

# 2. CHICHESTER TOMORROW

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This Chichester Master Plan was created as a living document that articulates the vision, desires, and concerns of our community. It serves as a road map for the future of the Town; it outlines where we are and where we want to go, as a community in central New Hampshire. This Plan describes us today, and forecasts our shared vision for the future. Most importantly, it defines what we will need to do over the next several years as we work together to shape the future of the Town of the Chichester.

This Plan provides recommendations on ways to maintain or improve the features of our community and aims to serve as a blueprint for all future activities of Chichester. This Plan can help support economic development efforts, amendments to land use regulations, environmental and historic preservation efforts, expansion of community facilities and services, and much more over the next several years.

A Master Plan is intended to be the device that supports the creation, interpretation, and implementation of laws and procedures that give shape and direction to the community. A Master Plan's purpose and description is outlined by New Hampshire statute (RSA 674:2); but it has no force of law and no way to generate the resources that may be required for implementation. The Master Plan can be a powerful tool to help shape a community by giving suggested direction to appointed and elected officials. However, the true power of the document is derived from the citizenry, as they will ultimately be the voice that approves the staffing, funding, regulatory alternatives and strategies identified by this Plan.

## CHICHESTER'S MASTER PLAN HISTORY

Chichester's first Master Plan was adopted in 1986, followed by an update in 1997, and the most recent version adopted in 2004. Key themes and recommendations from the previous Plans include:

- Maintain rural character;
- Continue zoning regulations based on soil survey and on-site examination;
- Recognize clustered housing and apartments may be an integral part of growth;
- Utilize Conservation Commission guidance to develop land use management goals and objectives;
- Review and update Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision Regulations, Site Plan Review Regulations, and Building Regulations;
- Develop regulations for sand and gravel operations;
- Maintain and improve highways and rural roads;
- Develop a traffic management plan for local and through traffic;
- Provide a Capital Improvement Program for Town services and develop better access to public waterways;
- Appoint a standing committee to coordinate building and construction needs; and
- Establish an Economic Development Committee.

Additionally, a public input survey was conducted as part of each of these iterations, with input incorporated into each of the Plan’s recommendations.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

Throughout the development of this Master Plan, engaging residents and other community stakeholders was a key goal. The Visioning Session and the Community Survey gave the Planning Board important information on residents’ opinions on many topics related to Chichester’s land use, housing, transportation, natural resources, and many other priorities and concerns. The following describes some broad themes that are based on the public outreach and other stakeholder input.

Overall, residents have a high appreciation for Chichester’s rural and historic character, vast array of natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities, and sense of community. Residents appreciate the Town’s recreational resources and opportunities and strongly support the development of a rail trail along the railroad bed. Overall support was also shown for agritourism development as well as a Historic District to protect designated historic places throughout town.

Strong concern for the Town’s high tax rate was expressed, with many stating that addressing the tax rate should be a high priority in the immediate future. Suggestions include expanding commercial and industrial development, though focusing commercial development along US4 and NH28 and keeping rural areas of Town rural. New residential development should fit with the rural character of Chichester, including conservation/open space development and renovation and repurposing of existing homes

and farmhouses. Additionally, single family homes and senior housing are the most preferred housing choices for Chichester.

With regard to Chichester’s transportation network, residents are highly concerned for the safety along US 4 and NH 28, specifically with any intersecting roads. Main Street was also mentioned for high speeds, lack of pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks), and for the intersections with US 4, NH 28, and with Center and Canterbury Road.

Like many other New Hampshire communities, Chichester residents expressed concern that the rural character often viewed as central to Chichester’s identity may be lost due to additional residential and commercial growth over the next few decades. There are many types of “rural character” images that shape Chichester - natural forests, open space, rivers, trails, and many historic building and sites. It’s often a “You know it when you see it or feel it” response which though may be unique to each individual, is the most common feedback receive during the public outreach process. Often, it is the mix of landscapes that contributes to the concept of rural character, including current development patterns and the scenic vistas of hills, rivers, open space and forests.

## OUR VISION...

*“Chichester is vibrant community that prides itself on its rural atmosphere, historical character, and sense of community. Appropriate commercial development is focused along the Main Street Corridor, agricultural uses are encouraged and supported, and a range of housing options are available to accommodate residents of all ages. Well maintained roadways*

*provide safe and efficient travel throughout. Preservation and protection of natural resources are prioritized and provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Town services and facilities contribute to resident's high quality of life and continue to make Chichester a desirable place to live."*

## HOW ARE WE GOING TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION?

The following are core values that are derived from the vision statements in each chapter and are a reflection of the long term direction for Chichester's future as a thriving community:

- We embrace the Chichester's unique historical character and cultural resources;
- We utilize available tools and regulations to support a wide range of housing options;
- We provide a high quality of community services, amenities, and recreation opportunities to residents of all ages;
- We take pride in our community and continue to serve as volunteers on local boards and committees;
- We take necessary steps to address changing demographic needs;
- We recognize our most important land uses, including forests, farms, and open space;
- We capitalize on opportunities to expand the local economy and offset the tax rate;

- We promote an appropriate mix of residential, commercial and industrial development;
- We protect our natural resources and natural recreation opportunities; and
- We plan for the maintenance and improvement of our roadways.