

Chester Town Plan Updates 2015-2016

Guiding Questions for Economic Development Chapter

Meeting Date: Feb. 1, 2016 at 6 PM in the Chester Town Hall

Meeting Purpose: Conduct a public meeting to gather input on economic development, village revitalization and community center initiatives

Required Chapter Elements: This project involves creating a new Town Plan chapter about jobs and economic opportunities for Chester. The new chapter is required to address the following elements:

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

▪ It also should include language to support renewal of Chester's Village Center designation. Clarify differences between designated Village Center, Village Center zoning district and National Register Historic District.

NOTE that this Town Plan Chapter is to be more broad/overarching about how to improve the local economy. The proposed Village Center Master Plan will be much more specific. In other words, a Town Plan recommendation might be to develop a Village center Master Plan to guide local economic and revitalization efforts in the Village.

Presentation Format:

1. Introductions (5 minutes)
2. Review of statistics and trends (5 minutes)
3. Group Presentations (10 minutes each)
4. Open Discussion

Guiding Questions: In order to facilitate a meaningful discussion, the following questions may be asked by the facilitator to help guide the discussion and get input that will help to inform this new chapter.

1. Does Chester have good job opportunities (locally or in immediately surrounding towns)?
2. Do residents feel a need to travel relatively long distances for higher-paying jobs?
3. What challenges do existing businesses experience? Such as the following:
 - a) A good local workforce with adequate skills
 - b) Houses and apartments that workers can afford
 - c) Marketing, etc.
4. Is tourism important for local businesses? If so, what can be done to improve the local tourist-based economy?
5. What kind of new jobs are desirable? What types of businesses would help to diversify Chester's economy?
6. Chester has a designated Village Center. The purpose of this State designation program is to support revitalizing the core village area. A village center is typically comprised of a mix of commercial, residential, governmental and religious buildings located in a compact, walkable area at the center of the community. What specific things would help to revitalization Chester's Village?
7. What type of new businesses do you want to see around the Green? In the Depot?
8. What challenges exist to make that happen?
 - a) Cost to rehab existing buildings for this purpose.
 - b) Old buildings/State building code issues.

- c) Need to bring more visitors into town.
 - d) Etc.
9. Are the Unified Development Bylaws adequate to encourage the kind of new businesses that you want, where you want?
10. What projects would help encourage the village revitalization efforts (e.g. sidewalks, parking, signage, water/sewer, etc.)?
11. What programs would help achieve a good local economy?
- a) Is the existing revolving loan fund working well?
 - b) Do businesses need help with marketing or business development planning?
 - c) Is workforce training in this area adequate?
 - d) Other ideas?