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FINAL Text with Edits made following March 7, 2019

**Charts and Maps to be inserted as additions
to the IMPLEMENTATION PLAN and APPENDICES sections**

CHESTER, CONNECTICUT

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2019 - 2029



Adopted Plan

Effective **Date**

Prepared by:

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Section 1- Introduction

The purpose of this Plan is to describe current conditions in Chester, capture the values expressed by the community through an open and transparent planning process, document the vision, goals and objectives for Chester over the coming decade, and provide direction on how the town can advance its objectives.

The 2019 Chester Plan of Conservation and Development (referred to as the “POCD,” or “the Plan”) is a current-day view of Chester and its future. Section 8-23 of the *Connecticut General Statutes* requires municipal planning commissions to prepare and adopt a POCD once every ten years, and for the Plan to address key aspects of the Town’s conditions, policies, and goals.

The Plan emphasizes appropriate economic development that supports Chester’s residents, existing businesses and small-town character, acknowledging the importance of protecting the natural and cultural resources while allowing the town to grow through support of economic growth and carefully planned development.

Planning Process

A representative Planning Task Force was established to guide the process of updating this Plan. The Task Force included representation from the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Board of Education, and the Parks and Recreation Commission among other interested Town departments, non-profit organizations, and citizens with relevant local expertise. The Task Force explored conditions, trends, assets and needs in major topic areas, such as housing, demographics, economic development, transportation, and natural resources to help guide development of the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Public engagement in the process began in the fall of 2017 with a community survey on important issues facing the town. The first community survey garnered 466 responses, or about 12% of the town's population. A second, long-range planning survey was conducted in the summer of 2018, receiving 350 responses.

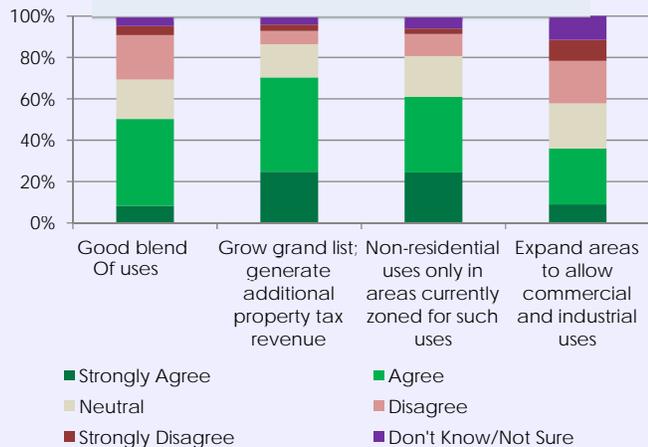
In addition to community surveys, a public workshop was conducted in March 2018. Results of the surveys and workshop underscored the community's desire to support the Town's tax base through creative economic development that enhances Chester's small-town charm and unique Village District. A website dedicated to the Plan and the planning process was maintained throughout the process to invite public participation and keep community members informed.

Survey Results

70% of 466 respondents to the community survey agreed or strongly agreed that Chester should generate additional property tax revenue.

Maintaining the Village Center as an economic, social and cultural hub, and promoting commercial and industrial development were the top-ranked objectives by 350 respondents to the long-range planning survey.

Economic Development Statements



The Plan

The Task Force and the Planning & Zoning Commission desired a Plan that would help guide decision-making.

This Plan is organized around the community's vision, goals and objectives, which are provided in Section 2.

Each of the six main community goals:

What the community wants to achieve is supported through descriptions of the conditions, trends and community input that explain **why** each goal is important.

Objectives and strategies under each goal explain **how** Chester can work to advance the stated goals and overall community vision.

The implementation agenda provided in Section 3 details **when** and **where** strategies should be implemented, and **by whom**.

Section 4 identifies location and extent of areas served by existing sewer systems, areas where sewer systems may be planned, and areas where sewers are to be avoided.

Section 5 discusses this Plan's consistency with applicable regional and State plans.

Finally, Section 6 provides maps, graphs, detailed data updates and survey results as appendices.

Section 2 - Chester 2029 Vision, Goals and Objectives

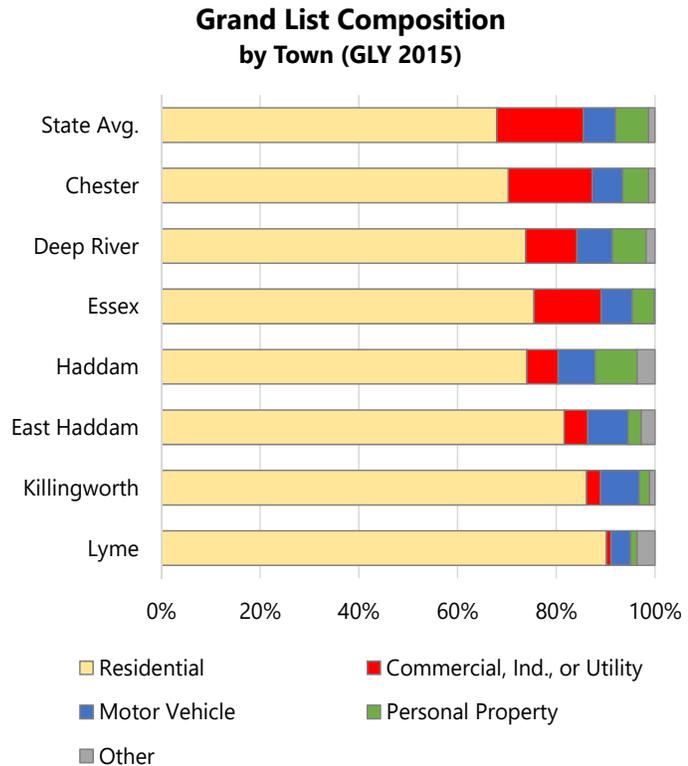
Vision

Chester builds an environment that supports the wellbeing of its residents and visitors by preserving natural resources, providing residential options, facilitating the establishment and growth of forward-looking business and industry as well as creating innovative opportunities for education and recreation.

Goal 1. Strengthen Chester’s economy through creative economic development

Chester’s residents want to attract new businesses while maintaining, sustaining and strengthening Chester’s small-town character.

- 70% of respondents to the community survey agreed or strongly agreed with the need to attract new businesses, while promoting commercial and industrial development was rated the second most important objective by the community in a follow-up long-range planning survey.
- The Town’s Grand List reflects similar distribution of components to the State average.
- Recent acquisition of one of the Town’s top taxpayers by a non-profit organization will significantly reduce tax revenues.
- Manufacturing/Light Industrial is the largest employment sector in Chester. It is a significant tax generator and offers high annual wages. However, current zoning does not offer opportunities for growth or expansion.
- Health care and social services are large employers and land holders in Chester, and represent a nationally growing economic sector.
- RiverCOG’s Regional Economic Growth Strategy targets four economic drivers in Chester and the region: traded goods, tourism, lifestyle, and local residential and institutional demand.



*Municipal Fiscal Indicators
Fiscal Years Ended 2012 to 2016*

Chester's iconic and valued Village District presents unique opportunities for economic development, civic engagement and community pride.

- Maintaining the Village District as the vital economic, social and cultural hub of Chester was ranked the number one priority by respondents to the long-range planning survey.
- Average assessed property values are highest in the Village District due to the density and quality of improvements, presenting opportunities for larger returns on smaller footprints.
- Easing parking through enhanced signage and wayfinding, improved parking lots with enhanced pedestrian connections to the Village, and more parking were frequently cited priorities in both surveys and workshops.
- The 2009 POCD called for Village District Zoning and in 2011, the Chester Planning & Zoning Commission adopted the Village District Regulations.
- The Main Street Master Plan continues to be implemented in phases as funding permits.

Route 154, Inspiration Lane and the Waterfront are opportunity areas for expansion to build existing economic drivers and assets.

- Route 154 was identified for mixed-use future development in the Town's 2009 POCD; current zoning does not reflect this Plan. The corridor currently consists of a mixture of commercial, light industrial, institutional, and medium- and low-density residential uses. Nearly 50% of the long-range planning survey respondents supported increased commercial, industrial and/or residential development along Route 154. Development is limited by a lack of public sewer and topographic constraints.
- Inspiration Lane is a successful industrial park offering transportation advantages with its location near the Route 9, Exit 6 interchange. The development is largely built out as currently zoned, minimizing the potential for existing businesses to expand and/or the ability to attract new businesses. Survey responses and workshop results indicated willingness to expand the Controlled Development Zone and potentially to acquire additional property to incorporate into that zone.
- Chester's waterfront incorporates multiple marinas and water-dependent uses. Workshops and surveys indicated connecting the waterfront to the Village could benefit the Town economically.

Efforts for regional cooperation on economic development are in early stages.

- The 2016 RiverCOG Comprehensive Economic Growth Strategy provided recommendations that require intermunicipal cooperation, including establishing measures that enable the sharing of resources and considering the establishment of a regional development entity.
- Chester's Economic Development Commission is engaged with commissions from neighboring communities to explore ways to share ideas and to coordinate and jointly pursue objectives.

Goal 1.1. Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1.1: Maintain the Village District as the economic, social and cultural hub of the community by supporting vibrant mixed-use development, appropriate design and community activity and civic uses.

The Village should continue to serve both residents and visitors. Future development and activity should retain the existing scale and character that support small businesses, food and beverage establishments, galleries and retailers that contribute to and benefit from a strong sense of place.

- Review the boundaries of, and permitted uses in, the Village District. Explore extending boundaries southeast along Main Street to Route 154; consider enabling building types/space needs for creative industries, such as live/work spaces, mill- or loft-style flexible spaces for creative manufacturing or incubator spaces.
- Pursue technological infrastructure (Wi-Fi, 5G) to support home-based business and creative technology sectors in the Village.
- Priority attention should be given to ensuring adequate parking is available in the Village and throughout Town.
- Improve access to existing parking through signage, lighting, landscaping and promotion. Physical improvements to the Maple Street parking lot should be prioritized.
- Repurpose underutilized/vacant properties for housing or economic initiatives, including municipally owned properties. Consider providing incentives for properties that remained vacant for a long period. Incentives might include pre-development assistance such as environmental remediation assessment and clean up, or post-development tax incentives.
- Work with Goodspeed Musicals to better integrate the Norma Terris Theater into the fabric of the Village through promotions, signage, and other means.
- Continue to support community events within the Village, providing year-round programming that attracts residents and visitors.
- To the extent possible, locate or relocate municipal uses in or around the Village District to promote community identity and activity.
- Seek opportunities to bury utility lines and make aesthetic improvements in the Village District.
- Engage in intermunicipal and regional efforts to promote tourism.

Objective 1.2: Enable mixed-use development in appropriate nodes along Route 154

Route 154 provides an opportunity for mixed-use development of a different character from the Village District, and for the development of diverse housing types. The scale of any development in the corridor is limited by the lack of public utilities.

- Conduct a study of the entire corridor to identify development and/or redevelopment opportunity sites and appropriate nodes for targeting new development.
 - Opportunity sites should consist of properties with minimal development constraints.
 - Consider the length and depth of development nodes and the interceding areas to avoid strip development.
- Creation of an overlay or new mixed-use zoning district will best achieve the Town’s vision for Route 154.
 - Consider some flexibility in uses to enhance market viability and attractiveness of future development.
 - Accommodate various housing types: single-family, duplex, townhouse, multi-family.
 - Accommodate varied commercial uses.
 - Consider design standards and visual guides to ensure appropriate architectural scale and character.
 - Distinguish development types to establish their own character.
- Consider whether the current Town Hall is an appropriate use of a potential commercial or mixed-use building. If the current site, coupled with adjacent properties or other properties along Route 154 has greater potential for economic development, seek an alternative location for Town Hall, ideally in or around the Village District.

Objective 1.3: Expand industrial and office development potential

Build on the existing base of manufacturing and light industrial businesses in the community to generate additional jobs and tax revenue.

- Work with existing manufacturing/light industrial sector businesses to identify opportunities for supply and support services or complementary industry.
- Explore expansion of the Controlled Development District (CDD) zone on Inspiration Lane to partial areas of adjacent residential Wig Hill Road lots.
- Cooperate in intermunicipal and regional efforts to promote infill of light-industrial uses, including the Research & Light Manufacturing (RLM) zone.
- Support continued operation of the airport.

Objective 1.4: Support water-based, recreation and tourism uses along the riverfront

Chester's waterfront development may be limited in scale by the lack of public water and sewer infrastructure. Enabling some additional uses in the Waterfront Design District could help support existing marinas and businesses, while enhancing opportunities to connect the waterfront to the Village.

- Consider enabling additional permitted uses in the Waterfront Design District, such as restaurants and retail.
- Explore with neighboring communities and tourism industries ways to establish regular shuttle-type connections from marinas to the Village District and other destinations in the region.
- Explore the potential for a public mooring area and water taxi to promote tourism.
- Improve Chester Overlook, the small parking and decked area at the end of Railroad Avenue. Consider a public-/private-partnership with the adjacent landowner to expand the passive recreation area.
- Actively monitor and pursue control and management of invasive species throughout the town.

Objective 1.5: Support existing Life Care developments

Because these communities are large employers and land holders within Chester, it is important to maintain a working relationship and open communications.

- Support the needs of existing or potentially expanded Life Care developments.
- Consider the need for a new continuing care/life care zoning regulation to support senior housing and medical uses with ancillary commercial facilities.
- Evaluate the possible need for sewer expansion on Route 148 to the Route 9, Exit 6 interchange area.

Objective 1.6: Support and maintain households at various life-cycle stages

Continue to provide for and work with organizations that provide high quality services and programs.

- Implement and support a variety of educational, recreational and cultural programming through Senior and Social Services, Parks & Recreation, the Library and other area organizations and initiatives.
- Seek opportunities to enhance services through regional cooperation and service sharing.
- Promote and support groups and agencies that provide a variety of recreational programs.

Goal 2. Increase pedestrian, bicycle and transit connectivity in the town and the region to enhance quality of life, enable active lifestyles and promote natural resource appreciation

Reflecting its rural character, Chester is served by a limited number of pedestrian walkway and bicycle routes. Providing safe and convenient connections is a community priority.

- About one-third of Chester’s roadways are state roads.
- Recent improvements in the Village District have enhanced walkability in the commercial core area; preliminary plans for enhanced connections to the Village from surrounding areas are supported by the community.
- Enhancing connections to active recreational areas, including State forests and parks, the Connecticut River, Cedar Lake, Chester Elementary School, North Quarter Park and, potential pedestrian access to Deep River should be considered.

The Estuary Transit District, operating 9-Town Transit, currently serves Chester with Dial-A-Ride service and two fixed routes – one from Chester to Old Saybrook and one from Middletown to Old Saybrook, connecting to Shore Line East train service. CT Transit Express service to Hartford is available from the Park and Ride Lot at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 148.

- Transit and Dial-A-Ride services are important services to maintain for the community.
- Regional cooperation is critical to ensure the continued operation and success of transit services.
- The Chester/Hadlyme Ferry serves both tourists and commuters.

Goal 2.1 Objectives and Strategies Goal

Objective 2.1: Prioritize target areas for safe pedestrian and bicycle connections

Seek to ensure the walkability of the full extent of the Village District, connect existing assets, and improve safety.

- Pursue opportunities to provide pedestrian walkways and bicycle infrastructure.
- Enhance connections to active recreational areas, including State forests and parks, the Connecticut River, Cedar Lake, Chester Elementary School and North Quarter Park.
- Consider revising zoning and subdivision regulations to require pedestrian walkway installation in prioritized areas or under certain conditions.
- Connect the Village with other nearby community assets.
- Explore opportunities to create trail connections between Ferry Road and Dock Road.
- Work with the Chester Land Trust to enable access to open space properties.
- Develop maps to promote Chester's trail networks online and in print.
- Work regionally to encourage promotion of safe bicycle routes, and to provide bicycle lanes and/or signage.
- Ensure that bridge and road projects consider the need for safe pedestrian and/or bicycle access.
- Promote connections to recreational properties and trail systems through signage, mapping, promotion and accessible bicycle and pedestrian routes.
- Improve connections to Town-owned facilities.
- Evaluate designation of selected section(s) of Route 148 as a State Scenic Road.

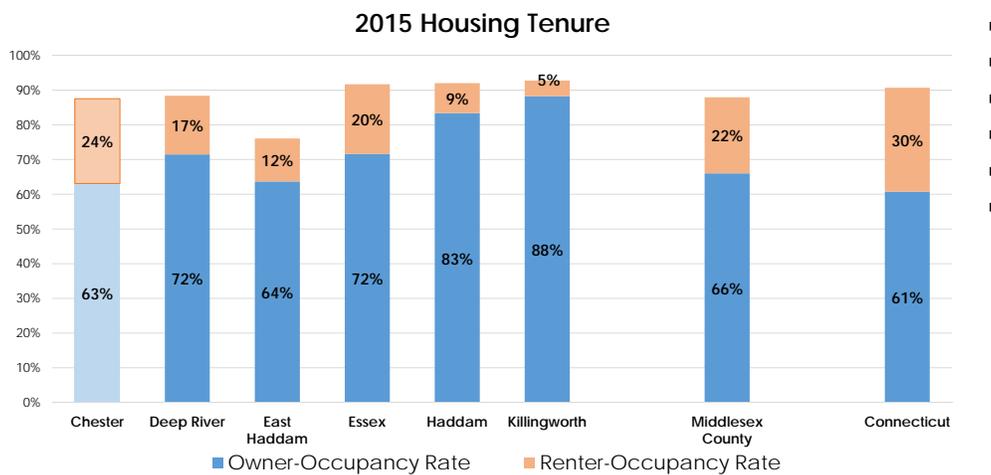
Objective 2.2: Expand transit opportunities and alternatives for connecting economic development areas

- Work with RiverCOG and 9-Town Transit to maintain and expand services and integration of transit services (Shore Line East, 9-Town Transit, CT Transit, etc.).
- Support improvements to Shore Line East commuter rail service.
- Support continued maintenance and operation of the historic Chester/Hadlyme Ferry.
- Support continued operation of Valley Railroad. Explore additional uses for residents, and/or connecting tourist excursions to the Village District.
- Explore with neighboring communities and tourism industries ways to establish regular shuttle-type connections from the riverfront to the Village District and other destinations in the region.

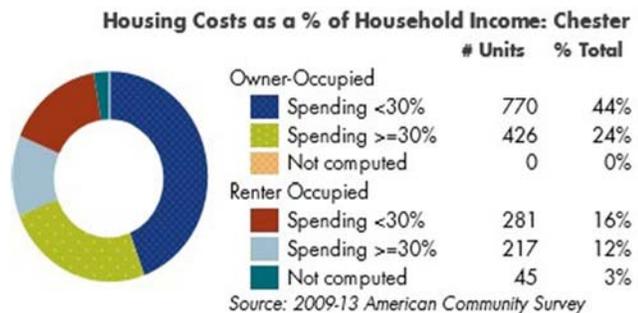
Goal 3. Diversify Chester’s housing stock, while protecting existing neighborhoods and community character

Chester's rural residential neighborhoods are vital to the town's character and sense of place

- A majority of Chester’s residents live in single-family homes, and almost 80% of all housing units were built prior to 1990.
- Community survey results showed a desire for smaller, affordable housing units, especially for older residents.
- Chester has a higher rental rate than its peer communities, and a median housing sales price that is still below median prices of a decade ago.



- According to Census estimates, about 24% of owner-occupied and 12% of renter-occupied Chester units are “cost-burdened” – occupants spend more than 30% of income on housing costs.



From the Partnership for Strong Communities

- About 2% of the local housing stock is affordable. According to the Connecticut Affordable Housing Appeals law, 10% of a Town’s stock needs to be affordable to qualify for exemption from CGS 8-30g, the *Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Act*.

Opportunities to construct additional housing under current zoning are primarily in the R-2 zone, which limits the potential for diversifying the type of housing available in Chester

- If all vacant land were developed under current zoning, Chester could accommodate an additional 285 single-family dwelling units, 257 of which would be in R-2 zones on two-acre lots.
- There is no vacant land zoned for multi-family residential uses

Multi-family opportunities are limited to the Village District and Planned Residential District (PRD), and accessory apartments are limited to one-acre or larger lots

- The existing PRD zone is a small zone off Maple Street and Hickory Hill Drive that enables multi-family development; however, it primarily consists of single-family, low-density development. The zone requires a minimum of five acres, and limits the number of bedrooms and units per acre, as well as unit sizes, and other bulk and massing requirements. Only a portion of the existing zone lies in a recommended sewer service area.
- Accessory dwelling units provide another opportunity for diverse housing types. Accessory dwelling units are currently permitted in all residential zones; require a one-acre minimum lot, four parking spaces, and a minimum 450 sq. ft. accessory unit.

Goal 3.1 Objectives and Strategies:

Objective 3.1: Promote housing development within and adjacent to the Village District and in mixed-use nodes along Route 154.

Chester's low-density neighborhoods and character are part of its heritage and character. While there is a need to diversify the housing types, this objective needs to be accomplished in a context-sensitive manner.

- Encourage development of diverse housing types, scale and densities in close proximity to commercial areas and public facilities, when available.

Objective 3.2: Increase regulatory flexibility to enable a range of housing opportunities.

Current regulations are relatively restrictive on multi-family and accessory dwelling unit development. Introducing more flexibility while maintaining design requirements may yield more units.

- Assess the ability of rural areas to support neighborhood-scale housing development in terms of character, land capacity, transportation infrastructure and soil suitability and the availability of public water and/or sewer connections.
- Consider modifications to the PRD regulations. Work with the Health District to understand whether a maximum bedroom yield per acre is necessary and/or whether the unit yield per acre can be increased. Consider providing an increased unit yield with public sewer and water connections. Consider a density bonus for a set-aside of affordable units.
- Consider modifications to accessory apartment regulations;
- Consider changes to minimum lot size requirements and permitting duplexes or attached housing units in rural residential zones.

Objective 3.3: Establish programs and partnerships to expand opportunities for increasing the number of affordable, attainable and sustainable housing units

Chester, like many rural and suburban communities in Connecticut, lacks diversity in housing type and housing prices. As older households seek a greater variety of housing options with lower costs and maintenance demands, and as the cost of housing can be a barrier to early-career professionals and young families, ensuring that Chester offers housing at a variety of price points is increasingly important. It should be noted that as Chester has developed over the years, available land capable of development for affordable, attainable and sustainable housing units has become increasingly limited. The requirements of legislation addressing affordable housing considerations must be included in all land use plans, activities and actions.

- Formulate regulations that require 10% of lots and built homes in future subdivisions of ten lots and over to be deed-restricted, affordable housing.
- Encourage construction or conversion of secondary housing units (carriage houses, in-law apartments, etc.) on existing lots where sanitary disposal conditions can be achieved.
- Designate incentive housing where a higher density of mixed housing options could be achieved, of which 30% or more would be affordable. Such areas should, wherever possible, be located near public transit, the Village District and other services, and built in tandem with sustainable practices listed in other sections of this document (e.g., community gardens, artisan shops/workshops), and alternative technology sewer systems.
- Educate the community on the need for diverse housing options to create a sustainable community through interaction and cooperation with non-profit and advocacy organizations and others addressing housing needs.
- Monitor and address issues relating to adopted affordable housing statutes and regulations as part of all Chester land use regulatory agencies
- Collaborate with housing developers to identify potential sites, plan for and build projects that generate additional opportunities for moderate- and lower-income households with a goal to serve community members who are elderly, disabled or ALICE (asset limited, income restrained, employed).
- Pursue regional partnerships to share resources, administer programs and activities that promote housing opportunity and workforce housing development.
- Explore establishing community programs that assist property owners in
 - Maintaining and rehabilitating aging housing units,
 - Developing accessory apartments, and/or
 - Increasing the energy efficiency of current housing units.
- Explore regulatory opportunities to promote affordable, attainable housing, such as offering density bonuses for income-restricted units in certain types of development, such as mixed-use or multi-family.
- Establish a Housing Committee to regularly evaluate different types of housing and community needs and initiate actions to address established, unfilled needs.

Goal 4.1 Preserve the rural character and natural features that make Chester unique

Chester's character is dictated, in part, by the significant amount of preserved land held privately, as well as publicly owned forestland and significant open spaces within its borders

- Approximately 48% of the Town's land area is open space, most of which is owned by the State of Connecticut (3,785 acres).
- Private landholders, including Camp Hazen, the Chester Land Trust and the Chester Agriculture & Mechanical Society own about 6% of the Town's open space.
- Very little open space is available on the Connecticut River to allow public access.

Chester's water resources are critical to the character, quality of life, flora and fauna, and economy of the community

- Chester benefits from high quality surface waters, and no known large areas of groundwater contamination. Chester Creek and Cedar Lake provide habitat for endangered or threatened species.
- The Connecticut River is one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers. It is an important natural and economic asset to the community, but it remains largely inaccessible to most community members due to limited public lands along the riverfront.
- The Harbor Management Plan calls for a balance of beneficial use and conservation, and supporting marinas and water-dependent uses, while protecting tidal wetlands, and the residential shoreline character.
- Measures to support and preserve agricultural uses as a contributor to the local economy should continue to be active goals for all land use agencies.

Twenty-three (23) dams are registered with the CT DEEP in Chester, the majority of which are Class A, low hazard potential. State and Town-owned dams are generally well maintained.

Objective 4.1: Maintain high quality open spaces for recreation and natural resource value

Ensuring the continued maintenance of protected lands will help to maintain the rural character of the community.

- Update the 1999 Open Space Plan to identify key criteria and/or parcels for protection and public improvements; pursue conservation easements and deed restrictions for priority parcels; consider whether the Town should re-commit to funding an open space acquisition fund.
- Promote and maintain the Public Act 490 assessment program to encourage preservation of land as open space.
- Work with the Chester Land Trust to increase accessibility of riverfront open space.
- Manage invasive species by supporting the efforts of the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission, regional and State partners.
- Promote long-term watershed management to maintain the quality of Cedar Lake, the Connecticut River and all waterbodies of Chester.
- Encourage proper management of private and publicly owned forests and the maintenance of wooded linkages between large tracts of forestland in Chester and surrounding municipalities with the cooperation of appropriate and involved agencies and groups.
- Promote best management practices and ensure compliance with existing septic pump-out ordinance and regulations.

Objective 4.2: Maintain high quality surface and sub-surface waters

Ensuring the quality of streams, rivers and lakes, as well as drinking water is critical to the health of the people and economy of Chester.

- Preserve the natural, scenic and recreational qualities of Chester's waterbodies and waterways.
- Incorporate low impact development techniques into zoning, subdivision and road design regulations, as well as with any public project.
- Regularly clean storm drains and provide corrective action for siltation and damage to Town roads.
- Ensure that the State regularly cleans catch basins on State highways.
- Promote the use of non-chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Maintain the Town-owned dam at Jennings Pond; monitor and maintain all other town-owned dams.
- Explore opportunities to assist private dam owners in the maintenance of dams.

- Seek to implement the recommendations of the 2013 Harbor Management Plan.
 - Increase access to Chester Creek for canoes and kayaks.
 - Improve Parker's Point boat launch and parking.
 - Pursue a riverfront walkway,
 - Use Chester Creek Overlook to its fullest potential for passive recreation.
- Educate landowners on water quality issues and techniques for protecting water quality; removal of invasive species; maintenance or creation of vegetated buffer strips along lakes and streams; use of non-chemical fertilizers and pesticides; and septic design and maintenance through the activities of and promulgation of materials by local agencies as well as the resources of state and federal entities.

Goal 5. Provide high quality recreational services and facilities to support quality of life

Objective 5.1: Provide high quality recreational amenities

Chester residents enjoy both local and State recreation areas on a frequent basis.

- Over 80% of survey respondents use Cedar Lake at least a few times per year, and almost 90% visit Cockaponset Forest at least a few times per year.
- Chester offers a variety of parks and recreation facilities – primarily of a passive nature.
- A long-standing priority for the community is to gain improved public access to the Connecticut River.
- Survey results also indicate a desire for more active recreation areas, including playgrounds, basketball courts and places to bike/skate or skateboard.
- The following chart provides current-day information about recreation areas including amenities presently offered as well as anticipated needs for maintenance and improvements.

Facility	Size	Function	Amenities	Indicated Needs
Cockaponset State Forest	3.759 acres	State/Regional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Trails 	State Owned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road/Parking Area Maintenance
Bishop Road Boat Launch	3 acres	State/Regional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boat Launch Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuisance Plant Removal
Pelletier Park	0.7 acres; 50,000 sq.ft. swimming areas	Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Beach Picnic Tables Pavilion Concession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuisance Plant Removal General Spruce-up Parking Canoe/Kayak Portage Restroom Improvements
Cedar Lake Road	0.02 acres	Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuisance Plant Removal
North Quarter Park	22 acres	Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Playground Picnic Area Volleyball Baseball Field Trail Loop Basketball Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages to Village and Chester Cove Improved Amenities
L'Hommeideau Park	0.5± acres	Mini/Neighborhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picnic 	
Chester Creek Overlook	0.4 acres	Mini/Neighborhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Deck/Seating Dock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Access to Water Improved Amenities
Parkers Point Boat Launch	0.6 acres	Mini/Neighborhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boat Launch Parking Picnic Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Access to Water Improved Amenities
Chester Elementary Baseball Fields	5.5 acres	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Baseball Fields Shack/ Storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional fields to reduce competition for organized sports activities

Municipal facilities are in generally good condition and the community supports continued maintenance

- Residents report using most municipal facilities, such as Town Hall, the Meeting House and the Deep River Transfer Station a few times per year.
- While nearly 44% of community survey respondents indicated they use the Chester Library at least monthly, 60% reported also using other libraries in the region. In addition, in the long range planning survey, making major improvements to the Library ranked toward the bottom of ten potential capital investment priorities.
- Maintenance of Town facilities, including Chester Elementary School, Town Hall, Library, Meeting House, Public Works and Public Safety facilities was a top priority for respondents to the long range planning survey.
- Municipal meeting places are limited; additional space is available through private organizations. Some desire for a community or senior center was evident in the initial community survey; however, it was not a top priority in the follow-up long range planning survey.
- Chester Elementary School's currently declining enrollment has started to stabilize. The building has not had major renovations since 1990; solar panels were recently installed. The building is not slated for any significant renovations aside from the already budgeted oil tank replacement.

Limited utilities are available in the Village District; the Town recently upgraded to LED lighting in the Village District

- The Connecticut Water Company provides water to limited service areas, including at the independent senior living facility on Route 148 abutting the Killingworth town line.
- Most households rely on private wells for drinking water.
- Public sewer service is available in the Village center through a wastewater agreement with Deep River. The agreement enables Chester to send up to 60,000 gallons per day to the Deep River treatment facility. Recommended service areas include a peripheral area around the Village District and a portion of the PRD zone.
- The nursing and rehabilitation facility at the Route 9 and Route 148 interchange has been cited for a failing septic system and may be best served by a sewer extension along Route 148 out of the Village District.
- Fiber optic service is provided along Routes 148 and 154, as well as Inspiration Lane, with service from Wig Hill Road.
- 4G/ LTE wireless service is provided by AT&T and Verizon through facilities along Route 9. Coverage in the Village District is not always available.

Goal 5.1 Objectives and Strategies:

Objective 5.1: Provide high quality recreational amenities

Maintaining and improving existing Town facilities, while seeking efficient ways to enhance services can help maintain and attract households at varying life stages, as well as support housing values.

- Plan for improvements at Cedar Lake and North Quarter Park's recreational facilities to meet the needs of all ages.
- Provide improved facilities and storage for Parks & Recreation programs.
- Monitor and identify potential improvements to programs for sports fields and facilities.
- Seek opportunities to enhance programs for all ages, especially youth, teens and seniors, independently as well as in cooperation with neighboring communities.

Objective 5.2: Provide facilities that enhance livability, enrich learning opportunities and cultural awareness, and cultivate social interaction

Maintaining Town facilities is a community priority and is important to economic development and supporting the vitality of the community.

- Continue to preserve the Meeting House and enhance community use of the facility.
- Promote engagement with Regional School District #4 to maintain high quality educational programs and facilities that are fundamental community resources.
- Continue to maintain Chester Elementary School and seek ways to improve community use of the building and fields for additional programming and/or recreational uses.
- Support and maintain the quality and condition of public safety facilities and equipment.
- Ensure quality maintenance and improvements of Town facilities and infrastructure.
- Work with private providers to implement sustainable technologies, utilities and infrastructure.
- Investigate possible improvements or modifications for the Library, considering alternatives that might include inter-town coordination.

Goal 6. Support and promote sustainability and resiliency

Chester has demonstrated a commitment to sustainability and resiliency

- The 2009 POCD called for the creation of a Sustainability Committee comprised of a variety of boards, commission and community groups to address energy consumption. The Town's Energy Team took the initiative, sponsoring two Solarize events, LED conversion of streetlights in the Village and the installation of solar panels at the Elementary School and Town facilities.
- Chester continues to participate in the Connecticut River Gateway Commission to ensure the preservation of the natural and traditional river landscape.

Goal 6.1 Objectives and Strategies:

Objective 6.1: Increase use of renewable energies

The Energy Team has implemented several measures to improve Chester's reliance on renewable energies.

- Continue to support community efforts to increase public and private use of renewable energies.
- Continue energy audits and programs to implement energy conservation at all Town facilities.
- Install photovoltaic or other renewable energy systems on all public buildings, as feasible.
- Expand the streetlight conversion program to parking areas.
- Promote and support alternative and clean-fuel technologies for public fleets, as feasible.
- Promote energy conservation techniques for the design and construction of public improvements and infrastructure.
- Explore installation of electric vehicle charging stations in municipal parking areas.
- Promote energy conservation improvements for private homes, industries and other properties.

Objective 6.2: Reduce waste

While residents are required to contract privately for trash removal, the Town participates in regional recycling efforts. Reducing waste entails not only increasing recycling, but also shifting focus to reduce, reuse and maximize the diversion of waste.

- Continue to educate residents on waste reduction.
- Encourage the reduction/elimination of use of single-use containers, plastic bags and other non-recyclable materials
- Support product stewardship or Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiatives.
- Increase use of electronic files in municipal operations and business transactions, including the permitting process.
- Continue to support regional recycling, household hazardous waste and electronics disposal.

Objective 6.3: Implement and Maintain Stormwater Management Plan

Chester is a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), and must comply with state and federal standards to reduce pollutant discharge from its stormwater system.

- Continue to implement and maintain the Town’s Stormwater Management Plan.

Objective 6.4: Continue participation in the CT Sustainable Communities Program

A new statewide certification program for sustainability coordinated through the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University is assisting communities in their efforts to be “thriving, resilient, collaborative and forward-looking.”

- Create a sustainability committee to pursue and maintain certification.
- Regularly look to the program for ideas and inspiration, as approved actions and supporting documentation from certified municipalities are made available at sustainablect.org.

Objective 6.5: Continue active participation with the Connecticut River Gateway Commission

The Town has a member and alternate appointed to the Commission to participate in the maintenance and implementation of development standards for the conservation zone, acquisitions and other activities of the Commission.

- Support the Gateway Commission’s standards.
- Continue to support efforts to acquire endangered natural areas within the Gateway Zone.

Objective 6.6: Improve Chester’s resilience to natural hazards

RiverCOG’s 2014 Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan includes Chester and Chester-specific recommendations that should be implemented to ensure the ability of Chester to withstand and recover from natural disasters.

- Implement the recommendations of the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, including pursuing acquisition of land in flood hazard zones, prioritizing road construction projects to lower risk through raising roadbeds and replacing inadequate bridges and culverts.
- Support maintenance of the regional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.
- Avoid construction of new structures in areas prone to flooding.
- Require that new tree plantings include a variety of species to avoid monoculture stands that are susceptible to disease and insects.

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- Establish a town-wide urban forestry program to monitor, maintain and replant street trees and other trees on town property.
- Chester's Hazard Mitigation Plan shall comply with the sea-level-rise change scenario as required by Connecticut Public Act 18-82 and be in accordance with the most recent sea-level-change scenario as updated pursuant to Subsection (b) of Section 25-68.o, as amended.
- Work with neighboring communities, the region and public utility companies to seek efficient solutions to clearing of potentially hazardous trees, street tree maintenance and re-planting.

Section 3 – Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Map is a reflection of the Town’s vision and goals for desirable future development over the next decade. The map depicts appropriate locations for and relationships between general categories of use and intensity, ranging from priority areas for economic development and the creation of housing opportunities to low-density rural, residential lands. The Future Land Use Plan graphically represents the general outcomes anticipated from implementation of the strategies contained in this Plan. Due to its generalized nature, there may be inconsistencies between the uses shown on this map and the actual use of individual properties.

The Future Land Use Plan describes desired land use outcomes in the following categories:

Village

The area located within and around Chester Village District is currently served or recommended for service by sanitary sewer and public water infrastructure. This area can support higher densities of housing and a mix of commercial or civic/institutional uses that are typical in traditional village centers. In order to maintain the unique, walkable and mixed-use character, policies should promote context-sensitive infill development and redevelopment that bolsters housing opportunity and economic development objectives.

Potential Village Expansion

As Chester seeks to develop more dense housing of different types and stimulate a stronger economy, the area, immediately adjacent to the existing district may be assimilated into the Village. Given its potential access to public sewer, and its current densities and civic/institutional uses, this area may best serve the community’s housing, economic development and connectivity objectives.

Priority Development Overlay

The area along the Route 154 corridor is a focal area for future mixed-use development in select nodes that are interspersed with low-density residential uses. Therefore, future development must comply with the limitations of the land. The corridor already has a wide mix of uses from low- and medium-density residential to retail/commercial and light industrial. This mixture of uses should continue.

Industrial Development

These areas support light industrial development. The availability of land, access to transportation, and existing businesses lend these areas to this type of use.

Riverfront Development

This area is important to the Town’s tourism industry and ability to access the Connecticut River. Development should consist of water-dependent and supporting retail/commercial uses. Future development should also strive to increase public access to the riverfront.

Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential areas are found on the outer edge of the Village District and scattered existing sites. Residential densities in these areas are about two units per acre. While these areas are not in the Village District, they support the vibrancy of the Village, and offer opportunities for different housing types, such as multi-family. Expansion of utility services in these areas may be considered to support new development that enhances housing diversity.

Low Density Residential

Low-density residential areas contain single-family homes at densities ranging from single-family homes on one or more acres. A balance of development and conservation objectives should be implemented in these areas, with protection of environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, riparian corridors, farmlands, and contiguous forests. However, more dense housing developments may be appropriate, given proper soil, environmental, transportation and neighborhood conditions.

Section 4 – Sewer Plan

Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-23, require that municipal plans of conservation and development adopted after July 1, 2015 must identify the general location and extent of areas served by existing sewer systems, areas where sewer systems are planned, and areas where sewers are to be avoided.

Chester's existing sewer system serves a portion of the Village District. The Chester Wastewater Planning Study adopted in 2005, with amendments to 2007 has already been implemented. Limited extension(s) of sewer systems to address changing needs to meet housing goals, public health and environmental protection requirements need to be considered and addressed as feasible.

Over the next decade, the Town should consider extending limited sewer service to align with zoning to help meet housing and public health goals and environmental protections, as well as development associated with economic growth within the constraints of its agreement for disposal with the Town of Deep River.

A potential expansion area is shown along Route 148 west of the Village District to the Route 9 interchange area due to identified septic issues in the area of the Route 9/Route 148 intersection.

Other areas of town are depicted as sewer avoidance areas.

Measures must be actively monitored and enforced to promote and ensure compliance with existing regulations requiring maintenance of septic systems through enforcement of the Resolution Regarding Household Hazardous Waste Collection Programs enacted by the Town on December 1, 1998, as administered by municipal enforcement agencies.

Section 5 – Consistency with Regional and State Plans

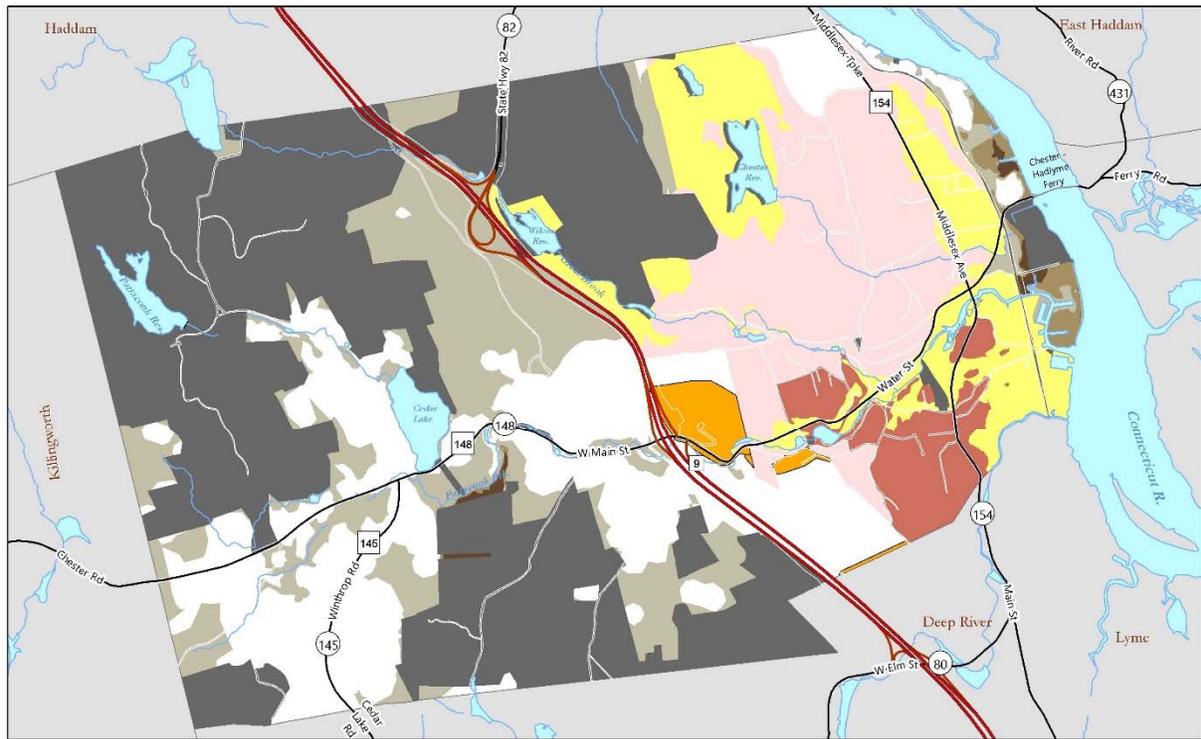
Economic development, housing, natural resources quality and transportation are issues influenced by regional and statewide policies and factors. While Chester can plan to address these issues at the local level, it is important to identify how the community’s vision and objectives fit into the regional and State context, especially where there may be inconsistencies.

Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut: 2013-2018

Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that local POCDs take into account the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan and note any inconsistencies. While a draft update to the State Plan was completed in 2018, it has not at this time been adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly. Therefore, the 2013-2018 State Plan was reviewed. Generally, Chester’s plan is consistent with the State’s six growth management principles as described in the following table.

State of Connecticut Growth Management Principles	Chester POCD Consistency Analysis
Redevelop and Revitalize Village Center and Areas that are Currently Served by or are Planned to be Served by Public Utilities	Chester's POCD promotes development in and around the existing Village District, in areas served by sewer and recommended for sewer expansion.
Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs	This POCD recognizes the need to diversify Chester housing stock and recommends strategies to achieve these objectives.
Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options	This Plan promotes strategic development along Route 154, as well as improved linkages to regional transit services and transportation networks.
Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands	Chester's rural character is critical to its success and depends on healthy, accessible and preserved resources. Several recommendations are included to protect and enhance these assets.
Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety	This POCD makes several recommendations designed to protect surface and subsurface waters, improve the Town's resiliency to natural hazards and enhance sustainability.
Promote Integrated Planning across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional, and Local Basis	Chester's POCD addresses opportunities for increased intermunicipal, regional and State collaboration.

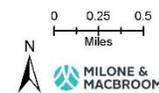
The State Plan classifies land into categories, including priority funding areas, protected lands, conservation areas, and balanced priority-funding areas. These land use categories are shown on the following “Locational Guide Map.” Overall, the Locational Guide Map aligns well with the Chester POCD Future Land Use Plan. State-designated balanced or priority-funding areas are concentrated around the Village and east of Route 9. Balanced priority funding areas recognize both conservation and development objectives, whereas priority-funding areas are generally supportive of development. Priority funding areas identified in the Chester Plan are generally recognized in the State’s plan as priority funding areas.



2013-2018 Connecticut Plan of Conservation & Development

Open Space Pres. Farmland	Priority Development Area	Priority Conservation Area
Grey	Light Pink	Light Green
Balanced Growth Area	Total Dav. Factors: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6	Total Cons. Factors: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Village Development Area	Dark Pink	Dark Green
	Dark Red	Dark Brown

Parcel Boundary Date: 2016
Land Use Data: 11/30/2017



Regional Plan

Chester’s regional planning agency has changed since its last POCD was adopted. The Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency merged with the Midstate Regional Planning Agency to form the Lower Connecticut River Council of Governments (RiverCOG). While RiverCOG has been working on a regional Plan of Conservation and Development, none was available at the time of this POCD update.