowners of large parcels of open space to benefit from the economic development of the land, while still preserving its rural character. Under such a plan, the entire density permitted for the overall parcel must be on 20 percent or less of the entire parcel, with a conservation easement on the remaining land, similar to open space subdivisions. Development must comply with existing access regulations for emergency services, but the development is exempted from regulations pertaining to lot size, setbacks, and density. Additionally, applications under the village plan alternative must be given expedited review of 45 days or less. Currently, no New Hampshire towns have adopted such a zoning ordinance, but the Rockingham Planning Commission has developed a model ordinance for municipalities to use in drafting their own village plan alternative provisions.¹¹ The model ordinance also contains drawings of the potential development that could occur under a village plan alternative subdivision.

Inclusionary zoning encourages developers to include affordable housing units in return for a variety of incentives. An agreed upon number or percent of dwelling units must be reserved for elderly, handicapped, or targeted moderate to lower-income households. The benefits of inclusionary zoning to a community include the provision of more diverse housing options by private developers and an increased supply of housing for moderate income households or workforce housing.

The foundation of Article 7 of the 2005 Chester Zoning Ordinance is inclusionary zoning. While the ordinance has failed to generate a significant number of affordable units in the Town, possibly because the incentives are not enticing enough to developers or simply because the existing high costs of land do not make low and moderate income housing feasible in Chester, it has made a substantial contribution in its three applications when viewed in isolation. Alternative incentives should be reviewed to help entice developers to utilize the inclusionary housing provisions within Chester's Zoning Ordinance more frequently.

The incentives must compensate the developer for the foregone profits of market rate development. Regulations must permit lower cost forms of construction or development for inclusionary housing to work. This requires not only higher densities and smaller lots but also multi-family development and the ability to have multiple structure types in a project, especially the option for apartments and rental units. Incentives may also include relaxed regulations or zoning exemptions for setbacks, parking, lot size and lot shape. Additionally, the Planning Board may offer expedited reviews and permitting and/or financial benefits such as application or impact fee waivers or reductions.

Mixed-use development allows mixing residential and compatible commercial uses within a single building or development. The potential commercial revenues can serve as incentives to developers to provide below market rate units. Additionally, mixing residential units affordable to all income ranges, through the creation of affordable units, market rate, and luxury units in one development allow private developers to earn the profits they anticipate and increase the local affordable housing stock.

¹¹ The model ordinance is available online at: <http://www.rpc-nh.org/Village-Design.htm>

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Another option for towns and incentive to developers is to allow the development of non-conforming lots. Traditionally, non-conforming lots do not meet the minimum dimensional requirements of buildable lots. By classifying these lots as buildable for affordable housing units only, or dwelling units not to exceed a set gross floor area, lots that were once vacant can be put to productive use in a community and allow for lower cost single family homes.

One of the greatest problems associated with inclusionary zoning is monitoring and maintaining the units' affordability when they are sold by the original and subsequent owners. The Strafford Regional Planning Commission and the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast have prepared a model Affordable Housing Restrictive Covenant and Agreement.¹² The model is a comprehensive document intended for use by municipal officials, monitoring agencies, developers, and homebuyers. The covenant creates a partnership with a local non-profit corporation that through fees paid upon property resale conducts the required affordability monitoring. Additionally, the covenant establishes maximum resale prices and specifies eligible future buyers.

Accessory dwelling units, such as in-law apartments, can provide affordable places to live for family members. These units are permitted as an Innovative Land Use Control in NH RSA 674:21. These units, which maintain the single-family character of neighborhoods, could provide inexpensive rental housing for older or younger relatives if existing ordinances were amended. Restrictions could be established within the zoning ordinance to limit occupancy to direct family member, set maximum unit sizes, and require some portion of the accessory unit share living space or entry access with the main dwelling.

Today's manufactured housing units can provide an aesthetically pleasing source of affordable housing when compared to the mobile homes of the past. New manufactured housing looks very similar to small stick built ranch homes. When manufactured home owner's in parks share land costs, the total housing costs remain affordable. Unfortunately, with increasing land costs, the value savings to unit owners siting manufactured homes on individual lots or subdivisions, is decreasing. While Chester's zoning regulations for manufactured housing meet State regulations, the SNHPC suggests it may be time to review those regulations to ensure realistic and affordable opportunities exist for such housing in Chester. Currently, Chester only permits manufactured homes on individual lots and may be able to promote the development of more affordable housing by permitting manufactured housing parks. The combination of new units and landscaping guidelines can ensure a positive aesthetic result.

Funding Opportunities to Meet Chester's Housing Needs

There are a variety of organizations and funding mechanisms throughout the State of New Hampshire that will assist communities striving to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income households. Sources include Community Development Block Grants; the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority; New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority; New Hampshire

¹² Available online at: <http://www.nhhfa.org/programdocs/HousingSolutions/Appendix/COVENANT.doc>

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Community Loan Fund; the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Service.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are administered by the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority. The competitive grant program provides funding to communities for the development of low to moderate income housing developments or to improve infrastructure service to the targeted population. To apply for CDBG funds communities must have an adopted Community Housing Plan. Common projects include the acquisition or rehabilitation of housing and provision of loans or grants to landlords to provide decent rental housing.

The **Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA)** provides funding from various lending institutions for the purchase or rehabilitation of low to moderate income housing. Funding is available either through grants or low-interest loans to communities or agencies creating affordable housing. Additionally, CDFA can grant tax credits to private developers who provide properties for rehabilitation as low to moderate income housing.

The **New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA)** is a nonprofit organization committed to developing affordable housing opportunities across the State. NHHFA has several programs to assist multi-family housing development and can provide developers with tax credits, deferred mortgage payments, low interest loans and grants.

The **New Hampshire Community Loan Fund (NHCLF)** also has several programs to assist in the development of low-income housing opportunities. NHCLF provides loans to build affordable housing create jobs and support essential services through several different programs including the most applicable to Chester:

- The Community Housing Program supports community rental housing created by nonprofit organizations;
- The Home of Your Own Program assists persons with disabilities purchase a home; and
- The Individual Development Accounts help low-income households save to purchase a home.

NeighborWorks of Southern New Hampshire is a private non-profit organization working to create affordable housing in the greater Manchester area. The organization works with individuals, businesses, and municipalities to achieve this goal. They have a variety of programs that include homeowner education programs to assist prospective homebuyers, neighborhood revitalization, and maintaining affordable housing rentals. NeighborWorks will also work with communities and developers to create new affordable housing opportunities.

The **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** or as it is more commonly known, HUD, administers several programs to provide housing for low and moderate income households. HUD is best known for their rental assistance programs such as the Housing Choice Voucher Program, Tenant Based Housing Choice Vouchers, Project Based Vouchers, Conversion Vouchers, Hope for Elderly Independence, and HOPE VI. Less commonly known are HUD's home ownership assistance programs

such as the Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Option, American Dream, and Section 5(h) Homeownership Programs, as well as, low interest loans, mortgage insurance, and education programs.¹³

The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** provides programs similar to HUD for low to moderate income families purchasing in rural communities. USDA programs include Single Family Direct and Guaranteed Homeownership Loans, Self Help Technical Assistance Grants, Rental Housing Direct Loans for developers creating affordable rental housing, Housing Preservation Grants, and loan guarantees for lenders.¹⁴

The rising cost of housing in Chester and the subsequent reduced affordability has made it difficult if not impossible for young families looking to return to the town where they grew up or move here from other communities in southern New Hampshire. There are however, a variety of mechanisms available to create a more diverse supply of housing affordable to households of all incomes.

Housing Type Definitions¹⁵

The data on units in structure (also referred to as "type of structure") were obtained from answers to long-form questionnaire Item 34, which was asked on a sample basis at both occupied and vacant housing units. A structure is a separate building that either has open spaces on all sides or is separated from other structures by dividing walls that extend from ground to roof. In determining the number of units in a structure, all housing units, both occupied and vacant, are counted. Stores and office space are excluded. The statistics are presented for the number of housing units in structures of specified type and size, not for the number of residential buildings.

1-unit, detached [Single-Family Detached]: This is a 1-unit structure detached from any other house; that is, with open space on all four sides. Such structures are considered detached even if they have an adjoining shed or garage. A 1-family house that contains a business is considered detached as long as the building has open space on all four sides. Mobile homes to which one or more permanent rooms have been added or built also are included.

1-unit, attached [Single-Family Attached]: This is a 1-unit structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures. In row houses (sometimes called townhouses), double houses, or houses attached to nonresidential structures, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall goes from ground to roof.

¹³ Descriptions of HUD programs are available online at: <http://www.hud.gov/funds/index.cfm>

¹⁴ Descriptions of USDA programs are available online at: http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?navid=HOUSING_ASSISTA&parentnav=RURAL_DEVELOPMENT&navtype=RT

¹⁵ Excerpted from the U.S. Census website at: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=DEC&_lang=en for Summary File 3 Table H30. Additional comments inserted by SNHPC are included in brackets.

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2 or more units [Two-Family or Duplexes and Multi-Family Residential]: These are units in structures containing 2 or more housing units, further categorized as units in structures with 2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 19, 20 to 49, and 50 or more units. [Multi-family residential includes all structures containing 3 or more housing units while two-family/duplex structures contain 2 units].

Mobile home [Manufactured Housing]: Both occupied and vacant mobile homes to which no permanent rooms have been added are counted in this category. Mobile homes used only for business purposes or for extra sleeping space and mobile homes for sale on a dealer's lot, at the factory, or in storage are not counted in the housing inventory. In 1990, the category was "mobile home or trailer."

Boat, RV, van, etc. [Other Housing]: This category is for any living quarters occupied as a housing unit that does not fit in the previous categories. Examples that fit in this category are houseboats, railroad cars, campers, and vans.

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Transportation

Transportation

Introduction

The Town of Chester's transportation infrastructure consists of a hierarchy of local and State roadways that combine to facilitate regional through-traffic and local travel. The characteristics and condition of the local roadway network are important for both the well-being of the existing community and for its future growth. The Town's roadway network must be planned to provide safe, convenient, and efficient local access and movement of traffic within the community and to discourage through traffic on residential streets. Because road maintenance and reconstruction expenditures generally represent a significant portion of the municipal budget, an efficient and comprehensive roadway improvement program is essential for the management of town roads.

Community Survey Questions and Responses

SNHPC assisted the Chester Planning Board to design and prepare a town-wide Master Plan Community Survey to ensure that the knowledge, experience and visions of residents were utilized as inputs into the Master Plan process. The survey included many questions on local issues pertaining to housing, economic development and transportation. In early 2015, the survey was distributed to all Chester households and property owners and the results of the survey were made available on the Town's web site. A total of 281 survey responses were received and the tabulated results have been used to develop chapters of the Master Plan. The results of the Community Survey were instrumental in obtaining the attitudes of residents and property owners regarding local transportation issues. The complete results of the Master Plan Community Survey are included on Page 1 of the Appendix.

The Master Plan Community Survey included a question asking respondents to identify which road or intersection in the town poses the most serious threat to safety. Approximately 49 percent of those responding to the question identified the NH 121/NH 102 intersection as posing the most serious threat to safety. Other roadways in the town identified in this question included North Pond Road, East Derry Road and Candia Road. Another survey question asked respondents to identify which road or intersection in the town requires the most aesthetic improvement. The NH 121/NH 102 intersection was again identified by approximately 25 percent of respondents along with East Derry Road which was identified by approximately 29 percent of those responding to this question. The NH 121/NH 102 intersection was also identified by approximately 66 percent of those individuals responding to a question regarding which road or intersection in the town needed a traffic signal.

The survey results also gave respondents an opportunity to express more general attitudes toward local transportation issues. Respondents to the survey identified the three most pressing transportation problems facing the town as 1) quality of roads; 2) the road maintenance program and 3) speeding.

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Approximately 51 percent of the respondents to a question on bicycle and pedestrian issues felt that there needs to be more opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian transportation modes in the town. A majority (approximately 56 percent) of respondents felt that the town’s streets are currently not safe for bicycles and pedestrians. In response to a question on the condition of roads in the town, approximately 39 percent of those answering this question felt that the town’s roads were in adequate condition. Approximately 32 percent of respondents felt that the town’s roads were in good condition and 21 percent of respondents felt that the town’s roads were in poor condition. Finally, NH 102, NH 121 and NH 121A were identified by survey respondents as the three most frequently utilized routes in town for work trip travel.

Question #30: Which road or intersection in town poses the most serious threat to safety?

Response	Number
Intersection of Routes 121 and 102	192
North Pond Rd.	12
Route 102	8
Route 121A	5

Question #31: Which road or intersection in town has too much traffic, considering its design and surrounding setting?

Response	Number
Intersection of Routes 121 and 102	62
Route 102	22
North Pond Rd.	16
East Derry Rd.	8
Candia Rd.	6
Lane rd.	5
Fremont Rd.	4
Route 121A	3

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Question #32: Which road or intersection in town requires the most aesthetic improvement?

Response	Number
East Derry Rd.	20
Intersection of Routes 121 and 102	17
None	8
Lane Rd.	8
Harantis Lake Rd.	6
North Pond Rd.	6
Candia Rd.	4

Question #33: Which road or intersection in town needs a traffic signal?

Response	Number
Intersection of Routes 102 & 121	96
Center of Town	14
No Traffic Signals Needed	32
School Zone	4

Question #34: What, in your opinion, is the most pressing transportation problem facing Chester?

Please check up to three items from the list.

Table 27: Transportation Problems																
Transportation Issue	Speeding	Road Quality	Road maintenance program	Lack of public transit	Traffic Volume	Lack of bicycle lanes	Lack of sidewalks	Heavy trucking	Improve school bus service	Insufficient police presence	Pedestrian safety	Lack of parking	narrow side streets	Road flooding	School traffic	Traffic violation
Total	102	120	103	18	44	50	49	52	3	22	49	8	13	36	9	21

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Question #35: Do you feel there needs to be more bicycle and pedestrian opportunities in Town?

Table 28: Bicycle and Pedestrian Opportunities				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	143	98	27	13

Question #36: Are Chester’s streets safe for bicycles and pedestrians?

Table 29: Pedestrian Safety				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	79	157	30	15

Question #37: What do you think is the general year round condition of roads in Chester?

Table 30: Condition of Roads						
Response	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Adequate-poor	Poor	No response
Total	8	89	110	5	60	9

Question #38: What major routes do employed members of your household use to get to work?

Table 31: Roads Traveled for Work											
Street Name	NH Route 102	NH Route 121	NH Route 121A	Lane Road	Fremont Road	Candia Road	Towle Road	Shepard Home Road	Old Sandown Road	Halls Village Road	East Derry Road
Total	217	144	51	27	43	49	13	21	14	18	27

This next portion of this chapter describes and evaluates the town’s existing transportation infrastructure in terms of administrative and functional classification and addresses the future needs of the system.

Administrative/Functional Highway Classification

Municipal roads and highways are generally maintained and described according to an administrative classification system. The administrative classification system defines governmental responsibilities for construction and maintenance purposes.

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The Administrative Classification system highways under state maintenance and control include Class I, II, and III highways. Class IV, V and VI highways are under the jurisdiction of municipalities. The descriptions below, based on information contained in New Hampshire Planning and Land Use Regulation, detail the various administrative classes.

Class I highways consist of all existing or proposed highways which are part of the primary state highway system excepting all portions of such highways within the compact sections of towns and cities listed in RSA 229:5, V, provided that the portions of the turnpikes and the national system of interstate and defense highways within the compact sections of these cities and towns shall be class I highways.

Class II highways consist of all existing or proposed highways on the secondary state highway system, except those portions of such highways which are within the compact sections of the towns and cities listed in RSA 229:5, V.

Class III, Recreational Roads, consist of all roads leading to, and within, state reservations designated by the legislature.

Class III-a highways shall consist of new boating access highways from any existing highway to any public water in this state. All class III-a highways shall be limited access facilities as defined in RSA 230:44. Class III-a highways shall be subject to the layout, design, construction, and maintenance provisions of RSA 230:45-47 and all other provisions relative to limited access facilities, except that the executive director of the fish and game department shall have the same authority for class III-a highways that is delegated to the commissioner of the department of transportation for limited access facilities. A class III-a highway may be laid out subject to the condition that it shall not be maintained during the winter months. A class III-a highway may be laid out subject to gates and bars or restricted to the accommodation of persons on foot, or certain vehicles, or both, if federal funds are not used. The executive director of fish and game may petition the governor and council to discontinue any class III-a highway.

Class IV highways shall consist of all highways within the compact sections of cities and towns listed in RSA 229:5, V. The compact section of any such city or town shall be the territory within such city or town where the frontage on any highway, in the opinion of the commissioner of transportation, is mainly occupied by dwellings or buildings in which people live or business is conducted, throughout the year and not for a season only. Whenever the commissioner reclassifies a section of a class I or class II highway as a class IV highway, the commissioner shall prepare a statement of rehabilitation work which shall be performed by the state in connection with the turnback. No highway reclassification from class I or II to class IV shall take effect until all rehabilitation needed to return the highway surface to reputable condition has been completed by the state. Rehabilitation shall be completed during the calendar year preceding the effective date of the reclassification. A copy of the commissioner's statement of work to be performed by the state shall be attached to the notification of reclassification to class IV, and receipt of said statement shall be acknowledged, in writing, by the selectmen of the town, or the mayor of the city, affected by the reclassification.

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Class V highways shall consist of all other traveled highways which the town has the duty to maintain regularly and shall be known as town roads. Any public highway which at one time lapsed to Class VI status due to 5-years' no maintenance, as set forth in RSA 229:5, VII, but which subsequently has been regularly maintained and repaired by the town on more than a seasonal basis and in suitable condition for year-round travel thereon for at least 5 successive years without being declared an emergency lane pursuant to RSA 231:59-a, shall be deemed a Class V highway.

Class VI highways shall consist of all other existing public ways, and shall include all highways discontinued as open highways and made subject to gates and bars, except as provided in paragraph III-a, and all highways which have not been maintained and repaired by the town in suitable condition for travel thereon for 5 successive years or more except as restricted by RSA 231:3, II.

Table 32 presents a summary of 2012 classified roadway mileage in Chester, as provided by the NHDOT. There are approximately 145 lane miles of public roads in town. Approximately 27.7 miles of Class I and Class II highways exist, including sections of NH Routes 102, 121 and 121A. The majority of Chester's roads, approximately 105 miles, are Class V or town roads. There are approximately 12 lane miles of Class VI roads in town.

Table 32: Chester Highway Mileage (Lane Miles)

Class	Type	Lane Miles
I	Primary	12.8
II	Secondary	14.9
III	Recreation	0
IV	Compact	0
V	Local	105.2
VI	Local Not Maintained	12.1

Source: NHDOT 2012

Table 33 on Page 131 compares the mileage of Class VI roadways in Chester with data for other similarly-sized towns in the SNHPC region. As shown in Table 33, the towns of New Boston, Candia and Deerfield, as of 2012, had 19.1, 10.7 and 13.2 lane miles, respectively, of Class VI roadways.

Historically, the Town has used State law as the basis for formulating policies regarding Class VI roads as the Town's practice has been not to open Class VI roads to private property owners. R SA 674:41 restricts any building on Class VI roadways to a decision of the local governing body. The law's purpose is to prevent premature and sporadic development. In this way, building permits are typically not approved for properties whose access is via Class VI roadways. Historically, there has been a lack of support in the Town for opening tracks of currently undevelopable land by opening up Class VI roadways as Class V roadways. However, other potential strategies for allowing development in these areas do exist. One strategy involves adopting a policy which would allow development on only a portion of a Class VI roadway. Therefore, the cost of a roadway improvement included in a potential development relatively close to an existing traveled road could be assumed by the developer. Allowing such growth

near an existing road could potentially minimize sprawl and encourage cluster development more conducive to pedestrian access.

Another option for potential use of Class VI roadways is for reclassification as Class A trails. RSA 231-A allows municipalities to designate Class V and Class VI roadways as “Class A” trails. With such a designation, the roadways are established as municipal trails. Access by vehicle over the Class A trail for use of the abutting property by landowners would be allowed to provide access for certain uses not related to development such as agriculture and forestry as well as or for access to any building or structure existing prior to the roadway’s designation as a Class A trail. To facilitate the expanded use of the Class VI roadways as Class A Trails, the town could conduct some maintenance at its option. Conducting research into the possible alternate uses of Class VI roadways could allow Chester to plan for the future without adding an unnecessarily burdensome cost on the town

Table 33: Class VI Roadway Mileage for Selected Towns in the SNHPC Region

Town	Class VI Roadway Lane Miles	Population**
Chester	12.1	4,770
New Boston	19.1	5,320
Candia	10.7	3,910
Deerfield	13.2	4,280

Sources: NHDOT (2012), 2010 Census

Municipal roads and highways are also described in terms of a functional classification system based on their role in terms of the amount of traffic they carry and the type of area they serve. The roadway functional classification system generally includes Interstate Highways as the highest classification followed by Other Freeways and Expressways, Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Collectors and Local Roads. The following roadway functional classifications as described in “Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria and Procedures – FHWA 2013” are found in the Town:

Collectors

The purpose of Collector roadways (i.e. NH 102, NH 121 and NH 121A in the town) is to gather traffic from Local Roads and distribute it to the Arterial network. Collector roadways are broken down into two categories: Major Collectors and Minor Collectors. In a rural environment, Collectors generally serve primarily intra-county rather than statewide travel and generally serve trips whose travel distances are shorter compared to Arterial routes. Consequently, more moderate speeds may be posted.

Local Streets

Local roads account for the largest percentage of roadway mileage. The primary function of Local roads, which are not intended or designed for long distance travel or through traffic, is for access to abutting land. Bus routes generally do not run on Local Roads and are often designed to discourage through

traffic. Local Roads are often classified by default once all Arterial and Collector roadways have been identified.

Development of a functional roadway classification system for the town will assist in highway system planning and encourage the development of an interconnected roadway network that meets the needs of both regional and local trip-making. An interconnected roadway network discourages through-traffic volumes, enhances pedestrian accessibility and emergency access, and provides increased opportunities for development of alternative modes of transportation. Cluster developments and other site design alternatives emphasizing more efficient use of land and roadway interconnectivity enable the town to provide a safe, efficient roadway network while minimizing its footprint on the open landscape.

Road Design

The Chester Subdivision Regulations include design standards related to the arrangement, character, extent, width, grade and location of town roads. The document states that roadway design must consider variables such as relation to existing or planned streets, topographical conditions, public convenience and safety and relation to land use. Roadways should also be designed so as to provide for the continuation of the principal streets in adjoining areas, provide for safe vehicular traffic circulation, discourage movement of through traffic within subdivisions and afford separation of through and local traffic. Table 34 below provides a summary of geometric and other standards for streets and roadways in the town from the Chester Subdivision Regulations. It should be noted that the design standards for new town roads should be coordinated with the town engineer and evaluated on an individual basis. In some instances, different standards may be appropriate for individual sites.

The Chester Subdivision Regulations also include regulations pertaining to the design of private ways to provide access within Open Space subdivisions. The provision of Open Space is required where the land to be subdivided consists of a parcel containing twenty -five acres or more. The purpose of the design standards for private ways within Open Space subdivisions is to 1) enhance the safety and welfare of residents served by private ways; 2) clarify the respective rights and responsibilities of builders and residents of open space subdivisions with respect to private ways and of the Town of Chester; 3) provide access to lots over a private way rather than by individual private ways on each lot; 4) preserve, protect and enhance environmentally sensitive land that might otherwise be cleared, excavated, filled and/or covered with impervious surface; 5) reduce increased runoff from impervious surfaces that would adversely impact nearby streams, wetlands and public and private drainage control structures; and 6) encourage the protection and preservation of significant natural and roadside vistas.

Table 34: Table of Geometric & Other Standards for Streets

ITEM	STANDARD
Minimum width of R.O.W.	60 feet
Minimum width of pavement	24 feet *
Minimum Grade	0.50%
Maximum Grade	10%
Maximum grade at intersections	2.00% within 75' of all intersecting roads
Minimum angle of intersection	70 degrees
Minimum centerline radii on curves	300 feet
Minimum tangent length between reverse curves	200 feet
Road Base (minimum)	24 inches
Sub base (sand)	8 inches
Sub base (bank-run gravel)	8 inches
Upper Base (crushed gravel) (Road base shall be installed by the developer prior to the issuance of building permits.)	8 inches
Pavement Thickness - Binder	2.5 inches
Pavement Thickness - Wearing	1.5 inches
Road crown (maximum)	¼ inch per foot
Width of Shoulders (Shoulders to be cleared the 5 feet and constructed as road base.)	5 feet
Cul-de-sac streets and Loop streets	

SOURCE: Chester Subdivision Regulations - 2009

Maximum length for loop and cul-de-sac streets shall be 1800 feet. Measurement shall include the total running length of the street including the loop and/or cul-de-sac. Measurement of total running length shall start at the last intersection with a Class V or better road which provides more than one access route for emergency vehicles. The length of pre-existing streets must be included in the running length measurement where they too are accessed by that same multiple access intersection.

1. Width of R.O.W.
2. Length (maximum)
3. Diameter of turn-around at enclosed end;
 - i) Property line (minimum)
 - ii) Open center, entire diameter pavement to pavement
 - iii) Minimum pavement width

4. Access into turn around shall be offset

60 feet

1800 feet

210 feet

120 feet

24 feet

Stopping sight distance 250 feet

* minimum pavement width of 20 feet allowable via waiver

Many towns and cities nationwide are beginning to focus the design of roadways according to the principles of the "Complete Streets" concept. The Complete Streets concept refers to streets that are designed and operated to accommodate safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders including those of all ages and abilities. Transportation projects incorporating Complete Streets principles will make communities more livable through making the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The design of Complete Streets facilities, which are unique for each community in response to context and individual needs, can include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes and roundabouts.

Creating transportation improvements that incorporate Complete Streets design requires towns to change their approach to planning roadways. A Complete Streets approach can be particularly advantageous during times of fiscal constraint when towns are attempting to ensure maximum long-term benefits from infrastructure investments. Incorporating Complete Streets improvement projects can often be accomplished with little to no additional funding, as there are many Complete Street improvements that are low-cost, require minimal amounts of time to implement and result in noticeable improvements. However, in order to accomplish this, towns must re-think project priorities and make a decision to allocate funds to those projects that can improve overall mobility.

While considerations of travel time and speed may be of primary importance to the commuter, the impacted community often considers this goal as secondary to creating and maintaining safe and livable neighborhoods. Additionally, maintaining a proper balance is challenging when other factors such as freight deliveries, emergency response, incident management, access to local businesses and transit operations are considered. Incorporating a Complete Streets approach to transportation improvements presents a challenge to planners and designers in that it begins a process of attempting to balance the interests of all users and other stakeholders with those of the specific communities affected. This approach is generally referred to as "Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) which involves a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to developing a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and

preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. Therefore, CSS attempts to consider the total context within which the transportation improvement project exists and is compatible with and supportive of the surrounding context and community.

One way in which the Town has begun to consider the CSS approach is through its participation in the development of the Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway. The Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway, connecting the towns of Atkinson, Hampstead, Chester, Auburn and Derry, is designed to celebrate and interpret the historic Boston-Haverhill-Concord Stage Coach route that followed what is today NH 121. It also features the New England landscape included in much of Robert Frost's work, including the settings of some of his most famous poems. Through highlighting the byway's numerous historic sites, scenic views, outdoor recreational opportunities, and other attractions, it raises awareness among local residents and promotes visitors creating economic development. The location of the Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway is shown in the Regional Concerns chapter as Map# 10 on Page 301.

Scenic Byways are recognized by the State of New Hampshire and the U.S. Department of Transportation for their scenic, historic, recreational, natural, cultural and/or archeological qualities. In New Hampshire, the National Scenic Byways program is administered by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. There are three levels of Scenic Byway designation. The Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway is classified as a State Scenic Byway, designated at the State level as having exemplary qualities that make it an attractive visitor destination. There are 14 such byways in New Hampshire, including six in the southeastern part of the state.

SNHPC is currently collaborating with the Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway Council and the Rockingham Planning Commission on development of a Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP). The CMP will describe the significance of the scenic, historic, natural, cultural and/or recreational resources along the byway including an inventory of buildings, sites and cultural events. It also identifies strategies for the preservation, enhancement and promotion of the historic buildings, scenic views and cultural events defining the area as well as strategies for enhancing tourism opportunities and safety for all users along the corridor.

Traffic Flows

Existing traffic volumes on the roadway network of the town were compiled using the results of the SNHPC's annual regional traffic counting program and data contained in the SNHPC regional travel demand model. Figure 11.1 shows the existing (2014) average annual daily traffic volumes (AADT) on selected roadways in the town. This information is also summarized in Table 35 below.

Information on traffic congestion on the State highway system in the town is presented in the State of New Hampshire Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan 2015-2024. Supporting documents for the Plan include a map presenting mobility on State roadways measured in terms of congestion. Congestion is measured by level of service, which is an indication of how well traffic flows on the highway system. Level of service (LOS) is expressed by a letter grade with LOS A representing no congestion and LOS F

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representing a roadway link operating with severe congestion. The information presented indicates that NH 102, NH 121 and NH 121A in the town are currently operating at LOS A with no congestion.

In order to assess future traffic conditions in the town, the traffic volumes for the “existing” base year condition were projected to the 2040 “horizon year” utilizing a growth rate from the regional travel demand model. The 2040 projected AADT traffic volumes were developed for the locations chosen for base year analysis. The 2040 projected AADT traffic volumes for the selected locations in the town are shown on Figure 11.2.

Table 35: Chester 2014 and 2040 AADT Traffic Volume Summary

LOCATION	2014 Existing	2040 Future	% Change	Annual Growth Rate
CANDIA RD AT CANDIA T/L	600	700	16.67%	0.62%
CANDIA RD NORTH OF NH 121 CHESTER ST	1,100	1,300	18.18%	0.67%
FREMONT RD EAST OF NH 102 RAYMOND RD	1,200	1,600	33.33%	1.16%
FREMONT RD OVER EXETER RIVER (@ bridge #172/108)	860	1,200	39.53%	1.34%
HARANTIS LAKE RD WEST OF NH 102 DERRY RD	290	300	3.45%	0.14%
LANE RD WEST OF NH 102 RAYMOND RD	1,200	1,600	33.33%	1.16%
NH 102 DERRY RD AT DERRY T/L	8,300	11,000	32.53%	1.13%
NH 102 RAYMOND RD NORTH OF FREMONT RD	7,500	9,700	29.33%	1.03%
NH 121 CHESTER RD AT AUBURN T/L	2,900	3,800	31.03%	1.09%
NH 121 CHESTER RD WEST OF NH 102 DERRY RD	3,400	3,800	11.76%	0.45%
NH 121 HAVERHILL RD NORTH OF DEEP HOLE RD	1,700	2,200	29.41%	1.04%
NH 121 HAVERHILL RD WEST OF HALLS VILLAGE RD (west Jct)	2,000	2,600	30.00%	1.05%
NH 121A SANDOWN RD AT SANDOWN T/L	2,300	3,400	47.83%	1.58%
SMITH RD WEST OF CANDIA RD	80	100	25.00%	0.90%
TOWLE RD OVER TOWLE BROOK	460	600	30.43%	1.07%
WASON RD NORTHWEST OF TOWLE RD	70	80	14.29%	0.54%
WELLS VILLAGE RD AT SANDOWN T/L	260	300	15.38%	0.57%

Sources: SNHPC traffic count data and Regional Travel Demand Models

Traffic Accidents

Crash data was obtained from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the Chester Police Department for the period from 2004 to 2013. During this period, there were a total of approximately 600 accidents in the town, with a minimum of 33 accidents occurring in 2012 and a maximum of 85 accidents occurring in 2007. Table 36 presents a summary of the annual accident totals.

Table 36: Chester Accident History 2004 – 2013

Year	Total Number of Accidents
2004	72
2005	77
2006	70
2007	85
2008	74
2009	66
2010	50
2011	37
2012	33
2013	36

Source: Crash database 2004-2013 from New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

Crash data for the ten-year period 2004 to 2013 was used to identify high accident locations within the town. High accident locations at intersections and at roadway link locations between intersections were identified. A listing of the high accident locations in Chester is presented in Table 37. This table shows that for the period from 2004 to 2013, the NH Route 102/NH Route 121 intersection experienced the greatest number of accidents. A total of 44 accidents occurred at this location during this period.

Table 37: Chester High Accident Locations

Intersection	Total
NH 102 and NH 121	44
NH 102 and East Derry Road	8
Raymond Road and Hanson Road	5

Sources: 1) New Hampshire top one-hundred Hazardous intersections 2) Local Input 3) NHDOT 2004 – 2013 NHDOT Crash Database

The following Table 38 presents the high accident mid-block locations (non-intersections) in Chester from 2004 to 2013. The results of the evaluation indicate that the segment of NH 102 between the Derry town line and Harantis Lake Road had the highest number of accidents. A total of 16 accidents occurred at this locations during this timeframe.

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Table 38: Chester Mid-Block Accident Locations

Roadway	Segment	Total
NH 102 Derry Road	Between Derry/Chester TL and Harantis Lake Road	16
NH 121 Haverhill Road	Between Sandown NH 121A and Halls Village Road	14
NH 102 Raymond Rd	Between Fremont Rd and Lane Road	14
Fremont Road	Between Raymond Road NH 102 and Crawford Road	14
NH 102 Derry Road	Between Warfield Road and NH 121	12
NH 102 Raymond Rd	Between NHDOT Portal Section 513 on Raymond Road and Raymond TL	12
NH 102 Derry Road	Between Webster Lane and Warfield Road	12
Candia Road	Between Clark Road and Villager Road	10
NH 121 Chester Street	Between Candia Road and Parsonage Lane	10
NH 102 Raymond Rd	Between Fremont Road and Edwards Mill Road	10

Note: 1. Crash database from New Hampshire Department of Transportation 2004 - 2013 was used; 2. Safety analysis software was used to identify the locations.

Problem Location/Proposed Solutions

The following section provides information on four intersections identified as problem locations by the town. Specific operational and/or safety issues are identified at each location and recommendations designed to address these issues are also included.

NH 102 and Webster Lane

NH 102/Webster Lane is a three-way unsignalized intersection located in the southern portion of the town. NH 102 acts as the major intersection leg, and Webster Lane, which acts as a STOP-sign controlled minor intersection leg, runs east-west from Town Farm Road to NH 102. Speed limits on NH 102 in the vicinity of the intersection are posted at 40 miles per hour. Warning signs for NH 102/Webster Street are located on the northbound and southbound approaches of the intersection.

At this location, southbound NH 102 approaches Webster Lane on an uneven down grade, which encourages excessive speeds. Sight distances were measured in the field, and adequate sight distances appear to be available looking north and south on NH 102 from Webster Lane, even for operating speeds in excess of the 40 mile per hour posted speed limit. However, an improperly positioned vehicle on the Webster Lane approach could have sight distance limited by a stone wall located northeast of the intersection. Snow piled on the roadway shoulders in winter increase the possibility of restrictions on sight distance. Additionally, the existing southbound 11-foot travel lane and one-foot paved shoulder on NH 102 makes it difficult for through traffic to pass a stationary vehicle waiting to turn left onto Webster Lane at the intersection. This passing maneuver may become more frequent in the future when traffic in the vicinity of the intersection increases as a result of planned developments. Traffic efficiency and safety in this area will also be impacted by new planned side streets intersecting with NH 102. This intersection is also presently used by motorists to avoid the NH 102/NH 121 area.

Short-term strategies for improving traffic safety and efficiency at this intersection include addition of a STOP bar on the Webster Lane approach to encourage proper positioning of vehicles for maximized sight distance. The minimal passing shoulders on NH 102 near the intersection should be addressed as traffic increases and more southbound left turns occur at this location. Additional enforcement could also be utilized to address excessive speeds on NH 102. Long-term strategies to improve safety and efficiency include modifications to the vertical alignment of NH 102 north of Webster Lane and repositioning of the stone wall on the northeast quadrant of the intersection.

NH 121 and Pulpit Rock Road

NH 121/Pulpit Rock Road is a three-way unsignalized intersection located in the southeastern portion of the Town. NH 121, which runs in a northwest-southeast direction between Sandown Road and the Derry town line, acts as the major intersection leg. Pulpit Rock Road, which runs east from NH 121, acts as a STOP-sign controlled minor intersection leg. Speed limits on NH 102 in the vicinity of the intersection are posted at 40 miles per hour.

Sight distance looking south on NH 121 from Pulpit Rock Road is limited by the roadway alignment and by the existence of brush and a ledge located on the east side of NH 121 south of the intersection. There is an intersection warning sign posted on NH 121 approximately 500 feet south of Pulpit Rock Road. Based on field investigation, it appears that limited sight distance exists looking south on NH 121 from this location. According to guidelines published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), a minimum of 305 feet of sight distance is required at the posted 40 mph speed limit to allow for safe stopping.

Proposed short-term recommendations for improving traffic safety and efficiency at this intersection include clearing of brush and removal of the ledge from the east side of NH 121 south of the intersection. Additional enforcement to address excessive speeds on NH 121 in the vicinity of the intersection is also suggested. A long-term solution to the limited sight distance at this intersection would involve re-alignment of NH 121 in this area or modifications to the Pulpit Rock Road intersection approach.

NH 102, North Pond Road and Old Sandown Road

NH 102 (Derry Road)/North Pond Road/Old Sandown Road is a four-way unsignalized intersection located in the central portion of the town. NH 102 runs in a north-south direction between the Derry town line to the south and the Raymond town line to the north. NH 102 acts as the major intersection leg and North Pond Road and Old Sandown Road intersect with NH 102 from the west and east to form STOP-sign controlled minor intersection legs. Speed limits on NH 102 in the vicinity of the intersection are posted at 40 miles per hour.

NH 102 in the vicinity of North Pond Road has a daily volume of approximately 8,500 vehicles per day (2013 AADT). North Pond Road west of NH 102 has a daily volume of approximately 1,400 vehicles per day (2013 AADT). Turning movements from the minor legs at this location are beginning to experience delays, particularly the westbound Old Sandown Road approach. Completion of traffic impact studies

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have indicated that an exclusive northbound left turn lane on NH 102 at this intersection is currently warranted. Sight distance looking south from Old Sandown Road on NH 102, limited by the alignment of NH 102, is approximately 315 feet. According to AASHTO guidelines, a minimum of 305 feet of sight distance is required at the posted 40 mph speed limit to allow for safe stopping. Additionally, Ledge Road, an unpaved road that provides access to eight single-family homes to the west, forms an unsignalized intersection with NH 102 approximately 185 feet north of the intersection. Ledge Road creates additional turning movements in the vicinity of the intersection which can be confusing to drivers.

The town, FHWA, NHDOT and SNHPC conducted a Road Safety Audit (RSA) for the NH 102/North Pond Road/Old Sandown Road intersection in March 2013. The RSA is a formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team. It is designed to qualitatively estimate and report on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users. The RSA is designed to answer the following questions:

- What elements of the road may present a safety concern: to what extent, to which road users, and under what circumstances?
- What opportunities exist to eliminate or mitigate identified safety concerns?

The RSA recommended that the following short-term solutions be implemented at the intersection within a six month period by the respective stakeholders. These short-term solutions include affordable measures that can be undertaken without engineering studies or financing:

Town Solutions:

1. Continue speed enforcement activities in this area.
2. Cut brush to maintain visibility of stop signs and oncoming traffic.
3. Add a stop-ahead sign on Old Sandown Rd approach to intersection.
4. Coordinate maintenance activities with District 5 to address drainage issues at the apron of Old Sandown Rd.
5. Planning Board should ensure compliance of CIP, zoning ordinances, and their site plan review process with off-site exaction requirements. In event of further residential development in general vicinity of the study intersection, Planning Board should propose using off-site exactions to finance intersection improvements.
6. The street name sign for Ledge Rd should be realigned so that it is visible from both directions.

NHDOT Solutions:

1. Replace intersection ahead and horse crossing signs as part of the District 5 High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRRP). Also add advisory speed plaques to the curve-ahead signs as necessary.

2. Paint stop bars on the minor road approaches.
3. Replace and relocate stop signs so that they are more easily visible. Stop sign on Old Sandown Rd should be placed at standard height.

NH 102 (Derry Road) and NH 121 (Chester Road)

NH 102 (Derry Road)/NH 121 (Chester Road) is a four-way unsignalized intersection located in the central portion of the town. NH 102 runs in a north-south direction between the Derry town line to the south and the Raymond town line to the north. NH 102 acts as the major intersection leg and NH 121 intersects with NH 102 from the west and east to form STOP-sign controlled minor intersection legs. Flashing warning signals also exist at the intersection. Speed limits on NH 102 in the vicinity of the intersection are posted at 30 mph. The segment of NH 102 north of NH 121 is a school zone with a speed limit of 20 mph in effect during the periods immediately before and after school. In the vicinity of the intersection, NH 102 has a cross-section of approximately 38 feet consisting of two twelve-foot travel lanes and two seven-foot shoulders. NH 121 has a cross-section of approximately 36 feet.

The NH 102/NH 121 intersection is located at the crest of a hill and this alignment obstructs views of the intersection, particularly for vehicles approaching from the south on NH 102. Sight distances looking north and south on NH 102 from the eastbound NH 121 intersection approach are limited not only by the changes in elevation but also by a large tree located west of NH 102 to the north near the Village Church. Sight distances looking north and south on NH 102 from the westbound NH 121 intersection approach are limited by the changes in elevation, a stone wall adjacent to the cemetery on the northeast intersection quadrant and by fencing surrounding the monument located on the southeast quadrant of the intersection.

A High Accident Location Study was completed by SNHPC for this intersection in 2011. The intersection was selected for study because it was included in the 2010 New Hampshire Highway Safety Improvement Program, which identifies five percent of the State's locations currently exhibiting the most severe highway safety needs. The High Accident Location Study completed for the NH 102/NH 121 intersection included: 1) an analysis of crash data for the years 2008 to 2011 and identification of possible accident causes; 2) countermeasures to effectively mitigate the causes and 3) recommended implementation countermeasures for the intersection.

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations were made for the NH 102/NH 121 intersection:

- Installing flashing light warning signs on NH 102 approaches, trimming trees on both NH 121 approaches, and grooving pavements on NH 102 are low-cost countermeasures which could be implemented in the short-term;
- Speed enforcement could be performed around the intersection on NH 102.
- Cutting back shoulder on the southwest corner to increase Chester Street (NH 121) sight distance could be implemented in the medium-term.

- Changing the skewed intersection to right angle intersection, and eliminating horizontal and vertical curves on Derry Road approach could be implemented in the long-term. However, it would require acquisition of additional right-of-way.

Installing a traffic signal/building a roundabout could be implemented in the long term. However, an engineering study would be required demonstrating that a signal is warranted, that heavy duty vehicles won't experience difficulty starting up after stopping at the Derry Road approach, and that sufficient right-of-way is available. Following the completion of the High Accident Location Study, the Town coordinated removal of vegetation and a utility pole to improve sight distances at the intersection.

NH 102 and East Derry Road

The intersection of NH 102 and East Derry Road is a three-way unsignalized intersection located in the southern portion of the town, approximately one mile north of the Chester/Derry town line. NH 102, which acts as the major intersection leg, runs north-south through the town. East Derry Road, which also runs in an approximate north-south direction, meets NH 102 from the east, forming an acute angle at the intersection. Speed limits on NH 102 in the vicinity of the intersection are posted at 40 miles per hour.

The acute angle at which East Derry Road meets NH 102 at this intersection results in safety and operational issues for traffic at this location. Because of the acute angle, northbound right turns to southbound East Derry Road are difficult, particularly for heavy vehicles. This angle also enables southbound NH 102 traffic to negotiate left turns onto East Derry Road at a high rate of speed. Motorists attempting to negotiate right turns onto northbound NH 102 at this intersection must look behind them at an awkward angle to locate an adequate gap in northbound traffic. Additionally, the pavement condition of East Derry Road just south of the intersection is very poor.

Strategies for improving traffic safety and efficiency at this intersection would include proper placement of the STOP sign and addition of a STOP bar on East Derry Road to encourage proper positioning of vehicles for maximum sight distance. A more long-term solution would involve re-aligning the East Derry Road intersection approach so that it meets NH 102 at an angle closer to ninety degrees. This re-alignment would moderate speeds for turning movements and facilitate driver sight distances at the intersection. A survey of the area surrounding the intersection would have to be completed to determine any right of way implications and identify private property required to complete the re-alignment.

Transportation Improvement Program Planning Process

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a vital link between plan development and project implementation where plans are converted into specific improvement projects and then programmed

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for implementation on the basis of priority and fiscal constraint. The FY 2015 – FY 2018 TIP is a staged multi-year program of regional transportation improvement projects for the SNHPC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area. Based on guidelines contained in Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the TIP is updated at least once every four years. The TIP is updated by the MPO in accordance with joint federal metropolitan planning regulations, 23 CFR 450, issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Transportation.

In New Hampshire, the TIP is generally updated every two years by the MPO, concurrent with the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The first two TIP years include those projects that have been selected for funding as agreed upon by the NHDOT and the MPO. The projects included in the TIP are included in the air quality determination. Those fiscally constrained projects included in the fourth year of the TIP subsequently become the first year projects following the biannual TIP update. All transportation projects utilizing Federal transportation funds in the SNHPC MPO region must be included in a conforming approved TIP in order to be incorporated into the STIP and proceed to implementation. Other requirements pertaining to the development and maintenance of the TIP include:

- The TIP must contain all transportation projects including all capital and non-capital projects within the MPO area to be funded through Title 23 or the Federal Transit Act, projects consistent with the recommendations of the long-term RTP and all regionally significant projects regardless of whether FHWA/FTA approval is required;
- The TIP must include a financial plan demonstrating that it is financially constrained by year and must include project-specific costs by funding source and category. Funding for the first two years must be available and committed and funding for the third and fourth years should be reasonably approved;
- The TIP must be established through the use of effective early and continuing public involvement;
- If adopted by the MPO and approved by the Governor, the TIP must be included in the STIP without modification.

The TIP serves as the short-range project-specific component of the long-range plan for the region, which is called the Regional Transportation Plan for the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (RTP). The RTP, which addresses all forms of transportation used in the fifteen municipalities of the region and for each mode, is intended to serve as a guide for funding of transportation projects. Prioritization of the Plan recommendations results from a screening process to assure that impacts associated with health, safety, welfare and the environment are properly weighed in the public interest.

The current FY 2015-2018 SNHPC TIP, which was approved by the MPO in December, 2014, contains two improvements projects associated with the Town of Chester. These projects are for preventative maintenance and operating assistance for the Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART) transit service. The CART service area includes the Town of Chester.

Roadway Surface/Bridge Management

Prior to 1995, the Planning Board determined that the town needed a management system to help the Highway Department prioritize roadway maintenance. As part of a management system, the Board was convinced that they needed an accurate condition and inventory assessment of all town roads. With such a system in place, Chester officials could then evaluate road repair needs and allocate their budget in the most efficient manner.

Local officials agreed to implement a pavement management system for both paved and unpaved roads. In response to a letter from the University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center, Chester agreed to have UNH students conduct a road surface survey and analysis. During June 1995, two civil engineering majors performed the survey and analysis with the help of Chester's Road Agent and a member of the Planning Board.

The Survey Team used the Center's Road Surface Management System (RSMS), whose objectives include:

1. Inventory the road system;
2. Determine and document the condition of each road;
3. For each condition type chose maintenance or repair methods;
4. Determine costs of maintenance methods to each road;
5. Assign repair and maintenance methods to each road;
6. Prioritize maintenance and repair requirements; and
7. Establish long-range work and budget plans.

The Survey Team determined the inventory and road conditions. Chester's Road Agent determined repair strategies, cost estimates, and factors for establishing priorities. Using RSMS software, the Survey Team entered data into computers and derived a prioritized list of maintenance and repair requirements, entitled "Inventory and Assessment of Road Surfaces for the Town of Chester, New Hampshire," July 17, 1995.

In 2007, the town contracted with an engineering consultant to perform visual inspections of local roads for the purpose of rating each facility and developing a Priority List to guide future roadway improvement expenditures. In late 2007, the town's consultant performed inspections of 35 different roadway segments and completed a Flexible Pavement Condition Evaluation and Asphalt Pavement Rating Form for each segment. The completed Flexible Pavement Condition Evaluation Forms provided an in-depth description and ranking of the condition of each segment with regards to severity, density and specific characteristics of pavement distress. Characteristics used to document the pavement distress for each segment included variables such as surface defects, surface deformation and location

and type of pavement cracking. The Flexible Pavement Condition Evaluation Forms also included additional observations and suggestions for maintenance.

The Asphalt Pavement Rating Forms utilized the data from the Flexible Pavement Condition Evaluations to rate each roadway segment on a numeric scale according to criteria such as Transverse Cracks, Pot Holes, Deficient Drainage and Overall Riding Quality. This information was used to assign a Condition Rating from 1 – 100 for each roadway segment.

The data gathered and the evaluations completed in this work enabled the consultant to develop a list of priorities for future roadway improvements. Each of the 35 roadway segments was assigned a score determining its placement on the list and additional comments and recommendations were also included. Based on the results of the process, the top three roadway segments on the prioritized list included East Derry Road, Fremont Road and Lane Road. Following the completion of the 2007 inspections, Harantis Lake Road and North Pond Road were added as priority roadway segments. The full results of the 2007 inspections are included on page 60 of the Appendix.

The NHDOT Bureau of Bridge Design is responsible for inspecting and rating state and municipal bridges and culverts to monitor the conditions of these structures. This work includes those state-owned and municipally-owned “Red-List” bridges requiring interim inspections due to known deficiencies, poor conditions, weight restrictions, or type of construction. State-owned “Red-List” bridges are inspected twice yearly and municipally-owned “Red-List” bridges are inspected annually.

There are currently (as of March 2015) six structures in the town being monitored by the NHDOT Bureau of Bridge Design. Five of these structures are owned by the town and one of these, the bridge carrying Hanson Road over the Exeter River, is classified as structurally deficient. This bridge is currently on NHDOT’s Municipal Bridge Red List. The bridge carrying NH 121 over Wilson Brook is currently maintained by NHDOT.

Alternative Modes of Transportation

Public Transportation

The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for the SNHPC Region states that about 78 percent of work trip travel for Chester residents was completed using a single-occupant automobile. Despite this reliance on the single-occupant automobile for travel, there are many individuals in the town who require transportation via alternative modes, including elderly, handicapped and youth populations.

One option for Chester residents is the Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART), a curb-to-curb transportation system serving a five-town Greater Derry/Salem service area including Chester, Derry and Londonderry in the SNHPC region. CART works with multiple agencies in the Greater Derry-Salem region to coordinate scheduling and dispatching of rides, pooling of transportation resources and accessing Federal transportation funding. CART is a designated recipient of FTA Urbanized Area 5307 funds. The service is open to the public for a fee of \$3 per one-way ride within one service area

community. Rides between service area communities and to out-of-region medical destinations are \$4.00 and \$5.00, respectively. Ten-ride passes are also available.

CART was formed as a result of a critical need for transportation identified in a regional study funded by NHDOT from 2001 to 2003. On behalf of the Greater Derry/Greater Salem Regional Transportation Council (RTC), the Rockingham Planning Commission, SNHPC and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) conducted a study to develop a regional transit plan for the area. A plan developed through the recommendations of the study called for improving transit service in the region through 1) a combination of coordination and expansion of existing demand response transportation services and 2) development of standard fixed-route public transportation service in areas with adequate population to support it. The RTC and RPC developed draft legislation to establish CART that was subsequently introduced during the 2004-2005 legislative session. Enabling legislation (HB 568) providing for the establishment of CART was passed by the New Hampshire General Court in June 2005. The Town of Chester has been an active participant in CART since the inception of the service in 2006. Historically, CART has been used by Chester residents primarily for medical and education-related trips.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation

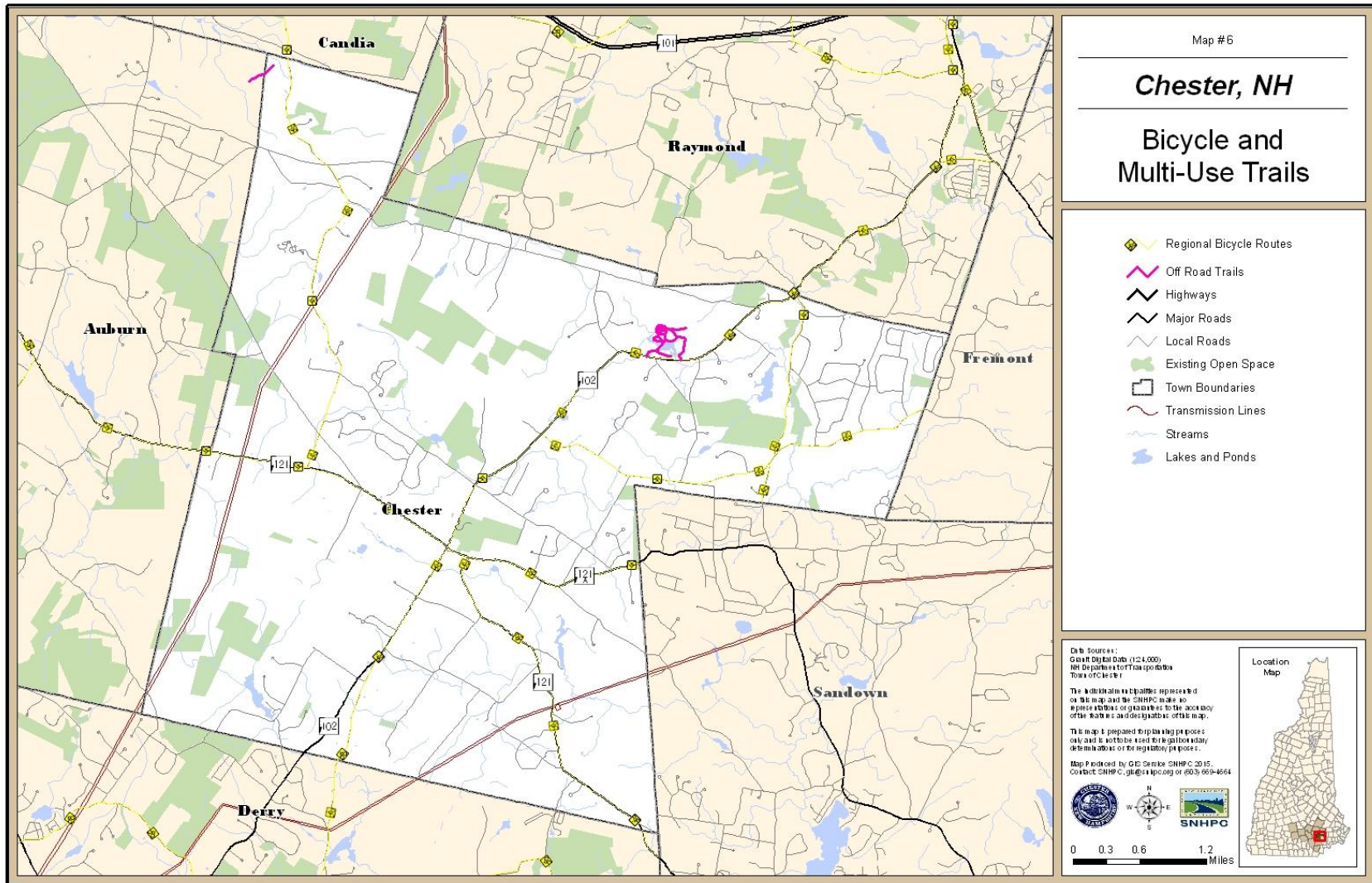
Materials produced in cooperation with the NHDOT indicate that there are approximately 25 miles of roadways in the town designated as regional bicycle routes. Chester roadways currently designated as regional bicycle routes include Candia Road, Chester Road, Derry Road (NH 102), East Derry Road, Fremont Road, Haverhill Road (NH 121), Shepard Home Road and Sandown Road.

There are limited public sidewalks or formal bicycle paths in Chester. Crossing the major arterials in Chester, Routes 121 and Route 102, can be difficult during peak traffic times due to high traffic volumes and limited gaps in the traffic stream. Higher vehicle speeds on these arterial roadways are also difficult to judge by some people. Bicycling along these roads can be hazardous due to the absence of a parallel path and lack of adequate shoulder. Since January 1, 2009, motorists in New Hampshire have been required by law to exercise due care when sharing roadways with cyclists. State statute 265:143-a states that "Every driver of a vehicle, when approaching a bicyclist, shall insure the safety and protection of the bicyclist and shall exercise due care by leaving a reasonable and prudent distance between the vehicle and the bicycle. The distance shall be presumed to be reasonable and prudent if it is at least 3 feet when the vehicle is traveling at 30 miles per hour or less, with one additional foot of clearance required for every 10 miles per hour above 30 miles per hour."

Work is currently underway to establish a regional system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities with the potential to link communities and form a network of alternative transportation corridors. A regional system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities can connect locally-developed systems with sidewalks, shared-use paths, and local streets. SNHPC is currently participating along with NHDOT and local trail stakeholder groups in the Regional Trails Coordinating Council (RTCC). Since 2010, RTCC has worked to build upon the past work of similar groups providing assistance to member organizations to develop and implement a comprehensive trail plan (2012). The RTCC is working to connect existing and planned trail networks in the region by providing a forum for cooperation and collaboration among trail organizations

and serving as an information clearinghouse for stakeholders. The goals of the RTCC include but are not limited to the following:

1. Assist in the development of individual trails to form a continuous network in the southern and central regions of the State of New Hampshire;
2. Develop maps of the region's trail network, including completed, as well as planned and missing segments and their conditions;
3. Identify and assist in obtaining available public funding (state, federal, etc.) for trail use;
4. Identify and assist organizations in obtaining available funding;
5. Identify and prioritize trail segment development tasks;
6. Provide forums and events to educate the public as to the importance of non-motorized multi-use trails in the health and quality of life of the regions;
7. Combine and augment the passion of volunteer groups and the power of Regional Planning Commissions to achieve common missions and values to accomplish common goals while, as necessary, overlapping jurisdictional boundaries. Existing off-road trails and regional bicycle paths in the Town are represented in Map 6.



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Natural Resource Chapter

Natural Resources

Introduction

The natural environment in the Town of Chester has always had a significant influence on the developmental patterns and quality of life of the town. Through the years, development in Chester has been primarily residential in character, and that trend is projected to continue into the 21st century. Chester will continue to balance environmental quality, land use and development. Development that is not sensitive to natural resources can impact a community’s quality of life. There is no time like the present to respect and protect Chester’s natural resources as new residential subdivisions and development changes Chester’s natural landscape.

Community Survey

During January 2015, a Community Survey was mailed out to all Town of Chester resident and Town property owners. The survey was also made available to the public on the Town website, as well as at the Town Hall. Out of all the surveys distributed, the Town received 201 responses. The following responses were received on the survey as related to Natural Resources in the Town of Chester (see Appendix in this Plan for complete survey results).

Question #1: What, in your opinion, are the most important general issues that must be addressed in Chester over the next five years? Please check up to five items from the list.

General Issues	Total Responses	Percent
Preserve Open Space and Forests	169	13.6
Preserve Agricultural Lands	146	11.8
Protect Drinking Water	140	11.3
Protect Historic Sites	123	9.9
Improve Road Quality	113	9.1
Create a Vibrant Town Center	85	6.9
Attract Retail or Office Development	84	6.8
Provide Public Transportation	8	6.5
Decrease Rate of Residential Growth	76	6.1
Created Elderly Housing	62	5.0
Increase Recreational Opportunities	55	4.4
Increase Zoned Commercial/Industrial Areas	43	3.5
Attract New Industrial Parks	34	2.7
Provide Sidewalks	33	2.7
Create Affordable Housing	18	1.5
Upgrade Town Facilities	19	1.5
Increase Housing Variety	17	1.4

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Increase School Capacity	14	1.1
Total	1239	100

Question #13: What impacts from outside Chester concern you the most? Check up to three.

Regional Concern	Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Potential Loss of Agriculture and Farms	148	20.8
Increased Traffic	126	17.7
Increased Residential Growth	119	16.8
Potential Watershed Contamination	108	15.2
Growth and Development	99	13.9
Urban Sprawl	80	11.3
I-93 Expansion	30	4.2
Total	710	100%

Question #22: How important is the preservation of additional open space in Chester to you?

Level of Importance	Number of Responses	Percent of Total
Very Important	140	51.7
Important	70	25.8
Somewhat Important	43	15.9
Not Important	18	6.6
Don't Know	0	0
Total	271	11.3

Question #24: Please indicate the level of importance you feel the Town should devote to the following natural resource preservation and open space protection methods?

Methods	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Protect Drinking Water Supply	212	40	14	3	3
Protect wetlands, streams and lakes	165	76	25	4	2
Promote fish and wildlife management	108	100	45	13	2
Protect	117	93	44	8	4

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wildlife corridors and habitats					
Preserve and protect forested areas	133	90	37	7	0
Preserve agricultural lands	135	84	40	10	0
Preserve open fields	118	86	51	11	0
Maintain outdoor recreation areas	110	98	53	9	1
Preserve open space through easements	101	83	54	14	13
Preserve open space through outright purchase of land	63	56	68	69	10

The above responses show that the most important issues facing Chester residents today revolve around natural resources. When asked what general issues must be addressed in the next five years, the top three answers were: preserving open space and fields; preserving agricultural lands; and protecting drinking water. In the 2005 Chester Community Survey, three of the top four responses were water-quality related answers. This most recent survey shows that, while water quality is still important, the residents feel that at least some of the water-related issues have been adequately addressed and now the focus must be placed back on preserving land, which has historically been a concern for Chester residents.

The following natural resources information offers the community an understanding of some of the key factors to consider when deciding on development projects. For more detailed information, it is recommended that the community maintain an updated Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) of the town. The Chester Conservation Commission is commonly responsible for Chester's NRI.

Soils

Soil is the surface layer of earth that was created by the interaction of geology, climate, plants, animals, topography, and time. One important soil type is hydric soils, defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as soils that are significantly wet in the upper part to develop anaerobic conditions during the growing season. Hydric soils are typically found in wetland areas.

The following is a brief overview of the main soils found in Chester. It is intended to provide residents a better understanding of the resources in Town, and also to provide background to the development of maps that could guide future land use in Chester.

As a way to begin understanding the types of soils, the following list presents soils according to their parent material, or the basic geologic or organic matter from which the soil developed. Parent material is not necessarily the most crucial factor in a soil's development, but it can serve to categorize soil in familiar terms.

1. **Glacial Till** – Unsorted, non-stratified material such as clay, silt, sand, and boulders deposited by glacial ice:

Canton	Hollis	Paxton	Scituate
Charlton	Montauk	Pennichuck	Woodbridge
Chatfield	Newfields	Ridgebury	

2. **Lacustrine Deposits** – Material deposited in lake water and exposed when the water level is lowered or the elevation of the land is raised:

Boxford	Raynham	Squamscott
Eldridge	Scio	
Maybid	Scitico	

3. **Organic** – Plant and animal residue in the soil in various stages of decomposition:

Chocorua	Ossipee
Greenwood	Pawcatuck
Ipswich	Westbrook

4. **Glacial Outwash** – Gravel, sand, and silt, commonly stratified, deposited by glacial meltwater:

Deerfield	Windsor
Hinckley	Scarboro
Pipestone	

5. **Glaciofluvial Drift** – Material moved by glaciers and subsequently sorted and deposited by streams flowing from the melting ice. The deposits are stratified:

Hoosic

Walpole

6. **Alluvial Sediments** – Material such as sand, silt, or clay, deposited on land by streams:

Several kinds of parent material formed the soils in Chester. Most of the soils were formed from glacial till, but many formed from glacial outwash, marine or lacustrine sediments, or organic material. Soils that formed in similar kinds of parent material can be differentiated from one another by other factors such as relief. For example, Paxton, Woodbridge, and Ridgebury soils all formed from glacial till, but they differ from one another because Paxton soils are in the higher topographic positions, Woodbridge soils are in the intermediate positions, and Ridgebury soils are in the lower positions.

The October 1994 **“Soil Survey of Rockingham County, New Hampshire”** provides the soil data for Chester. It provides sound, scientific information that can be used to help evaluate the capability of the land to support various types of development, including septic systems.

Wetlands

The State of New Hampshire defines wetlands as follows:

“Wetlands are those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”

As stated in the beginning of this section, NRCS has defined two classes of wetland soils, also called Hydric soils. Hydric A soils are those soils that are classified as very poorly drained. Hydric B soils are those soils that are classified as poorly drained.

Hydric A soils are rated by NRCS as having severe limitations for virtually all forms of development, including septic systems. The ability of Hydric B soils to accommodate residential development is limited. Some of the Hydric B soils have seasonally high water tables that could be potentially damaging in terms of producing wet basements or creating frost in roadways.

Wetlands are critically important to the environment. They absorb storm waters and spring snowmelt runoff. These waters are slowly released, regulating stream flows during the year. This absorption is especially significant in areas where development has rapidly sprouted, as runoff water tends to increase in these areas. Not only that, but wetlands also act as a filter, trapping pollutants such as road salt, pesticides, and other chemicals, in their thick, mucky soils. This trapping keeps groundwater supplies from becoming contaminated. These thick soils also lower water acidity levels, and prevent eroded silt and sediments from getting into larger water bodies, such as streams, ponds, and lakes. In addition, they also serve as unique wildlife habitats.

The Hydric A soils associated with Chester’s wetlands include the Greenwood and Ossipee soils, ponded; Scarboro muck; Scarboro muck, very stony; Greenwood mucky peat; Chocorua mucky peat; and Ossipee mucky peat. The Hydric B soils associated with Chester’s wetlands include Udorthents; the Lim-

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North Pond Wetlands

Pootatuck complex; Pipestone sand; Walpole very fine sandy loam; and Ridgebury very fine sandy loam, stony (A and B slopes).

The largest concentration of wetlands is in the northeastern portion of the community, east of Towle Road and Raymond Road (NH Route 102). Other significant concentrations are in the North Pond area, and along Old Sandown Road to Stowe Road, then south through and beyond the intersection of Wells Village Road and Sandown Road (NH Route 121 A).

Wetland areas should be avoided as development sites. These areas offer no advantages and impose significant economic costs. Disturbing them often disrupts the valuable roles that they serve. Wetlands should be preserved and protected, and reserved for activities that do not require construction of any structures and do not alter the area's natural condition.

New Hampshire law (RSA 482-A) requires that a permit be obtained from the Wetlands Bureau of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) before any construction, excavation, removal, filling, or dredging in wetlands. Under the permit review process, the applicant must show that the proposed project will in no way impair the value of the wetland.

By themselves, wetlands have various ecological functions and values. As a result, New Hampshire has established prime wetland legislation. Prime wetland designation is an advanced level of protection for a wetland. Once a wetland is considered prime, all projects either within or adjacent to the wetland, called "major projects," must be field inspected by a DES worker. Also, a public hearing conducted by DES must also take place. Chester currently does not have any designated prime wetlands.

Chester's Zoning Ordinance includes a wetlands conservation district, which is designed to protect the Town's wetland resources. The district is an overlay district that protects wetlands from damage through incompatible uses. For example, if there was a wetland located on a parcel of land zoned as residential, the wetland conservation district would overlay the wetland portion of the residentially zoned parcel, thus making the proposed use meet the higher standards of the wetland conservation district.

Wetlands are recommended for continued protection; however the term "protection" should not be interpreted to mean prohibiting all uses. Wetland areas should be evaluated independently from one another for purposes of determining their respective values, and then judgments can be made as to the degree of protection or mitigation needed.

Farmland Soils

Farming represents a rapidly disappearing land use activity throughout New Hampshire, particularly in southern New Hampshire, where growth pressures have been the worst. Low farm earnings and high demand for farmland for other uses have resulted in many farms being abandoned or converted for other purposes.

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Generally, agricultural land presents few, if any, limitations to development. As a matter of fact, these are often the most sought-after lands, from a developer's perspective, because the site improvement costs are customarily significantly lower in these areas than in others.

Two categories of valuable farmland soils are recognized by the NRCS. "Prime farmland," which could be cropland, pasture land, forest land, or other land exclusive of urban built-up land and water areas, has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically, when treated and managed according to modern farming methods.



Farmland off Raymond Road

"Additional farmland of statewide importance" consists of soils that are considered to be important to agriculture in New Hampshire. Although these soils exhibit properties of erosion and aridness, they can produce fair-to-good crop yields when properly managed.

The NRCS has mapped five soil series in Chester that are considered to be of "prime" or "statewide importance." These soils are **Canton gravelly fine sandy loam** (B and C slopes), **Montauk fine sandy loam** (B and C slopes), **Paxton fine sandy loam** (B and C slopes), **Scituate-Newfields complex** (A and B slopes), and **Unadilla very fine sandy loam** (B slopes).

Based on these soil classifications, it is estimated that there are approximately 1,168 acres of "prime farmland" and approximately 947 acres of "additional farmland of statewide importance" in Chester. Significant concentrations of "prime" farmland are found in the Town center, Bell Hill, and Hall's Village areas. Despite the fact that some development has taken place along the road frontage, particularly along Chester Street, some large tracts of prime agricultural land remain untouched by development. The topographic and soil characteristics that make these areas most favorable for agricultural activities also make them favored sites for developmental purposes.

A distinction must be recognized, however, between land designated as prime farmland, and land that is actually farmland. Not all land that is considered suitable for agriculture is in agricultural use. Some has been subdivided and developed.

Determining the potential for continued or future use of prime and important farmland for agricultural purposes involves economic, political, legal, and moral judgments. Although the conversion of all of Chester's prime farmland for non-agricultural purposes might be considered to be a major loss, to totally exclude development from such areas might also be a major mistake. Somehow a balance must be achieved between (1) the rights of landowners, (2) the need for economically developable land to accommodate future growth, and (3) the preference among many residents to maintain the "rural" character of the community.

Assuming that agricultural land protection can be best accomplished at the local level, the challenging task will be to identify and to implement the most effective means of assuring protection. Techniques which might be employed include the purchase and/or donation of development rights to ensure that

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prime agricultural land will be available for agricultural use in the future, or that it simply provides community open space, as with the Spring Hill Farm property which includes 267 acres which were donated to the Town of Chester by Miss Muriel Church, or the Wason Pond area.



Senator Bell Farm

The community might want to consider developing some general guidelines for an agricultural land preservation policy. Farmer representation should be an essential element in the development of such policy since the farmers would be the most directly affected by Town actions. Farmers owning and working prime farmland might be encouraged to participate in either the state's "Acquisition of Agricultural Land Development Rights" program, or a similar locally developed and locally supported program.

The state program, which is described in New Hampshire RSA Chapter 432:18 through 432:31-a, allows farmers who agree to keep their land in agricultural use to receive a one-time payment to exceed the difference between the fair market value of the land and the fair market value of the land when restricted for agricultural purposes.

Also available are Federal measures of protection. The United States Department of Agriculture has a Farmland Protection Program (FPP) designed to help States, Tribes, local governments, and non-profit organizations purchase conservation easements in order to limit non-agricultural uses. Similarly, the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) has been established in order to help purchase development rights in order to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses.

The community might want to act under RSA 432:25, which authorizes any governmental body, charitable corporation, or trust which has the authority to acquire interests in land to also purchase agricultural land development rights.

The Town of Chester has already experienced some degree of success in terms of helping to protect farmland. Miss Muriel Church, a long-time resident of the community, donated to the Town approximately 267 acres of land that is currently being used as a working farm. One condition of the offering is that the Town maintains the farm in its present state, indefinitely. It is expected that residents will have access to trails and other recreational pursuits associated with this property as well.

Agricultural Resources

Agricultural sustainability allows agricultural producers to meet the needs of their operations, their environments, and their communities. While specific techniques and approaches vary by farmer, common goals include:

- Providing a more profitable farm income
- Promoting environmental stewardship

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- Promoting stable, prosperous farm families and communities

Agriculture in Chester encompasses a wide range of food and plant production, including but not limited to: livestock; fruits and vegetables; annual and perennial greenhouse plants; nursery stock; maple syrup; honey; hay and sod; lumber.

Agricultural land is integral to Chester's economic vitality, ecological health, aesthetics, and culture. Chester, as with all towns in the SNHPC region, was originally settled as an agricultural establishment. Much of the current forested areas once existed as farmland. Today, most of the Chester's employment is non-farm related; and only five to seven percent of the land in the state is in agricultural use (GRANIT 2004).

Farm stands and farmers' markets, traditional sales operations that allow agricultural producers to sell directly to community members, are increasingly important to the success of Chester's agricultural endeavors. Chester has an annual farmers market and several individual farm enough publicity for current operations. Agricultural producers and agencies are looking to expand advertising and signage for farmers' markets and farm stands and to increase overall visibility of local food sales.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is an emerging concept bringing community members into direct participation in the local agricultural industry. Participants buy a subscription or share in the harvest prior to the start of the growing season. In exchange, they regularly pick up a portion of the produce throughout the season, subject to the success of the harvest. CSAs can range in level of participation, with some operations requiring labor or pick-your-own for some produce, as well as availability of foods. There are some CSA programs in Chester and the surrounding region.

Construction Materials

In order to be able to accommodate future needs for such materials, selected locations of some of the most probable sources of sand and gravel have been identified in the USDA's 1994 Soil Survey of Rockingham County.

The terms "sand" and "gravel," as used herein, are defined by NRCS to mean natural aggregates considered to be suitable for commercial use with a minimum of processing. The properties used by the Service to evaluate the soil as a probable source of sand or gravel are gradation of grain sizes, the thickness of the deposit, and the content of rock fragments. A soil rated as a "probable" source has a layer of clean sand or gravel or a layer of sand or gravel that is up to 12 percent silty fines. The material must be at least 3 feet thick and less than 50 percent, by weight, large stones. Each soil is evaluated to a depth of 5 to 6 feet. Soils not meeting these standards are rated as improbable sources. Coarse fragments of soft bedrock, such as shale and siltstone, are not considered to be sand or gravel.

The NRCS has identified approximately 770 acres¹⁶ as probable sources of sand or gravel in the Town of Chester. Only about 25 acres¹⁷ of this is considered to be strictly sand. There have been no sites identified by the NRCS as being strictly gravel. The soils that the NRCS has classified as probable sources of sand and

¹⁶ SNHPC calculated 1,907 acres probable sources of sand or gravel using the County Soil Survey GIS data.

¹⁷ SNHPC calculated 597 acres to be strictly sand using the County Soil Survey GIS data.

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gravel appear to be concentrated in two distinct areas. An estimated 75 to 80 percent of the most probable sources of sand and gravel appear to be located in the northeastern portion of the community, generally to the east of NH Route 102. A significantly smaller and considerably less accessible concentration has been identified north of NH Route 121, adjacent to the Town of Auburn.

The Planning Board previously identified in the Town's 2006 Master Plan the locations of eleven current or former sand/gravel operations within the community. Three of these are considered to be active. The locations of most of the active operations appear to be coincident with the locations of the "probable" sources of this valuable resource. There is no estimate of the extent of construction material available at any of these sites; however, the acreage of the eleven parcels on which the sites are located was previously noted as approximately 600 acres. This is not to suggest that the whole of any of these parcels qualifies as a "probable" source of sand or gravel.

Steep Slopes

The slope of the land, which is measured from topographic maps, is expressed as a percentage representing the relationship between the change in elevation and the horizontal distance over which that change occurs in a given area. For example, if the land area rises a distance of 10 feet in elevation over a horizontal distance of 100 feet, the slope is determined by dividing the change in elevation by the horizontal distance within which that change occurs. The relationship, then, is shown as a fraction (10/100), which is equal to a slope of 10 percent.

Steep slope areas, which are generally considered to be 15 percent or greater, can be a cause for concern. The influence that topographic conditions have on land use is not limited to the gradient alone. The relationship of the degree of slope to the soil, water and vegetation conditions at a particular location is also an important consideration. Because of the significance of such relationships, areas that are nearly level, as well as those that are very steep, can exhibit physical characteristics that can impede development, make it risky or costly.

Generally, where a steep slope condition prevails, the soil layer is thinner, the volume and velocity of surface water runoff is higher, and the absorption capacity of the soil is very limited. The steep slope areas are identified on Map 8, Development Constraints.

Access and site improvement costs associated with properly developing in steep slope areas are often very high. The Planning Board's perception is that few developers would be willing or able to incur the extra costs of designing and building proper waste water disposal systems, or of installing and continually maintaining adequate erosion and sedimentation control facilities.

The experience of NRCS personnel working in southern New Hampshire counties has been that developers seldom maintain erosion and sedimentation control facilities during the construction process. Thus, it is safe to assume that the developers are not going to continually maintain such facilities, as is necessary in some cases, once they have completed their projects. If steep slope development is not restricted, because it is not likely to be done correctly, the problems that will result will become evident down slope, probably on someone else's property or in someone else's water supply.

Effective land use and environmental controls, which would allow steep slope areas to be developed properly, can be imposed at the local level; however, the municipality may have to hire engineering review

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services, at the developer's expense, to verify the adequacy of the design plans and facility installation. The big question then remains: Is the municipality committed to a vigilant inspection program to monitor maintenance of environmental facilities not only during the construction phase, but indefinitely, if needed?

The Chester Zoning Ordinance reorganizes the potential sanitary risks associated with development on steep slopes. The Ordinance imposes special provisions for leach fields when used on slopes in the 15 to 20 percent range, and prohibits leach fields on land having slopes of 20 percent or more.

Surface Waters

Most of Chester lies within the Exeter and Lamprey River basins; however, the extreme western border of the community drains toward the Merrimack River Basin. Chester's major surface water resources, one of which is the Exeter River, are valuable to Town residents, as well as to downstream communities, as sources of good quality water for recreational and scenic enjoyment, for all diverse wildlife and vegetation types, and as a good source of drinking water.

In April of 1996, the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee held its organizational meeting. The governing bodies of the Towns of Chester, Raymond, Sandown, Fremont, Exeter, Brentwood, and Danville nominated the members of this Committee. The Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services made the appointments. Chester has three members on this Committee. The Exeter River Local Advisory Committee has developed a local river corridor management plan, a copy of which is on file with the Chester Planning Board.

Water Resources

Aquifers, much like wetlands, serve as a storage place for water. An aquifer can consist of surficial geological deposits such as sand and gravel, or it can be fractured bedrock, but it must be able to store and allow the movement of water.

In 1990 and 1995, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Water Resources Division of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services jointly produced two significant ground water resource studies.

These are:

“Geohydrology and Water Quality of Stratified-Drift Aquifers in the Exeter, Lamprey, and Oyster River Basins, Southeastern New Hampshire” (1990); and

Geohydrology and Water Quality of Stratified-Drift Aquifers in the Middle Merrimack River Basin, South-Central New Hampshire” (1995).

The results of these efforts supersede the 1977 work of the two agencies that produced the ground water availability map and related information that was used in the 1986 Master Plan.



Wason Pond

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The 1990 and 1995 aquifer studies identified the more productive aquifers in Chester as the stratified-drift aquifers which consist mainly of layers of sand and gravel, parts of which are saturated and can yield water to wells and springs (See Map 6: Water Features). The distribution and hydraulic characteristics of the stratified-drift aquifers are related to the original environment in which the sediments were deposited. Various types of stratified-drift deposits are found in the study area.

Deglaciation of the Chester portion of the study area is believed to have occurred by a systematic process that resulted in valley-fill deposits, including eskers (long ridges of sand and gravel deposited by water flowing in tunnels within or beneath glacial ice), kames (low mounds, knobs, hummocks, or short irregular ridges composed of stratified sand and gravel deposited by glacial meltwater), kame terraces (terrace-like ridges of stratified sand and gravel), and outwash and outwash deltas (stratified deposits chiefly of sand and gravel removed or “washed out” from a glacier by meltwater streams and deposited beyond the margin of the glacier).

The most significant of the several stratified-drift aquifers identified by these studies lies largely to the east of Raymond Road (NH Route 102) in the northeastern part of the community. Other less significant aquifers are along the Chester-Sandown line, between Sandown Road (NH Route 121 A) and Fremont Road; in the North Pond Road area; along the Chester-Auburn line, north of Chester Street (NH Route 121); and scattered in various areas south of Chester Street and Haverhill Road. Detailed information concerning the characteristics and capabilities of these aquifers is presented in the previously referenced studies (See Map 6, Water Features).

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the U.S. Geological Survey has recently completed a multi-year study on the state’s sand and gravel aquifers. Additionally, the New Hampshire Bedrock Aquifer Resource Assessment has also recently been completed. Surficial geologic maps can be used to further refine the stratified drift aquifer maps. Maps of potential yields and reports providing statistical relationships, water-quality data, and an assessment of geophysical techniques were published in 2000 and 2001. The goal of the New Hampshire Bedrock Aquifer Resource Assessment was to identify potential high-yielding sources of ground water and analyze the quality from these sources.

All of the great ponds identified on the NH DES official list of public water bodies are subject to the former Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA) (now referred to as the Shoreline Water Quality Protection Act – WQPA) requirements of the state. This act requires a 50-foot setback for primary buildings. In addition, a natural woodland buffer of 150 feet from the reference line is required as is a 75 to 125-foot setback for septic tanks, depending on soil type.

The reference line for natural lakes and ponds is the surface elevation listed on the Consolidated List of Waterbodies subject to the WQPA. In the WQPA there are also restrictions regarding impervious surfaces, unaltered land, vegetation clearance, and fertilizer use within the protected shoreland. A town may maintain or enact more stringent requirements than the WQPA prescribes if it wishes.

Flood Hazard Areas

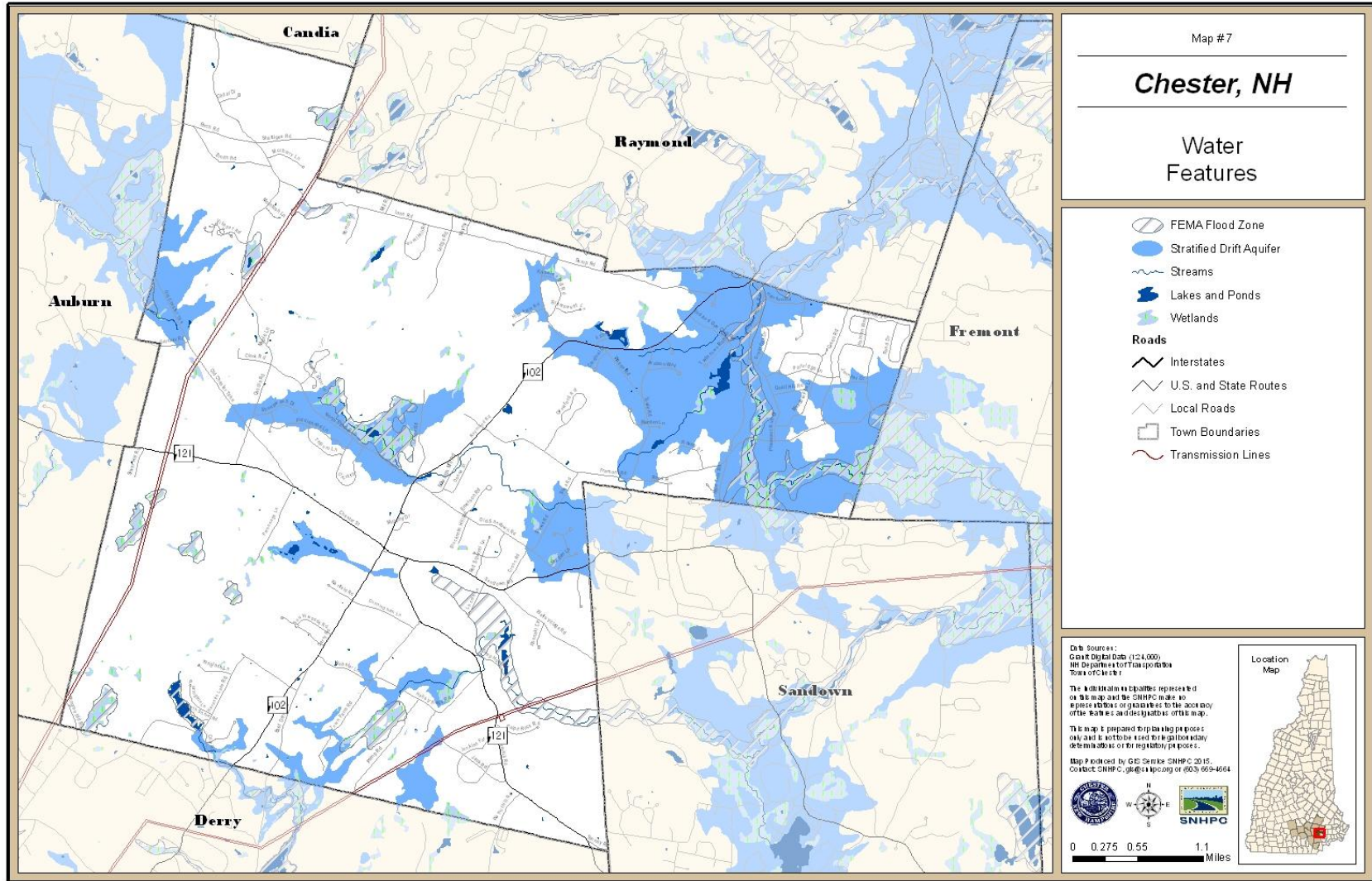
With the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, Congress created a program to identify special flood hazard areas throughout the United States. In conjunction with this program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mapped the locations of Chester's "Special Flood Hazard Areas." The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has remapped all of Rockingham County's Flood Insurance Rate Maps as part of their Map Modernization Program. The new maps have been produced in a digital format and the Town of Chester adopted the new Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) in 2005. Although some of the flood hazard area locations may be coincident with the occurrence of alluvial soils or wetlands, the flood hazard areas are generally more extensive than areas that are defined by soil properties alone. The limits of the Special Flood Hazard Areas were determined on the basis of stream flow and rain data records, information obtained through consultation with the communities, and by hydrologic and hydraulic analyses. An important consideration of floodplains is the amount of flood storage present. According to 2009 and 2012 data, Chester has 131 acres of flood storage land conserved. This is less than 1% of the total acres in the Town.



**Flooding Along Edwards Mill Road
May 2006**

Similar in distribution to the wetland soils, the more significant concentrations of the special flood hazard areas appear to be associated with the Exeter River, in the northeastern portion of the community; in proximity to North Pond and its tributaries; and in proximity to the unnamed stream flowing easterly into Sandown, between Haverhill Road (NH Route 121) and Wells Village Road. (Map 6)

Map #7: Water Features



Habitat Resources

Chester has 3,935 acres of conserved forest acres. Many of these parcels, however, are not continuous. Surrounding towns vary regarding the amount of conserved acres and the continuity of the parcels. Keeping continuous passages for plant and animal species is critical to avoid fragmentation and isolation. Equally important is the protection of critical or threatened wildlife habitats, with emphasis being placed on those sites identified by the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI). The majority of land fragmentation occurs as a result of land division by roadways that are class V or higher. Due to the natural wonder and aesthetic beauty offered by these sites, they are often targeted and destroyed for human benefit. Due to this problem, site specifics are not released to the public.

The NHI has identified several areas in the Town of Chester as containing important or rare aspects of natural habitat. For this reason, it is easy to see why Chester's natural environments must be protected in order to benefit the important and rare species inhabiting these areas. Chester has also been noted to contain the following rare species and natural communities: Atlantic White Cedar—Yellow Birch—Pepperbush Swamp, Atlantic White Cedar, Blanding's Turtle, and Swamp Darter.

Most significant of all, Chester was noted as containing the Black Gum Tree. These trees not only can grow upwards of 75 to 80 feet, but can live up to 400 years, and are likely some of the oldest trees in New Hampshire. These unique, rare trees should also enjoy the benefit of protective measures.

The Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) has been documenting and reporting the extent of forest cover in New Hampshire for many years. In *New Hampshire's Changing Landscape 2005*, SPNHF has predicted the percent loss of forest land by municipality throughout the state.¹⁸

Chester is projected to lose up to ten percent of its forest land by 2025. According to SPNHF, the largest extent of known forest cover in the state occurred in 1983, however, by 1997, the U.S. Forest Service estimated forest cover in New Hampshire had dropped to 84 percent, a loss of 163,400 acres in 14 years.⁴ The most up to date estimates according to SPNHF based on 2001 satellite data indicate New Hampshire's forest cover has since dropped to 81.1 percent.¹⁹

SPNHF predicts that "New Hampshire's forest cover will decline to 79.1 percent by 2025 and that a total of 85 towns will lose more than 500 acres of forestland by 2025, while 20 towns – all in the southeast and the Lakes Region – will lose more than 1,000 acres."²⁰ The greatest loss of forestland will occur in southeastern New Hampshire, with about 60,000 acres expected to be lost in Rockingham, Hillsborough, and Strafford Counties.²¹ According to SPNHF this could accelerate the demise of critical forest-based economies in these areas, and undermine recreational opportunities.

Forested lands serve a multitude of purposes such as providing food and shelter for wildlife, shading shoreline areas which allows for critical temperature control for aquatic species, nature trails for hiking, prevention of soil and wind erosion, and transformation of harmful gases into oxygen needed to sustain life. Forest trees also are able to store large amounts of water and play a vital role as regulators of the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

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hydrological process, especially those processes involving groundwater, as well as local evaporation of rainfall/snowfall patterns. Beech/Oak, Birch/Aspen, Other Deciduous, White/Red Pine, Spruce/Fir, Hemlock, and Mixed Forest areas can all be found in the SNHPC Region.

Large blocks of forest not broken up by roads, other land uses or water are also critical. SPNHF has determined that “a 500-acre forest block is big enough to support significant wildlife habitat, protect water quality and allow some economic forest management.”²² In evaluating forest blocks in New Hampshire, SPNHF has found that 500-acre blocks are still widespread, but are already sparse in the Seacoast and lower Merrimack Valley, and becoming so in the Lakes Region.”²³ This is particularly true for Southern New Hampshire as shown by the percent of land with forest blocks greater than 500 acres in size by municipality. Large blocks of forested lands represent the fabric that holds together New Hampshire’s natural environment and provide the basis for New Hampshire’s forest, recreation and tourism industries.

According to SPNHF, “sustainable forest management and ecological significance requires blocks of at least 5,000 acres, and these values increase with block size.” Given current development patterns, there are no blocks of this size remaining within the Southern New Hampshire region.

In Chester, a variety of wildlife habitats exist including wetlands, forests, rivers, lakes, floodplains, and many others. Chester has 314 wildlife habitat acres conserved. Preservation of wildlife habitat is critical to the region’s overall ecosystem. The loss of even one single species could have a catastrophic ecological impact. Therefore, loss of habitat is a considerable concern. Wildlife habitat loss can occur when land becomes developed or when an invasive plant or a non-native species invades and overwhelms the native flora and fauna.

One of the largest destroyers of wildlife habitat is urban development. Growth and development within southern New Hampshire is occurring rapidly. Many species and habitats are at risk by this development, particularly wetlands, ponds and streams and surrounding uplands.

Removal or modification of natural vegetation reduces the quality of habitat areas. Habitats can also be fragmented and dispersed when land is subdivided into smaller lots. Other development threats to wildlife include altered hydrology, stormwater runoff, oil spills, roads and highways, and recreation. In 2006 the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department’s (NH F&G) released the state’s first ever Wildlife Action Plan (WAP). This plan identifies New Hampshire’s wildlife and habitats at risk, and sets forth a variety of conservation strategies for habitat protection. In this plan, the types of wildlife and habitat that are most threatened within Southern New Hampshire can be identified. Additionally, NH F&G released updated digital habitat maps in 2010.

In July of 2015, NH F&G released an updated draft WAP. Southern New Hampshire harbors the greatest diversity of the state’s wildlife, including many rare or endangered species. At the current rate of protection and development, many more species will likely become rare, and several species may

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

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become extirpated.²⁴ In New Hampshire in total, there are 27 species listed endangered, 14 species listed as threatened, and 105 species listed as being of greatest concern. These species includes all types of animals, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and insects.

Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest

The most extensive Appalachian oak-pine forest blocks are located in Rockingham County. Appalachian oak-pine forests are one of New Hampshire's most at-risk habitats. Only 17 % of New Hampshire's 688,106 acres of Appalachian oak-pine forest is protected (NH F&G 2015 WAP). The most challenging issues facing these forests are human development and transportation infrastructure and altered natural disturbance. Some of the important wildlife found in these forests include: the American woodcock, bald eagle, black bear, black racer, Blanding's turtle, bobcat, Canada warbler, common nighthawk, Eastern box turtle, wild turkey, whip-poor-will, white-tailed deer, wood thrush and migrating birds.

Hemlock-Hardwood Pine Forests

Hemlock-hardwood pine forests are also one of New Hampshire's most at-risk habitats. Just under 20% of New Hampshire's over 2 million acres of Hemlock-hardwood pine forests are considered protected (NH F&G 2015 WAP). The most extensive hemlock-hardwood pine forests are located in Belknap and Merrimack counties. The most challenging issues facing this habitat are human development, introduced species, and altered natural disturbance.

Grasslands

Grasslands are located in all New Hampshire counties. The largest proportions occur in Grafton (20 percent), Merrimack (13 percent) and Coos (12 percent) counties. Important wildlife includes American woodcock, Blanding's turtle, Eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, horned lark, purple martin, white-tailed deer, wood turtle, black racer and migrating birds. Grasslands are the least protected habitat in New Hampshire, with only 12% of New Hampshire's 255,980 acres being protected (NH F&G 2015 WAP).

Floodplain Forests

Floodplain forests are widely distributed throughout the state and within the region in association with larger rivers and streams. Important wildlife include the American woodcock, warbler, hawk, Eastern red bat, salamander, northern leopard frog, red shouldered hawk, spotted turtle, wood thrush, Canada warbler and migrating birds.

²⁴ New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan 2015, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, July 2015

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Marsh and Shrub Wetlands

Marsh and shrub wetlands are also broadly distributed throughout the state and region. Some of the state's most extensive wetland complexes are located in Southern New Hampshire, including Belknap and Rockingham Counties. Some of the most challenging issues are fragmentation, transportation infrastructure, development of surrounding uplands and invasive species.

Peatlands

Peatlands occur in clusters throughout the state and region. Some of the important wildlife includes mink frog, northern bog lemming, palm warbler, ribbon snake, spotted turtle, and the spruce goose.

Open Space

For the purpose of this plan, "Open Space" refers to undeveloped land that has local, regional and statewide value as protected or conservation land, historic or cultural sites, or scenic vistas. Such areas may contain, but are not limited to, forests, farmlands, old fields, floodplains, wetlands, shorelands, parks and recreation areas.

Some of the most important benefits that communities can derive from open space and recreation include:

- **Growth Management** – Protecting open space and conservation lands can help guide growth and development to areas that are the most appropriate and cost-effective for municipalities to serve.
- **Land Use Compatibility** – Incompatible land uses can be buffered and attractive and functional green space and trail opportunities can be provided within densely developed areas.
- **Historic Preservation** – Threatened historic and cultural sites can be protected through historic and conservation easements, and possibly accessed as recreational pursuits.
- **Agricultural Preservation** – The viability of working farms and forests can be protected to sustain the community's character, economy and local employment.
- **Scenic Views** – By preserving key parcels and large open blocks of undeveloped lands, important scenic vistas and views can be maintained and enjoyed by local residents and tourists alike.
- **Water Supply** – An adequate water supply is essential for economic activity. Preservation of open space can protect and contribute to a readily accessible and sufficient supply of water.
- **Water Quality** – Sustained water quality is vitally important in supporting all ecological functions. Open and undeveloped land helps maintain water quality.

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- **Aquatic Buffers** – Vegetated buffers physically protect a stream or river by maintaining trees, shrubs, bushes, tall grasses, and groundcovers that provide shade and remove debris and polluting nutrients.
- **Aquifer Protection/Recharge** – By providing open space, municipalities can protect their water supply aquifers, preventing costly clean up in the case of a polluted water source. Trees, meadows, scrub areas, and agricultural lands also allow water to recharge back into underground supplies, maintaining base flow in rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, and wetlands.
- **Flood Control** – Many communities throughout the region are purchasing open space to increase flood storage and reduce repetitive losses due to flooding.
- **Air Quality** – Preservation of open space is integral in maintaining air quality. Trees in forested areas absorb pollutants such as ozone and sulfur dioxide, leaving the air noticeably cleaner.
- **Biodiversity** – Biodiversity, which encompasses the existence and interacting processes of plants, animals, fungi, algae, bacteria, and other microorganisms, is integral to human survival. The complex natural world provides elements that support human life, such as enriched soil to grow food, oxygen to breathe, and purified water to drink. Maintaining these processes is important for economic as well as ecological reasons.
- **Habitat Protection** – Preserving open space lands enhances wildlife protection. Wildlife is an attractive draw for residents and visitors alike, who enjoy bird-watching, hunting and fishing, and hiking amidst the fall foliage.
- **Greenway Planning** – Greenways or riparian corridors offer an important means for connecting open space and recreation, particularly along the region’s rivers and streams. These corridors provide many social as well as ecological benefits, including the potential for recreational trail development, wildlife viewing, and a wide expanse of connected open space.
- **Public Access** – Open space offers the potential for public access to a variety of active or passive recreational opportunities. Public access, however, needs to be located at appropriate places, which will not compromise the character of the area.
- **Aesthetics** – Aesthetic landscapes lend appeal to a community and provide economic benefits as well.
- **Social Interaction** – The advancement of open space and recreational opportunities can also expand the social network of the community. Residents can meet neighbors while hiking a trail, hold town festivals in newly-established parks, and work together to construct improvements to public open spaces.
- **Tourism** – A beautiful environment makes New Hampshire and the region an attractive place to live, work and visit. This in turn helps the region’s economy and helps to attract businesses and visitors to locations where quality of life is an important factor.

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In identifying and ranking important lands for open space, conservation or recreation purposes, the following criteria may be useful:

- **Potential linkages to existing open space**, recreation facilities, and to similar areas in adjacent communities.
- **Environmental sensitivity and importance of the parcel** such as the presence of aquifers, rivers, wetlands, wildlife and scenic qualities. This includes wildlife corridors, unique habitat, and endangered, threatened and rare species.
- **Areas with insufficient public open space** or existing open space areas threatened by continued development. Consideration should be given to land which can encourage town-wide distribution of open space and recreation.
- **Town-wide versus special group benefit.** The acquisition of land should benefit the town as a whole and not a select group of residents. The importance of addressing each need will depend on the specific goals of the town.
- **Outdoor recreation potential.** This is related to providing additional athletic fields as well as providing areas for greenways and trails that provide opportunities for hiking, walking, running, skiing, and biking.
- **Cost and availability of the parcel.** This should account for the amount of residents that are willing to pay to purchase open space (in the form of increased taxes) and the availability of funding sources that would be available if a particular property were targeted for acquisition.
- **The financial impact** that removing the parcel from development will have on the municipality. For example, a residential parcel may cost the town in services while a commercial property may be a positive contribution to the tax base.
- **Aesthetic benefits to the general public** and the preservation of community character. This can include scenic values, cultural and historic preservation and/or the overall agricultural and rural character of the community.

There are a variety of techniques many communities throughout the region have used for open space and land protection. Many of these techniques are described in more detail in Dorothy Tripp Taylor's handbook *"Open Space for New Hampshire, a Tool Book of Techniques for the New Millennium."* The five major techniques include:

- Public Outreach and Landowner Contact
- Voluntary Protection
- Land Acquisition

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- Regulatory Measures
- Open Space and Recreation Planning

For local government, regulatory measures are perhaps the most cost-efficient means of land preservation. If implemented according to the open space priorities of the community, these measures can be extremely effective in curbing sprawl and protecting open space. Some of the most important regulatory measures include natural resource overlay and agricultural zoning techniques, open space development and conservation subdivisions, transfer of development rights, and growth management ordinances. Zoning is also an important tool that can be used to help protect open space within a community. NH RSA 674:21, Innovative Land Use Controls, permits environmental characteristics zoning, intensity and use incentives, cluster development, and several other innovative land uses, many of which can be incorporated in zoning approaches which promote the conservation of open space and recreation.

Environmental Characteristics Zoning

Generally, environmental characteristics zoning involves overlay districts that are superimposed on existing zoning districts. Proposed development must comply with the requirements of both the underlying district and the overlay district. A natural resource overlay district adds additional restrictions and requirements to those of the underlying district. Overlay districts can be applied to a variety of natural features including, but not limited to, floodplains, wetlands, aquifers, steep slopes, rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes. There are many examples of overlay districts in many of the communities within the region. However, as a foundation to a proposed natural resource overlay district, the master plan needs to identify and outline the importance and/or threat to the resources contained within the district.

Agriculturally Friendly Zoning

To help protect the rural qualities of the region, the ability to sustain agriculture is a vital part of the visual landscape. There are a variety of zoning tools that have been developed to help communities preserve rural character through agricultural preservation. A resource kit called *Preserving Rural Character Through Agriculture* (Kit 77) was made available in 1999 from the UNH Cooperative Extension.

Open Space Development

An Open Space Development is a residential or mixed-use development in which a large portion of the site is set aside as permanently protected open space, with the buildings clustered on the remaining portion of the land.

In most conventional developments, developers do not provide open space or recreation. The lots are typically drawn first, thereby eliminating many of the significant natural features. An open space development however can incorporate an incentive based approach to entice developers to set aside open space in perpetuity. An Open Space or Conservation Development Ordinance promotes the

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protection of open space by allowing buildings to be clustered on the area of the parcel that is best suited for development. At the same time, the remainder of the parcel is left undisturbed.

There also exists the “Village Plan Alternative,” as described in RSA 674:21. This stipulates that a developer must locate all development on 20 percent of the developable property to allow for maximum open space. The open space area would be protected under a recorded conservation easement. The Village Plan alternative provides for an expedited application review process and it is subject to all ordinances and regulations with the exception of density, lot size, and frontage and setbacks.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Although this technique has never been used in Chester, it is an extension to the purchase of development rights concept. It relies on the separation of development rights from other land ownership rights and adds to that the shifting of those rights from one location (the “donor” zone) or zoning district to another (the “receiver” zone). A TDR program can protect critical resource areas by shifting the development potential from areas where it is least desirable to areas where it is most desirable. A model TDR like ordinance which is referred to as Density Transfer Credit (DTC) is available within the Innovative *Land Use Planning Techniques: A Handbook for Sustainable Development* October 2008 located on the NH DES website.

Growth Management Ordinance

A Growth Management Ordinance is often employed by municipalities experiencing population growth at a rapid pace where public facilities and services cannot keep up. They function by placing short or long-term caps on new residences or population numbers. Under certain circumstances, a town may adopt regulations to control the rate of development. In New Hampshire, a town must have both a master plan and a capital improvement plan before it can adopt any ordinances controlling the timing of development. In certain rapid growth situations, slowing the rate of development can give a community time to update its master plan, develop infrastructure, and consider ways to conserve open space.

Local Resource Protection Priorities

As reported in the town’s 2006 Master Plan, 1998, Chester, using funding from DES under the Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP), along with help from the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, produced an inventory of their natural and cultural resources. In 2004, REPP had been renamed to Local Resource Protection Priorities (LRPP), and the Town of Chester updated their inventory.

Chester identified 29 areas in Town that are considered to be desirable areas for open space protection. However, the Chester Conservation Committee as well as the Strategic Land Protection Committee each decided that, while these areas should be considered for protection, no one area shall stand above the others in terms of prioritization. Therefore, should one of the areas identified become available, it is at that point the site will be evaluated using criteria established through the Open Space Plan to determine whether the site is of a “high,” “medium,” or “low” priority.

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For a more complete and in depth overview, the Town developed an Open Space Plan. Chester's Open Space Plan is available online and in the Town Planning Office.

Goals and Strategies

Chester has three main natural resource protection goals:

- **Preserve Open Space** – Achieve coordinated, planned development of the region by utilizing established as well as new and innovative land use principles and planning concepts as authorized by RSA 674:21.
- **Protect Natural Resources** – Protect and improve the quality of the natural environment while developing a complementary man-made environment.
- **Support Regional Conservation Efforts** – Facilitate greater collaboration and discussion between local planning boards and conservation commissions regarding land use regulations and natural resource conservation.

Many communities within the region have already taken a vital step in ensuring that some of its open lands remain permanently in their natural states. These municipalities may have adopted bond measures for open space and recreation or have allocated their land use change tax monies to their conservation commission for the purpose of acquiring conservation lands. However, these funds are not always adequate due to rising land values. In order to maximize the economic, social, and environmental benefits of open space, many municipalities must find additional funding sources and land protection strategies.

Additionally, many municipalities within the region recognize the importance of regulatory conservation strategies, including changes to zoning ordinances to encourage the use of conservation subdivisions. These regulations generally have very little implementation cost and, in fact, save money on future municipal infrastructure costs. By encouraging conservation subdivisions, the open space land is built into the new development rather than purchased afterwards, providing significant future cost savings for local government.

To help fund land acquisition, municipalities are also working cooperatively with a number of land trusts and private non-profit conservation organizations to pool financial resources and expand conservation efforts. The Bear Paw Regional Greenway Land Trust for example, works specifically with a number of surrounding communities to link Bear Brook State Park, Pawtuckaway State Park, Northwood Meadows State Park, and other conservation areas. As a community-based organization composed of townspeople, Bear Paw can serve as an important mobilizing and organizing resource. The Rockingham Land Trust, serving all the communities of Rockingham County, can also be a good local resource, although it currently maintains very few conservation lands within the SNHPC Region.

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The Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy are both national land trust organizations active in New Hampshire, which can provide resources and assistance to preservation projects. Additional state resource organizations include the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Audubon Society. Many of these programs and organizations are described below.

Current Use Program – The Current Use Assessment Program allows qualifying land to be taxed according to the value of its current use rather than its potential use.

Land and Water Conservation Fund – The Planning, Development and Outreach Office through the Division of Parks and Recreation administer funds received by the State through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This fund provides 50 percent matching grants to municipalities for the acquisition of open space and recreation lands.

Department of Resources and Economic Development (NH DRED) – The Commissioner of Resources and Economic Development may also upon request establish a program to assist those cities and towns that have adopted the provisions of Chapter 36-A, Conservation Commissions, in acquiring land and in planning of use and structures as described in RSA 36-A:2. In addition, the State Trails Bureau within NH DRED manages the recreational trails grant program in New Hampshire. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a component of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). It funds motorized, non-motorized, and diversified trail projects through federal gas tax money paid on fuel for off-highway recreational vehicles.

Land Management Assistance – The Rockingham County Conservation Districts provides direct assistance to landowners in sustaining the productivity of their farmland. As part of their effort to protect the land, the RCCD will also accept and monitor conservation easements. Experienced staff from the UNH Cooperative Extension program will also assist landowners and communities with land protection efforts.

NH Department of Agriculture – This federal agency is actively involved in a number of ways to protect the State's farmland resources, including providing technical assistance on land use issues, conservation programs and efforts to improve the economic return of farm enterprises. Since many farms in New Hampshire often contain a variety of open space, these programs also help to maintain the integrity of open space areas.

NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program – Created in 2000, the Land and Community Heritage Program (LCHIP) is an independent state authority that makes matching grants to NH communities and non-profits to conserve and preserve New Hampshire's most important natural, cultural and historic resources.

Natural Heritage Inventory - New Hampshire's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) is responsible for identifying and assessing sites that contain habitat of rare, endangered and threatened natural species throughout the state and region. While specific location of these sites is not released to the public, this information is helpful in evaluating lands for open space and conservation purposes. .

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Forest Stewardship Plan - A forest stewardship plan addresses fish and wildlife habitat, water resources, recreation, forest protection, soils, timber, wetlands, aesthetic values, cultural features and endangered species at the local level. Besides giving management direction, a forest stewardship plan is necessary for certain current use assessment categories and certified Tree Farm status.

Forest Legacy Program – The Forest Legacy Program, operated by the Land Trust Alliance, is a voluntary program of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, providing grants to states for the purchase of conservation easements and fee acquisition of environmentally sensitive or threatened forestlands. The Forest Legacy Program provides federal funding for up to 75 percent of the cost of conservation easements or fee acquisition of existing natural resources. Participation in Forest Legacy is limited to private forest landowners.

Other Federal Programs – There are several other federal grant programs which may be utilized for the purchase of open space land: 1) The NH Department of Fish & Game receives Pitman-Robertson Act Funds which cover 75 percent of the fair market value of lands acquired by the Department for wildlife protection, and the Dingel-Johnson Fund (1950) which cover 75 percent of acquisition costs to provide access to and provide for fishery habitat; 2) the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, enacted in 1989, to conserve North American wetland ecosystems and waterfowl and other migratory birds and fish that depend upon such habitat; and 3) the Environmental Protection Agency, through the NH DES, offers grants under the Source Water Protection State Revolving Fund for land acquisition projects, and additional funds are available (as a matching grant program) for land acquisition in designated water protection areas.

Non-Profit Organizations

Private non-profit conservation organizations and land trusts are important entities, which provide assistance in open space protection. Most of these organizations help to conserve land through land donations and conservation easements.

Region Trails Coordinating Council – SNHPC is currently participating, along with NHDOT, RPC and local trail stakeholder groups in the Regional Trails Coordinating Council (RTCC). The Council, formed in 2010, is designed to build upon the past work of the Manchester Regional Trails Alliance that also included Goffstown, Bedford, Londonderry, Auburn, Derry and Hooksett. The primary goal of the RTCC is to assist member organizations in the development and implementation of a comprehensive trail plan.

The Audubon Society of New Hampshire encourages the preservation of wildlife habitat and natural areas through education and land acquisition.

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) promotes the conservation and wise use of natural resources, and strives to protect productive forest and agricultural lands. Currently, SPNHF manages 574 conservation easements totaling 86,105 acres throughout the state. SPNHF also holds 40,976 acres of land in fee simple ownership and manages another 13,218 acres through deed restrictions.

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The Nature Conservancy is an international, non-profit conservation organization. Its mission is to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life by protecting lands and waters they need to survive. The Conservancy owns more than 1500 preserves, the largest private system of nature sanctuaries in the world. The New Hampshire Chapter has protected more than 121,000 acres of land around the state.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit organization is also actively involved in open space protection and conservation easements. As part of its Farmland Protection Initiative in Southern New Hampshire, TPL helped the Town of Derry conserve the 68-acre Cornelius Farm and 38 adjacent acres of active farmland in 2004. Critical funding was committed by the town, the state's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, and private supporters. Federal grants to the state from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program closed the funding gap.

The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) is a member of the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts. Since 1946, the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts (NHACD) has provided statewide coordination, representation, and leadership for Conservation Districts to conserve, protect, and promote responsible use of New Hampshire's natural resources. The Rockingham County Conservation District is actively involved with federal, state, and local agencies, nonprofits, conservation groups and landowners to protect open space through conservation and agricultural preservation easements

The Rockingham Land Trust, established in 1980 and located in Exeter, is another non-profit land trust organization, which accepts gifts of land by donation or bequest, and monitors conservation easements on several properties within Rockingham County. Since 1980, the Rockingham Land Trust has worked with landowners and municipalities to voluntarily conserve more than 3,300 acres of land within Rockingham County.

Implication for Future Development

The Town of Chester has numerous natural development constraints (Map 8, Development Constraints), which has the potential to inhibit future development. Natural Development constraints include, but are not limited to, steep slopes, hydric soils and wetlands, and flood hazard areas. Despite their developmental limitations, many development constraint areas are ideal candidates for open space protection.

As reported in the Town's 2006 Master Plan, Chester has a total of 8,500 constrained acres. Naturally constrained acres make up 5,440 of these acres, and developed land accounts for 4,000 acres. This reveals an overlap of 940 acres of land that is both constrained yet developed. Chester has approximately 1,465 acres of wetlands, 1,842 acres of steep slopes, and 3,020 acres of hydric soils acting as natural development constraints.

Chester has a total of 8,290 unconstrained acres. Only 1,745 of these acres are divided amongst 22 parcels totaling 50 acres or larger. Four of those 22 parcels are 100 acres or larger in size. There are 206

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parcels of land in Chester ranging from 10 to 49 acres in size, make up a total of approximately 4,290 acres. See Map 8, Development Constraints.

The remaining unconstrained lands in Chester are mostly found in the western half of Town. Southwestern Chester in particular has the largest amount of unconstrained areas in Town. Southeastern Chester contains a few parcels located close to the border with Derry. Northwestern Chester also contains a few parcels of unconstrained land, close to the borders with Auburn and Candia.

Although these lands are considered unconstrained, this does not necessarily mean that development is suitable in all locations. For example, there are several parcels of land located north of Ledge Road in north Chester that have a development potential rating of low to very low. Contrarily, in southwestern Chester, there are a few parcels of land located northwest of the intersection of Harantis Lake Road and East Derry Road that have a development potential rating of Medium to High (development potential ratings are defined in detail below).

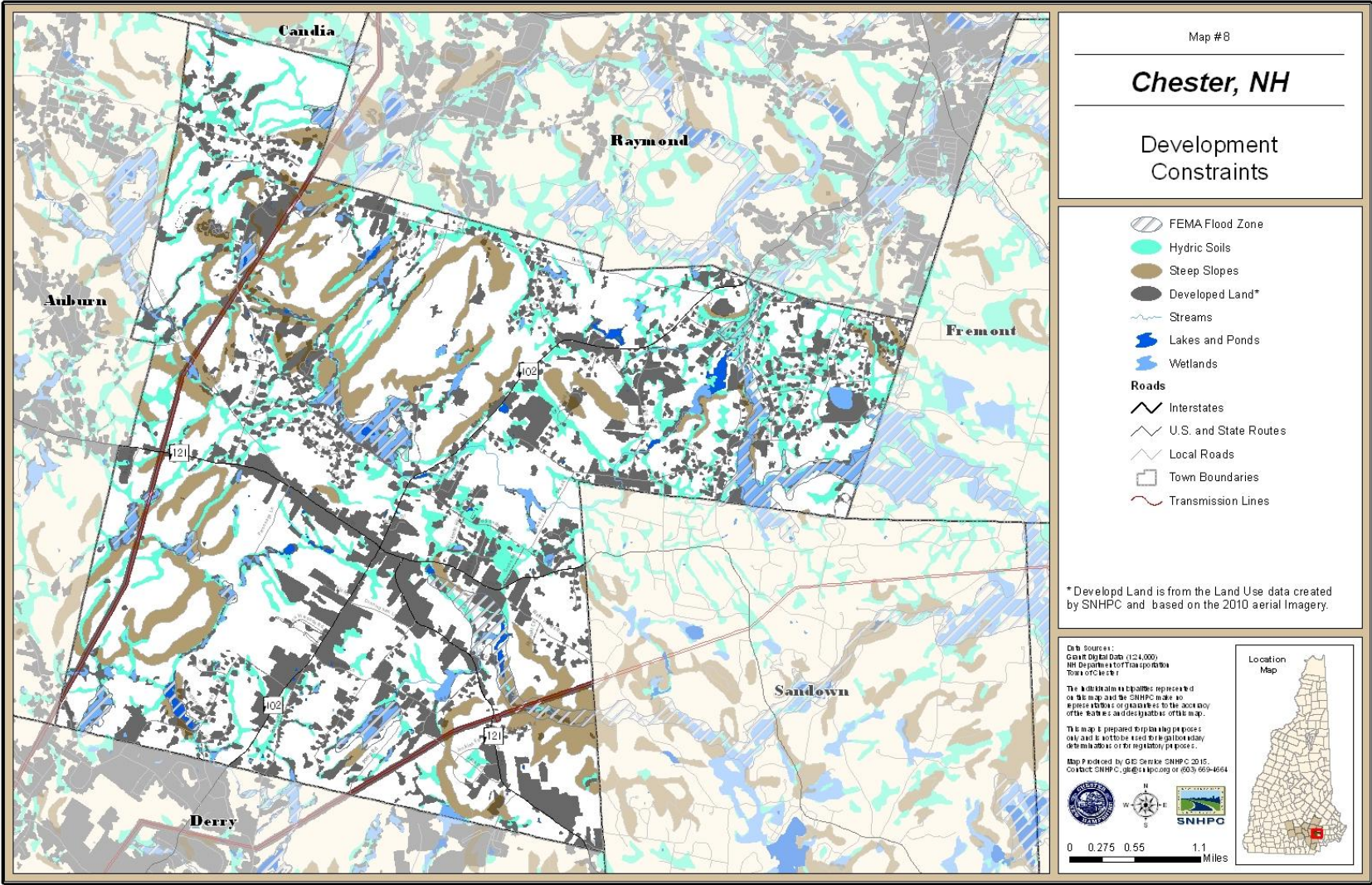
In New Hampshire and other New England states, local governments are more reliant on the property tax than they are in other regions of the country. Local officials are often sensitive to changes in the tax base because property taxes are particularly burdensome to New Hampshire households with the least ability to pay, and many people across the state have already reached their limit. Because open space and recreation projects can involve complex land transactions, it is important that local officials and residents better understand the system of taxation in New Hampshire as well as the various costs and tax implications of preservation actions.

In 2005, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) released an important study entitled, *Managing Growth: The Impact of Conservation and Development on Property Taxes in New Hampshire*. Looking at the unique relationship between property taxes and municipal revenue in New Hampshire, the study addressed the concern that land conservation increases property taxes. In short, the results of the 2005 TPL study indicated that while there are short-term tax consequences associated with the acquisition of permanent open space and land conservation; in the long term, residents pay fewer taxes overall with more open space and protected lands than residents in other communities.

According to the 2005 TPL study, the tax consequences of permanent land conservation projects vary according to the agency or organization acquiring the land. Federal, state and local governments do not pay property taxes. However, federal agencies do make payments in lieu of taxes of different amounts for fee-simple acquisitions. The State of New Hampshire also does not pay property taxes on the land it owns. However, the state does make a payment to the municipality that is based upon the amount of taxes that the land would pay if it were enrolled in the current use program, at an average value. Also, municipalities do not pay taxes to themselves. Therefore, land acquired by a local government comes off the property tax rolls and there is no payment in lieu of taxes.

Most private non-profit conservation organizations enroll the land that they own in fee in the current use program and pay taxes on it. However, a local government can waive the tax requirement. Most private non-profit conservation organizations are more likely to conserve land through conservation easements than through fee-simple acquisition. If the land was already assessed at current use there would be no change to the municipality after the acquisition of the easement. If the land was previously

Map #8 Development Contraints



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assessed at full value, there would be a decrease in the taxable value due to the easement. As a result, acquiring conservation lands by direct purchase comes at a quantifiable cost to the purchasing body, which in the case of a municipality impacts the taxpayers.

Calculating the net revenue loss due to the purchase can give taxpayers a starting point for evaluating whether the open space purchase is a worthwhile long-term investment for their community. However, the calculation of the tax effect of a particular open space or land conservation project is not well understood, mainly because removing the property from the tax rolls is not typically an expense that shows up in the budget, but rather it is a decrease in the revenue raising ability of the municipality.

Generally, the short-term tax effect of land conservation is the removal of land value from the tax rolls. In the short term, land protection, by fully or partially removing land from taxation, reduces the tax base and results in a tax increase for a finite period. As a result, the taxes no longer paid on the open space or protected land must therefore be shifted to other taxpayers.

Since many municipalities often need to compensate for lost tax revenue, there can be a small, *short-term* tax increase for residents. To address this tax issue, municipalities purchasing conservation lands should clearly communicate to residents both the benefits of the open space to be purchased as well as the costs and benefits of the purchase itself.

In addition, there are measures in place by land conservation organizations to account for this tax base loss and avoid making residents pay the difference. Most of these measures are described in the next section on Land Protection Techniques. However, for the purpose of this section, it is important to point out that most open space and recreation land likely acquired through municipal action or through a private conservation group is obtained by donation or conservation easement. Open space and recreation land may also be obtained through conservation subdivisions. In each situation, the cost to the taxpayer is different, as described below:

- **Private conservation groups** – Private conservation groups generally put the land into current use and continue to pay taxes on it. These groups tend to seek open space through conservation easements, in which the owner continues to pay taxes on the land.
- **Conservation subdivision** – Open space land in conservation subdivisions is often owned by the developer, where it gets passed on to a Homeowner's Association. The taxation values are low because the land has lost its development rights, and taxes are paid through homeowner association dues by the residents of the subdivision.
- **Municipal lands** – When a municipality purchases land, they do not pay property taxes to themselves, so the property is removed from the tax roll. However, due to the Statewide Education Property Tax and Adequacy Aid (SWEPT), the total equalized value of the town would decrease with the lands removed from the tax roll. Therefore, "property rich" towns would have to send fewer property taxes to the state for education and "property poor" towns would receive greater adequacy aid from the state. While the SWEPT funds do not account for the total value lost, the resulting tax increase is slight (in the 2005 TPL study, the highest scenario of tax increase was a mere \$0.88 on a \$100,000 property).

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Economic Development Chapter

Economic Development

Introduction

The economic health of a region has a direct impact on a municipality’s population and employment growth. In most cases, cities and towns will not grow unless the region in which they are a part is growing. All municipalities have varying potential for economic development. While Chester is primarily bedroom community and has businesses present, the town is not likely to become a major employment center given its size and geographic location. In addition, Chester lacks the basic infrastructure necessary to support infrastructure and facilities that could employ a large number of people. Nevertheless, there are opportunities in Chester for economic development. The purpose of this chapter is to identify these opportunities and to offer suggestions and recommendations that the town can consider in its planning goals and actions.

Overall, it is essential that communities work to achieve a realistic balance of non-residential and residential opportunities to avoid economic decline and stagnation during economic downturns. Chester’s growth as a low-density residential community means that it is more likely to attract businesses that will provide local services for the town’s primarily commuter population, creating a balance between community character and a diversified economic base.

Community Survey

During January 2015, a Community Survey was mailed out to all Town of Chester residents and property owners. The survey was also made available to the public on the Town website, as well as at the Town Hall. Out of all the surveys distributed, the Town received 201 responses. The following responses were received on the survey as related to Economic Development in the Town of Chester (see Appendix in this Plan for complete survey results).

Question #1: What, in your opinion, are the most important general issues that must be addressed in Chester over the next five years? Please check up to five items from the list.

General Issues	Total Responses	Percent
Preserve Open Space and Forests	169	13.6
Preserve Agricultural Lands	146	11.8
Protect Drinking Water	140	11.3
Protect Historic Sites	123	9.9
Improve Road Quality	113	9.1
Create a Vibrant Town Center	85	6.9
Attract Retail or Office Development	84	6.8
Provide Public Transportation	8	6.5
Decrease Rate of Residential Growth	76	6.1

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Created Elderly Housing	62	5.0
Increase Recreational Opportunities	55	4.4
Increase Zoned Commercial/Industrial Areas	43	3.5
Attract New Industrial Parks	34	2.7
Provide Sidewalks	33	2.7
Create Affordable Housing	18	1.5
Upgrade Town Facilities	19	1.5
Increase Housing Variety	17	1.4
Increase School Capacity	14	1.1
Total	1239	100

Question #16: Do you feel that adequate amounts of land have been zoned for the following uses?

Land Use	Too Much	Just Right	Not Enough	Wrong Location	Don't Know
Commercial – Business and Office	11 (4.2%)	75 (28.7%)	102 (39.1%)	4 (1.5%)	69 (2.6%)
Commercial – Retail	8 (3.1%)	80 (30.1%)	111 (42.3%)	0 (0.0%)	62 (23.8%)
Industrial – Manufacturing	17 (6.7%)	78 (30.6%)	55 (21.6%)	9 (3.5%)	96 (37.6%)
Industrial – Sand and Gravel Excavation	22 (8.6%)	102 (39.8%)	16 (6.3%)	2 (0.8%)	114 (44.5%)
Industrial Parks	27 (10.5%)	75 (29.3%)	51 (19.8%)	3 (1.2%)	101 (39.3%)

Question #39: Please indicate the level of importance that the town should give to the following economic development actions.

Actions	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Attract Offices	56 (20.8%)	57 (21.2%)	73 (27.1%)	80 (29.7%)	3 (1.1%)
Attract Small-Scale Retail	72 (26.5%)	78 (28.7%)	57 (21.0%)	62 (22.8%)	3 (1.1%)
Attract Large-Scale Retail	14 (5.3%)	13 (4.9%)	38 (14.4%)	196 (74.2%)	3 (1.1%)
Attract Light Industrial	37 (13.6%)	30 (11.0%)	81 (29.8%)	119 (43.8%)	5 (1.8%)
Develop Industrial Parks	24 (9.1%)	12 (4.5%)	46 (17.4%)	172 (64.9%)	11 (41.5%)

Question #40: Is there a type of business, industry or service that you would like to see in Chester?

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Response	Number	Percent
Yes	194	73.2%
No	71	26.8%

When residents were asked what changes should be made with regards to zoning, the most common response revolved around interest in seeing certain areas becoming open for retail development. When asked to indicate the level of importance for certain economic development actions, “attracting new small-scale retail development” was the only action receiving a significant number of ‘important’ or ‘very important’ votes, at a total 55% of all respondents. About 42% of respondents ranked “attracting new office development” as either ‘very important’ or ‘important.’

However, when given a list of 18 general issues and asked to rank those that are most important, increasing areas for commercial zoning ranked 11th, far behind the top two issues of preserving open space and preserving agricultural lands.

Economic Profile

The following Economic Profile of the Town of Chester is provided as a baseline of Chester’s current economic conditions.

Household and Sources of Income

Household income is an important metric for presenting the buying power of community residents. The median household income in the Town of Chester was \$105,104, a 58 percent increase from 2000. (US Census 2000, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) Chester ranks second highest in the SNHPC Region behind the Town of Bedford. This figure is about \$30,000 higher than the median household income for Rockingham County, and almost \$40,000 higher than the median household income for the entire state. Additionally, Chester had the highest percent increase in median household income between 2000 and 2013.

Table 20
Median Household Income

Municipality	2000	2013	Percent Change
Auburn	\$70,774	\$98,125	40%
Bedford	\$84,392	\$122,517	45%
Candia	\$61,389	\$92,813	51%
Chester	\$68,571	\$105,104	54%
Deerfield	\$61,367	\$89,451	46%

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Derry	\$54,634	\$64,855	19%
Fremont	\$62,171	\$82,629	32%
Goffstown	\$55,833	\$67,556	22%
Hooksett	\$61,491	\$81,792	33%
Londonderry	\$70,501	\$90,263	29%
Manchester	\$40,774	\$54,496	35%
New Boston	\$66,020	\$98,684	48%
New Hampshire	\$49,467	\$64,916	31%
Raymond	\$48,829	\$61,463	27%
Rockingham County	\$58,150	\$77,348	33%
Sandown	\$67,581	\$84,093	25%
Weare	\$59,924	\$86,674	46%

Source: US Census 2000, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

About ninety-two percent of households in Chester have income from wages or salary, which is significantly more than the average for households in Rockingham County and the State, which are 83.6% and 81.0%, respectively. Twenty-seven percent of Chester's households have income from Social Security and over twenty percent receive income from retirement benefits. Chester has fewer households receiving income from Supplemental Security and Public Assistance than households in the County and State. (US Census 2000, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 21
Source of Income, 2013

Source of Income	Town of Chester	Rockingham County	State of New Hampshire
	Percent of Households Receiving Income from that Source		
Wage/Salary/Other Earnings	92.4%	83.6%	81.0%
Social Security	27.0%	27.3%	29.6%
Retirement	20.3%	17.9%	17.6%

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Supplemental Security	2.2%	3.3%	4.1%
Public Assistance	0.4%	1.9%	2.9%
Food Stamp / SNAP Benefits	6.8%	4.5%	7.9%

ACS 2009-2013 Data

Education

Economists have established a direct relationship between one’s income and their level of education. Generally speaking, the higher the level of education that a person has attained, the higher the income earned by that particular individual will be. The educational attainment levels of Chester’s population (aged 25 years and over in 2013) is slightly higher than that of Rockingham County and the State of New Hampshire in most regards. Chester has a higher percentage of persons who at least finished some college compared to the aforementioned regions. Furthermore, Chester has a smaller percentage of people with only a high school education or less. About 32% of Chester residents have no education beyond the high school level, while the numbers are for Rockingham County and New Hampshire are 33.6% and 37.4%, respectively. However, the percentage of Chester residents who have attained a graduate or professional degree is slightly lower than that of Rockingham County and similar to New Hampshire. About 11.6% of Chester residents have a professional or graduate degree while 13.4% of Rockingham County residents and 12.4% of New Hampshire residents have such degrees. (2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

Table 22
Level of Education

Attainment Level	Chester	Rockingham County	New Hampshire
Less than 9th grade	1.7%	1.6%	2.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4.0%	3.9%	5.4%
High school graduate (or equivalency)	26.4%	28.1%	29.3%
Some college, no degree	23.6%	19.3%	19.2%
Associate degree	11.3%	9.8%	9.6%
Bachelor's degree	21.4%	23.8%	21.3%
Graduate or professional degree	11.6%	13.4%	12.4%
Source: 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

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Unemployment

As of 2014, 4.3% of Chester’s residents were unemployed. This is down from a 2010 high of 5.7%, but still 80% higher than the 2000 level of 2.5%. (NH Employment 2014 data) According to 2013 statistics, there were seven municipalities in the SNHPC Region with lower unemployment rates than Chester and four municipalities with higher unemployment rates than Chester. However, it is important to note that the municipality with the lowest unemployment rate, Auburn, was only 1% point lower. (Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NH Employment Security 2014 data)

Table 23 (a)
Chester Unemployment Levels from 2000 to 2014

Year	Percent
2000	2.5%
2001	3.3%
2002	5.5%
2003	5.3%
2004	4.1%
2005	3.6%
2006	3.4%
2007	3.3%
2008	3.3%
2009	5.3%
2010	5.7%
2011	5.3%
2012	5.0%
2013	5.0%
2014	4.3%

Source: NH Employment

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Table 23 (b)
Unemployment Rate in the Area 2014

Municipality	Unemployment Rate
Derry	5.1%
Raymond	4.8%
Londonderry	4.5%
Manchester	4.6%
Chester	4.3%
Deerfield	4.0%
Hooksett	3.8%
Auburn	3.7%
Bedford	3.7%
Candia	3.6%
Goffstown	3.6%
Weare	3.4%
New Boston	3.3%

Source: Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NH Employment Security

Employment Sectors

The management, business, science and arts occupations constitute the largest category of employment for Chester residents, about 44.5%. The category of occupations with the next greatest amount of residents is sales and office, which includes 24.9% of Chester residents. Only 6.4% of Chester residents are employed in the production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Compared to Rockingham County and the State of New Hampshire, Chester has a greater ratio of its residents employed in management, business, science, arts, natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations, and a smaller ratio of residents employed in service, sales and office occupations. (ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates)

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Table 24
Employment by Occupation, 2013

Occupation	Town of Chester	Rockingham County	State of New Hampshire
	Percentage of Population Over 16 Years of Age		
Sales and office	24.9%	26.0%	24.8%
Management, business, science, and arts	44.5%	41.6%	39.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving	6.4%	9.4%	11.2%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	10.7%	9.0%	8.9%
Service	12.3%	14.0%	15.8%

Source: ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Table 25
Employment by Industry 2013

Industry	Town of Chester	Rockingham County	State of New Hampshire
	Percentage of Population Over 16 Years of Age		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.3%	0.6%	0.8%
Construction	11.4%	7.1%	6.9%
Manufacturing	11.4%	12.5%	13.1%
Wholesale trade	2.0%	3.8%	2.9%
Retail trade	15.4%	13.3%	12.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.2%	4.4%	4.0%
Information	3.8%	2.6%	2.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6.6%	6.7%	6.4%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	10.3%	11.2%	10.1%
Educational services, health care and societal assistance	20.9%	22.0%	24.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food	5.7%	7.8%	8.3%

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services			
Other services	4.8%	4.5%	4.3%
Public administration	4.3%	3.8%	3.9%

Source: ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Educational services, health care and societal assistance provided 21% of employed Chester residents with jobs, and retail trade provided about 15% with jobs. Other industries with a significant grip on Chester’s population include construction, manufacturing, professional, scientific and technical services. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (0.3%) and wholesale trade (2.0%) were the industries with the least number of Chester residents. (ACS 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates)

Places of Employment

The latest data shows that only 14.3% of Chester residents work in Chester, which is down slightly from 2000. Conversely, the number of residents who work outside of New Hampshire is up slightly to 22.8% (see Table 26). This statistic shows that the residents of Chester depend heavily on the economic vitality of other communities for employment.

Table 26
Where Chester Residents Work 2012

Place of Work	Percent
Chester	14.3%
New Hampshire	62.9%
Outside New Hampshire	22.8%

Source: ACS 2008-2012 5-Year Estimates

Commuting

The Town of Chester is within close proximity to employment centers in Derry and Manchester, as well as a number of towns in Massachusetts. The relatively easy access to NH Route 101 and Interstate 93 makes Chester a well-placed residential or “bedroom” community. Over half of Chester’s residents spend 30 minutes or more traveling to work. Furthermore, more than twice as many Chester residents spend 60 minutes or more traveling to work (11.3%) than those who spend less than 10 minutes (5.2%) (ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates) A large percentage of commuters is an indication of the quality of life found in Chester. It shows that many people are willing to have a relatively lengthy commute in order to live in the community.

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Table 27
Travel Time to Work – Chester

Commuting Minutes	Number	Percent
Less than 10 minutes	120	5.2%
10-29 minutes	836	36.2%
30-44 minutes	729	31.6%
45-59 minutes	362	15.7%
60 to 89 minutes	147	6.4%
Greater than 89 minutes	113	4.9%

Source: ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Additionally, the preferred mode of commuting, if not the most widely mode of transportation available, is by automobile. Some residents did report carpooling to and from work in 2013 (ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates). However, with the nearest public transportation hub in Manchester and Londonderry, the automobile is currently the only practical transportation option for most people.

Table 28
Mode of Communication

Commuting Mode	Percent
Drove alone	81.4%
Carpooled	8.0%
Public Transportation	0.8%
Walked	3.0%
Other	1.2%
Worked at Home	5.6%

Source: ACS 2009-2013 Data

Local Business

Even though Chester is foremost a residential community, there are a number of firms who have chosen to base their business operations in Chester. A list of 135 businesses has been compiled by the Southern

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New Hampshire Planning Commission utilizing the New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau's online Network employers' database by industry group title (see Table 29).

Table 29
Businesses by Industry Category, 2015

Industry Group	Number of Businesses	Percent
Accommodation and Food Services	2	1.48%
Administrative and Waste Services	5	3.70%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	3	2.22%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3	2.22%
Construction	39	28.89%
Educational Services	2	1.48%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3	2.22%
Information	1	0.74%
Manufacturing	3	2.22%
Other Services	15	11.11%
Professional and Technical Services	11	8.15%
Public Administration	15	11.11%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6	4.44%
Retail Trade	9	6.67%
Transportation and Public Utilities	5	3.70%
Unclassified	9	6.67%
Wholesale Trade	4	2.96%
Total	135	100%

Source: Network Employers by Industry Group Title, February 2015

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Construction is the largest single industry in Chester, accounting for nearly 29% of all businesses. This group includes firms associated with building and renovation. The construction industry in Chester includes general contractors, carpenters, excavators, heating and cooling specialists, electricians and other specialized contract services. Professional and technical, educational, health care, social assistance, and other services also represent a sizable chunk of Chester’s industries, at about one-third of the overall. This sector is quite diverse, having accounting firms, architects, barbers and beauticians, child care providers, libraries, schools, religious organizations, repair shops, and survey, among many others.

In 1995, the third largest industry group in Chester was agriculture, comprising 18 percent of the Town’s businesses. However, as of 2015 this has drastically been decreased to only about 2% of the business sector, a drop from 21 businesses to only 3. As of 2015, public administration offices comprised 11 % of the town’s employers.

Land Value and Tax Base

Chester’s tax base is a direct representation of its economic base. The more diverse the economic base, the lower the per capita tax burden typically is. The town’s primary source of revenue is from residential property taxes (91.4 percent). Commercial and industrial uses constitute only 1.6 percent of the town’s valuation. This represents a residential to commercial-industrial valuation ratio of roughly 57:1. (Town of Chester Assessing Department MS-1, 2014 Data). Theoretically, the ideal ratio would be in the order of 10:1; however, to achieve this ratio, a significant increase in commercial and industrial business growth and valuation would need to occur.

**Table 30
Chester’s Local Assessed Valuations (2014)**

Land Use	Value	Percent of Total
Residential Buildings	\$291,580,800	59.1%
Residential Land	\$161,968,200	32.3%
Utilities	\$25,763,200	5.2%
Commercial/Industrial	\$7,976,300	1.6%
Commercial Land	\$3,914,600	0.8%
Manufactured Housing	\$984,800	0.2%
Current Use Land	\$718,900	0.1%
Farm Land	\$188,300	0.0%

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Preservation Easements	\$200	0.0%
Total	\$492,913,600	100.0%

Source: Town of Chester Assessing Department MS-1

Table 31
Comparison of Local Assessed Valuations Among Surrounding Towns (2014)

Municipality	Current Land Use	Residential Land	Commercial and Industrial Land	Residential Buildings	MFG Housing	Commercial and Industrial Buildings	Utilities
Auburn	\$248,670	\$310,523,400	\$16,852,100	\$275,904,648	\$1,194,100	\$30,991,500	\$8,020,800
Candia	\$440,772	\$136,222,200	\$8,630,300	\$221,062,175	\$1,027,100	\$15,976,900	\$5,338,125
Chester	\$718,900	\$161,968,200	\$3,914,600	\$291,580,800	\$984,800	\$7,976,300	\$25,763,200
Deerfield	\$1,735,882	\$193,000,600	\$5,426,300	\$269,598,841	\$5,339,100	\$12,627,000	\$76,624,500
Francestown	\$1,162,942	\$58,432,904	\$2,049,200	\$118,058,300	\$519,700	\$6,957,300	\$3,653,500
New Boston	\$1,251,339	\$194,616,454	\$7,545,300	\$323,356,949	\$2,411,800	\$14,472,600	\$10,867,000

Source: State of NH Department of Revenue Administration 2014 Tables

Economic Development Strategies

In the past, economic development has not been a planning priority in Chester and there have been few initiatives to bolster economic growth in the Town. The one significant effort to recruit a large business to the town was voted on by Chester’s residents during the 1993 town meeting. The Town had been working to establish a regional bio-composting facility in the Dump Road area. However, a zoning change was needed and the Planning Board proposed a “Solid Waste Management District” to the Zoning Ordinance. It was this zoning change that the voters rejected, deterred mostly by the environmental and heavy truck traffic concerns as well as other unanswerable issues. Without a zoning district that would permit such a facility to locate in Chester the firm went elsewhere.

During the 2005 town meeting, residents of Chester voted to create a new commercial zoning district. The new “C2” district allowed all uses permitted in the existing “C1” district plus light industrial establishments. In 2013, the Town prohibited residential housing in the “C2” zone. With the creation of this new district the Town now has 247 acres of commercially zoned land. Of this area 76 acres have already been developed; 41 acres by residential uses, 14 acres are roads, 14 acres with public uses, and only 7 acres with commercial establishments.

While Chester has a need for more locally based jobs, it is important that its economic development efforts be well-focused and balanced with other town needs. The Town has experienced some

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economic growth in the commercial sector since 1995 as is seen by the 41 percent increase in local businesses; the 116 firms in Chester in 1995 grew to 164 in 2006. As of 2015, there are over 50 home-based businesses in Chester. (Town Planning Office) However, economic development should not be viewed as a panacea in reducing local property taxes. While the direct cost of services for commercial and industrial developments is tax positive to municipalities the indirect costs and secondary impacts to the town need to be examined as well. For example, commercial and industrial property values do not appreciate as rapidly as residential properties, therefore any given commercial or industrial development may constitute only half of its current share of municipal tax revenues in the future.

Chester's future employment base will depend upon a number of variables. Projected increases in population will more than likely create demands for employment growth in the service and retail trade sectors. However, the ability for the commercial and industrial sector in Chester to expand is restricted by a number of existing local and regional development constraints including:

- Lack of public water or sewer systems needed for large scale establishments;
- Limited land zoned for commercial or industrial development;
- Natural development constraints such as steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains;
- Housing affordable to the required labor force for establishments drawing in new residents;
- Limited existing labor supply for new developments; and
- Limited child care providers and capacity for care.

A thorough examination of Chester's position in the regional economy suggests that it does not make sense for the Town to appropriate funds to create infrastructure that would facilitate or attract industrial development. One suggestion would be to establish a Chester Economic Development Commission which would address the specific needs of the town's local economy and interest in small scale retail growth as identified in the 2015 Community Survey and discussed in this chapter.

An Economic Development Commission could examine the potential for a retail and bank service area for the town center, running along Route 102 from just south of Route 121 to North Pond Road and along Route 121 from the Town Offices to just east of Route 102. This could take the form of a new mixed use or village center zoning district. Architectural and design performance guidelines could be established to ensure new development is compatible with the area's historic and unique rural character, one of the primary concerns of Chester's residents. Some of the guidelines typically enacted cover landscaping, building façade, signage, parking and buffering. Also, there could be a commercial zoning district near the Town dump.

Improvements in communications and technology over the last two decades have provided workers with the opportunity to establish offices and work spaces in their homes. Chester's location near Manchester and Derry and its proximity to the Boston Metropolitan area are suitable to entrepreneurs, consultants, and others, who wish to provide home-based products and services to these markets. These small-scale businesses are adequately served with on-site water and septic systems.

Alternative steps in economic development can be taken that highlight the existing economic base in Chester. Having a directory of local businesses, for example, could significantly increase firms' visibility

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within the community and in surrounding areas. A survey of businesses could be taken in order to get a clearer sense of what it's like to conduct their operations in Chester.

The Town might continue to explore its recreation potential because increased recreation options in Chester could spur economic growth. Continued conservation efforts might prove attractive to persons who enjoy hiking, camping and biking (e.g. the Town of Frankestown has been holding a Tour De Frankestown bike ride to raise funding for local community projects the past several years). Tourism, recreation, arts and cultural activities could possibly fit in with the goal of preserving prime farmlands and attracting visitors to see the working farms in the community and to visit local town parks and historic properties.

Building upon Chester's local assets and strengths is a key strategy for the town's future. This includes improvements to the village center itself through creating and enhancing a town green or commons, and promoting and protecting the town center's historical characteristics. Some other key assets and strengths of Chester include access to NH Route 101 East, a highly educated workforce, and comprehensive zoning.

Also, the Town of Chester can consider and update the Target Industry Analysis prepared for Chester (see attached analysis), which was prepared by MS&B, Moran, Stahl & Boyer, in 2010 as part of the SNHPC's Regional Economic Development Plan. In addition, MS&B has prepared a useful resource for small communities such as Chester identifying economic strategies. These strategies include:

- Identifying the community's economic potential
- Compiling an analysis of the community's economic fundamentals
- Expanding local products and company life cycles, as well as community life cycles, i.e. population, job or tax revenue changes
- Community resources and opportunities for expanding the local economy
- Developing an economic development plan, including options promoting local industrial growth opportunities
- Expanding new growth in parts/components manufacturing, agricultural production processes, renewable energy, tourist destinations, bed and breakfasts, biking, and the arts and culture economy.

Economic Development Tools

There are a variety of tools that Chester can consider to promote economic development. Tax increment financing (TIF) is an innovative tool that uses tax revenue from new developments, in designated areas, to pay for new infrastructure to serve those new businesses, expansions, and residential developments. The State of New Hampshire grants municipalities the authority to create TIF districts through RSA 162-K:1-15. However, TIF districts have numerous legal considerations and requirements if they are to be established. Tax increment financing is an attractive means of providing an economic development incentive within the community without taking resources from other community projects and needs.

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Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are a valuable resource available to fund public needs ranging from affordable housing to economic development. The CDBG program is administered through the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority. Potential projects could include the establishment of public water and sewer facilities. In 2003, New Hampshire received 9.6 million dollars in CDBG funds that through the grant process were allocated to communities across the state. Individual grants are permitted up to \$500,000 per year and require a matching contribution from the applicant. Additionally, CDBG grant funds for economic development projects must provide at least 60 percent of the new jobs created through the initiative for low to moderate income households.

The Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) provides financial and technical assistance to community development corporations, worker cooperatives, and certain municipal entities. CDFA administers a variety of economic development grant programs, including the Economic Development Ventures Fund, Tax Credit Program, Community Development Investment Program, and various discretionary grants.

The State of New Hampshire also has a Statute called the Economic Revitalization Zone Tax Credits (Chapter 162-N of the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated). If a municipality decides to create an Economic Revitalization Zone, the area under consideration must meet the conditions set forth under the statute. The area must be a zone with a single continuous boundary and it must be either a brownfields site or meet at least one of the following different characteristics: the municipality must have had a decrease in population over the last two decades; median household income in the area is less than 70 percent of the state's; more than 20 percent of households live below poverty; or the area contains unused or underutilized industrial parks or vacant land previously used for commercial and industrial purposes. The local governing body must petition the commissioner of resources and economic development to designate a zone as an Economic Revitalization Zone. Once the zone is established, businesses that expand the commercial or industrial base in the zone and create new jobs in the state will become eligible for tax credits.

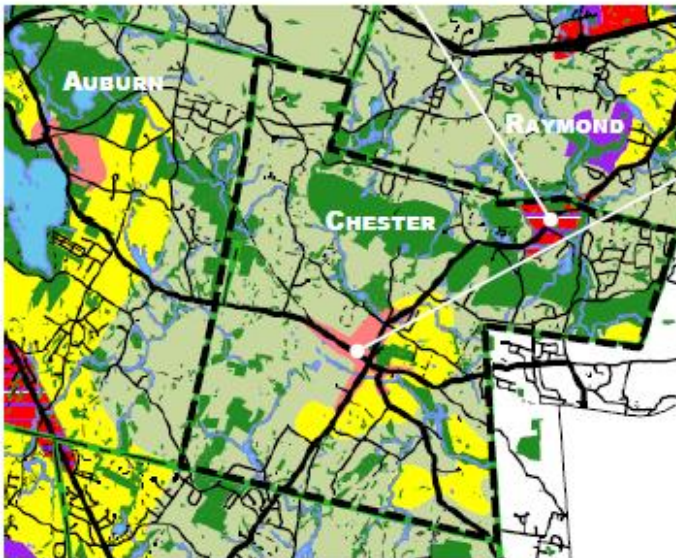
In addition to these programs, Chester belongs to Access Greater Manchester, a regional alliance of communities within the Greater Manchester area to promote the region and region's economic vitality. The SNHPC also offers municipalities a new marketing tool to promote economic development for shovel-ready sites (see Ready Set Go at www.readysetgonh.com).

TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS BY CITY/TOWN

TOWN OF CHESTER

General Statistics

Population (2008 est.): 4,620	% Adult Population With 4-Yr.+ Degree: 31.1% (U.S. average: 27%)
Median Age: 35.7 (U.S. average: 35.3)	% Population Over 65: 6.1% (U.S. average: 12.4%)
Population Density: 178 residents/sq. mi.	Per Capita Income (2000 Census): \$23,842 (U.S. average: \$21,587)
% Residents Commute to Other Community: 84%	Direct Access to Interstate/Limited Access Highway: No (I-93 is 7 mi.)



- Commercial
- Conservation
- High Residential
- Industrial
- Medium Residential
- Mixed Use Commercial/Industrial
- Mixed Use Commercial/Residential
- Mixed Use Commercial/Residential/Public
- Public
- Rural Residential
- Town Center
- Village Center

■ **TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS BY CITY/TOWN**

TOWN OF CHESTER (CONT'D)

Overall Observations and Comments on Target Industries

The town is in a rural setting with low population density, located seven miles east of I-93. Adult population has a high (31%) four-year+ education attainment level and 84% of working population leaves the town to work – over 20% travel to Massachusetts each day. The town has a variety of family farms, some manufacturing as well as technical services companies.

Due to its location away from limited access highway, the town should continue to attract small manufacturers, small professional/technical services firms and additional agricultural and tourism destinations. A significant portion of technical services and other consulting businesses may work from a home office.

Stone Machine makes complex metal parts.



Senator Bell Horse Farm.

CURRENT EMPLOYERS BY ECONOMIC LEVEL AND INDUSTRY WITH NOTATION OF POTENTIAL TARGET INDUSTRIES

Economic Sector	Chester	Existing Employers
Level 1 - Primary Industries		
Agriculture/Forestry	■	Family farms, Senator Bell Farm, Jackson Farm
State/Federal Government	■	Post office
Manufacturing	■	Genesis Woodcraft, Stone Machine Company, Carp Industries
Colleges/University/Training	■	Chester College of New England
Back Office/Shared Services		
Prof./Tech/Scien. Services	■	SWS Consulting, Crawford Software Consulting, Dann Norris Batting Architects
Regional Healthcare		
Regional Retail		
Regional Distribution		
Tourism-Related		
Headquarters		
Level 2 – Business Support Services	JR Pepper Electric, realtors, mailing services, water and fire damage services	
Level 3 - Consumer Services	Local retail and restaurants and local government.	

■ Existing Industry Potential Opportunities

Note: Due to remoteness from limited access highway, manufacturing operations may be smaller in size (many may be home based).

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Historical and Cultural Resources Chapter

Historical Resources

Introduction

Incorporated in 1722, Chester has a rich history that colors the modern character of the Town. The residents of Chester have confirmed the importance of the Town’s heritage through community surveys and workshops. At the Land Use Visioning workshop, Chester citizens called for protection of farms and fields, the preservation and positive use of Springhill Farm, and a general protection of rural character. The community survey found that the vast majority of people are in favor of continuing to promote the protection of historic and cultural sites, which is a promising sign for the Town of Chester. When respondents were asked what the most important preservation method is most voted for recognizing historic structures. Lastly, the three features people felt had the greatest historic significance or preservation value were the Stevens Memorial Hall, the Village Cemetery and the Congregational Baptist Church.

This chapter provides the story of Chester’s foundation, settlement, and growth as well as the valuable historic and cultural features located within the Town’s borders. Additionally, it provides guidelines and tools for preserving those resources that give Chester its rural charm.

Community Survey Questions and Responses

Question #1: Should the Town continue to promote the protection of its historic and cultural sites?

Table 17: Protection of Historical and Cultural Sites				
	Yes	No	No Response	Don't Know
Number of Responses	241	14	20	6

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Question #2: Please indicate the level of importance you feel the Town should give to the following historic and cultural preservation methods:

Table 18: Historic and Cultural Preservation Methods						
Preservation Methods	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Recognize Historic Structures	124	100	28	7	9	13
Create a Historic District	53	49	82	73	11	13
Create Architectural Design Guidelines	46	58	75	69	16	17
Purchase Historic Buildings	29	33	86	95	20	18
Demolition Review Ordinances	33	52	70	42	65	19
Preservation or Barn Easements	55	78	63	29	41	15
Establish a Heritage Commission	36	40	79	68	41	17

Question #3: What three features in Chester have the greatest historic significance or preservation value?

- 1) Stevens Memorial Hall
- 2) Village Cemetery
- 3) Congregational Baptist Church

For the complete list of individual responses see appendix A.

Historical Setting²⁵

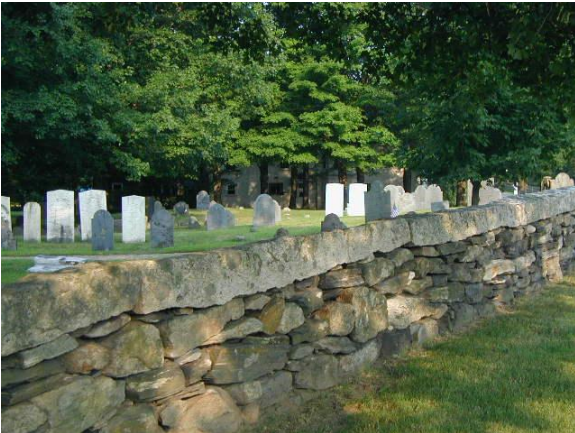


Village Church

The process by which the Town of Chester was incorporated began in 1719 with a petition to the Royal Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (which included the not yet independent New Hampshire) from 125 businessmen/proprietors. The grant was issued in 1720, and the town was incorporated in 1722. Of the original 125 proprietors, only 13 actually settled in Chester. Future settlers were primarily Scot-Irish, and purchased, leased, or married into land from the original proprietors.

The original grant for Chester stated 100 square miles, and if surveyed today it would reflect approximately one hundred and fifty eight (158) square miles of wooded land. Roads were barely cart paths, and travel from what is now Hooksett to “Chester Center” for a Town Meeting or to Church was a round trip that took all day, or longer. It was no wonder that outlying areas created their own communities, their own parishes, and schoolhouses. Eventually these areas broke away and incorporated their own towns, now known as Candia, Raymond, Hooksett, Auburn, and Derryfield (now Manchester from Belmont Street to the Merrimack River, and to the Mall of New Hampshire).

Today, within Chester’s boundaries of about twenty seven (27) square miles, Chester Center is located at the intersection of NH Routes 102 and 121, the geographic center of the community, and it has changed little from a hundred years ago; is still the commercial and civic center of the community.



Village Cemetery

Chester Center is a landmark, with National Historic Sites on three of the four corners. On the northwest corner is the Village Church (Chester Congregational Baptist Church). Constructed in 1773, it served as the site of the annual Town Meeting through 1836. On the northeast corner is the Village Cemetery, a wealth of history in itself, and includes all those veterans who served in the Revolutionary War. The southwest corner reveals Stevens Memorial Hall.

Constructed in 1909, Stevens Memorial Hall was dedicated in 1910 to George Washington Stevens, former resident of Chester, who bequeathed money to the Town to build a “sorely needed Town Hall.” It became the first “Town Hall” in Chester, and was home to the local government offices for 91 years. It was the first building that the Town owned with an auditorium where the Annual Town Meeting could be held, and it was home to the Chester Public Library from 1930 until 1980. Today Stevens Memorial Hall is home to the Chester Historical Society, Chester Senior Citizens, and Chester Lion’s Club, as well as a meeting place for numerous local organizations, and classes such as dance and aerobics.

²⁵ Excerpted from “Historical Setting” by the Chester Historical Society, September 2005, and published at www.chesterhistorical.org.

During the Post-Revolutionary Period (1780-1830), Chester was an important stop on the first stage route, which was established between Haverhill, Massachusetts and Concord, New Hampshire. In 1793, many of the larger homes along Haverhill Road and Chester Street served as inns and taverns for the travelers. In 1803, a company was formed to build the Chester Turnpike, a straight-line toll road, between Chester and Concord. This venture was not profitable and was abandoned with the development of the Merrimack River for waterpower and transportation, which left Chester as a small, rural community.

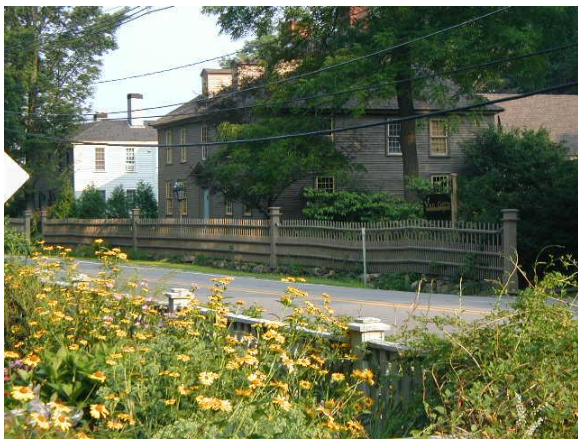
Although Chester never became a manufacturing center, its residents have played a major role in politics and the arts in both New Hampshire and the nation. Chester has given the State of New Hampshire three governors, three senators, a chief justice of the State Supreme Court, a President of Dartmouth College, and numerous judges, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and financiers. It is also famous as the home of the Revolutionary period Dunlap Family of Cabinetmakers, and as the summer home of the sculptor Daniel Chester French, who created the statue of Abraham Lincoln for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

During the latter part of the Post-Civil War period (1860-1900), Chester became a popular summer resort. The estates of the wealthy, the inns and the summer boarding houses provided summer employment for many of the year-round residents. As the summer resort activities began a decline, which continued well into the 1900s, the inns, taverns, and the smaller stores in the outlying areas could not afford to remain open and were gradually converted to private homes.

In 1877, the New Hampshire Legislature granted a charter to the Chester & Derry Telegraph Company. The telegraph line was operated successfully until 1884, when it was converted to a small private telephone company, the Chester Telephone Company, which survives today as Granite State Telephone.



Civil War Monument



Historic Homes in the Town Center

Unlike the surrounding towns of Auburn, Candia, Raymond, and Sandown, no steam-driven railroad was ever built into Chester. It did, however, have an electric railroad, the Chester & Derry Electric Railroad, a line that ran from Chester Center, to East Derry Village, then into Derry, near the Derry Depot. The “Trolley,” as it was called, ran passengers and freight from 1896 to 1928, a time when Chester’s population had declined to its lowest level (653 residents). The same lack of industry in scores of other small New England communities forced people away from the farms to better employment opportunities in cities such as Manchester and Nashua. This and development of the automobile which brought improved roads saw the demise of the “Trolley.”

In 1924, electric streetlights were installed one mile on each road emanating from Chester Center, thus beginning the electrification of the Town. Within a few years, the main streets were paved with only a



Town Pound

few of the lesser traveled roads still gravel. By the early 1950s, Chester residents had become concerned about the future development of the town, and a Planning Board was appointed and the first zoning ordinance was passed in 1960.

Between 1940 and 1980 as better automobiles and roads (such as Route I-93) made it easier to commute to the centers of industry in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, population growth was again evident. During this period 330 new homes were built, mainly along existing roads in the community, thus adding to the approximately 350 homes remaining from earlier

periods of Chester's history. The importance of transportation in this development is borne out by the almost complete lack of new building permits when the cost of commuting was at its highest during the oil crisis of the 1970s. Spring Hill Farm was bequeathed to the Town and is maintained by a trust for its historic significance and land conservation.

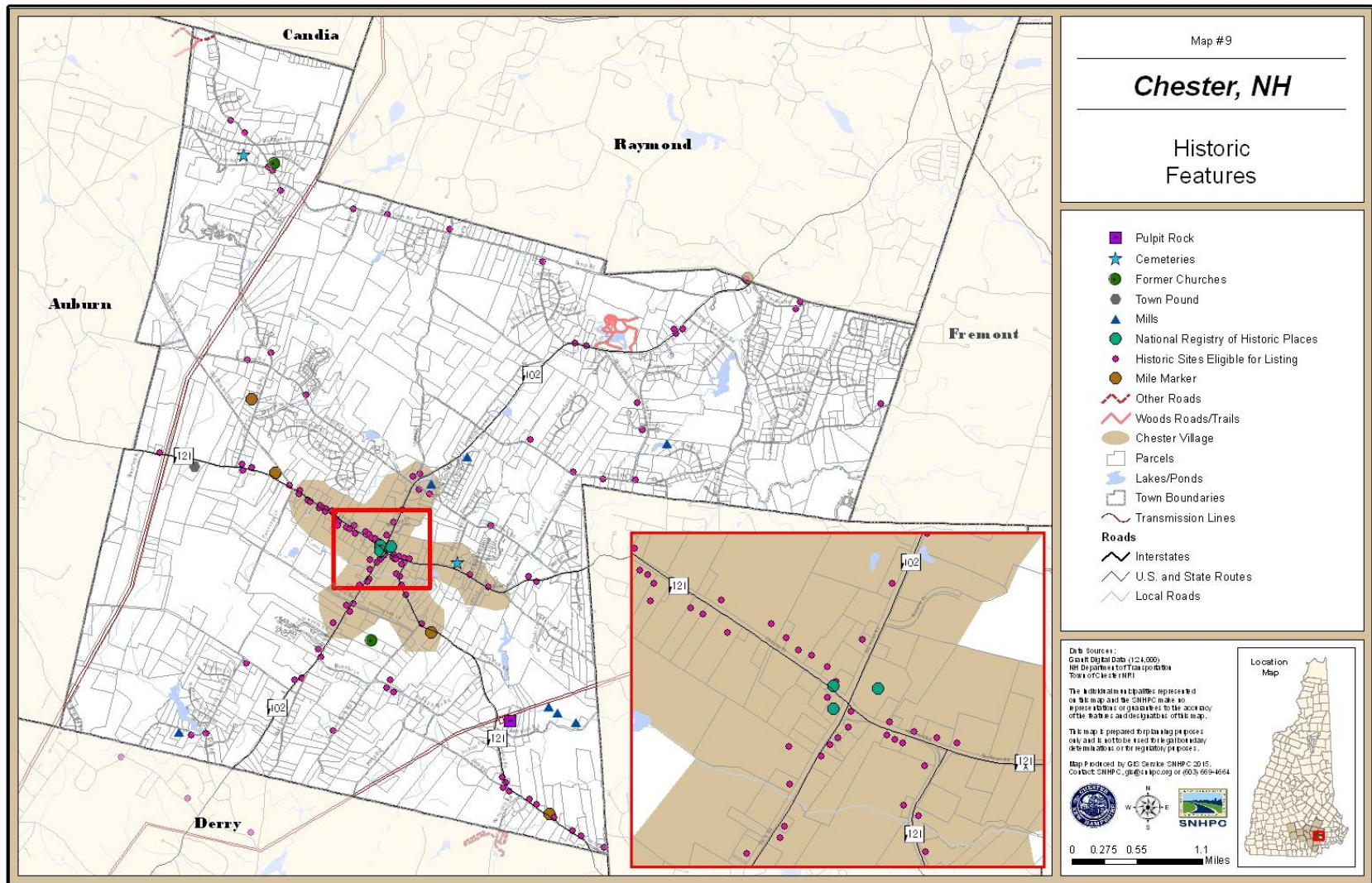
Today, Chester is still a small, semi-rural bedroom community with almost no manufacturing activity. There are, however, many agricultural opportunities within the community. From family farms to backyard farms to gentleman farmers to full-time commercial enterprises, Chester is fortunate to offer an amazing variety of wonderful agricultural products for sale including fresh produce, baked goods, hay and livestock. Additionally, Chester has become home to several magnificent equine facilities, both large and small, which all add not only to our commerce but to the esthetics of this great community. Other agricultural-related businesses (like water gardens, a butcher, the local maple-sugar producers, goat farmers, and the continuing development of the town-owned Spring Hill Farm) round out a town rich in its agrarian history and respectful of its land and the citizens who maintain it so well²⁶.

Chester's Historic Features

In 1996, the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission and the Chester Historical Society prepared a list of historic buildings and landscapes in Chester. The list was prepared to reflect the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places and updated as part of the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. The list was further updated as part of the Open Space Plan in 2005. Currently the list contains 123 entries, ranging from private homes to public meeting spaces spanning three centuries. Table 1 located in Appendix B contains the complete listing of each site, along with age and description, where available. Map 9 presents the location of these features.

²⁶ <http://www.chesternh.org/local-farms>

Map #9: Historical Features



Mechanisms for the Protection of Historic Resources

While the Chester Historical Society, along with residents of the Town, have successfully identified and inventoried well over 120 historic features, Chester needs to take proactive steps to protect these sites from development or disrepair. Successful historic preservation planning requires careful consideration and the use of specialized tools and techniques. The following section identifies some of these mechanisms by which Chester can achieve its historic preservation goals.

"Preservation saves energy by taking advantage of the non-recoverable energy embodied in an existing building and extending the use of it"²⁷

The Town of Chester is a rich and vibrant repository of cultural and historic resources. Many of these sites are being preserved and have designation locally and nationally.

To be successful, historic preservation planning must be proactive in its preservation goals. There are a number of tools available to help the Town of Chester with their preservation efforts. These include, but are not limited to:

- Establishment of Historical Societies, Heritage and Historic District Commissions;
- Zoning Regulations such as Historic and Neighborhood Districts;
- Historic Easements;
- Landmark Designation and National and State Register of Historical Places;
- Grants, Loans, and Tax Credits

Local Actions to Encourage Historic Preservation Efforts

Chester Heritage Commission

Since 1992, heritage commissions have offered a valuable means for local government to manage, recognize, and protect historical and cultural resources. They are intended to have a town-wide scope and a range of activities that is determined by each individual municipality and geared to that particular community's needs and wants. Basically, a heritage commission does for historical resources what a conservation commission does for natural resources: it advises and assists other local boards and commissions; conducts inventories; educates the public on matters relating to historic preservation; provides information on historical resources; and serves as a resource for revitalization efforts. A heritage commission can also accept and expend funds for a non-lapsing heritage fund, acquire and manage property, and hold preservation easements.²⁸

²⁷ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. 1979. Assessing the energy conservation benefits of historic preservation: Methods and Examples.

²⁸ *RSA 673:1(II), 674:44-b
(<http://www.nhpreservation.org/get-answers/community-wide-planning-resources/for-heritage-commissions.html>)

Agricultural Commission

The Agricultural Commission was established in 2011 by Gary Van Geyte. It consists of a seven-member, all-volunteer board appointed by the Selectmen under the provisions of NH RSA 674:44-e. The commission's mission statement consists of three main objectives: to represent Chester farms and to advise the Chester Town regulatory bodies on agricultural matters; to facilitate communication among farmers, to educate the community in agriculture, and to promote the business of farming and farm activities in Chester; and to promote and help preserve the farms, agricultural lands, and rural character of Chester.²⁹

The Chester Agricultural Commission has identified the following specific objectives to be considered by the Town of Chester.

- Continue to protect Chester's remaining agricultural and forest lands by purchasing development rights with conservation easements. Where it is practical, conservation easements should allow for forestry and agricultural use.
- Preserve agricultural uses in open space land created by new cluster subdivisions. If farmland is part of a new cluster development, then preserving a portion of the open space for continued agricultural production should be encouraged. Also, plots could be set aside to accommodate community gardens.
- Protect farms currently operating and for those who wish to establish farms in Chester from planning and zoning regulations that would unreasonably restrict, limit or negatively impact agricultural activities as protected by the NH Right to Farm Law. Additionally, planning and zoning regulations should promote and encourage sustainable agricultural practices by following the Best Management Practices for Agriculture in New Hampshire.
- Because of the unique and seasonal nature of farming, consider exemptions in regulations and zoning ordinances to allow farms to more effectively promote their products. For instance, allowing flexibility in the size and placement of signage would directly benefit farms.
- In order to reduce conflict between new development and existing farms, the requirement of buffer zones should be considered of new site plans. Not only can typical operations of a farm impact abutters, but the use of chemicals and pesticides on lawns of homeowners can negatively impact crops within the proximity of the property line. In the case of organic production, a farmer would be required to take land out of production if no buffer zone was required of the new development.
- The Town of Chester has adopted RSA 79-D - a property tax incentive to preserve historical agricultural structures. To further protect farm structures and the rural character of Chester, the Town should consider the adoption of RSA 79-F Farm Structures or Land Under Farm Structures. This would act as an incentive for farmers as it would reduce taxation on agricultural structures actively used to produce farm products.

Chester Historical Society

There are many different approaches communities can pursue to encourage historic preservation. The most important and basic step is the formation of a historical society. Historical societies can be organized by historic preservation minded individuals or as non-profit organizations. It is important to note that historical societies can be formed with no affiliation with the municipality. Once formed these

²⁹ <http://www.chesternh.org/boards-committees/agricultural-commission>

organizations can conduct the research, inventory and nomination work necessary for historic preservation. Members can also be active in local, state and national organizations and nonprofits which actively work to protect key resources and gain public support in this effort.

The Chester Historical society is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to promote the study of the history of Chester, to preserve its history through the collection and protection of historical matter, and to support the continuing education of the Town's ever-evolving heritage.

Historic Preservation Tools

Historic Resources Survey and Inventory

The most important historic preservation-planning tool is the historic resources survey and inventory. According to New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, less than 25 percent of New Hampshire's communities have completed this step, including the Town of Chester. Many years ago SNHPC compiled a list of properties in the region that were considered historically and culturally significant to its member communities as part of the 2004 New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP) (see final report on the SNHPC website). This report of Local Resource Protection Priorities, while providing a starting point, is by no means all-inclusive and cannot substitute for a detailed inventory.

During 1998 and 1999, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services contracted SNHPC, along with the other regional planning commissions around the state, to collaborate with communities to identify and map what each community believed their Local Resource Protection Priorities (LRPP) to be. This inventory and data was then reviewed and updated again in 2004 and 2011. Today most of these mapped priorities still represent unprotected natural and cultural resources that are worthy of preserving. The overall project's intent was to gain an understanding of local priorities for two purposes – to assist the LCHIP program to identify projects to fund and to assist planners, regional planning commissions, and state agencies in their planning efforts.

At the same time, the REPP cannot substitute for a prioritized history survey of the most important or endangered historic sites, properties and buildings within a community. A town-wide comprehensive survey and inventory must be conducted in accordance with state and federal standards. Once compiled, such an historic inventory can guide future planning decisions and provide a starting point for historical societies and heritage commissions in nominating decisions for the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Historic District Commissions

New Hampshire RSA 673:4 and 673:4a also allows communities to form historic district commissions (HDC) and heritage commissions (HC). Once formed, communities can vote to allow historic district commissions to take on the duties and responsibilities of a heritage commission and vice versa. Historic district commissions are concerned solely with historic districts, primarily administering historic zoning districts and related building guidelines. HDCs can regulate the appearance within a designated historic district, such as review building permits, site plan review applications, and demolition requests.

Heritage commissions are non-regulatory bodies that focus on the entire town. The purpose of heritage commissions is to identify, preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character of the municipality.

Considered the ‘town’s preservation experts,’ heritage commissions are empowered to conduct surveys and advise planning boards on preservation issues.

According to RSA 674:45, historic districts are designed to showcase the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history of an area, while conserving property values, fostering civic beauty, and strengthening the local economy.³⁰ Historic district commissions can also assist local planning boards with technical and historic advice and work to establish and administer historic districts. The citizens of the municipality generally formulate the powers and responsibilities of historic district commissions. Thus, citizens should not fear that a historic district commission would enforce severe rules or restrictions. The only requirement that historic district commissions must complete is a local historic resources survey.

Currently, the following municipalities in the region have established historic district zoning: Bedford, Goffstown, Londonderry, Manchester, Raymond, Weare and Windham. Communities that have established historic district or heritage commissions, a historic district ordinance, and have completed the local historic resources survey can then apply for Certified Local Government status.

Historic District Overlay and Other Zoning Tools

Historic zoning or historic district overlay zoning is a tool for preservation. Typically, this type of zoning consists of an overlay zone that is applied over existing zoning regulations in designated historic districts. The heritage commission, historic district commission or a design review board reviews building permits and demolition requests within the district. In some cases, the heritage commission or historic district commission may only review demolition requests; while an independent design review board reviews permits. In either case, the efforts of the preservation groups and the planning board need to be coordinated for best results, otherwise, problems can arise. For instance, zoning in historic districts could be incompatible with current uses, or there could be density, lot size, or off-street parking issues.

To determine the need for historic zoning overlays or revised zoning ordinances, communities should first map historic districts, properties and landmarks, along with the boundaries of existing zoning ordinances to determine potential conflicts and areas of compatibility. Additionally, historic zoning ordinances may allow historic properties special exceptions for uses typically not permitted by the municipality’s zoning ordinance. One example is to allow historic residences, which can be large and expensive to maintain, to be used as office space or multi-family housing. Another consideration is the use of existing mill buildings for mixed use, such as residential or commercial purposes. By providing for mixed uses in historical districts, communities can facilitate revitalization.

Conditional Zoning

Conditional zoning is another preservation tool in which zoning change requests are granted only if certain conditions are met. The conditions might be preservation of open space or built structures, among others. All of these zoning tools require a willingness to cooperate between planning boards and preservation groups and knowledge of zoning regulations, potential historic and archeological areas in need of preservation, and development objectives.

³⁰ New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources. 2003. What are Historic Districts Good for, Anyway?.

Transfer of Development Rights

Another important zoning tool is transfer of development rights (TDR). TDRs allow the development rights for low-density historic buildings, or the “air” above a historic building or site where zoning allows for more stories to be sold or transferred to another location where higher-density development is allowed or desired. Density bonuses can also be utilized to preserve open space with archeological potential.

Neighborhood Heritage District: As defined by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, a Neighborhood Heritage District (NHD) is a zoning mechanism that helps protect the key character of an area.³¹ The district is a group of buildings and their settings that are architecturally or historically distinctive and are worth protecting based on their contribution to the character of the community.³¹ An NHD differs from other types of historic preservation in that its objective is to protect neighborhood character, whether that is residential, commercial or a mix of uses, rather than design details of individual buildings. The features that are determined to be significant in maintaining the character of a neighborhood are determined by the community seeking to establish an NHD.

In the SNHPC region the Town of Hooksett is undergoing a two-year process to explore the feasibility of an NHD around the area of Robie’s Store. The purpose of this study is to determine the viability of a zoning overlay designed to help preserve and protect the visual character of the village and perhaps the surrounding neighborhoods.

Demolition Delay Ordinances

According to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, “Demolition review is a preservation tool that ensures potentially significant buildings and structures are not demolished without notice to the community and review by a heritage or historic district commission.”³² These reviews, or delays, are most commonly adopted as an amendment to the building code, as a bylaw in an existing historic preservation or zoning ordinance, or as a stand-alone ordinance.³²

Demolition delay or review ordinances allow for a review process by a local historic preservation agency or group to determine the structure’s historic value or significance. If it is determined that the structure is architecturally significant, a delay on a demolition permit is issued, during which time a public hearing is scheduled to consider alternatives to demolition and options for preservation. However, this is simply a delay to review alternatives to demolition; this does not guarantee that a building will not eventually be demolished.

Scenic Road Designation

New Hampshire RSAs 231:157 and 231:158 also allows towns to make scenic road designations. Any town road, other than a Class I or II highway, can be designated a scenic road by petition of 10 or more people. A local scenic road designation can be useful for the protection of natural landscapes; roadway repair or maintenance cannot disturb or harm trees or stone walls without written consent of the responsible board.

Village or Downtown Design Guidelines

³¹ For more information, please visit: http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/documents/neighbor_hert_handbook.pdf

³² New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. 2007. Protecting Historic resources Through Demolition Review.

Village or Downtown Design guidelines outline locally acceptable site and architectural design and can be formulated to identify desirable community characteristics. They focus on the aesthetic and promote new development and substantial improvements to existing structures that is harmonious with the surrounding area, town center, or historic district. The guidelines can specify locally desired architectural styles, construction materials, building scale, window and door design, sign size and design, awnings and canopies, lighting fixtures, landscaping, fencing, and screening methods.

In the SNHPC region, the towns of Derry, Chester, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, Windham and the City of Manchester have established design guidelines to ensure that future growth and development in their historic village centers and downtowns is compatible with its surroundings. These guidelines are typically incorporated within the communities' Site Plan Review or Land Use Development Regulations. Within the SNHPC region, these regulations range from providing a general clause requiring the preservation and protection of historic features to location specific guidelines for new development.

Village Plan Alternative

The Village Plan Alternative (VPA) is a planning tool that allows for the creation of new villages within a municipality that promote compact development with a mix of land uses, including residential, small-scale commercial, recreation and conservation.³³ The purpose of a VPA is to promote mixed use development in close proximity to one another within a neighborhood. The development is then at scale to the smaller populations and lower density of many New Hampshire towns.

The VPA is designed to implement the specific provisions of RSA674:21.VI(a) The ordinance was designed "to respond to the economic, environmental and social consequences of conventional two-acre lot zoning that segregates the locations of work, home, and recreation and produces a sprawling development pattern."³⁴ The VPA addresses these concerns by promoting smart growth principles, preserving the working landscape, and protecting environmental resources.

Federal and State Preservation Programs

There are a number of state and federal programs that provide designations, which can assist in preservation efforts. Such designations can also make communities more attractive to businesses and tourists, providing an economic boost to the area. It is important to note that a designation does not guarantee permanent preservation of a site, but most citizens and communities would rather maintain the designation, rather than allow such a site to be lost.

National Historic Landmarks

National Historic Landmarks are places that have meaning for all Americans. They are designated by the Secretary of the Interior and nominated by the National Park Service. Landmarks can be buildings, districts (villages or communities), sites without built structures, uninhabited structures, or objects. There are fewer than 2,500 designated landmarks nationally and only about 20-25 new landmarks are designated per year. To be designated a National Historic Landmark, areas must be associated with

³³ NHOEP; Frost, Benjamin. The "Village Plan Alternative" RSA 674:21,VI [HB 1344]

³⁴Community Technical Assistance Program. Village Plan/Context Sensitive Solutions.

<http://www.nhctap.com/documents/ctap/products/CTAP%20Factsheets/Village%20Plan%20Alternative%20Fact%20sheet.pdf> last accessed 8/9/2013.

historic events, people or ideals, be prime examples of design or construction, or exhibit a way of life. New Hampshire is home to 22 National Historic Landmarks.

While Chester does not currently have any National Historic Landmarks, some of Chester's historic buildings may be able to qualify for National Historic Landmark status. The Bell House, built in 1833, was the home of New Hampshire Senator and Governor Samuel Bell. The Crawford House may qualify as an outstanding example of Italianate architecture. The Town also has various properties associated with inventors, politicians, wars, and state and national affairs.

National Underground Railroad Program

The National Underground Railroad Program is a National Park Service project to record and map the locations of the highly secretive network of stations providing safe haven on the road to freedom in the North or Canada. Locations that are part of the network can display the network logo, receive technical assistance and participate in program workshops. Many communities in New Hampshire contain properties with a folklore connection to the Underground Railroad. The Moses Sawyer Homestead is one of four known stops in Weare along the Underground Railroad. The Network provides an opportunity for local historical societies or heritage commissions to preserve these traditional stories, while garnering national recognition as important historic places. Sites are not limited to buildings or 'stations' but can also be river crossings, routes, or hiding places.

The National and State Registers of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is perhaps the most commonly known list of designated historic sites. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service and contains nearly 79,000 listings. Listings on the National Register are eligible for special federal tax benefits, preservation assistance, and acknowledgement that the property has national, state or community significance. Properties must meet certain criteria to be considered for designation. Essentially, properties are generally at least 50 years old and are associated with significant events or people in the past, or exhibit distinctive characteristics of a historical time period or architectural style. Properties on the New Hampshire State Register are eligible for the same types of benefits as the National Register, only the source of the funding, planning assistance, and tax benefits are at the state level, rather than federal.

Register designation does not, however, equal preservation. Properties on the list can be privately owned, and the designation does not limit the owner's right to change or demolish the property. The National Park Service has created a publication that guides communities through the federal application process; communities considering nominating properties for National Register designation should consult this document.³⁵ The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources offers guidance to communities that desire to apply to the State Register.³⁶

Chester has three properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These are the Chester Congregational Church, the Chester Village Cemetery, and Stevens Memorial Hall. Currently, Chester does not have any properties listed on the State Register, which may be partially due to the fact that the State Register has only been in existence for a few years.

Certified Local Government

³⁵ Visit www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb39/

³⁶ Visit www.nhdr.gov for more information.

The designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) can provide additional preservation funding and resource opportunities for communities. In order to be granted CLG status, municipalities must meet specific state and federal standards. These standards pertain to the entire community, not only a historic district. Once certified, communities are members of a network made up of the National Division of Historic Resources and other CLGs. Additionally, there are federal matching grant funding opportunities reserved exclusively for CLGs. Currently, three communities in the region – Derry, Goffstown and Londonderry – are certified local governments.

Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program allows a 20 percent tax credit for the preservation of historic buildings. The tax credit is only available for income-producing structures, not individual private residences. To qualify for the tax credit, the structure has to be listed, or at least be eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as an individual structure or as part of a historic district. The structure must meet the ten Standards for Rehabilitation, set by the Secretary of the Interior and the rehabilitation efforts must be substantial. This means that the cost of the rehabilitation must exceed the pre-rehabilitation value of the structure. The National Park Service, along with the Internal Revenue Service and State Historic Preservation Offices, administer the tax credit.

The New Hampshire Barn Survey and Discretionary Preservation Easements

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) has recently been focusing on barn preservation. NHDHR, in conjunction with the New Hampshire Historic Agricultural Structures Advisory Committee, began a barn survey project in 1999. The survey attempts to catalog all existing barn structures in the state to assist in grant determinations and technical assistance.

New Hampshire state law also provides for the preservation of barns through RSA 79-D. This law allows municipalities to provide tax breaks to barn owners that meet certain requirements. The owners' barns must provide a public benefit with the preservation of their barn and agree to maintain the barn or structures throughout the minimum 10-year discretionary preservation easement. The barn owners are granted tax relief, enabling them to repair and maintain their barns. The easement also provides that the town will not increase the assessed value after the repair work has been completed and tax relief can be equivalent to a 25 to 75 percent reduction of the structure's full-assessed value. To qualify as a "historic agricultural structure," the structures, including the land it was built on must be or have been used for agricultural purposes and also be at least 75 years old.³⁷

Chester has begun the process of creating an inventory of its historic barns, including locations and historic information. The Town hopes to continue and complete this survey in the future. When this inventory is complete, Chester can begin to take advantage of discretionary preservation easements. Seven historic sites listed for Chester have explicit mention of barns or agricultural activities. In particular, the Chamberlain house on Chester Street has a beautiful 1915 Sears and Roebuck barn from the Vanderbilt era that may qualify for preservation funding.

Historic Preservation Easements

Historic preservation easements allow a property owner to grant a portion of the rights of the property to a group that commits to preservation. The property owner retains the right to sell the property,

³⁷ For more information on New Hampshire's barn preservation efforts, visit the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources at www.nh.gov/nhdhr

however all subsequent property owners forever relinquish the development, demolition, alteration, or other rights waived as part of the easement. Historic preservation is not inexpensive. Easements provide property owners with a mutually beneficial alternative. Not only does the property owner retain ownership, along with any potential financial benefits, but there is also the possibility of a federal tax deduction. These benefits are balanced by the knowledge that the owner has contributed to the preservation of a historic or culturally significant place. Owners can claim a federal tax deduction of the value of the easement up to 30 percent of their adjusted gross income. The balance of the easement tax benefit can be carried forward up to five years.³⁸ The value of the easement, as determined by an appraiser, is typically the difference between the appraised fair market value of the property and the value with the easement in effect. Properties must meet certain qualifications set by the IRS in order to qualify for tax benefits.

To be eligible, properties must be on the National Register of Historic Places or be located within a nationally registered Historic District and certified by the U.S. Department of the Interior as historically significant to the district.³⁹ Certification must come prior to an historic preservation easement, or before the owner files a tax return for the year the easement was granted.

Additionally, qualified properties must be accessible to the public. Depending on the nature of the site, this could mean as few as a couple of hours or days per year, or even the ability to view the site from a distance. Historic preservation easements generally prohibit the destruction or alteration of the property without review and approval by the easement holder. Development and subdivision restrictions are also common. Additionally, some easements require the owner to maintain or restore the property to certain conditions. Historic preservation easements provide ownership of the property, thereby alleviating the financial burden of maintaining the property alone. As of 2010, there were four organizations that hold historic preservation easements in New Hampshire. These include: the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, the Manchester Historic Association, the New Hampshire Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), and the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.⁴⁰

To realize a historic preservation easement in Chester, Town officials could work in cooperation with the Conservation Commission and the Historic Society to identify properties and seek funding. The town pound would be one site that could benefit from a preservation easement; historic mills and dams would also benefit from the easements.

New Hampshire Heritage Landmarks

Pursuant to RSA 227-C: 25, all National Historic Landmarks owned by the state, as of July 1, 1993, were designated as New Hampshire heritage landmarks. Currently the program is not active in the state, but the Robert Frost Homestead in Derry qualifies under this designation.

State Historic Markers Program

¹⁴ More information on tax deductions can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/easements-historic-properties.pdf>

³⁹ For a description of historically important land areas, as defined by the IRS visit http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Conservation-Easement-Audit-Techniques-Guide#_Toc156

⁴⁰ For more information on the National Park Service Historic Preservation Planning Program, please visit: <http://www.nps.gov/hps/pad/index.htm>

The New Hampshire Historical Markers Program commemorates New Hampshire's places, people, or events of historical significance. The New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources, with the help of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, administers the program. Marker requests can be made by communities, organizations, or individuals and must be accompanied by accurate documentation including footnotes, a bibliography, copies of supporting research and a petition signed by at least 20 citizens. Marker preference is given to public locations, except in the case of express written consent by private owners.

Chester is home to two historic markers: the Chester Village Cemetery (Marker 139) and Early American Clocks, home of Isaac Blaisdell (Marker 14). The town should consider requesting markers for additional locations in town since Chester has several other buildings and sites associated with important events and people in New Hampshire's past.⁴¹

Preserve America

Created by the White House and led by First Lady Laura Bush, Preserve America Communities are recognized for celebrating their heritage. Designated communities are allowed to display the Preserve America logo, are included in the Preserve America directory, and receive a Preserve America Community road sign. Additionally, some communities are eligible to receive funding to support planning, development, implementation or enhancement of heritage programs. To date, 247 communities have been designated Preserve America Communities, including Hooksett and Keene in New Hampshire.⁴²

Historic Landscapes

The National Historic Landscape Initiative is not a list of designated properties, but rather a resource for the preservation of landscapes. It provides publications, workshops, technical assistance and national policy direction. Landscapes are an essential part of how New Englanders identify with the region and the image of the New England village would be incomplete without landscapes. By protecting landscapes, communities can provide enjoyment for their citizens and an improved quality of life. Landscapes are more than just open space; they include residential sidewalks, lawns, and trees, as well as agricultural fields, forests, and stones. Currently Chester has no preserved historic landscapes. However, Healy Farm would be an ideal historic landscape for preservation.

Historic American Buildings Survey

The Historic American Buildings Survey is a program that works toward preservation through documentation. The program documents important architectural sites throughout the nation. The survey was originally performed by professional architects when it began in the 1930s. Today, college students complete the fieldwork and documentation during the summer months. Chester does not have any buildings listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey. Chester can work with the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources or directly with a representative from the Buildings Survey to document buildings in town.

Scenic Byways Program

There are currently two National Scenic Byways in New Hampshire and 14 State Scenic Byways. A scenic byway is a designation that showcases the state's most beautiful vistas and landscapes. Additionally

⁴¹ Visit www.state.nh.us/markers/ for the complete list of state markers.

⁴² State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Historical Resources, "The Old Stone Wall," Volume XIV, Number 1, (Fall 2005).

New Hampshire RSAs 231:157 and 231:158 allow towns to make scenic road designations.⁴³ Any town road, other than a Class I or II highway, can be designated a scenic road by petition of 10 or more people. A local scenic road designation can be useful for the protection of natural landscapes, since roadway repair or maintenance cannot disturb or harm trees or stone walls without written consent of the responsible board.

Chester does not have roads designated by the state or nation as a scenic byway. However, Hanson and Shattigee Roads have been designated by the town as scenic roads.

Archaeological Sites and Programs

There has been human habitation in New Hampshire for at least the past 10,000 years. Our knowledge of settlements and archaeological sites is limited, however, because most of the State has not been fully explored. This explains why a map of archaeological sites cannot be produced. The New Hampshire State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program (NH SCRAP) is hesitant to describe known archaeological sites on a map because people have a tendency to assume that blank space on a map equates to the absence of archaeological significance. This is not the case in New Hampshire; the blank space simply means it has not been explored yet.

There are a few generalizations about potential archeological sites that communities can use to determine preservation efforts. Generally, SCRAP has found that sites tend to be within 300 feet of rivers or other water bodies. Areas near a waterfall or rapids pose a good chance of hosting former settlements. Certain soil types, such as well-drained alluvial soils are indicators of activity. Settlements have been known to occur on high ground near wetlands or swamps because these areas provided good resources for hunters and gatherers. A slope grade of 20 percent or greater could rule out a site, since steep slopes are not attractive for habitation. These environmental guidelines are imprecise indicators of settlement because the environmental landscape of the State has changed many times over the last 10,000 years. Unfortunately, there is no predictable model to determine settlement areas in New Hampshire.

Funding

Although most people would agree that the preservation of their town or region's Historic Resources is desirable and important, funding is the largest impediment to preservation efforts. However, a variety of funding programs exist to assist historic preservation efforts.

The National Trust provides both grants and loans to non-profit organizations and public agencies. Some of the grants require that the property be designated a National Historic Landmark to qualify. Grant opportunities range from \$500 to \$10,000 and the money typically must be used for professional advice, public outreach, educational materials, preservation planning and land-use planning.⁴⁴

The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance sponsors a Historic Barn Assessment Grant Program. This program provides matching grants of \$250 to \$400 to barn owners for the hiring of a barn assessment consultant, who will determine the required steps to stabilize, repair, and reuse the barn.⁴⁵

⁴³ For the locations of the National and State scenic byways in New Hampshire, visit www.byways.org/browse/states/NH/.

⁴⁴ Visit the National Trust at www.nationaltrust.org for more information.

⁴⁵ Visit www.nhpreservation.org/html/gettomgstarted.htm for more information.

Another local resource is the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). This organization provides matching grants to NH communities and non-profit organizations for the preservation of local natural, cultural, and historic resources. Unfortunately, the State has reduced the allocated budget for LCHIP by 85 percent; meaning that over the next two years, only three percent of approved projects will be financed through the organization.⁴⁶

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program allows a 20 percent tax credit for the preservation of historic buildings. The tax credit is only available for income-producing structures, not individual private residences. To qualify for the tax credit, the structure has to be listed, or at least be eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as an individual structure or as part of a historic district. The structure must meet the ten Standards for Rehabilitation, set by the Secretary of the Interior and the rehabilitation efforts must be substantial. This means that the cost of the rehabilitation must exceed the pre-rehabilitation value of the structure. The National Park Service, along with the Internal Revenue Service and State Historic Preservation Offices, administer the tax credit.⁴⁷

Chester's updated and extensive inventory of historical and cultural features can serve as the foundation for all of the preservation steps listed above. The Town is ideally suited to pursue preservation funding and opportunities due to its catalogued priorities and the active involvement of the Chester Historical Society. Through listing in state and national registers and the protection of historic features, Chester can reinforce the historic charm that characterizes the Town.

The Main Street Program

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center, Inc. currently provides a staff person to assist communities in establishing and maintaining local Main Street Programs in New Hampshire. At one time there was a New Hampshire Main Street Program organized through the NH Community Development Finance Authority; however this program is no longer active in the state. Many existing Main Street initiatives in NH are also recognized as Nationally Designated Main Street Programs under the National Trust Main Street Center. While Main Street Programs contribute significantly in helping to revitalize and maintain local business growth and expansion, they also play a crucial role in the education, health and well-being of our citizens. Exposure to the arts and creative industries fosters growth in youth populations, creates jobs and increases overall quality of life. The creative economy in the SNHPC region is an engine of growth and community vitality and will continue to play a role in shaping our region through creative industries and by adding to the cultural activity and rich history of the area.

Main Street Programs are designed to improve the economic vitality of a downtown center, while supporting historic preservation. The National Trust's Main Street Center located in Concord, NH is open to all NH towns and cities and provides at least three years of technical support to participants, which are competitively selected. A successful Main Street Program requires both public and private cooperation and relies on four principles to accomplish revitalization. These are: organization; promotion; design; economic restructuring. Participants in the program need to understand that results are incremental. The focus is limited to central business districts; however, an economically vibrant

⁴⁶ Visit www.lchip.org for more information.

⁴⁷ For more information visit www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/

downtown can impact the overall vitality of the town. Currently, Goffstown is the only town within the region which is a member of the National Trust's Main Street Center.⁴⁸

Future Preservation Programs

Clearly, the largest impediment to historic preservation is planning and financing. Most people would agree that the preservation of their town or region's historic and cultural resources is desirable and important. There are many planning tools and funding programs to assist historic preservation efforts. All it takes is public support, committed volunteers and public/private partnerships. Currently the best available funding for historic preservation include the following programs and funding sources.

The **National Trust** provides both grants and loans to non-profit organizations and public agencies. Some of the grants require that the property be designated a National Historic Landmark to qualify. Grant opportunities range from \$500 to \$10,000. Typically, the money must be used for professional advice, public outreach, educational materials, preservation planning and land use planning.

The **New Hampshire Preservation Alliance** sponsors a Historic Barn Assessment Grant Program. This program provides matching grants of \$250 to \$400 to barn owners for the hiring of a barn assessment consultant, who will determine the required steps to stabilize, repair, and reuse the barn.

Another local resource is the **New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program** (LCHIP). This organization provides matching grants to NH communities and non-profit organizations for the preservation of local natural, cultural, and historic resources. Currently six municipalities in the SNHPC region – Bedford, Derry, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester and Windham – have taken advantage of this program, with grants ranging from \$109,000 to \$300,000. Unfortunately, the State has reduced the allocated budget for LCHIP by 85 percent.⁴⁹

With the exception of Bedford, Londonderry and Windham most communities in the SNHPC region have ten percent or more of their homes built prior to 1940. This indicates that there is great preservation potential existing today and in the future in the region. While not all of these structures should be preserved, the general age of the building stock is illustrative of patterns or clusters of development within historic neighborhoods. These areas could potentially be analyzed and grouped as historic districts in the future.

In addition to the need for funding, a review of municipal master plans indicates that little preservation work has occurred within the SNHPC region. While most communities recognize the importance of maintaining their historic character, there are very few historic plans that have been developed and few goals or objectives have been adopted. At best, simple historic planning efforts could be conducted including an audit, inventory or review of existing zoning ordinances and local land use policies for historic preservation needs. While every town in the region has important historic or cultural resources to protect, many of the region's towns are at different stages in implementing effective historic preservation programs.

⁴⁸ For more information on the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Center, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street>

⁴⁹ Visit www.lchip.org for more information.

Examples of some of the historic preservation goals in the towns' master plans include:

- Establish a Heritage Commission, Historic District Commission or Historical Society
- Designate historic areas as historic districts
- Establish zoning and land use regulations that recognize the value of historic resources and strive to preserve those features
- Organize public group walks through local historic districts
- Prepare educational brochures about the local historic district, town center or areas of historic pride and importance
- Prepare informational materials or a website to promote local resource management and protection
- Incorporate historic landmarks and cultural resources into school field trips and curriculum
- Promote private voluntary preservation
- Develop cohesive town centers within the historic setting
- Promote town center development consistent with historic character

These goals provide a starting point, but continued emphasis and proactive historic preservation planning is still needed in the region. Implementation takes both committed volunteers and effective leadership. This leadership can often be found within existing organizations and non-profits as well as the establishment of public/private partnerships which can work together to protect and revitalize significant historic buildings and cultural landmarks within a community.

Arts and Cultural Resources and Design

Arts, culture and visual design are important aspects to a community and create a unique local identity or brand that allow communities to stand out among similar municipalities at the local, regional and national level. Examples include community arts centers and land, art classes, pottery studios, retail shops, art and music galleries and performances, etc. The arts also include new and emerging computer related businesses and industries as well as graphic design. All of these resources offer both established and new emerging business opportunities to help support economic development around institutions and venues as well as promote tourism and the influx of tourist dollars. The entire creative arts economy in total helps to enhance a community's vitality, sense of place, and overall quality of life. In short, these resources help to bolster a community's economy, tax base and foster important social connections that may otherwise not occur.

Existing Conditions – Chester's Creative Economy

According to the New Hampshire Business Committee for the Arts, the creative economy "encompasses the cultural core of artists, cultural nonprofits, and creative businesses that produce and distribute cultural goods and services that impact local and regional economies by generating jobs, revenue and quality of life. The creative economy is a powerful and positive force that drives community growth and vitality."⁵⁰ While the current iteration of the creative economy may include molecular engineers and graphic designers, it has its roots in the arts and is often identified with cultural nonprofits.

⁵⁰ NEW HAMPSHIRE BUSINESS COMMITTEE FOR THE ARTS. © 1999-2004. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
[HTTP://WWW.NHBCA.COM/](http://www.nhbcacom/) LAST ACCESSED 8/9/2013.

Cultural nonprofits play a significant economic role in Southern New Hampshire. According to Dunn & Bradstreet, New Hampshire is home to 4,618 arts-related businesses that employ 13,111 people.⁵¹ Art schools, design, publishing, film, radio, performing arts, visual arts/photographers and museums employ a creative workforce, spend money locally, generate government revenue, and are a cornerstone of tourism and economic development. A 2012 survey by Americans for the Arts found that in NH \$115 million was spent by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations which added/translated to \$62.1 million in local sales in retail, lodging and restaurants.⁵²

A 2012 study conducted by Americans for the Arts attempted to track how many times a dollar is “re-spent” in the local economy and the economic impact generated with each round of re-spending. This input-output analysis revealed that direct expenditures by cultural organizations in New Hampshire was more than double the national average and that average spending by nonprofit arts and culture event attendees in New Hampshire was \$22.31 per person, excluding the cost of admission to the event.

While these institutions contribute significantly to our region’s economy, they also play a crucial role in the education, health and well-being of our citizens. Exposure to the arts and creative industries fosters growth in youth populations, creates jobs and increases overall quality of life. The creative economy in the SNHPC region is an engine of growth and community vitality and will continue to play a role in shaping our region through creative industries and by adding to the cultural activity and rich history of the area.

Table 19: Select Characteristics of Arts and Cultural Institutions

Municipality	Total Cultural Businesses	Total Cultural Nonprofits	Number of Employees	Number of Employees per 1,000 Population	Total Net Assets at Year End	Total Revenue
Auburn	4	4	93	18.8	NA	NA
Bedford	17	14	320	15.1	\$350,358	\$1,229,125
Candia	5	2	91	19.1	\$902,251	\$192,266
Chester	3	5	78	16.4	\$34,190	\$21,028
Deerfield	7	7	68	15.9	\$3,514,522	\$1,843,787
Derry	21	9	1,001	30.2	\$66,184	\$186,536
Goffstown	10	2	607	34.4	\$50,477	\$61,809
Hooksett	13	9	425	31.6	\$403,969	\$519,471
Londonderry	12	6	776	32.2	\$323,326	\$277,028
1Manchester	87	62	4,352	39.7	\$170,170,914	\$19,698,244

⁵¹ New Hampshire Business Committee for the Arts. 2013. Creative Economy Facts.

http://www.nhbca.com/news_040610_ce.php last accessed 8/9/2013.

⁵² Americans for the Arts. *The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences*. Arts and Economic Prosperity IV: Report for the State of New Hampshire. Copyright 2012 Americans for the Arts, 1000 Vermont Avenue NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20005.

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New Boston	7	3	116	21.8	\$73,206	\$85,005
Raymond	8	0	277	27.3	NA	NA
Weare	5	6	169	19.2	NA	NA
Windham	9	2	198	14.6	\$52,188	\$28,621

Performing Arts Centers

Performing arts centers are part of Chester’s cultural heritage. A performing arts center is defined as a multi-use performance space that is intended for use by various types of the performing arts, including dance, music and theatre. A range of spaces, private and public, may host performances. The two performing arts centers within the Town of Chester include the Congregational and Baptist Church as well as Stevens Memorial Hall. The American Planning Association identified these two locations as part of a briefing on the role of the arts and culture in planning practice.

Public Art and Creative Spaces

Public Art are artworks that are located in public places and/or created using public funds. They usually consist of all forms of visual art conceived in any medium, material or combination thereof, which are placed in areas accessible or visible to the public. Works may be permanent, temporary, or functional. Public art does not include any architectural or landscape design, except when commissioned and designed by an artist.

In the Southern New Hampshire Region, the City of Manchester is home to numerous outdoor art displays, from small, neighborhood installations to large, iconic murals evidenced by the mural on the Manchester College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences building. These projects can be a point of pride for a community or help to combat blight through the repurposing of blank walls or publicly visible areas with murals, drawings or lighting displays. The Manchester community group known as Eagle Eyes is working with young adults in the city to clean up graffiti in publicly visible spaces and replace it with art that reflects the space or the values of the local community. More information on this group can be found on their website: <http://eagleeyes1.org/>

In addition to public art, throughout New Hampshire, businesses, non-profits and communities are developing creative spaces to support artists and cultural organizations. Among them:

- Langer Place (Manchester)
- Salmons Falls Mills (Rollingsford)
- The Button Factory (Portsmouth)
- AVA Gallery and Arts Center (Lebanon)
- Riverview Mills (Wilton)
- Mennino Place (Concord)
- Washington Street Mills and Cultural Center (Seacoast area)
see <http://www.onewashingtoncenter.com/space.php>

Planning Tools for the Arts

To foster creative business and promote local arts and a creative economy, a variety of planning and zoning tools have been implemented in many communities throughout New England. The City of Lowell, Massachusetts offered financial and regulatory incentives in select areas of their downtown to

revitalize under-utilized properties. The city adopted an Artist Overlay District that allowed artists to live and work in the same facility. This mix of uses was previously restricted under the city's zoning code. Lowell also advertised and sponsored these live/work units housed in properties in the Artist Overlay District, some of which the city had acquired through foreclosure. Through partnerships with local property owners, marketing and a zoning overlay, Lowell was able to transform its image as a disinvested, post-industrial city to a creative arts hub north of Boston.

At the state level, a 1998 declaration from the State of Rhode Island's General Assembly allows for tax incentives to be utilized by artists living in locally designated arts districts. Under Rhode Island General Laws §44-18-30B(6) the state offers an exemption from sales tax and personal income tax to all works of art sold by artists so long as they live and work within a locally designated arts district. This sales tax exemption also extends to galleries located within the district.

While the aforementioned tax incentives may not apply to New Hampshire, similar incentives could be offered to New Hampshire residents. Currently New Hampshire offers reduced property tax bills to elderly and disabled property owners under RSA 72:38-a and also offers tax relief to low and moderate income home owners. In addition, RSA 79-E known as the Downtown Tax Incentive was recently expanded to include the potential for tax relief to owners seeking to rehabilitate historic buildings, whether they are located within downtowns and village centers or not, and also adds provisions for making qualified energy improvements. Even if RSA 79-E has already been adopted locally, the town meeting or city council must vote to accept these latest amendments before it can take effect.

Generally all of these articles could be used as model legislation to create a property tax relief program at the local and state level through the application of zoning changes or overlays granting relief to those property owners using commercial or residential space for creative purposes. While it should be noted that many artists, gallery owners, and those participating in other creative industries often rent their work space this does not rule out an exception that limits the property owner to collecting tax relief in the identified zone. This exception could be implemented if the property owner can demonstrate a certain percentage of their renters are involved in a creative industry. It would be necessary to define exactly what constitutes a creative industry, or any industry type for which a similar moniker is used; however, this would be at the discretion of the enabling legislative body/municipality.

Best Practices For Creative Economic Development

There are many examples and best practices in promoting the arts and implementing creative economic development. These strategies and best practices generally center on building creative communities by convening stakeholders, building partnerships and promoting successes. Many of these strategies engage economic development professionals, chambers of commerce, artists/organizations, creative businesses, entrepreneurs, and public officials.

Faced with increasingly tighter budgets and limited resources, municipalities, arts organizations, arts advocates, and artists themselves are challenged to further the important work of bringing art to citizens, visitors, and all sectors within New Hampshire's communities. The ***Guide to Creating an Arts and Cultural Plan*** is an extensive gathering of local, state and national resources to help community arts organizers, local and regional planners and business leaders. Town and city officials, and economic

development professionals who understand the connection between the creative industries and community vitality, can create an action plan to move toward a creative economy planning focus.

Creating an Arts and Culture Plan is a planning strategy that can support community economic development, tourism, and quality of life goals. Working together, community and regional planners, town and city officials, arts and cultural councils, and citizens interested in growing the creative economy and celebrating the role that arts and culture play in community vitality can:

- Identify businesses, individuals, non-profits, and academic organizations that contribute to the creative economy;
- Collect data showing the role that creative industries, public art, and the arts education play in engaging citizens and sustaining community vitality;
- Explore collaborations and partnerships to share resources and ideas;
- Include citizens in creating a plan that is unique to the needs and desires of their individual communities or regions.⁵³

Different organizations, including local and state governments, non-profits, businesses and local and regional planning agencies can take the initiative to create policies to establish and maintain support for building the creative economy. Samples of various policy initiatives are identified and discussed below.

a. Creating an Arts and Cultural Commission

Communities can choose to create an Arts and Cultural Commission to conduct a cultural asset inventory, develop arts and cultural programming, oversee percent for art fund disbursement, and manage public art installations. Example ordinances in New Hampshire include:

- Nashua, NH – Establishing the Nashua Arts Commission
- Rochester, NH – Arts and Culture Commission

It is also important to consider what role an Arts and Cultural Commission will play in the community. Will it have purchasing authority? Will it be a stand-alone nonprofit or part of the City or Town governance structure? Will City or Town resources be available to support the Commission such as office space, accounting services and liability insurance?

b. Establishing an Arts and Cultural District

ArtistLink, a non-profit resource addressing artist needs for space, health insurance, financial support, and business planning, identifies cultural districts as “...a well-recognized, labeled area of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities and programs serve as an anchor of attraction. Typically, cultural districts are geographically defined and have many different names, including: arts districts, arts and entertainment districts, arts and science districts, artists’ quarter, museum district, and theatre

⁵³ <http://nhcreativecommunities.org/Resources/GuidetoCreatinganArtsCulturalMasterPlan/tabid/384/Default.aspx>

district.” Communities can choose to create an arts and cultural district to develop tourism, and revitalize neighborhoods.

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces, outlines 11 principles for creating great community places. Their pioneering Place making approach helps citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs.⁵⁴

c. Percent for Art Programs

The New Hampshire Percent for Art Program enacted by the State Legislature in 1979 through RSA 19-A:9 and RSA 19-A:10 authorizes one half of one percent of the capital budget appropriation for new buildings or significant renovations to be set aside in a non-lapsing account for the acquisition or commissioning of artwork. The Percent for Art Program is dedicated to aesthetically enriching state funded buildings, enhancing the effectiveness of the services provided in state buildings through the art that is displayed there and making the arts more available to our citizens. The program takes a unique approach to the acquisition of artwork by creating a Site Selection Committee that engages in a process where planners, architects, state employees, art professional and private citizens collaborate in the selection, commissioning or purchasing of works of art by artists and craftspeople for state buildings. The themes developed by the committee and the artwork selected often help the agencies housed within the buildings to better meet their mission. Some examples of existing programs in New Hampshire include:

- Hampton Beach Percent for Art Project
- Portsmouth Ordinance for Funding of Public Art
- Portsmouth Public Art Acquisition Policy

d. New Hampshire Creative Communities

There are many examples of creative communities in New Hampshire. New Hampshire’s creative community efforts take many forms. They are evolving and established local and regional arts councils, municipally associated arts commissions, statewide arts service organizations, and organizations (chambers of commerce, main street programs, municipal economic development departments) that support strengthening the arts infrastructure in their communities/regions.

The City of Concord offers inspiration and guidance for what can be achieved in other communities in the state. In 2006, the City of Concord set out to develop and enhance the city’s creative economy. Their efforts resulted in the 2008 creative economy plan titled: *New Hampshire’s Creative Crossroads: The Concord Creative Economy Plan*. The goals of this plan include:

- **Capacity** – Build capacity of Concord’s creative sector through strategies such as public and private funding for not-for-profits, information, networking, management assistance, and coordination.

⁵⁴ http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

- **Creative Climate** – Develop a business and public policy climate that encourages creativity with a public commitment to creative economic development that actively enables creative enterprises and individual artists.
- **Identity** – Define and promote a creative identity and brand Concord so residents, current and prospective employers, potential creative workers, and visitors understand Concord’s unique and authentic identity as a home and destination.
- **Downtown** – Develop and enhance Concord’s downtown, implementing Main Street Concord plans for upper-story residential and creative enterprises, special events, restaurants, shopping, and streetscape and façade development that results in a vibrant, lively downtown with activity into the evenings and weekends.
- **Greater Concord** – Enhance neighborhoods and surrounding communities as walkable villages that encourage creative businesses, artist housing, cultural programming, parks and open space, and cultural attractions.⁵⁵

The achievement of these goals will represent a significant investment in defining Concord as a creative city. Already the Concord Chamber of Commerce has partnered with the City’s Economic Development Advisory Council to publish the previously mentioned report and the goal of retaining the offices of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen has been achieved. Artist housing has also been provided in newly developed units and a feasibility study of incubator space in downtown Concord has been completed.

According the NEFA, Concord has excelled in defining their creative industries and worked toward breaking down negative stereotypes between contrasting industries. The Creative Crossroads plan notes that a creative economy consists of:

“a cultural core that includes occupations and industries, both for profit and not for profit that focus on the production and distribution of cultural goods and services, as well as intellectual property – but specifically intellectual property that has a cultural component. The **Creative Economy involves** a cultural workforce [consisting of] occupations that represent work that directly produces cultural goods and services, regardless of industry, or work within an industry that makes cultural goods/services regardless of the actual work task. [The creative economy consists of] **Cultural Enterprises** [or] those industries that are involved in the production and or distribution of cultural goods and services.”⁵⁵

Through the use of public/private partnerships, definition of goals and the addition of a housing component into the long-term feasibility of the expansion of Concord’s creative economy, the city is leading the way in planning for creativity. Municipalities in the SNHPC region could benefit from the lessons learned in Concord. These municipalities could use the *Crossroads* plan as a model for creating a regional identity or brand that is amenable to cultural and creative industries.

A thriving arts environment is important to communities. In New Hampshire we know that change happens at the local level and the arts are no exception. Local efforts support and bring new focus to

⁵⁵ City of Concord Economic Development Advisory Council; Creative Economy Task Force. New Hampshire’s Creative Crossroads: The Concord Creative Economy Plan. June 30, 2008.

the arts and creativity and what they do for our communities. Provided below is a list of many creative communities and local efforts currently in the works in New Hampshire:

NH Creative Communities

- Arts Alive! (Keene area) www.monadnockartsalive.org
- Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire – www.aannah.org
- Art Esprit Rochester – www.artesprit.org
- Art-Speak, Portsmouth Cultural Commission (seacoast) www.art-speak.org
- ArtVentures New Hampshire (statewide)
- AVA Gallery & Arts Center (Lebanon) www.avagallery.org
- City Arts Nashua – www.2.cityartsnashua.org
- Creative Concord – www.concordnhchamber.com
- Dover Arts Commission – www.ci.dover.nh.us
- Lake Sunapee Region – www.centerfortheartsnh.org
- Lamprey Arts and Cultural Alliance (Newmarket) www.lampreyarts.org
- Lebanon Recreation & Parks Department – <http://recreation.lebnh.net/>
- Manchester Arts Commission
- Manchester Economic Development Office – www.yourmanchesternh.com
- MoCo Arts (Keene) www.moco.org
- New Hampshire Business Committee for the Arts – www.nhbca.com
- Peterborough Cultural Planning Committee
- Portsmouth Economic Development Program
- Rochester Main Street Program – www.rochestermainstreet.org
- Upper Valley Arts Alliance – www.uvarts.org

Conclusions and Recommendations

The town of Chester's history spans centuries and encompasses many facets. The town is home to a variety of potential preservation gems. Chester recognizes the importance of preserving the historic character of the town. Despite the advantages of designation, it is important to realize that historic sites are still vulnerable to loss. Chester should educate themselves and their citizenry about the advantages and disadvantages of historic preservation and implement the types that are most suited to their historic resources.

Many of the aforementioned challenges and goals for the protection and preservation of historic resources are applicable for the region's cultural venues and industry. Without proper foresight and follow through of suggested policies cultural and artistic venues may go in need of new facilities or desperately needed funding sources. For municipalities to move toward expanding local creative economies the City of Concord's policies should be review to determine applicability when crafting municipal policy. Furthermore, cooperation between local business leaders and the creative community should be encouraged. Municipal administrators are in a position to take a leadership role in facilitating this dialogue and should be encouraged to do so.

Historic preservation designations and policies geared toward bolstering arts and cultural resources can provide education – not only to visitors and patrons of the sites and venues, but also to their own citizens thereby encouraging future efforts. Historic, artistic and cultural resources can attract visitors,

which can add dollars to the community's economy. Provided below are the key goals and recommendations identified through this chapter and the Project Leadership Team.

Identified Key Goals and Recommendations:

1. Promote greater collaboration between the public and private sector in historic preservation and the arts and culture. The SNHPC should work individually with each of the region's communities to actively collaborate in establishing historic, arts and cultural commissions and developing local arts and historic preservation plans, visions and goals and recommendations that can advance historic preservation and promote the arts and culture in local and regional economic development initiatives and strategies. This includes taking stock and conducting necessary inventory of existing regulations, policies and programs.
2. SNHPC can also help build local leadership and set up appropriate commissions and promote "place-making" as the centerpiece of local historic, arts and cultural plans. This planning must involve the public and key stakeholders within each community and address "place-making", arts and culture, and historic preservation.
3. Some additional important goals and recommendations include: (a) keeping arts in regional and local budgets; (b) promoting businesses and organizations that can provide the leadership skills necessary to build and maintain public and private support, partnerships and volunteers in the arts and historic preservation; (c) conduct comprehensive inventories of the historic and cultural infrastructure, including cluster and target analysis of specialized historic, arts and culture-related industries and businesses; (d) obtain and provide planning grants and training to communities to promote the arts; (e) consider establishing cultural and mixed use zoning districts; (f) seeking legislative authority to create and implement new tools such as cultural enterprise zones; (g) most importantly creating and fostering an environment, places, amenities and events that can stimulate investment, create new jobs and business opportunities, attract young workers and build a talented workforce; and (h) promoting and using historic preservation and the arts as a local economic development tool within the community.
4. Artistic talent and historic preservation are essential for revitalization and economic growth. Artists need places to live, work, perform and to exhibit their work. Communities need historic buildings and places to sustain community character and place. All of these actions including the reuse of existing older industrial space and historic properties as space for artists and cultural events and organizations will improve quality of life and attract creative industries and businesses and promote economic growth and development.
5. The primary recommendation for this chapter is to conduct a detailed historical resources inventory survey of the Town of Chester. In accordance with State and Federal standards the table that lists Chester's historical resources is a good starting point; however the survey should provide a description, history and assessment of each historical resource within the town itself. Knowing that a building is old isn't enough to make it historic, and without understanding the history behind it, it is difficult to explain why it is important to preserve.

Appendix A

Community Survey Responses Received for Question 3: What three features in Chester have the greatest historic significance or preservation value?

1. Old Barns
2. Old Town hall in center of town, Spring Hill Farm
3. Community Survey Responses
4. Historic buildings, Cemeteries, Open space
5. Town Center, Historic Buildings in Chester
6. Chester Congregational Church, Stevens Memorial Hall, Village cemetery
7. The Cannons on the Common, Stevens Hall, The Church in the Center of Town
8. Town Center, Cemeteries, Historic Building
9. Stevens Hall, Congregational Church, cemetery
10. Former Chester College, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
11. Stevens Hall, Post office, Café
12. Stevens Memorial Hall, Village Center
13. The Center, Stevens Hall, Cemetery
14. Stevens Hall, Historic Landmark in Center of Town, Cemeteries
15. Post office building, Library building, Stevens Memorial hall
16. Stevens Hall, Cemetery
17. Homes on 121, Wason Pond, The farms and downtown
18. Stevens Hall, Congregational Church, cemetery
19. Historical Society, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
20. Barns, cemetery, Stevens Hall
21. Town Hall
22. Stevens Hall, cemetery, Congregational Church
23. Stephens Hall, cemetery, Congregational & Baptist Church
24. Historic Buildings, Preservation of Land
25. Town Center, Chester College
26. Cemetery
27. Church, Steven's Hall, cemetery Downtown
28. Chester Congregational Church, Stevens Memorial Hall, Miss Church's farm
29. Congregational Church, Stevens Hall, Chester St. -homes and buildings
30. Church/Town Hall in Center, cemetery, Existing open spaces/recreational areas
31. Historic look of town center (i.e. post office, library, Stevens hall, church), cemetery
32. Rural nature
33. cemetery, History in center of town, old barn
34. Stevens hall, Chester Library, numerous historic homes in town
35. Stevens hall, Baptist Church, Homes in Center of Town
36. Stevens Hall
37. Village cemetery, Residences on 121 and 121A, Existing landmarks
38. Open Space, Center of Town, Less Growth
39. Church, cemetery, Stevens Hall

40. Post Office
41. cemetery, Civil War Statute and cannon, Church
42. Written History, Military History, Structure History
43. Stevens Hall, Chester Congregational Church, Chester Village cemetery
44. Main St. Downtown area
45. All historic homes not just in the center, the Church, Stevens Hall
46. cemetery, Stevens Hall, Rte. 121 Homes
47. Library, Post Office, Town Inn
48. Stevens Memorial Hall, cemetery, Church
49. Old Homes, Farms, Forests and Wetlands
50. Stevens Hall, Village Center, cemetery
51. Old School house, Town Cemeteries, Historic Houses
52. Stevens Hall, Farms, cemetery
53. Mill Dam, Center of Town cemetery, Stevens Hall
54. All the old houses, Stevens Hall, The Church, The Common
55. Town hall and town center, Watsons Pond, cemetery
56. Library, Stevens Hall, Covered bridge by Wason Pond
57. Library, Church, cemetery
58. Cannons and the site they occupy same for cemetery monuments across from cannons, Covered bridge and associated area with Wason pond
59. Former Chester College, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
60. Historical Society, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
61. Stevens Hall, cemetery, Church
62. Town Hall/Library, Soldiers Monument, Wason Pond
63. Old Town Hall
64. Chester Congregational Church, Village cemetery, Stevens Hall
65. Antique houses around the center, The Church in Center, Wason Pond/Dam/Bridge
66. Town Center, Chester Street
67. Bob Healey's farm, Church. cemetery
68. Historic Homes, Stevens Hall, Historic Sites
69. Don't Know
70. Forsyth Forest Cedar Bog, Black Gum trees, North Pond Rd., Exeter River
71. Town Center including surrounding homes, Farms - Stands, Large Land Lots
72. Chester Street, Cemeteries
73. Church, Chester street, Stevens Hall
74. Stevens Hall, cemetery
75. All historic structures in the center and surrounding area
76. Houses/Buildings over 200 years old, Edwards Mill and Pond, Town Center
77. Village cemetery, Historic Houses
78. Rural Character, Stevens Hall, Cemeteries
79. Chester Center

80. Town Hall and surrounding buildings, Cannons and Statue, Area around town center - along 121
81. Stevens Hall/Library/Post Office, Town Hall, Chester Academy
82. Stevens memorial hall, cemeteries
83. Stevens Hall, Antique Homes on Chester Street and Sandown Road, Church Farm
84. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery
85. Stevens Hall
86. Stevens Hall and Chester Street Homes, Wason Pond Rec. Area, Church Farm and active private and commercial farms
87. cemetery, Stevens Hall, Library/post office
88. Chester Street, The Old School Houses, Cemetery
89. Chester Street and Haverhill Rd., Brick school building for historical building, indicate the era of existing structures.
90. Chester Street
91. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery
92. Stevens Hall, Wason Pond trails and land area
93. Stevens Hall, Church, Vestry
94. Cemetery in center of town, Church, old Town Hall
95. Open Space when driving through center, visual - historical character of 121/downtown, love the church bells
96. The visual aesthetic of Rte. 121 and Chester St., Open Space along rte. 121/102,
97. Stevens Hall, American Legion
98. Chester St., Halloween on Chester St., Rural environment
99. The Town Center, Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Area, Cemetery
100. Rural History, Open Spaces, Wooded Spaces
101. Old Cemetery, Houses near center of town, Statues
102. The church, the village center, Stevens Hall
103. Center of Town, Farms, Old Chester Turnpike
104. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery, Cong Bap Church
105. Older homes, giving owners tax breaks to preserve those homes and barns, Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery.
106. Stevens hall, Church and Vestry, Post office
107. Stevens hall, Library, Post office area
108. Cemetery, Stevens hall, Wason Pond Bridge
109. Rural Character, Center of Town
110. Rte. 102/121 intersection
111. Chester Street Area, Cemetery, Wason Pond area
112. Cemetery, Stevens Hall, Post Office
113. Old town hall, Church, Cemetery, Chester rod and gun club
114. Stevens Hall, Historic Homes
115. Congregational and Baptist church, Chester village cemetery, Chester center
116. Town Cemetery, Stevens Hall

117. Open Land, Agricultural zoning
118. Church in Center of Town, Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery
119. Cemetery, Old Houses on Chester Street, Old Church at center of town
120. Land, Center of Town
121. Stevens Hall, Common with Commons, Baptist Church
122. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery, Monument Cannons and Common
123. Wason Pond, Grange Hall, Scarecrows
124. Rte. 121 Colonial homes, Town Forests, Wason Pond
125. I'm all for preservation but not at the taxpayer's expense
126. Cemetery, Town Center, Wason Pond
127. Stevens Hall, Church
128. Rte. 102/121 intersection, Chester Street
129. Main street/Center of town, Wason Pond and trails, Cemeteries
130. Town Center, Town center historical buildings, All other historical sites
131. Stevens Hall, Chester Congregational church, Old Barns
132. Stevens Hall, Library, Church
133. Farm Land, Forest Areas, Open Spaces
134. Agricultural/Residential
135. Old Barns, Old Historic Residential homes, Cemeteries in the woods
136. Church, Stevens Hall, Cemeteries
137. Stevens Hall, Some homes are 200+ years old and have been maintained with character, Cemetery
138. Chester Street, Wason Pond, Chester Center
139. Cemetery, Undeveloped Land
140. Town Center (Stevens/Church/Cemetery)
141. Cemetery, Stevens Hall, Muriel Church Property
142. Post office, Wason Pond (trails not fields)
143. Main Street
144. Public Buildings, Cemetery, Old Homes
145. Center of Cemetery, Houses on Rte. 121 Downtown, Memorial Hall and vestry
146. Edwards Mill, Old mill site on Pulpit rock road
147. Old buildings town hall, library, conservation trails, Wason development
148. Town Center, Wason Pond Area
149. Stevens Hall, Church, Old Homes on Chester street and Haverhill Rd
150. Stevens Hall, Church
151. Open land/farming, town Chester, trees
152. Center of town, Farmland
153. Stevens Hall, Congregational Church
154. Town Center, Wason Pond and natural areas, Low Housing density - 2 acre min.
155. Farm Land, Old restored houses, No ugly businesses
156. Well manufactured homes in village center, Rural Character, The absence of strip malls, Convenience stores and gas stations

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- 157. Old Town Hall Building, Old Church, Cemetery
- 158. Downtown Area, Open spaces, Rural Character
- 159. Small town living

Appendix B

**Table 1
Chester's Historical Resources**

Date	Historic Name	Description	Comments
Candia Road			
	Miss Morse - 1857	House	
	W. Weeks - 1857	Old Colonial House	
	T. Seavey - 1857	House	
	A. Holman - 1857	House	
	Schoolhouse	Ladies Aid Society	
	B. Chase	House	Old Colonial. Recently restored. (1996)
	CEM		
		Former Site	
		Mile Marker	Between Clark Road and Chester Street
Chester Street			
1751	Jacob Chase	Georgian House	Horse block dated 1752 now located on town common.
1830c	F.A. Morse	Greek Revival House	Built by Frederick A. Morse.
1835	Brick School House	Greek Revival House	Bricks made in Epping. It was used as a look out during WWII. Beginning of Chester Turnpike and mile marker.
1747	Elliot Tavern	Federal House	Built by Edmund Elliot. Popular stop for stage coach and drovers.
1730c	Jacob Elliot	Georgian Cape House	Portions of this house reportedly date from 1730 possibly built by Ithamar Berry.
1790c		Federal House	
1832c	"Chamberlain"	Federal House	Probably built by J.T. Underhill. Beautiful barn that was a stable in the Vanderbilt era.
1828c	Fitts - 1857	Greek Revival House	Isaac Blaisdell Clockery
1790c	The Cradle/Hayes	Georgian/Federal House	Part of French estate in the 1800s. Birthplace of Benjamin Brown French, Clerk of the House of Representatives and friend of Abraham Lincoln.
1788	Richardson-French/Masters	Georgian/Colonial Revival House	Built by William Hicks. Chief Justice William Richardson conducted state business here.
1787	A.T. French/Dexter House/Orcutt	Georgian House	Built by Tappan Webster, Purchased by Lord Timothy Dexter in 1796. Later owned by Epraim Orcutt and used as a tavern.
1857c	Vanderbilt House/JW West	Federal House	
1850c		Greek Revival House	Built by Greene Dennis.

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Date	Historic Name	Description	Comments
1890c	Baptist Parsonage	Greek Revival House/ Queen Anne House	Appears to have been built by John W. West II, who donated it to Baptist Church.
1900		Vernacular Colonial Revival House	Built by Luther Hall.
1849c	Osgood Richards Home	Federal/Greek Revival House	Built by Osgood Richards. Has an interesting doorway.
1800c	"Orcutt" - 1857	Federal House	
1846		Greek Revival House	Built by Mr. Londegan.
1825c		Greek Revival House	
1902		House	Built by Roland Nichols.
Chester Street			
1800c	"Greenough" - 1857	Federal House	
1840c	Benjamin P. French 1857	Nutting Hall- WPC, Greek Revival	Was library at the center of town. Moved to present location by Finnigan.
1830c	T.J. Melvin	Lane Bldg - WPC, Greek Revival	Built by Thomas Jefferson Melvin.
1895c		Parsonage, Greek Revival/Italianate	Built by Nathan Bradstreet.
1799	Aiken	Joicoeur-Smith, Federal	Built by Amos Kent, later owned by Samuel Aiken (who fought in the battle of Bunker Hill), Lucien Kent (Abby Kent served as hostess at the White House when Franklin Pierce was President) and Farish Lewis.
1735c	Gov. John Bell House	Douglas Hall, White Pines College, Georgian/ Federal/ Queen Anne	Rear ell was original house, built by Ebenezer Flagg. Main house built in 1806 by Gov. John Bell.
1865c	Crawford House	Italianate House	Outstanding example of Italianate style, one of finest in NH.
1828c		Greek Revival/Queen Anne Church Vestry	
1830c		Antique shop	
1883	Ruth Roy Estate	Mid-19th Century Vernacular Post Office	Site of early post office, which has had several different locations during its history.
1910c	Stevens Memorial Hall	Queen Anne (eclectic) Town Hall	Given to town by George Washington Stevens in memory of his wife. Unique carvings in upper hall.
1773	Chester Congressional Church	Greek Revival appearance	Structure was originally built to be used as a meeting house but was later converted for other uses
Clark Road			
	G.W. Clark - 1857	Colonial House	
Cole Road			
	A. Morse - 1857	Compline	Well cared for, retains primitive features.
Cunningham Road			
		Presbyterian Church site	

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Date	Historic Name	Description	Comments
Derry Road			
	Dr. I. Hall - 1857	House	
	Schoolhouse #2	House	
1790	J. Sanborn - 1857	Hardy's	Poultry farm for many years.
1833	Bell House, Richardson	House	Built by Samuel Bell who was Governor of NH 1819-1823 and US Senator 1823-1835
	A.S. Dearborn - 1857	House	
	R. Morse - 1857	House	
	T.J. Melvin - 1857	House	
1729	Colby House, Ebenezer Dearborn Jr. Homestead	"Chat Noir"	The L part of the house is reputed to be the oldest standing structure in town. Destroyed by fire in 2004.
		House	
	Schoolhouse	House	
		House	Old schoolhouse moved to this site to become kitchen.
Derry Road			
	C.W. Wilcomb - 1857	House	
	A. Ball - 1857	House	
	Graham - 1733, Davis - 1857	House	Owned by Dr. Benjamin Kittridge in 1807.
	J.C.D. Shaw	House	
Edwards Mill Road			
	Edward's Mill	Sawmill	
Exeter River			
1720		Sawmill	First sawmill in Chester.
1730	Grist Mill	Sawmill	
	Haselton Grist Mill	Sawmill	
Freemont Road			
	Mrs. Hoitt - 1857	House	
	B. Spofford - 1857	House	
	Col. J. Towle - 1857	House	
	D. Lane - 1857	Colonial House	House and outbuildings well kept (1996).
	N. Chase - 1857	Cape House	Fine example of old cape.
		Unknown site	
Halls Village Road			
	S. Kendall - 1857	Dolloffs Dairy Farm	
	J. Kendall	Tali Arabians	
	M. Hall	House	
Hanson Road			
1743	Jacob Clough Homestead	House	Date from sign on house.
		Colonial House	
Harantis Lake Road			

Chester Master Plan 2015

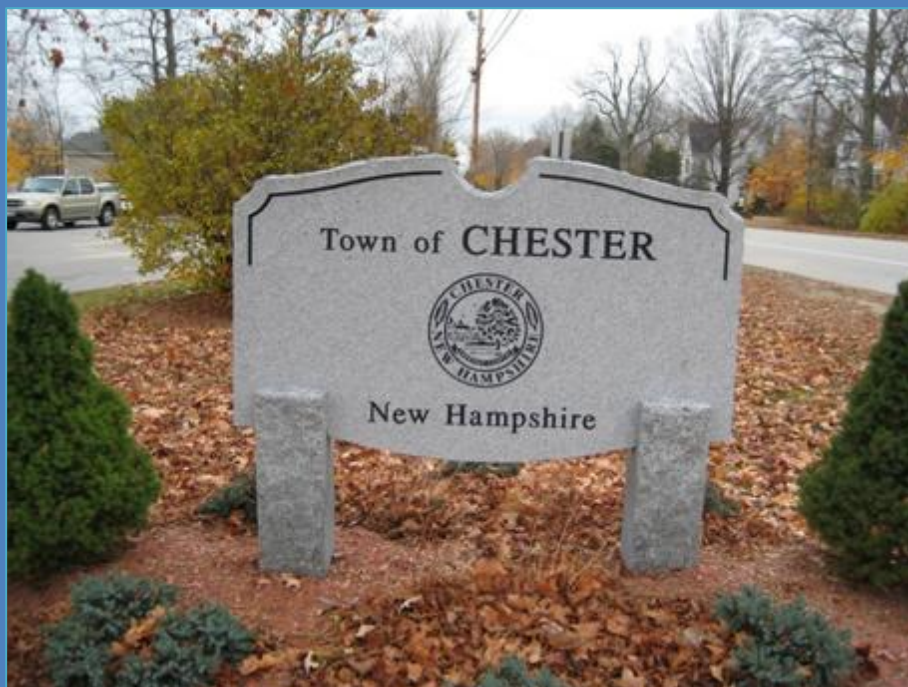
Date	Historic Name	Description	Comments
	I. Morse - 1857	House	Early farm house.
Harantis Lake Road			
	Couch's Mill	Sawmill	
	L.S. Couch - 1857	House	
Haverhill Road			
1734	R. Long - 1857	Georgian House	"Blunt Tavern" was built by Captain Blunt.
1804	Parsonage	Federal House	First parsonage for Congregational Church. Built by William Bell. Was town library at one time.
1749	C.S. Wilcomb - 1857/Glidden Tavern	Georgian House	Glidden Tavern. Baptist church meetings held here from 1819 to 1823. At this time a church was built.
1776	J. Lane	Federal House	Also known as the "Townsend House"
1795	J.D. Bell - 1857	Georgian House	Built by William Bell. Was a tavern.
1800c	Daniel Bell - 1857	Federal House	
1840	J. Robison - 1857	Greek Revival House	
1739	Blackstone	House	
1741	Messer - 1857	House	1741 refers to oldest part of house. Was a tannery, school, birthplace of Wm. H. Paine (Brooklyn Bridge and SF trolley car engineer)
Haverhill Road			
		House	Building that housed the blacksmith shop is still standing (1996).
1828	Baptist Church Parsonage/ Learnard 1857	House	
1875c	Spollott's Store	House	At center crossroads. Was Post Office at one time
1722		House	1722 is written over front door
	D. Osgood	House	
	Schoolhouse	House	
		House	Still a working farm (1996).
1883	E. Richardson - 1857/Tolford House	House	Block House. Previous dwelling on this site was used as a garrison, and later as a tavern.
1732	V. Niles	House	First frame house in Chester, only a portion remains.
	Mrs. Chase - 1857	Colonial House	Fine example of Colonial architecture.
1727	S. Hazelton - 1857	House	1727 on chimney
1736	Wm Hazelton - 1857	House	Built by Epraim Hazelton. Birthplace of Hon. Gerry W. Hazelton and Hon. George C. Hazelton, both Congressmen from Wisconsin.
	Z. Shirley - 1857	House	Excellent example of Sears barn.
		Town Common/Square	
		Mile Marker	There are three mile markers on the southeastern section of Haverhill Road.

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Date	Historic Name	Description	Comments
Jct. NH 121 and NH 102			
1910	Stevens Memorial Hall	Colonial Revival style	Designed by architect George Adams
Lane Road			
	E. Brown 1857	House	
	I.L. Seavey - 1857	House	Former schoolhouse which was moved to this site.
	J. Hook - 1857	Colonial House	House in excellent condition.
		Unknown site	
	G. Marden - 1857	House	
Ledge Road			
	J. Forsaith - 1857	House	King's grant house
Ledge Road			
	J. Shackford - 1857	Salt Box House	Most of early features remain.
NH 102 and NH 121			
1751	Chester Village Cemetery	Cemetery	One of the oldest graveyards in the State
North Pond Road			
	S.W. Edwards - 1857	House	
Old Auburn Road			
1790c	Waddell - 1857	North Colonial House	Pingree farm only surviving dairy farm in Derry.
1773c	Brown - 1857	Federal House	
1750c	Ingalls - 1857	Georgian/ Federal House	Known for many years as Wentworth Lodge.
Old Sandown Road			
	H. Pressey - 1857	House	
	G. Miller - 1857	Cape House	
	F. Hills	House	

Chester

2015 Master Plan



Energy Chapter

Energy

Introduction

Energy efficiency has become a key issue throughout the nation, as the financial costs continue to increase and concern mounts over the environmental and health consequences of major forms of energy production. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance and tools for identifying strategies, policies and actions, as well as establishing a vision for achieving energy efficiency and conservation in the Town of Chester. Promoting and incorporating energy efficient measures in town buildings, activities and ordinances has many benefits to the town, including reducing operating costs, cutting carbon emissions and pollution, and diversifying the town's economy.



This chapter also updates the Town of Chester's previous Energy Chapter prepared in 2011. There are no questions or comments regarding energy issues in the 2015 Community Master Plan Survey.

Energy Conservation Related to Sustainability

Energy conservation is the efficient use of or reduction of energy use by implementing energy efficient practices, policies, technologies, construction, development or any other action aimed at reducing energy usage.

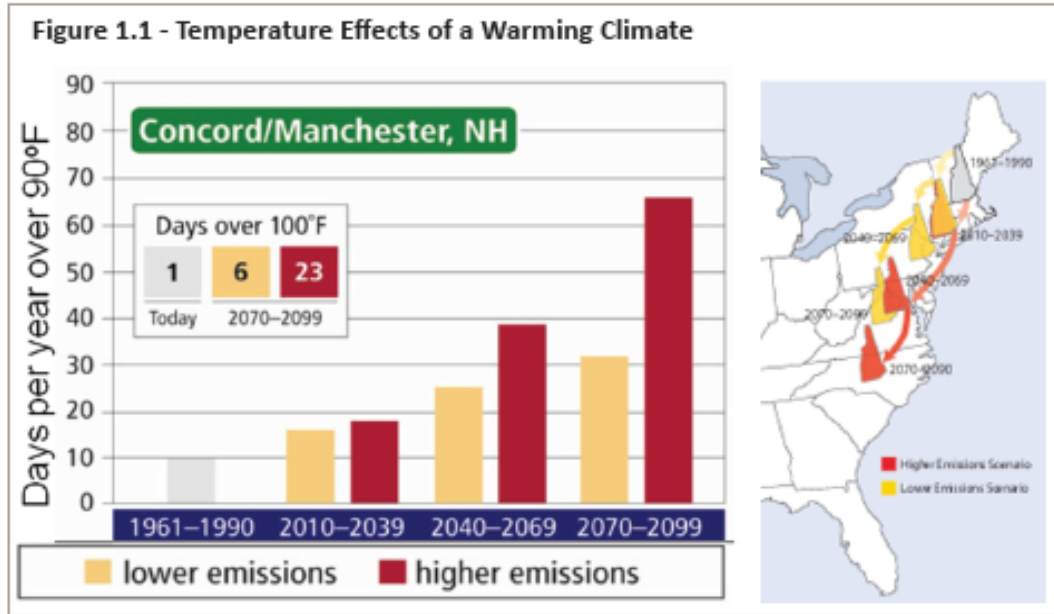
The 1970 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) formally established as a national goal the creation and maintenance of conditions under which humans and nature "can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic and other requirements of *present and future generations of Americans.*" This definition has become an accepted definition of sustainability. A key component to sustainability is energy efficiency. Energy efficiency serves many purposes, including:

- Reducing costs
- Reducing health impacts from pollutants and environmental destruction
- Reducing environmental pollutants
- Reducing negative environmental impacts
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Increasing quality of life by reducing environmental, health and economic impacts of conventional means of energy production

An extensive analysis review of peer-reviewed scientific literature by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has clearly shown that if global greenhouse gas emissions

continue to grow at current rates, there will be significant and far reaching changes in our future climate that will profoundly affect our health, economy, security, and quality of life.⁵⁶

On a regional scale, the 2007 Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment (NECIA) concludes that if greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase at current rates, by late in this century New Hampshire’s climate will more closely resemble that of North Carolina (Figure 1.1).⁵⁷



Such a change in New Hampshire’s climate presents numerous potential economic impacts:

- Reduced viability of New Hampshire ski areas (a \$650 million annual industry in New Hampshire) and other winter-based recreational industries; the snowmobiling economy (\$3 billion annually in the Northeast region) almost eliminated in the southern areas and reduced to fewer than 20 days per year in the northern part of the state.
- Increased frequency and severity of heavy, damaging rainfall events and the associated major economic impacts of cleanup, repair, and lost productivity and economic activity.
- Increased frequency of short-term (one to three month) summer droughts from every two to three years to annually, resulting in increased water costs, and impacting New Hampshire’s agricultural and forestry industries.
- Increased coastal flooding, erosion, and private property and public infrastructure damage from the estimated rise in sea level.

⁵⁶ Gittel, R. and Magnuson, M. (2007). Economic Impact of a New Hampshire Renewable Portfolio Standard. UNH Economic Analysis, 74 pp.

http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/climate/documents/unh_rps_report.pdf.

⁵⁷ NHDES. New Hampshire Climate Action Plan. March 2009.

- Increased human health impacts and costs due to extreme heat (more than 20 days per year projected over 100°F), increased air pollution, and prevalence of vector borne diseases.
- Change in forest species and extinctions. These changes would have significant impacts on timber harvesting, the maple syrup industry and tourism in New Hampshire which will cause direct economic impacts to the State.

According to the IPCC the type, frequency and intensity of extreme events are expected to change as Earth's climate changes, and these changes could occur even with relatively small mean climate changes. Changes in some types of extreme events have already been observed, for example, increases in the frequency and intensity of heat waves and heavy precipitation events. These changes have been observed in New Hampshire with recent extreme flooding events that happened in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, the 2008 ice storm, the 2010 windstorm and most recently a record-breaking snowstorm in October 2011 resulting in the third largest power outage in State history.

Chester Energy Goals

The Chester Planning Board has developed the following goals for energy use and reduction for the town.

- Improve energy efficiency of Chester's municipal buildings
- Support regional, state and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases
- Develop an integrated education, outreach and workforce training program
- Plan for efficient growth and development patterns

State Statutes/Plans Related to Energy

State Statutes outline the purpose of land use regulations which are implemented by Planning Boards. Pertinent sections which relate to environment and energy include the following sections:

RSA 672:1

III. Proper regulations enhance the public health, safety and general welfare and encourage the appropriate and wise use of land.

III-a. Proper regulations encourage energy efficient patterns of development, the use of solar energy, including adequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy uses, and the use of other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation. Therefore, zoning ordinances should not unreasonably limit installation of solar, wind, or other renewable energy systems or the building of structures that facilitate the collection of renewable energy, except necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

RSA 674:2

The master plan shall include, at a minimum, the following required sections:

(n) an energy section, which includes an analysis of energy and fuel resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems affecting the municipality and a statement of policy on the conservation of energy.

RSA 38-D Ch. 275 (effective September 27, 2009)

Enables the appointment of an energy commission by either the local legislative or the local governing body of 3-10 members with staggered three year terms. The purpose of an energy commission is "...for the study, planning, and utilization of energy resources for municipal buildings and built resources of such city or town", to research municipal energy use, and recommend to local boards pertaining to municipal energy plans and sustainable practices, such as energy conservation, energy efficiency, energy generation, and zoning practices.

RSA 155-A:2(VI) permits communities to adopt stricter measures than the New Hampshire State Building Code.

RSA 72:61-72 permits municipalities to offer a property tax exemption on solar, wind and wood heating energy systems. These systems include solar hot water, solar photovoltaic, wind turbine or central wood heating systems (not stovetop or woodstoves).

1.1. New Hampshire Climate Action Plan

The 2009 NH Climate Action Plan was developed by the state-authorized, bi-partisan Climate Change Policy Task Force that was composed of representatives from all sectors of the NH community. It aims at achieving the greatest feasible reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while also providing the greatest possible long-term economic benefits to the citizens of New Hampshire.

The Task Force concluded that the most significant reductions in both emissions and costs will come from substantially increasing energy efficiency in all sections of the economy, continuing to increase sources of renewable energy and designing our communities to reduce reliance on automobiles for transportation. The Climate Action Plan recommends that New Hampshire strive to achieve long-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The Climate Change Policy Task Force also recommends 67 specific actions to achieve the following goals:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, electric generation, and transportation;
- Protect natural resources to maintain the amount of carbon sequestered;
- Support regional and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases;
- Develop an integrated education, outreach and workforce training program; and
- Adapt to existing and potential climate change impacts.

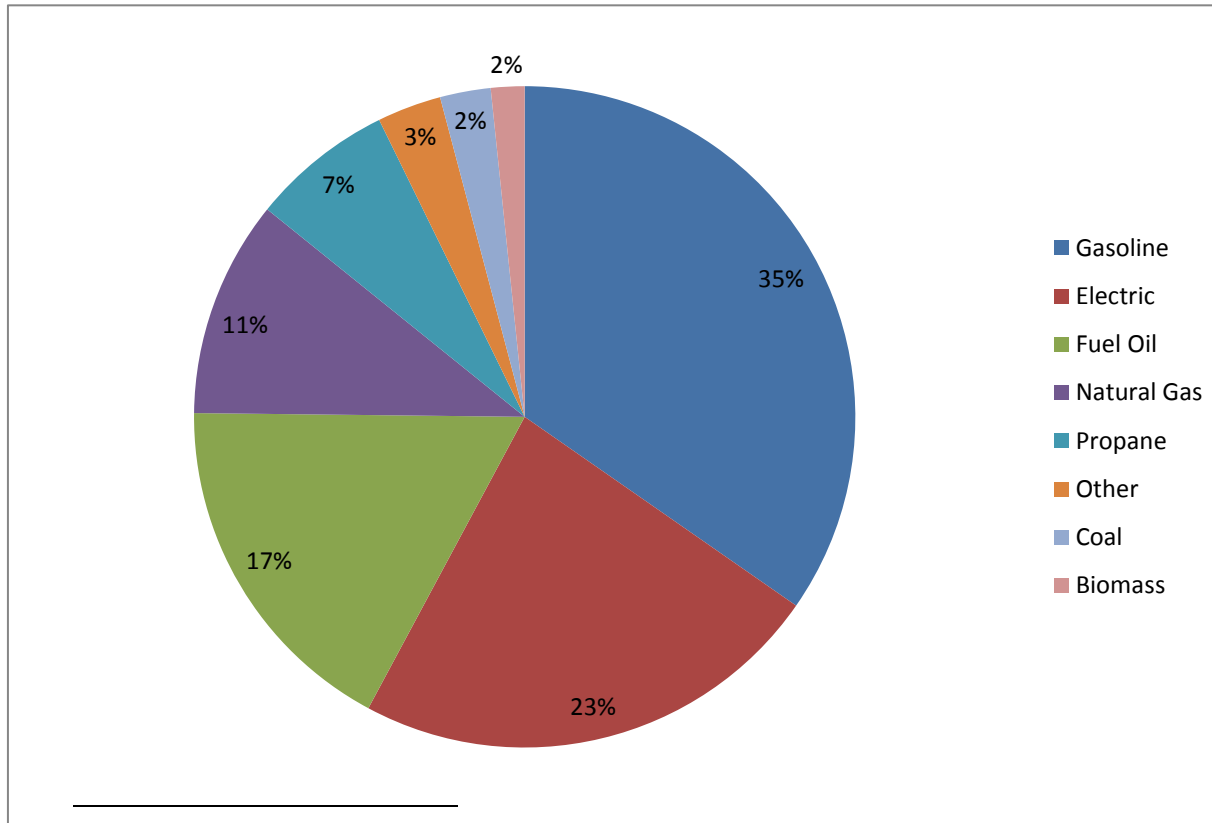
It is envisioned that with participation from all communities, the NH Climate Action Plan will benefit the economy, increase state and regional energy security, and improve environmental quality. In order to meet the recommended goal of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions

statewide, it states that NH communities must engage in local energy planning that includes strategies for decreasing their emissions overall.

The Town of Chester adopted the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan in 2009 and has committed to work towards supporting the goals, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing energy conservation.

Existing Conditions

3.1. State Energy Supply and Consumption



New Hampshire citizens, businesses, and industries spent almost \$5 billion on energy in 2009⁵⁸.

Figure 1.2

Of this money, more than 2/3 of it left the state immediately, much of it to pay for fossil fuels and nuclear fuels imported from overseas.⁵⁹ This outflow of dollars represents nearly 7% of New Hampshire’s GDP and has been identified as a major drain on the economy. Investments in more efficient energy use could cost up to \$2 billion. However, savings would offset the investments in less than 4 years. According to a 2009 study, if all state households achieved the highest level of energy efficiency, residents would save \$309 million per year.⁶⁰ Commercial and industrial buildings would save \$220 million per year.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Energy Information Administration, State Energy Data System 2009, “Table S1b Energy Expenditure Estimates by Source, 2009,” http://www.eia.gov/emeu/states/hf.jsp?incfile=sep_sum/plain_html/sum_ex_tot.html.

⁵⁹ New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, “2007 New Hampshire Energy Facts,”

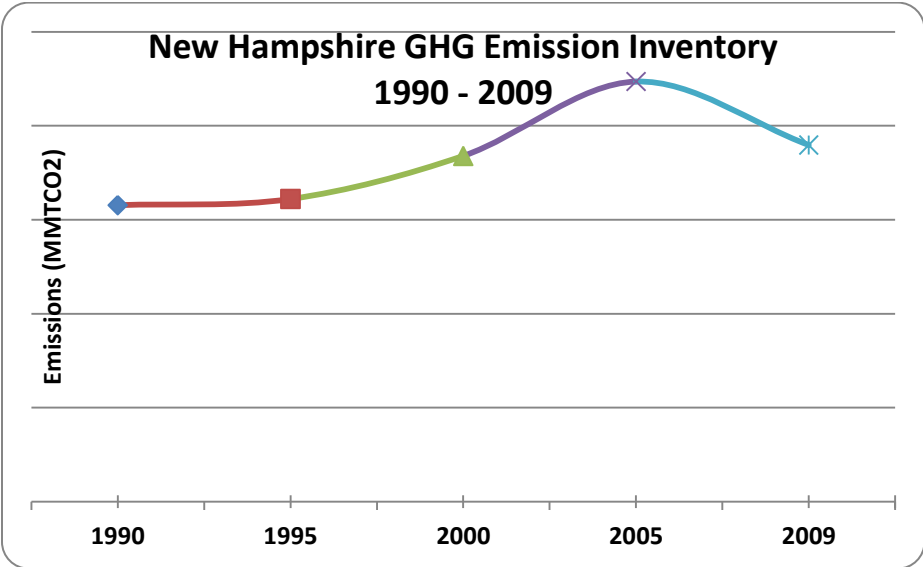
<http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/energy/nhenergyfacts/2007/introduction.htm>.

⁶⁰ This represents energy savings of around 20%, as defined as cost-effective in the study *Additional Opportunities for Energy*

Efficiency in New Hampshire, Final Report to the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, GDS Associates, Inc., 2009

⁶¹ Independent Study of Energy Policy Issues. Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, Jeffrey Taylor and Associates, Optimal Energy Inc. June 30, 2011

Figure 1.3

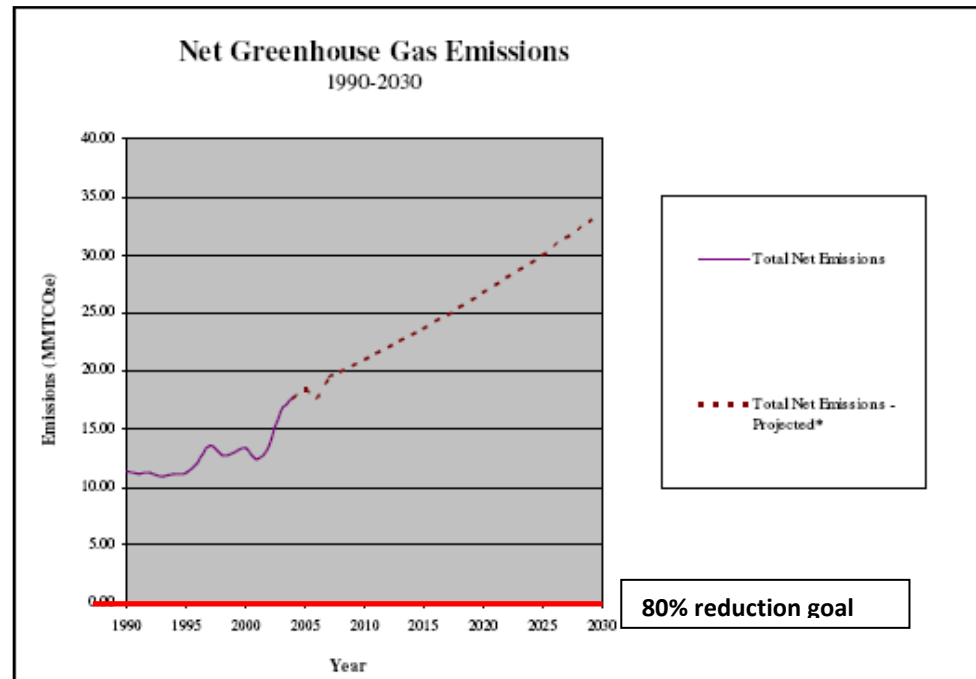


Source: NHDES, An analysis of EIA Energy Consumption Estimates By Sector for New Hampshire from 1960-2009 using EIA emission factors for all fossil fuels with NON-ENERGY emission calculations developed through the EPA’s State Inventory Tool.

Figure 1.3 shows the net greenhouse gas emissions from 1990-2009 in New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Climate Action Plan recommends that New Hampshire strive to achieve long-term reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. As the graph shows, emissions went up approximately 20% from 1990-2009. The New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund (GHGERF) started in 2009. In the first year emissions were reduced by 4,600 metric tons from the projects that were implemented. Details on reductions made in the first year (July 2009 – June 2010) can be found in the Year 1 Evaluation published by Carbons Solutions New England, University of New Hampshire.⁶²

Figure 1.4*

⁶² Carbon Solutions New England, University of New Hampshire. *The New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund Year 1 (July 2009–June 2010) Evaluation*. 2011.



Source: NHDES, EIA. *New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Projections*, 2008.

*Greenhouse gas emissions from 1990-2005 differ from Figure 1.2 as the uptake of CO2 by forests (carbon sequestration) was subtracted from emissions in Figure 1.3

Figure 1.4 shows net greenhouse gas emissions in New Hampshire from 1990-2004 (with carbon sequestration subtracted) and projections through 2030 for a “business as usual” scenario with no major changes from current trends. Projections are considered to be mid-range estimates and do not account for impact of economic recession, expansion of renewable or clean energy sources, potential shift to fuels with higher life-cycle emissions, loss of forests, or impacts of climate change on heating and cooling loads. Emissions for New Hampshire in 1990 were 14.7 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. To achieve the 80 percent reduction, levels will have to fall to 2.94 million metric tons by 2050. This shows how all municipalities in New Hampshire play an integral part in working towards energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions while New Hampshire works towards the goals in the New Hampshire Climate Action Plan.

3.2. Chester Energy Inventories/Audits

Chester participated in the Energy Technical Assistance and Planning (ETAP) Program during 2010-2011 administered by the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning. This in turn currently exists within the 2011 Chester Master Plan Energy Chapter and has not been updated. The town received an initial high level energy assessment of three municipal buildings as part of this program to address the town’s interests and needs with respect to energy efficiency improvement and capital upgrades. Those buildings include the Town Offices, the Library and Stevens Memorial Hall. Table 3⁶³ from the May 18, 2011 *Energy Efficiency Improvements for Chester Town Buildings Memorandum* shows the annual utility use and energy density of these six buildings based on data collected from 2009-2011. The highest energy use per square foot of the municipal buildings analyzed is the Stevens Hall Memorial Building, followed by the Community Center and the Town Hall. These buildings have the most opportunity for energy reduction and savings in town.

Table 40. Annual Utility Consumption and Energy Use Intensity

Facility	Square Feet	Electric kWh	Oil Gallons	Propane Gallons	Total kBTU	Site kBTU per Square Foot
Town Hall - Combined	33,907	160,505	7,773	5,061	2,097,606	62
Fire Department	8,740	42,580	-	2,405	364,634	42
Library	5,232	28,740	661	-	190,672	36
Stevens Hall	5,724	6,660	3,330	36	492,163	86
Community Center	1,496	5,985	686	-	116,453	78
Highway Garage	3,329	4,810	975	271	177,696	53
Total	55,099	244,470	12,451	7,501	3,261,528	59

Table 2 shows the annual utility cost and energy cost intensity of the municipal buildings analyzed. The community center is the highest cost per square foot, followed by the Town Hall⁶⁴ and then the Fire Department.

⁶³ Peregrine Energy Group. *Energy Efficiency Improvements for Chester Town Buildings Memorandum*. August 11, 2011.

⁶⁴ Town Hall – Combined includes four buildings constructed in three phases – the original school building (1950) is located in the middle of the complex, an addition (1975) was added in back called the annex that houses some unused rooms and the Police Dept., a new addition (1984) was added in the front that houses the Town Offices, and a multi-purpose room/gymnasium (1984) located on the left side of the complex.

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Table 41. Annual Utility Cost and Energy Cost Intensity

Facility	Square Feet	Electric Cost (\$)	Oil Cost (\$)	Propane Cost (\$)	Total Cost (\$)	Cost (\$) per Square Foot
Town Hall - Combined	33,907	25,105	18,478	10,242	53,825	1.59
Fire Department	8,740	6,670	-	5,275	11,945	1.37
Library	5,232	5,101	1,574	-	6,676	1.28
Stevens Hall	5,724	1,447	5,499	70	7,016	1.23
Community Center	1,496	1,204	1,635	-	2,839	1.90
Highway Garage	3,329	1,011	2,294	598	3,903	1.17
Total	55,099	\$39,527	\$27,186	\$15,588	\$82,300	\$1.49

Recommendations for the three municipal buildings assessed are analyzed in Table 3 with total costs, savings and payback estimate totals for all.

Table 42. Energy Reduction Program Potential Results⁶⁵

Facility	Approximate Installed Cost (\$)	Utility Incentive Available ¹	Potential Utility Savings			Cost Avoidance (\$)	Simple Payback Yr
			Other Benefits	Electric kWh/yr	Oil Gallons/ yr		
Town Hall - Combined	12,500	400	A,C	9,660	533	2,778	4-5
Stevens Hall	12,900	-	A	-	760	1,425	9-10
Library	1,500	-	A	-	46	110	10+
Total	\$26,900	\$400	A,C	9,660	1,339	\$4,314	6-7
Notes						Current Utility Budget:	\$67,516 /yr
(1) Subject to Utility Incentive Policy and Screening Analysis						Percent Reduction:	6%
(2) A - Better Comfort; B - Improved Reliability; C - Reduced Maintenance; D - Enhanced Appearance							

Tables 4 and 5 outline recommendations for the Town offices/Community Center building and the Stevens Hall Memorial Building.

Table 43. Summary of Energy Reduction Opportunities for the Municipal Building

	Description	Approximate Installed Cost (\$)	Utility Incentive Available ¹	Other Benefits ²	Potential Utility Savings		Annual Cost Avoidance (\$)	Simple Payback Yr
					Electric kWh/yr	Oil/ Propane Gallons/ yr		
1	Review temperature setback	\$500				233	\$554	<1
2	Review light levels	low cost					\$0	<1
3	Install T8 High Bay Lighting	\$6,000	\$400	C	9,660		\$1,511	3-4
4	Targeted air sealing	\$6,000		A		300	\$713	8-9
	Estimated Program	\$12,500	\$400	A, C	9,660	533	\$2,778	4.4
Notes						Current Utility Budget:	\$63,825 /yr	
(1) Subject to Utility Incentive Policy and Screening Analysis						Percent Reduction:	5%	
(2) A - Better Comfort; B - Improved Reliability; C - Reduced Maintenance; D - Enhanced Appearance								

⁶⁵ This table does not include renewable energy cost and savings

Table 44. Summary of Energy Reduction Opportunities for Stevens Hall

	Description	Approximate Installed Cost (\$)	Utility Incentive Available ¹	Other Benefits ²	Potential Utility Savings		Annual Cost Avoidance (\$)	Simple Payback Yr
					Electric kWh/yr	Oil Gallons/ yr		
1	Install clock thermostats	\$500				67	\$110	4-5
2	Targeted air sealing	\$6,000		A		236	\$660	8-9
3	Install low-e storm windows	\$3,400		A		257	\$425	6-9
4	Install wall insulation	\$4,000		A		200	\$330	10+
	Estimated Program	\$12,900	\$0	A	-	760	\$1,425	9.1

Notes **Current Utility Budget:** \$7,016 /yr
 (1) Subject to Utility Incentive Policy and Screening Analysis **Percent Reduction:** 20%
 (2) A - Better Comfort; B - Improved Reliability; C - Reduced Maintenance; D - Enhanced Appearance

Table 6 outlines recommendations for the library.

Table 45. Summary of Energy Reduction Opportunities for the Library

	Description	Approximate Installed Cost (\$)	Utility Incentive Available ¹	Other Benefits ²	Potential Utility Savings		Annual Cost Avoidance (\$)	Simple Payback Yr
					Electric kWh/yr	Oil Gallons/ yr		
1	Review light levels	low cost						<1
2	Targeted air sealing	\$1,500		A		46	\$110	10+
	Estimated Program	\$1,500	\$0	A	-	46	\$110	13.6

Notes **Current Utility Budget:** \$6,676 /yr
 (1) Subject to Utility Incentive Policy and Screening Analysis **Percent Reduction:** 2%
 (2) A - Better Comfort; B - Improved Reliability; C - Reduced Maintenance; D - Enhanced Appearance

A number of the buildings assessed have elicited similar recommendations for energy savings and the town might consider aggregating these projects over several buildings to get better pricing on the work. The following recommendations are similar for multiple buildings.

1. Building envelope - air seal and top off insulation.

Recommended for:

- Town Offices / Community Center
- Stevens Hall Memorial Building
- Library

2. Heating system efficiency - install boiler reset controls, programmable thermostats, insulate hot water pipes

Recommended for:

- Town Offices / Community Center
- Stevens Hall Memorial Building

3. Review light levels and/or install more efficient lighting.

Recommended for:

- Town Offices / Community Center
- Library

3.3. Renewable Energy

Renewable energy flows involve natural phenomena such as sunlight, wind, tides, plant growth, and geothermal heat, as the International Energy Agency explains:⁶⁶

“Renewable energy is derived from natural processes that are replenished constantly. In its various forms, it derives directly from the sun, or from heat generated deep within the earth. Included in the definition are electricity and heat generated from solar, wind, ocean, hydropower, biomass, geothermal resources, biofuels and hydrogen derived from renewable resources.”

Renewable energy is an important consideration in energy planning. While non-renewable energy demand cannot be eliminated completely, renewable energy can be a valuable complement to energy efficiency and conservation. The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning estimates that, on average, at least 85% of our heating energy in New Hampshire comes from imported sources. Residences may offer one of the best opportunities to increase the use of renewable and local energy sources. These renewable energy options could also be implemented for larger uses and structures over time.

State law, RSA 72: 61-72 grants municipalities the option to exempt certain renewable energy installations from property taxation. Incentives such as this encourage people to explore different options for home heating and energy, leading to an improvement in the region’s economic vitality and energy sustainability. The Town of Chester has shown its support for renewable energy through the adoption of property tax exemptions for solar and wind power energy installations.

3.4. Transportation

Transportation is an activity that consumes a great deal of fossil fuel. As communities grow and physically spread out, vehicle miles traveled per household and the associated energy demand have increased to support a more auto-dependent lifestyle. This practice is energy and resource inefficient and promotes unsustainable future transportation, land and energy use trends. Smart growth strategies for reducing vehicle miles traveled and reliance on automobiles can help to create a more sustainable, energy efficient transportation network. Smart growth strategies can also create transportation systems that better serve more people while fostering economic vitality for both businesses and communities. Strategies include providing multiple routes and multiple types of transportation, providing access to public transportation, implementing *complete streets design standards* and planning more mixed-use and compact development where appropriate.

Complete streets (sometimes livable streets) are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ IEA Renewable Energy Working Party (2002). *Renewable Energy... into the mainstream*, p. 9.

Major streets with moderate to high volumes of traffic should be transformed into “complete streets.” Bike lanes, bike trails, sidewalks, streetscaping, curb extensions, mid-block crossings and other tools are applied.

The June 2011 Technical Memo *Toward a More Walkable and Livable Manchester* by the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, which can be found in a 2014 Update to the New Hampshire Livable Walkable Communities Toolkit, suggests:

“Traffic calming and traffic management techniques should be used. On-street parking can be striped, and curb extensions, tree wells and medians can be added. Such improvements not only bring down speeds, they improve town centers and connect streets by reducing noise and perceived danger.

Most principal streets should have lanes narrower than today, especially when combined with bike lanes. Bike lanes add a buffer to parking and sidewalks.

Sidewalk construction and maintenance should be a priority, especially within a quarter-mile of half-mile of town centers and schools.

Ramps should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and “universal design” standards.”⁶⁸

3.5. Land Use

The way communities are designed, planned, and built has significant influence over the amount of energy used, how energy is distributed, and the types of energy sources that will be needed in the future. Energy efficiency can be incorporated into land use planning by adopting mixed-used zoning, which would allow greater accessibility to desired services without requiring greater mobility. This can be achieved by promoting Traditional Neighborhood Developments, Village Plan Alternatives (VPA) and conservation subdivisions that promote a mix of uses in larger new developments. Other ways to promote energy efficiency and conservation in land use planning include:

- Initiating impact fees that require developers to pay for the increased demands on infrastructure they generate.
- Promoting development around transportation facilities and incorporating complete streets design guidelines in order to promote alternative forms of transportation and increased recreation opportunities
- Encouraging energy efficient development through subdivision and site plan review regulations, zoning ordinance and building codes. Site design techniques that take

⁶⁷ Ritter, John (2007-07-29). *Complete streets' program gives more room for pedestrians, cyclists.* [USA Today](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-29-complete-streets_N.htm). http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-29-complete-streets_N.htm. Retrieved 2011-09-07.

⁶⁸ Walkable and Livable Communities Institute. “Toward a More Walkable and Livable Manchester Technical Memorandum.” June 2011.

advantage of sun exposure, differences in microclimate, and landscaping reduce a development's demand for fossil fuel derived energy sources and overall reduce energy consumption.⁶⁹

3.6. Building Codes

Building codes can be used to promote sustainable, energy-efficient construction in the built environment. Programs like the U.S. Department of Energy's Building Energy Codes Program (BECP) and certifications such as Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) offer guidelines and metrics that can be used to increase a building's energy performance and result in greater energy efficiency and ultimately cost savings.

Current building codes represent the minimum legal energy efficiency for structures. These standards focus on the building envelope and mechanical systems and disregard natural and renewable means of reducing a building's environmental impacts. By applying passive solar design in conjunction with building codes, energy utility bills can be decreased by 30 percent. Add to that "well insulated and tightly constructed building shells" and the savings can reach 75 percent.⁷⁰

RSA 155-A:2 VI allows municipalities to adopt more stringent building codes than the state codes. For examples of more stringent standards that a community may adopt to achieve desired energy savings please see the Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Handbook.⁷¹

Planning Roles

More often than not, energy initiatives cut across jurisdictional and political boundaries, requiring the cooperation and coordination of many different actors. Thus, for towns such as Chester, it is essential to understand the various interests involved, as well as the many opportunities available, at the both the state and local levels. In addition to these public agencies and initiatives, there is also a wide array of opportunities available to private individuals, which can be carried out independently or with outside support.

3.7. State-Level Energy Agencies

NH Office of Energy and Planning: NHOEP is a cabinet-level division of the New Hampshire Executive Branch and reports directly to the Governor. It is charged with overseeing and carrying out a wide array of energy-related activities, including but not limited to the following:

1. Coordination of programs funded by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), popularly known as the "Stimulus"
2. Statewide administration of the Fuel Assistance Program (see below)

⁶⁹ Model ordinance language can be found in *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques*. October 2008.

⁷⁰ Urban Land Institute, 2000

⁷¹ NHDES. *Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques, A Handbook for Sustainable Development*. October 2008.

3. Management of the State's "25 by '25 Program," which seeks to ensure that at least 25% of NH energy comes from renewable sources by 2025
4. Administration of the State's Weatherization Program (see below)

NH Public Utilities Commission (PUC)⁷²: A watchdog agency also affiliated with the Executive Branch, whose job is to make sure that customers of regulated utilities receive safe, adequate and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. Some of the responsibilities of the PUC include:

1. Monitoring and inspecting gas utilities for safety and proper construction
2. Acting as a mediator in disputes between customers and regulated utility companies
3. Initiating public hearings, audits of public utilities, and other forms of inquiry and investigation
4. Oversees energy code in the State
5. Provides extensive training

Office of Consumer Advocate (OCA): An independent state agency administratively attached to the PUC. However, while the PUC is charged with balancing the interests of ratepayers and utility shareholders, the role of OCA is to advocate exclusively for residential ratepayers

Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board (EESE): The EESE is a relatively new agency, created in 2008 to help promote and coordinate programs relating to energy efficiency, demand response, and sustainable energy in NH

1. Investigates potential sources of funding for energy efficiency and sustainable energy development
2. Works with local communities, non-profits, and civic engagement groups to increase statewide knowledge about energy efficiency
3. Provides recommendations to the PUC about how to spend energy efficiency and renewable energy funds

3.8. State-Administered Energy Programs and Funding Mechanisms:

- **ARRA (Stimulus) Grants:** Between 2009 and 2012, stimulus grants provided \$72 million towards NH energy efficiency projects.
- **State Energy Efficient Appliance Rebate Program (SEEARP):** Offers residential consumers rebates for the replacement of existing hot water heaters, boilers and furnaces to more energy efficient models
- **Enterprise Energy Fund (EEF):** A low-interest loan and grant program to help finance energy improvements in buildings owned or leased by businesses and nonprofits of all sizes
- **State Weatherization Program:** Provides insulation and heating efficiency improvements, carried out by public utility companies and NHOEP
- **RGGI:** The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a cap and trade program aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions across ten participating states in the northeast. It uses sales of emissions permits to fund a wide variety of state-wide energy programs.

⁷² <http://www.puc.nh.gov/>

- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Offers home-heating assistance to qualifying low-income NH residents
- **Pay For Performance Program:** Helps business owners improve energy efficiency in large commercial and industrial buildings
- **Retail Merchant's Association of NH (RMANH) Energy Program:** Offers detailed energy efficiency audits along with free energy-awareness seminars and printed materials to RMANH members
- **NH Community Loan Fund:** Has provided deep energy efficiency retrofits in approximately 425 manufactured homes located in a score of resident-owned communities throughout the state
- **New England Carbon Challenge:** A joint initiative of the University of New Hampshire and Clean Air - Cool Planet which works to educate, inspire and support sustained reductions in residential energy consumption.
- **Systems Benefits Charge (SBC):** The SBC is a tax on all public utilities, a portion of which is used to fund energy efficiency projects.
- **CORE Energy Star Program:** Helps homes and businesses reach the Energy Star standards adopted by the federal government. So far, approximately 4% of NH households have participated in this program with the help of their public utilities provider
- **Electric Assistance Program (EAP):** Provides low-income residents with assistance on their electric bill
- **Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE):** On May 12, 2010 the NH Senate passed HB 1554, AKA the "PACE Bill." PACE is an acronym for Property Assessed Clean Energy—its final passage will enable municipalities to establish revolving loan funds to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for both residential and commercial properties. HB 1554 will provide an important tool for financing energy efficiency improvements in existing homes and businesses in a manner that is consistent with the local control ethic of New Hampshire government. It will enable the State's municipalities to provide access to bond-based or other capital for the residents' and businesses' clean energy projects. Eligible projects include weatherization and a variety of innovative renewable energy projects. Financing for these improvements will be achieved through mechanisms that provide for a positive cash flow for the property owner, based on demonstrable energy efficiency savings. (The arrangement authorized by the bill is similar to special assessment or betterment district mechanisms used to finance street upgrades, utility line burial or other improvements benefitting certain properties, except that participation by property owners in energy efficiency and clean energy districts would be purely voluntary)

3.9. Energy and Sustainability Agencies/Officials in Chester

- **Town Board of Selectmen:** The Executive body of Chester charged with carrying out town policies.
- **Town Planning Board:** Develops and helps to implement the Town's Master Plan, including its Energy Chapter, which reflects the vision of Chester residents for growth, development and planning.
- **Chester Energy Committee:** A non-partisan, inclusive, voluntary citizen's committee seeking solutions to reduce carbon emissions and reduce energy costs in Chester.

- **Chester Conservation Commission:** The Chester Conservation Commission is a seven-member, all-volunteer board appointed by the Selectmen under the provisions of state RSA 36-A: 2, which allows municipalities in New Hampshire to establish commissions “for the proper utilization and protection of the natural resources and for the protection of watershed resources.”
- **Chester Building Official:** Responsible for inspection and compliance for adopted energy codes and standards

3.10. Current Chester Initiatives

1. Chester Energy Committee

The Town adopted the 2009 NH Climate Action Plan and an Energy Committee was formed. The Committee had an energy audit performed and most recently PSNH came in and performed a lighting audit as recommended in the initial audit.

2. Tax incentives for solar and wind power

In 1979 the citizens of Chester adopted property tax exemptions for solar and wind power energy installations per RSA 72:61 and RSA 72:65

3. Recycling

The Town of Chester has mandatory recycling

4. Energy Technical Assistance and Planning for New Hampshire Communities (ETAP) is a two year program providing energy efficiency technical assistance at no charge to municipalities and counties in NH. ETAP’s goal is to advance energy efficiency in all New Hampshire municipalities and provide the tools communities need to monitor energy performance. ETAP is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and administered through New Hampshire’s Office of Energy and Planning. The program is open to all NH towns, cities, and counties. ETAP aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Assist participating NH communities to track and understand energy consumption in municipal and county buildings and other major energy uses
- Provide a web-based tool to communities to benchmark energy performance
- Work with communities to identify and prioritize energy cost reduction opportunities
- Help develop strategies for energy cost reduction and secure technical and financial resources needed to realize energy savings

Issues and Concerns

Over the past several years, the Town of Chester has made important progress in the areas of energy efficiency and sustainability. However, as the town enters the second decade of the 21st Century, there are many challenges yet to overcome.

3.11. Extant Challenges

Many of the problems faced by Chester are **extant challenges**: challenges which arise from conditions in the outside world. Whether related to climate change, energy consumption, or population growth, extant challenges are tangible and can generally be expressed in quantitative terms. Some examples of extant challenges in New Hampshire and the Town of Chester include:

1. Volatile Fuel Prices: The price of oil has increased by more than 400% since 1998, and in New Hampshire, the cost of home heating oil rose 30% between 2010 and 2011⁷³

2. Commuter-driven Patterns of Development: In recent decades, development in the United States has been characterized by sprawl: the tendency of communities to fracture into residential and commercial zones, accessible to each other only by automobile

3. Lack of adequate Public Transit: Like many other rural towns, Chester lacks access to major public transit lines such as rail or bus

4. Lack of funding for Energy Efficiency programs: Between 2009 and 2012, much of NH's energy and sustainability funding came from the AARA. With stimulus funding scheduled to end by 2012, NH communities will be forced to deal with deep spending cuts in a tough economic climate

3.12. Systemic Challenges

Unlike extant challenges, **systemic challenges** arise from problems within the planning process itself, and thus are not as easy to quantify. Systemic challenges require, not just policy fixes, but also changes in mindset and the way that energy planning is carried out.

1. Transactional complexity: Many energy efficiency and sustainability programs in New Hampshire are complex and difficult for the general public to understand. For instance, one recent survey showed that more than 40% of NH residents had little to no idea about where to go for sustainable energy loans, rebates, or grants⁷⁴

2. Lack of Start-up Capital: Although cost-effective in the long run, many energy efficiency projects require significant up-front costs that businesses and individuals cannot afford

⁷³ New Hampshire Heating Oil Dealers and Price Guide. < <http://www.heatingoilnh.com/lowest-prices.htm> Retrieved 2011-10-06

⁷⁴ *Independent Study of Policy Issues*: Prepared by the Vermont Investment Corporation, June 2011. Appendix A: Page 3.

3. Split incentives: In the case of rented buildings, owners pay the costs of initiating energy efficiency programs, but tenants receive the savings from implementing them (or the costs from not implementing them)

4. Lack of residential interest and education: Depending on the project, energy efficiency projects can seem daunting and complex. Lack of residential interest and education can present a challenge when trying to make positive changes in a community towards energy efficiency and sustainability.

New Opportunities for Energy Efficiency

It is widely acknowledged that current patterns of growth, development, and consumption cannot be maintained indefinitely. Fortunately, as the costs of energy grow more prohibitive, many actors are turning to new, more sustainable methods of energy use. These new methods can be direct, such as implementing plans for renewable energy, or indirect, such as increasing citizen awareness about the importance of sustainability.

3.13. Opportunities in Renewable Energy

Solar

New Hampshire has an average solar energy density of 4.0-4.5 kWh/m²/day⁷⁵, enough to drive significant amounts of energy on the state's rooftops and fields, as well as through larger distributed systems. Costs have indeed been steadily declining over the past few years, with installed costs for a residential-scale PV system currently averaging below \$6.50/W⁷⁶

- **Self-Contained Solar Units** are immune to power outages and offer battery backup for cloudy days. They also are typically easier to maintain than traditionally powered units and reduce ownership costs by eliminating monthly electric bills. Self-contained solar is a good option in places where it may be difficult to run wires or that are especially remote.
- **Solar heating** harnesses the power of the sun to provide heat for hot water, space heating and swimming pools. Solar heating can be either passive, such as simply using large windows to let in more light and warmth, or active, where specially designed mechanical systems increase the heat gained from the sunlight.
- **Group net metering** makes it possible for small-scale solar owners to create a group with other small-scale solar owners presiding within the same utility service area to offset the cost of electric bills against the system's production.
- **Solar Up** In the summer of 2015, Chester volunteers participated in a Solar Up Campaign as part of a coalition with resident of Derry, and in conjunction with the SNHPC and other solar energy advocate groups, to increase the number of residents and businesses utilizing solar power in the town. Chester teamed up with a solar installer to offer solar

⁷⁵ *Independent Study of Policy Issues*: Prepared by the Vermont Investment Corporation, June 2011.

Section 10: Page 28

⁷⁶ See above

installations at a discounted tiered price, with the price decreasing as more individuals signed up.

Wind

Although only 0.3% of the state's power supply is currently provided by wind, a recent resource assessment by the National Renewable Energy Lab determined that wind could provide up to 60% of the state's current electricity needs.⁷⁷

- Small wind energy systems are turbines which require 1 acre of open land and can lower electricity bills to homes and businesses by 50 to 90 percent⁷⁸
- Smaller, single-unit wind turbines are also less likely than larger units to raise complaints over scenery issues

Hydroelectric

Currently, hydro-electric dams located in New Hampshire produce about six percent of the state's electricity needs. The Northern Pass transmission project, currently in the planning and permitting stages, is designed to deliver up to 1,200 additional megawatts of low-carbon, renewable energy to the state. As one of the most cost-effective and widely available forms of re-usable energy, hydro-electric power is expected to play a big part in NH's future sustainability goals.

LEDs

For most uses, Light Emitting Diodes typically last 20 years, compared to less than a year for incandescent bulbs. In addition to requiring less maintenance, LED bulbs provide up to a 90% reduction in power consumption and have a similarly wide-range of application, from commercial and home use, to street and traffic lighting.

Biomass

Unlike coal and oil, biomass has the ability to quickly replenish itself, and is thus considered a renewable energy source. In 2008, biomass represented over 6.5% of total New Hampshire electric production and just over 4% of residential and C&I energy consumption.⁷⁹

- Biomass typically takes the form of unused wood chips, stumps, roots, and discarded crop matter, and thus would not negatively affect the lumber or farming industries.

⁷⁷ *Independent Study of Policy Issues*: Prepared by the Vermont Investment Corporation, June 2011. Section 10: Page 31.

⁷⁸ See above

⁷⁹ *Independent Study of Policy Issues*: Prepared by the Vermont Investment Corporation, June 2011. Section 10: Page 36.

- It is estimated that biomass will have a particularly large impact in rural communities with easy access to wood and crop materials. Already, more than 10% of rural NH residents use wood as their primary heating source.⁸⁰
- In a recent study, the Northeast Biomass Thermal Energy Working Group developed a vision for heating the Northeast, which estimated that 19 million green tons of forest and crop biomass will be available by 2025 to fuel the region.⁸¹

3.14. Other Energy-Efficiency and Sustainability Opportunities

Direct

- New Building Codes
- More mixed-use/Village districts
- Walk-able and Bike-able Streets

Indirect

- Provision of free sustainability workshops and seminars
- Encouragement of carpooling and alternative transportation methods
- Festivals or parades with a sustainability focus
- Increased cooperation and collaboration between public and private sectors

Recommendations

Promoting and incorporating energy efficient measures in town buildings, activities and ordinances has many benefits to the town, including reducing operating costs and cutting carbon emissions. The following actions were recommended for the Town of Chester from the Town's 2011 Energy Chapter in order to work towards achieving its energy goals.

1. Improve energy efficiency of Chester's municipal buildings

- a. Prioritize energy efficiency recommendations from the May 18, 2011 ETAP Technical memorandum developed for the building assessments done on the Town Offices/Community Center, Stevens Memorial Building and Library.
- b. Track energy use in municipal buildings using the inventory tool or a similar tracking tool
- c. Require quarterly reporting on energy use in municipal buildings to the BOS and/or Budget Committee
- d. Appoint a responsible party for exploring and applying for grants or funding that will help the town to implement the prioritized energy efficiency projects and recommendations
- e. Re-establish the Energy Committee and develop a mission and goals to work towards

⁸⁰ *Independent Study of Policy Issues*: Prepared by the Vermont Investment Corporation, June 2011. Section 10: Page 36.

⁸¹ *Independent Study of Policy Issues*: Prepared by the Vermont Investment Corporation, June 2011. Section 10: Page 38

- f. Consider establishing a green building and vehicle ordinance for municipal buildings and vehicles which gives preference to alternative fuel and hybrid vehicles and requires new construction or major renovations for town buildings to meet US Green Building Council LEED standards when possible without increasing the budget for a given project
- 2. Support regional, state and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases**
 - a. Establish a responsible party on the Local Energy Committee for researching and reporting on regional, state and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases
 - b. Regularly review and revise energy goals to align with initiatives as appropriate for the Town of Chester
- 3. Develop an integrated education, outreach and workforce training program**
 - a. Publicize energy savings measures the town is taking for municipal buildings and progress on reducing municipal energy and costs
 - b. Create a page for the Chester Energy Committee on the Town website and post energy efficiency tips (provided by the committee) on the homepage periodically
 - c. Publish energy efficiency tips in the local newspaper through the committee
 - d. Work with the committee to hold free sustainability workshops/seminars and to hold events with a sustainability focus
- 4. Plan for efficient growth and development patterns**
 - a. Appoint a BOS representative to the LEC to work with and coordinate on energy efficiency projects in the Town of Chester
 - b. Consider innovative land use planning techniques such as
 - i. Energy efficient development planning principles upheld and implemented in subdivision regulations and site plan review, zoning ordinances and building codes
 - ii. Village plan alternative
 - c. Consider implementing elements of complete streets design guidelines and conduct an evaluation to determine the best roads/areas to implement these elements
 - d. Consider adopting more stringent building codes than State codes to increase energy efficiency and decrease energy costs for development in town
 - e. Consider ways to encourage alternative transportation methods such as ridesharing, public transportation options and expanding trails and bicycle lanes in town

4. Action Plan

Chester Master Plan Energy Chapter Action Plan

	Recommendation	Who (Leadership)	Suggested Timeline	How (Resources)
1a	Prioritize energy efficiency recommendations from the May 18, 2011 ETAP Technical memorandum developed for the building assessments done on the Town Offices/Community Center, Stevens Memorial Building and Library.	<i>Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
1b	Track energy use in municipal buildings using the inventory tool or a similar tracking tool	<i>Energy Manager, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
1c	Require quarterly reporting on energy use in municipal buildings to the BOS and/or Budget Committee	<i>BOS, Energy Manager, Finance Dept, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
1d	Appoint a responsible party for exploring and applying for grants or funding that will help the town to implement the prioritized energy efficiency projects and recommendations	<i>Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
1e	Re-establish the Energy Committee and develop a mission and goals to work towards	<i>Board of Selectmen, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
2a	Establish a responsible party on the Local Energy Committee for researching and reporting on regional, state and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases	<i>Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
2b	Regularly review and revise energy goals to align with initiatives as appropriate for the Town of Chester	<i>Planning Board, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>LEC</i>
3a	Publicize energy savings measures the town is taking for municipal buildings and progress on reducing municipal energy and costs	<i>Energy Manager, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>

Chester Master Plan Energy Chapter Action Plan

	Recommendation	Who (Leadership)	Suggested Timeline	How (Resources)
3b	Create a page for the Chester Energy Committee on the Town website and post energy efficiency tips (provided by the committee) on the homepage periodically	<i>Local Energy Committee, Website Manager</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
3c	Publish energy efficiency tips in the local newspaper through the committee	<i>Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
3d	Work with the Local Energy Committee to hold free sustainability workshops/seminars and to hold events with a sustainability focus	<i>Energy Manager, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Town Staff</i>
4a	Request a BOS representative to the LEC to work with and coordinate on energy efficiency projects in the Town of Chester	<i>Board of Selectmen, Local Energy Committee</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>N/A</i>
4b	Consider innovative land use planning techniques such as i. Energy efficient development planning principles upheld and implemented in subdivision regulations and site plan review, zoning ordinances and building codes ii. Village plan alternative	<i>Planning Board</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff, SNHPC</i>
4c	Consider implementing elements of complete streets design guidelines and conduct an evaluation to determine the best roads/areas to implement these elements	<i>Planning Board</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff, SNHPC</i>
4d	Consider adopting a more stringent building code than State code to increase energy efficiency and decrease energy costs for development in town	<i>Planning Board</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff, SNHPC</i>
4e	Consider ways to encourage alternative transportation methods such as ridesharing, public transportation options and expanding trails and bicycle lanes in town	<i>Planning Board</i>	<i>Short Term</i>	<i>Town Staff, SNHPC</i>

Definitions

ARRA – American Reinvestment and Recovery Act

Carbon sequestration - Carbon that is removed from the atmosphere and retained in a carbon sink (such as a growing tree or in soil).⁸²

Climate Change – Burning fossil fuels, increased agriculture, and deforestation all emit natural greenhouse gases and are concerning due to their contribution to increased concentrations of these greenhouse gases. Human activities also increase GHG emissions that are not naturally occurring in the atmosphere. These activities include semiconductor manufacturing, refrigerant leaks, and other industrial sources. The high level of greenhouse gases trap heat close to the surface of the earth, contributing to major shifts in the global climate.⁸³

Complete Streets – Complete streets (sometimes livable streets) are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities.⁸⁴

DHW – Domestic Hot Water

Energy Conservation – the efficient use of energy or the reduction of energy use by implementing energy efficient practices, policies, technologies, construction, development or any other action aimed at reducing energy use.

Energy Efficiency – Efficient energy use, sometimes simply called energy efficiency, is the goal of efforts to reduce the amount of energy required to provide products and services. For example, insulating a home allows a building to use less heating and cooling energy to achieve and maintain a comfortable temperature. Installing fluorescent lights or natural skylights reduces the amount of energy required to attain the same level of illumination compared to using traditional incandescent light bulbs. Compact fluorescent lights use two-thirds less energy and may last 6 to 10 times longer than incandescent lights. Improvements in energy efficiency are most often achieved by adopting a more efficient technology or production process.⁸⁵

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Greenhouse gases are trace gases in the lower atmosphere that trap heat through a natural process called the "greenhouse effect." This process keeps the planet habitable. International research has linked human activities to a rapid increase in GHG concentrations in the atmosphere, contributing to major shifts in the global climate.⁸⁶

⁸² [Energy Terms Glossary](http://www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/glossarys.htm). Nebraska Energy Office. <http://www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/glossarys.htm>. Retrieved 2011-11-15.

⁸³ US Dept. of Energy. Federal Energy Management Program

⁸⁴ Ritter, John (2007-07-29). *Complete streets' program gives more room for pedestrians, cyclists*. [USA Today](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-29-complete-streets_N.htm). http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-07-29-complete-streets_N.htm. Retrieved 2011-09-07.

⁸⁵ Diesendorf, Mark (2007). *Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy*, UNSW Press, p. 86.

⁸⁶ US Dept. of Energy. Federal Energy Management Program.

IR – Infrared

kWh/yr – Kilowatt hours per year

Life-cycle emissions – The term 'lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions' means the aggregate quantity of greenhouse gas emissions (including direct emissions and significant indirect emissions such as significant emissions from land use changes related to the full fuel lifecycle, including all stages of fuel and feedstock production and distribution, from feedstock generation or extraction through the distribution and delivery and use of the finished fuel to the ultimate consumer, where the mass values for all greenhouse gases are adjusted to account for their relative global warming potential.⁸⁷

Light Emitting Diodes (LED) - A light-emitting diode (LED) is a semiconductor light source.⁸⁸ LEDs are used as indicator lamps in many devices and are increasingly used for other lighting. Introduced as a practical electronic component in 1962,⁸⁹ early LEDs emitted low-intensity red light, but modern versions are available across the visible, ultraviolet and infrared wavelengths, with very high brightness.

Point of Use DHW heaters – Point of Use Domestic Hot Water heaters. They are typically dedicated use heaters meaning the unit serves one sink / faucet or one shower, etc.

Renewable Energy – Renewable energy is derived from natural processes that are replenished constantly. In its various forms, it derives directly from the sun, or from heat generated deep within the earth. Included in the definition are electricity and heat generated from solar, wind, ocean, hydropower, biomass, geothermal resources, biofuels and hydrogen derived from renewable resources.⁹⁰

Simple payback – Payback period in capital budgeting refers to the period of time required for the return on an investment to "repay" the sum of the original investment.

Small wind energy systems – A wind energy conversion system consisting of a wind generator, a tower, and associated control or conversion electronics, which has a rated capacity of 100 kilowatts or less and will be used primarily for onsite consumption.

Super T8 – High-performance “Super T8” lamp and ballast systems provide energy savings and longer lamp life.

Traditional Neighborhood Developments – Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a compact land development pattern that includes a variety of housing types and land uses in a defined area. Public spaces, civic buildings and commercial establishments are located within walking distance of homes. Community identity, civic spaces and walkability are emphasized.⁹¹

⁸⁷ US EPA. Clean Air Act Section 211(o)(1)

⁸⁸ "LED". The American heritage science dictionary. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2005. Via <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/led> and <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/LED>, Retrieved 2011-11-15

⁸⁹ "Nick Holonyak, Jr. 2004 Lemelson-MIT Prize Winner". Lemelson-MIT Program. <http://web.mit.edu/invent/a-winners/a-holonyak.html>. Retrieved 2007-08-13.

⁹⁰ International Energy Agency

⁹¹ Natural Lands Trust. Conservation Tools. <http://conservationtools.org/guides/show/46> Retrieved 2011-11-15

Vehicle miles traveled – Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the total number of miles driven by all vehicles within a given time period and geographic area.

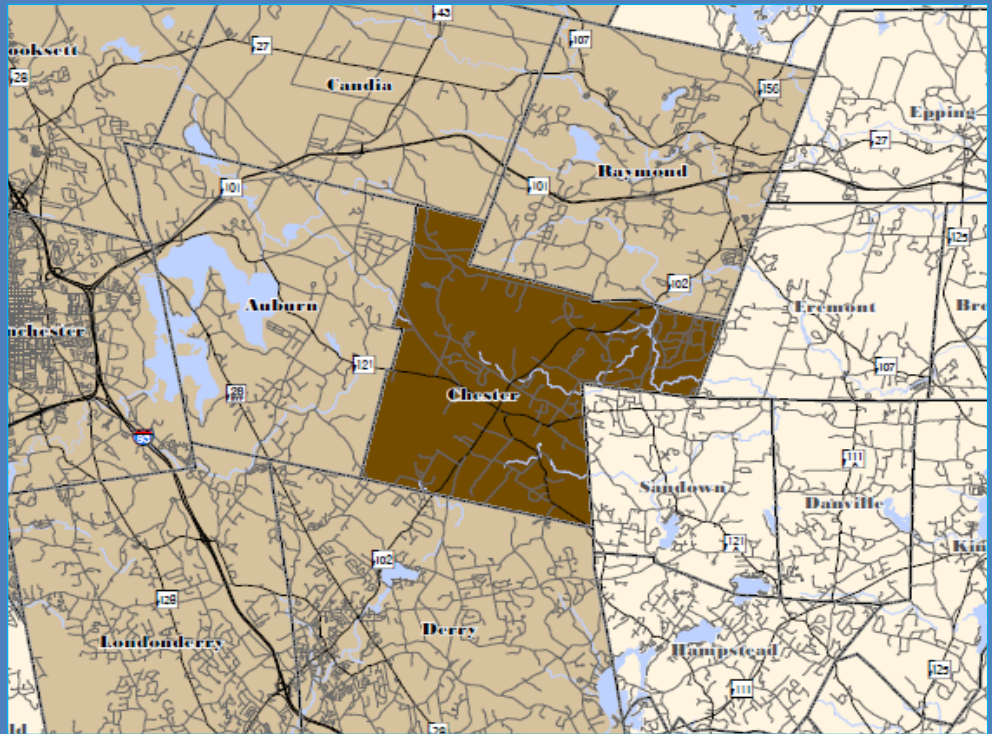
Village Plan Alternative – The Village Plan Alternative (VPA) is a planning tool that promotes compact development with a mix of land uses, including residential, small-scale commercial, recreation and conservation in close proximity to one another within a neighborhood. It is designed to implement the specific provisions of RSA 674:21.VI(a) to allow for the creation of new villages with mixed-used development that is scaled to the smaller populations and lower density of New Hampshire towns.⁹²

Wind turbines – A wind turbine is a device that converts kinetic energy from the wind into mechanical energy.

⁹² NHDES. Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Handbook. October 2008.

Chester

2015 Mater Plan



Regional Concerns Chapter

Regional Concerns

Introduction

This Chapter of Chester’s Master Plan identifies and examines key issues and topic areas of Regional Concern for the Town of Chester. These issues and topics are based on the town’s past master plans and the recent visioning public workshop held on December 7, 2015 (see list below).

As Chester continues to grow and develop, there are also many regional and state planning initiatives and programs that the Town of Chester can participate in and have a voice in governmental affairs. Most importantly, the Town of Chester should continue to participate in the *Access Greater Manchester Regional Economic Development Alliance* and the New Hampshire Municipal Association as well as the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC).

These organizations and alliances offer many benefits and program information covering a wide range of topics that will help the Town of Chester address current local and future regional concerns.

This Chapter addresses the following identified Top Issues/Topics of Regional Concern:

- Location within Southern New Hampshire;
- Development along Chester’s borders;
- Population and Growth Management;
- Fair Housing, Senior Housing and Services
- Economic Development
- Increasing Traffic Growth Along Major State Highways;
- Potential Future Traffic and Population Growth Within the I-93 corridor and the Exit 4A area in Derry;
- Scenic Byway Planning;
- Groundwater Protection; and
- Regional Partnership Opportunities

Hanson Road Bridge



Photo: SNHPC

Location within Southern New Hampshire

Chester is located in Rockingham County about 12 miles east of Manchester, the largest City in New Hampshire. To get to Chester from Manchester you must travel through the Town of Auburn along NH Rt. 121. You can also reach the Town of Chester by traveling along NH Rt. 102 from the Town of Derry to the south and along NH Rt. 102 from the Town of Raymond to the north. Access to Chester is also available along NH Rt. 121A from the Town of Sandown to the southeast and the Town of Candia to the north along NH Rt. 43.

Even though Chester is close to the City of Manchester and major highways, the town is somewhat isolated from surrounding communities and as a result is mostly rural in character with many open space lands and small residential neighborhoods. Chester's immediate neighbors include the towns of:

- Auburn
- Candia
- Raymond
- Fremont
- Sandown
- Derry

Of its surrounding towns – Auburn, Fremont, Raymond and Sandown – what are the special characteristics of Chester that distinguish it from its surrounding communities? Is it the town's rural character and charm; the town's location, housing, school system or taxes; what are the factors which make Chester stand out in theregion?

Wason Pond Dam



Photo: SNHPC

All of these questions are important for Chester to monitor as it continues to grow in the future. Currently, the town planning board has in place growth management provisions to help balance the town’s growth with the need for new services and public facilities in the future. Should the town continue to impose these growth management provisions or should it look to lessen certain requirements. Currently, seven of the fifteen municipalities in the SNHPC Region have in place some form of growth management, even though these communities are not growing as fast as previous years. Among Chester’s immediate neighbors, only the towns of Auburn and Derry have a growth management ordinance in place while the towns of Candia, Fremont, Raymond and Sandown do not have any growth management controls (see Table 1).

The Town of Chester’s growth control regulations are found in Article 8 (Phasing) in the Town’s Zoning Ordinance. Every applicant in Chester must demonstrate that a proposed development will not adversely affect public health, safety or welfare due to a sudden demand on service(s) that cannot be provided for by a reasonable expenditure or public funds. If the Planning Board determines that a sudden demand exists, then the proposed development must be phased over such a period of time to allow the Town to manage and meet the demands. Services include, but are not limited to, police and fire protection, schools, water supply, drainage, transportation, highway maintenance, or other public services. The Town’s Phasing Ordinance also includes a waiver provision to encourage and provide opportunities for the development of low/moderate income housing in Town.

The establishment of growth management ordinances and growth controls while effective for one community can work to push housing and residential development into another community, thus increasing development pressure for other towns. Because many of the immediate towns surrounding Chester are not growing at all or not growing as fast as Chester, these communities likely are in support of Chester’s growth management policies as it could help to redirect growth throughout the region.

In addition to the close monitoring of its own growth control mechanisms, Chester can also maintain an open dialogue with its neighboring communities, either through one-on-one interactions or in regional forums, to review the regional impacts of housing growth in each community. These conversations may focus on actual growth trends, planning efforts, and growth controls, which all may have regional implications.

TABLE 1: GROWTH MANAGEMENT ORDINANCES BY MUNICIPALITY

Municipality	Growth Management Ordinance	Impact Fees	Phased Development
Auburn	Yes	No	No
Bedford	No	Yes, School & Recreation	Yes, Not required but allowed
Candia	No	Yes	No
Chester	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deerfield	No	Yes	No

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Derry	Yes	No	Yes
Fremont	No	Yes, Schools	No
Goffstown	No	Yes	Yes
Hooksett	No	Yes	Yes
Londonderry	Yes	No	Yes
Manchester	No	Yes	No
New Boston	No	No	Not mandatory
Raymond	No	Yes	No
Sandown	No	No	No
Weare	No	No	Yes
Windham	No	Yes	No

Source: Municipal Zoning Ordinances

Affordable Housing and Senior Housing/ Services

The cost of housing in Chester is steep compared to other communities in the SNHPC Region, the town of Chester has the third largest median home values. As of the 2010 U.S. Census, Chester’s average home value was \$342,900; Hooksett was \$355,300; and, Windham was \$391,500. Chester’s median gross rent however was the lowest in the SNHPC Region, at \$895 and Chester is among the top three towns (along with Auburn and Candia) which have the greatest number of renter households meeting the income thresholds and paying 30 percent or more of their income for housing.⁹³ Out of Chester’s 1,659 total housing units, 1603 are single-family homes with fifteen 2-4 unit multiple-family structures, and 11 are five or more unit multiple-family homes. There are also 30 mobile homes or other structures in Chester.⁹⁴

Affordable housing is also an issue for senior households on fixed incomes as well as younger generations just entering the housing market. The lack of a diverse and affordable housing supply, with realistic opportunities for all households, is a chronic problem in the State of New Hampshire. This problem is not unique to the Town of Chester, which has primarily single-family homes. Adoption of SB 146 Accessory Dwelling Units will allow municipalities to put into place local regulations which would make it easier to allow these living arrangements for many senior households and caregivers.

To adequately meet the state, county, or region’s overall demand for a diverse and affordable stock of housing, municipalities must work together so that no single community has a surplus of low-valued housing, while others only have luxury priced housing. In addition, the Town of Chester can participate in a variety of housing related regional forums sponsored by agencies such as SNHPC, the Business and Industry Association, Home Builders and Remodelers Association of New Hampshire, Plan NH, the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority, the New Hampshire office of Energy

⁹³ Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward, SNHPC,

2014.

⁹⁴ American Census Survey 2008-2012, Economics
Employment Security.

and Labor Market Information Bureau, NH

and Planning, and the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. More information about up to date programs can be obtained by contacting each of the agencies.

The over-55 demographic in the SNHPC Region is also growing and creating new housing needs. An aging population can have significant impacts on health care systems and costs and related services. Many communities are helping to address the need for older residents through age-restricted housing. Ten communities in the SNHPC Region currently permit elderly housing in community zoning – Bedford, Candia, Deerfield, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, Manchester, Raymond and Windham.⁹⁵ The Town of Chester does not specifically address elderly housing in its zoning.

Another issue of regional concern as voiced by residents at the Visioning Workshop is the lack of public transportation services in the region and to the Town of Chester. This has been a long standing issue for many years. In the last master plan survey conducted by the Planning Board in 2005, many Chester residents identified the lack of public transportation services and the need to own a car as one of the most pressing transportation problems facing the town. While this is a local concern, it may have a regional solution. Providing public transportation is a costly operation. By joining and working together with other towns, regional initiative (such as CART) may provide a cost effective solution to this problem. The Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART) provides fixed rate and curb to curb demand response transportation serving Chester, Derry, Hampstead, Londonderry and Salem. The service is open to the public for a fee.

CART is also developing fixed-route services to improve system cost-effectiveness and efficiency and provide the Greater Derry/Salem area with increased mobility. A new deviated fixed-route bus service that began operating on February 1, 2012, the CART SUN Shuttle provides regular access to shopping, nutrition and medical facilities for seniors and the general public in Derry and Londonderry. The SUN Shuttle also provides rides to shopping stops along NH 102 between Derry and Londonderry for seniors as well as the general public.⁹⁶

With the aging of the population state-wide the need for Senior Services, affordable housing and regional transportation will become more pronounced in the future. Many current services to seniors are located in Londonderry and Derry although volunteers come from Chester, the Town of Chester is not currently receiving these services. For instance, the Community Caregivers of Greater Derry provides, through volunteers, networking, support and assistance to help the elderly, disabled and homebound maintain independence in the community and home environment.

⁹⁵ Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward, SNHPC, 2014.

⁹⁶ NY 2013-FY 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, SNHPC, 2012.

Economic & Community Development

At the January 7, 2015 Visioning Workshop held for this master plan, many residents expressed concerns about the lack of employment and jobs in town, including the lack of industry, commercial retail or medical facilities like dentists. As a result, many Chester residents must drive out of town for these services.

Chester is primarily a bedroom community and 79.80 percent (2010 Census) of town residents commute out of town for employment. This is typical of many similar sized bedroom communities in the region. Generally, the town's commuting statistics have changed very little since 2000 when 83.76 percent of the workforce commutes out of Chester for employment.

Commuting from home to work is an important issue of regional concern. Without local employment opportunities and jobs, many households and individuals will not be able to live or raise a family in Chester. This lack of employment opportunities has negative impacts on the town's tax rate; schools and retaining a younger workforce. It also supports greater job growth within other communities within the region and neighboring towns. While Chester has a strong home business environment, the planning board should consider evaluating the town's existing zoning ordinance and work to identify areas and opportunities to grow the town's existing economy, continue to support home based business growth, and seek and encourage small commercial, office and medical business growth within Chester.

There are currently a lot of people working at home in Chester. In the region, Chester was noted as having the third highest workforce working at home (7 percent) in the SNHPC Region. This also shows how important the need for high speed broadband service is in providing jobs and expanding business and local economic development opportunities.⁹⁷

As of January 2014, the Town of Chester's tax rate was \$25.56 per thousand valuation. The Towns of Derry (\$29.42), Sandown (\$27.59) and Fremont (\$28.22) have higher tax rates while Candia (\$21.20), Auburn (\$21.31) and Raymond (\$24.33) have lower tax rates. Thus Chester is in the middle range in the area.

Chester's somewhat high tax rate is because the town does not have a large tax base and there is limited commercial and industrial property within the town.⁹⁸ Currently, the largest business in Chester is Stone Machine Company, a machine shop which employees 15 persons. While a business directory of local businesses in Chester is provided on the Town website, there really are very few existing commercial, retail and businesses located within Chester. As a result, there is very limited and few employment opportunities and jobs.

⁹⁷ Broadband Plan for Southern New Hampshire Region, SNHPC, March 2014.

⁹⁸ NH Department of Revenue Administration, 2015

Increasing Traffic Growth along Major State Highways

At the January 7, 2015 Visioning Workshop, many residents also expressed concern about increasing traffic on the major state highways which cut through the Town of Chester, mostly as through traffic to other destinations. Of primary concern are NH Routes 121, 102 and 121A.

The following Table 2 provides a look at the historic growth trends of traffic volumes along these highways and at the Chester town lines. This data indicates that there has in fact been increasing traffic between 2003 and 2013 on these major highways. Most particularly, there has been traffic growth in the order of 18 to 30 percent or more on various road segments, including Candia Road at the Candia town line (30 percent); Hale True Road at the Sandown town line (34 percent); NH 102 Raymond Road north of Ledge Road (20 percent); and NH 121 Haverhill Road west of Halls Village Road (18 percent).

The data also indicates that traffic has been slowing down and decreasing on many Chester roads, including: Fremont Road at the Fremont town line; NH 121 Chester Road at the Auburn town line; NH 121 Haverhill Road at the Derry town line; NH 121 Haverhill Road east of Halls Village Road (north of the power lines) (11 percent); and NH 121 Haverhill Road north of Deep Hole Road (16 percent).

These percentage increases and decreases, however are only rough estimates given that a continuous counting program is not maintained every year but two years, between 2000 and 2013. In monitoring this traffic growth the town of Chester could request the SNHPC to conduct traffic counts at specific locations and to study and develop a transportation plan for the community.

Route 101 & 102



Photo: Town of Chester

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Table 2: HISTORICAL TRENDS OF traffic VOLUMES

LOCATION	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total 2003-2013	Absolute Change	Percent Change
Candia Rd at Candia T/L	N/A	460	N/A	N/A	530	N/A	N/A	580	N/A	N/A	600	2170	140	30 %
Candia Road North of NH 121 Chester Street	1000	1000	N/A	N/A	920	N/A	N/A	980	N/A	N/A	1100	5000	100	10 %
Candia Rd North of North Pond Road	N/A	990	N/A	N/A	880	N/A	N/A	900	N/A	N/A	1000	3770	10	1 %
Fremont Rd at Fremont T/L	N/A	N/A	480	N/A	N/A	500	N/A	N/A	390	N/A	N/A	1370	-90	-19 %
Fremont Rd. East of NH 102 Raymond Road	1200	1100	N/A	N/A	1100	N/A	N/A	1400	N/A	N/A	1200	6000	0	0 %
Hale True Rd at Sandown T/L	N/A	N/A	820	N/A	N/A	860	N/A	N/A	1100	N/A	N/A	2780	280	34 %
NH 102 Derry Rd at Derry T/L	8100	N/A	N/A	8100	N/A	N/A	8300	N/A	N/A	8200	N/A	32700	100	1 %
NH 102 Derry Rd North of NH 121 Chester Rd.	8400	N/A	N/A	8200	N/A	N/A	8300	N/A	N/A	8100	N/A	33000	-300	-4 %
NH 102 Derry Rd south of NH 121 Chester St.	N/A	8800	N/A	8800	N/A	N/A	8900	N/A	N/A	8600	N/A	35100	-200	-2 %
NH 102 Raymond Rd. North of Fremont Rd.	N/A	6800	N/A	N/A	6200	N/A	N/A	6800	N/A	N/A	7500	27300	700	10 %
NH 102 Raymond Rd. North of Ledge Rd.	N/A	N/A	7100	N/A	N/A	7100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8500	22700	1400	20 %
NH 102 Raymond Rd. North of Towle Rd.	N/A	6400	N/A	N/A	5600	N/A	N/A	6500	N/A	N/A	7300	25800	900	14 percent
NH 102 Raymond Rd. South of Hanson Rd.	5400	N/A	6000	N/A	N/A	4900	N/A	N/A	5800	N/A	N/A	22100	400	7 %
NH 121 Chester Rd. at Auburn T/L	3100	N/A	N/A	2900	N/A	N/A	2300	N/A	N/A	2800	N/A	11100	-300	-10 %
NH 121 Chester Rd. West of NH 102 Derry Rd.	N/A	N/A	3400	N/A	N/A	3300	N/A	N/A	3100	N/A	N/A	9800	-300	-9 %
NH 121 Chester St. East of Old Chester Turnpike	N/A	3400	N/A	N/A	2900	N/A	N/A	3500	N/A	N/A	N/A	9800	100	3 %
NH 121 Haverhill Rd. at Derry T/L	1800	N/A	1500	N/A	N/A	1500	N/A	N/A	1400	N/A	N/A	6200	-400	-22 %
NH 121 Haverhill Rd. East of Halls Village Rd. (North of Power Lines)	1900	N/A	N/A	1700	N/A	N/A	1700	N/A	N/A	1700	N/A	7000	-200	-11 %
NH 121 Haverhill Rd East of NH 102 Derry Road	4700	N/A	4500	N/A	N/A	4200	N/A	N/A	4300	N/A	N/A	17700	-400	-9 %
NH 121 Haverhill Rd. North of Deep Hole Road	N/A	1900	N/A	N/A	1500	N/A	N/A	1600	N/A	N/A	N/A	5000	-300	-16 %
NH 121 Haverhill Road West of Halls Village Rd. (west Jct.)	1700	2000	N/A	N/A	2900	N/A	N/A	1600	N/A	N/A	2000	10200	300	18 %
NH 121A Sandown Rd. at Sandown T/L	2300	N/A	2100	2300	N/A	N/A	3000	N/A	N/A	2200	N/A	11900	-100	-4 %
NH 121A Sandown Rd. East of NH 121 Split Haverhill Rd	N/A	N/A	2800	N/A	N/A	2800	N/A	N/A	3100	N/A	N/A	8700	300	11 %
Reed Rd. at Sandown T/L	N/A	N/A	300	N/A	N/A	300	N/A	N/A	400	N/A	N/A	1000	100	33 %
Wells Village Rd at Sandown T/L	N/A	N/A	220	N/A	N/A	210	N/A	N/A	220	N/A	N/A	650	0	0 %

*First recorded record to last recorded record.

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Currently, there is only one blinking traffic light in the Town of Chester located at the junction of NH Routes 102, 121 and 121A. NH 102 has the right-of-way while NH 121 is stop-controlled and has stop-ahead signs in both directions. A flashing beacon is located at the intersection and flashes yellow for NH 201 traffic and red for NH 121 traffic. With increasing traffic at this junction, the need for a traffic signal may be warranted in the near future.

There was a road Safety Audit conducted in February 2012 by SNHPC, NHDOT and the Town of Chester. According to the report, NH 201 has Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 8,900 during a 2009 traffic count and NH 121 had an AADT of 4,300 vehicles per day east of NH 102 during a 2010 traffic count.⁹⁹ Accident data shows a total of 27 accidents at this intersection between January 1, 2008 through July 1, 2011.¹⁰⁰

As part of the FY 2011-FY 2012 SNHPC Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the intersection of NH 102 (Derry Road/Raymond Road)/NH 121 (Chester Street/Haverhill Road) was studied as part of the Regional High Accident Locations Study.

Based on the analysis, recommendations were made as follows:

- Installing flashing light warning signs on NH 102 approaches,
- trimming trees on both NH 121 approaches,
- grooving pavements on NH 102, Speed enforcement,
- cutting back shoulder on the southwest corner to increase Chester Street sight distance, changing the skewed intersection to right angle intersection,
- eliminating horizontal and vertical curves on Derry Road approach,
- Installing a traffic/signal/building roundabout.

Intersection of 102 and 121



Photo: Town of Chester,
February 2012

⁹⁹ Chester, NH Road Safety Audit, SNHPC, NHDOT,

¹⁰⁰ Chester Police Department records.

Potential Future Traffic and Population Growth with I-93 Expansion and the Exit 4A area in Derry

There are major transportation improvements that could have regional impacts on the Town of Chester in the future. These include increasing regional traffic growth as a result of the widening of I-93 from Massachusetts to Manchester and a future Exit 4A on I-93 in Derry. These projects could have impacts on Chester and surrounding towns in terms of population, housing, and employment growth, and increased traffic.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) has been working on the widening of 19.8 miles of Interstate-93, from the Massachusetts border to the I-293 split in Manchester since 2008, but most of the construction has taken place since 2012. The Interstate is being widened, Exits 1 through 5 are under reconstruction, and new Park and Ride facilities are being constructed at Exits 2, 3, and 5. As of January 2015, the widening and Exit construction from the Massachusetts border to north of Exit 3 has been completed. The widening north of Exit 3 to the interchange of I-293 in Manchester will take place during 2015-2016.

One of the benefits of the I-93 widening project are NH DOT plans to increase bus and rideshare opportunities as well as reserve the median space within the highway for a possible future train or mass transit system. The Exits 4 and 5 Bus Terminal and the Park and Ride facilities opened to public in 2007 and 2008 are good examples of how regional public transportation services can be provided and improved for the benefit of all towns within the region.

While the direct impacts of the I-93 project will be felt in the area immediately surrounding the highway, secondary impacts will likely be felt throughout an identified 26-community region. Chester is one of these municipalities. The secondary impacts most likely to be felt in Chester will be directly related to increase traffic and eventual increased population growth, including housing growth, land use changes, and environmental impacts.

The creation of a new Interstate-93 Exit 4A, between the existing Exits 4 and 5 is being initiated by the Towns of Derry and Londonderry to alleviate traffic on Route 102 through those towns and provide additional access to commercial and industrial zoned lands. According to the most recent 2014 Regional Transportation Plan by SNHPC, the Environmental Impact Statement for the project is nearing completion and representatives of the State Senate Transportation Committee have stated their intention to pursue a funding plan for the project. NHDOT has also stated the importance of incorporating the project in the plan to widen the I-93 corridor. The Towns of Derry and Londonderry have both committed to a portion of the funding for the project, which has also been identified as an essential component of the planned Woodmont Commons multi-use development in the northeastern portion of Londonderry. In the fiscal constraint analysis of the Plan, funding is included for the I-93 Exit 4A project, which was programmed for implementation during the period 2036 – 2038. So, it is likely that Exit 4A will not be constructed for at least another ten years.

While it is envisioned that Exit 4A will improve conditions for these two towns, it may have less desirable implications for Chester, especially along Route 102 from Derry through the center of town. The following Table 3 provides SNHPC’s best estimate of future traffic growth along NH 102 and 121 at the Derry town line.

TABLE 3: FUTURE TRAFFIC GROWTH ALONG NH 102 AND 121 AT DERRY TOWN LINE

Location	2010 count	2010 Assignment	2035 NB	2035 S1	2035 S2	2035 S3
NH 102 at Derry TL	8,900	12,920	18,183	15,462	16,524	17,060
NH 121 at Derry TL	1500	1596	2144	1803	1924	2001

In addition to this data, an SNHPC study¹⁰¹ states that, depending on the alternative exit design selected, Chester would have anywhere from no impact to a 24 percent traffic increase. This increase would include an increase of truck traffic and its impacts would be more related to safety, rather than capacity. The Towns of Derry and Londonderry have been working with RKG Associates and the SNHPC to develop the exit design and investigate any other potential impacts this project may have on surrounding communities. The Town of Chester can utilize the services of the SNHPC to remain up to date and have a voice in mitigating the impacts of this new interchange in the future.

It is also important to note that in SNHPC’s recently adopted Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward, the SNHPC Region has seen a slowing in total traffic growth on roads other than interstates and freeways. In addition, traffic counts collected by SNHPC over the last ten years have remained virtually flat within the region, decreasing by roughly 6 percent.¹⁰²

However, increasing traffic volumes were observed for 11 roadway segments in the region, including parts of Interstate 93, Interstate 293, and U.S. Route 3. Traffic volumes on the following road segments which show an increase that might affect the Town of Chester, include: I-93 between exit 4 and 5 in Londonderry; I-293/NH 101 between I-93 and exit 2 in Manchester; NH 28 Bypass in Derry; NH 27 (Raymond Road) between NH 43 and Blevens Drive in Candia.

All in all, even though overall traffic volumes in the SNHPC region are decreasing on many roads where traffic counts are conducted by the planning commission, traffic congestion continues to remain an issue in the region on the interstates and highways with the highest traffic volumes.

¹⁰¹ Secondary Traffic Impacts of Exit 4A Alternatives, SNHPC, 2003.

¹⁰² Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward

Senic Byway Planning

The Robert Frost/Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway was designated by the State of New Hampshire as a Scenic & Cultural Byway in May 2014 and is depicted on the following Map #10. The Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway connects the towns of Atkinson, Hampstead, Chester, Auburn and Derry, and is designed to celebrate and interpret the historic Boston-Haverhill-Concord Stage Coach route that followed what is today NH Route 121; as well as the New England landscape featured in much of Robert Frost’s work, including the settings of some of his most famous poems. The Byway highlights the numerous historic sites, scenic views, outdoor recreational opportunities, and other attractions that the region has to offer - raising awareness among local residents and promoting visitation for economic development.

This Corridor Management Plan (CMP) serves as the key planning document for the Robert Frost/Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway. It begins with a description of the significance of the Intrinsic Qualities (scenic, historic, natural, cultural and/or recreational resources) along the Byway that merit designation, and includes an inventory of those buildings, sites and cultural events. The following description is from the Robert Frost/Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (December 2014).¹⁰³ “The unifying theme of the Robert Frost/Old Stage Coach Byway is the history and culture of rural southern New Hampshire.



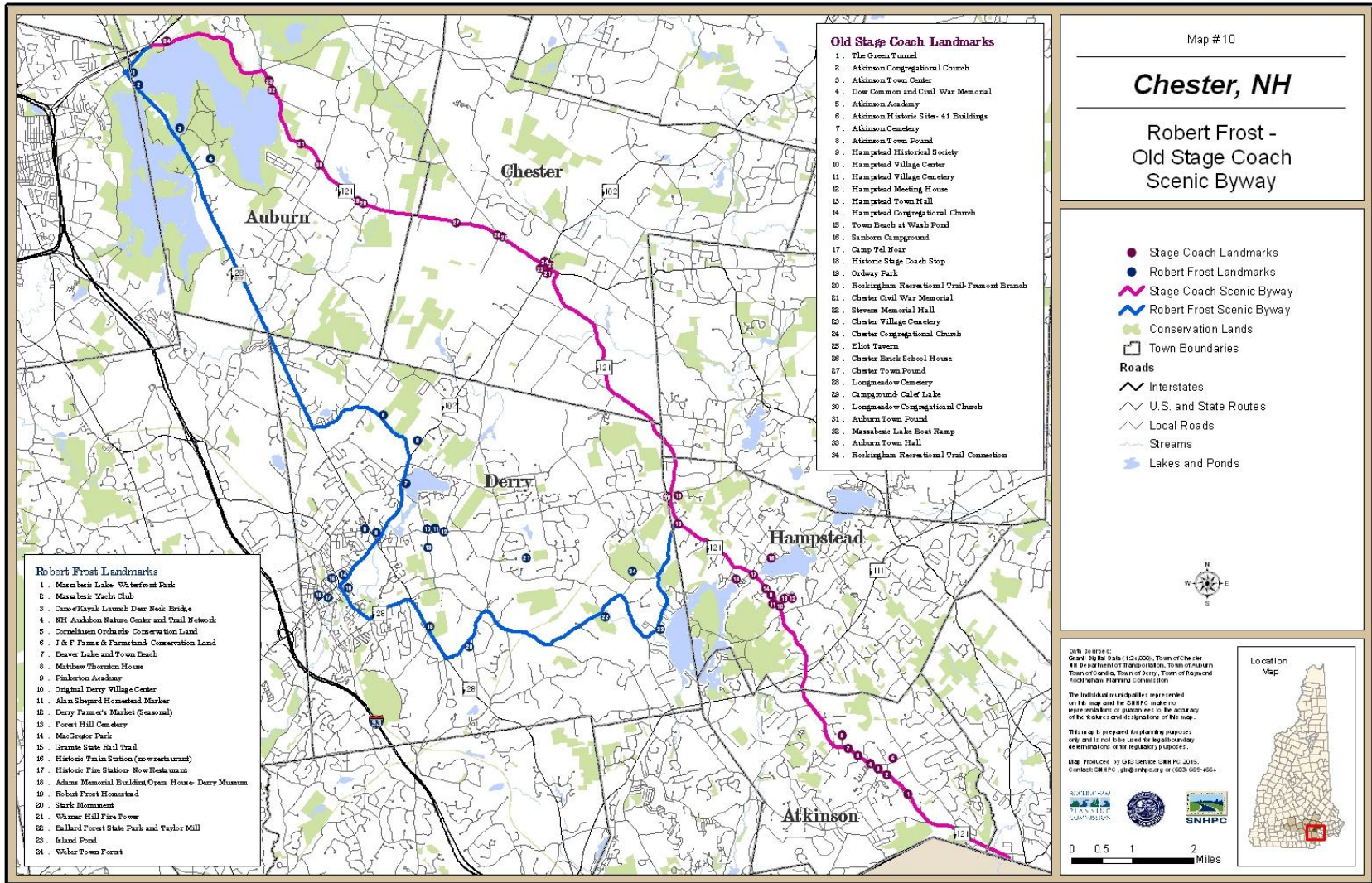
Route 102

This includes how it was shaped by the early transportation network of the region – most specifically the Stage Coach service that connected Boston and Concord via Haverhill, Atkinson, Hampstead, Chester, Auburn and Manchester. More broadly, the Byway celebrates New Hampshire’s rural landscape and communities through which the Byway passes – the villages, farmsteads, orchards, and denizens brought to life in the writing of Poet Laureate, and former Derry resident, Robert Frost.”

The route is located wholly within Rockingham County, and consists of two contiguous segments with distinct interpretive themes. The first of these segments is the Old Stagecoach Byway, which begins in Atkinson at the Massachusetts border and travels northwest along NH Route 121 through Hampstead, Chester and Auburn to Massabesic Lake. The adjoining segment is the Robert Frost Byway, which follows NH Route 28 and local roads south from Massabesic Lake through Derry village center to the Robert Frost Farm State Park, and continues along local roads heading eastward until it reconnects with Route 121 and the Old Stagecoach Byway in Hampstead, completing a loop of 44 miles.

¹⁰³ Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (SNHPC), Rockingham Planning Commission, Robert Frost/Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway Committee.

Map # 10: Robert Frost-Old Stage Coach Scenic Bvway



The Byway route is highly scenic, leading visitors through quintessential New England colonial villages, rolling farmland, working orchards, and picturesque ponds and lakes. The route provides visitors access to recreational resources including Massabesic Lake and local ponds with recreational access, and a range of hiking and biking trails, including the Rockingham Recreation trail, and the Granite State Rail Trail. There are networks of mountain bike and Audubon Center hiking trails at Massabesic Lake. Seasonal festivals and year-round museums, restaurants, and town centers provide opportunities to experience the culture of the region, and offer the visitor an “off-the-beaten path” experience through a unique, little known part of New England.

The Town of Chester features an historic village center with multiple properties on the National Register, including the home of Daniel Chester French, sculptor of the statue of President Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial and other famous works of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Groundwater Protection

The Town of Chester is located on an aquifer that produces a moderate to limited (dependent upon location) supply of groundwater. The Town of Chester gets all its drinking water from groundwater supplies and because the Town is solely dependent on groundwater, its protection is critical. Single-family homes have their own wells and there are some large community wells such as for condominium complexes, there are 22 public water systems in Chester and eleven wellhead protection areas (WHPA).¹⁰⁴ While road salt and chloride are typical storm water runoff pollutants, the most common causes of groundwater contamination in NH are leaking underground storage tanks, mishandling of industrial chemicals and urban runoff.¹⁰⁵ The [Source Water Protection Plan for Wason Pond](#) Plan is a good source of information on the current well situation and management practices for the Town to work towards such as land use controls. There are already best practices provided in the Town’s Groundwater Protection Overlay District

Figure #1: Exeter River Watershed

¹⁰⁴ [Source Water Protection Plan for Wason Pond](#), SNHPC, 2009.

¹⁰⁵ [Source Water Protection Plan for Wason Pond](#), SNHPC, 2009.



Source: Exeter Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee

Watershed Protection

As shown on the watershed map (Figure #1), the Town of Chester is located within the headwaters of the Exeter River Watershed. The Exeter River rises from a group of spring-fed ponds in Chester and flows 33 miles to downtown Exeter where it changes its name to the Squamscott River, and becomes a tidal river and a primary tributary to Great Bay. The river often meanders, frequently doubling back on itself, and passes through several short stretches of rapids in Brentwood before falling over the dam in Exeter. The Exeter River watershed covers an area of approximately 67,700 acres in Rockingham County and includes sizeable portions of ten municipalities including Chester. A small portion of western Chester is located within the Cohas Brook Watershed, and the southwestern corner of the town located within the Beaver Brook Watershed.

There are a number of regional and multi-state organizations which are currently working together to protect these valuable water resources in Chester including the many other communities located within the watershed. These key organizations include: the Piscataqua Estuaries Partnership and the Exeter River Local River Advisory Committee.

Land use changes within the headwaters of the Watershed can often have downstream impacts on the water quality of any of the fifteen communities with land in the watershed. The ten communities located within the majority of the watershed are Chester, Brentwood, Darville, East Kingston, Exeter, Fremont, Kensington, Kingston, Raymond and Sandown. The other five communities have nominal areas in the Exeter River Watershed.

Land use changes and impacts within the Cohas Brook Watershed may also be felt in portions of Chester, Manchester, Hooksett, and Candia, as well as minor areas in Derry and Londonderry. Land use changes in the Beaver Brook area could also impact the communities of Chester, Derry, Londonderry, Windham, Pelham, and Hudson, along with smaller areas in Salem.

The Exeter and Squamscot River is a primary tributary of New Hampshire's Great Bay and plays an important role in maintaining the health of the bay and its surrounding environment. All of the communities located within this 32 mile long stretch of river need to work together to maintain water quality and protect these critical resources.

To protect these important watersheds and reduce the risk of negative impacts to water quality, it is important that the Town of Chester continue to participate on the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee as well as the activities of the Piscataqua Estuaries Partnership.

Regional Partnership Opportunities

In addition to these watershed partnerships, the Town of Chester has many other additional opportunities to partner with neighboring communities and to collaborate on various land use planning efforts. Generally, this can happen through the strengthening of day-to-day relations with the surrounding municipalities as well as maintaining open communications between communities as developments with potential regional impacts are identified and issues of regional concern are discussed and addressed. This can occur specifically through the review of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) as provided through RSAs 36:54 through 58. Under state law municipalities are required to notify abutting communities of any developments of regional impact. The SNHPC has created guidelines for communities in considering Developments of Regional Impact. The intent is to open dialogue between communities within the SNHPC region, encourage communities to apply the same review standards, and to minimize potential conflicting points of view between communities. The Town of Chester should include these guidelines in the planning board's site plan regulations. In addition to DRIs, there are a variety of organizations and agencies that work in a regional capacity that may be of assistance to the Town of Chester when addressing and mitigating issues of regional concern. These partnership opportunities include:

Access Greater Manchester

This is a collaborative effort of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (NH DRED). Access Greater Manchester unites Manchester and 14 surrounding communities, including Chester, with the Chamber and NH DRED to promote regional cooperation in economic development. Access Greater Manchester provides a forum to address regional issues such as new business recruitment,

infrastructure, transportation and other issues and needs of the region. The forum also provides participating communities an opportunity to react and take a proactive approach to various issues they may collectively face.

Rockingham County Conservation District

The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) has been operating since 1946 as a legal state subdivision. The RCCD provides a variety of services to private landowners, municipalities, and other local interest groups on conservation and natural resource management. They provide technical assistance and guidance on issues such as surface and ground water quality and quantity, non-point source pollution, erosion and sedimentation, storm water management, flooding, wetlands, forestlands, wildlife habitats, and solid waste.

Exeter River Local Advisory Committee

Chester plays an integral role in the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee. This group was formed to ensure that the river and its watershed are protected from future environmental threats. While the Committee serves in a purely advisory role, it has established an action plan for the Watershed's communities to use when making decisions on water quality and quantity, wildlife habitats and natural communities, scenic, recreational and historic features, and education and outreach. The committee is also available to review and comment on any riparian developments that may or may not have an adverse impact on the Exeter River.

Piscataqua Estuaries Partnership

The mission of Piscatqua Estuaries Partnership (PREP) is to protect and improve the water quality and overall health of the region's two estuaries-Great Bay & Hampton-Seabrook. The organization monitors and researches the region's water ways, encouraging people to help protect and preserve the estuaries, support development patterns that protect water quality, maintain open space and important habitat, and restore estuarine resources.

NH DOT/SNHPC Transportation Advisory Committees

As a function of the Bylaws of the Southern NH Planning Commission, SNHPC can form technical advisory committees (TAC) by functional categories such as housing, intergovernmental relations, transportation, water supply and water pollution abatement, solid waste management, land use, etc. The most common and active at SNHPC is devoted to transportation issues. All member communities have representation on the TAC. The TAC presents regional transportation projects and discusses their feasibility and impacts across the region. Additionally, the TAC provides policy recommendations, on behalf of the municipalities, to the SNHPC staff and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning

The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP) is a part of the Governor's Office and serves to implement the policy recommendations of that office. The NHOEP's general tasks are to implement state policy on smart growth, provide a variety of planning assistance to municipalities, support natural resource protection programs, provide services related to heating fuel assistance and refugee resettlement, ensure reliable energy sources are available, and promote energy efficiency. Possibly the most valuable service NHOEP offers to communities is their training programs. NHOEP sponsors fall and spring planning and zoning conferences with sessions on all planning issues and subjects. Additionally, they maintain the State Data Center, an invaluable planning tool for municipal planning boards.

Local Government Center/New Hampshire Municipal Association

The Local Government Center (LGC) was originally founded as the NH Municipal Center in 1941 and reorganized as the LGC in 2003. The Local Government Center's mission is to provide programs and services that strengthen the quality of its member governments and the ability of their officials and employees to serve the public. To do this they provide a variety of services to its municipal members including legal advice, professional recruitment, the Law Lecture Series, a toll-free hotline, enhanced member services, and pooled risk management services.

Access Greater Manchester

Access Greater Manchester is a regional economic development partnership between the SNHPC, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the New Hampshire Business Resource Center. Access Greater Manchester seeks to facilitate economic development at a regional level by encouraging communities to look beyond their borders in order to collectively market the entire region's assets as a desirable place to live, work and play.

Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire (REDC):

REDC is a sister economic development organization providing and offering similar programs and incentives as the CRDC but only to municipalities and businesses located within Rockingham County in NH. For more information about REDC's programs see their website at: www.redc.com.

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC)

SNHPC is one of nine New Hampshire regional planning commission. The main function of the SNHPC is to promote intergovernmental cooperation and encourage coordinated development of the region. This includes the preparation of regional plans, including policies and strategies for the region. Issues addressed include environmental, health care, housing, emergency, hazard mitigation, long-term planning (Master Plans), energy, air and water quality, hazardous waste, transportation, education, sustainability, etc. The number of people served in the region is 274, 854, according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

Rt. 121 Cell



Photo: SNHPC

Appendix

Question #1: What, in your opinion, are the most important general issues that must be addressed in Chester over the next five years? Please check up to five items from the list.

Table 1: General Issues						
General Issues	Create elderly housing	Create affordable housing	Increase Housing Variety	Increase recreational opportunities	Preserve agricultural lands	Increase school capacity/facilities
Total Responses	62	18	17	55	146	14
General Issues	Upgrade or create new town facilities	Protect historic properties and sites	Protect drinking water supply and quality	Preserve open space and forests	Attract new retail or office development	Attract new industrial parks
Total Responses	19	123	140	169	84	34
General Issues	Improve road quality and traffic control	Provide public transportation	Provide sidewalks in key areas	Decrease the rate of residential growth	Increase areas zoned for commercial/ industrial uses	Create a vibrant town center
Total Responses	113	8	33	76	43	85

Question 1 Write-In Responses:

- 35. Pay Teachers more Money
- 36. Cell Phone Tower
- 37. Improve Town management
- 38. Reduce Full time police officers
- 39. Bike Paths/Trails
- 40. Need Something in Chester to tax other than houses
- 41. Limit Cluster Development
- 42. LANE ROAD NEEDS TO BE PAVED
- 43. Gas Station
- 44. Street Light at center to cut down on accidents
- 45. Keep 2 acre lots single family
- 46. Lane Road Needs Improvements

47. Lower property taxes
48. Allow More Home Businesses
49. Improve Town Management
50. Restaurant
51. Improve Main Roads
52. Keep Chester rural.
53. Don't Become Derry.
54. Lower taxes, create jobs
55. Stop Cluster housing and reduce taxes
56. Develop a more professional rapport between departments + boards of Chester.
57. Stop Spending, Lower taxes
58. Road maintenance program
59. Convert Chester College to professional park
60. Reduce School budget by putting more students per class
61. Install a traffic light at the dangerous intersection of rte. 121 and rte. 102.
62. Diversify tax base. Keep Chester from becoming bedroom community. More places to work during the day and more places to socialize at night.
63. Spend Less Money!
64. Lower/maintain taxes
65. Protect and keep Chester college land
66. Preserve Country Setting
67. Community Rubbish Pickup
68. Raise pay for teachers

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Question #2: Are you a Chester full-time resident, seasonal resident or business owner?

Table 2: Residency Status				
Residency Status	Full-time resident	No Response	Full-Time/Business Owners	Land Owners
Total Responses	273	4	2	2

Question #3: If you are a business owner, on what street is your business located?

Table 3: Location of Business											
Street Name	No response	Church Road	Old Sandown Road	Chester Street	Fremont Road	Harantis Lake Road	Raymond Road	Lane Road	Twin Fawn Road	North Pond Road	East Derry Road
Total Responses	267	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Question #4: Do you own or rent your home?

Table 4: Home Ownership			
Ownership Status	Own	Rent	No Response
Total Responses	272	2	7

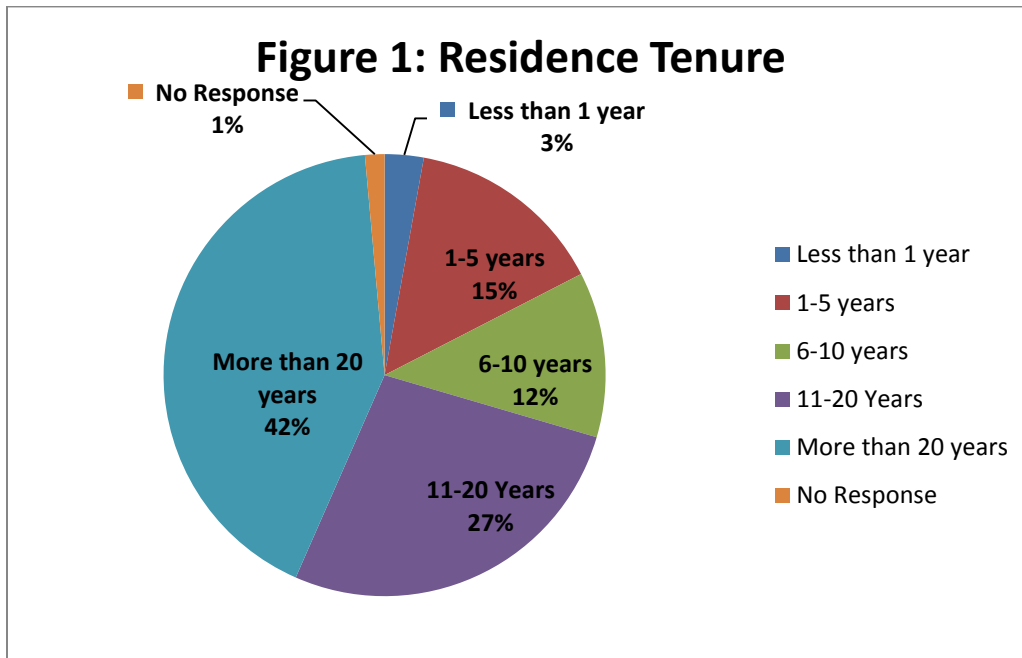
Chester Master Plan 2015

Question #5: What type of home do you live in?

Table 5: Type of Home						
Home Type	Single Family Houses	Townhouse/ Condominiums	No response	Duplex	Manufactured	Apartment
Total	267	4	5	1	3	1

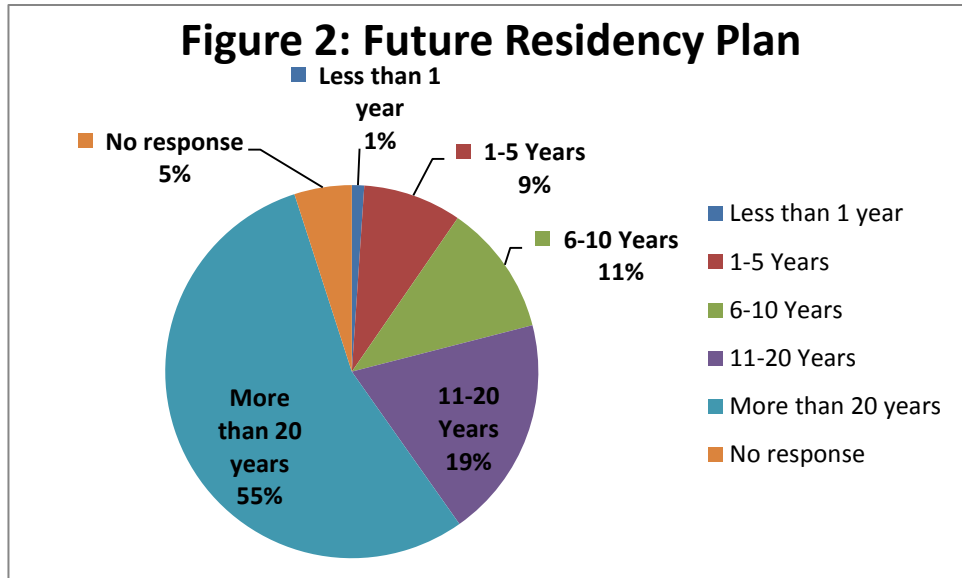
Question #6: How long have you lived in Chester?

Table 6: Residence Tenure						
Time	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 Years	More than 20 years	No Response
Total	8	41	34	76	118	4



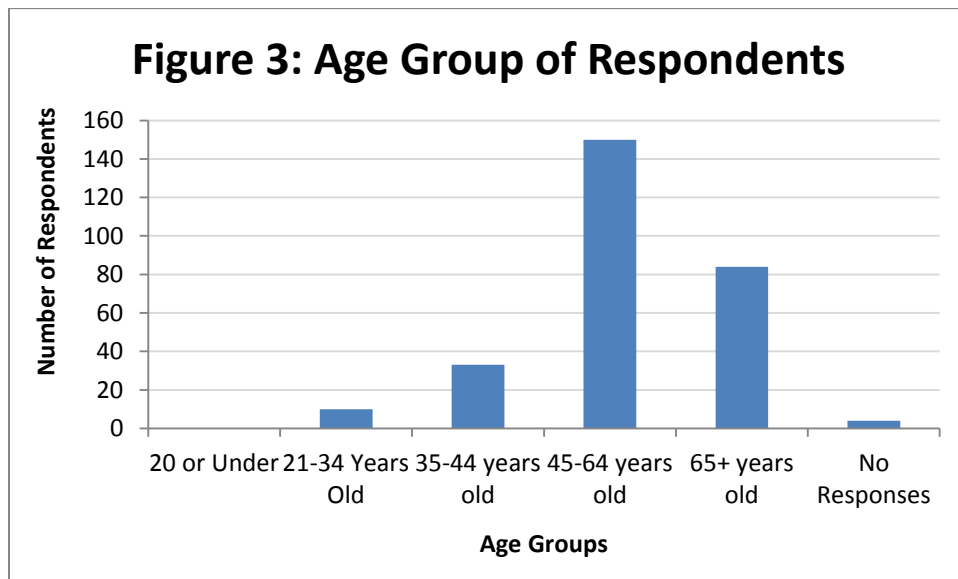
Question #7: How long do you plan to stay in Chester?

Table 7: Future Residency Plan						
Time	Less than 1 year	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	More than 20 years	No response
Total	3	24	32	54	154	14



Question #8: What is your age group?

Table 8: Age Group						
Age Group	20 or Under	21-34 Years Old	35-44 years old	45-64 years old	65+ years old	No Responses
Total	0	10	33	150	84	4



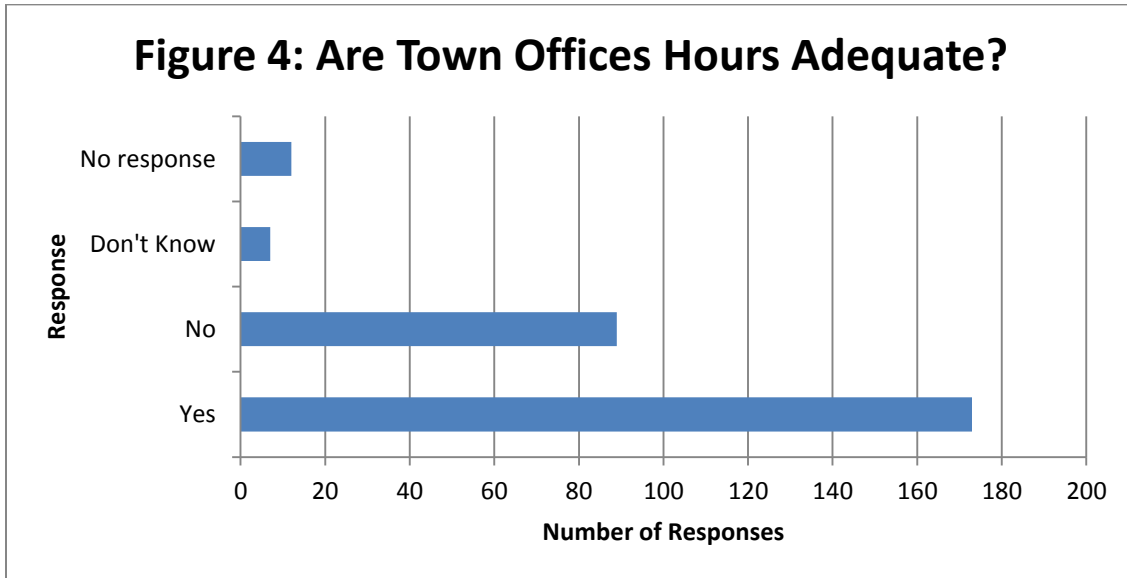
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Question #8: Please rank the following town departments, facilities and services as excellent, good, adequate, or poor by checking the appropriate box. Please indicate, “Don’t Know” if you are uncertain.

Table 8: Ranking of Community Facilities and Services						
Facilities and Services	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't Know	No response
School System	66	106	36	2	63	8
Fire/Rescue	93	127	33	1	17	10
Police	81	124	45	9	13	9
Library	66	99	60	3	43	10
Recreational areas & facilities	37	104	77	25	28	10
Recreational programs for seniors	18	43	33	21	154	12
Recreational Programs for youths	33	72	47	16	96	17
Road maintenance & reconstruction	15	58	104	82	9	13
Transfer station & recycling	113	80	43	12	22	11
Building inspections/ code enforcement	18	83	61	18	89	12
Land use planning	8	61	72	25	102	13
Health, welfare & animal control	12	62	69	16	110	12
Tax assessing & collection	30	99	103	15	23	11
Town Administration	21	102	99	24	23	12
Cemetery Maintenance	38	100	52	2	80	9
Town forests	32	96	47	5	91	10
Community Access TV	4	24	54	62	125	12

Question #9: Do the Town Offices have sufficient operating hours?

Table 9: Town Offices' Operating Hours				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	173	89	7	12



Question 10: Should we improve...

Table 10: Improvements to Town Buildings					
Improvements	Renovate Existing Structure	Build New Structure	No Improvements	Don't Know	No Response
Town offices	39	9	185	34	14
Police facilities	31	20	154	62	14
Fire/public safety facilities	222	9	2	38	10
Highway Dept.	14	15	145	92	15

Question 10 Write-In Responses:

- 16. Better Planned Maintenance
- 17. Renovate: Library
- 18. Lane Road Is a Major issue
- 19. Renovate MPR Room
- 20. Renovate Community Building

21. Renovate Existing Building: Stevens Hall
22. Build New Structure: Library
23. Library
24. Consolidate as much as possible
25. Town Clerk Needs More Hours
26. Community center & Rec. buildings. Stevens hall. Library
27. Reduce taxes
28. Build new structure: intersection of routes 121 & 102
29. No improvements: Transfer station
30. Build New Structure: Recreation

Question #11: For any items above that you are dissatisfied with please explain how Town staff and volunteers may improve their services:

Write-In Responses

1. The town needs a professional manager to manage town staff & operations; town needs to fund road improvements
2. Increase teachers' pay
3. Need a town Manager. The employees/staff have no effective day to day supervision, coaching or accountability except for police, fire and road dept.
4. Town clerk needs more accessible hours.
5. Need to find a better funding method for road repairs and maintenance
6. Roads are awful, but I get it, can't spend what we don't have
7. Post information on town website better i.e. election info
8. Our road is in terrible condition
9. More adult recreational opportunities
10. Library has excellent service but could improve buildings and resources
11. Police should have updated facilities
12. Town Hall hours are not conducive to working people, Wason Pond area is under utilized
13. The fire is all new.
14. If town buildings are built what would happen to the old building
15. The Town has grown to the point that it is ineffective to have a board of selectmen. We need a full-time paid town administrator/staff
16. Increase hours of operation
17. Town offices are open too few and inconvenient hours. Harantis Lake Road has been in need of serious repairs to years. It is unsafe.
18. They could be more friendly and helpful to the public.
19. Crime lab and 24 hour police patrol
20. Taxes are ridiculous
21. Town Clerk is unnecessarily adverse to being helpful or kinds. Woman at the dump is extremely rude. Both seem power hungry. The dump consistently closes early; they should not partially close any parts of the dump early when they are open so few hours.
22. MPR Floor is dangerous for anyone to use for sports.
23. Town Dump should open by 4pm on Wednesdays

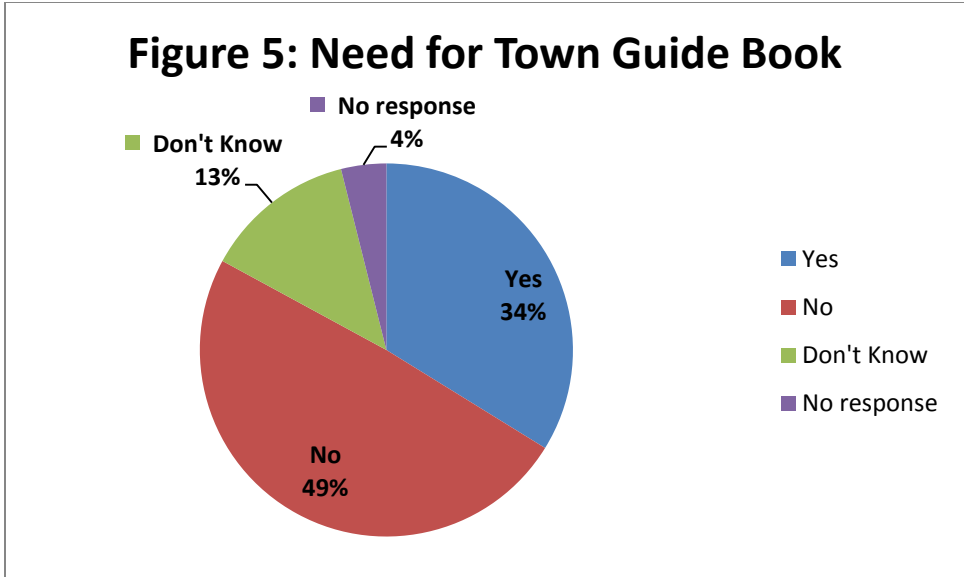
24. Town office operating hours need to be extended.
25. Would like to see a town Administrator
26. Need to find ways to lower tax rate burden.
27. Selectmen need to support road agent in fixing poor roads
28. Town office tax collector should be open 5Am to 8 Am and one night during the week.
29. Fund reconstruction of deplorable roads. Younger folks need to step up in leadership roles - e.g. new selectman.
30. Be accountable for their actions or non-actions.
31. Observation - Town leaders ineffective-lack of decision and effectiveness lead to more costly proposal i.e. PO siding generator and specialized equipment.
32. Police Department should be staffed with more full time officers and be paid a better wage to help keep the officers who we currently have.
33. More hours at transfer station.
34. A lot of roads in town need to be repaved. Traffic light needed for center of town.
35. Better planning to fund road repair
36. Later hours for Town offices
37. People in town need to be willing to spend money on roads-road agent can only do so much with what's provided; crazy how cheap people are with roads.
38. Paved roads are crumbling and reverting to gravel. Town hall is inadequate for meetings and energy efficient.
39. Town offices have limited hours, not convenient to full time employees.
40. Town employees and selectmen need to stop bickering and act mature and do the job they were appointed/elected to do. Town offices need to be open 1 night per week.
41. Road maintenance - need to budget to improve and maintain roads
42. I hear conflict between town offices they need to be educated or hold a degree in town management.
43. Town Clerk should be more available to workout people not everyone like cyber working.
44. When registering my car and to vote, staff was downright rude. A checklist of things you need to do when you come to town and materials to bring should be included with first tax bill.
45. Woman who helps with license, registering voters, etc. is pretty rude to new comers.
46. The community access TV is poor, but who cares? I rated them-that does not indicate dissatisfaction
47. Police Department Traffic Officials are not honest.
48. Longer hours
49. Would be good in town clerk and other officers open 1 night a week.
50. More hours at town offices.
51. Police seem only to care about traffic offenses - really speeding and OUI. They don't do much that's actually helpful or useful.
52. Town offices open one evening per week. Change "oppositional" atmosphere of Board of Selectmen meetings.
53. Increase hours at town hall.
54. Property assessments and appraisals on the website are a mess, some homes the same value for both, other homes vary drastically-makes us wonder why we are paying such high taxes and older larger nicer homes pay less.

Chester Master Plan 2015

55. We need better response from police, more officers in town and most importantly, a plan to improve our road conditions and maintenance.
56. North Pond Road needs paving, 121 toward Auburn, Chester Street in front of the old school house red brick one.
57. Build the police a garage for 4-wheel vehicles and appoint a fire chief that is budget conscious
58. I do not believe the building inspector/code enforcer adequately shuts down illegal building and close down illegal business operating in not permitted structures.
59. Not enough recreation areas - maybe hiking and running trails.
60. Property taxes are outrageous.
61. Increase staffing of Police and fire departments.
62. Town roads are a disgrace.
63. You do nothing to reduce the cost of education, seem to feel you have a blank check. When I last checked you had 12.5 students per teacher. If you increased that to 13 or 14 you would have plenty of money with no tax increases.
64. Town Clerk more hours open.
65. No community TV access through DIRECTV. Explore the possibility of hiring a new town Administrator.
66. Longer open hours have one late night until 7pm.
67. Staff at transfer station is too large. Volvo equipment is overkill for need. Some staff at the transfer station is nasty.
68. Need more/extended police coverage hours
69. Town administration is ineffective: a town manager should be hired/roads are problem
70. Appoint an animal control officer or provide adequate training for police officers who will do this job.
71. Roads are a mess. Town offices are not quaint and fitting of town center.
72. Roads are awful. Town offices are not quaint design.
73. New Façade
74. Let us use metal from the transfer station for home/personal projects!
75. Town hall building exterior is very dated. Does not fit the country feel of the town. Could use a face lift.

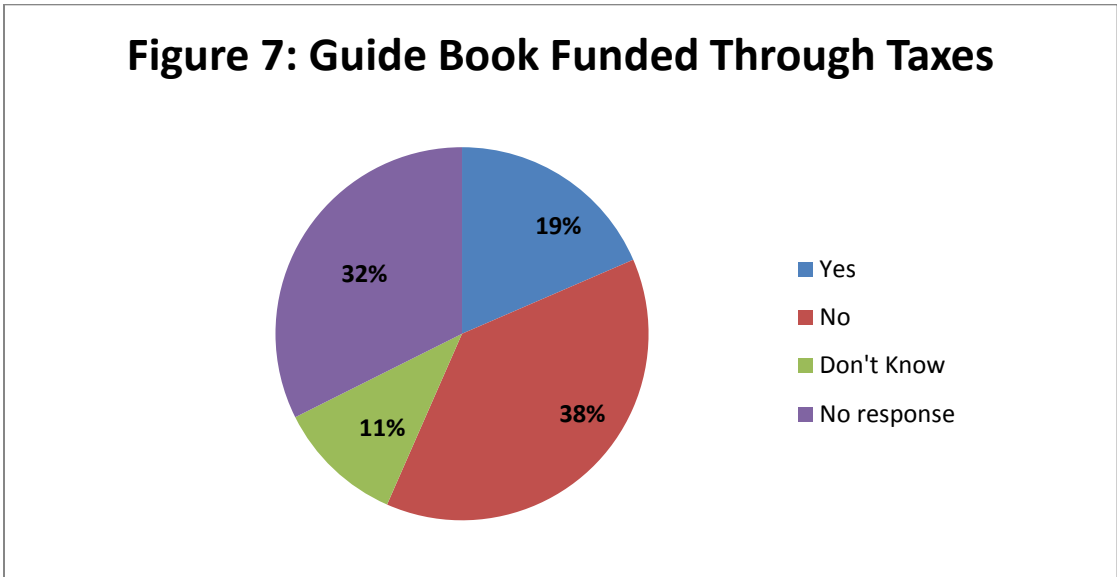
Question #12: Should Chester have a Town Guide Book for residents and businesses?

Table 11: Town Guide Book				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	95	138	37	11



Question #13: Should the Town Guide Book be funded through general tax revenues?

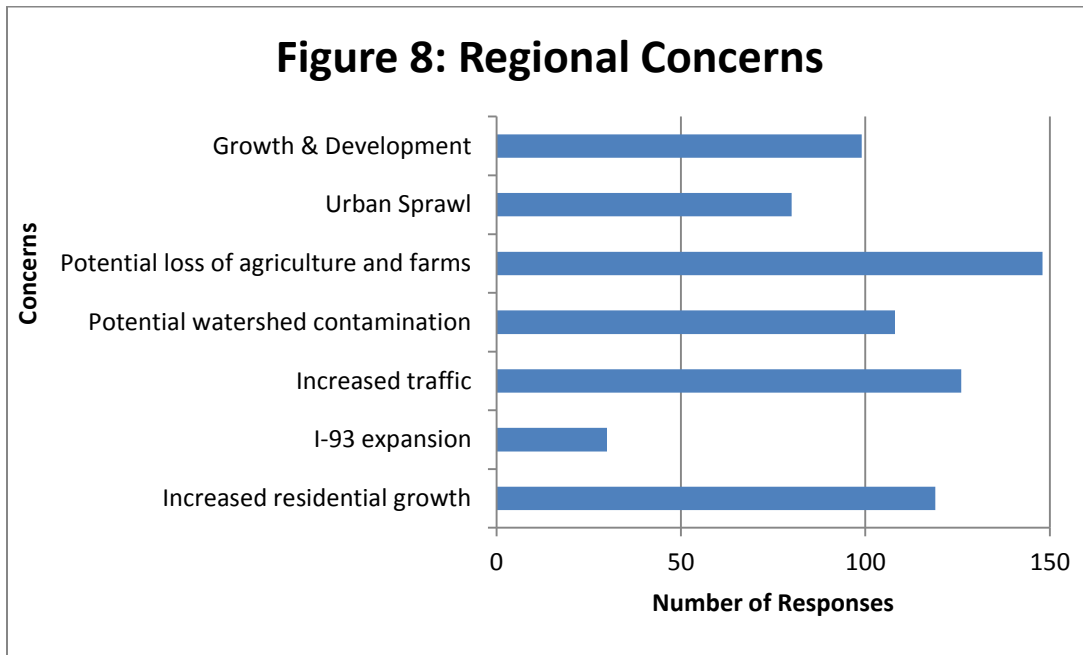
Table 12: Guide Book Funded Through Taxes				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	52	107	31	91



Question #14: What impacts from outside Chester concern you the most? Check up to three.

Table 13: Regional Concerns

Regional Concern	Increased residential growth	I-93 expansion	Increased traffic	Potential watershed contamination	Potential loss of agriculture and farms	Urban Sprawl	Growth & Development
Total	119	30	126	108	148	80	99



Question #15: What do you feel are Chester’s greatest regional assets? Check up to three.

Table 14: Regional Assets

Assets	Agriculture	Wason pond & community center	Recreational trails	Pinkerton academy	Chester academy	Rural character	Canoeing	Town center	Stevens memorial hall
Total	95	108	49	141	69	218	6	66	119

Question #16: Do you feel that adequate amounts of land have been zoned for the following uses

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Table 15: Land Use						
	Too Much	Just Right	Not Enough	Enough But Wrong Location	Don't Know	No Response
Residential - single family	59	136	5	0	60	21
Residential - 2 & multi family	64	82	33	1	84	17
Residential - Cluster housing	97	64	19	1	79	21
Residential - rural	8	135	37	2	76	23
Commercial - business and office	11	75	102	4	69	20
Commercial - retail	8	80	111	0	62	20
Industrial - manufacturing	17	78	55	9	96	26
Industrial - sand and gravel excavation	22	102	16	2	114	25
Industrial - industrial parks	27	75	51	3	101	24

Question #17: If you feel that zoning for a particular use is in the wrong location, what changes would you suggest?

43. Better Consistent enforcement of zoning and building rules, fewer variances granted. Do not expand commercial district further. Need full time code enforcement officer who actually enforces the codes.
44. Encourage more office/retail near 121/102 intersection
45. Do not add retail because close enough to malls and larger towns
46. Increase retail/business in center of town
47. Need some business, along 102, to increase tax base
48. If they own it and can make a living, leave them alone!!
49. Chester College
50. Developing Rte. 102 for retail
51. Use the college area to increase small business, office and retail. OR use college area for elderly housing
52. Expand this home cottage type of businesses or manufacturing in historic looking buildings. Must maintain character of historical rural town. Many others do-look at Lexington MA. As good example.
53. Make more space available for business retail to lower tax rate.
54. Don't know enough about the whole process. See town and land use above.
55. Allow small clean business scattered throughout town, not necessarily concentrated. Support home (cottage industry) as was the case in earlier times.

56. Very careful with town growth
57. Keep Rural character - we don't need multi-family or businesses. Both would change Chester into another Derry.
58. Rte. 121 and Rte. 102 should all be business areas. Abutting dump should be industrial.
59. Radius around center should allow for Apartments/duplex and retail business. Especially Rte. 102 to Raymond.
60. Highway Dept. more centralized
61. Include/change zoning along the center of town to allow light commercial or retail to encourage business development.
62. Disappointed to see neon lighted sign at your variety. Does not fit in with the town's character.
63. Industrial not addressed - causes too much home businesses in residential areas. Retail not addressed.
64. Consolidate business, manufacturing and industrial in one location.
65. Zoning in town should be higher density
66. Your variety and Etc. one is sitting right on the aquifer. Need to get Chester
67. Would suggest mixed use be allowed in some areas for business/office or retail to have residential apartments on 2nd floor - but with good quality design.
68. Prohibit industrial uses in residential zones.
69. We don't need industrial parks and traffic that it brings.
70. None at this time.
71. Rather not comment-just say need change
72. Reduce cluster developing.
73. Open land businesses/golf courses or garden center or nurseries
74. Non-residential business should not be able to operate in residential zone especially when the businesses are commercial and are not permitted/no certificate of occupancy issued not permits pulled for construction.
75. Lower property taxes! Cut Spending!
76. Change zoning regulations to encourage industrial development.
77. I have no doubt that you are looking at the closed college to create a plush set of public offices. I do not support it. Work in conditions like those who pay your salaries must work.
78. Future zoning should consider business, office and retail in just a few locations around town.
79. Zoning regulations cannot be determined by driving the roads so I have no idea what they are.
80. Enlarge commercial zoning to draw in new business.
81. The town should promote growth (or plan for growth) above the Rte. 102 corridor. A commercial/industrial presence would benefit the community and its tax revenue/base
82. Concerned about Maintenance of Chester College property.
83. Yes, Town center-mixed use
84. Attract manufacturing and commercial businesses to reduce residential tax burden.

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Question #18: Please indicate the level of importance that the town should give to the following land use development methods for guiding future growth in Chester?

Table 16: Future Land Use Development						
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Allow commercial and residential uses on the same lot or same building	31	54	81	73	23	19
Allow commercial and residential in the same zoning district	31	59	58	83	29	21
Concentrate development into already developed areas in order to preserve rural character elsewhere	115	86	36	20	10	15
Regulate the number of residential building permits allowed each year	130	70	39	23	4	15
Continue to permit higher residential density as a bonus for creation of affordable housing	12	45	50	127	23	24

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Continue to permit higher residential density as a bonus for creation of elderly housing	40	66	52	87	16	20
Village center with more residential and or commercial development	46	63	57	72	13	30
Village Center with Smaller residential lot sizes	26	26	38	147	15	29
Village Center with Creation of a livable/walkable town commons	64	55	63	70	8	21
Village Center with elderly housing	56	53	76	58	11	27
Village Center with mixed use	25	55	62	62	22	55

Other Uses – Write-In Responses:

8. Require new structures to comply with historic/rural look
9. Allow in-law apartments in single family homes
10. maintain scenic views and rural nature
11. Route 121 & 102 should be commercial use
12. Important to develop guidelines for the types of commercial uses allowed in mixed areas.
13. Beauty Salon, Market Basket, Kohl’s, Restaurants open after 2 pm
14. Maintain bridle paths for horses

Question #19: Should the Town continue to promote the protection of its historic and cultural sites?

Table 17: Protection of Historical and Cultural Sites				
	Yes	No	No Response	Don't Know
Number of Responses	241	14	20	6

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Question #20: Please indicate the level of importance you feel the Town should give to the following historic and cultural preservation methods:

Table 18: Historic and Cultural Preservation Methods						
Preservation Methods	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Recognize Historic Structures	124	100	28	7	9	13
Create a Historic District	53	49	82	73	11	13
Create Architectural Design Guidelines	46	58	75	69	16	17
Purchase Historic Buildings	29	33	86	95	20	18
Demolition Review Ordinances	33	52	70	42	65	19
Preservation or Barn Easements	55	78	63	29	41	15
Establish a Heritage Commission	36	40	79	68	41	17

Question #21: What three features in Chester do you feel have the greatest historic significance or preservation value:

- 160. Old Barns
- 161. Old Town hall in center of town, Spring Hill Farm,
- 162. Historic buildings, Cemeteries, Open space
- 163. Town Center, Historic Buildings in Chester,
- 164. Chester Congregational Church, Stevens Memorial Hall, Village cemetery
- 165. The Cannons on the Common, Stevens Hall, The Church in the Center of Town
- 166. Town Center, Cemeteries, Historic Building
- 167. Stevens Hall, Congregational Church, cemetery
- 168. Former Chester College, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
- 169. Stevens Hall, Post office, Café
- 170. Stevens Memorial Hall, Village Center,
- 171. The Center, Stevens Hall, Cemetery
- 172. Stevens Hall, Historic Landmark in Center of Town, Cemeteries
- 173. Post office building, Library building, Stevens Memorial hall
- 174. Stevens Hall, Cemetery,
- 175. Homes on 121, Wason Pond, The farms and downtown
- 176. Stevens Hall, Congregational Church, cemetery
- 177. Historical Society, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
- 178. Barns, cemetery, Stevens Hall
- 179. Town Hall
- 180. Stevens Hall, cemetery, Congregational Church

181. Stephens Hall, cemetery, Congregational & Baptist Church
182. Historic Buildings, Preservation of Land
183. Town Center, Chester College
184. cemetery
185. Church, Steven's Hall, cemetery Downtown
186. Chester Congregational Church, Stevens Memorial Hall, Miss Church's farm
187. Congregational Church, Stevens Hall, Chester St. -homes and buildings
188. Church/Town Hall in Center, cemetery, Existing open spaces/recreational areas.
189. Historic look of town center (i.e. post office, library, Stevens hall, church), cemetery
190. Rural nature
191. cemetery, History in center of town, old barn
192. Stevens hall, Chester Library, numerous historic homes in town
193. Stevens hall, Baptist Church, Homes in Center of Town
194. Stevens Hall
195. Village cemetery, Residences on 121 and 121A, Existing landmarks
196. Open Space, Center of Town, Less Growth
197. Church, cemetery, Stevens Hall
198. Post Office,
199. cemetery, Civil War Statute and cannon, Church
200. Written History, Military History, Structure History
201. Stevens Hall, Chester Congregational Church, Chester Village cemetery
202. Main St. Downtown area
203. All historic homes not just in the center, the Church, Stevens Hall
204. cemetery, Stevens Hall, Rte. 121 Homes
205. Library, Post Office, Town Inn.
206. Stevens Memorial Hall, cemetery, Church
207. Old Homes, Farms, Forests and Wetlands
208. Stevens Hall, Village Center, cemetery
209. Old School house, Town Cemeteries, Historic Houses
210. Stevens Hall, Farms, cemetery
211. Mill Dam, Center of Town cemetery, Stevens Hall
212. All the old houses, Stevens Hall, The Church, The Common
213. Town hall and town center, Watsons Pond, cemetery
214. Library, Stevens Hall, Covered bridge by Wason Pond.
215. Library, Church, cemetery
216. Cannons and the site they occupy same for cemetery monuments across from cannons, Covered bridge and associated area with Wason pond.
217. Former Chester College, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
218. Historical Society, Stevens Hall, Town Forests
219. Stevens Hall, cemetery, Church
220. Town Hall/Library, Soldiers Monument, Wason Pond

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221. Old Town Hall.
222. Chester Congregational Church, Village cemetery, Stevens Hall
223. Antique houses around the center, The Church in Center, Wason Pond/Dam/Bridge
224. Town Center, Chester Street,
225. Bob Healey's farm, Church. cemetery
226. Historic Homes, Stevens Hall, Historic Sites
227. Don't Know
228. Forsyth Forest Cedar Bog, Black Gum trees, North Pond Rd., Exeter River
229. Town Center including surrounding homes, Farms - Stands, Large Land Lots
230. Chester Street, Cemeteries
231. Church, Chester street, Stevens Hall
232. Stevens Hall, cemetery
233. All historic structures in the center and surrounding area
234. Houses/Buildings over 200 years old, Edwards Mill and Pond, Town Center
235. Village cemetery, Historic Houses
236. Rural Character, Stevens Hall, Cemeteries
237. Chester Center
238. Town Hall and surrounding buildings, Cannons and Statue, Area around town center - along 121
239. Stevens Hall/Library/Post Office, Town Hall, Chester Academy
240. Stevens memorial hall, cemeteries
241. Stevens Hall, Antique Homes on Chester Street and Sandown Road, Church Farm
242. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery,
243. Stevens Hall
244. Stevens Hall and Chester Street Homes, Wason Pond Rec. Area, Church Farm and active private and commercial farms.
245. cemetery, Stevens Hall, Library/post office
246. Chester Street, The Old School Houses, Cemetery
247. Chester Street and Haverhill Rd., Brick school building for historical building, indicate the era of existing structures.
248. Chester Street
249. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery,
250. Stevens Hall, Wason Pond trails and land area
251. Stevens Hall, Church, Vestry
252. Cemetery in center of town, Church, old Town Hall
253. Open Space when driving through center, visual - historical character of 121/downtown, love the church bells
254. The visual aesthetic of Rte. 121 and Chester St., Open Space along rte. 121/102,
255. Stevens Hall, American Legion
256. Chester St., Halloween on Chester St., Rural environment.
257. The Town Center, Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Area, Cemetery.

258. Rural History, Open Spaces, Wooded Spaces
259. Old Cemetery, Houses near center of town, Statues
260. The church, the village center, Stevens Hall
261. Center of Town, Farms, Old Chester Turnpike.
262. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery, Cong Bap Church
263. Older homes, giving owners tax breaks to preserve those homes and barns, Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery.
264. Stevens hall, Church and Vestry, Post office
265. Stevens hall, Library, Post office area,
266. Cemetery, Stevens hall, Wason Pond Bridge
267. Rural Character, Center of Town
268. Rte. 102/121 intersection
269. Chester Street Area, Cemetery, Wason Pond area.
270. Cemetery, Stevens Hall, Post Office
271. Old town hall, Church, Cemetery, Chester rod and gun club
272. Stevens Hall, Historic Homes
273. Congregational and Baptist church, Chester village cemetery, Chester center
274. Town Cemetery, Stevens Hall
275. Open Land, Agricultural zoning
276. Church in Center of Town, Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery.
277. Cemetery, Old Houses on Chester Street, Old Church at center of town.
278. Land, Center of Town
279. Stevens Hall, Common with Commons, Baptist Church
280. Stevens Hall, Village Cemetery, Monument Cannons and Common
281. Wason Pond, Grange Hall, Scare-Crows
282. Rte. 121 Colonial homes, Town Forests, Wason Pond
283. I'm all for preservation but not at the taxpayer's expense.
284. Cemetery, Town Center, Wason Pond
285. Stevens Hall, Church,
286. Rte. 102/121 intersection, Chester Street
287. Main street/Center of town, Wason Pond and trails, Cemeteries.
288. Town Center, Town center historical buildings, All other historical sites
289. Stevens Hall, Chester Congregational church, Old Barns
290. Stevens Hall, Library, Church
291. Farm Land, Forest Areas, Open Spaces.
292. Agricultural/Residential
293. Old Barns, Old Historic Residential homes, Cemeteries in the woods.
294. Church, Stevens Hall, Cemeteries
295. Stevens Hall, Some homes are 200+ years old and have been maintained with character, Cemetery.
296. Chester Street, Wason Pond, Chester Center

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- 297. Cemetery, Undeveloped Land
- 298. Town Center (Stevens/Church/Cemetery)
- 299. Cemetery, Stevens Hall, Muriel Church Property.
- 300. Post office, Wason Pond (trails not fields)
- 301. Main Street,
- 302. Public Buildings, Cemetery, Old Homes.
- 303. Center of Cemetery, Houses on Rte. 121 Downtown, Memorial Hall and vestry.
- 304. Edwards Mill, Old mill site on Pulpit rock road.
- 305. Old buildings town hall, library, conservation trails, Wason development
- 306. Town Center, Wason Pond Area
- 307. Stevens Hall, Church, Old Homes on Chester street and Haverhill Rd
- 308. Stevens Hall, Church,
- 309. Open land/farming, town Chester, trees
- 310. Center of town, Farmland,
- 311. Stevens Hall, Congregational Church
- 312. Town Center, Wason Pond and natural areas, Low Housing density - 2 acre min.
- 313. Farm Land, Old restored houses, No ugly businesses
- 314. Well manufactured homes in village center, Rural Character, The absence of strip malls, Convenience stores and gas stations.
- 315. Old Town Hall Building, Old Church, Cemetery
- 316. Downtown Area, Open spaces, Rural Character
- 317. Small town living.

Question #22: How important is the preservation of additional open space in Chester to you?

Table 19: Open Space Preservation						
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Number of Responses	140	70	43	18	0	10

Question #23: How should open space preservation be funded? Check all that apply.

Table 20: Funding for Open Space Preservation						
	Easements	The current use change tax fund	General tax revenues	A bond issue	Donations	Grants
Number of Responses	252	228	106	112	378	382

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Question #24: Please indicate the level of importance you feel the Town should devote to the following natural resource preservation and open space protection methods?

Table 21: Natural Resource and Open Space Preservation Methods						
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	Response
Protect drinking water supply and aquifers	212	40	14	3	3	9
Protect wetlands, streams, lakes, other surface waters	165	76	25	4	2	9
Promote fish and wildlife management	108	100	45	13	2	13
Protect wildlife corridors and habitats	117	93	44	8	4	15
Preserve and protect forested areas	133	90	37	7	0	14
Preserve agricultural lands	135	84	40	10	0	12
Preserve open fields	118	86	51	11	0	15
Maintain outdoor recreation areas	110	98	53	9	1	10
Preserve open space through conservation easements	101	83	54	14	13	16
Preserve open space through outright purchase of land	63	56	68	69	10	15

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Question #25: Please indicate the level of importance the Town should give to the following housing types:

Table 22: Housing Types						
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No Response
Single-Family	138	83	24	12	5	19
Two-family (duplex)	19	57	73	102	9	21
Multifamily (3+ units)	14	14	54	163	10	26
Elderly Housing	68	67	65	55	9	17
Manufactured (mobile) Homes	10	15	50	174	9	23
Townhouses or Condominiums	17	44	85	109	9	17
Affordable Housing	31	44	73	109	6	18
Cluster Developments	25	33	49	141	15	18

Question #26: Does Chester need affordable housing?

Table 23: Affordable Housing Need				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	82	145	39	15

Question #27: Does Chester need elderly or assisted housing?

Table 24: Elderly Housing				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	153	70	45	13

Question #28: Should the Town require cluster subdivisions?

Table 25: Cluster Subdivisions				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	45	157	65	14

Question #29: Is Chester’s Residential growth occurring Too Fast, Too Slow, or Just Right?

Table 26: Residential Growth				
	Just Right	Too Fast	Too Slow	No Response
Total	129	124	10	18

Question #30: Which road or intersection in town poses the most serious threat to safety?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Center 2. Rte. 102/121 intersection 3. Rte. 102/121 intersection 4. 121 + 121A + 102 5. Rte. 102/121 intersection 6. Rte. 102/121 intersection 7. Old Chester Rd. 8. Rte. 102/121 intersection 9. Rte. 102/121A Intersection 10. Rte. 102/121 intersection 11. Rte. 102/121 intersection 12. Rte. 102/121 intersection 13. Rte. 102/121 intersection 14. Rte. 102/121 intersection 15. Rte. 102/121 intersection 16. Rte. 102/121 intersection 17. Rte. 102/121 intersection 18. Rte. 102/121 intersection 19. Center of Town 20. Rte. 121 and Chester Rd. 21. Rte. 102/121 intersection 22. Rte. 102/121 intersection 23. Rte. 102/121 intersection 24. Rte. 102/121 intersection 25. North Pond 26. Rte. 102/121 intersection 27. Rte. 102/121 intersection 28. Rte. 102/121 intersection 29. Rte. 102/121 intersection | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 30. Rte. 102 31. Rte. 102/121 intersection 32. Rte. 102/121 intersection 33. Rte. 102/121 intersection 34. Rte. 102/121 intersection 35. Rte. 102/121 intersection 36. Center of town blinking light 37. Rte. 102 38. Rte. 102/121 intersection 39. Rte. 102/121 intersection 40. 102/Chester Rd. 41. Rte. 102/121 intersection 42. Rte. 102/121 intersection 43. Rte. 102/121 intersection 44. Center Intersection 45. Rte. 102/121 intersection 46. Center of Town 47. Rte. 102/121 intersection 48. Rte. 102/121 intersection 49. Ledge Rd. 50. 102 Needs a bike path or sidewalk 51. Rte. 102/121 intersection and East Derry Rd. 52. Rte. 102/121 intersection 53. Rte. 102/121 intersection 54. Rte. 102/121 intersection 55. Rte. 102/121 intersection 56. Rte. 102/121 intersection 57. Rte. 102/121 intersection. Make light change blinking, not yellow. Put in traffic |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- circle like Derry and Amesbury MA.
58. 4 Corners by blinking light
 59. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 60. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 61. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 62. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 63. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 64. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 65. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 66. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 67. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 68. None
 69. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 70. North Pond Rd. and Rte. 102
 71. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 72. 102, North pond rd. and old Sandown rd.
 73. Rte. 102 intersection of Rte. 121A
 74. NH Route 121-Needs maintenance
 75. Rte. 102 intersection of Rte. 121A
 76. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 77. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 78. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 79. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 80. Harantis Lake Rd. and Derry rd.
 81. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 82. The Center
 83. East Derry Rd.
 84. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 85. 102/121 and 121A
 86. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 87. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 88. Easy Derry Rd.
 89. Town Center and North Pond Rd.
 90. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 91. Rte. 102 and North Pond Rd.
 92. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 93. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 94. Blinking light in center of town
 95. Back Chester, Town center
 96. Center of town
 97. Center of town needs light.
 98. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 99. East Derry Rd.
 100. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 101. Fremont Rd./Raymond Rd.
 102. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 103. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 104. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 105. 102 and North Pond Rd./Old Sandown intersection
 106. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 107. Chester Center
 108. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 109. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 110. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 111. Half True and North
 112. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 113. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 114. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 115. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 116. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 117. Center at blinking light
 118. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 119. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 120. 102 and Haverhill Rd.
 121. Chester Center
 122. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 123. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 124. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 125. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 126. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 127. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 128. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 129. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 130. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 131. Fremont Rd. and Rte. 121
 132. Rte. 102/121 intersection
 133. Rte. 102/121 intersection

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134. Rte. 102/121 intersection
135. Rte. 102/121 intersection
136. Rte. 102/121 intersection
137. Rte. 102/121 intersection
138. Blinking light in center of town
139. Rte. 102/121 intersection
140. Rte. 102/121 intersection
141. Rte. 102/121 intersection
142. Rte. 102/121 intersection
143. Rte. 102/121 intersection
144. Rte. 102/121 intersection
145. Rte. 102/121 intersection
146. Rte. 102/121 intersection
147. Rte. 102/121 intersection
148. Rte. 102/121 intersection
149. Rte. 102/121 intersection
150. Rte. 102/121 intersection
151. Rte. 102/121 intersection
152. Rte. 102/121 intersection
153. Rte. 102/121 intersection
154. North pond and Chester Street.
155. Rte. 102/121 intersection
156. Rte. 102/121 intersection
157. Rte. 102/121 intersection
158. Rte. 102/121 intersection
159. Rte. 102/121 intersection
160. Rte. 102/121 intersection
161. Sharp corner on lane rd. by dog kennel.
162. Center of town at blinking light/Rte. 102 and 121.
163. North Pond Rd.
164. East Derry Rd. and Lane Rd. and North Pond Rd.
165. Rte. 102/121 intersection
166. East Derry Rd.
167. Need tunnel and preservation by historical register.
168. Rte. 102
169. Rte. 102/121 intersection
170. Rte. 102 and Chester Rd.
171. Center of Town
172. Rte. 121 and Candia Rd.
173. Rte. 102/121 intersection
174. Rte. 102/121 intersection
175. North Pond/Rte. 102 - and Intersection of Rte. 121/102
176. Town Center
177. Rte. 102/121 intersection
178. Rte. 102/121 intersection
179. Rte. 102/121 intersection
180. Rte. 102/121 intersection
181. Rte. 102/121 intersection
182. Rte. 102/121 intersection
183. Rte. 102/121 intersection
184. Rte. 102/121 intersection
185. Rte. 102/121 intersection
186. Rte. 102/121 intersection
187. Center of town.
188. Rte. 102/121 intersection
189. Center of Town
190. Rte. 102/121 intersection
191. Center of town
192. North Pond Rd./East Derry Rd.
193. Chester Street and Rte. 102
194. Rte. 102/121 intersection
195. Old Chester Rd.
196. East Derry Rd.
197. Rte. 102/121 intersection
198. Rte. 102/121 intersection
199. Rte. 102/121 intersection
200. Rte. 102/121 intersection
201. Rte. 102/121 intersection
202. Rte. 102/121 intersection
203. Rte. 102/121 intersection
204. Rte. 102/121 intersection
205. Rte. 102/121 intersection
206. Rte. 102/121 intersection
207. Rte. 102/121 intersection
208. Rte. 102/121 intersection

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- 209. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 210. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 211. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 212. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 213. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 214. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 215. Rte. 102/121 intersection

- 216. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 217. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 218. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 219. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 220. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 221. All-people Speed!

Question #31: Which road or intersection in town has too much traffic, considering its design and surrounding setting?

- 1. Towle Rd.
- 2. Rte. 102
- 3. Rte. 102 and 121
- 4. East Derry Rd.
- 5. None
- 6. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 7. 102
- 8. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 9. Center of Town
- 10. Center Rte. 121 and Chester Rd.
- 11. East Derry Rd.
- 12. North Pond Rd.
- 13. Rte. 102/121
- 14. 102
- 15. Rte. 102
- 16. Lane Road
- 17. Rte. 102/121
- 18. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 19. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 20. North Pond Rd.
- 21. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 22. Route 102
- 23. Route 102/121
- 24. North Pond Rd,
- 25. Rte. 121
- 26. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 27. Rte. 102
- 28. Rte. 102/121 intersection and East Derry Rd.
- 29. none
- 30. Lane Rd.
- 31. Route 102/121
- 32. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 33. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 34. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 35. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 36. Rte. 102
- 37. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 38. Which road has too much traffic?
- 39. Candia Rd. and Old Sandown Rd.
- 40. Rte. 102
- 41. Rte. 102
- 42. North Pond Rd.
- 43. Rte. 121A Too fast
- 44. Candia Rd. - Enforce no truck thru
- 45. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 46. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 47. Rte. 102
- 48. Rte. 102
- 49. Harantis Lake Rd. and Derry rd.
- 50. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 51. Rte. 102
- 52. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 53. 121A and North Pond Rd.
- 54. Shepard Home
- 55. North Pond Rd.
- 56. Candia Rd.
- 57. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 58. Which road has too much traffic?

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59. Intersection of Rte. 121/102
60. Center of town
61. East Derry Rd.
62. Rte. 102/121 intersection
63. Raymond Rd.
64. Rte. 102/121 intersection
65. Rte. 102/121 intersection
66. East Derry Rd.
67. Chester Center
68. Route 121A
69. Rte. 102/121 intersection
70. Rte. 102/121 intersection
71. Rte. 102
72. Fremont Rd.
73. General store entrance
74. Rte. 102/121 intersection
75. The growth in Raymond
76. Rte. 102/121 intersection
77. Rte. 102/121 intersection
78. Back Chester, North Pond Rd.
79. East Derry Rd., North Pond Rd., Candia Rd.,
80. Rte. 102 and 121
81. Fremont Rd.
82. Center Traffic light
83. Rte. 102/121 intersection
84. Rte. 102/121 intersection
85. Rte. 102/121 intersection
86. Rte. 102/121 intersection
87. Blinking Light
88. Heavy truck limits need to be enforced on all
secondary roads with larger fines.
89. North Pond Rd.
90. Rte. 102/121 intersection
91. Rte. 102/121 intersection
92. Rte. 102/121 intersection
93. Rte. 102/121 intersection
94. Rte. 102/121 intersection
95. Candia Rd.
96. Rte. 102/121 intersection
97. Rte. 121
98. None
99. None
100. Fremont Rd., North pond rd.
101. Rte. 102/121 intersection
102. Rte. 102
103. North Pond Rd.
104. East Derry Rd.
105. Route 102
106. North Pond Rd.
107. Freemont Rd.
108. North Pond Rd. and 102
109. None
110. Lane Rd.
111. Rte. 102 and Chester Rd.
112. It is what it is.
113. Rte. 102/121 intersection
114. Rte. 102/121 intersection
115. Rte. 102
116. Rte. 102/121 intersection
117. Rte. 102/121 intersection
118. North Pond Rd.
119. Rte. 102/121 intersection
120. Rte. 102
121. Rte. 102/121 intersection
122. Rte. 102
123. Fremont
124. Too much Traffic.
125. Rte. 102/121 intersection
126. Rte. 102/121 intersection
127. Old Sandown Rd.
128. Rte. 102/121 intersection
129. 102 at center
130. Route 102 (trucks)
131. North Pond Rd.
132. Lane Rd.
133. Lane Rd.
134. Rte. 102/121 intersection
135. Rte. 102/121 intersection
136. Candia Rd.
137. North pond rd. and Raymond rd.

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Question #32: Which road or intersection in town requires the most aesthetic improvement?

1. Scenic highways
2. None
3. Old Sandown Rd.
4. If you mean repaving - East Derry Rd. and Harantis lake Rd.
5. Center of Town
6. East Derry Rd.
7. Lane Rd.
8. Rte. 102/121
9. Shaker Heights
10. East Derry Rd.
11. Old Chester Rd.
12. East Derry Rd.
13. East Derry rd.
14. Lane Rd.
15. None
16. None
17. All
18. Harantis Lake Rd.
19. North Rd. at Hale True Rd. and Rte. 121A
20. Parker Road
21. Lane Rd.
22. None, they are all beautiful
23. North Pond Rd.
24. Lane Rd.
25. Fremont Rd. Candia Rd.
26. Around town center
27. East Derry Rd. Needs repairs badly
28. Rte. 102/121 intersection
29. Harantis Lake Rd. and Derry rd.
30. Fremont Rd. Candia Rd.
31. East Derry Rd.
32. East Derry Rd.
33. Rte. 102/121 intersection
34. North Pond Rd.
35. Town center
36. Lane Rd.
37. None
38. Halls Village Rd.
39. East Derry Rd.
40. Chester Center
41. Chester St.
42. Back Chester Rd.
43. East Derry Rd.
44. Rte. 102/121 intersection
45. Town center
46. Town Roads
47. East Derry Rd.
48. Rte. 102/121 intersection
49. East Derry Rd.
50. East Derry Rd.
51. Rte. 102/121 intersection
52. Rte. 102/121 intersection
53. North Pond Rd. - East Derry Rd.
54. Rte. 102/121 intersection
55. East Derry Rd.
56. Rte. 102/121 intersection
57. Unknown
58. Derry Rd. (east)
59. Harantis Lake Road
60. Just fix the road
61. Harantis Lake road.
62. Rte 121 and 121a
63. None
64. North Pond Rd.
65. Center of town Rte. 102/121
66. East Derry Rd. and North Pond Rd.
67. Hale True Rd. and Rte. 121
68. East Derry Rd.
69. None
70. Lane Rd.
71. Don't Spend money on aesthetics.
72. Old Sandown Rd.
73. East Derry Rd
74. Rte 102
75. Rte 102
76. Rte. 102/121 intersection
77. Better school zone signage and lights by Chester Academy.
78. Library
79. Roundabout with cannon area
80. North Pond Rd.
81. Rte. 102/121 intersection
82. Rte. 102
83. Candia and 121
84. Lane Rd.
85. Lane Rd.
86. Rte. 102/121 intersection

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- 87. Harantis Lake Rd.
- 88. None

- 89. Candia Rd.
- 90. East Derry Rd.

Question #33: Which road or intersection in town needs a traffic signal?

- 1. Rte. 121/102 intersection
- 2. Areas where there is naturally pedestrian activity, i.e. 121+102 + others, intersection needs recreation area, need crosswalk, signage and walking lights
- 3. 121A & 102
- 4. Rte. 121/102 intersection
- 5. None!!
- 6. Rte. 102/121A Intersection
- 7. Rte. 121/102 intersection
- 8. Rte. 121/102 intersection
- 9. None
- 10. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 11. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 12. Center of Town
- 13. Chester Center
- 14. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 15. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 16. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 17. None
- 18. Intersection in center of town needs stop light as opposed to flashing light
- 19. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 20. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 21. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 22. None
- 23. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 24. None
- 25. Center of Town
- 26. Center of Town
- 27. None
- 28. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 29. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 30. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 31. North Pond/center intersection
- 32. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 33. Center of Town
- 34. None
- 35. Town Center
- 36. none
- 37. School zone need better traffic signal
- 38. None
- 39. intersection of 102/121
- 40. 4 Corners by Blinking light
- 41. None
- 42. 4 Way 102
- 43. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 44. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 45. Center of Town
- 46. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 47. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 48. None
- 49. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 50. None
- 51. Center of Town intersection 102 and 121
- 52. None
- 53. Intersection of 102/121 (red, yellow, green)
- 54. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 55. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 56. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 57. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 58. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 59. None
- 60. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 61. Center of town
- 62. Town Center
- 63. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 64. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 65. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 66. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 67. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 68. Center of town
- 69. Center of town
- 70. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 71. None
- 72. 121/102 Needs a 4-way light with straight, turn lanes, signals vs. a blinking light
- 73. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 74. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 75. Rte. 102/121 intersection
- 76. Rte. 102/121 intersection

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77. Chester Center
78. None
79. Rte. 102/121 intersection
80. Town Center
81. Rte. 102/121 intersection
82. Rte. 102/121 intersection
83. None
84. Rte. 102/121 intersection
85. Town Center
86. Center of town, school entrance
87. Rte. 102/121 intersection
88. With more open sight lines on Rte. 121 North Side
89. North Pond and Old Sandown rd.
90. Rte. 102/121 intersection
91. Enough lights/signs in town
92. Rte. 102/121 intersection
93. Rte. 102/121 intersection
94. None
95. Rte. 102/121 intersection
96. Center traffic light
97. Rte. 102 and 121 for safety
98. Rte. 102/121 intersection
99. Rte. 102/121 intersection
100. None
101. Blinking light
102. Rte. 102/121 intersection
103. Rte. 102/121 intersection
104. Rte. 121 East Derry Rd. and center of Chester
105. Rte. 102/121 intersection
106. Rte. 102/121 intersection
107. None
108. Rte. 102/121 intersection
109. Rte. 102/121 intersection
110. Chester Center
111. Not Sure
112. Rte. 102/121 intersection
113. No
114. A 50 foot diameter circle at 102 and 121 to slow and allow continuous traffic flow
115. Change the blinking light to traffic light at intersection of Rte. 121/102 at town center
116. Rte. 102/121 intersection
117. Rte. 102/121 intersection
118. None
119. Center of town only at busy commute times.
120. Rte. 121/102
121. None
122. Entrance to school.
123. None
124. None
125. Rte. 102/121 intersection
126. Town Center
127. Rte. 102/121 intersection
128. Rte. 121/102
129. Rte. 102/121 intersection
130. Rte. 102/121 intersection
131. None
132. Rte. 102/121 intersection
133. Rte. 102/121 intersection
134. Rte. 102/121 intersection
135. None
136. Rte. 102/121 intersection
137. Center
138. None
139. Rte. 102/121 intersection
140. School (during drop off and pick up times)
141. Rte. 102/121 intersection
142. Circle
143. Rte. 102/121 intersection
144. Rte. 102 and 121 center of town
145. Rte. 102 and 121 center of town
146. Rte. 102 and 121 center of town
147. Rte. 102 and 121 center of town
148. Rte. 121/102
149. Rte. 121/102
150. Rte. 121/102
151. Rte. 102/121 intersection
152. None
153. Center of Town.
154. None
155. Town Center
156. None
157. Rte. 102/121 intersection
158. Rte. 102/121 intersection

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Question #34: What, in your opinion, is the most pressing transportation problem facing Chester?
Please check up to three items from the list.

Table 27: Transportation Problems																
Transportation Issue	Speeding	Road Quality	Road maintenance program	Lack of public transit	Traffic Volume	Lack of bicycle lanes	Lack of sidewalks	Heavy trucking	Improve school bus service	Insufficient police presence	Pedestrian safety	Lack of parking	narrow side streets	Road flooding	School traffic	Traffic violation
Total	102	120	103	18	44	50	49	52	3	22	49	8	13	36	9	21

Question #35: Do you feel there needs to be more bicycle and pedestrian opportunities in Town?

Table 28: Bicycle and Pedestrian Opportunities				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
Total	143	98	27	13

Question #36: Are Chester's streets safe for bicycles and pedestrians?

Table 29: Pedestrian Safety				
Response	Yes	No	Don't Know	No response
Total	79	157	30	15

Question #37: What do you think is the general year round condition of roads in Chester?

Table 30: Condition of Roads						
Response	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Adequate-poor	Poor	No response
Total	8	89	110	5	60	9

Question #38: What major routes do employed members of your household use to get to work?

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Table 31: Roads Traveled for Work											
Street Name	NH Route 102	NH Route 121	NH Route 121A	Lane Road	Fremont Road	Candia Road	Towle Road	Shepard Home Road	Old Sandown Road	Halls Village Road	East Derry Road
Total	217	144	51	27	43	49	13	21	14	18	27

Question #39: Please indicate the level of importance that the town should give to the following economic development actions.

Table 32: Economic Development						
Response	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know	No response
Attract new office development	56	57	73	80	3	12
Attract new small scale retail development	72	78	57	62	3	9
Attract new large scale retail development	14	13	38	196	3	17
Attract new light industrial development	37	30	81	119	5	12
Develop new industrial park(s) in town	24	12	46	172	11	16

Question #40: Is there a type of business, industry or service that you would like to see in Chester?

Table 33: Future Business Development			
Response	Yes	No	No response
Total	194	71	16

Write-In Responses:

1. Dunkin Donuts
2. Dunkin Donuts
3. Restaurants
4. Restaurant/coffee shop
5. Art/crafts
6. Restaurant/Bar
7. Coffee/Lunch
8. Dunkin Donuts
9. Small Stores, Cheese & Wine, Bakery
10. Farmers market
11. Bakery
12. Coffee, Restaurants, stores
13. Donut Shop
14. Restaurant
15. Car wash
16. Community College
17. ATM
18. Home based Businesses
19. Restaurant
20. Drive-thru Coffee Shop (Dunkin Donuts)
21. All types of Retail
22. More Farms
23. Dunkin Donuts
24. Restaurant
25. Dunkin Donuts
26. Hair Salon, Church, Recreation business
27. Restaurant
28. Restaurant/coffee shop
29. Restaurant
30. Agricultural
31. Nursing Home
32. Indoor Pool
33. Dunkin Donuts
34. Coffee Shop
35. Coffee Shop
36. Dinner Restaurant
37. Dining Restaurant
38. Restaurant
39. Restaurant
40. Bakery, butcher shop
41. Elderly Housing/Assisted living
42. Washateria
43. Restaurant
44. Any + All.
45. Farm Stands
46. Golf Course for open space + tax
47. Restaurants
48. Month Long Town Fair
49. Any that pay taxes-manufacturing for local jobs
50. Dunkin Donuts
51. Restaurant/bar
52. Coffee Place like Dunks or Starbucks
53. Restaurant/Coffee Shop
54. Bakery/Butchery/Restaurant
55. Bakery/Butchery/Restaurant
56. Restaurant

Question #41: What's the best thing about Chester?

Write-In Responses:

1. Schools
2. Great Place to raise a family
3. Rural Community
4. Mostly uncrowded spaces for homes,
5. descreat home businesses, development of our school and recreation options for kids and families.
5. Rural Small Town Character

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6. The beauty of the built environment (especially the old) and the land & other natural features.
7. Small Town Charm
8. Peaceful, quiet, rural community
9. Rural/small town character
10. Attractive, quiet community
11. Small Town Feel.
12. Rural space, horse farms, natural beauty
13. The small town community, appreciative residents who want to keep it the same.
14. Chester Public Library
15. Rural character, safety, quiet, dark sky
16. Zoning and Residential
17. Location, sense of community, opportunity for a vibrant center of town
18. Rural atmosphere beauty, nature community
19. Sense of community/people
20. It's beautiful rural appeal
21. Community spirit and rural feel
22. Forests, Not built-up too much
23. Well-kept properties/traditional New England Community
24. Beauty, small town feel
25. Quiet, Quaint, Pretty
26. It's got a small town feel but is close to the bigger towns when you need something
27. The Character
28. It's beauty
29. Rural Character, Mellow Town activities, safety
30. Friendly, Small-Town
31. Quaint rural nature
32. The people
33. Community involvement.
34. Safety
35. Neighbors-community
36. It's rural character
37. Quality of Life
38. Picturesque setting
39. Rural character and recycling
40. Rural setting
41. Rural
42. It's Country
43. Small town atmosphere
44. The Woods
45. Small, rural community, school system, etc.
46. Rural beauty, main road, historic appearance
47. Post card perfect Main St. Wonderful K-8 School.
48. Rural Nature
49. Small Town
50. Small town feel but close to ocean, city and mountain
51. The rural, small town feel
52. Summer
53. Rural, small safe
54. It's a beautiful rural setting - Peaceful and quiet.
55. Characteristics of the town
56. Historical Small Residential town.
57. Quiet rural nature. Keep it that way.
58. Wason Pond
59. It's peaceful
60. It's school and people
61. Beauty
62. Conveniently located near Nashua, Manchester, Concord, Boston
63. Small town life
64. It's natural beauty
65. Historic homes and buildings
66. 2 Acre lots. Character. Rural setting. Near major highway.
67. Quaint
68. Rural and community involvement
69. People always helpful.
70. The small community feel
71. Still a quiet town.
72. Rural. Large lots single family homes.
73. Rural nature.
74. The way it is.
75. Open Space, not congested
76. Beautiful, rural atmosphere
77. Rural lands
78. Rural, good character
79. It's rich history
80. It is a quiet rural town
81. Rural Character
82. Rural Character - Quiet
83. Country Living
84. Rural Setting
85. Rural Charm
86. Rural Setting

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87. Rural character, safety, quiet, dark sky
88. Rural Character, Mellow Town activities, safety
89. Pinkerton academy
90. The rural small town feel, along with the natural areas.
91. School System and Small town feel.
92. A great small town where the only light is a flashin gone
93. Open space.
94. Location
95. Quiet, not crowded, safe
96. Rural Character
97. Quiet Town
98. Agricultural land
99. Its historical character and rural ambiance.
100. Small town character, forest trails
101. Small town feel - quiet historic center
102. Charm
103. I love the fact that my kids are growing up where I grew up.
104. Town Center
105. It's rural character
106. It's small town charm.
107. Freedom (large lot sizes)
108. Historic New England Charm
109. Quiet
110. History and people.
111. Historic Architect and Rural farm with open land
112. People
113. Rural atmosphere
114. Sense of Community
115. Rural!!
116. Rural Character
117. Rural character, but still close to Derry/Manchester for shopping/Medical
118. Rural, small town atmosphere yet close enough to necessities.
119. Safety
120. Country Atmosphere
121. People care about the town and help each other out.
122. Small town feel
123. Its beauty and proximity to people's needs.
124. Rural Character, including open spaces
125. Rural Character
126. Rural, Quaint center, decent services
127. Country Atmosphere, People helping people
128. Small quaint town not far from stores, etc.
129. It's rural character
130. It's rural charm
131. The closeness of community
132. Rural Setting
133. Rural atmosphere, scenic town center
134. Rural Character/Friendly people
135. It is not Derry
136. The people how live here
137. Rural Character, better managed than other towns.
138. Community Feeling
139. The sense of Community
140. Small town feel, single family houses
141. Community
142. Rural - large lots - spacious - trees
143. Rural country living
144. Rural atmosphere
145. Historical/Rural character
146. Rural Character
147. Peace and Quiet
148. Rural Character
149. The people, Schools
150. Its beauty and history. I moved here to start a small farm with no one telling me to get rid of my animals if they didn't like them.
151. Quiet, rural setting
152. Love the country feel.
153. Historical /rural character exemplified by Chester Center
154. Rural Community
155. Rural character, wonderful heritage
156. The community
157. It's a small town feel
158. Small town rural character
159. Small community feel
160. Small town living
161. Rural
162. Quaint, small town feel/open space.
163. Beautiful Small New England Town.
164. Rural Character

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165. It used to be the light traffic volume. No wits dwindling forests and fields
166. Location, rural but close to I-93 access.
167. Agricultural zoning/use of town land
168. Small town feel and open space.
169. Hiking trails and rural atmosphere with easy commute to Manchester, Massachusetts, etc.
170. We the people.
171. Quaint Beautiful
172. Small town where we know so many of our neighbors.
173. Rural character
174. Small, quiet town.
175. It's a definite horse community.
176. Rural Setting
177. Rural Character, Traffic, Buy Chester College and direct the development.
178. Quiet
179. Motivated-not too far in debt-open minded
180. Rural Character, lack of corporate presence.
181. Rural character, no mobile homes.
182. Historical Buildings/Rural Character
183. Nice, quiet town. Easy to get around.
184. Center of town-4 corners.
185. Rural setting
186. County line setting/people
187. People - small town Character
188. People, Rural Character
189. Small town feel
190. People
191. The beautiful historic homes and barns.
192. The community and historical center of town.
193. Small town feel.
194. Agricultural standard and value.
195. The rural aspect of the town.
196. Small town feel - people care about one another.
197. Country Atmosphere
198. Proximity to major cities, rural atmosphere
199. Farms!
200. Country living
201. Small town atmosphere
202. The rural nature and setting.
203. Nice place to live with friendly people.
204. Pinkerton academy
205. Road maintenance/small town
206. Small town atmosphere
207. Historic Character
208. Its rural setting and character.
209. Small town feeling.
210. It's rural feel
211. Historic Rural Character
212. Small town feel...seclusion so close to the MA. Border.
213. Rural, country setting
214. Small town and good school
215. Low Crime Rate.
216. Quality of community life.
217. Rural-agricultural character-small town charm
218. Pleasant, quiet community
219. Rural quality
220. Rural atmosphere
221. Rural atmosphere
222. Rural Character
223. Quiet, Rural Character
224. Sense of community, great programs for kids.
225. The Residence
226. Rural nature
227. Rural small town general store.
228. The people and rural character.
229. School System
230. School System
231. Country life atmosphere
232. Rural
233. Small town, country feel
234. Rural environment/good schools
235. Local People

Question #42: What's the worst thing about Chester?

Write-In Responses:

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1. The Back Stabbing politics and deceitful
2. Not Enough Small Business
3. Loss of Chester College. Need for code enforcement + building inspection, heavy industry traffic and insulated town officials
4. Occasional Political Strife
5. 102/121 intersection
6. Not enough commercial business to support tax base
7. Rod and Gun Club
8. No food delivery service
9. It's cold in the winter
10. Poor management of public resources by BOS
11. Taxes
12. Repeated attempts at large bond issues
13. Gun Club outdoor pistol range
14. Not as conducive to biking, walking, many places
15. Intersection of 121/102 between 4:30-6
16. The Roads
17. Too many non-NH moving into town
18. We need more growth - people love this town and don't want major changes - but we still need to grow in certain ways.
19. traffic
20. Roads and bickering selectmen
21. Not much to do in town
22. Lack of Attractions in town center
23. Lack of evening services
24. Very poor money management and waste within Chester Academy - school employees say this too
25. Doesn't have enough small business, specialty shops
26. Some residents oppose planning restrictions/rules
27. No Diversity
28. High Tax Rate
29. None
30. Listening to selectmen argue at meetings.
31. Overzealous police department
32. No pavements at senior center and buy a going campground, for recreation and remove it from tax base.
33. Town politics
34. Could use a small plaza close to center of town
35. Lack of a restaurant
36. Too high of noise level coming from the road and gun club.
37. Nothing
38. Too much growth in recent years
39. No industry
40. Heavy traffic
41. Heavy traffic on two commuter routes
42. Lack of tax revenue other than residential taxes
43. Some of the new subdivision/architecture
44. Taxes
45. High Tax Rate
46. Not Enough Recreational opportunities/facilities for youth.
47. Small Town
48. Where it spends its money, the fact that we paid a road frontage tax and we still have dirt after 15yrs is crazy.
49. Winter
50. Too much heavy traffic on Rte. 102 - Especially Walmart trucks
51. You have to drive somewhere for essentials - gas, banks, pharmacy and medical offices
52. High Property Tax
53. To constraints to home based businesses and in-law apartment restrictions.
54. Proposals to add new housing to town.
55. Police/School
56. Nothing
57. No Retail
58. Taxes are suffocating!
59. Taxes

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60. Road maintenance - local public funding - tax payers refuse to allocate money to fix roads
61. Taxes so keep them down
62. Not Protecting the history
63. Town management bickering
64. Roads and sidewalks
65. Rte. 102 traffic.
66. Cars speeding on Rte. 102
67. Traffic
68. Not enough retail to reduce taxes. Need more business to help reduce taxes.
69. Considering "affordable housing"
70. Greater Traffic Flow.
71. Residents wanting change!
72. 20 Minutes to get anywhere
73. New people moving here for the rural character then trying to change it.
74. Taxes
75. Checks and balance of local government
76. Trash thrown at the side of the road.
77. Growth too fast
78. Chester academy-poor academics-needs improvement
79. Some of the Selectmen
80. Politics
81. Bureaucracy (town meetings generally are not productive)
82. Not as conducive to biking, walking, many places
83. Some residents oppose planning restrictions/rules
84. Road quality
85. Nothing except for high property taxes
86. Overall we're very happy we moved to Chester. We can't think of anything we'd consider the worst about the town.
87. A great small town where the only light is a flashing gone
88. Tax bill (school)
89. Roads
90. Not enough Community events/happenings
91. High Taxes
92. Speeders
93. Bad Roads
94. The feeling of indifference by a seeming majority of folks.
95. Board of Selectmen, Taxes
96. Town Management (or lack thereof)
97. Frequent gun fire, heavy truck traffic noise
98. The shooting range - too loud and open too many hours
99. Cluster housing using wetlands
100. Road Conditions
101. Repairing roads, No light at center of town
102. Some roads are terrible
103. Lack of Services
104. Growth
105. Traffic in the center of town.
106. Traffic at Rte. 121 and Rte. 102
107. Town Officials
108. Having to go to Derry, Raymond for everything else.
109. We need a town manager.
110. Small town politics
111. Lack of lines on road - nothing to guide driving at night or in bad weather.
112. Property Taxes
113. Have to leave town for almost everything.
114. Taxes
115. Clustered housing in some neighborhoods/Bar hours at your variety location.
116. Some Roads are in poor condition
117. Petty Politics of town leaders.
118. Town politics
119. Traffic
120. No senior housing, no affordable housing
121. The lack of good town management
122. School taxes

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123. Bickering town officials/high taxes
124. It is close to Derry
125. The people who are always speeding, 102 and back roads.
126. High taxes
127. Taxes and snooty attitude towards business
128. We need a town common place.
129. Lack of a town common
130. Nothing
131. Police Department
132. Some back roads are very bad.
133. Doesn't offer anything.
134. High Taxes don't provide many town services.
135. Weak tax base/poorly compensated teachers. Recent increase in Rod & Gun Club membership which has resulted in serious noise pollution.
136. Too much Subdivision
137. No Fog lines on roads
138. Board of Selectmen
139. Hard-nosed code enforcement.
140. Nothing
141. The quality of roads
142. getting too crowded.
143. Developer misuses of cluster ordinance
144. Growing too fast.
145. Mass transplants bringing suburbs with them.
146. Taxes
147. High taxes
148. Present form of Government
149. Roads
150. Taxes
151. Town hall hours
152. Residential growth
153. Roads
154. Taxes are too high.
155. Condition of roads
156. Traffic and New construction
157. Perception that open space should be preserved at the expense of affordable housing and tax revenue.
158. "Politics" rapport between town division and boards.
159. The Cold
160. Taxes.
161. People who don't follow rules/laws
162. Speeding on our roads.
163. High taxes
164. Taxes
165. Tax rate is way too high for what you get.
166. Roads and services
167. Roads
168. Political Fighting.
169. Lack of sensible development to chester college and gravel pit on Raymond Rd.
170. Roads/Long Drive for service and taxes/
171. School is causing older people to leave due to heavy taxes to support school.
172. Police officers need more training or additional staff.
173. Nothing
174. Traffic at light, lack of town center.
175. Roads
176. None
177. High Taxes
178. Many roads have shoulders that are narrow or non-existent causing danger for joggers/walkers , bicyclists and cars needing to pass them.
179. 102 Traffic/Road to Harrantis Lake.
180. Rte. 102/121 intersection
181. Some of the secondary roads.
182. Too rapid of growth.
183. Distance from supermarket
184. People moving in and posting their land.
185. Poorly maintained homes on 102
186. Not cared for and unsightly home structures, non maintained homes.
187. Building more homes and destroying land.

188. Traffic Heavy
189. Those who would want to change the rural nature and setting.
190. You have to leave town to work and play.
191. Wason pond senior center
192. Tax rate
193. Lack of services
194. Taxes
195. The roads
196. Residential subdivisions
197. Limited town operating hours at town hall, transfer station, restaurants, convenience store
198. small town police force
199. Have no complaints.
200. Town administration/lack of affordable housing.
201. Large suburban style sub divisions are taking over.
202. Must go to other communities for bank, groceries, restaurants, gas, etc.
203. Roads
204. Roads and property taxes
205. Too much code/enforcement
206. Lack of Business, having to go to other communities.
207. The Residence
208. Road condition, taxes
209. Nothing.
210. Center Rte. 102/121 blinking light
211. The executive body (BOS) not consistent in fiscal matters for the town.
212. Taxes
213. Population growth.
214. Selectmen are unprofessional
215. Small town politics
216. Graft within town politics
217. Imports from MA.

Question #43: If you could identify one vision for Chester what would it be?

Write-In Responses:

1. Keep small town charm. Don't let growth consume town.
2. A village center of appropriate scale and type, which would lead to more town vibrancy.
3. Rod and gun club hours 9-5 Monday
4. Rural, Quiet
5. Maintain character and encourage a wider variety of affordable housing and more businesses to diversify tax base and offer convenient services.
6. Keep it rural, small town
7. Keep development down, look what has happened in Auburn...too many new houses took away from small town vibe. Keep Chester small.
8. Maintain small town character with a bit more variety in housing typed and small business
9. Remain mostly unchanged
10. Continue home town feel. Re Assess tax structure.
11. Provide tax relief to residents by attracting small business and light industry
12. Reduce property taxes, stop cluster housing, town common area, less police. Keep Chester clean and quaint why we moved here and not change it to be and then town like Derry, etc.
13. Maintain small town/community feel but make improvements to the town facilities/programs
14. That it will remain a rural community but offer a but more to the residents
15. More self-sufficient, offering more retail and businesss locations
16. A quaint town center with useful retail and services so errants and money aren't going to Derry.
17. Imprpove town center for more community events
18. Keep Chester quaint, quiet and pretty
19. Turn Chester College into an assisted living facility for the elderly, better roads.
20. Remain as it is.
21. Preserve the rural character
22. Maintain it's rural character while allowing some limited growth and development. Derry has a HIGH industrial/retail presence, yet still maintain a high tax rate. This is not the direction Chester should move in.
23. A good place to live. I have been in town all my life, 80 years.
24. To stay a small town and promote agriculture, farming and family. To get new families involved.
25. A tax base on something other than houses.
26. Staying small with some industry to help with taxes base.
27. To expand general services but to retain rural/NE character
28. Noise is a big concern.
29. Think Small
30. Keep it a rural, small town (Do not let it become Deery or Londonderry with massive growth and overburdened intersections) - No cluster development.

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31. Continued protection of natural resources especially watershed areas. Plant and maintain community gardens. Follow best practices for environmental protection. Start local musical groups.
32. Create more jobs in town. Jobs that pay good.
33. Develop Chester College property into town center with elderly housing, park and progressive offices
34. Find a way the town of Chester could purchase and utilize Chester College property.
35. To keep the town as rural as possible. In fairness to those who have lived here for 25+ years some housing that elderly can afford with potential to become available for them as age dictates.
36. x
37. Preserve the rural nature and working farms
38. Small scale communit with retail development on 102
39. Small town, rura, agricultural and many small college, equine friendly.
40. To develop the college are with the essentials, small business with low traffic OR elderly
41. Have a true style guide for all signage in Chester to maintain consistency in the look and feel of the town. Hire an expert and stop allowing hillbilly signs like Chester general store and the neon "city" sign at your variety store. Again look at Lexington and Andover MA. Signage regulations. Chester is looking like a flea market with all thee the disparity in styles and quality of signage.
42. Keep quiet and rural nature of town. This town needs more new housing like it needs the plague!! Stop the growth. The town has grown enough.
43. A town administrator and staff to oversee the town and to increase the tax base with business but maintain the small town feel.
44. Increase businesses and help lower tax rate.
45. Good Roads, tennis courts, bike trails, hiking trails, skating rink, garbage pick-up. North Shore Road reclassified so the town helps us maintain it!
46. Lower property taxes.
47. Low taxes and more business while keeping the country charm.
48. Bring in more revenue with elderly housing and elderly tax breaks and preserve the historic buildings and homes.
49. Historically charming cemetary.
50. Continue to keep the town quaint and historic while introducing modern ammenities.
51. Bank, Pharmacy and meddical offices addition.
52. Farm Land, Historical buildings, woods, elderly housing
53. I think over the years we have grown to the point that we need a very passionate town administrator and management. Too much for selectmen to do without professional guidance. Need more professional management and we need to pay this team. It is impoetant to the growth and integrity of the town.
54. Keeping it basically rural. How about purchasing the buildings. In Chester College and turnn that area into a vibrant downton area.
55. Keep Rural Nature.

56. That it looks exactly the way it does 20 years from now. Chester is such a sanctuary away from unlike every other town south of the Chester line. It is a beautiful town please don't let them ruin it.
57. Peaceful bedroom community.
58. Lower taxes
59. A community of people more centered in town and not commuting many miles away.
60. Keep it small. Allow a limited zoning for commercial. Need some elderly and low income. Need elderly and children recreational programs. Promote land conservation.
61. Keep Chester rural-no elderly housing, no affordable housing, no more sub-divisions, no more condos. If people want these things there are plenty of places they can move to. Fewer places like Chester left.
62. Keep as is!
63. Don't Change anything
64. A town administrator who would get to the heart of issues - like finalizing a resolution to the Chester College Land and Buildings. Resolution like senior housing, retail, and town center.
65. Remain mostly unchanged
66. Remain as it is.
67. Rte. 121 and Rte. 102 business and light industry or retail. Industrial in dump area.
68. Do not increase building and development. Maintain all of the natural resources and forestry. Keep the small town feel.
69. To maintain its rural character and small town feel. I hope it continues to be a positive place to raise a family.
70. Keeping it the small town feel while possibly allowing industry to enter only if it will help reduce taxes and not just allow more spending.
71. Keep it's rural character and charm.
72. All socio-economic backgrounds, cohesive community.
73. To keep Chester the same without too much change.
74. More vibrant center including meeting place such as coffee shop, spaces for informal gatherings to discuss what is going on in town, improved location for activities now held at MPR. Respect for one another.
75. More Vibrant Town Center.
76. All generations could live and gather at community events/businesses to stay connected and informed.
77. Maintain small town status, limit growth.
78. Maintain a rural, small town feeling.
79. A quaint and beautiful residential community.
80. Continue existing atmosphere with some modernizing
81. Long -term commitment to maintaining old world charm and values, nature and natural resources with emphasis on continual growth of servers and activities for families.
82. More rurification
83. Keeping the history and providing for limited growth.
84. Maintain the integrity of Chester and remember why we moved here.

85. Accountability
86. "If it ain't broke, Don't Break it"
87. That Chester will remain a small, rural, agricultural community
88. To have affordable senior housing to allow long time residents to stay here.
89. Keep the town rural character of the town developing town wide activities that bring everyone out, residents and visitors alike but without commercialness.
90. maintain small town charm but broader tax base.
91. Property Tax relief by attracting commercial/industrial businesses - allow cable and phone service competition (internet also)
92. Smart, moderate commercial growth in the center of town and along major roads with strict but reasonable zoning guidelines as to aesthetics, use, stormwater design and traffic control. Improvement of recreational facilities and roads, while preserving our historic properties and agricultural areas.
93. Keep the small town feel, but attract more small business and a variety of housing. Lower Taxes.
94. maintain its rural character.
95. Maintain rural character and prohibit illuminated signs.
96. Allow sustainable growth without significantly compromising the natural beauty, space and rural character of the town.
97. Maintain NE Charm but gain some businesses or light industry.
98. Senior housing
99. A central traffic circle on 102 and Chester St. and Haverhill Rd. this would help to slow traffic but keep traffic moving at all four corners.
100. A place where elderly people could live. Some people live in town all their lives. When they get old they move out of town, because there is no place for them to leave here.
101. Maintain current character while slowing residential development and increasing tax base by encouraging sustainable, environmentally responsible small business and light industry.
102. Provide federal tax relief for 65+ residents
103. Essentially the same as now but encourage growth of small businesses; provide some services (bank, pharmacy) but keep them small. Stop over planning. Let it grow organically by providing more general support.
104. More welcoming town center with parks, walk/bike way and benches. Visual aesthetics maintenance without obvious subdivisions on route 121-would change everything.
105. Keep future subdivisions out of sight. More vibrant/diverse town center. Retain open space.
106. Preserve environmental and historical identity. Keep rural feel, open space and maintain historical structures. Develop more industry slowly and carefully. No more decisions.
107. Welcome small business complex
108. Stay similar to what we are today - but improve some roads.
109. Taxes are too high for a town that offers not very much. Municipal growth would be great and maybe lower taxes.
110. 1. Develop the best quintessential small New England Town. 2. Stop trying to be everything to everybody that moves into town.
111. Get more commercial/light manufacturing on the tax rolls.

112. Maintain the small rural town feeling.
113. Leave it alone
114. maintain rural character to the degree possible while trying to attract small business. Improve the school.
115. A community with town government that functions smoothly and offers warm welcome to town offices and town services, reaches out with a summer and winter newsletter that keeps everyone informed, provides more bike paths and sidewalks - especially near children and seniors, maintenance of rural countryside, and twice daily public transportation so people could leave town in AM and return late afternoon.
116. Staying like an agricultural town. (Derry and Manchester each only 10/15 min away. The town charm.
117. Keep it old school type of feeling.
118. A town that preserves its historical and rural character by preserving the historic and rural character of Chester Center.
119. Slow down the growth.
120. Keep small town character, not allow to be overbuilt and ruin that character..No Dunkin Donuts, McDonald's, etc.
121. Keeping its rural and agricultural lands
122. A town manager or at least town Administrator form of government. End selectman form of governemtn. A town of Chester which could keep its elderly either through assisted living or elderly hosuing.
123. Remain a small town farming community
124. Trying to develop a family safe town and maintain its charm. Keeping to the traditions or what makes our country unique and special.
125. Reduce taxes. School should be year round. Our school hours are based on old far mhours where children were held with the farm, that is gone now. School should be year round to keep in step with the world.
126. A community with regulated residential growth, some small retail and a welcoming downtown with better roads everywhere.
127. Thoughtful use of open spaces to allow new business/affordable housing while preserving town character by using building designs that fit the town rural character.
128. Maintain small town look and feel.
129. Turning Chester College into a senior living facility may be nice, but not if planners believe it would result in commercialization of the area.
130. To spread out the tax base.
131. To Keep the popualtion low with lots of open space.
132. Rural for years to come...
133. Imprpove property values through smart consistent planning in order to maintain small town feel.
134. For local, state and federal government to get out of the way and let people keep their hard earned money and let the free market decide what industry is best.
135. To keep the small town charm without taxing every little thing.
136. To be New Hampshire's first town business and also first tax free town in NH and USA.

137. More Support/funding for Chester fire and rescue.
138. Limit residential growth while developing professional office opportunities in areas mentioned above. Also, creation of recreational vehicle trails would be welcome, along with Wason Pond Skating Rink. Other towns can provide affordable housing.
139. Lane Rd. paved and development of Chester College Property.
140. You can do all the improvements you want if you increase the number of students per teacher.
141. Preserve the history as economical as well. Have a grocery co-op, we have so many farms.
142. Stay as is.
143. Small common area with shops and coffee shop, maybe boutiques and a small restaurant.
144. Elderly Housing. Let our seniors who can no longer maintain their homes stay in town.
145. Would enjoy seeing the Wadleigh Library area be used as a town common, community center, small park area, playgorind - buildig up the town center.
146. Chester is a beautiful town with wonderful people who look out for their neighbors.
147. I would like to have the town of Chester stay the same. Small town is good.
148. Remain a small rural town with historic buildings and open farm land. There would be single family homes with land around them, some elderly housing and some afforable housing with very few condos or multiple housing units, i.e. apartments.
149. Maintain the rural atmosphere and agricultural areas.
150. Unnecessary fear of expansion.
151. It remains the same. If I wanted all the perks of the city, I would move back there. All the improvements increase taxes, increase traffic, more things and people and crime rates climb. We have banks, gas stations, super markets , etc. within 5 or 10 miles. Enough.
152. I have been told Chester has the highest per capita house/person rate in state. This is very appealing and unique - capitalize on it! Make sure bridle paths are repaved or have right of ways in new parcels. If this is made important more famrs will come to Chester and the rural character will remain. Once it's gone -it's gone!
153. Lovely New England charm and character.
154. Beautiful historical small New England town.
155. Keep it quiet and promote farming-we love the Chester general store, they should have a farmers market there in summer. Wason Pond trails should be maintained for kids and people wanting to hide.
156. Less town selectmen problems in TRI city paper weekly - slower traffic down at cross roads of Rte. 102/121 AM and PM.
157. A limited number of new home buildign permits issued per year . Small scale retail and commercial development which meets the needs ot the residents. A town plan which is modular to allow changing only parts or single sections to be modified as conditions change.
158. To stay true to its roots.
159. I'd like to see Chester evolve into a more well rounded town. A place with more employment and social opportunities. And maybe some walkable ares with mixed retail/business/residential development.
160. Summer recreation. More retail/buildings. More community events. Better care of Wason Pond.

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161. Open up college land for small retail specialty district. With quaint shops, restaurants, offices. Good for tax base.
162. Envision some sort of elderly housing so long term residents would not have to leave Chester when they can no longer maintain a home here. Preserve rural, historic nature of town.
163. Small business to help offset taxes and improve roads.
164. Preservation
165. Quaint small town feel with abundant rural features, along with a vibrant town center.
166. Maintain existing level.
167. Balance between residential and community of commercial business that will result in a vibrant community where people can live and work together.
168. To grow up while retaining quaint feeling-add more diverse housing choices, shopping and other amenities for its residents, expand office and commercial development.
169. Light industry to increase tax base.
170. Light industry to increase tax base.
171. Stay the same.
172. Rural /Historic
173. Old New Hampshire
174. Attract enough industrial/commercial development to stabilize or reduce taxes while establishing a capital account to maintain what we have. Also, to preserve open space and historical properties.
175. Keep the character.
176. Small, quaint New England Town.
177. Preserve country charm, no condos, no apartment buildings.
178. Maintain small town feel and promote small business to improve tax base.
179. Preservation of rural environment while providing opportunities for next generation.
180. Continue small town living with the benefit of light retail development to help the tax burden.

Town of Chester Master Plan

Summary of January 7, 2015 Visioning Workshop

The Town of Chester Planning Board and the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) are working together in a process to develop a new Master Plan to guide future decisions and initiatives in the town. An integral part of the Master Plan process is to engage the general public in discussions regarding their vision for the town's future. A vision statement is a statement of a desired future and future goals and is generally one of the first sections of the Master Plan document. To obtain this public input, SNHPC and Plan NH held a visioning workshop open to the public at the Chester Town Offices on January 7, 2015 (see attached agenda, Appendix A).

Nearly forty people came out to voice their opinions about Chester's future. Robin LeBlanc, Executive Director of Plan NH, facilitated the workshop and led early discussions about what a town's vision is supposed to look like. Opening thoughts were deliberated in a large group setting for approximately one hour. Some of these opening thoughts include:

- The goals of a visioning workshop
- Traditional thinking suggests growth is necessary but growth may not be right for every community
- What would residents envision for a celebration of the town's incorporation?

In addition to these opening thoughts, a number of assumptions about the town were communicated by residents to SNHPC staff. Some of the popular assumptions of the townspeople include; public safety, the ongoing need for road improvements, volunteers will step up, good people, and that taxes will increase. These assumptions provide information about the fundamental beliefs of residents that make the town an attractive place to live.

Another important and telling question asked during the first part of the workshop was "Why did you move to Chester or why did you decide to stay?" This topic generated much discussion relating to the advantages of settling in Chester. The school system, rural character, low crime rates and commutability of the town are amongst its greatest draws, according to residents. These desirable traits will remain a part of the vision for Chester's future.

A large portion of the group discussions were focused on the expansion of Chester's tax base to make the town less reliant on property taxes as its main source of capital. Many residents voiced their interest in creating economic opportunities such as a mixed use development with apartments and small scale commercial shops and restaurants. Others were opposed to the idea that Chester needed more commercial development citing the town's small town charm and relative proximity to commercialized towns (Raymond and Derry) as reasons to remain without major commercial developments.

Ensuing discussions connected values present in the Chester community to the decision making process affecting the town's development. To plan for the future, it is important to take a look at the past. "How

has Chester changed over the past 40 years?" asked Robin LeBlanc to the entire group. Many residents expressed their displeasure with issues related to overcrowding, such as increased traffic congestion and more residential subdivisions. Others stated positive changes including the town's efforts to conserve natural areas and the increased involvement of families in recreational activities.

The larger group discussions came to an end shortly after 8pm when residents broke for a short break and then proceeded to gather into smaller groups of about 6-8 people. Smaller groups provided the opportunity for all attendees to share their opinions. Each small group proceeded to discuss the following two questions:

(1) What showed up for you?

(2) What are your assumptions about the future?

As residents discussed their ideas, SNHPC and Plan NH staff recorded the topics in each group. A list of all the comments recorded by each small group is provided in Appendix B. Many similar themes appeared throughout the small group discussions, including:

- Increase tax base
- Promote some commercial development
- Create a Walkable town center
- Retain rural character and community feel
- Zoning changes to allow for commercial development in other zones
- Traffic congestion, specifically near route 121/102 intersection
- Roadway safety for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Mixed use development
- Use of old Chester College buildings

As residents identified the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed ideas; overall, residents feel there is much opportunity in the town whether that is with Chester's open space and natural areas or the possibility of creating a walkable village center.

Affordable housing was another major concern identified during the workshop. Chester has seen a recent decrease in school enrollment, particularly at the elementary age level. Residents believe this to be attributable to the lack of affordable housing in town. Young families are finding it difficult to live in Chester and often move to surrounding towns. Some residents feel differently about the idea and think that Chester does not need to provide affordable housing because that's part of what makes the town special.

After nearly a half hour of small group discussions, the group rejoined as a whole. Each group reported back to the whole what some of their findings were.

More debates ensued about the development of a village center and the expansion of the town's tax base.

Closing remarks were made just before 9:00pm and residents were provided with notecards to write down their final thoughts for the vision statement. A summary of all the notecard comments is provided below (also see Appendix C). There is a frequency chart in Appendix E that provides information on the number of similar responses provided by the citizens. Some of the similar themes expressed through these notecards include:

- Preserve Chester's rural character
- Maintain Chester's small, quaint village
- Protect/expand home businesses
- Create Community gathering spots for youth including shops and safe gathering spots

The workshop adjourned two hours after it began and now the planning board will use this information in crafting a new Vision Statement for the master plan.



Appendix A

Creating a Vision for Chester's Future

Wednesday, January 7, 2015

Multi-purpose Room at the Town Offices Building
84 Chester Road, Chester NH

6:30: visit with friends and neighbors ... 7:00-9:00 workshop

Background:

Every ten years, communities in New Hampshire re-write their Master Plans, the documents used to guide initiatives and decisions for the town. The first chapter is the *Vision Statement*, a description of what the community would like to see at a certain future date.

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) has been retained by the Town of Chester to collect and organize the information for the next Master Plan. In order to do so, the town must first identify what it wants for itself – so that the Master Plan will support that vision. Plan NH will lead the discussion for this portion.

In this fun and eye-opening workshop, citizens, citizen leaders and elected officials will look at issues, trends and ideas that are shaping Chester and could contribute to its future. Topics include:

- Assumptions, conversations and questions that affect our decisions and planning
- How *values* influence planning and decision-making
- The four infrastructures that are the foundation of a community
- Forces of change that are having an impact
- Chester's purpose and role in the region

6:30 Register, gather with friends and neighbors
7:00 Introductions, overview of topics (large group)
8:00 Small group discussions:
What do you need to think about differently?
What would you like to see in the future for Chester?
8:25 Report outs, general discussion
8:55 Next steps?

Outcomes:

- Thoughts and ideas from various viewpoints that will help inform an overall Vision statement that will serve as a foundation for the new Master Plan.
- Community members thinking about trends and ideas having an impact
- Community members thinking about assets and opportunities
- Community members thinking differently about the structure of Chester as a community
- New conversations among Chester residents

Appendix B

Group One: *What showed up for you? What are your assumptions about the future?*

- Surprised people think we need community development
 - 7 miles to Derry, 7 miles to Raymond where there is plenty of commercial development
- Some people feel it would contribute to tax base
 - Would it really though?
- Still lots of talk about town center
- Banks and restaurants have failed
- Chester center used to be beautiful
 - It's all about the rural character of the town
 - New subdivisions look terrible – big “McMansions”
- Character is threatened by:
 - Residential subdivisions
 - Loss of historical town center
- Declining school enrollment figures is okay
- The real estate bubble will happen again
- 55+ has not been a viable option – Jenkins farm was not viable
- 55+ would need access to shopping
 - Public transportation: CART – subsidized public transit
 - Currently exists
 - Not a lot of senior citizens
 - There is a discount available for people who have lived there for 20 years (from school taxes)
- Good Stuff:
 - Town owned land
 - Open space
- We are becoming a tourist destination
 - Scare crows all over
- Police Department, Fire Department, Highway department are all growing
 - Outpacing the town?
 - Town roads are in bad shape
 - Town votes against paying for roads
 - We “declare” recessions
- People struggle to pay taxes
- Chester does one thing well: we raise kids and educate them
- We never built the town to be diverse
- Wonderful volunteers
- Number of volunteers has been consistent- town will always be able to piece itself together

Group Two: *What showed up for you? What are your assumptions about the future?*

- Strong sense of community
- Everyone loves it
- Afraid of change
- Infrastructure has changed
- ¼ town conservation needed
- Lose tax \$
- Special place
- No culture change

- Promote economic development
 - Recreation – high school
 - Coffee shop
 - Community center
 - Wason pond
 - No place to hang out in Chester for younger people
 - No college
 - Charter school
 - Streetscape is an issue
 - Economic Decline: need small offices, senior housing
 - a. Bring people downtown
 - 2 General stores
 - Zoning regulations need updating
 - 290 Feet frontage
 - Walkable villages
 - Fire department is fine
 - Chester street is inefficient for commuting
 - Need updates to infrastructure in town
- downtown (medical office)
 - Working at home – Need internet access throughout town
 - Could be better internet and more provider options
 - Office developments
 - Outdoor recreation – air, rifle, shooting
 - Economic development needed but want to retain rural character
 - Central area with developments but keep open space
 - Downtown needs to be a community meeting place
 - 2 Restaurants (lunch and bar)
 - Premium Coffee shop with WiFi
 - Green Grocer
 - Maintain facilities
 - Roads need to be rebuilt
 - State roads are slowest
 - Community Spirit

Group Three: *What showed up for you? What are your assumptions about the future?*

- Need to take risks about economic opportunities – that will support the values of the town
- We are a proactive town – we purchased land for future use (conservation and subdivisions)
- Mixed use needed in the center of town
 - a. Elderly housing and businesses
 - b. Need a pub for local folks
 - c. Shops
 - d. Make downtown center walkable
- There is a barrier to get through zoning board of appeals and planning process
 - a. Residents feel need to break barrier
 - b. Need to incorporate mindset of people here for a long time
- Not enough people show up at town meetings to voice their opinion
- Some volunteers do it all

Group Four: *What showed up for you? What are your assumptions about the future?*

- Traffic light at 121/102 intersection
- Interaction between adjacent towns
 - Observe/learn from other towns
- Managing growth in town while maintaining rural community
- Jobs are needed in town – midsize jobs, residential/home-based jobs
- Not critical to provide housing for young adults
 - Allow other towns to provide affordable housing
- Variation in architecture/developers
- No need to provide housing for elderly people/young families
 - Not all towns need to provide this type of housing. Neighboring towns such as Derry have this in place already
- Sidewalks are not always a benefit to everyone
- Lower traffic speeds could improve safety
- Cluster zoning needs to be tweaked by planning/zoning boards
- Increase volunteerism

Group Five: *What showed up for you? What are your assumptions about the future?*

- Take a look at white pines college “Chester College”
 - Could be used by the town
- Town fair – 300th anniversary
 - Vendors – promote home business
- Spring Hill farm
 - Used to be a gravel pit in the past
 - Currently used as recreational trails
 - Great place for sleds and wagons (there are bridges)
 - Could have “winter fair”
 - Spring hill farm is an underutilized area
- Town needs a plan
- Town buildings need to be maintained on a routine basis
- Community Supported Agriculture
 - Did the town profit or lose money?
- No incubator for new local businesses
- Educational component
 - 4 H clubs for youth in town needs to be thought about
- Major Concern = decreasing number of volunteers
 - Derry – community care givers provide meals on wheels services to seniors/ disabled citizens
 - Chester can network with surrounding towns to provide essential services
- Need to revive small businesses in town
- People slip through “needs services: and want to help
- Missing link is that it needs to go both directions
- People always tend to assume that somebody will take care of it
 - Expect the town to take care of it (this is an obstacle)

- Need for starters in town – young families must move out of town to be able to afford a home
- Town has a lot of land that it may not be able to support
- Change needed in town zoning regulations especially need a downtown district
- Need to put more money into town roadways to improve their conditions
- Gym gets so much
- Tax money needs to support facilities and infrastructure
- Mindset of the town needs to be “balance”
 - Start with small changes
 - Need to keep the rural charm of the town intact
- What is the benefit to the town?
 - More tax base
- Cost of community services study
 - Open space – least expensive
- Residential – use center of town
 - Little commercial district in center of town
 - Hardware store has been up for sale for over 2 years
- No need for more commercial development in town because Raymond is nearby and has shopping options
- Have lost some Big houses in recent past
- People do not look at streetscape anymore

Group Six: *What showed up for you? What are your assumptions about the future?*

- No infrastructure for youth, no apartments, etc.
- No affordable housing
- No attractions for youth
- Not a lot of medical (dentistry etc.)
- Don't want far drive for dinner
- Need a little general store
- Zoning adjustments
 - Small adjustments to allow for some small shops/restaurants
- Chester College property could become 1 bedroom apartments, maybe a mixed use zone
- More quality of life for young people
- Surprised by possibility of commercial development
- College mixed use – central zone, not through entire town
- Downtown center
- Local economy – promote small home type businesses

Appendix C

Citizen Comment Cards

1. Change zoning in town to facilitate development of the property downtown for business development and elderly housing. Allow more in-law apartments
2. More senior housing with memory care units "end of life care", physical therapy, rehab, etc. Assisted and unassisted living.
3. Mixed use commercial center of town. Done tastefully. A rustic restaurant or pub. Small businesses, etc.
4. A walk to everything community.
5. The opportunity to shop, relax and work in town rather than have to travel out.
6. A coffee shop like the Coffee Factory in Derry. Free WiFi, somewhere you can do your work on a laptop.
7. Preserve the rural character by more town land purchases and more farms.
8. Small-scale economic development in the center of town.
9. Work to maintain balance between rural character, and develop some businesses which will not interfere with that character
10. Change zoning laws to make a mixed use economic downtown with small businesses; open green; opportunity for community gatherings.
11. Move the pavement of the roads to one side to allow walking paths (not sidewalks) in the 60 foot right of ways.
12. A few small houses or small lots that could, therefore, be more expensive, so available to young people as starter homes and/or senior downsizing homes. Not rental housing.
13. Maintain rural character. Minimize further development.
14. Reduced traffic speed and flow (of traffic) at the 102/121 intersection. I fear it will increase with growth.
15. Move library to old school. More communication for new arrivals.
16. Lower taxes. Maintain rural quality. Recreational and volunteerism emphasis.
17. I want it to have the same feel (as it does now). Places for our children to live.
18. "Village Center" in the center of town – zoned to allow for appropriate mixed use development (write a plan for the the 102/121 intersection , pedestrian footbridge?). Purchase by town of additional open space.
19. More affordable housing. Younger people and seniors. Some commercial tax base encouragement. Better planning/scheduled funding for road and building maintenance.
20. Investigate establishing a housing authority that may be able to give some direction to the town on ways to develop low-cost housing option/funding sources.
21. Small business center.
22. Elderly Housing.
23. Restoration of a historic center of town & keep commercial zoning where it is.
24. Keep the rural character. Develop downtown/center with small, quaint mom & pop shops & café's – architecture to be like existing homes.

25. Coffee Shop, Tennis Courts, Pool.
26. A place for the community to gather shops for youth, teen and adults & safe place to hang around. Also, improve the facilities we currently own in order to facilitate additional programs/activities.
27. Mixed Use commercial center on Chester St. Provide for in-law apartments. Elderly housing/assisted living.
28. Buy white pine (Chester University Property)
29. The town needs to use its assets. To better serve the people in town.
30. I do not want Chester Street to become a business traffic zone. It is a pleasant place to walk and drive 30 Miles Per Hour without the distraction of traffic coming in and out. There will always be a reason for residents to drive to local adjacent towns to do business. We don't need to duplicate the same model in each town.
31. Promote and support home business; examines rules and restrictions that may inhibit new or existing business from expansion. Examine and revitalize volunteer; Derry Community caregivers model to make services and need readily connected.
32. Supported, promoted family businesses that thrive!

Appendix D

Names of Resident Attendees to Chester Visioning Workshop

1. Michael Shackelford
2. Richard LeBlanc Sr.
3. Jeanine LeBlanc
4. Rob Dapice
5. Gene P. Charron
6. Richie LeBlanc Jr.
7. Phil Cassista
8. Andrew Hadik
9. Mike Logue
10. Louise Logue
11. Evan Sederquest
12. Maureen Lein
13. Nancy Myette
14. Chuck Myette
15. Corrina Reishus
16. Michelle Trask
17. Mike Oleson
18. John Turcino
19. Brian Sullivan
20. Beth Swanson
21. Gary Van Geyte
22. Liz Richter
23. Matt Stover
24. Cindy Landau
25. Stephen Landau
26. Cass Buckley
27. Web Anderson
28. Jane Mallinson
29. Cynthia Herman
30. Deb Munson
31. Ellen Phillips
32. Michael Weider
33. Kevin Kistler
34. Patrick Connelly
35. Susan Cassista

Appendix E

Citizen Comment Cards Frequency Table

Frequency of Occurrence	Themes
11	Promote Small-Scale Business Development
6	Retain Rural Character
4	Provide Elderly Housing
4	Mixed-Use Center
3	Affordable Housing
2	Emphasize Recreational/Volunteer Opportunities
2	Maintain Condition of Town Infrastructure
2	Adjust Zoning Regulations
2	Preserve Open Space
2	Provide Community Gathering Spots
2	Deal With Traffic Issues at Intersection of Route 121/102
2	Minimize Development
1	Create a Walkable Community
1	Construct Pedestrian Walking Paths
1	Allow for Some Small Lots for Starter Homes
1	Move Library to Old School Building
1	Allow for More In-Law Apartments
1	Lower Taxes
1	Create a Housing Authority
1	Restore Historical Center
1	Keep Current Location of Commercial Zone
1	Buy White Pine