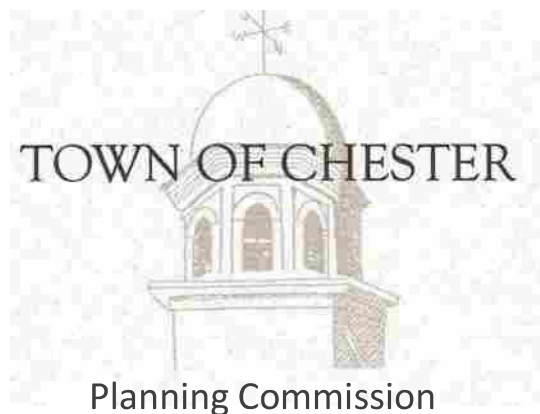


# CROSS BOARD TOWN PLAN UPDATE

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June 9<sup>th</sup> 2026



# Agenda

- Introduction & Goals
- Demographics Summary
- Chester SWOT Analysis Summary
- Town Plan Chapter Highlights

# Meeting Goals

- Share an Update on Progress to Date
- Align Municipal Plan Goals Across Town Boards
- Begin the “Future of Chester” Conversation
- Establish a Cadence for Ongoing Collaboration

# Introduction

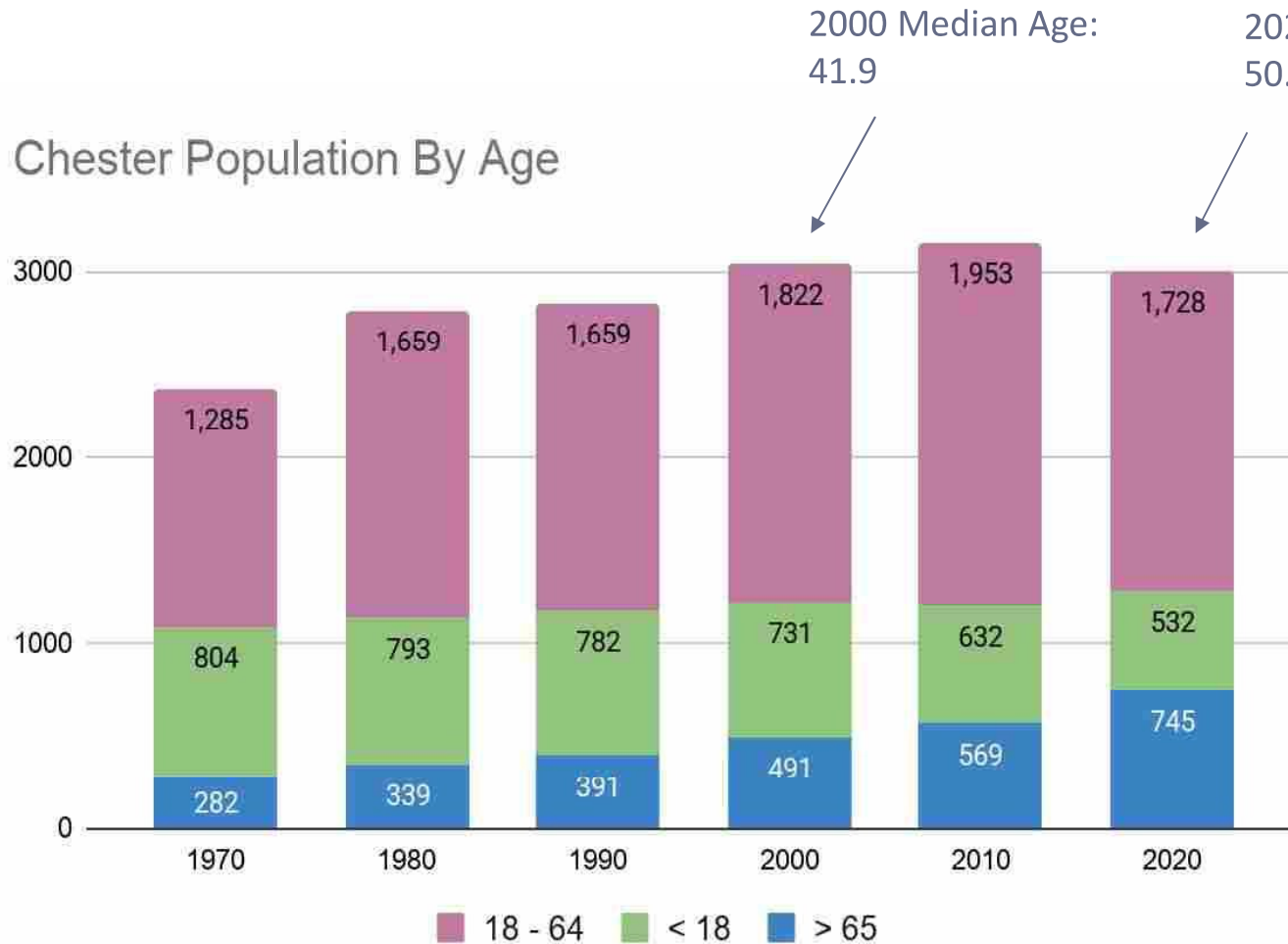
The Planning Commission in partnership with MARC has begun work to update the Municipal Plan which expires in May of 2028

## Benefits of a Municipal Plan

- Adopt Regulations
- Act 250 Applications must conform to Town Plan
- Town Plan is considered in Section 248 Certificate of Public Good Applications
- More competitive grant applications



# Chester Demographic Data

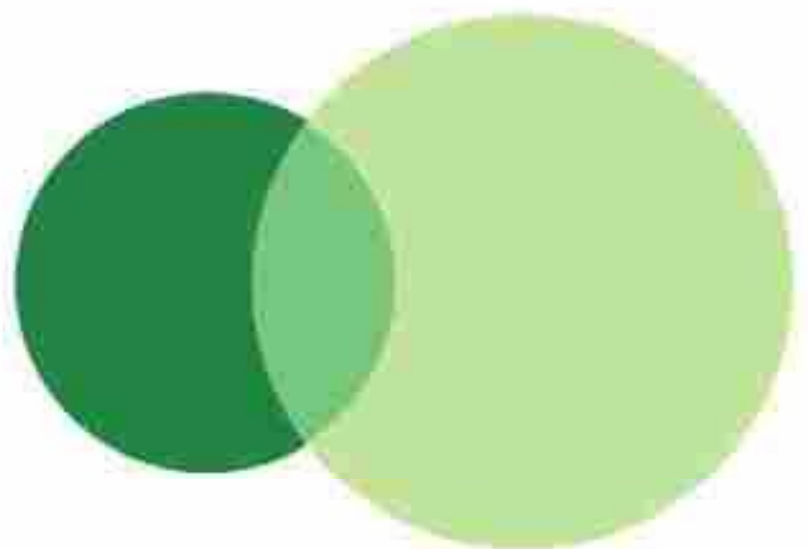


- Chester's Population is Aging (and faster than Vermont)
- Household sizes are getting smaller.

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Survey 2020, 2010, Table DP1. Chester town plan.

# Commuting Patterns in Chester

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2023  
All Workers



- Most people in Chester work outside of Chester
- Commutes are quite long, even for Vermont
  - 60% of commutes >10 Miles
  - 30% of commutes >25 miles

508	-	Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
1,227	-	Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
212	-	Employed and Live in Selection Area

# Costs and Income in Chester

- Income in Chester
  - Median Income: \$62,125 (2019 - 2024)
  - 76% of Vermont's – \$81,200 vs \$62,125
- Cost of housing sale/rent
  - Approx 75% of state average.
  - **\$960** is the Gross Rent in Chester over the past 5 years - Considerably Lower than Fair Market Price
  - Vermont "Fair Market Price" **\$1970/unit**
  - **Moving is expensive.**
  - Average sale price in Chester in 2025: \$483,000 .vs. \$200,000 in 2019



Depot Street Apts via chestervt.gov

Median Gross Rent				
	Yearly Increase	Vermont	Windsor County	Chester
2019-2024	5.4%	\$1,234.00	\$1,118.00	\$960.00
2013-2018	2.5%	\$972.00	\$940.00	Aprx \$900
2007-2012		\$864.00	\$844.00	Aprx \$800

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, S1901, B25031.  
HUD Fair Market Price estimates 2025.

# School Enrollment in Chester

## Declining Enrollment

Combined enrollment across both Chester schools has fallen **28%** since its peak in 2005, from 783 students down to 564 in 2025.

### Key Figures

COMBINED 2025 <b>564</b> Down 219 from 2005 peak	GREEN MOUNTAIN 7-12 ↓ <b>30%</b> 447 → 312 since 2004	CHESTER-ANDOVER PK-6 ↓ <b>15%</b> 298 → 252 since 2004
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## Implications

- Aging Population?
- Lack of Jobs/Housing?
- Families Choosing other Education Alternatives?
- Others?

# SWOT Analysis

*Internal*

**Strengths** are what Chester does well and we should build upon.

**What do we build on?**

**Weaknesses** are internal barriers that limit or interfere with reaching our future state.

**What do we need to shore up?**

*External*

**Opportunities** are external forces that Chester is well positioned to act and benefit from.

**What do we capitalize on?**

**Threats** are external forces or barriers that may prevent Chester from reaching its objectives.

**What do we need to mitigate?**

## Strengths (what do we build on)

- Village Green/Village Center
- Municipal Services (Police/Fire/EMS)
- Diversified Business Portfolio
- Utilities & Infrastructure (Water/Sewer, Roads, Comm.)
- Schools
- Recreation Facilities
- Proximity (Healthcare, Skiing, Arts, Recreation)
- Regional Transportation Access (Rail)

## Weaknesses (what do we need to shore up)

- Marketing & Branding
- Economic Development Strategy
- Limited Senior Housing & Services
- Housing Supply & Variety
- Dwindling School Enrollments
- Local Access to Healthcare
- Lack of High Wage Employment
- Infrastructure Capacity Constraints

# Opportunities (what do we capitalize on)

- Growing Demand for Aging In Place Services
- Demand for Small-Town Living
- Family Focused Tourism / Agri-Tourism
- Climate Migration
- Renewable Energy Policy Environment

## Threats (what do we need to mitigate)

- Cost of Living/Building
- Cost of Land
- Loss of Local Schools
- Taxes
- Wealth Inequity Gap
- Competition for Funding
- Second Home Market Pressures

# Municipal Plan Elements

1. **Future Land Use**
2. **Transportation**
3. Utilities and Facilities
4. **Rare Natural Areas, Scenic & Historic Features**
5. Education
6. Energy
7. **Economic Development**
8. **Housing**
9. *Flood Resilience (New Element)*

 Initial Focus Areas

# Context Setting

- Not a Comprehensive Summary of the Chapters
- Intended to Invoke a Conversation and Solicit Feedback
- We are not “Solutioning” in this Meeting
- Think about Theme, Aspiration, and Tone
- Don’t Overthink, Just React

# Future Land Use

## 2020 Plan Highlights

- Plan development to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact urban centers separated by rural countryside (State Planning Goal in Statute)
- Excessive commercial development on RT10, 11, 103 discouraged.
- Residential and mixed use development tailored to the tourist & ski industries should be sited and designed to protect settlement pattern, commercial development and natural resources.
- Programs that help owners of farms and forestland bear the burden of the mandated financial responsibility for resource protection should be supported.

# Transportation

## 2020 Plan Highlights

- Encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation through widened road shoulders or separated paths.
- Obtain property to widen the intersection of Routes 11/103 and Maple Street to provide better turning radius for commercial vehicles.
- Obtain property necessary to provide more parking for commercial properties and for Park and Ride.
- Explore the use of public and rail transportation as an alternative to automobile and truck traffic on Route 103.

# Rare Natural Areas, Scenic & Historic Features

## 2020 Plan Highlights

- Fragmentation of significant and necessary wildlife habitat should not be approved.
- Corridors connecting habitat areas for large mammals must be incorporated in plans for management and conservation of forest areas.
- Consider land use regulations to restrict development along ridgelines and in scenic areas.
- Review bylaws to strengthen protection of historic structures. The demolition of historically significant structures should be discouraged.

# Economic Development

## 2020 Plan Highlights

- Maintain a business-friendly approach to economic development and the associated local permitting process.
- Applications for new businesses will demonstrate how they further the community's desire to improve the quality of life, contribute toward the charm of the village, and maintain or improve the local tourist-based economy.
- Promote additional creative economy-based businesses. Consider creating marketing materials that highlight local artisan's, historical points of interest, and/or great restaurants in the area.

# Housing

## 2020 Plan Highlights

- Guide housing development in Chester to meet the needs of residents of all income levels.
- Allow for multi-family housing or higher density development of single-family housing in some areas to provide housing for lower income residents.
- Chester's housing targets for 2050 is a low of 411 units and a high of 810 units. That would increase the current population of ~ 3000 to a low of 3822 and a high of 4620. Is that too high? Too Low?
- The Town should provide for accessory dwelling units in the Zoning Bylaws and establish a streamlined review process.