

Town of Chester, Vermont

Town Plan

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Introduction

History of the Town of Chester

Chester was one of the first towns in Windsor County to be chartered by New Hampshire's Governor Bennington Wentworth. The grant, dated February 22, 1754, divided 23,040 acres into sixty-four equal parts and named it Flamstead. The conditions of the Charter were forfeited by the original proprietors leading to the Charter of New Flamstead, dated November 3, 1761.

The original proprietors, mostly from Worcester, MA, held their first meeting on the third Tuesday of December 1761 in Worcester. The first town meeting held in Chester occurred in March 1765. This was also the last meeting held under the New Hampshire grant, for in July of 1766, a third charter was executed by Governor Tryon of New York. Under this charter Thomas Chandler and thirty-four of his associates became proprietors of the town, now called Chester. At the present time, these three original charters are displayed in the conference room of the Town Hall.

The New York charter also named Chester as the seat of Cumberland County making it the site of the county jail and courthouse with Judge Thomas Chandler presiding. This did not sit well with other residents of the county as Chester was referred to as "a distance from the Connecticut River" and "backward compared with other settlements." Judge Chandler attempted to squelch this argument by promising to build "a good and sufficient courthouse and jail" at his own expense. His efforts were a failure and in 1772 the county supervisors selected Westminster as the county seat. (Aldrich and Holmes, History of Windsor County Vermont, Syracuse N.Y., D Mason & Co., p. 667.)

Chester's next claim to fame occurred at a special Town Meeting held October 10, 1774 wherein the residents of the town:

"Resolved, firstly, That the people of America are naturally entitled to all of the privileges of freeborn subjects of Great Britain, which privileges they have never forfeited.

"Resolved, secondly, That every man's estate, honestly acquired, is his own and no person on earth has a right to take it away without the proprietor's consent, unless he forfeits it by some crime of his committing.

"Resolved, thirdly, That all acts of the British Parliament tending to take away or abridge their rights ought not to be obeyed.

"Resolved, fourthly, That the people of this town will join with their fellow American subjects in opposing in all lawful ways every encroachment on their natural rights."

Chester did not suffer directly from the Revolutionary War, although many soldiers from the Town served in the war. Its one brief experience occurred in August of 1777 when General Stark marched his troops from Charlestown, NH through Chester South Village on the way to the Bennington battlefield. (Aldrich and Holmes)

Chester's growth was probably predicated on its location at the intersection, first of important stage coach lines, and later railroad lines. Green Mountain Turnpike, the major route

from Boston to Montreal still runs through Chester, both under its own name and that of Route 103. In addition, the present Main Street was the route from Hanover, NH to Albany, NY. (League of Women Voter, This is Chester 1766 - 1966)

As a result of those thoroughfares three villages grew up in Chester: South Village along Main Street, Chester Depot and Gassetts, named for the stationmaster for the Burlington and Rutland Railroad. The Town expanded rapidly: the first census in 1791 listed it as having a population of 981, but by 1820 the population exceeded 2400. The Town included four grist mills, nine saw mills, three fulling mills, one oil mill, two woolen factories, five stores, six taverns, one distillery and four tanneries. During this period there was established the Chester Academy in addition to the nineteen school districts with school buildings, the poor farm and the Congregational, Baptist and Universalist churches.

Chester did its part in the Civil War. At a meeting in May of 1861 it was voted to equip the first volunteers with a \$10.00 bounty, a Colt's revolver and a bowie knife. In 1884 the Town appropriated \$2,000.00 to erect the soldier's monument in front of the cemetery on Main Street.

Unfortunately, one of the side effects of that war and the opening of the West was a drain on the population. By 1933, the Vermont Year Book lists Chester as having a population of 1,666 and a tax rate of \$3.00 based on a grand list of \$14,042.00.

Population and Demographics

An important aspect of any town plan is a good understanding of population and demographic trends and future projections. This analysis provides a broad overview of the demographics of the Town. In turn, it helps planners determine how much growth the Town may expect in a given amount of time, and how to plan for future educational, housing, utility, and facility needs.

Between 1970 and 2000 the population grew from 2371 to 3044 according to the 2000 census data. The majority of this growth came between 1970 and 1980 with a 17.7% increase. The census data indicates the 1990 to 2000 rate of population increase was 7.49%, from 2832 to 3044. In the last ten years the rate of population increase for Windsor County was 6.22%, and the towns of Cavendish and Ludlow increased by 11.11% and 6.39%, respectively. Springfield decreased in population -5.23% in that same period. Andover and Baltimore increased in population by more than 30% in the same period. Ludlow, Windsor and Springfield each lost population between 1960 and 2000 at the rate of -4.0%, -4.0% and -17.0%, respectively.

The age distribution also changed during this period. The number of school-age children in Chester fell between 1970 and 2000, while the number and percentage of persons between 18 and 65 and elderly (over 65) increased (Table 1). It is expected that the elderly population in Chester and statewide will continue to grow as a segment of the population.

Table 1 - Chester Population and Age Distribution – 1970 to 2000

	1970		1980		1990		2000	
Population	2,371		2,791		2,832		3,044	
Age	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total

< 18	804	34%	793	28%	782	28%	731	24%
18 - 64	1,285	54%	1,659	59%	1,659	59%	1822	60%
> 65	282	12%	339	13%	391	13%	491	16%
Totals	2,371	100%	2,791	100%	2,832	100%	3,044	100%

Chester’s density is at 50 people per square mile. Compared to towns in the southern Windsor County region, the Town of Chester has remained above the median range in population density. The towns of Windsor and Springfield ranged between 230-235 persons per square mile, while smaller more rural communities averaged ranged between 9.5 for Andover to 73 for Ludlow.

In Chester during the period between the year 1980 and 2000, while the total number of housing units increased from 1368 to 1611, the number of housing units “for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use” decreased from 260 to 250 units, and now this type of housing is 15.5% of the total housing, down from 19% in 1980. These figures show the number permanent resident housing has grown faster than the seasonal, recreation, and occasional use housing. This trend may not continue given the expansion of Okemo Mountain Resort in the neighboring Town of Ludlow. The Town should watch seasonal, recreational, and occasional use housing numbers in planning for infrastructure and services. Whereas the educational facilities may not be impacted by second home growth, facilities such as roads and bridges, water and sewer systems may see expanded use.

Goals and Objectives

The people of Chester desire to maintain the rural character of the community while encouraging the economic well-being of its residents. The rural character is exemplified by the many attributes of the Town; the vast amount of wooded and undeveloped areas; the unique villages and the streams and abundant wildlife. The Town of Chester illustrates a traditional village character. A mixture of residential and commercial uses exist in harmony. As development pressures increase upon the Town and less densely populated areas, it is vital that the unique characteristics of the Town be preserved. The Town wishes to continue a mixture of residential and commercial development.

Most residents live in Chester by choice, thereby indicating a preference for this rural character rather than an urban or suburban community. They want growth to occur at a pace and in a manner which does not destroy the character of the community or result in significant tax increases. Growth deemed good for the Town should enhance the social, environmental, cultural, and economic values of the Town. It should not undermine the ability of the taxpayers to support the Town on a sound financial basis. The following goals and recommendations provide a general overview of the direction in which the residents of Chester would prefer to see the Town develop.

Goal 1: To encourage development so as to maintain the existing settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by rural countryside.

Recommendations:

1. Intensive residential development should be encouraged only in the areas of the Town serviced by sewer and water; strip development along the highways should be discouraged.
2. Residential development that occurs in designated rural areas should be designed so as to prevent negative impacts to natural, cultural and aesthetic resources.
3. Development should be discouraged on slopes greater than 15%.
4. Development on ridge lines should be limited.
5. Business and industrial growth should occur in areas adjacent to where business and industry now exist and where town water and sewer are available or plan to be made available.
6. Public investments, including the construction or expansion of the infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.
7. Development should be consistent with the existing density pattern of the area and consistent with an historic rate of growth.
8. Growth and development should occur at a rate which does not undermine the taxpayers' ability to support the town on a sound basis.

Goal 2: To encourage a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities.

Recommendations:

1. Economic growth should build upon expansion of existing businesses or encourage businesses that support the goals and aspirations of the community.
2. Economic growth should be encouraged in village centers and area designated for industry on the Future Land Use Map and should be employed to revitalize and rehabilitate existing village centers.
3. Home occupations are encouraged as long as they are appropriate to adjoining land uses, and do not adversely affect air, water or scenic resources or cause noise that is offensive to surrounding neighbors.
4. Businesses that employ sound environmental practices should be promoted.

Goal 3: To maintain and broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities for all Town residents.

Recommendations:

1. Include maintenance and expansion of school facilities in a capital program to ensure that facilities have the capacity to serve the desired level of growth in student population.
2. Encourage development of educational and cultural opportunities for all residents.
3. Support community wide cultural events and activities.

Goal 4: To encourage and maintain a safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation network.

Recommendations:

1. Improvement or expansion of public utilities and transportation should occur along existing corridors to encourage desired development patterns.
2. Alternative forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling and public transportation should be encouraged.

Goal 5: To identify and protect important natural and historical features of the Vermont landscape, including woodland, wetlands, scenic and significant archeological sites, significant architecture, villages, wildlife habitats and agricultural land.

Recommendations:

1. Include important resource areas on Future Land Use Map and develop a conservation plan to protect and preserve those features.
2. Encourage the renovation and preservation of historic buildings in village centers.
3. Discourage development within flood plains to the extent that it will cause damage to natural or manmade resources.

Goal 6: To maintain or improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.

Recommendations:

1. Discourage development in areas of natural, cultural and scenic significance.
2. Support state and federal policies and standard to protect the water quality of the Town's rivers, streams and groundwater supplies.
3. Support measures to encourage areas for habitat for wildlife.
4. Encourage the use of transportation systems that have minimal impacts on air quality.
5. Continue policies and practices that promote the extraction of minerals in a manner that ensures that land and water resources are minimally impacted.

Goal 7: To encourage the efficient use of energy through conservation and the use of renewable energy resources.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage the development of a transportation system that encourages the use of public transportation and ride-sharing and enables increased non-motorized vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Emphasize links between schools, stores, work and home.
2. Help to ensure that the design, location and maintenance of existing and future transportation systems are consistent with the land use patterns recommended in the Town Plan.
3. Encourage the location of community service structures, retail sites, public utilities, day care centers, state offices and other frequently visited sites within walking distance of residential areas.

Goal 8: To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and maintain good recreational plans and infrastructure to provide recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors.
2. Ensure public access to important natural and scenic resource areas for recreational use.

Goal 9: To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

Recommendations:

1. Support Current Use program for agricultural and forest lands.
2. Forest and agricultural lands should be considered for their forest and agricultural potential prior to any non-forest or non-agricultural use.
3. Encourage businesses and industries that add value to locally produced agricultural or forestry products.

Goal 10: To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet present and future needs.

Recommendations:

1. Analyze current facilities and assess future needs to determine potential demands of infrastructure.
2. Enact a “Capital Program and Budget Plan” for public utilities and facilities.

Goal 11: To encourage availability of safe and adequate housing.

Recommendations:

1. Housing should meet the needs of diverse social and income groups.
2. New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.
3. All types of housing should be encouraged in the Town of Chester.

Chapter 1 - Land Use

The two most important considerations in determining desirable land uses are:

- Does it appear, from objective evidence, expert opinion, public opinion or common sense that the proposed use in the area proposed will be good for Chester and the majority of its residents?
- If it is good for Chester and most of its residents, is the proposed location compatible

with the proposed use of the land?

The land use recommendations of the Town Plan should reflect both of these criteria in guiding the future growth of the Town. A use which will have an adverse effect on the Town should not be undertaken, even if the land is perfectly capable of supporting it. A use which the land cannot support should not be undertaken, even if it might otherwise be good for the Town.

Most of the residents of Chester choose to live here, thereby indicating their preference for a rural rather than an urban or suburban community. They want growth to occur at a pace and in a manner which does not destroy the rural character of the Town. Planning for growth and development should enhance the social, environmental, cultural and economic values of a rural community. The ability of the taxpayers to support the Town on a sound financial basis should remain as a basic consideration in future land use planning.

Current Land Use

Land use in the Town of Chester follows patterns of traditional Vermont villages. The village areas of Main Street, the Depot and Stone Village have a mixture of commercial, industrial, and residential uses, and house services such as post offices, health care, the elementary school, bus stops, and municipal offices. The village center is served by municipal water and sewer service, while outlying areas are served by private wells and on-site septic systems. Residential areas outside the village centers are primarily rural in nature, and of low or moderate density.

The majority of the land area in the Town is forested land. Steep slopes, undeveloped ridgelines, and large wetland areas not only add to the scenic beauty of the landscape, but are also important habitat areas for deer, moose and bear. Dairy farms, hay and corn fields, pumpkin patches, truck farms and open fields and agricultural pasture lands are important assets to the Town and define its rural character.

The list below was compiled from the 2001 Chester Grand List. It illustrates the distribution of land parcels among the different Grand List use categories.

Category	Number of parcels
Residential I (Parcels less than 6 acres)	684
Residential II (More than 6 acres)	282
Mobile Homes - U (Unlanded)	40
Mobile Homes - L (Landed)	110
Vacation I (Less than 6 acres)	148
Vacation II (More than 6 acres)	129
Commercial	96
Commercial Apartments	9
Industrial	12
Utilities - E	2
Utilities - O	0

Farms	3
Woodland	165
Other	0
Miscellaneous	164

Of Chester’s 33,892.31 acres of land (which does not include the area taken by state and local roads and highways), roughly 118.3 acres are state lands: 2.2 acres for the Agency of Transportation’s garage, 8.1 acres of Department of Fish and Wildlife land, and 108 acres of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation Lands.

Future Land Use

The population in Chester is increasing, the number of housing units has increased over the last ten years. The ongoing and planned growth of Okemo Mountain Resort and other ski areas may put some residential and commercial development pressure on the town of Chester. The current zoning map designates uses and areas of development that are sufficient to handle most of the development in the foreseeable future. However, along Route 103 between the Village of Chester and Rockingham and along Route 11 in the area around the Army Reserve Center there could be provisions for development of truck fuel stops with related shops and services, light industrial uses, freight transfer, and tank farms for LPG. With these exceptions, the Current Land Use maps reflect the current and future locations of uses in the Town. See Current and Future Land Use Maps.

Within the zoning districts there are various types of land and land uses, generally described in what follows.

Forest

The majority of acres of land in Chester is forested. Most of the forest is in small residential parcels, and, though contiguous with forested lands, is not predominantly in large enough tracts to be individually managed for forestry uses and wildlife habitat, but serves as good habitat for wildlife and a good source of recreational uses, including crosscountry ski trails, snowmobile trails, hiking and hunting, with the cooperation of the owner of the land. The contiguity of large areas of forest land is important for many types of wildlife, especially for large mammals such as deer, bear, and moose, as well as for forestry management across parcel boundaries. Any development which occurs in forest areas should be designed so that these important recreational, forestry and habitat areas are maintained wherever possible. The ability of forest areas to provide these benefits should not be significantly impaired. Development in these areas should be undertaken in ways that protect their value and ensure the continued presence of healthy forest ecosystems in the Town. Cluster development could be considered in these areas for the maximization of forest preservation.

Agriculture

Agricultural land has historically been important to the Town’s economy, food supply,

and cultural heritage. It contributes to the land use patterns and aesthetic qualities that make the Town a desirable place to live, work, and visit. Land in agricultural use and idle open land with agricultural potential both possess these values. The potential for agricultural use and production should not be impaired in designated agricultural areas. Cluster development could be considered in these areas for the preservation of open lands.

Recreation

Public and private indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities are a vital part of the Town's economy and quality of life. Publicly accessible recreation opportunities should be enhanced where possible, and should not be significantly diminished. Designated recreation areas should retain their recreational value to the public; where development would reduce recreational opportunities, alternatives should be provided whenever feasible.

Rural Residential

Rural Residential areas can support a number of different uses, including low density residential, forest, agricultural (including tree farms and other horticultural uses), open, and transitional (scrub/shrub). The primary concern in rural areas shall be to discourage sprawl and strip development, and to maintain existing, low-density settlement patterns. Cluster development is encouraged wherever possible, as long as the overall density remains low. Open space and recreational resources should be preserved wherever possible. New residential development may occur in Rural Residential areas only where accessible by existing town roads.

Residential

Residential areas are designed for low density residential use, near and surrounding the village, and are served with their own septic systems. These areas are primary residential in character now, and should remain so. Attention to facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists should be considered when planning new development in Residential areas.

Village Residential

Village Residential areas are served by public water and sewer, and can therefore support greater densities than Rural Residential areas. These areas are now primarily residential in nature and should remain residential. Attention to facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists should be considered when planning new development in Moderate Density Residential areas.

Conservation Residential

Conservation areas are lands that possess outstanding value or potential as wildlife habitat, recreation areas, educational resources, fragile natural areas, economic assets (generating revenue from recreation and tourism), or aesthetic resources. Conservation lands represent relatively pristine areas of the Town that residents wish to preserve in their natural state for

future generations, and should receive the highest level of protection from development. Special care should be taken in any resource management or extraction plans to maintain the character and value of these areas. Conservation areas are especially beneficial when surrounded by compatible uses such as forest and agriculture.

Mixed Use Village

The village centers, that is, Main Street and the Green, Depot area, and Stone Village, currently have a mixture of high density residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses. These areas should remain as they are in character and settlement pattern. Commercial development has historically been located in the village centers, and is encouraged to occur in these areas because of the availability of Town water and sewage. Commercial development in mixed use areas should be surrounded and interspersed with high density residential, public and light industrial uses. These areas are intended to continue the long tradition of Vermont's village centers. Development in these areas should be of the highest density in the Town, and should facilitate development of a circulation system that accommodates pedestrians and other non-motorized travel. New development should not detract from the historic character and aesthetic qualities of the village centers.

Highway Frontage Special Use

There are uses that are not compatible with the Village mixed use setting, such as gas stations. Trucks bringing fuel into these locations, as well as trucks using them to fuel, find it difficult to maneuver in the tight confines of a village. In addition, the resultant congestion from large trucks using the gas stations in the village causes visual obstruction, access interference and obstruction of the roads around the gas station. The situation can at times be dangerous to drivers and pedestrians because pedestrians and other vehicle traffic cannot be readily seen and avoided. In addition to such uses, there is a shortage of space within the village for light industry. The future land use plans of the Town should include 1.) a limited area on Route 103 between the Village of Chester and Rockingham with access to the site limited to traffic entering and exiting off a frontage road or at limited access points on Route 103, and 2.) a limited area on Route 11 west of the Village of Chester on the north side of Route 11 from the Motel in the Meadow westerly to the vacant land just west of Balch Road, with primary access off of Reservoir Road, and on the southerly side of the road westerly of this site. Uses allowed in this Special Use district would be limited to uses not compatible with the Village setting. [See "Future Land Use," above and Future Land Use Map.]

Aquifer Protection Areas [APD1 and APD2]

The Town of Chester has identified two Aquifer Protection Areas where development shall be restricted or prohibited. The first is the Jeffrey Well Station, on Town land on the west side of Route 103 in the vicinity of the intersection of Route 103 with Trebo Road, which is the primary well for the water supply for the Town of Chester. The second is the Canal Street Well Station, which is located on three acres of Town Land off Canal Street in the meadow behind the

Grafton Street (Route 35) residences.

Industrial

Industrial areas are designated within the mining and commercial areas, and should be singled out for uses that may be incompatible with other uses because of traffic, noise, vibrations, or other impacts in conflict with residential and some commercial uses.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials, either from within or outside the State of Vermont, shall not be imported to and/or disposed of within the boundaries of the Town of Chester, except in accordance with accepted business practices as permitted by State law.

Mineral Deposits

The mining of talc and other mineral deposits and hydrocarbons within the Town of Chester should be encouraged within the districts where these are allowed. Adequate regulations shall be established to protect the public health, safety, comfort, and welfare, to reduce negative impacts on essential wildlife habitat, and to control noise, dust, vibration, air and water pollution, and to assure the restoration of the land after mining is completed.

Special Considerations

There are several important resources and areas of concern within any of the land use categories above, and which merit special attention and protection. They include: floodplains; vegetated areas next to surface waters; wetlands; Natural Heritage Inventory sites; critical deer wintering habitat and bear habitat as defined by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; regionally significant historic sites; and other locally defined sensitive natural areas and scenic resources. Development should be planned as to minimize negative impacts to these resources, while ensuring the economic benefit to the owner of the land. In addition, special considerations should be observed in the following areas:

High elevations and steep slopes — At high elevations (greater than 1,500 feet) the soil tends to be thinner and cooler and less able to support a wide range of plant life. If areas are disturbed the potential for severe erosion is great. Land at 1,500 feet and above as well as lands with steep slopes (greater than 15%) should be protected from any development which could reasonably be expected to cause soil erosion.

Ridgelines — Any development which is proposed at higher elevations should demonstrate that every measure has been taken so as the development is not visually obtrusive to surrounding neighbors or from public roadways.

Headwater Areas — Any development in headwater areas should be so designed as to protect and avoid contamination of the headwaters of local streams, brooks and rivers, and the wildlife found in these areas.

While residential development may be expected in almost all land use categories, higher densities should be concentrated in and around established village areas. Residential development should be compatible with the land use and housing goals of this plan, and should not conflict with the values defined in the land use categories of this plan.

Timing of Development

Chester is a rural community which has historically seen family-by-family growth. Chester residents wish to continue this steady and well-paced pattern of growth, and to the extent possible, prevent sudden large increases in population which would place undue stress on Town facilities and village character.

Land Use Goals

1. To preserve the historical development pattern or mixed-use village areas surrounded by open land, agriculture, forest, and low-density residential use.
2. To direct growth and development in Town where it will be most effective and efficient to provide the necessary public infrastructure and services.
3. To achieve the concentration of infrastructure development within the village area and areas identified in this chapter as areas desirable for growth.
4. To establish land uses and land use patterns that protect and enhanced the values defined in this chapter.
5. To provide a Town highway system that encourages and complements historic land use patterns.

Land Use Policies

1. 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.
2. Excessive commercial development along Routes 10, 11 and 103 (i.e., strip development) is discouraged. Access management and innovative commercial development that maintain the characteristics of the existing village areas and greens, is encouraged.
3. Limited commercial development that is not compatible with the Village setting and limited light industrial development with strict site plan review standards may be allowed along Route 103 southerly of the Village and along Route 11 in the area of the National Guard Armory.
4. Maintaining the density pattern for residential development that protect or enhance the existing settlement patterns and resources is encouraged.
5. In order to maintain the existing settlement patterns, higher density residential, commercial, and industrial development should be located in the village areas of

- the Town, and within walking distance of most of the residents of the village.
6. Necessary transportation improvements, especially road and bridge maintenance, public transit options, car and van pooling, or other techniques to utilize existing infrastructure should be supported.
 7. The Town should make efforts to attract and locate viable and appropriate businesses in areas targeted by the town for economic development.
 8. Residential and mixed use development tailored to the tourist and ski industries should be sited and designed to protect the settlement patterns, commercial development and natural resources of the Town.
 9. Use of public funding for the maintenance or improvement of infrastructure, development of affordable housing, and conservation of natural resources is encouraged.
 10. Development adjacent to significant natural resources (waterways, large forested areas, wildlife habitat, etc) should be compatible with the value of those resources and negative impacts on the natural resource should be mitigated with buffer strips or visual screening, where this will be effective mitigation and where possible.
 11. The elimination or mitigation of the adverse effects of development on the natural resources that extend beyond Town borders or which are regionally significant should be considered and is encouraged.
 12. The location of municipal and other government buildings should be in established village areas in order to maintain and encourage pedestrian access and the vitality of the village areas.
 13. Programs that help owners of farm and forestland bear the burden of the mandated financial responsibility for resource protection should be supported.
 14. Any proposed development should not place an undue burden upon Town facilities or services. If it is shown that the additional property taxes would not cover the additional burden placed on Town services, imposition of impact fees may be considered.
 15. Preserve the historical development pattern of mixed-use village areas surrounded by open land, agriculture, mining, forest, and low-density residential use.

Land Use Recommendations

1. Develop effective land use regulations that are consistent with the purpose and intent of this Town Plan.
2. Evaluate proposed development projects for possible adverse effects to important natural resources, both within and beyond town borders.
3. Develop effective bylaws, including zoning and subdivision regulations that are consistent with the purpose and intent of this Town Plan and the needs and plans of abutting Towns and the Region.
4. Encourage, and communicate to the state and federal agencies, the necessity for notice to the town of plans for, or discussion of, the location or relocation of government buildings within the Town, to the Town, or from the Town.
5. Initiate the development of a Conservation Commission in order to protect

significant cultural resources, farmland, forestland, shorelines, and significant plant and animal species and their habitat.

Chapter 2 – Transportation

Chester has experienced a large increase in automobile and truck traffic in recent years, especially on Route 103 which is part of the National Highway System (NHS) and was recently identified as a designated route in the Vermont Truck Network (VTN). Roads were included in the Vermont Truck Network according to their capacity to service overweight or oversized vehicles, as identified in a report completed for the Vermont Agency of Transportation in 1999. Recreational and commercial traffic travels down Route 103 causing weekend congestion and dangerous conditions. Thus Route 103, part of the NHS and the VTN, where mobility and convenience for regional travel are most important, is also a local road for Chester residents, for whom mobility and speed are reduced in importance, presents the classical functional conflict between roadway uses. As a result mobility, convenience and safety all suffer. The residents of Chester feel this conflict and are faced with the challenge of balancing the need to provide for increased traffic on State and local roads while maintaining traffic safety and the rural character

and quality of life that are some of the town's greatest assets.

Roadway Inventory

Regional Highways

Regional highways connect large population areas outside Chester. Those highways passing through Chester are Route 10, Route 11 and Route 103. Route 103 runs southeast to northwest from I-91 in Rockingham to Route 7 just south of Rutland.

Route 103 has been part of the National Highway System (NHS) since and prior to becoming a part of the NHS this Route has served large trucks and oversized loads for years. The NHS roads are intended to be part of an "interconnected system of principal arterial routes" and "serve interstate and interregional travel." However, recently this Route has been designated as part of the Vermont Truck Network and this designation concerns many residents, who fear that truck traffic will further increase as a result of the designation. Truck traffic is 4.5 percent of the total traffic volume on Route 103 south of the village and increases to 5.5 percent north of the village.

Running east to west across the southern section of Chester, Route 11 connects I-91 in Springfield to Route 7 in Manchester Center. Truck traffic is 5.5 percent of the total volume of Route 11 between Springfield and Chester.

Route 10 runs east to west from North Springfield to Route 103 in Gassetts. Truck traffic is 2.5 percent of the total traffic volume on Route 10, between North Springfield and Gassetts.

Town Highways

In the Town of Chester there are presently 2.559 miles of Class 1 highways. Routes 11 and 103 become Class 1 highways as they pass through the village. The town has 12.55 miles of Class 2 town highways, formerly state aid highways or roads that connect town to town. Route 35, Green Mountain Turnpike, Church Street, Flamstead Road, and the Andover Road are examples of Class 2 Highways. There are 72.59 miles of Class 3 town highways, roads that the Selectboard has designated for year-round maintenance. Class 4 town highways make up 7.23 miles of Chester's roadway network. Class 4 town highways are roads not maintained by the town including trails and pent roads.

The Town Highways and the classification of each is shown on all Maps in this Plan.

Existing Traffic Conditions

Traffic on VT Route 103 in the Town of Chester, and especially in the Village of Chester, is a growing concern to local residents. Given the lack of a limited access east-west highway in the state, traffic patterns in southern Vermont tend towards Route 103, which serves as a direct route between the north-south arteries of I-91 and US 7. In addition to supporting the travel

needs of its local residents, Route 103 carries a large portion of truck traffic, seasonal tourist traffic and recreation related commuters.

Route 103 provides access to Okemo Mountain Resort in Ludlow, and also carries traffic destined for Killington via Route 100 and Route 4. There are inevitable conflicts between traffic trying to pass through Chester, and traffic that is trying to access service in the village, resulting in congestion and reduced traffic safety. This congestion is especially pronounced during ski season because of the very high, sharp peaks of traffic at the beginning and end of busy ski weekends. In particular during these high peaks of seasonal tourist and recreation related traffic and the nearly continuous weekday commercial truck traffic the intersection of Route 103/Route 11 and Maple Street becomes congested and safety is compromised. The turning radius for commercial vehicles is extremely tight. At this intersection the long trucks and the busses need to wait for traffic to clear the intersection before making the turn, thus blocking the traffic behind them, and temporarily block all lanes at this intersection during the turning movement.

The following are the Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (AADT), in 2001, for the Town of Chester.

In Village of Chester

<u>Route</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>AADT</u>
103	Between bridges south of Rte 11	6,800
	South of Maple St. Intersection, near P.O.	8,600
	North of Town Hall, near Yosemite F.D. Bldg	4,700
11	Between Church St. and Lovers' Lane	5,600
	Between Church St. and Grafton St.	5,200
	Between Rte 103 and Green Mtn. Tpke.	4,900

Outside the Village of Chester

<u>Route</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>AADT</u>
103	Near Chester - Rockingham line	4,600
	Near South end of Village	5,400
	Junction with Church St.	4,500
	Before and near the Intersection with Rte 10	6,200
11	Near Chester-Cavendish line	5,300
	Near Chester - Springfield line	3,700
	Near the Village of Chester	5,200
10	West end of the Village	3,800
	Near Chester - Springfield line	3,100
	Near Junction of Route 103	4,400

Chester traffic in relation to other Towns

The village of Woodstock, VT (sitting on the US Route 4 corridor), much like Chester, is perceived to be overburdened with traffic, specifically truck traffic. Much like Chester, Woodstock is home to a tourist intensive, pedestrian-friendly village center. Ludlow, VT (north of Chester on Route 103) is also home to high levels of truck traffic and receives heavy ski season traffic.

AADT east of the village of Woodstock is 10,900, with 3.6 percent of that traffic being in the form of semi tractor trailers. West of Woodstock village traffic remains stable at 10,700, of which three percent is semi tractor trailers. Within the Village of Woodstock AADT is 12,500 with three percent of the traffic being semi tractor trailers.

AADT south of the Village of Ludlow is 8,400, of which seven percent is truck traffic. Once in the Village, just south of the Okemo Mountain access road, traffic increases to 10,200. North of the Village the AADT is 8,100.

Because Route 4 in Woodstock, like Route 103, serves as an east-west corridor between I-91 and Route 7 in Rutland, truck traffic in Chester and Ludlow is affected by restrictions on truck travel through the Village of Woodstock. The more restrictions on use by trucks through Woodstock, the more truck traffic will use Route 103 and impact Chester and Ludlow with a higher number of trucks using the Route 103 corridor. This potential increase of truck traffic is a serious concern for the residents of Chester and Ludlow.

Seasonal Traffic

Ski resorts pose special challenges to Vermont's road system. Ski areas are typically connected to the interstate highways by older, narrow two-lane rural and village roads and bridges. The number of ski resorts in Vermont has been declining since 1970; conversely, the remaining resorts are currently undergoing significant expansion. While this smaller number of ski resorts have undergone moderate to high levels of growth, the roads and bridges that service those resorts have not seen appreciable improvement since the early 1970s.

With Killington and Okemo becoming more four season resorts, the traffic during spring, summer and fall may increase significantly, causing short term peaks in other seasons of the year. While Chester struggles with the added traffic from the recreation generated traffic using the narrow rural roads, it benefits economically from those passing through the Town availing themselves of the goods and services provided by the business community of Chester. It is important for the economic life of the Town that future maintenance and road construction take into consideration the economic benefit of continuing the flow of through traffic through the commercial areas of the village of Chester.

In the summer of 2000, a planning process for identifying strategies to address traffic generated by ski resorts was initiated by the Windham RPC, the Southern Windsor County RPC, Rutland RPC, and Two Rivers Ottauquechee RPC at the request of the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Killington and Okemo Mountain ski resorts. The involved parties contracted with Wilbur Smith Associates to identify short, mid- and long-range strategies for addressing the transportation needs related to traffic generated by the region's ski resorts. This study is about complete. In draft form the report contains Roadway Mitigation Strategies, such as control and design of curb cuts to manage access, turning lanes to channelize traffic and prevent traffic backup, roadway realignment, zoning controls on setbacks and use, and enhancement of pedestrian and bike facilities to all for alternative access for town residents during peak traffic periods. It also includes mitigation strategies for the resorts and destination facilities, which the

Town may desire to require of the resorts and facilities in mitigation of the effects of traffic generated by expansion or improvement of the resort.

Commuter Patterns

The implications of commuting patterns relate to all aspects of transportation planning. Of particular concern are traffic flow, peak hour traffic patterns, and the capacity and maintenance of the infrastructure. It is important to take into account the size, density and location of population and employment when planning for infrastructure improvements and public transportation needs.

According to 1990 census data (2000 census data was not available at the time of this writing), Chester had the third highest number (434) of workers in the region who worked within their town of residence. For the remainder of Chester workforce, Springfield is the number one destination, within the Southern Windsor County region. Rockingham, Brattleboro, and Londonderry are the top three destinations for commuters commuting to work outside of the Southern Windsor County region.

Fifty-six percent of workers who commute to Chester, originate in Springfield. Another Twenty-six percent of inbound workers were evenly split between the towns of Andover and Cavendish.

Peak hour commuting times for Chester residents decreased by 13.5 percent, from an average of 18.4 minutes in 1980 to 15.9 minutes in 1990. Though the majority of Chester's peak hour commuters drive to work alone (84%), seven percent indicated that they carpool to work. There are currently no Park & Ride facilities in Chester. Four percent said they walked to work and six percent work at home.

Public Parking Facilities

Other than on-street parking, Public Parking in Chester is very limited. Public parking is limited to the establishments that provide parking for their customers or patrons. There are no facilities for a Park and Ride in the Town. For the economic health and for commuters to and from the Town Public parking facilities should be planned and developed.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities take a wide variety of forms. A bicycle facility can be as simple as a road with no additional width beyond the travel lane or as elaborate as a separated path for exclusive use by cyclists. A pedestrian facility can range from a stable, gravel shoulder on a rural road to a paved sidewalk separated from travel lanes by a curb and planted green strip.

The 1997 SWCRPC Bicycling and Walking Plan outlined several improvements to existing bike and pedestrian network of Chester. The 1997 plan identified Bridge #8 on Route

103, the Mountain View Bridge, to be in need of improvements for cyclists. This bridge provides a critical point of access to the village area, but is currently too narrow to allow bicyclists and/or pedestrians to share the bridge with automobile and truck traffic. Future improvements to Bridge #8, scheduled to be replaced in 2004, should take into account the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.

Route 103 from Gassetts to Chester Village (approximately three miles) has very narrow shoulders. The stretch of road is winding and has several road side obstacles such as a ledges, guardrails, loose gravel and debris on the paved shoulder. This stretch of roadway has high speeds and high volumes of traffic. Widening the shoulders by three feet on each side would provide continuity on Route 103 and enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Route 11 westbound out of the village is narrow and the shoulders are almost non-existent. Horizontal curves limit site distance and the pavement is in poor condition. Levels of traffic, especially large trucks, are heavy and present obstacles for cyclists. Adding or widening the shoulders by three feet on each side would enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Two sections of Route 10 between North Springfield and the junction of Route 103 have shoulders that less than three feet and traffic volumes tend to be around 4,000 AADT. This route is also very popular among bike touring groups. Widening the shoulders by three feet on each side would provide continuity on Route 10 in these narrow sections and enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety.

Sidewalk Inventory

During the summer of 1999, SWCRPC staff conducted a sidewalk inventory for the village of Chester. The inventory showed Chester to have over 23,000 linear feet (LF) of sidewalk. Fifty-seven percent of the existing sidewalk network was ranked as being in “good” condition, 36 percent was in “fair” condition and another seven percent was ranked as “poor.” The overwhelming majority of the sidewalk network, 91 percent, was between four and six feet in width. The remaining nine percent was less than four feet in width.

Twenty percent of Chester’s existing sidewalks have a curb to help separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic. Over 80 percent of the sidewalk network is accompanied by a planting strip.

The longest stretch of complete sidewalk (sidewalk, curbing, and planting strip) was from Grafton Street (TH 3) to Lover Lane (TH 43). A stretch of sidewalk, with curbing, runs from Main St. south on Grafton Rd to the intersection of River St. Another small segment of “good” sidewalk with a planting strip exists near the Chester Depot area, at the intersection of the Elm Street and Depot Street. 100 feet of “good” sidewalk with planting strip runs north along the west side of Route 103/North Street. Near the end of the sidewalk on the west of North St., a

section of “good” sidewalk with planting continues on the east side of the street and continues another 1000 feet. There is about 800 LF of “good” sidewalk with planting strip running north along Church St. to its intersection with Main St.

A stretch of sidewalk in “fair” condition runs along the north side of Route 103/Main St. from Pleasant Street to the junction of Depot St. This section of sidewalk is accompanied by a planting strip. 300 feet of sidewalk runs along the south side of Maple Street from Main Street to Depot Street. Another of 250-300 foot section of “fair” sidewalk with curb runs along the west side of Main Street from Maple St. to Grafton Rd. There is also a small stretch of fair sidewalk along School Street.

A stretch of sidewalk, which runs easterly 1000 LF from the intersection of Route 103 along the south side of Pleasant St./Route 11, was reconstructed in 2000.

There is a need for improved sidewalks along the Depot and School Streets, the existing network is not continuous and traffic is relatively high in these areas. The sidewalks in these areas are not continuous and the existing roadways are wide and lack defined crosswalks.

Public Transportation, Rail, and Air

Public Bus Service

Public bus service is available in the Town of Chester. In the winter months only this service provides transportation from Chester to Ludlow up Route 103. A spur periodically runs off this route along route 10 to the Holiday Inn Express at Exit 7 off of I-91. This route serves as the main route for Okemo employees who ride for free as an incentive to reduce automobile traffic in Ludlow. This route runs seven days a week, 12 hours a day from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Ridership on the route has hovered around 2000 since its inception in 1998. Daily transportation is provided from Holiday Inn Express in Springfield to Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital in Hanover.

Green Mountain Railroad

The town of Chester is serviced by Green Mountain Railroad. The railroad runs from its terminal in Bellows Falls through Chester north to Rutland.

Primarily a freight line, the tracks do host tourist excursions on the Green Mountain Flyer during the summer and fall months between Bellows Falls and Chester and on special occasions on to Ludlow. Okemo Mountain is also hoping to expand this service in winter to bring skiers to their resort, and thus eliminate some of the peak winter weekend traffic of Route 103. This could have an adverse impact on the economy of Chester unless stops at Chester Depot were included in the scheduling to allow for travelers to use the train and find lodging, restaurants and opportunity to shop in Chester, as well as access the ski resort from Chester. Expansion of the passenger service to include commuter transportation would benefit the Town and residents.

An increase in the transport of freight would potentially benefit Chester by reducing the amount of the through truck traffic on Route 103, which parallels the track from Bellows Falls to Rutland. Improvement to the track and signaling would be necessary to allow for greater speed along the corridor, which would increase the potential for use for time-sensitive freight shipments. The most common goods shipped efficiently by rail, however, are long distance hauls of bulk goods, such as talc, coal, grain, pulp/paper, wood and minerals, which are not time-sensitive and the loading and unloading are more efficiently done in bulk shipments. Green Mountain Railroad ships such bulk items, and had an increase in carloads between 1983 and 1993, as reported in the 1995 Southern Windsor County 1995 Regional Transportation Plan. The use of rail for these bulk goods has already had the effect of reducing truck traffic on Chester through roads. Improvement of the tunnel at Bellows Falls on the New England Central line would allow for the use on multi-modal rail cars and stacked rail/truck cargo vans, and could potentially allow for more of the trucked goods to be shipped by rail not only through Chester but throughout the region. Efforts by Chester to encourage the improvements to the rail facilities and thus expansion of rail use could potentially reduce auto and truck traffic on Route 103, resulting in less congestion and improvement in traffic safety and convenience to local travel.

Road Policy and Maintenance

New Highways

All new roads must comply with the Town Highway specifications before they will be considered for acceptance by the Selectmen as a Town Highway. On May 2, 2001, the Town adopted Minimum Road and Bridge Standards recommended by the State. Before new roads are accepted as town roads the Selectmen must judge if the public good, or the necessity, or the convenience of individuals require such a highway to be laid out. The capital costs of road construction or improvement of existing town roads to service new residential and commercial development should be borne by the developer. Ample off street parking should be provided and all accesses to lots should be limited to one curb cut.

Access Management

A key component to keeping traffic flowing through a downtown/main street area is being able to balance the number of access points. Access Management balances mobility and access. The logic behind Access Management usually becomes obvious after conditions on a transportation corridor become a problem. The presence of a large number of access points results in a high level of turning movements and points of conflict, thus increasing the likelihood of traffic accidents. Unlimited curb cuts also contribute to sprawl, and result in dangerous conditions for bicycles and pedestrians. The goal of access management is to ensure that curb cuts, or access points, are properly planned to avoid the above mentioned complications.

Transportation Goals

1. Ensure that future development of transportation related facilities in the town of

Chester are designed to maintain the beauty, integrity and rural characteristics of the town.

2. Keep the existing transportation network in good repair to avoid costly replacement in the future.
3. Reduce the impact of truck traffic on the village center.
4. Reduce the adverse impacts of current peak traffic volumes.
5. Expand the use of public and rail transportation as an alternative to automobile and truck traffic on Route 103.
6. Encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation through maintenance and expansion of existing facilities.
7. Limit access points (curb cuts) wherever possible to discourage sprawl and maintain safe travel conditions for all roadway users.
8. Widen and realign the intersection of Routes 103/11 and Maple to accommodate the turning radius of trucks and busses.
9. Provide more parking for commercial uses and provide parking for Park & Ride.
10. Encourage the expansion of public transit within Chester and between it and regional towns.

Transportation Policies

1. Involve citizens in planning processes concerning the long range structure and viability of Chester's transportation network.
2. Work with Green Mountain Railroad to expand the capabilities of its rail corridor.
3. Work with Town and Village Bus to expand its local service and schedule.
4. Continue to expand the sidewalk network while at the same time maintaining those segments that are in "good" and "fair" shape.
5. Maintain ongoing communication and coordination with the regional planning commission concerning state and federal funding opportunities to expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other enhancements to Chester's transportation network.
6. Work with other towns along the Route 103 corridor to coordinate mitigation efforts aimed at alleviating the effects of truck and peak ski/tourist traffic.
7. Obtain the property necessary to widen the intersection of Routes 103/11 and Maple Street to provide adequate, or better, turning radius for commercial vehicles.
8. Obtain the property necessary to provide more parking for commercial properties and Park and Ride.

Transportation Recommendations

1. Develop a village parking plan and traffic circulation analysis.
2. Create a time-line for replacement of sidewalk sections that are in "poor" shape and expansion of pedestrian facilities to those areas of town that need them.
3. Work with the regional planning commission to develop the capabilities to monitor traffic volumes/patterns on an internal basis.
4. Identify properties for acquisition by the Town for parking and Park & Ride

facilities

5. At the intersection of Routes 11/103 and Maple St., acquire the parcel on the northeasterly corner for widening and realignment of the intersection.
6. Obtain representation of the Town of Chester on the Public Bus Service Board.

Chapter 3 - Utilities and Facilities Plan

The development of public utilities, facilities and services should be based upon a projection of reasonably expected population increase and economic growth, and should recognize the limits of the Town's human, financial and natural resources. In addition, any proposed public facilities should recognize the Goals and Objectives set forth in the Town Plan. The plan recommends the enactment of a Capital Program and Budget Plan for the Town of Chester as authorized by V.S.A. Title 24 Chapter 117, Section 4426, thereby enabling Chester to plan for its future capital investments and operational needs. This step will provide Chester with a formal defined statement about Chester's own growth capacities and limits. It would serve as a legal tool in Act 250 proceedings under criterion 9a (1) "Impacts of growth."

Health Facilities

The Town of Chester is served by the Ellsworth Clinic, Visiting Nurses and Chester Ambulance Service, which provides emergency medical care. Hospital services are provided by the Springfield Hospital, Veterans Administration Hospital in White River Jct., Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, and Mount Ascutney Hospital, Windsor, VT.

At the Ellsworth clinic there are physician and dentist offices to serve the needs of the residents of Chester and surrounding areas.

Chester Ambulance has one ambulance vehicle, which was purchased in 1998, and is manned by call-paid attendants. The Springfield VT Fire Department dispatches the Chester Ambulance. Chester Ambulance and Springfield Ambulance have an informal mutual aid agreement, which is facilitated by the use of the same dispatcher. When either department has its ambulance fully committed, the other is put “on call standby” in case an emergency should arise. The Chester Ambulance Service is located in the same building with Chester Fire Department and the Chester Highway Department. All three (3) departments need more space. A new location for the Ambulance Service and Fire Department should be pursued in the near future.

No replacement of the ambulance is contemplated or expected until the year 2020, based on past experience with similar equipment and its longevity of useful service.

Daily bus service is provided by Town and Village Bus from the Holiday Inn Express facility at the junction of Interstate 91 and Route 11 in Springfield to Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital in Hanover, NH.

Health Policies

1. Provide the residents of Chester the best possible ambulance service by supporting improvements to these services that are prudent and necessary.

Health Recommendations

1. A new facility for housing the Chester Ambulance Service and the Chester Fire Department is needed and should be provided for in the near future.

Fire Protection

Chester is served by the Chester Fire Department which is located in Chester Depot at the Town Garage. The Fire Department consists of two (2) Pumpers/Tankers, one Utility truck, and is manned by call-paid firemen. The Pumpers were acquired new, respectively, in 1992 and 1997, and the utility truck in 1990.

Chester Fire Department is also equipped with a snowmobile sled for use in emergencies on V.A.S.T. snowmobile trails in the area.

Both the Chester Fire Department and Chester Ambulance Service have converted from Low Band Radio Communications System to a High Band Radio System, in order to improve the quality and reliability of the transmissions and more effectively communicate with the majority of neighboring services, which are now on High Band Radio System.

Chester Fire Department is radio dispatched by Springfield Fire Department, which is manned twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

Chester Fire Department by mutual unwritten agreement also serves the Town of Andover, VT.

Chester Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with the Connecticut Valley Mutual Aid System and the Southwestern New Hampshire Mutual Aid System.

Fire Department Policies

1. Any housing development in Chester should contain provisions for adequate fire protection.
2. Provide the residents of Chester the best possible fire fighting service by supporting improvements to these services that are prudent and necessary.

Fire Department Recommendations

1. The Chester Fire Department shares its facilities with the Chester Ambulance Service and the Chester Town Highway Department. All three departments need more room for personnel, equipment and operations. Relocating the Ambulance Service and the Fire Department to a new facility will ameliorate the crowding problem for all three (3) departments. New facilities for the Ambulance Service and the Fire Department should be should be pursued in the near future.

Police Protection

Police protection is provided by the Chester Police Department consisting of a Chief, 3 full time officers and 6 part-time officers, plus the Vermont State Police. Dispatch for the Police Department is handled by the Vermont State Police.

Officers of the Police Department are crossed-trained as Emergency Medical Technicians, and, if available, respond to all Chester Ambulance calls.

The Department has 2 vehicles: a cruiser and a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The capital improvement plan provides for the replacement of these two vehicles every two years, alternating annually between the cruiser and the four-wheel-drive vehicle.

The Chester Police Department is located in the Town Hall. The office is small and needs expansion. A new location and expanded facilities should be pursued in the near future.

Police Department Policies

1. Support continued cooperation with the State Police and the Windsor County Sheriff.
2. Support the continued cross- training of officers as Emergency Medical Technicians and response, as available, to all Chester Ambulance calls.
3. Support continued annual replacement of one of the Department vehicles.

Police Department Recommendations

1. A new facility for housing the Chester Police Department is needed and should be provided for in the near future.

Water

The Village in the Town of Chester is served by the Chester Water Department. A major renovation and expansion program was completed on the Water System in 1982. Chlorine contact facilities were added in September of 1990. The Source Protection Plan is now in draft form with the State of Vermont for review, and it is contemplated that it will be adopted after this review is completed. The Source Protection Plan prohibits certain development and uses within the source protection area. The Water System is in compliance with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The system currently serves 470 buildings containing 700 units. Those units are: 644 residential, 38 commercial, 8 industrial and 10 institutional units. During the last decade the number of units served has increased by 5%. The current daily use is approximately 200,000 gallons, or 25 % of capacity. The Jeffrey well is supplied with water from an aquifer, which contains more water than it is anticipated would be required or used by the Town. The system is designed to satisfy the Town's water needs for the foreseeable future. No expansion of the system is anticipated, though upgrading of the system will continue as needed or required.

The Water System contains two (2) wells. The Jeffrey Well Station, which is located on 17 acres at 391 Route 103 North, is capable of producing 576,000 gallons of water per day and is the primary well. The secondary source is the Canal Street Well, located in the middle of the meadow at the end of Canal Street, which is capable of producing 288,000 gallons per day. The Canal Street Well is put online once every two weeks to keep it operational. The daily consumption is about 200,000 gallons per day, or about 25% of capacity. The wells are pumped during off peak hours for the best electrical utility rates and the water is stored in and drawn from the 1,000,000 gallon precast, prestressed concrete tank, located off Reservoir Road.

The Water System serves the needs of the community well and correlates well with the Land Use Regulations and the planned future development of the Town.

Water System Policies

1. Provide the Chester Village water customers with a pure, clean water supply.

Water System Recommendations

1. Upgrade public water system as needed to maintain quality, efficiency and environmental soundness.
2. Upgrade the public water system to meet future State and Federal water quality requirements.

Sewage

The Chester sewage system, which has a capacity to treat 175,000 gallons of sewage per day, is operating at 55% of capacity. The sewage system is a secondary treatment system, which was built in 1969. Recently the residents of Chester approved a major twenty-year bond issue of \$1.32 million to upgrade the system. The improvement is projected to cost \$1.8 million. The balance of the cost will be funded with a Rural Development Grant. The work on this upgrade is now beginning and will be completed in 1 years. There have been minor infiltration and compliance problems with the sewer system. Those problems and the new State and Federal regulations will be addressed and resolved with this work.

The Sewer Ordinance requires pre-treatment by users when necessary. Currently two commercial users are pretreating: Newsbank and Drew's All Natural.

The system currently serves 470 buildings containing 700 units. Those units are: 644 residential, 38 commercial, 8 industrial and 10 institutional units. During the last decade the number of units served has increased by 5%. With the completion of the upgrade the system will be sufficient to serve the needs of Chester through 2028, that is, twenty-five years from the completion of the work of improvement. No expansion of the system is anticipated.

Sewage System Policies

1. Provide the Chester Village residents with a safe and efficient sewage treatment system.

Sewage System Recommendations

1. Within the next two years upgrade the public sewer system to maintain quality, efficiency and environmental soundness.

Solid Waste District

Solid waste in Chester goes to the NH / VT Solid Waste District facility in Claremont, NH. Chester is a member of the Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District. Solid waste is transported to Wheelabrator Claremont Corporation's facility under a contract that expires in July 2007. Plans must be made to extend or replace this contract for the disposal of solid waste. Solid Waste disposal is the responsibility of the individual residents, businesses, industries and institutions to provide for either by contract with solid waste disposal companies, or by transporting and disposing of the solid waste at the Springfield, VT facility. Recycling needs are met by the Recycling Center at Springfield, VT. The Town should continue these arrangements, and encourage and take an active role in local and regional efforts to reduce the solid waste stream and increase recycling.

Solid Waste Recommendations:

1. Plan for the extension or replacement of the solid waste disposal contract being aware that the current contract terminates in July 2007.

Town Administration

The Town of Chester is under the Town Manager system of Government. Five elected Selectmen have the responsibility for general supervision of the affairs of the Town. This responsibility is carried out by an appointed Town Manager who administers all Departments of Town Government. The Town Manager system of Government should be sufficient for the foreseeable future.

Recreation

The Town of Chester is fortunate to have some of the finest recreation facilities in the area. The operation of the Pinnacle and Memorial Fields, also known as Cobleigh Street Fields, are under the direction of the Recreation Committee of the Town and a part-time Recreation Director. These facilities should continue to receive the financial and volunteer support necessary to maintain the facilities and to provide program leadership and should be sufficient, with the recommendations set forth herein, serve the needs of the community for recreation facilities for the next 25 years.

Athletic Fields

1. Green Mountain Union High School - The high school has a soccer field, baseball field, track and other land areas used in school recreation and sports programs.
2. Chester-Andover Elementary School - The elementary school has a playground and athletic field used for school recreation and sports programs.
3. Pinnacle Recreation Area - The Pinnacle Recreation area contains 25 acres and is the hub of summer and winter recreation for the towns sports program. The area includes an outdoor swimming pool, skateboard park, volleyball courts, two tennis courts, two Little League baseball fields. The hillside is also used for sledding, tobogganing and snowmobiles, and the area is a snowmobile access area.
4. Memorial Fields, also known as Cobleigh Street Fields - The Memorial Fields recreation area contains an ice skating rink and a ball field used for softball and soccer.
5. Green Mountain Softball facility - This privately owned facility has volleyball courts and two softball fields, which are used for annual softball tournament events and are made available for Green Mountain High School softball games.

Swimming

The swimming pool in the Pinnacle Area at present, meets the need for summer swimming. This pool has been recently relined, which is designed to extend the life of the pool for 20 years.

Recreation Policies

1. The Recreation Committee and the part-time Recreation Director have expanded the recreation program to serve not only the needs of the youth, but also the expanding needs for recreation of the adult and senior adult residents.

Recreation Recommendations

1. The pool building at Pinnacle needs to be upgraded in the near future so that it will be able to serve the needs of the users of the pool.
2. At the pool area at the Pinnacle, near the pool building and with access to that building for its restroom facilities, a pavilion to provide an area for covered picnic facilities and tables should be built in the near future to provide a gathering area for the town residents, which can be used in inclement weather.
3. As the town population increases, the town should continue to develop land for recreational facilities, parks and playfields.
4. This added land for town recreation should supplement existing public and private facilities and should include athletic fields, areas suited for winter sports, tennis courts, and basketball courts.
5. Effort should be made to coordinate trails for both summer and winter use.
6. As town population grows, creation of new water bodies for swimming and recreation should be considered.

Snowmobile Club

The Chester Snowmobile Club, which is a private organization, in cooperation with Vermont Association of Snowmobile Travelers (VAST) and with the participation of private landowners, plans, lays out and maintains snowmobile trails throughout the Chester Town area and connecting to the VAST state-wide trail system. This system of trails provides recreational opportunities for residents of Chester as well as visitors, attracts tourists in season, and is beneficial economically to the Town of Chester and its tourist industry. The Snowmobile Club has assisted the Chester Fire Department to provide a machine and sled for use in medical emergencies on the local trails.

Forest Lands

The State of Vermont, Department of Forests and Parks owns 130 acres of Forest land called the Williams River State Forest which is located in the Southwestern corner of Town or better known as the Popple Dungeon area.

The Water Department of the Town of Chester owns 550 acres of land off the Reservoir Road in the center section of Town. This forest land was purchased for the watershed area and holds an 11 acre reservoir, which is used for recreational purposes only. The reservoir previously served as the Town drinking water source and should be preserved for use during an emergency, for instance, when the Jeffrey and Canal wells are not available. This 550 acres is a

managed forest with a ten year Forest Management Plan prepared by the State Forester, who also manages the forest in accordance with the Plan. This Forest Management Plan was first adopted in 1983 and has been revised ~~and~~ annually. Under this plan and careful management the Town Forest provides income to the Water Department. Additionally it is available to students for scientific field studies. The Chester Fire Department is planning to use a portion of the forest to plant trees for its annual Christmas Tree Sale, a fundraiser for the Department.

Doctor Adams land is Lot 3, Map 52. This parcel contains 30.53 acres and is Town owned. This land is replete with wild life and is available to the environmental class at Green Mountain Union High School (GMUHS) and other students for field studies.

Forest Lands Policies

1. Maintain the 550 acres of Town Forest as a managed forest and continue access to it for field studies, fishing and hunting.
2. Maintain the Doctor Adams land for wildlife and scientific field studies for GMUHS students and others.

Forest Lands Recommendations

1. Work with the Chester Fire Department and the State Forester to develop a tree farm in the Town Forest for Christmas trees for its annual Christmas Tree Sale.
2. Expand the opportunities for the use of the Town Forest and the Doctor Adams land for scientific research and use by classes of the town schools and other students.

Hunting and Fishing

At the present time, Chester's extensive woodlands provide hunting for fur-bearing wild game, birds and fish as provided under State Regulations. The Town Forest is open in season for hunting as well.

Rivers and streams available for fishing are the south, middle and north branches of the Williams River and the streams that feed into them. Within the Town Forest lands, the reservoir pond has in the past been stocked with trout and provides good fishing.

The Chester Rod and Gun Club, which is a private organization, provides the only gun range facility for Chester and is unique in Vermont in that it allows nonmembers, as well as members, to use the facility. Furthermore the Chester Rod and Gun Club provides Hunter Safety classes, which are required for those wishing to obtain hunting licenses, and the only shotgun and rifle range facility in Chester.

Hunting and Fishing Policies

1. Continue the use of the public lands as resources for hunting and fishing and encourage private owners to do the same.

Hunting and Fishing Recommendations

1. It is recommended that town officials and the Recreation Committee work with the local sportsmen's organizations and the State Fish and Game Department to assure a continuing program of stocking to maintain an adequate supply and proper management of fish and game.

Electric Utilities

The Town of Chester is served by one electric utility provider, namely Central Vermont Public Service.

Electric Utilities Policies

1. Provide residents with safe, effective and efficient utility service.
2. Utility lines should be placed in areas designated for growth.
3. New utility lines should be placed along existing corridors whenever possible; multipurpose use of utility corridors is encouraged.
4. Aesthetic and natural resource impacts should be considered when placing utility lines.
5. Encourage common use of utility poles for telephone, electric, cable and fiber optic lines whenever possible.
6. Promote underground electric lines where possible and practical.

Electric Utilities Recommendations

1. Encourage the utility to move the power poles and service in the area of Main Street and the Town Green underground.

Telephone and Computer

The telephone and data lines for the Town of Chester are provided by VTel, and include the opportunity to communicate quickly with DSL high speed internet connections. In addition, Adelphia Cable has installed high speed fiber optics in the Town for cable service, which is capable of being used to access the internet. It is vital for the residents, businesses and the Town of Chester to have the opportunity to communicate freely and efficiently via landline with businesses and persons throughout the world. Technological improvements to landline telephone and internet access enable people to work efficiently at home, thus providing employment opportunities to those who would otherwise not be able to avail themselves of employment, and reducing commuting traffic and benefiting the environment of the Town. The Town of Chester welcomes these improvements and encourages the development of highly efficient communications to better serve the residents and businesses of the Town of Chester.

Communications Towers and Structures

The maintenance of a modern and accessible telecommunications network is essential to the public welfare. Public safety agencies, such as emergency medical services, fire and police departments, rely on broadcast and communications facilities to provide essential services. In addition, a modern and accessible telecommunications network provides communities with economic, social and cultural benefits.

At the same time, network infrastructure should be developed in an efficient, safe and thoughtful manner. Possible impacts upon scenic and cultural resources, aesthetics, and public health and safety should all be considered during the planning process.

The field of wireless communications and telecommunications is undergoing rapid change. Advancements in this technology have and will continue to affect growth in the Town of Chester. Technological improvements will enable people to work at home and telecommute to work or to other remote or central offices more readily.

The major planning issue with wireless communications technology today is the siting and construction of new communications towers and supporting network infrastructure including power lines, access corridors and support buildings. These include towers* for wireless communications facilities** and wireless telecommunication facilities***. In the hilly topography characteristic of this Region, towers and related facilities need to be located on the hilltops or higher elevation points in order to provide the broadest service area coverage. These towers and their supporting infrastructure can alter mountaintops and ridge lines in ways that negatively impact scenic resources vital to the Region's economic future and cultural richness. Aesthetic concerns will increase as more mountains and ridge lines are developed. The towers and network infrastructure must be developed in an efficient, safe and thoughtful manner. Possible impacts upon scenic and cultural resources, aesthetics, and public health, and alternative tower designs that mitigate these impacts, should all be considered during the planning process.

Definition of terms:

* **Tower** - Any structure that is designed and constructed primarily for the purpose of supporting one or more antennas, including self-supporting lattice towers, guy towers, or monopole towers. The term includes radio and television transmission towers, microwave towers, common-carrier towers, cellular, personal communication service (PCS) and similar service towers, alternative tower structures, and the like.

** **Wireless Communication Facility** - A tower, pole, antenna, guy wire, or related fixtures or equipment intended for the use in connection with transmission or receipt of radio or television signals or any other electromagnetic spectrum-based transmission/reception and the construction or improvement of a road, trail, building or structure incidental to a communications facility. Wireless Communication Facilities include Wireless Telecommunication Facilities.

*** **Wireless Telecommunication Facility** - A facility consisting of the structures, including the towers and antennas mounted on towers and buildings, equipment and site improvements involved in sending and receiving telecommunications or radio signals from a mobile communications source and transmitting those signals to a central switching computer which connects the mobile unit with land-based or other telephone lines.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 restricts the authority granted under Vermont law to municipalities, such as the Town of Chester, to prohibit wireless telecommunication facilities by zoning. Municipalities may not prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting efforts to provide wireless telecommunication facilities, and must provide reasonable opportunities for location of such facilities. [Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, Section 704, (a), (7), (B),(i),(ii)] Other wireless communication towers such as towers for radio and television are not covered by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, leaving communities with greater authority to regulate these facilities. The Town of Chester should assess where these facilities may be located within the municipality and enact conditions under the zoning authority to implement that policy decision.

In addition, there is some uncertainty about the health effects of the electromagnetic fields generated by wireless communications facilities upon people living near them. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 provides that no local government may regulate a wireless telecommunication facility on the basis of environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) regulations concerning such emissions. [Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, Section 704, (a),(7), (B),(iv)] An applicant for a wireless telecommunication tower must prove to the satisfaction of the Town of Chester that the proposed facility will be and remain in compliance with the FCC's regulations of radio frequency emissions.

The Federal Communications Commission retains jurisdiction over the public airwaves and the communications industry in general. Additionally, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) exercises control over the location and height of wireless communication towers and similar structures to prevent interference with airport operations.

The Town of Chester has addressed the wireless communications facilities issue in order to prevent the installation of unnecessary multiple towers. In 1997 US Cellular was looking for a tower site in Chester. The Town approached them and agreed to allow them to site the tower on top of the Pinnacle where the Town's low band tower already existed. The agreement provided that US Cellular would build the tower for the Town, the Town would guarantee US Cellular a twenty year lease, and the Town could add additional users as deemed necessary. The intent was and remains to control the site of the wireless telecommunications facility as an existing use with existing infrastructure. Since then space at this facility has also been leased to Cellular One.

Telecommunications Goals:

1. Provide residents with the benefits of an integrated and modern telecommunications network while minimizing the economic, aesthetic and cultural costs of its development.
2. Support the enhancement of integrated and modern wireless communications networks when such facilities do not have significant adverse environmental, health or aesthetic impacts.
3. Enable new economic opportunities through the use of wireless communications technology.

Telecommunications Policies:

1. New communications towers and supporting infrastructures detract from the beauty of the Town and should be sited and constructed only as necessary to meet the Town's changing needs. New towers, access corridors and utility poles serving towers should not be sited or constructed where adequate communication coverage can be obtained through use of existing structures. The use of existing structures, such as water towers, farm silos, church steeples and buildings, to support the wireless communications broadcast equipment is encouraged whenever it will not have a negative impact on significant historic or aesthetic resources.
2. Existing tower space and supporting infrastructure on, and at the site of, the Town wireless communications facility on the Pinnacle should be utilized to the fullest extent possible.
3. New wireless communications towers, access corridors, and utility poles serving towers should not be sited or constructed as long as the existing site is viable. Those wishing to provide new or expanded communications services must utilize the existing Town tower and supporting infrastructure, unless it can be demonstrated that the sharing or collocation is prohibitive due to frequency interference, adverse aesthetic impacts or risk to public health. The Town should facilitate the sharing of space to the fullest extent possible. Those building new towers or support infrastructure shall not prohibit the sharing of those facilities by other users for reasons other than frequency interference or avoiding a demonstrated risk to public health, in that the public exposure to Radio Frequency (RF) radiation will exceed the applicable FCC standards for human exposure. If the Town tower cannot be utilized, the use of existing structures, such as water towers and buildings, to support telecommunications broadcast equipment is encouraged wherever appropriate and where it will not have a negative impact on significant historic or aesthetic resources nor a risk to public health.
4. There is an Act 250 permit for the construction and use of the Town tower on the Pinnacle. Those installing new transmission facilities on that tower shall comply with that permit.
5. Siting and design of new communications towers and facilities (including any support and maintenance structures, necessary access corridors and utility lines) shall minimize impacts on natural, scenic, wildlife habitats and corridors and aesthetic resources. The use of the ridges for communications towers and related facilities needs to be undertaken in a manner that will neither unduly detract from nor adversely affect Chester's scenic values.
6. To minimize conflict with scenic values, facility design and construction for new communication towers and accessory facilities should adhere to the following principles:
 - a. Where feasible, new towers should be sited in areas not highly visible to the traveling public and not visible from residential areas, historic districts and public use areas or outdoor recreation areas;
 - b. New towers should be located in forested areas or be sufficiently

- landscaped to screen the lower sections of towers and related ground fixtures from public vantage points, such as trails, roads or water bodies;
- c. New towers should use materials, architectural styles, color schemes, lighting fixtures, mass and other elements to promote aesthetic compatibility with surrounding uses and to avoid adverse visual impacts;
 - d. Where prominent views of a site exist, new towers should be located downgrade of the ridge so as not to exceed the elevation of the immediate ridge;
 - e. Where new access roads are proposed, they should be located to follow the contours of the land and to avoid open fields or meadows in order to minimize their visibility;
 - f. New towers should not be sited on peaks and ridges that function as regional focal points;
 - g. Existing tree cover should be maintained to the maximum extent possible, with tree removal allowed only to clear the footprint area of the tower structure and accessory facilities; and
 - h. A blue or black color balloon shall be raised to indicate the height of the tower for at least one day before a hearing is held provided it is in compliance with all local, state and federal regulations, including FAA restrictions on height limitations.
7. An applicant for installation of new transmission facilities shall demonstrate that public exposure to Radio Frequency (RF) radiation will not exceed the applicable FCC standards for human exposure. Assessment of possible health effects shall be based on the cumulative effects of all RF emissions at any given location, and should include both preconstruction and post-construction monitoring.
 8. In the event that use of a tower is discontinued, the site should be restored to its natural condition, or to the condition that existed prior to construction, as appropriate. The developer of a new tower should provide the Town of Chester with a site restoration and reclamation plan at the time of application for the new tower site in the event the tower and accessory facilities are abandoned in the future. This site restoration and reclamation plan should include provisions for removal of the tower and accessory facilities, regrading, revegetation, a time frame for accomplishing the site restoration, and adequate security, such as a letter of credit or a performance bond, including anticipated inflation, to provide funds necessary for completing the site restoration and reclamation plan.
 9. The Secretary of Administration of the Office of the Governor of Vermont, pursuant to under 30 V.S.A. Section 227b, should notify the Planning Commission of the Town of Chester in order to conform with this Plan before allowing the use of state or private property in the Town for a new or expanded communication facility.
 10. The Vermont Public Service Board should notify the Planning Commission of the Town of Chester in order to conform with this Plan before allowing the use of state or private property in the Town for a new or expanded communication facility.

11. The Agency of Natural Resources in its capacity as managers of State Lands should notify the Planning Commission of the Town of Chester in order to conform with this Plan before allowing the use of state property in the Town for a new or expanded communications facility on state land in the Town.

Telecommunications Recommendations:

1. The Town of Chester, its officials and Planning Commission should develop and incorporate wireless communication policies and elements into the Town's zoning Regulations, and adopt the provisions of Title 24, V.S.A., Chapter 117, Section 4407, Subsection 17, into Chester Zoning Bylaws. This subsection provides that any proposed tower developer pay the reasonable costs to the Town of a technical study of how the tower would affect the Town. The development of alternative technologies to serve the industry, such as satellite technology that would eliminate the need for towers should be encouraged.

Chapter 4 - Natural and Cultural Resources

Agricultural and forested lands

The number of working farms in Chester has been decreasing over the years. Farms provide open space and contribute to the rural qualities that people enjoy about Chester. Forest and farmland provide habitat requirements for a variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. This patchwork of fields, forests, and the viewsheds among them constitute an aesthetic resource that deserves recognition and protection.

Vermont and the rest of the New England states have been deforested three times since the settlement of America by early colonialists. Yet, the majority of land in Chester is in woodland or forest, and the number of lumbering jobs has been decreasing over the years. The predominant canopy species have changed since pre-settlement. The forests and woodlands of Chester are currently a mix of broadleaves and conifers. Sugar Maples are important part of Vermont's, and Chester's, cultural heritage, providing colorful foliage and maple syrup.

Primary agricultural lands are defined as those which are capable of supporting an agricultural operation and are further defined in 10 VSA Section 6001 (15) [Act 250]. Forested and secondary agricultural lands include those which are not primary agricultural lands, and those which have not been extensively developed.

Agricultural and forested lands Goals

1. To promote the continued use of agricultural and forested lands in a manner which helps to maintain or preserve the natural beauty, function and productivity of the lands.
2. To encourage sustainable uses of Chester's marketable natural resources.

Agricultural and forested lands Policies

1. Primary agricultural lands shall be devoted to the production of agricultural products, or to uses that will maintain or preserve such lands for future agricultural operations.
2. Any development planned for agricultural or forested lands shall not reduce the natural productivity of these lands.
3. All logging and forest-related activity should be done in accordance with Best Management Practices (BMP) and Acceptable Management Practices (AMP) as established by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

Agricultural and forested lands Recommendations

1. Promote, through education, the correct management practices for agriculture and forest-related activities by using the expertise of professionals.
2. Work with area land trusts, in cooperation with land owners and the community, to educate people on the different methods available to preserve important forested and agricultural lands.
3. Identify areas of significant aesthetic value to the entire community.

Surface waters and wetlands

The rivers, brooks and streams that run through Chester are a valuable resource to the town and to the Williams River watershed. While most of the streams are small, many contain healthy populations of native fish and serve as the headwaters of the Williams River and its branches. Headwaters are generally Class 1 and 2 tributary streams, the "beginnings" of a river system, that flow into a larger body of water. Headwater streams are sensitive to change, and land uses in this part of the watershed can affect water quality and river stability further downstream.

Due to the importance of these surface waters, it is important that they be protected. Protection of surface waters involves stream bank management, overseeing point source discharges of wastes, and controlling non-point sources of water pollution (for example, agricultural runoff, erosion from logging or construction, and stormwater runoff from roads and impervious surfaces). Naturally vegetated buffers next to surface waters can help to filter pollutants, provide shade for fish, and habitat for birds and mammals. In addition, wider buffers (over 100 feet) can provide natural greenways and wildlife corridors.

A number of ponds and wetlands are also located throughout Chester, many of which are included in the National Wetlands Inventory. Wetlands, small ponds and vernal pools (ponds that dry up in summer months) are biologically productive ecosystems and serve a variety of functions: retaining stormwater runoff, reducing flood peaks, protecting groundwater quality, filtering eroded sediment, and providing habitat for a wide diversity of plants and animals. They also provide open space and contribute to Chester's scenic landscape. According to the Vermont Wetlands Rules, Class 1 and 2 wetlands (those identified in the National Wetlands Inventory) require conditional use review prior to the issuance of a local zoning permit. The Town may wish to protect vernal pools and smaller wetlands in local regulations as well.

Surface waters and wetlands Goals

1. Maintain or enhance the integrity and functions of Chester's surface waters and wetlands.

Surface waters and wetlands Policies

1. Continuous areas of undisturbed vegetation along rivers and streams should be encouraged, thereby protecting shorelines, wildlife habitat and scenic quality.
2. New development adjacent to streams or rivers must be designed to cause minimal damage to the stream environment. Any such development should be planned so that surface waters do not become silted, contaminated or otherwise degraded.
3. Natural vegetated buffer strips between development and surface waters should be maintained.
4. Any storing or transporting of chemicals or other hazardous material should be done in such a manner so as to have no adverse effects on streams or other sources of water.
5. The use of road salts and other chemicals adjacent to sensitive areas such as wetlands, stream crossings, and steep slopes should be minimized.
6. Any alterations to ponds and wetlands must be in compliance with local zoning and all State and Federal laws.

Surface waters and wetlands Recommendations

1. Review zoning regulations to protect rivers and streams, ponds and wetlands not already protected under state law.
2. Include high elevation streams and buffer areas in a plan for open space conservation.

Wildlife habitat and endangered species

Whitetail deer, black bear, and wild turkey are a few of the animals that can be found in Chester. Deer wintering areas and black bear habitat are regulated by the State of Vermont. According to the Vermont Non-game and Natural Heritage Program, there are currently no endangered or rare species located in Chester.

Wildlife habitat and endangered species Goals

1. To review areas designated as deer wintering areas, bear corridors and Natural Heritage Inventory Sites.

Wildlife habitat and endangered species Policies

1. Develop strategies to protect areas containing rare species, exemplary natural communities and necessary wildlife habitat. Strategies may include public and quasi-public ownership or conservation easements protecting such lands.
2. Encourage the conservation of contiguous properties and discourage practices which fragment wildlife habitat.

Wildlife habitat and endangered species Recommendations

1. Request that the Regional Planning Commission create and update maps indicating the locations of state regulated natural resource constraints.
2. Review subdivision regulation to ensure conformity with wildlife habitat policies.
3. Encourage discussion of the development of a conservation program at community forums.

Mineral resources

Granite, gravel and sand are the only earth resources utilized at this time, but other resources such as soapstone and talc, as well as minerals, precious stones and metals, such as gold, are present. Mining provides jobs and is a valuable source of income for rural communities. Resources from mining make activities such as building construction, road development, and a variety of other manufacturing processes possible. However, mining and mineral extraction can adversely affect the roads, rural landscape, essential wildlife habitat, and the peace and quiet of the rural community. These adverse impacts can and should be mitigated by conditional use, site plan review and performance.

Mineral resources Goals

1. To encourage the extraction and processing of mineral resources in a manner that is appropriate and consistent with Chester's rural character.

Mineral resources Policies

1. The extraction of any earth resource shall be permitted only when the present and future effects of such extractions or related processing are not unreasonably damaging to the surrounding properties, essential wildlife habitat, and the environment.
2. Special interests shall not override the health and integrity of the entire

environment.

3. Require that earth resource extraction activities do not adversely affect surrounding properties and mitigate adverse impacts on essential wildlife habitat, and that extraction sites be restored to viable condition in a timely manner.

Mineral resources Recommendations

1. Review local and state regulations to assure that the public interest is protected. Amend local regulations to conform with any revised state regulations.

Cultural Resources

The buildings in the Chester Village Historic District and the Stone Village Historic District, as well as the Greenwood House on Rte 103 and the Jeffrey house on North Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

The Chester Village Historic District (Entered in the National Register on August 8, 1985) corresponds to the village center, focused on the Green together with related historic development along Main Street between Maple Street and Lovers Lane, including seven side streets. The Chester Village Historic District occupies the flat bottomland along the north side of the Middle Branch of the Williams River. The river flows along the base of a ridge whose abrupt slope provides a south backdrop for the village. A similar juxtaposition defines the valley bottom on its north side where a small brook flows essentially parallel to the Middle Branch, also flowing along the foot of a low ridge. There are 156 principal buildings in the district, among which only 17 buildings do not contribute to the district's historic character. The architectural styles represented include the Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne/Eastlake, Colonial Revival, and Georgian Revival. Most are of wood-frame construction and the buildings generally share the temple form and domestic scale with gable facades oriented toward the street. There are three examples of the "snecked ashlar" construction (which is prevalent in the buildings of the Stone Village Historic District). Although a few intrusions have appeared in the recent decades, Chester Village Historic District retains to an extraordinary extent the integrity of its nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural environment. The description of the district and of the various individual buildings can be found in the National Register under the Chester Village Historic District.

The Stone Village Historic District (Entered in the National Register on May 17, 1974) lies northerly of the Village District, on either side of Route 103 between the bridge over the Williams River northerly to the "Tavern" building, a distance of about 0.6 of a mile. The Stone Village is set in the Williams River Valley, where the river's alluvial plane opens to the west of the community and provides an expansive view to the opposite bluff about a quarter-mile away. The base of Mt. Flamstead is near the rear of the structures on the east side of the two-lane, tree-lined, paved Rte 103, and the hillside provides a striking backdrop to the village. Of the 18 buildings that comprise this Historic District, 13 of the buildings are fine, well-maintained

examples of “snecked ashlar” construction . The buildings described in this historic district are a church, a school, a tavern, a barn and 14 residences. The description of the district and of the various individual buildings can be found in the National Register under the Stone Village Historic District.

Cultural Resources Goals

1. Protect and preserve the structures recorded in the state and national registers of historic places.
2. Protect and preserve the cultural resources as they are identified by the residents of Chester.
3. Protect and preserve the physical setting and aesthetics of the area within which the historic villages are set.

Cultural Resources Policies

1. The demolition of historically significant structures should be discouraged.
2. Property owners of historic structures seeking inclusion in the State or National Registers should be encouraged and assisted in their efforts.

Cultural Resources Recommendations

1. Review bylaws to strengthen protection of historic structures and the aesthetics of the surrounding area.
2. Cooperate with local Historical Societies and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to build a public consensus for the value of historic structures.
3. Inventory cultural resources as identified by the residents of Chester.

Chapter 5 – Education

The Town of Chester is a member of two school districts: Chester-Andover Elementary School District, which includes grade K-6, and the Green Mountain Union High School District No. 35, which include grades 7-12.

The Chester-Andover Elementary School, which was built in 1955, had a year 2000 enrollment of 317 students, with 287 students being residents of Chester and 30 students residing in Andover.

Prior to the construction of the Chester-Andover School in 1955, students attended one of six (6) smaller schools in town. The present location of the former schoolhouses are: the American Legion Hall, Stone School on School Street, Chester Elementary School (which now houses the Chester Historic Society Building), St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Elementary School in Gassetts, and the Simsbury School in West Chester.

Historically, the number of students enrolled in the Chester-Andover Elementary School has ranged between a high of 373 students in 1960 to a low of 317 in 2000. This is illustrated in the chart below.

Table 1 – CAES enrollment

1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
373	330	340	353	317

Source: Offices of Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union

The Green Mountain Union High School (7-12), which was built in 1971, has students from the Towns of Andover, Cavendish, and Chester and, in 2000-2001, 38 tuition students from the Towns of Baltimore, Grafton, Londonderry, and Weathersfield. The Town of Chester has the largest number of students attending with 260, Cavendish 102, and Andover 24.

Since 1960 the enrollment has fluctuated between a low of 141 in 1960 to a high of 479 in 1980.

Table 2 -Enrollment History of Green Mountain Union High School

1960*	1970*	1980	1990	2000
141	288	479	450	424

Source: Offices of Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union

***Chester High School**

Green Mountain Union High School students may receive vocational and technical training at the Howard Dean Educational Center, in Springfield, VT.

Continuing education programs are offered through Community College of Vermont and Johnson State College External degree programs in Springfield.

There are homes providing day care for the Chester area. The Head-Start Program is being offered at Green Mountain Union High School. There is a pre-school/daycare presently in the planning stages for Chester to be housed with and run in conjunction with Headstart.

Opportunities In Learning, an alternative educational program, is offered at Cavendish Town Elementary School, in Proctorsville, VT.

Capital needs are currently being studied and addressed by the Town and the School Trustees.

Education Goals:

1. Maintain and broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities to the youth of the Town.

Education Policies:

1. The Town should continue to provide high quality, cost effective educational opportunities and amenities to all students residing in Chester, as well as those attending Chester schools, who reside in other Towns.
2. The Town should continue to work with the school board on capital development programs for buildings and other structures.
3. Any new development which results in significant increases in the number of school-age children should not place a significant burden on Chester’s taxpayers or existing school facilities

Chapter 6 - Energy

Careful, efficient use and conservation of energy is in the best interest of Chester and its residents. The influence of the Town on energy use and conservation pales in comparison with the effects of state and federal policies, yet the policies of a small town and its residents can affect energy consumption through encouraging such measures as carpooling, conservation, use of renewable energy resources, walking or cycling to work or store, and proper insulation and siting of buildings for passive solar heat. The Town has an interest in conserving energy to the greatest extent possible in order to preserve local environmental quality, save money, and be an active participant in the state and national efforts to conserve energy.

Wood, propane and heating oil are among some of the more common types of fuel used to heat homes in Chester. As a result of increasing fuel oil costs, home heating costs are on the rise throughout New England, which in turn increases the demand for cheaper sources of fuel such as cord wood. Home heating costs can be significantly lowered by proper solar siting, and using modern insulation and building techniques to achieve higher “R” ratings. Vermont Residential Energy Code requires builders of new homes to complete a Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards Certificate.

Many Chester residents travel to surrounding towns for employment. High fuel costs have increased the cost of transportation for commuters. The Town should seek solutions to decrease the number of commuter miles, including planning for and providing for facilities for the use of carpooling, including Park & Ride lots, and an expansion of public transportation between Chester and the neighboring towns for work and shopping. Employers in Chester and the neighboring Towns should encourage with incentives to employees, greater use of carpooling and the existing public transportation, and seek expansion of public transportation to better serve their employees.

Energy Goals

1. To encourage energy saving measures that can be adopted by local residents.
2. To reduce local demand for non-renewable energy resources.
3. To encourage the construction of energy efficient buildings, both in renovation of existing buildings and new construction.
4. To encourage and promote the most efficient use of electricity, and heating and cooling equipment in all municipally owned buildings.
5. To encourage the development of a transportation system that encourages the use of public transportation and ride-sharing and enables increased non-motorized vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Emphasize links between schools, stores, work and home.
6. To encourage the location of community service structures, retail sites, public utilities, day care centers, state offices and other frequently visited sites within walking distance of village residential areas.
7. To encourage new development to take place in areas most easily served by existing and future public utilities.
8. To support the use of locally-produced energy sources such as wood, provided that they are supplied and used in ways that protect air quality and are compatible with this Plan's Natural Resource and Land Use policies.

Energy Policies

1. New construction and renovation shall be encouraged to use modern building materials (insulation with a high "R" factor) and techniques in order to conserve energy and lower home heating costs.
2. Cooperate regionally to hold educational events encouraging citizens to adopt energy saving measures, thereby lowering living expenses.
3. Amend subdivision regulations and/or adopt site plan review procedures for review of the building and insulation materials, and the siting of new homes (for passive solar).
4. Strive to obtain the cooperation of the builders of new homes to comply with the Vermont energy standards and to complete and file with the Town a Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards Certificate.
5. The Town should adopt policies ensuring the most efficient use of municipal equipment and vehicles.
6. The Town should adopt procedures for ensuring the most efficient use of heating and cooling equipment in municipal buildings.

7. The Town should investigate the possibility of including energy-efficiency standards in local land use regulations.
8. The Town should include land use regulations that encourage locally-produced energy sources such as wood for heating, with provisions to ensure the protection of air quality and compatibility with this Plan’s Natural Resource and Land Use policies.
9. For large employers in conditional use reviews and in Act 250 proceedings the Town should request that the employer encourage their employees to reduce fuel consumption, as well as traffic conditions, with programs that encourage employees to use public transportation and carpooling for their commute to and from work.

Chapter 7 – Housing

There were total of 1,611 housing units in Chester, according to the 2000 US Census. Of this number, 950 units were specified in the 2000 Census as owner-occupied, 346 were rented, and 315 were seasonal, vacant ready to rent or sell, or otherwise vacant. The Census reported there were 116 mobile homes in Chester, accounting for 07.2% of the total housing units.

Housing Analysis

According to the 2000 Census, Table 1., there were 1,292 Households and the Median Household Income (MHI) in Chester was \$39,417. MHI for Windsor County was \$40,688.

Table 1. – Chester Household Income – 2000 Census

Household Income	Number	Percentage	Percentage of Households at or above this Income level	30% of Annual Household Income	30% of Monthly Household Income
Less than \$10,000	103	8.0	100.0	Less than \$3,000	Less than \$250
\$10,000 to \$14,999	81	6.3	92.0	\$3,000 to \$4,500	\$250 to \$375
\$15,000 to \$24,999	201	15.6	85.7	\$4,500 to \$7,500	\$375 to \$625
\$25,000 to \$34,999	195	15.1	70.1	\$7,500 to \$10,500	\$625 to \$875
\$35,000 to \$49,999	231	17.9	55.0	\$10,500 to \$15,000	\$875 to \$1,250
\$50,000 to \$74,999	312	24.1	37.1	\$15,000 to \$22,500	\$1,250 to \$1,875
\$75,000 or more	169	13.0	13.0	\$22,500 or more	\$1,875 or more
Median \$39,417					

Totals	1292	100.0	-
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According to the 2000 Census, there were 861 Families and the Median Family Income was \$47,083. [See analysis of Family Income census data in Table 2.]

Table 2. - Family Income

Family Income	Number	Percentage	Percentage of Families at or above this Income level
Less than \$10,000	25	2.9	100.0
\$10,000 to \$14,999	24	2.8	97.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	104	12.1	94.3
\$25,000 to \$34,999	139	16.1	82.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	172	20.0	66.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	250	29.0	46.1
\$75,000 or more	147	17.1	17.1
Totals	861	100.0	-

The value of residential units from the Chester Lister Records and the 2000 Census Data, as well as, mortgage status and selected monthly owner costs, and those costs as a percentage of Household Income are set forth respectively in the following Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Table 3 - Value of residential units on the Town of Chester Lister Records of 2001 (Which list 1413 Residential Units)

Value	Number	Percentage	Percentage at or below this value
\$50,000 or less	160	11.3	11.3
\$50,001 to \$75,000	236	16.7	28.0
\$75,001 to \$100,000	335	23.7	51.7
\$100,001 to \$125,000	250	17.7	69.4
\$125,001 or more	432	30.6	100.0
Totals	1413	100.0	

Table 4 shows, according to the 2000 Census data, 50% of the owner-occupied homes have a value under \$100,000. 82.4% are under \$150,000. Table 6, below, shows the values from the Lister's Records, showing all residential units and their values, and those values are very similar to, and support the values reflected in, the Census data.

Table 4 - Value of "Specified owner-occupied units" – 2000 Census Data

Value	Number	Percentage	Percentage at or below this value level
Less than \$50,000	18	3.0	3.0
\$50,000 to \$99,999	286	47.0	50.0
\$100,000 to \$149,999	197	32.4	82.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	63	10.4	92.8
\$200,000 to \$299,999	36	5.9	98.7
\$300,000 or more	8	1.3	100.0
Totals	608	100.0	-
Median Value (Dollars)	\$100,000		

Table 5 shows that most owner-occupied homes with mortgages (58.8%) have monthly costs for housing, including mortgage of less than \$1,000.00.

Table 5 - Mortgage status and “selected monthly owner costs” on Owner-occupied units

	Mortgage and Selected Costs per Month	Number (Total 608 Units)	Percentage	Percentage of Mortgaged Units at or below this level
With a Mortgage		388	63.8	100.0
	\$300 to \$499	10	1.7	2.6
	\$500 to \$699	64	10.5	19.1
	\$700 to \$999	154	25.3	58.8
	\$1,000 to \$1,499	133	21.9	93.1
	\$1,500 or more	27	4.4	100.0
Median	\$932	-	-	
Not Mortgaged		220	36.2	
Median	\$386	Totals	608	100.0

And finally, Table 6 shows that for 75% of the owner-occupied homes the monthly costs, including mortgage, are less than 30% of monthly Household Income.

Table 6 - Selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of Household Income in 1999 - 681 owner-occupied units

Percentage Costs/Income	Number	Percentage	Percentage at or below this level
Less than 15.0 percent	176	28.9	28.9
15.0 to 19.9 percent	136	22.4	51.3
20.0 to 24.9 percent	85	14.0	65.3
25.0 to 29.9 percent	59	9.7	75.0
30.0 to 34.9 percent	46	7.6	82.6
35 percent or more	102	16.8	99.4
Not computed	4	0.6	100.0
Totals	608	100.0	-

Affordable Housing based on value and cost of purchasing a home in Chester.

The U.S. and Vermont State Housing goals for affordable housing include the achievement of housing costs at or below 30% of Household Income (including utility expenses) for households at or below the county median income level. Chester’s 1999 median Household Income level (\$39,417) was less than the 2000 Windsor County’s median income level (\$40,688), which includes the incomes of those near Dartmouth in Hanover, NH and the business center of the Lebanon, NH. region. Using the 1999 Windsor County Median Household Income of \$40,688, no more than \$1,017 per month would go toward mortgage payments or rent, heat, electricity, water, housing related taxes or fees, and other similar housing expenses.

The 2000 Census data, supported by the Chester Listers' data, shows that at least 50% of the owner-occupied homes are \$100,000 or less in market value.

A 30 year mortgage at 7.0% mortgage interest rate for an 80% mortgage on a home costing \$100,000 would result in \$532 of monthly mortgage costs. One of the largest monthly payments for homeowners is property taxes. Property tax rate for Chester is \$2.32 for 2001. For a home costing \$100,000, the annual tax rate would be \$2,320, costing \$193 monthly. With \$725 required for mortgage and taxes, of the \$1017 (30% of the monthly Median Housing Income), there would remain \$292 for utilities, heat, electricity, water, similar fees. A comparison of property value and affordability for the purchase of a home in Chester is shown in Table 7. It would appear from the calculations in Table 7, which are based on 2000 Census data, that there remains approximately 30% (Table 1) of the households in Chester, that is, those with an annual Household Income less than \$24,000, are not able to purchase a home in Chester. Stated another way, based on the known data, in order to purchase a home in Chester, the purchaser at a minimum must have the \$10,000 down payment on a \$50,000 home and have an income of \$24,000 or more. Approximately 70% of the Households in Chester have the income to pay the \$40,000 mortgage and selected costs for the purchase of such a home. Of those owner-occupied homes in the 2000 Census, of those with a mortgage 75% spent 29.9% or less of the Median Household Income on selected housing costs. [See Table 6]

Table 7 – Mortgage Amortization Cost and Property Taxes; Percent of Properties available at the cost and percent of Households which can afford to purchase the property.

Value	Mortgage *	Mortgage (Mo.)	Taxes **	Taxes (Mo.)	Mortgage + Taxes (Mo.)	Other home related expenses (Mo.) ***	Number / Percent of Properties Available at of below this value****	Monthly Income / 30% needed to Afford Purchase	Approximate Percent of Household at MHI is Able to Afford *****
\$100,000	\$80,000	\$532	\$2,320	\$193	\$725	\$290	731 / 51.7%	\$3,383 / \$1,105	45%
\$75,000	\$60,000	\$399	\$1,740	\$145	\$544	\$270	396 / 28.0%	\$2,713 / \$814	60%
\$50,000	\$40,000	\$266	\$1,160	\$97	\$363	\$250	160 / 11.3%	\$2,043 / \$613	70%

*Calculation based on 80% mortgage

**Based on 2001 Town Property Tax Rate, including School

***Insurance, fuel, electricity, water, sewer, estimated, as there is no hard data in the Census

**** Based on 2001 Lister Records from Town Of Chester [Table 3]

*****Based on 2000 Census of Household Income (HI) for Chester and 30% of HI available for housing. [See Table 1.]

For comparison to Towns in the Southern Windsor County Region, Table 8, below, contains the number and value of various residential properties in the area.

Table 8 - 1996 Residential Counts and Average Fair Market Values (FMV) and differ from the 2000 Census*

TOWN	R1** count	R1 avg. FMV	R2** count	R2 avg. FMV	MHU** count	MHU avg. FMV	MHL** count	MHL avg. FMV
Andover	65	\$108,478	75	\$164,798	82	\$5,556	12	\$50,608
Baltimore	31	\$63,775	28	\$120,790	1	\$13,752	13	\$39,423
Cavendish	308	\$74,730	117	\$151,593	94	\$7,915	54	\$35,423
Chester	646	\$87,386	233	\$160,863	22	\$9,711	99	\$48,158
Ludlow	572	\$100,466	124	\$167,201	100	\$17,283	66	\$60,515
Reading	115	\$90,753	109	\$208,479	2	\$6,079	22	\$41,435
Springfield	2,554	\$76,934	301	\$150,222	132	\$11,984	79	\$47,989
Weathersfield	501	\$89,866	304	\$132,840	180	\$19,906	124	\$53,278
West Windsor	182	\$123,629	155	\$200,565	1	\$21,118	12	\$53,849
Windsor	895	\$76,253	82	\$139,932	41	\$8,691	37	\$48,504
REGION Median		\$86,127		\$164,634		\$13,337		\$47,969
REGION Average	5,870	\$83,247	1,530	\$160,535	655	\$13,298	518	\$49,292

* Figures based on data from the Division of Property Valuation and Review

**Property definitions are as follows:

R1 - Residential on less than 6 acres

R2 - Residential on greater than 6 acres, not including working farms

MHU - Mobile home - unlanded (set up on land not owned by the owner of the mobile home, as in mobile home parks)

MHL - Mobile home - landed (set up on land owned by the owner of the mobile home)

Affordable Housing based on cost of renting a residential unit in Chester.

According to the 2000 Census, 87.7% of residential units rented in Chester cost less in Gross Rent than 30% of \$1017, which is the Median Household Income for the County of Windsor. [Table 9]

Table 9 – 2000 Census, Gross Rent on household units in Chester

Gross Rent	Number (Total 323)	Percent	Percent at or below this level	Percent at or above this level
Less than \$200	34	10.5	10.5	100.0
\$200 to \$299	28	8.7	19.2	89.5
\$300 to \$499	79	24.5	43.7	80.8
\$500 to \$749	124	38.4	82.1	56.3
\$750 to \$999	18	5.6	87.7	17.9
\$1,000 or more	12	3.6	91.3	12.3
No cash rent	28	8.7	100.0	8.7
Median (in \$)	(\$512)	-		
Totals	323	100.0		

However, 2000 Census data reports that, in 1999, just 57.2% of renting households paid rent that was 29.9% or less of the Median Household Income. 33.2% paid 30% or more of the MHI. [Table 10]

Table 10 – 2000 Census, Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (HI) in 1999

Gross Rent as a % of HI in 1999	Number (Total 323)	Percent	Percent at or below this level	Percent at or above this level
Less than 15.0 percent	45 (45)	13.9	13.9	100.0
15.0 to 19.9 percent	46 (91)	14.2	28.1	86.1
20.0 to 24.9 percent	46 (137)	14.2	42.3	71.9
25.0 to 29.9 percent	48 (185)	14.9	57.2	57.7
30.0 to 34.9 percent	31 (216)	9.6	66.8	42.8
35.0 or more percent	77 (293)	23.8	90.6	33.2
Not calculated	30	9.4	100.0	9.4
Totals	323	100.0		

It is difficult to explain from the available data how 87.7% of the rentable housing units could be affordable, yet 33.2% paid gross rent above the affordable level. Data from the 1990 Census was reported in a different format. The following look at the 1990 data could shed light on the 2000 Census data.

The 1990 Census reported, in 1989, of the 301 families renting, 276 paid rent (Note: The 2000 Census reported 323 household renting with 295 paying rent.). Of the 276 families paying rent, 178 (or 64.5%) used less than 30% of their Family Income for the rent of the unit, and 98 (35.5%) used more, as follows: Of the 69 families earning \$10,000 or less, 30 paid more than 30% of their Family Income for the rental (17 paid no rent). Of the 93 families earning \$19,999 or less, 53 paid more than 30% of their Family Income for the rental (2 paid no rent). Of the 102 families earning \$34,999 or less, 15 paid more than 30% of their Family Income for the rental (5 paid no rent). All families earning \$35,000 or more paid less than 24% of their Family Income for the rental (1 paid no rent).

The 1990 Census Data shows that those paying more than 30% of the MHI were:

- 43.5% (30/69) of those earning less than \$10,000.
- 57% (53/93) of those earning less than \$19,999.
- 14.7% (15/102) of those earning less than \$34,999.

If the data from the 2000 Census were reported in the same format as the 1990 Census, it is logical to believe that the spread of affordability of rental housing over the income spectrum would be similar. In any case, the 2000 Census data show the affordability of the rental housing in Chester has not changed significantly. There are 22 more units reported, and 19 more are paying rent. The percentage of households in rental units, which the U.S. and Vermont standards deemed not affordable, increased very slightly from 1990 to 2000, that is, 98 of 276 (32.5%) to 108 of 295 (33.4%).

Housing Goals

1. To guide housing development in Chester to meet the needs of residents of all income levels.

Housing Policies:

1. Allow for multi-family housing or higher density development of single family housing in some areas of town in order to provide for the housing needs of lower income residents.

2. Continue to monitor and review the housing needs of Chester.

Housing Recommendations:

1. Continue to review Chester's and the region's job market and economy.

Chapter 8 - Town Plan - Implementation

Implementation of the goals, policies and recommendations outlined in this Plan depends on the combined efforts of Town residents and local officials, as well as the resources of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, and other regional, state, federal and private entities involved in land use planning activities.

At the state and federal levels, the Plan can be used to justify and prioritize the use of federal funds for community development, transportation improvements, natural resource protection and management, and other investments. In addition, Act 250 requires that developers show that projects conform to local and regional plans.

At the regional level, the Regional Planning Commission can review the Town Plan for compliance with the requirements of Act 200. Act 200 approval makes the Town eligible to apply for implementation funding from the State in the form of Municipal Planning Grants.

At the local level, the Town may take some of the following actions to implement the goals of this Plan:

1. Review and amend, if necessary, zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations so that they are based on the goals, policies and recommendations outlined in the Town Plan.
2. Refer to the Town Plan when planning additions and improvements to local infrastructure such as local roads and public utilities. Such additions or improvements should be used to plan for appropriate growth and development.
3. Work with public and private entities to help them design development or resource management plans in ways that will further the goals of this Plan.
4. Continue to plan and work to conserve important resource lands.
5. Request that the Regional Planning Commission create and update maps indicating the locations of state regulated natural resource constraints.
6. Review and amend Capital Program and Budget Plan.
7. Work with the Regional Planning Commission on meeting local housing needs.
8. Identify areas of significant aesthetic value to the entire community.
9. Inventory cultural resources as identified by the residents of Chester.

Chapter 9 - Relationship to Local and Regional Plans

In order for the Town of Chester to carry out its land use planning goals, the Town must evaluate the Town Plan in relation to plans of neighboring towns and the region. Chester is bordered by the Towns of Grafton, Rockingham, and Windham in Windham County, and by Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Ludlow, and Springfield in Windsor County. Chester is located in the south-central area of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission's 10-town region. Chester is served by the District 2 Environmental Commission, and is located in Vermont Agency of Transportation District 2, and shares borders with VAOT Districts 3 and 4.

Neighboring Towns

Chester is surrounded by towns which share many similar planning concerns and are faced with varying degrees of development pressure. All of the towns abutting Chester have town plans and zoning regulations, except Cavendish, which has a town plan, but no zoning regulations. None of these plans is in conflict with the Chester Town Plan.

Some neighboring towns share similar concerns to those in Chester with regard to development and traffic. The towns of Chester, Cavendish, Ludlow, and Rockingham, for example, see a significant increase in traffic flow during the winter months, due to the operation of five ski resorts in the area, namely, Okemo, Killington, Bromley, Magic and Stratton. The expansion plans of Okemo Mountain Resort and Killington Resort will cause further increases in traffic through Chester, Cavendish, Ludlow, and Rockingham once they are implemented. The increase in truck traffic and truck size along Route 103 is also a shared concern amongst the towns of Chester, Cavendish, Ludlow, and Rockingham.

According to the Southern Windsor County Regional Transportation Plan, Routes 10, 11 and 103 are identified as Regional Transportation Corridors.

Chester shares the watershed of the Williams River and its branches with the Towns of Andover, Cavendish, Grafton, Rockingham, and Windham.

The land use and conservation plans of the neighboring Towns are compatible with those of Chester.

Southern Windsor County Region

The Southern Windsor County Regional Plan provides broad guidelines for planning, coordination and review of the natural, cultural, social and economic features of the Southern Windsor County region. The Southern Windsor County Regional Plan, Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Bicycling and Walking Plan are companion documents to the Chester Town Plan, providing a broader framework and context for local planning efforts. The Town Plan should support and complement the land use and development goals of these regional planning documents and it does.

The 1997 Regional Plan identifies the village area of Chester as a “Service Village,” that is characterized by having limited local services, which may include shopping, employment, government, schools, libraries, and clinics. The village areas of Cavendish and Ludlow are also identified as Service Villages in the Regional Plan. The Future Land Use section of the Regional Plan predicts that Ludlow will become a Regional Center by the year 2002. Ludlow’s growth pressure is already affecting the growth pressure in Cavendish, Andover and Chester. The Regional Plan states that this anticipated growth should be focused within the higher density village areas where sewer and water infrastructure already exists. This section is compatible with the Chester Town Plan, which designates the village areas as mixed use area, where commercial development and high-density residential development should occur first.

While maintaining Chester’s uniqueness and independence of thought and planning, the Chester Town Plan is compatible with 1997 Regional Plan of the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission in the concerns and goals expressed in Transportation, Land Use, Community Utilities and Facilities, Natural and Cultural Resources, Energy Resources, Housing and Economic Development.

EXPIRATION DATE

This Town Plan expires the 18th day of June, 2008.

___/s/ Seeley W. Morton_____
___/s/ Richard G. Jewett_____
___/s/ Michael J. LeClair_____
Selectmen, Town of Chester

Dated this 18th day of June, 2003.