

Chester Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Bylaw Amendment: Creation of new Open Space (OS) District and Map

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441(c) which states:

“When considering an amendment to a bylaw, the planning commission shall prepare and approve a written report on the proposal. A single report may be prepared so as to satisfy the requirements of this subsection concerning bylaw amendments and subsection 4384(c) of this title concerning plan amendments. The report shall provide(:)

(A) brief explanation of the proposed bylaw, amendment, or repeal andinclude a statement of purpose as required for notice under §4444 of this title,

As part of the ongoing effort to update the Unified Development Bylaws (UDBs), the Town of Chester’s Planning Commission has prepared a draft Open Space District and Map. This is a new district that does not presently exist in the UDBs.

The purpose of this Open Space District, which is entirely within FEMA’s Special Flood Hazard Area, protects critical flood plain resources including wetlands, wildlife habitat, and natural flood storage which provides erosion control in the event of a flood, and limits the uses beyond what is allowed under the Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District. Appropriate uses in this district include agriculture, forestry, recreation, and civic, cultural, educational and social events. This district is not appropriate for residential uses.

(A)nd shall include findings regarding how the proposal:

1. *Conforms with or furthers the goals and policies contained in the municipal plan, including the effect of the proposal on the availability of safe and affordable housing:*

It conforms with the Chester Town Plan in that the proposed District encourages flood resilient communities (Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter, page 46). The proposed District furthers goals in the Plan for the Farmlands future land use category as well as special considerations for important natural resources (Land Use Chapter, pages 12-13). It also helps to maintain the scenic views of farms along the Williams River (Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter, pages 50-51).

Safe and affordable housing are proposed in other areas of town, where they are not subject to higher levels of flood-related risk.

2. *Is compatible with the proposed future land uses and densities of the municipal plan:*

Yes, we believe this proposed District is compatible with the future land uses and densities called for in the Town Plan as described above.

3. *Carries out, as applicable, any specific proposals for any planned community facilities.”*

Not applicable.