

2023 VTrans Scoping Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Application

1. Project Title:

2. Applicant (Town, RPC, etc.):

3. Project Contact Info:

a. Name:

b. Mailing Address:

c. Town:

d. Zip Code:

e. Email Address:

f. Phone Number:

4. Fiscal Information:

a. Accounting System Automated Manual Combination

b. Unique Entity Identifier #

c. Fiscal Year End Month

5. RPC(s)

6. Primary Facility Type: Sidewalk Bike Lane Shared-use Path

Shoulder

Other (Please describe)

7. Project Description: Please give a brief description of the project (100 words or less.)

Detailed information should be submitted as part of addressing the selection criteria. Be sure to include identifying streets or landmarks that the proposed project links at either end (e.g. New concrete sidewalk with granite curbing on Main St. from Elm St. to Maple St.).

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8. **Estimated Project Costs:**

Scoping Projects

Consultant Costs

Consultant Costs (to develop scoping report)

Admin Costs

Administration/Local Project Manager Costs

(Costs associated with oversight of the project, estimated at 10% of Scoping report development)

TOTAL SCOPING AMOUNT APPLIED FOR (including 20% local share)

2023 VTrans Bicycle/Pedestrian Program – Scoping Criteria Template

Applicant Name: Town of Chester

Project Title--Scoping: Scoping Study of Sidewalk to High School

Application Checklist

Make sure everything is included and pages numbered.

(1) Project Application Form (separate PDF file)

All other materials noted below to be provided in the same order as below.

(2) Project Evaluation Criteria Documentation for the project (completed BELOW)

(3) Project Map(s)

(4) RPC review confirmation letter

(5) Current letter of support from the municipal governing body acknowledging their willingness to provide the local match

(6) Documentation of contact with VTrans District office, if project is on the state system Not a Construction Project

(7) Supporting Documentation (Excerpts from other planning documents, police reports, etc.)

A. SCOPING PROJECTS

1. **Community Need—15 Points:** How does the project to be scoped contribute to the community bicycling or walking network? How does the project contribute to ongoing local placemaking or economic development initiatives? Include a description of the type of facility (i.e. sidewalk, bike lanes, shared-use path) to be studied and key origins and destinations to be served. Provide justification for study requests that exceed \$60,000.

One of the greatest assets of Chester is that it is a walkable community. The sidewalk network connects all aspects of community living: shopping, education, recreation, religious institutions, history, library and culture, and municipal buildings such as town hall. The Sidewalks in Chester are used by residents, but also by visitors who come to Chester and admire the ability to park their car and walk throughout the community. Chester has taken large strides over the past several years to not only maintain and improve our existing sidewalk network, but also to begin looking at ways to expand our system.

This Scoping Study will review the potential of adding a sidewalk to the southern region of Chester that will provide pedestrian access to several local businesses, two neighborhood developments as well as the High School. The study will include an assessment of rights of way, utility concerns and potential environmental impacts. The study will provide a realistic cost estimate for engineering and construction of the sidewalk. The process will involve extensive community outreach to assess the temperature of the abutting landowners who will be directly affected by the project. In addition, the community at large will need to be assessed to determine their level of support as there will need to be town funding of some capacity to bring this project to completion in the future.

This area of Chester, to include the High School property is located along Vermont Route 103, just 3,100 feet off the existing sidewalk network. This area is heavily used by pedestrians, primarily students, who walk to and from the High School. In addition to being an educational institution, the High School property is also home to several miles of hiking trails which are frequently used by members of the community. If constructed, this sidewalk extension would complete a vital pedestrian linkage for Chester's community. This section of sidewalk would allow its residents safe pedestrian access to the Village Center Area, as well as allowing pedestrian access to Town Hall, the stone church, the local market, the train depot, recreational areas of town as well as the Village Center.

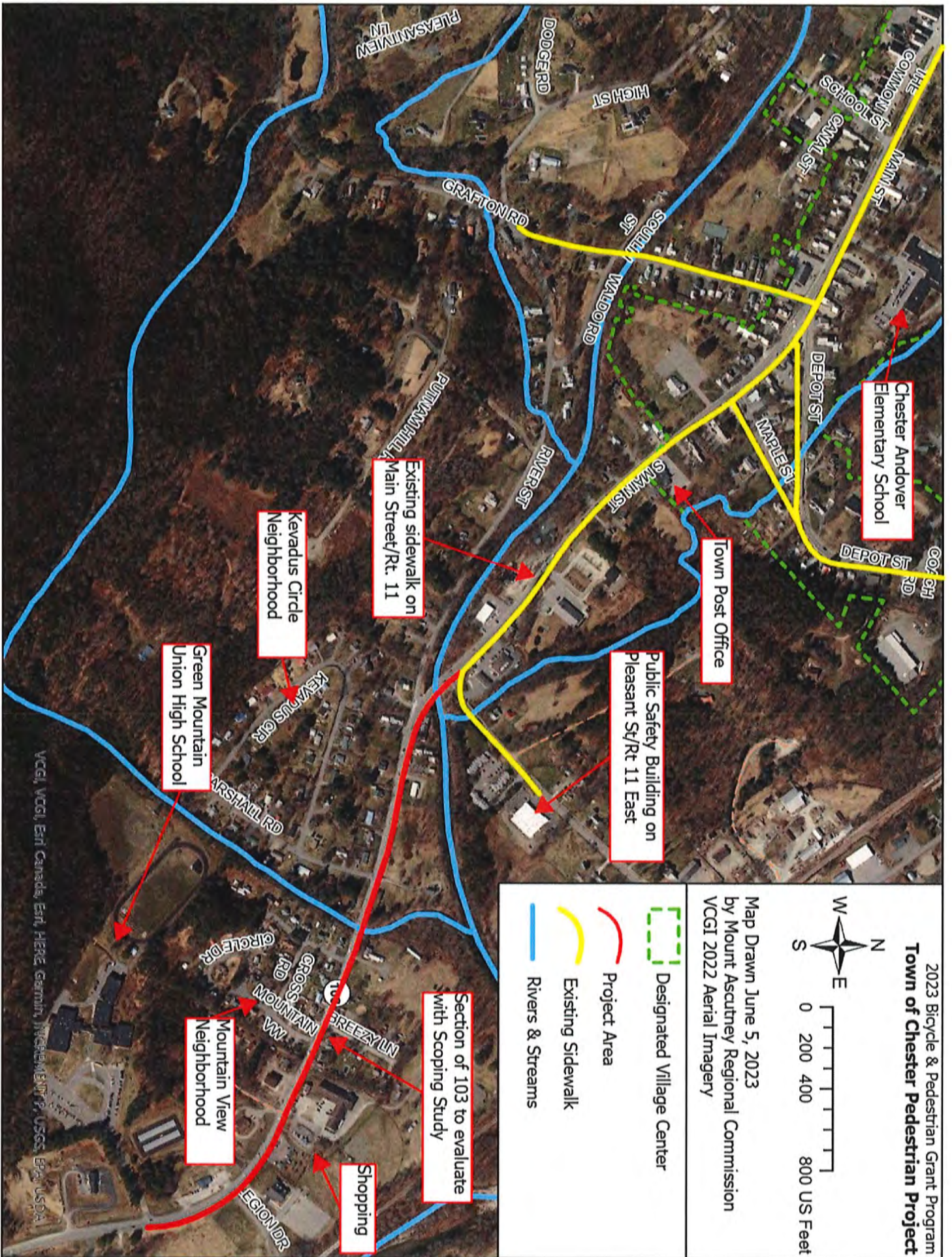
Vermont Route 103 is a truck network for the State of Vermont and is very heavily traveled by motor vehicles and trucks of all sizes. Pedestrian passage along this road is not safe. However, the pedestrian usage continues to grow as more people are out walking for exercising and as their preferred mode of transportation. Attached

to this application is a letter from the former Principal of Green Mountain high School indicating his concerns regarding students walking to school and the lack of sidewalk. Constructing a sidewalk along this section of busy road will provide safe passage for all.

Chester has recently completed a Master Plan for the Village Center Designated Area which was accomplished through the Strong Communities Better Connections (SCBC) Grant program. Through this Plan, Chester has identified that its desire is to become a place where one can Live, Work and Play. This Master Plan, as well as the Town Plan and Sidewalk Inventory acknowledge the importance of this network to the local community and its economy.

In 2015, the Chester Planning Commission and Chester Selectboard adopted its most recent version of the Chester Town Plan. The Town Plan addresses sidewalks as a “critical form of transportation within this community. It establishes a goal to “encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation through maintenance and expansion of existing facilities” (see highlighted section on page 25). It sets forth a goal to “encourage and maintain a safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation network” by recommending “Alternative forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling...” (See page highlighted section on Page 7.) The Plan further creates a policy to “continue to expand the sidewalk network while at the same time maintaining those segments that are in good and fair shape” (See page 26, Policy 4), as well as work with Regional Planning to “expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other enhancements to Chester’s transportation network”. (See page 26, Policy 5). The Town Plan further creates a recommendation to “maintain the 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”. The purpose of this grant will be to study an area where the sidewalk network can be expanded, as guided by this Town Plan.

The Town Plan also considers the use of increasing pedestrian traffic in its review of Energy consumption and uses. It sets forth the goal to “encourage the development of a transportation system that ... enables increased non-motorized vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Emphasize links between schools, stores, work and home.” (See highlighted section on page 8, Goal 7, Recommendation 1.) The proposed sidewalk project accomplishes these goals that have been set forth by the Town Plan as well as regional and state Planning efforts.



VCGI, VCGI, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, Esri, USA, 1



June 7, 2023

Peter Pochop, Project Manager
Project Delivery Bureau, Municipal Assistance, VTrans
219 North Main Street
Barre VT 05641

SUBJECT: Statement of Support for Chester's Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Application

Dear Mr. Pochop:

The Town of Chester is applying to the 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Program for a scoping study of extending the existing sidewalk from the VT 103/11 intersection to connect with the Green Mountain High School on VT 103 South.

Staff at Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC) has reviewed this application. MARC strongly supports this application.

This project is consistent with and furthers goals of both the Regional Plan and Town Plan. Specifically, this project would address a key pedestrian need in the Regional Transportation Plan by: *"[m]ak[ing] logical sidewalk and multi-use path network expansions to make connections between destinations."*

It also helps to implement a physical improvement that is identified in our Active Transportation Plan: *"VT Route 103 – Chester – Plan for and construct a sidewalk extension to connect the village to the Green Mountain High School."*

This project also addresses a recommendation from the VT 103 Corridor Management Plan (2009): *"Construct New Sidewalk From VT 11 to Green Mountain High School."*

This is an important project, and one that MARC staff has been talking about for many years with town officials. It would help to determine the feasibility of making important pedestrian connections from the Village Center and surrounding neighborhoods to the high school.

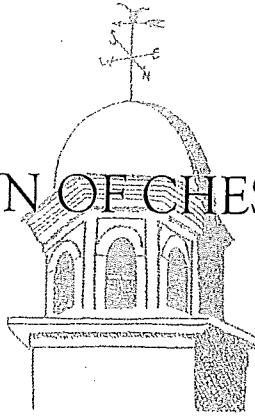
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Rasmussen, AICP
Executive Director

P.O. Box 320
38 Ascutney Park Road
Ascutney, VT 05030
802.674.9201
www.marcvt.org

TOWN OF CHESTER



556 Elm Street
P.O. Box 370
Chester, VT 05143

(802) 875-2173
Fax (802) 875 2237

June 8, 2023

Mr. Peter Pochop
Agency of Transportation
Municipal Assistance Bureau
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier, Vermont 05633

RE: 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program
Town of Chester, Sidewalk to High School Scoping Study

Dear Mr. Pochop:

The Town of Chester is submitting an application under the 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program for a Scoping Study along Vermont Route 103 to the High School.

This application has been presented to the Chester Selectboard and was approved with great excitement. The Selectboard and I are aware of the required match of 20% and are committed to ensuring that the required match is funded.

In addition, the town of Chester sets aside money each year within its budget for the maintenance and upkeep of the existing sidewalk network. Future maintenance of this completed project will be included with this budget item.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Julie S. Hance', written in dark ink.

Julie S. Hance
Town Manager



GREEN MOUNTAIN UNION HIGH SCHOOL

716 VT ROUTE 103S CHESTER, VERMONT 05143

<http://www.gmuhs.wswsu.org>

Tel. (802) 875-2146 Fax (802) 875-3183

Tom Ferenc, *Principal*

Pam O'Neil, *Guidance Director*

Michael J. Ripley, *Associate Principal*

December 10, 2015

David Pisha
Chester Town Manager
PO Box 370
Chester, Vermont 05143

Dear Mr. Pisha,

I am writing to you to help initiate a study of the traffic flow on Route 103. I understand that this may come under the purview of the State but I wanted to relate my observations to you.

There are several areas of concern that I have, all related to the health, safety and welfare of the Green Mountain Union High School students and staff. These include, but are not limited to:

- the speed of the vehicles going by our school in the morning and afternoon when we transition, including large tractor-trailers
- the lack of sidewalks on Route 103 as numerous students walk to and from town on the side of Route 103 (even more dangerous when it is dark and there are snow piles)
- the lack of clearly marked crosswalks for students to cross Route 103
- the lack of blinking warning lights to alert drivers that the speed limit has changed

The intention here, of course, is student safety. It is also to let the data we collect from the study inform our decision-making, regarding the issues we face and possible solutions.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns, guidance or direction you may have and thank you very much for your consideration of this logical request.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Ferenc, Principal, GMUHS

MISSION STATEMENT

Green Mountain is an educational community committed to helping students develop to their fullest potential and be responsible individuals.

CHESTER ROUTE 103 SIDEALK SCOPING STUDY PRE-PROPOSAL ESTIMATE JUNE 5, 2023

Task Number	Task Description	VP RM CMH-PE (Hrs)	CPE RNG (Hrs)	Eng Tech MCB (Hrs)	Clerical (Hrs)	Sub Consult (dollars)	Expenses (Dollars)	Cost Per Task
A	Project Kick-Off Meeting	6					\$100	\$940
B	Compile Basemap/Document Existing Conditions	6		22				\$2,820
C	Local Concerns Meeting	6		8			\$100	\$1,660
D	Identify Land Use Context	1		2				\$320
E	Develop Conceptual Alternatives	8		40				\$4,720
F	Identify Right-of-way Issues	1		4			\$340	\$10,840
G	Identify Utility Conflicts	1		6				\$680
H	Identify Natural Resource Constraints & Permitting Requirements	2		8			\$500	\$13,500
I	Alternatives Presentation	12		18			\$100	\$3,400
J	Develop Preliminary Cost Estimates	2	8	16				\$2,560
K	Project Time Line	1		2				\$320
L	Report Production & Final Presentation	20		50	12		\$100	\$8,240
Total Hours		66	8	176	12	111	\$1,240	
Percent of Total Hours		18%	2%	47%	3%	30%		
Hourly Rate		\$140.00	\$105.00	\$90.00	\$70.00	\$22.000	\$1,240	\$50.000
Subtotals		\$9,240	\$840	\$15,840	\$840	\$22,000	\$1,240	\$50,000

NOTES:

- 1 This estimate is for the Town's budgetary purposes. Sub consultant pricing has not been obtained.

TOTAL FEES \$50,000

TOTAL HOURS 373



Chester Scoping Study
Beginning location of proposed sidewalk



Chester Scoping Study
Vt. Route 103 near residential developments



Chester Scoping Study
Vt. Route 103 near residential developments



Chester Scoping Study
Vt. Route 103 near businesses



Chester Scoping Study
Vt. Route 103 approaching High School



Chester Scoping Study
Taken from H.S. Driveway entrance

1 costs of road construction or improvement of existing town roads to service new residential and
 2 commercial development should be borne by the developer. Ample off-street parking should be
 3 provided and all accesses to lots should be limited to one curb cut.
 4

5 **Access Management**

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

15 Controlling accesses along VT Route 103 south and north of the village is important. In 2008-9,
 16 the Town of Chester is working with the SWCRPC, WRC, Town of Rockingham and VTrans to
 17 develop a VT Route 103 Corridor Management Plan to address access management and other
 18 issues.

19 The Residential 40,000 zoning district currently allows many commercial uses along VT Route
 20 103 south, which may result in unwanted strip development.

21
 22 **Transportation Goals**

- 23
- 24 1. Ensure that future development of transportation related facilities in the town of
- 25 Chester are designed to maintain the beauty, integrity and rural characteristics of
- 26 the town.
- 27 2. Keep the existing transportation network in good repair to avoid costly
- 28 replacement in the future.
- 29 3. Reduce the impact of truck traffic on the village center.
- 30 4. Reduce the adverse impacts of current peak traffic volumes.
- 31 5. Expand the use of public and rail transportation as an alternative to automobile
- 32 and truck traffic on Route 103.
- 33 6. Encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation through maintenance and
- 34 expansion of existing facilities.
- 35 7. Limit access points (curb cuts) wherever possible to discourage sprawl and
- 36 maintain safe travel conditions for all roadway users.
- 37 8. Widen and realign the intersection of Routes 103/11 and Maple to
- 38 accommodate the turning radius of trucks and busses.
- 39 9. Provide more parking for commercial uses and provide parking for Park & Ride.
- 40 10. Encourage the expansion of public transit within Chester and between it and
- 41 regional towns.
- 42
- 43

- 1 7. Development should be consistent with the existing density pattern of the area and
2 consistent with an historic rate of growth.
- 3 8. Growth and development should occur at a rate which does not undermine the
4 taxpayers' ability to support the town on a sound financial basis.

5
6 **Goal 2:** To encourage a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job
7 opportunities.

8 **Recommendations:**

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

18
19 **Goal 3:** To maintain and broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities for
20 all Town residents.

21 **Recommendations:**

- 22 1. Encourage development of educational and cultural opportunities for all residents.
- 23 2. Support community wide cultural events and activities.

24
25 **Goal 4:** To encourage and maintain a safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient
26 transportation network.

27 **Recommendations:**

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

32
33 **Goal 5:** To identify and protect important natural and historical features of the Vermont
34 landscape, including woodland, wetlands, scenic and significant archeological sites, significant
35 architecture, villages, wildlife habitats and agricultural land.

36 **Recommendations:**

1 **Transportation Policies**
2

- 3 1. Involve citizens in planning processes concerning the long range structure and
4 viability of Chester’s transportation network.
5 2. Work with Green Mountain Railroad to expand the capabilities of its rail corridor.
6 3. Work with Town and Village Bus to expand its local service and schedule.
7 4. Continue to expand the sidewalk network while at the same time maintaining
8 those segments that are in “good” and “fair” shape.
9 5. Maintain ongoing communication and coordination with the regional planning
10 commission concerning state and federal funding opportunities to expand bicycle
11 and pedestrian facilities and other enhancements to Chester’s transportation
12 network.
13 6. Work with other towns along the Route 103 corridor to coordinate mitigation efforts
14 aimed at alleviating the effects of truck and peak ski/tourist traffic.
15 7. Obtain the property necessary to widen the intersection of Routes 103/11 and
16 Maple Street to provide adequate, or better, turning radius for commercial
17 vehicles.
18 8. Obtain the property necessary to provide more parking for commercial properties
19 and Park and Ride.
20 9. Promote access management techniques along VT Route 103 south in order to
21 balance growth with highway mobility.
22

23 **Transportation Recommendations**
24

- 25 1. Create a timeline for replacement of sidewalk sections that are in “poor” shape
26 and expansion of pedestrian facilities to those areas of town that need them.
27 2. Work with the regional planning commission to develop the capabilities to
28 monitor traffic volumes/patterns on an internal basis.
29 3. Identify properties for acquisition by the Town for parking and Park & Ride
30 facilities
31 4. At the intersection of Routes 11/103 and Maple St., acquire the parcel on the
32 northeasterly corner for widening and realignment of the intersection.
33 5. Obtain representation of the Town of Chester on the Public Bus Service Board.
34 6. Continue working with SWCRPC, VTTrans and other partners to develop the VT
35 Route 103 Corridor Management Plan. Consider incorporating the Corridor
36 Management Plan, or portions of it, as a component of the Town Plan.
37 7. Examine options to address potential access management problems along VT
38 Route 103 South and allow growth that does not detract visually or economically
39 from the Village.

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

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

8 **Recommendations:**

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

17
18 **Goal 7:** To encourage the efficient use of energy through conservation and the use of renewable
19 energy resources.

20 **Recommendations:**

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

31
32 **Goal 8:** To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

33
34 **Recommendations:**

- 35 1. Develop and maintain good recreational plans and infrastructure to provide
36 recreation opportunities for all residents and visitors.