

## Chester Town Plan Updates 2015-2016 Project Outline

### **Background**

This project is funded under a FY 2015 Municipal Planning Grant (#MP-2015-Chester-00029). Under this contract, this project will result in a draft updated Town Plan and the necessary documentation for a Planning Commission hearing to begin the formal adoption process. The scope of work in the application includes the following focus areas for this project: updated maps, public meetings, new data/information, creating new chapters on economic development and flood resilience, and strategic updates to meet the statutory requirements for energy, education and utilities/facilities.

Starting the project was put on hold until the end of summer in order to allow the Planning Commission to get through the pending amendments to the Unified Development Bylaws.

### **Generalized Project Timeline**

August 1, 2015 – Work begins under a contract with SWCRPC

May 31, 2016 – All work under the grant is completed and money expended

June 30, 2016 – Grant close out/final report is due

### **Project Outline**

#### **Task 1 – Outline Changes**

- A. Kickoff meeting with Planning Commission (Sept. 21, 2015)
- B. Develop draft project outline (Sept.-Oct., 2015)
- C. Facilitate a meeting with the Planning Commission, Selectboard and interested boards and citizens to outline changes to the Town Plan and identify key priorities to address (November 16, 2015)

#### **Task 2 – Public Outreach**

- A. Develop a webpage to post draft documents and facilitate public input (SWCRPC to create)
- B. Conduct a public meeting to gather input on community flood resilience plan
- C. Conduct a public meeting to gather input on economic development, village revitalization and community center initiatives

#### **Task 3 – Update Town Plan Maps**

- A. Update town plan maps with newest available information
- B. Develop new flood resilience map per statutory requirements
- C. Update the future land use map based upon public input and desired community center and village revitalization strategies

#### Task 4 – Draft Town Plan Updates

##### A. Develop new town plan elements:

###### 1) Economic Development Chapter

- ✓ Describe present economic conditions
- ✓ Describe the location, type and scale of desired economic development
- ✓ Identify policies, projects and programs necessary to foster economic growth

###### 2) Flood Resilience Chapter

- ✓ Identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas based on ANR and FEMA maps
- ✓ Designate those areas to be protected (i.e. floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands and upland forests) to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property
- ✓ Recommends policies and strategies to protect the above areas and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures and municipal investments

##### B. Strategic updates to existing town plan elements to more fully address statutory requirements:

###### 1) Land Use

- ✓ Intensity of future land uses
- ✓ Timing of development as it relates to public facilities and services.

###### 2) Energy

- ✓ Analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality
- ✓ Statement of policy on conservation of energy
- ✓ Statement of policy on the development of renewable energy resources
- ✓ Statement of policy on patterns and densities of development that are likely to result in conservation of energy

###### 3) Utilities / Facilities

- ✓ Expand upon future needs, priority, costs and financing
- ✓ Consider adding an implementation matrix to help with this

Note: need to provide some basic ideas about capital needs, but not commit to addressing them within the next 5 years. (See example on page 3)

###### 4) Statement of Relationship

- ✓ How the plan relates to recent trends
- ✓ Expand adjacent town plan analysis

##### C. Other strategic updates to address pressing planning concerns

###### 1) Include language to support renewal of Chester's Village Center designation. Clarify differences between designated Village Center, Village Center zoning district and National Register Historic District.

###### 2) Better define certain terms (i.e. character, community center).

###### 3) Consider changes needed to have effect under Act 250

- ✓ Aspiration vs. mandatory language (see examples on the next page)

###### 4) Consider standards for Section 248 projects, including screening standards (via bylaws or ordinance)

Task 5 – Public Meeting

- A. Facilitate a public meeting to review the draft town plan changes, specifically including the draft flood resilience, economic development and future land use elements

Task 6 – Final Draft Town Plan

- A. Prepare a final draft town plan based upon input
- B. Prepare the necessary documentation for the Planning Commission hearing under 24 V.S.A. §4384

**Examples of Aspirational vs. Mandatory Language**

M: Prohibit development in all flood hazard areas and maintain such areas in a natural state.

A: Development in flood prone areas is discouraged.

M: Direct the majority of the town's growth to the village planning area. Target the village planning area as a location for new or expanded public facilities and economic development.

A: Revitalization of village commercial, residential and mixed-use areas, including the appropriate use, maintenance and reuse of existing historic structures and other existing buildings whenever possible, should be encouraged.

M: Development that meets the definition of strip development is not appropriate in this area. This includes, but is not limited to, convenience stores, banks, large chain retail stores and fast-food establishments.

A: Excessive commercial development along major transportation routes (i.e. strip development) is discouraged.

**Example of Implementation Matrix / Capital Needs**

Recommendation	Expected Timing			Priority of Need (Low, Medium, High)	Generalized Cost Estimate	Method of Financing
	Short Term	Med. Term	Long Term			
<i>Design and construct ADA upgrades to sidewalks along Main Street</i>		X		<i>High</i>	<i>\$300,000</i>	<i>Seek grant funds; establish capital reserve fund for local match</i>
<i>Construct a new emergency services facility on town-owned land</i>			X	<i>Medium</i>	<i>\$500,000</i>	<i>Seek grant funds; establish capital reserve fund for local match</i>