

**Town of Chester
Plan of Conservation and Development**

**WORKSHOP #1
SUMMARY**

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--------|
| <i>Chester Resident:</i> | Yes - 57 | No - 0 |
| <i>If no, are you a Chester taxpayer?</i> | Yes - 15 | No - 0 |
| | Missing answers to 8 | |

Chester Planning and Zoning Commission
Chester, Connecticut

February 3, 2007

WORKSHOP 1: OUR TOWN TODAY

SCHEDULE

9:00 - 9:20 • *Introduction*

9:20 - 9:50 • *Town Treasures*

9:50 - 10:20 • *Chester - We know where it is!*

10:20 - 10:30 • *Break*

10:30 - 10:55 • *Changing Hats*

10:55 - 11:45 • *Travel Map*

11:45 - 12:00 • *Key Issues*

12:00 - 12:15 • *Summary*

"TOWN TREASURES"

9:20 to 9:50

The purpose of this exercise is to focus on specific areas/buildings in town and determine what makes Chester unique. Please note and record important characteristics of the existing places, sightlines, views, and other characteristics while answering the following questions.

1. Town Center:

What defines it? What is its value to the community as a whole? What has to be preserved? Would you close the street more often for events? What's the importance of the expansion of the sewer system? What would you do to improve parking?

What defines it?

- Not clearly defined
- Library to hose co to Carrini Preserve to Community Ctr
- All Main St to War Memorial to Mtg Hse
- United Church to Catholic Church
- Small businesses, mostly owned by residents; owner operated
- Coziness
- Shops and restaurants - 7
- Historic Architecture (4) - (Same era buildings)
- Small and rural
- Old and unspoiled
- Mix of shops
- Ambiance
- Physical embodiment of community
- Walkable
- Place of activity
- Sidewalks
- People

- Public buildings
- Town identity/Heart
- Quaintness - 10
- Typical NE village - 3
- Unique - 3
- Services - 4
- Population density
- Street wall
- Character: small town
- Wacky traffic flow

Value to the community?

- Destination for tourists and residents
- Vitality of shops
- Gathering point - 15
- Place for town events - 3
- Social and economic definition of Chester - 3
- Can show it off to visitors - 2
- Post office
- Proximity of goods

- History
- Makes us special
- Good for old and young
- Everyone knows and loves Chester
- Gives good reason for residents to use center
- Adds cohesiveness
- Draws folks to live here - 3
- Sense of community - 3
- Draws tourists - 4
- Mostly for tourists – not much for families

What should be preserved?

- Curbs - 2
- Main Street as is
- Keep for residents not tourists
- Place for events
- Eclectic place
- Character of buildings
- colors, wood structures, signage
- Center of Town
- Intimacy – small scale
- Curved streets
- Art galleries for culture
- Character - 2
- Off street parking
- Walking district
- History
- Uniqueness
- Good restaurants
- Mixed use - 4

Close Street for events ?

- Yes - 29
- A living street – not a park
- Yes, but not more often
- Close section permanently

Importance of Sewer System?

- Unsure - 2
- Look at other options - 4
- Decisions being made by those not financially affected
- No – a mistake - 2
- Important issue - 2
- Yes - 18
- Sewers bring sprawl
- Will fail in 50 years
- Needs discussion
- Solve for center only – no connection to Deep River
- No – will detract from charm - 2

How improve parking?

- “Oh Dear”
- Add lighting - 2
- Drain puddles
- Add more on street
- Expand sidewalks - 7
- Leave spots for visitors and customers
- More bicycles
- Move PO and use property for parking
- Parking is OK
- Enforce rules
- Not sure

- Provide shuttle - 2
- Have timed parking
- Put lots behind stores
- Use cemetery lot
- Need more/better parking signs - 4
- More parking = less charm
- Restore bridge across Pattaconk to lot
- Add a lot - 2
- Fewer cars
- Limit time limits to residents

Comments:

- Add pet store/training center
- Need more basic goods – groceries
- Need design guidelines
- Hide power lines
- Add gas streetlights
- Do more landscaping to beautiful

2. CT. River/Chester Creek:

Should the village be re-connected to the river? What is the value of the River to Chester? Is there enough access? Do you use the River?

Connect village to River?

- Agreed with statement - 36
- Disagreed - 7
- Unsure - 1
- Connect with open space - 3
- Not clearly defined
- Walking and biking paths alongside especially to North Quarter Park
- And Cemetery.
- Walk beside Pattaconk to Historical Building.
- Connect to Carini preserve
- Boardwalk alongside.

What is the value to the community as a whole?

- Significant - 23
- One of, if not, the largest Boating

Communities on the CT River!

- 750-800 Boats, in Chester!
- Brings people to restaurants/shops/etc.
- The Boat License Fee's come back to the Town General Fund.
- Provides employment
- Marina's pay taxes.
- Allow more multi-use development at Marina's.
- Provides a Border!
- Pattaconk behind buildings should be opened to the Public.
- Waterviews most valuable.
- Quality of life.
- Take care of.
- Under Utilized.
- Chester's Roots.
- Not Valuable - 4

Enough Access to the River?

- No (not enough access) - 23
- Not Sure - 1
- Have enough access now - 7

- Good for Residents but don't want Tourists.
- Limit access to reduce Environmental Impact.
- Need Town Beach on the River.
- Dredge Creek for Kayaks.

- Picnic area improved - 2
- Expand area at Ferry Landing.
- Improve Or Add Boatlaunch Ramp - 5
- Improve Town Dock - 1

Use the River?

- Yes - 32
- No - 5

Would use more with better access

3. Route 154:

What is its benefit to the community? Do you see 154 as an obstacle to river access? How would you change it? Should 154 be a continuation of the scenic route from Haddam? If you were going to create an office corridor would it be on 154 near Town Hall?

Benefits the Community?

- Yes - 28
- Keeps heavy traffic out of Town (bypass of sorts)

- Yes - 0

Is 154 an Obstacle to the River?

- Yes - 6
- No - 16
- Not Sure - 2

- Widen it
- Restore to original 1800's tree lined beauty
- Speed Bumps
- Make Commercial
- Improve sight lines
- Improve lighting.
- Add Sidewalk Bike path - 5
- Hard to cross needs crosswalks
- SLOW TRAFFIC DOWN! - 4
- Lower Speed limit - 4

How would you change 154?

- No - 7
- Not Sure - 1

Scenic route continuation?

- Yes - 17
- No - 9
- Not Sure - 0
- Open up more views of the River
- Office space would stop it being too scenic
- Scenic aspect not that important
- Take economic over scenic, esp. as Town Center is scenic
- Add bicycle paths
- It's a state road what's scenic about that?

Create Office corridor near Town Hall?.

- Yes - 51
- No - 3
- Not Sure - 2
- Already ruined.

- Rezone to commercial - 3
- Mainly around Town Hall - 3
- From Haddam to Main Street
- Set back from road to preserve rural Character/feel - 4
- But not a Town owned Office Park
- Clean Businesses
- Create controls for Office/professional space only
- Office Corridor sounds ugly how about Second
- -Village Center, like Deep River
- Careful control of design but yes Office/Professional.
- Add walks and bike paths, more kid friendly (slow Cars only)
- Small buildings with quaint character or don't do!
- No Chainstores

4. Cedar Lake:

How often, and for what purpose, do you use Cedar Lake and the Town beach? What about it would you change?

For what purpose?

- Swim
- View
- Boat launch
- Picnic
- Fishing
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Skating

Do you use Cedar lake?

- Yes – 41
- No – 9
- No Comment – 7

What would you change?

- Better water quality
- Area for dog owners

- No changes
- Stop speeding and crosswalk violations
- Kayaks, canoes, paddle boats available for rent
- Maintain toilets better
- Full of stones – fill with sand – better weed control
- Provide sidewalk and bikeway from Camp Hazen around other side of lake
- Replace chain link fence with something more attractive
- Fish hooks, geese, glass on beach, dogs not welcome
- More shade for older people
- Parking on beach side

Comments:

- Invaluable treasure
- Wonderful town asset
- Underutilized
- Moved to Chester because of lake and beach
- Love it – summer and winter
- Keep food available
- Fabulous resource
- Keep it a low-key operation
- Tried using it for a birthday party but insurance a hassle
- Visual access is great
- Protect, don't exploit

5. Chester Airport:

Do you use the airport? If so, how often? Is it an asset to the Town? Are you aware of any problems with airport operations?

Do you use the airport?

- Yes – 3
- No – 47
- No Answer – 10

- Noise smell of aircraft fuel
- Planes fly too low
- Twin-engine planes and helicopters
- Runoff

Asset?

- Yes - for tax revenue - 4, yes – 27
- Yes - big asset for future homeowners
- No - 1

Comments:

- Limit future expansion
Good draw for town
Would patronize a restaurant there
One of our unique features
- Very cool, please keep it
- Improves mobility for business

Problems?

- Asset for business

- Opportunity for attracting tourist

6. North Quarter Park:

Would you expand or improve the current facilities? How? How often do you use the park? Do you access Chester Creek from the park? Should it be used for community activities? Should the Farmer's Market be held there?

Expand or improve? How?

- Use for passive and light recreation
- Do more of the Town activities there - 2
- Yes – 8
- No - 2
- More land
- Improve paths
- Use excess space as commercial
- Equipment needs updating - 3
- Current facilities are fine - 3
- Better park and recreation
- Basketball and tennis - 2
- Improve playground - 3
- Connect to cemetery and 154
- Amphitheatre overlooking the cove would be great
- Rest rooms
- Better water drainage
- Improve parking
- Improve community center – 2
- Replace community center
- Nature walks/observations
- Thai Chi classes
- Expand facilities to tie into community center
- High potential for expansion

- Little league
- Please do not go overboard
- Baseball, volleyball
- Access to river
- Knock down community center – library to create a community hub
- Walking path
- Connect to Town and Preserve with foot bridge
- Community gardens
- Make a garden so people can eat whenever they want
- Preserve open space
- Limit expansion
- Demolish community center and build appropriate multi-purpose structure
- Expand down to Chester Creek
- Outdoor concerts, plays – current gazebo too small
- Improve landscaping/appearance
- Town green for special events

Use how often?

- Seldom - 6
- Used more when kids were small – 5

- With grandchildren – 2
- Once a week
- Never – 11
- Often - 4

Access Creek from Park?

- No – 5
- Yes – 4
- Didn't know you could - 3
- Would be good
- Not really possible from there
- Should be expanded
- Can't improve visual access

Use for community activities?

- Yes – 20
- Yes, but do not expand buildings

Use for Farmer's Market?

- Yes – 32
- Great idea
- Fantastic

- Better next to village – 8
- No – 3
- We need a Farmers' Market!
- Would they dare come back?
- Good place for visibility to passers-by
- Could create a ?? problem
- Would create too much traffic congestion
- Let Simon's sell local produce all year long
- Does not take away business from merchants

Comments:

- Not familiar with it
- Heard it's full of ticks
- Excellent for kids, rec activities
- Nature trail is nice – 2
- Do not develop for office space
- Great place for people and children and connected to pedestrian core of Town
- Farmers' Market adds to quaintness of Town and brings in tourist \$\$

7. Chester Elementary:

Should the present building be improved? Should the ball fields be accessible to everyone? Is there a use for the lot across the street from the school? Give options?

A. Improve present buildings?

- Yes - 8
- No - 12
- Not Sure - 3
- Population projections?
- Make energy efficient and all Town buildings.
- Have never been there.
- If needed - 2
- Bathrooms need help
- More sidewalks in the whole area so kids can walk
- Set aside money for eventual expansion
- Beautiful school does not equal excellent education but equals higher taxes

Ballfield access?

- Yes - 22
- No - 3
- Not Sure - 0
- They're not accessible? - 2
- Backfield should be repaired

- No pesticides, Organic, the chemicals used are a real problem
- Access is a liability?
- Post use schedule.
- Unusable even to students in sept/oct because of fertilizing.
- More use= equals more maintenance equals \$ in budget

Lot use?

- Parking - 5
- Leave as is - 1
- Don't know - 4
- More Fields
- A new Library/Community or Tennis Courts
- A children's Sculpture Park
- Access for recreation
- Open space for kids to play - 3
- Community Center or Recreation Building
- Kids should help decide.
- Skate park or bike park.
- What Lot? - 3
- Farmers Market
- Volley ball or tennis court

8. State Forest:

How does the forest benefit the Town? Does the existence of the forests supplant the need for open space in Chester? Do you use Cockaponset State forest?

Benefits town?

- Yes - 52
- No - 0
- Protects us from overdevelopment
- & provides for recreation. 7
- Moved to town because of State forest.
- More Access and parking.
- Important to Ecosystem.
- Makes Town unique

Use?

- Yes - 16
- No - 24
- Should be recognized and counted as open space for town.
- True outdoor experience close to Town.

- Yes - 44
- No - 3
- Don't use, but I like trees.
- Number one reason for living here.

Supplant need for Open space?

9. Exit 6 at Route 9:

What is the appropriate land use in the area surrounding Exit 6?

- Information source
- No industrial visible – OK if hidden – 2
- Could support intense development but must enhance our image (a gateway)
- Ambulance and fire emergency vehicles – move firehouse to exit 6 and library to firehouse – 3
- Commercial (controlled/light use) – 8
- Keep for traffic use as Rte 9 traffic increases

- Offices not retail – 4
- Mixed use – 3
- Keep as is – 20
- Mixed housing
- No gas station/big box/stop and shop – 6
- Commuter lot with shuttle – 2
- Multi-modal transportation stop
- Nature preserve – 2
- Gym
- More businesses on Inspiration Lane – 2
- Library

10. Camp Hazen:

Do you use Camp Hazen? How does it benefit the community? Would you support a Camp Hazen expansion?

- Yes – 15
- No – 23

Is it a benefit? Yes – 37

Support expansion?

- Yes – 29
- No – 5
- Qualified - 8

11. Industrial Parks:

Do you work in any of the parks? Which one? Should Chester set aside land for another industrial park? Do they benefit Chester? If so, how?

Do you work in any?

- No, or no answer – 60 (out of 60)

Which one?

- N/A

Should we have another?

- Yes – modest in scale and not visible to the public - 4
- Yes – some expansion - 2
- Already have more space than we can fill – wish we had more for tax base - 4
- Yes, if economic and social impact positive
- No - 2

- No – keep as much open space as possible
- No – need to integrate commercial growth into existing neighborhoods
- Yes – for jobs and taxes – 5
- Not at Exit 6
- Yes, if Town makes it attractive for businesses to move in
- Yes, if does not affect character of town
- Yes - 4

Do they benefit Chester? How?

- Yes – tax base - 24
- Employment opportunities – 7
- No – 1
- Shortens commute - 2
- Key resource for solar energy generation

- Enhances property values

Comments:

- Denlar Drive and Inspiration Lane are ideally located and should be made more attractive with street lights, trees, sidewalks
- Denlar Drive needs major renovation.
- Should be multi-tenant service, office, light industrial – must be near highway
- Do not need more industrial – could use professional office buildings – 2

- Support them, but must stay hidden and clean industries
- Support them, but don't let them become like DR incubator businesses
- Clean business park would be fabulous!
- We need to give more attention to economic development
- Need to provide incentives to keep existing businesses in town.
- Open space swap with Cockaponset?

12. Chester Ferry:

Is it a luxury or a necessity? Should the Town take an active role in supporting/protecting the ferry?

Luxury or necessity?

- Luxury - 8
- Necessity - 16
- Both – 14

Comments:

- Helpful but not necessary

Should the town support?

- Yes – 35
- No – 4

Comments:

- Yes, if the State fails to do so - 5
- No - State responsibility – not a Town issue – 2

General Comments:

- Has charm
- Historic value - 4
- Develop land south of ferry for park - 2
- Cool
- Gateway to Castle
- Tourism revenue - 13

- Please preserve it - 3
- Adds to quaint, rural character and uniqueness of Chester - 18
- We take our visitors on “our boat”
- It’s a treasure
- Use it in summer - 3
- I love the ferry - 4
- Convenience for residents - 2

- An important asset to me as a daily rider - 2
- Only close crossing for bikes
- Opportunity to be seen as a connection to Castle Town
- Should be enhanced as a welcoming gateway to Town
- Low-tech travel
- Vital to Chester center
- Locals should get a fare break

13. Community Center:

How should the Town use the community center? Should the community center be replaced or renovated? If so, how and why?

- Replace – 5
- Renovate - 7
- No – 1
- Yes - 2
- Tear it down. We already have Town Hall, Norma Terris, Meeting House, Elementary School. Good economic development site.
- Torch it. It’s ugly inside and out. Make adjunct to NQP such as indoor/outdoor pavilion
- Facility is a disaster. Valuable land not being utilized

- If we can re-do The Mill, why can’t we fix the community center.
- Replace it – it’s an eyesore.
- Should be an extension of kindergartens so the young can learn from the wise and the old can share their stories
- Biggest downfall in town. Need a safe, fun, accessible place for youth. Teens complain there is nothing for them in Chester.
- Note useful for much.
- Not a very inspiring structure
- Wasted space, ugly, does not benefit community. Eliminate it!
- Charge usage fees – if no one pays, probably obsolete
- Use for library or hose company
- To bring kids and adults together
- Good place for gatherings near town center. Acquire house next door for expansion.
- It’s awful

Who uses it?

- Never used it in 13 years.
- Not used enough to justify. Sell off for commercial use.
- Need new community center for park and rec/scouts/etc.

- A disgrace. Youth need a gathering place.
- Want to start a food market coop there. Can we talk?
- It's falling apart. Sell it. Additional tax revenue – commercial
- Looks a bit run down
- Don't need it. Have other Town buildings already
- Use for board and committee meetings
- Make it prettier but don't grow it.
- Office space for park and recreation
- Create joint community center and library
- Not needed for public use. Sell it for professional office space.
- Youth, elderly community activities tied to NQP

14. Meeting House:

Do you feel the Meeting House is used enough by the community? Inside? Outside? Does it provide a sense of community? Used enough?

- Yes – 27
- Could be used more – 9
- No - 1

Inside? Outside?

- More picnic tables
- More outside musical concerts – 2
- Could be used more outside

Sense of community?

- Yes – history and charm – 2
- Heart of Chester – this is where we meet, party, memorialize, emote, dance, sing – preserve it at all costs!
- Yes – 28
- Provides a link to the past

- Hugh sense of history and community
- It's where we go for things like this Charette
- It's terrific!
- Great community asset. Preserve it at all costs!
- More community recreational use.
- Of course!
- Great building but cold in winter
- Make it available without rental fees
- It's the glue
- Our meeting place
- Roots of Chester
- Would prefer to have commission meetings here.
- Privileged to have such an amazing space.

- More events
- Too many regulations discourage community use
- Links part to future. Great building. Preserve it.
- A treasure
- Not so much with new Town Hall

15. Norma Terris Theater:

Does the theater benefit Chester? If so, how? If it ran second run movies or artistic movies would you support it?

Benefit? Yes – 46,
No - 4

How?

- Tourist \$ - 10
- Community
- Nearby
- Doesn't pay taxes
- Cultural - 6
- "no more Art!"
- Unique\charm - 4
- Good P.R.

Movie nights: Yes – 40, No - 0

16. Town Hall:

Do you go to the Town Hall more or less now that it has been moved? Does it still play a vital role within the community?

Use More: - 14

Use Less: - 8

Comments:

- Now sterile, lost treasure
- Tragedy
- Embarassing
- Underutilized
- Need bigger meeting space
- Great
- Added vitality to Village
- Too big

- Much better
- Limited hours
- Ugly

- Not as warm
- Put it where the big black monster is now

Vital? Yes – 9, No - 13

17. Library:

Does the existing library serve your current needs? What would you do to improve it?

Yes – 28, No – 14, N/A - 6

Improve?

- Nothing [4] comment – it's quaint
- Bigger/Expand [21]
- Move to firehouse and put fire in new bldg at exit 6
- Leave it alone [3]
- Can do more
- Another computer; upgrade technology [3]
- Never been there
- New books
- More books
- Keep close to Town
- Move to Community Center
- Renovate

What treasures did we miss? Let us know.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chester Fair - 10 • Scale of shops • Train stop - 5 • Wind power - 3 • Linked Trails - 5 • Dams • Ponds - 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space - 2 • Wireless Internet Towers • People - 5 • Scenic Drives - 2 • Cemetery - 2 • Mixed Use • Junk Cars |
|---|---|

- Riverfront
- Marinas - 2
- Route 154
- The Mill - 9
- Chester Creek - 3
- Inn at Chester
- Dredge Creek
- Sprint Street Park
- Cedar Swamp
- Brooks Factory - 2
- Biodiversity
- Private land w/forest tax exemption
- Antique cars and houses - 2
- Chester Village West
- Abundance of knowledgeable people
- Boat Ramp
- Trees

- Sidewalks - 2
- Bike paths
- Water Street parking lot
- Flowers
- Concentrated development
- “Third place”
- Artists
- Pattaconk Brook
- Sandy beaches
- Access to land-locked properties
- Traffic islands
- Museum
- Troop 13
- Whelan Industries
- Two (2) Churches and a Synagogue

"CHESTER – We know where it is!"

9:50 to 10:20

We've examined the pieces of Chester that make it unique. Now we need to look at the Town as a whole. The following questions will help us determine where you live and develop specific strategies about how you and future generations want to live in Chester!

1. *What part of town do you live in (where is your property located closest to)?*

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| A. Cedar Lake | 9 |
| B. The Village | 23 |
| C. Route 154 | 9 |
| D. The Inn at Chester | 2 |
| E. Route 9 | 4 |
| F. Other (specify) | 10 |

2. *How many years have you lived in Chester? Circle one:*

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| A. 1 to 5 years | 10 |
| B. 6 to 10 years | 11 |
| C. 11 to 15 years | 13 |
| D. 16 to 20 years | 4 |
| E. 21 + years | 21 |

3. *Where did you live prior?*

| | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|---|
| Cromwell | 1 | New Canaan | 1 |
| Deep River | 2 | New Haven | 3 |
| Essex | 2 | Old Lyme | 3 |
| Enfield | 1 | Old Saybrook | 2 |
| Fairfield | 1 | Stamford | 1 |
| Hartford | 1 | Westbrook | 1 |
| Killingworth | 1 | Western, CT | 1 |
| Middletown | 1 | Woodbury | 2 |
| Milford | 3 | California | 1 |
| Mystic | 1 | Chicago, IL | 1 |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Massachusetts | 2 | New York, NY | 5 |
| Western, MA | 1 | Long Island, NY | 1 |
| Maine | 1 | Pennsylvania | 1 |
| Minnesota | 1 | Virginia | 1 |
| New Hampshire | 4 | Vermont | 2 |
| SE Asia | 1 | | |

4. List the ages of family members that live in your household, including yourself?

| <u>Age</u> | <u>Count</u> |
|------------|--------------|
| 75+ | 6 |
| 60 to 69 | 27 |
| 50 to 59 | 29 |
| 40 to 49 | 29 |
| 30 to 39 | 7 |
| 20 to 29 | 3 |
| 10 to 19 | 22 |
| 0 to 9 | 25 |

5. Why did you choose to live in Chester?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| A. Schools | 18 |
| B. Low density population | 25 |
| C. Rural atmosphere | 44 |
| D. Natural resources | 37 |
| E. Potential for economic development | 2 |
| F. Location relative to employment | 14 |
| G. Taxes | 4 |
| H. Level of Town services | 0 |
| I. Community | 12 |

6. How many in your household currently attend school?

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| A. Region 4 schools | 31 |
| B. Other | 11 |

7. Your place of employment? If outside of Chester, where?

| | | | |
|--------------|----|------------------|---|
| Chester | 24 | East Haddam | 1 |
| Hartford | 7 | Enfield? | 1 |
| Essex | 5 | Hamden | 1 |
| Middletown | 3 | Mystic | 1 |
| Old Saybrook | 3 | New Haven | 1 |
| Branford | 2 | North Stonington | 1 |
| Guilford | 2 | Old Lyme | 1 |
| Madison | 2 | Rocky Hill | 1 |
| Wallingford | 2 | New York, NY | 1 |

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

8. *Should changes in the Plan of Conservation and Development further affordable housing in Chester? If so, what kind of housing?*

| | |
|--|----|
| A. Expansion by conventional means – single family residence, accessory dwellings, or garage apartments? | 20 |
| B. Condominiums, apartments, townhouses, elderly housing? | 21 |
| C. Permit elderly housing only? | 3 |
| D. Cluster/open space subdivisions? | 25 |
| E. A decrease in single family acreage (smaller lot sizes)? | 5 |
| F. No Town action? | 6 |
| G. Restricted house size? | 1 |
| H. Co-housing? | 1 |

9. *Would you support the expenditure of town funds in support of affordable housing alternatives?*

- Yes – 26
- No – 23
- Maybe - 8

10. *Would you support some limiting of the size of structures that can be built in Chester?*

- Yes – 41
- No – 12
- Maybe - 4

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

11. Please indicate whether the following land use types should be encouraged (**E**), limited (**L**), or discouraged (**D**):

| | <u>E</u> | <u>L</u> | <u>D</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| A. Single family residential | 21 | 31 | 3 |
| B. Multi-family residential | 15 | 28 | 11 |
| C. Mixed use | 39 | 14 | 4 |
| D. Conservation Land/Open Space | 46 | 11 | 1 |
| E. Recreation Facilities | 45 | 7 | 1 |
| F. Tourism Destinations | 27 | 17 | 4 |
| G. Industrial/Light Industrial | 25 | 22 | 7 |
| H. Commercial | 25 | 18 | 9 |
| I. Marine | 35 | 18 | 3 |
| J. Municipal Facilities | 19 | 23 | 7 |
| K. Agriculture Uses | 48 | 5 | 1 |
| L. Professional Office Space | 40 | 13 | 3 |

12. To what extent should Chester encourage commercial development, such as retail stores and shopping, even on a limited scale?

Circle one: Encourage (41), Discourage (12), No opinion (1).

Comments: no boxes; small, local; mixed use; boutique retail

13. To what extent should Chester encourage industrial development, such as manufacturing or warehousing, even on a limited scale? If so, where and what type?

Circle one: Encourage (35), Discourage (12), No opinion (3).

Comments: light mfg. – need the tax \$\$; use existing industrial parks; warehousing

14. To what extent should Chester encourage professional office space, such as office parks, even on a limited scale? If so, where and what type?

Circle one: Encourage (43), Discourage (6), No opinion (1).

Comments: small scale along 154, 148 and 156; use present industrial parks first; more office, less industrial; Route 9 Exit 6; don't use up more open space; not too obtrusive; keep rural flavor

15. Please indicate, by priority – 1 being the highest, your opinion with regard to the need for the following uses in Chester’s commercial district:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Food Stores | 1 |
| Clothing Stores | 7 |
| Furniture Store | 9 |
| Hardware Store | 6 |
| Pharmacy | 3 |
| Automotive | 8 |
| Banking/Financial | 5 |
| Personal Services | 4 |
| Restaurants | 2 |
| (write-in) Medical | 1 |
| (write-in) Galleries | 1 |

16. Should the Town rezone existing residential areas so as to increase commercial areas? If so, where?

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Parts of 154 | 4 – 1 cited “near Town Hall” |
| • Route 154 | 12 – 2 cited “only” |
| • Route 154 North of Fairgrounds only | 1 |
| • Parts of 148 | 3 |
| • Center to 154 | 1 |
| • West section of 148 | 2 |
| • Route 9 and Route148 Intersection\Exit 6 | 1 |
| • Parts of 156 | 2 |
| • Denlar Drive | 1 |
| • Village | 3 |
| • Main Street | 2 |
| • No | 17 |
| • Yes and no – mixed use | 3 |
| • Yes – actualize the zone | 1 |
| • Yes, with caution, retaining small-town character | 3 |

17. Do you feel that recent development in Chester has been in keeping with the character of the town?

- Yes - 25
- No – 10 - (cited Hoop Pole Hill, recent “oversize structure in village,” New town office building is ugly, “gallery downtown is a monstrosity in scale and color”)
- Somewhat - 4

18. Are there any aspects of new development which you feel should receive more attention from town officials?

- Scale of development in keeping with small-town character - 5
- Industrial development should be limited in residential areas
- Mixed use in town - 3
- cluster housing in open space
- Clear-cutting of building lots
- Environmental implications - 2
- Tax improvement
- Respect and sympathy for property owners’ facilities
- No - 5
- Septic\sewer needs attention
- Community focused
- Keep aesthetics a top priority
- Historical information
- Enforcing existing regulations
- Lot size
- Sidewalks on Water Street
- Relationship between sewer service and zoning controls
- Pedestrian oriented
- Bike path around town
- Office parks
- Making sure all conditions are met
- Any development in the Village
- Signage
- Sustainability - 2
- Architecture
- Colors
- Low Income
- Elderly
- Subdivisions
- Old developments should be phased out
- Sewer connection to Deep River should NOT happen

19. Would you support some level of design review to guide design efforts in our commercial and waterfront areas?

- Yes - 40 – cited sustainability, several underlined waterfront areas for emphasis
- We should do design review on residences first
- No – too subjective
- Specific zone language would accomplish this

- Yes – limited
- Yes – and our Village buildings

20. *State legislation enables Connecticut municipalities to develop “village districts” thereby allowing for the adoption of additional standards and criteria directed toward their preservation. Should the Town pursue opportunities to establish “village districts” within the Town? Where?*

- Chester Center - 13
- Chester Center – historic district suggested
- Chester Center – extending from library to Herbery, Norma Terris to Post Office - 2
- Chester Center and Town Hall area - 2
- Yes - 4
- Yes – enlarge current Village area - 10
- Northwest of route 9
- Southeast of route 9
- War memorial to Brooks Factory
- No - 5
- Inn at Chester area
- Marina and Middlesex Turnpike
- The whole town except the industrial park

NATURAL RESOURCES:

21. *Do you feel that there are any specific areas in Town that should be preserved?*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass the Scenic Road ordinance • State Forest – 3 – 1 cited growth zones • Land abutting state parks • Cedar Lake - 9 • North Quarter Park - 4 • CT Riverfront - 8 • Creek area near Herbery - 9 • Chester Center - 8 • Middle and upper sections of Chester Cove • Route 9 and Route 148 interchange/Exit 6 - 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 148 into town • Route 148 from the lake to Killingworth line • Village and immediate surroundings - 3 • Village district from 154 loop • Butter Jones Road • Kopper property • Simeo property • Town Meeting House • Ponds • Jennings Pond |
|---|---|

- Waterfalls - 2
- Town Meeting House

- Yes - 8
- All of it - 2

22. *Do you feel that there are any specific parcels or properties which should be targeted for conservation in the event they become available?*

- The old Bates Factory
- Land adjacent to North Quarter Park
- Property at the end of Dock Road – historic value (1700's dock)
- Property at mouth (upstream side) of Chester Creek
- Kopper property - 2
- Simeo/Simonean property - 2
- Lynde property - 2
- Castelli property - 2
- Bevington parcel opposite farm
- Top of Gilbert Hill Road
- Historical homes
- Areas adjacent to Cockaponsett
- CT Riverfront properties - 8
- CT Water Company properties

- Pattaconk stream-front - 2
- State Forest land
- Railroad tracks
- Jennings Pond
- Fairgrounds
- Route 9 and 148 (exit 6) intersection - 2
- Village and immediate surrounding properties
- Mill building on Liberty Street
- Houses near bridge on 154
- Houses on Cove, especially on 154
- Houses near Moravela's
- Yes - 8
- No - 4

23. *Do you feel that the Town should consider minimizing development along its ridges and hilltops?*

- Yes - 37
- No - 9

OPEN SPACE:

24. *Should the preservation of open space in Chester be a priority?*

- Yes – 38
- No – 7
- Limited/Possibly – 7

25. *Should the Town use taxpayer money to buy and maintain open space?*

- Yes – 37
- No – 9
- Limited/Possibly – 10

26. *Would you be willing to pay higher taxes to acquire/maintain open space?*

- Yes – 31
- No – 15
- Limited/Possibly – 9

27. *Please indicate how important each of the following open space categories is to you.*

| | <u>More</u> | <u>Less</u> | <u>Not Important</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Active recreation | 28 | 18 | 3 |
| Passive recreation | 40 | 6 | 2 |
| Protection of wildlife habitat | 45 | 7 | |
| Protection of Tidal/Inland Wetlands | 53 | 1 | |
| Protection of ridges and hilltops | 42 | 9 | 2 |
| Protection of town character | 46 | 5 | 1 |
| Provide greater river/cove access | 39 | 12 | 2 |
| Provide greater boating/fishing access | 16 | 28 | 4 |
| Protection of large contiguous tracts of land | 39 | 8 | 3 |

Other (specify):

- Scenic road designation
- Sidewalks
- Bike paths
- Non-motorized boat access

PUBLIC FACILITIES:

28. Please indicate how important each of the following categories is to you:

| | <u>Most Important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>Not Important</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Swimming areas | 26 | 22 | 10 |
| Hiking/Walking/Nature Trails | 40 | 14 | 1 |
| Recreation | 19 | 28 | 10 |
| Softball/baseball fields | 8 | 26 | 21 |
| Tennis courts | 7 | 22 | 28 |
| Parks/playgrounds | 22 | 28 | 13 |
| Skating/Ice Hockey Rinks | 8 | 19 | 29 |
| Cross-country skiing | 9 | 29 | 19 |
| Access for boating | 11 | 28 | 21 |
| Access for fishing | 12 | 21 | 22 |
| Other suggestions: | | | |
| • Horseback riding | 1 | | |
| • Bike trails | 3 | | |
| • Cove access | 1 | | |

29. Please indicate how important each of the following capital improvement categories is to you.

| | <u>Most Important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>Not Important</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Improve government buildings | 2 | 18 | 36 |
| Community Center | 15 | 22 | 16 |
| Library | 14 | 27 | 9 |
| Elementary School | 13 | 22 | 13 |
| Develop recreational facilities | 8 | 35 | 16 |
| Purchase open space | 20 | 21 | 17 |
| Other suggestions: | | | |
| • Pedestrian/bicycle access | 2 | | |

30. Do you feel there is a need for additional police services in Town?

- Yes – 8
- No – 44
- Maybe – 1

31. Are you satisfied with Chester's network of town and state roads?

- Yes – 44
- No – 8
- Maybe - 2

32. Do you feel that the Town's system of roads is sufficient to accommodate existing and future traffic? If no, please explain.

- Yes – 42
- No –
- Maybe – 4
- Limited – 1

Comments:

- Future traffic centralized
- Widen 154 in future, safety uppermost
- Traffic study needed, depends on development
- Speed ranges

33. Do you feel there is a need for pedestrian and/or bicycle pathways along roadways in Chester?

- Yes – 45
- No – 9
- Maybe – 3

Comments:

- More sidewalks
- Rails to trails
- Narrow car lanes

34. *Would you support an initiative to designate any Chester roadway as “scenic roads”, thereby protecting their rural nature? If so, which roads?*

- Yes – 32
- No – 9
- Maybe – 3

Comments:

- Water Street - 2
- Goose Hill Road
- Liberty Street
- North Main Street
- Main Street
- Route 154
- Route 148
- Cedar Lake - 2
- Old County Road
- Leave all the roads alone
- Not in a million years; feels like a way to protect neighborhoods at the expense of others
- Ferry Road
- Wig Hill Road
- Cedar Swamp Road
- Chester Airport

COMMENTS:

35. *What do you like best about Chester? What problems would you most like to see local government address?*

Like Best:

- Rural/small-town character - 3
- Sense of community - 4
- Woods
- Restaurants - 2
- Amenities
- People it attracts
- Scenic roads
- Lake
- Grandparents buried here – all 4 of them
- History/connection to the past - 3
- Artistic scale blended w/rural community - 2
- Compactness/density
- Personality
- Mix of residential and commercial uses
- Keep us from becoming Guilford
- Architecture of Village
- Care of homes and properties
- Quality of life
- Schools
- Safe and accessible for children
- Cross-section of ages and monies (but not races)

Problems to be addressed:

- Sewer connection to Deep River/alternative desired 3 – cited “WPCA fiasco needs to slow down and have more townspeople involved”
- Beaver dams
- Taxes too high, driving out young and old
- Traffic/speed - 2
- Village protection
- Sidewalks downtown
- Energy conservation
- Environmental protection
- Tax incentive for owners who agree NOT to develop
- Excessive vehicles and junk
- Scattered development
- Parking
- Sustainability
- Not enough entertainment for older kids
- Communication – Town falls short of compliance
- More responsive government
- Long-term stable tax base
- Support of town ordinances and regulations
- Unregulated utilities never relate to needs of community
- Provide great community center and library
- Develop logical, prudent sewer policy

36. *What do you like least about Chester? Describe the Chester in which you'd like to live?*

Like Least:

- Industrial buildings in residential areas
- High/increasing taxes - 4
- Does commercial, bad and ugly have to be the only alternative to higher taxes
- Parking
- New residents “too New York”/NY refugees - 2
- Bus company buses in residential areas - 2
- Property on East Liberty Street
- Unbalanced idealism
- Boards and Commissions try to take too much control
- Traffic/speeding cars - 2
- Nothing
- Few residential and commercial eyesores
- Airport expansion
- Bridge on Wig Hill
- Those with money/power have an agenda - 2
- Contentious developers vs. short-sighted townspeople
- Getting expensive and exclusive
- Lack of pedestrian amenities
- Too expensive – “not enough Village”; Village for tourists, not locals - 2
- Sewer/septic issue
- “Tipping point” of development; “recent pushing to lay infrastructure for development” - 3
- No practical amenities; must leave town for basics
- Inability to see the future of sustainability
- Need for diversity
- Growing artistic influence/too eclectic - 2

- Relations between those with and those without children
- People afraid to speak out

Ideal Chester:

- ...in which residents continue to care about issues like these
- As it is - 6
- “Greening of Chester”; environmentally progressive - 3
- Solar town model
- Be more self-sufficient – spend less \$\$ outside of town - 2
- Encourage use and beautification of 4 Water Street, parking area, view of rear of buildings and brook
- Tax-free zone with all services available and improved
- Kept as a small rural community in country setting
- Get State to share more \$\$
- Change property tax dependence
- More businesses and services
- Limit discord, produce sensible development
- Social and economic diversity
- Reduce car use in Village and immediate environs
- Encourage creative arts even more - 2
- Need more consistent youth activities
- Need to enforce zoning laws
- Sustainable growth
- Incorporate high-tech businesses in growth
- Families
- Agriculture
- Inspire residents to use local services
- Small-town, rural character; open spaces - 3
- Small grocery
- Pharmacy
- Diversify economically
- Diversify ethnically
- Diversify population
- Elderly housing
- Condominiums, apartment buildings
- Knows and helps neighbors
- Lower taxes even if it means fewer services and improvements
- Emphasis on residents; they’re more important than tourists
- Cross-pollination
- Community gardens

"CHANGING HATS"

10:30 to 10:55

In order to help all of us to better understand the ways that a town can function best for everyone, we will "change hats" or role play together.

First, we'll list all the types of people we can think of who live, work, or visit Chester.

- Recreation:
 - Kayakers
 - Boaters
 - Fishermen
 - Beachgoers
 - Birdwatchers
 - Hikers
 - Bicyclists
 - Equestrians
 - Campers
 - Ice skaters
- Visitors:
 - Theatre-goers
 - Fair-goers
 - Weekenders
 - Restaurant-goers
 - Tourists
 - Neighbors
 - Business Clients
 - Potential residents
- Family:
 - Relatives
 - Parents
- Occupations:
 - Artists
 - Musicians
 - Actors
 - Contractors
 - Loggers
 - Educators
 - Blue Collar
 - White Collar
 - EMT/Fire/Police
 - Farmers
 - Bank Robbers
 - Employees of town businesses
 - Developers
 - Potential business owners
- Special populations:
 - Elderly
 - Retirees
 - Teens
 - School children
 - People with disabilities
 - Foreigners moving to Chester
 - Swamp Yankees
 - Suppliers of local businesses
 - Animals/wildlife
 - Pilots

Next, let's discuss how they would "use" the Town? What matters most to them about it? How does its appearance matter to them? What about it improves their lives? What about it makes their lives more difficult?

- General:
 - Community
 - Coziness
 - Rural (x3)
 - Nature
 - Good schools
 - Low taxes (x3)
 - Town services
 - Improve/expand communications infrastructure
 - Friendliness of people
 - Charm
 - Character (x2)
 - Cleanliness
 - Sewer system
 - Social diversity
 - Economic diversity
 - Parking
 - Business hours of operation
 - Taxi service
- Shopping:
 - Public toilets
 - Lights
 - Hours of operation
 - Parking
- Agriculture:
 - Tax breaks
 - Marketplace
 - Marketing
 - Community support
 - Flexible regulations
 - Source of employees
- Composting
- Energy needs
- Tourists/visitors:
 - Public toilets
 - Food
 - Signage
 - Parking
 - Sidewalks
 - Transportation to town from marinas
 - Gas
 - Lodging
 - Maps of town
 - Preservation of town center
 - Museum
 - Welcoming attitude
 - Trash removal
 - Advertising and promotion
- Local population:
 - Rails to trails
 - Lower taxes
 - Good schools
 - Basic necessities
 - Clean environment
 - Public access to river
 - Save the cove
 - More volunteers
 - Conservation – be green
 - Community center
 - Movie theatre
 - Employee opportunities
 - Best practice sharing among local towns

- Better recreational facilities – playgrounds and ball fields
- Attainable entry-level housing
- Improved library
- Safe community center
- Sidewalks
- Neighborhood watch
- Town Wi-Fi
- Developers:
 - Clear development and zoning rules and regulations
- Business:
 - Improved parking
 - Sidewalks
 - Space to do business
 - Stable taxes
 - Tax incentives
 - Good communication infrastructure
 - Access to workforce
 - Solve water/sewer availability
 - Availability of local financing
 - Community connection
 - Opportunity for cottage industries
 - Bury wires downtown

What would you want the Town of Chester to do for you?

- Preserve the smallness
- Improve recreation
- Provide walking paths
- Give me as much freedom as possible
- Trolley from marinas to Center
- Worry more about the average Joe instead of tourists
- Acknowledge the demographic of single, self-employed residents who make up a lot of the foot traffic and town services who feel disenfranchised
- Curtail speeding
- More pedestrian friendly
- P+Z should be pro-active, not reactive
- Safe and friendly environments
- More cultural and community gatherings
- Continue to provide strong community feeling
- Welcome social and economic diversity
 - Acknowledge the changing ethnic face of CT
- Bike/walk to school safely
- Improve public transportation
- Make it easy to understand my options regarding business location, rules and regulations
- More convenient and improved communication with town officials
- Be a haven and a family

"TRAVEL MAP"

10:50 to 11:45

The purpose of this exercise is to map your typical movement through and around Chester.

1. *Locate the places where you live, study, work and visit and label them.*

2. *Then, with your front door as a starting point, draw a continuous colored line to show your travel route to each place you visit during a typical day. Make a dot for each destination and label it. Use a separate line for each visit. Include visits to outside destinations. If the outside destinations are not on the map, draw your line to the edge, end it in a dot, and label the destination point.*

3. *Don't worry if the lines build up or overlap--you're creating a loose, free-hand diagram.*

4. *Color Code:*

| | | |
|--|---|--------------|
| <i>Work</i> | = | <i>Red</i> |
| <i>Personal (store, doctor, etc.)</i> | = | <i>Blue</i> |
| <i>School</i> | = | <i>Green</i> |
| <i>Recreation (dining, sports, etc.)</i> | = | <i>Brown</i> |

"KEY ISSUES"

11:45 to 12:00

Now that we have spent the morning working on exercises to help us become more aware of the existing conditions of our Town what do you feel are the key issues the Planning and Zoning Commission should focus on in the Plan of Conservation and Development?

-
- Accessibility – Broad – roads, cycles etc. - 3
- Incentives for Visiting/Residency
- Environmental Impact
- Commercial Zone – Define and Expand and Develop - 4
- New emergency/youth facilities at Route 9
- Develop thoughtfully – retain character while allowing development - 3
- Narrow definitions of each zone’s allowable development - retail, etc.
- Strict zoning regulations and enforcement thereof
- Simple/Clear Plan of Conservation and Development
- Maintain Character within above
- Encourage environmental responsibility/Green development - 8
- Encourage affordable development
- Utilize existing natural energy sources – i.e. hydropower for electricity/renewable energy - 5
- Discourage big box/chain stores – grocery stores etc. - 3
- Consider historical business success when considering new businesses
- Divide Planning and Zoning Functions
- Community Communications – fiber optic, make Chester a “globally competitive” place to live and work - 2
- Sewer/Public Utilities - 6
- Encourage diversity of population - 2
- Consider climate change
- Retain mixed-use zoning - 3
- Restore local food economy
- Resident’s Satisfaction
- Communication between Town boards - 2
- Encourage community input
- Revenue for change and sustainability – “how to pay for all the cool stuff”
- Support public facilities
- Housing
- Taxes/Revenue considered when developing - 3
- Affordable taxes for populace - 2
- Growing town
- Public facilities – library, community Center - 5 – suggested existing firehouse for new library
- Keep in mind you’re elected by the people
- Retain diversity of population
- The opinion of outsiders should not be a major concern
- Development should preserve town’s unique character
- Affordable housing – look for creative solutions - 5
- Sewer avoidance
- Preservation
- Small-town charm; maintain character - 9
- Limit commercialization; encourage “commercial enterprise” zones
- Limit development based on what neighboring communities already provide - 2

- Development shouldn't rely on an "unattainable critical mass of customers"
- Community-building activities – potlucks etc.
- People: family, children, elderly
- Protect Chester Cove
- Protect existing parks and open space but do not expand them
- Services for visitors to Town
- Sustainability - 3
- Retain mix of commercial and residential zones – set targets for each
- Do not price out artists who have added to the town
- Gardens in Village
- Protect natural resources
- Beautify individual properties
- Biking trails, walking, trolley - 8
- Safe recreation for youth - 3
- Municipal service – police, fire - 2
- Maintain established “gems”/treasures - 2
- Make town attractive (“ser-friendly”) for potential businesses, professionals, developers
- Allow development to support tax base in designated areas
- More recreational opportunities for youth
- Diversity – unspecified - 2
- Maximize use of existing open space
- More access to CT River - 2
- Encourage tourism
- Consider aesthetics in all development
- Public Toilets
- Employment opportunities in town
- Offer incentives to attract new businesses
- Attract healthcare providers
- Get DOT to improve signage on our state roads
- Public transportation
- Village District with design standards