



THE MUNICIPALITY OF
CHESTER

DISCUSSION PAPER

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT ALONG HIGHWAY 3 IN CHESTER VILLAGE

Prepared By: John Gamey, Summer Co-op Planning Student
Department: Community Development & Recreation
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BACKGROUND



This section's purpose is to introduce a number of topics that are relevant to planning Highway 3's future. First, a brief review of Ekistics Planning & Design's 2011 *Highway 3 Streetscape Study* will be provided, which has had a significant impact on how development has proceeded along Highway 3 for the past 10 - 12 years. Next, several topics relevant to Highway 3's future are introduced, including: (a) the creation of a new vision for Highway 3, and (b) municipal priorities and zoning regulations as they relate to residential and commercial development

BACKGROUND



This discussion paper will provide an overview of Chester Village's current Land-use bylaws, planning documents, and policies as they relate to residential and commercial development along Highway 3. A series of questions will be provided at the end of each subsection, which will (a) be used to foster discussion at a public engagement workshop in August, and (b) help set the stage for this paper's 'Discussion' and 'Staff Re-zoning Proposals' sections. In these two sections, staff will provide an analysis of how they believe zoning along Highway 3 can be re-imagined to closer align with current municipal objectives.

Following a public engagement workshop being held on August 18, staff expect to have a greater sense of what community members believe is appropriate for future land use along Highway 3. Once this workshop is completed, a Staff Report will be compiled for Council's consideration as part of the larger Village Plan Review that is underway.

Historical Overview

In 2011, Ekistics Planning & Design (now Fathom Studio) submitted their final report for the then-future of Highway 3, titled [*Planning Vision and Streetscape Design for Highway 3 at Chester Village*](#). This study was originally commissioned by Council to guide growth on Highway 3 in a way that (Ekistics, 2011):

- Created a positive first impression of Chester;
- Encouraged economic development in a planned fashion;

- Emphasized Highway 3 as a destination instead of a conduit;
- Ensured the objectives of the Chester Integrated Community Sustainability Plan were met.

Following a series of public engagement initiatives, Ekistics found a desire among residents to think of Highway 3 as North Street again. This engagement also revealed a rejection of sprawling strip malls and the inclusion of generic franchises (Ekistics, 2011). The report submitted by Ekistics provided a number of recommended architectural controls to apply to the Highway 3 area at Chester Village, most of which were subsequently applied to the Chester Village Secondary Planning Strategy. These architectural controls have been in place since 2011, and are currently being reviewed as a part of the larger Village Plan Review.

In a separate but related initiative, the Municipality of Chester recently commissioned Fowler Bauld and Mitchell (FBM) to conduct the *Built Form & Character-Defining Elements Study* for Chester Village, a study that is still ongoing. In short, this study's goal is to identify the architectural styles, materials, and design elements that contribute to the existing character of Chester, and to provide recommendations for how future development can be compatible with these identified elements (FBM, 2022). While this study focuses primarily on the core village area south of Highway 3, its findings can be used to compliment discussions on the future of development along Highway 3.

BACKGROUND



Now that 10 years have passed since residents have been engaged with concerning Highway 3, a workshop with the public will be held on Thursday August 18th with the goal of beginning the process to update the vision and planning tools for the area. Specific areas that planning staff are seeking community feedback on include:

- Creating a new vision for Highway 3
- Suitable housing types and densities
- Suitable commercial development
- Desired level of design guidelines

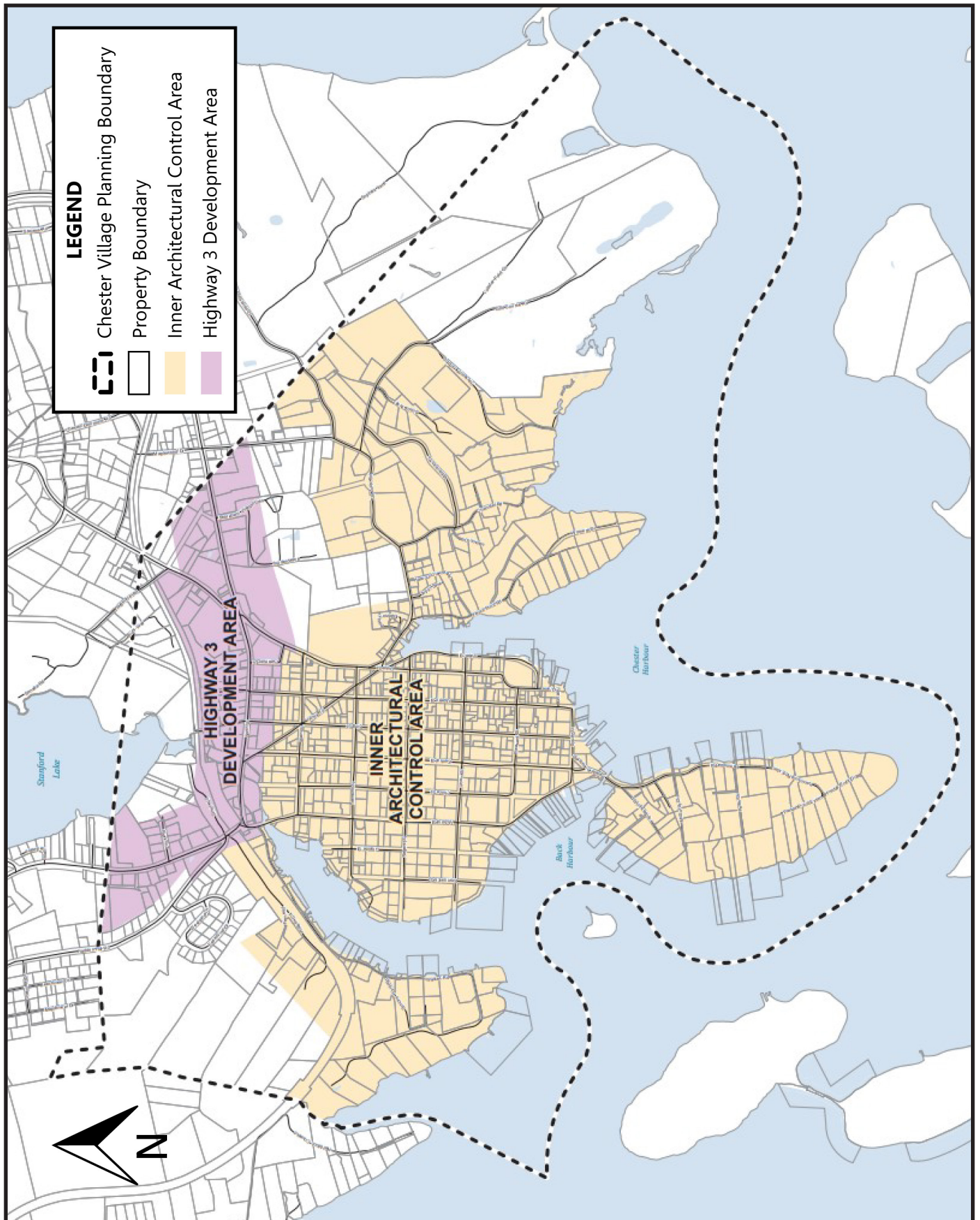
Chester Village: Inner vs. Outer Areas

In implementing the recommendations from Ekistics' report in 2011, the municipality adopted two planning maps that separated development in Highway 3 from development that takes part in the central area of the Village. As shown in [Map 1](#) (Page 4), the Highway 3 Development Area was established, which is separated from the Inner Architectural Area. Within the Highway 3 Development Area, all new construction other than single- and two- unit dwellings must follow design guidelines with regard to (a) architectural character and (b) site design.

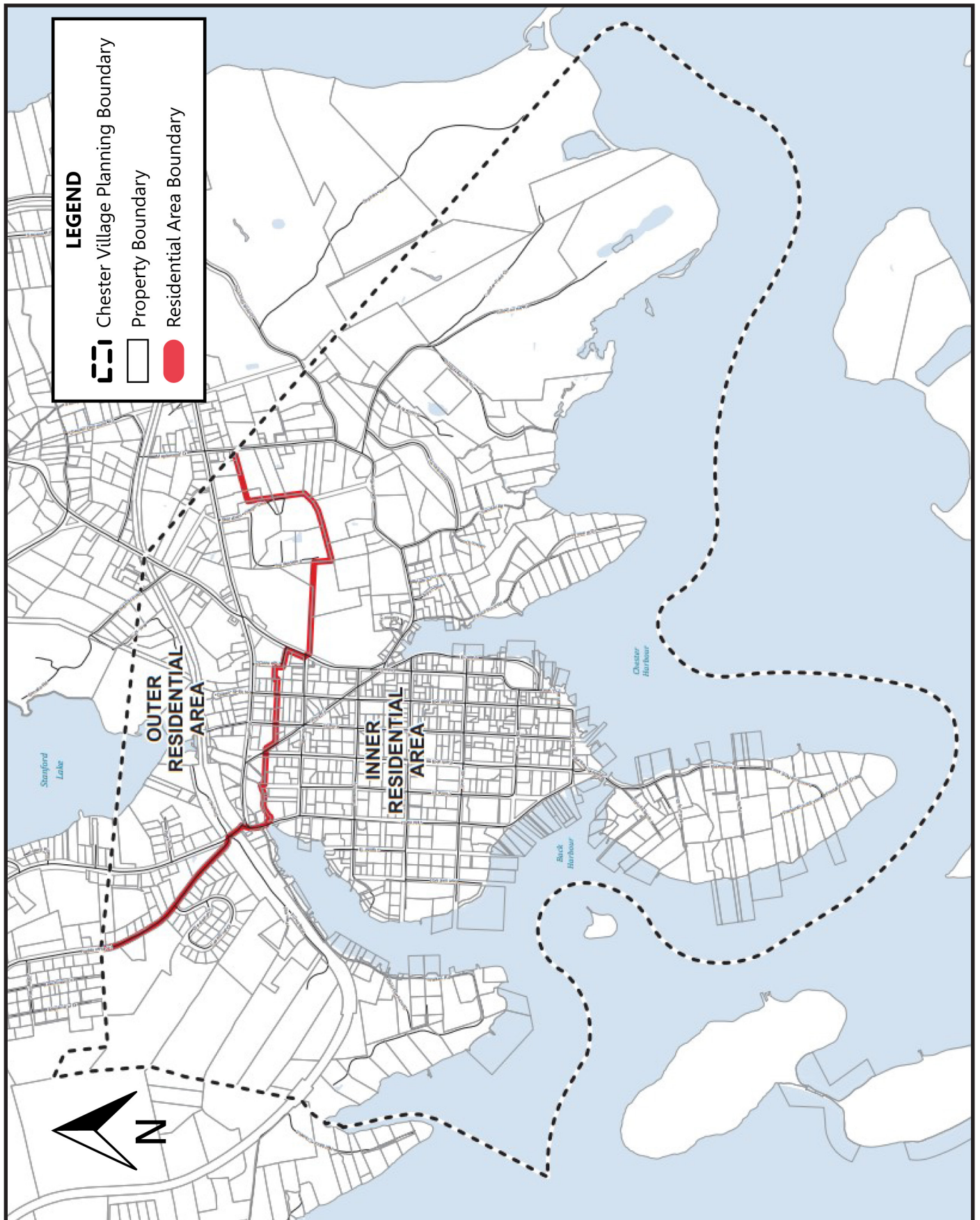
Additionally, as shown in [Map 2](#) (Page 5), the Outer Residential Area was established, which is separated from the Inner Residential Area. In the Outer Residential Area, development is slightly less restricted. Conversions and new residential developments up to 4 units are usually allowed by right, and larger multi-unit developments (up to 12 units) are permitted by site plan approval. Mobile

homes are also permitted by site plan approval, while mini homes are permitted as of right. There are zones within the planning areas shown in Maps 1 and 2 which outline what specific uses are permitted (commercial, residential, density levels etc.). These zones will be looked at more closely in the following pages.

It is important to note that the Village Planning Boundary (as shown in both Map 1 and 2) was shrunk to match the Village Political Boundary in 2020. This was done in an effort to avoid confusion for the property owners who previously fell within the Village Planning Boundary, but outside of the Chester Village Municipal Boundary. This has shrunk the Highway 3 Development Area that existed at the time of Ekistics' work in 2011.



Map 1: Highway 3 Development Area



Map 2: Inner/Outer Residential Area

A New Vision for North Street



Revisiting the 2011 Vision

During Ekistics' *Highway 3 Streetscape Study*, public engagement sessions articulated a clear vision for the part of Highway 3 that passes through Chester Village. In this vision, Highway 3 was to be thought of as North Street again - "a street that is a special place, an extension of Chester's high quality sense of place and an artery through a special community" (Ekistics, 2011). This vision, in a way, guided many of the design guidelines that were adopted by the municipality to ensure that future development along Highway 3 would proceed in alignment with this vision. At the workshop in August, staff plan to engage the public on (a) whether they believe this vision was achieved, (b) whether the community still believes this vision is appropriate for Highway 3, and (c) what a vision for Highway 3 in the Village looks like for 2022 and beyond.

Developing a New Vision

To develop a new vision for Highway 3 in 2022 and beyond, staff will provide a summary of the 2011 vision and ask the public whether they believe this vision has been achieved over the last 10+ years. Next, a series of questions will be asked that are more general in nature, which will attempt to foster a discussion on how Highway 3 is currently perceived, and how it could be improved upon going into the future. After the workshop is finished, staff will analyze the responses received to these questions, looking for consistent themes in how the public want to see development on Highway 3 proceed moving forward. From here,

a general vision for future development along Highway 3 in the Village is expected to materialize. Examples of questions that staff will ask at the August workshop are listed below:

Do you believe the vision developed for Highway 3 in 2011 has been achieved (e.g. turning North Street into a "special place")?

How would you currently describe the part of Highway 3 that passes through the Village?

What do you like about Highway 3 in the Village as it currently exists? What don't you like?

What is most important to you for the future of the Highway 3 in the Village?

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



Municipal Housing Priorities

As a municipality, Chester has a number of goals and policies related to housing, which are intended to support the municipal vision for housing. At a broad level, Chester seeks to allow a wide range of housing types to meet the needs of all residents living in the Municipality, with an emphasis on encouraging affordable housing and options for seniors as they age. Three specific policies are outlined in the Municipal Planning Strategy that address housing goals, which are:

POLICY L-16

Council shall encourage a range of housing types and densities that respond to the needs and physical character of each area, including but not limited to: housing for varied households sizes, housing for seniors and others with special housing needs, and affordable housing.

POLICY L-17

The Land Use By-law shall provide for a range of development approaches, including but not limited to development agreements, mixed-use zoning, varied residential types and densities, two-unit and multi-unit developments, manufactured housing and alternative development standards, to encourage the development of innovative housing concepts.

POLICY L-18

Council may work with organizations, non-profit and cooperative groups and with developers to encourage innovative neighbourhood design and housing approaches, including affordable housing, in the Municipality.

To meet these housing goals, the Municipal Planning Strategy explains that the municipality can work with community groups and developers to encourage the design and development of innovative housing solutions and neighborhoods.

Housing in Chester Village

While the Village is the most densely populated area in the municipality, density levels vary in different parts of the Village. The central core of the Village is the densest, with lots getting larger and more spread out as the edge of the Chester Village Planning Area (see [Map 2](#), Page 5) is reached. The areas designated as the “Outer Residential Area” and “Highway 3 Development Area” (see Maps [1](#) and [2](#), Pages 4 and 5) are where residential properties are dispersed along Highway 3.

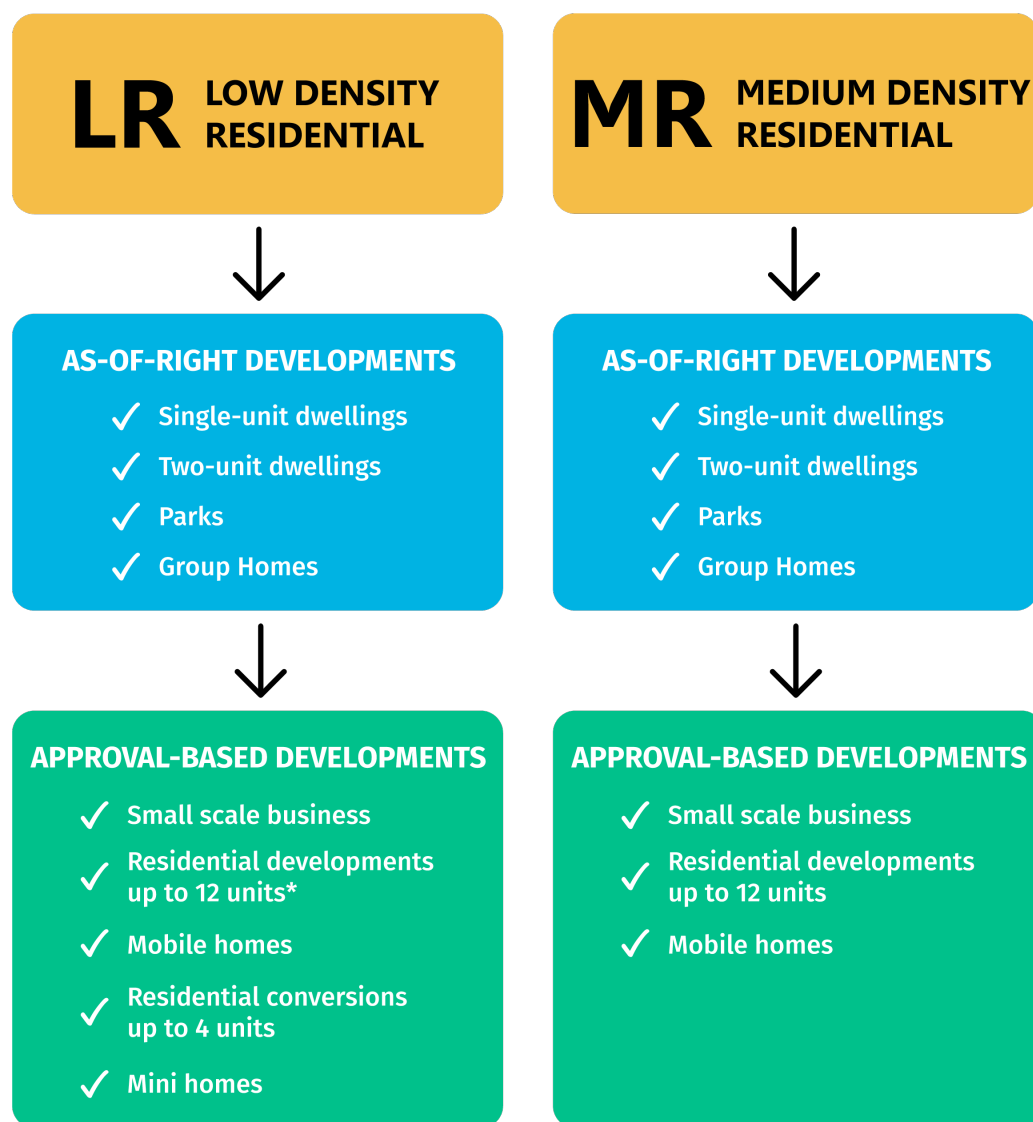
In the Outer Residential Area, residential conversions up to four units are allowed as of right, while larger multi-unit buildings (up to 12 units) are permitted subject to site plan approval, confirmation of adequate water supply, approval of sewage disposal, and satisfaction of any traffic concerns. Architectural controls do exist for the Highway 3 Development Area, meaning that any new residential developments would be required to satisfy design guidelines during the site plan approval process.

CURRENT ZONING: RESIDENTIAL

There are three main zones that run along Highway 3 in Chester Village - (1) the Highway Commercial Zone, (2) the Low Density Residential Zone, and (3) the Medium Density Residential zone. In each of these three zones, there are specific land uses that are permitted. The two residential zones (Low and Medium Density Residential Zones) are quite similar in what they allow, as outlined in

Figure 1 below. Along the Highway 3, the Medium Density Residential Zone is concentrated between Victoria St. to the west and Duke St. to the east, while the Low Density Residential zone is featured more prominently at the edges of the Chester Village Planning Boundary (see [Map 4](#), Page 25 for an overview of current zoning). Both zones have the same permitted as of right development types,

meaning property owners can develop on their land as they see fit, so long as it conforms to specific zoning standards. The Low Density Residential Zone has additional approval-based development types, making it slightly more flexible than the Medium Density Residential Zone. These strong similarities in uses for both residential zones will be discussed further in the “Staff Re-zoning Proposals” section of this paper.



* Limited to Outer Residential Area
Figure 1: Current residential zones

CONSIDERATIONS: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Is the Highway 3 Development Area more appropriate than the Village core for multi-unit residential developments?

Should there be a maximum number of units permitted in a residential structure along Highway 3?

What characteristics could help multi-unit residential developments on Highway 3 blend in with the rest of the Village?

Should architectural controls be in place for new residential developments in the Highway 3 Development Area?

Should the approval process vary depending on number of units? For example, 1 - 4 unit developments being permitted as-of-right (no public input), 5+ units by discretionary planning approval (includes public input).



Multi-unit at 3974 North Street (Google Maps, 2021)



3993 Victoria Street (Google Maps, 2016)

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Business in Chester

In the Municipality of Chester, there are five key economic sectors: (1) Arts, Culture & Recreation, (2) Business Services, (3) Construction, (4) Green Industries, and (5) Niche Manufacturing/Value-added. In Chester Village, it is typical that larger (and sometimes corporate) businesses (e.g. Irving, Independent, Home Hardware) operate along Highway 3, while smaller businesses (e.g. The Kiwi Cafe, The Village Emporium, Tanner & Co. Brewing) operate within the central core of the Village. This divide in commercial activity is significant in defining the quaint character of the central core of the Village (e.g. at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Queen Street).

Approaches to Economic Development

In 2013, an Economic Development Strategy was developed by the municipality - a 5-to-10-year strategy that outlined goals, objectives, and actions the municipality would take to achieve desired economic outcomes. Certain key goals included:

- Becoming a partner in economic development;
- Ensuring the municipality has the tools and infrastructure to retain and attract investment;
- Working with businesses to ensure existing businesses thrive and new businesses are welcomed;
- Becoming the South Shore community that stands out;
- Continue to be known as a tourist destination

Specific objectives and actions related to these goals are outlined in a [2013 report](#) prepared by McSweeney & Associates.



Street sign (Village of Chester, 2022)

At present, Chester continues to market itself as a viable location for businesses to grow and succeed. As outlined on the [Invest Chester](#) webpage, Chester's natural environment, existing recreational opportunities, and overall quality of life are key factors that make doing business in Chester desirable. Further, the municipality markets itself as a government willing to work with businesses to work toward growth and prosperity by (a) offering incentives, (b) having lower property costs, and (c) working to strike an overall balance between services, taxes, and regulations.

CURRENT ZONING: COMMERCIAL

Highway Commercial Zone

A specific commercial zone exists in the Highway 3 Development Area, known as the **Highway Commercial Zone**. This zone allows for over 40 different uses (see full list in [Appendix A](#), Page 30), including a wide array of commercial uses and the same residential uses found in the Low Density Residential Zone. Commercial uses are all subject to both Highway Commercial Zone requirements and site plan approval.

During Ekistics' *Highway 3 Streetscape Study*, it was recognized that commercial development typically happens in clusters along Highway 3 in the Village, and that this pattern of development should be

maintained. Within the Chester Village Planning Boundary, there are two larger clusters of commercial development: (1) where Highway 3 passes between Smith Road and Douglas Avenue, and (2) where Highway 3 passes between Queen Street and Pig Loop Road (see [Map 4](#), Page 25).

A third potential cluster area was identified by Ekistics where the old Hawboldt Industries site was once located (at the intersection of Highway 3 and Victoria Street). Council agreed that this land should be zoned as commercial, which it is today despite not being developed on. This site area is shown in the photo below:



Undeveloped site at North St and Victoria Street, Chester Village (Google Maps, 2014)

CONSIDERATIONS: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Should residential uses be prohibited in the Highway Commercial Zone?

The separation of commercial and residential uses reduces land use conflicts. Agree or disagree?

Are there any commercial uses that you believe do not belong in the Highway 3 Development Area?

Should light industrial/industrial uses be prohibited in the Highway Commercial Zone?

Would you support re-zoning vacant lots currently zoned as Highway Commercial to encourage residential development?



The Stretch Diner (Trip Advisor, 2022)



Home Hardware on North Street (Twitter, 2022)

DESIGN GUIDELINES

When Ekistics completed the *Highway 3 Streetscape Study*, they developed a series of design guidelines for the Highway 3 Development Area (see [Map 1](#) Page 4). The recommended design guidelines were almost all adopted by the municipality, and have been codified into the Village Land Use By-law since 2011. The goal of applying these design guidelines to the Highway 3 Development Area was to “ensure that future development reinforces the tradition of architectural and landscape excellence of Chester” (Ekistics, 2011). These design guidelines were broken into 6 different categories: (1) site standards, (2) landscape, (3) architectural, (4) large format development, (5) signage, and (6) lighting.

(1) Site Standards

In creating their site standards, Ekistics was focused on reinforcing the scale and pedestrian focus of the Village. Of particular importance was ensuring that sites resembling “typical commercial



Commercial Strip Development in New Minas, NS (The Star, 2018)

strip development” were prohibited. Specific key guidelines included:

- No parking between Highway 3 and the building front;
- Locate buildings close to Highway 3 with entrances fronting the road;
- One landscape parking island per 30 parking spaces.

(2) Landscape

Ekistics recognized that Chester’s natural and manicured landscapes contribute to the area’s character, and as such sought to develop guidelines to ensure that landscaping within the Highway 3 Development Area aligned with the “Chester vernacular”. Specific key guidelines included:

- Site layout, grading, and planting plans must be submitted as part of the approval process for all buildings exceeding 2,000 sqft;
- Landscaped beds must be incorporated into at least 25% of the building footprint in area;
- Landscape details and fixtures should reinforce Chester as a distinct waterfront community, and are “playful and artful” like those in the Village.

(3) Architectural

The architectural guidelines created by Ekistics for the Highway 3 Development Area had the goal of “respecting and maintaining the character and sense of place of Chester” (Ekistics, 2011). These guidelines include:

DESIGN GUIDELINES



- New buildings must be consistent with an already prevalent architectural style found in Chester;
- Building components not visible from Highway 3 can be built to a less stringent standard and do not require a discernable style;
- Large monolithic and monotonous buildings shall be broken down into a collection of architectural parts;
- Building colour schemes should include either light muted body colors, and/or white/grey body colours;
- The use of fake stone, stucco, aluminum, or vinyl siding is prohibited.

(4) Large Format Development

Ekistics defined large format development as buildings exceeding 15,000 sqft, explaining that buildings of this size were not desired on Highway 3 with the exception of (a) the Chester Shore Mall, and (b) the Robinson's Corner area, east of the Highway 3/Highway 14 intersection. A series of site design and pedestrian amenity guidelines were developed, along with separate architectural guidelines. These architectural guidelines included:

- The base, middle, and top of the building shall be expressed through the use of materials and detail design;
- Blank or single material facades that extend the length of the building parallel to the public street are not permitted;
- Main entrances to buildings should be emphasized through canopies, awnings or taller, non-habitable building structures.

(5) Signage

Ekistics developed guidelines for signage in the Highway 3 Development Area to ensure that all signage “should be informative and embody the architectural and environmental flavour that surrounds it” (Ekistics, 2011). The key guideline created in relation to signage was that backlit and/or internally lit signs were no longer permitted (this was reversed in 2021).

(6) Lighting

Guidelines for lighting were developed to protect the enjoyment of neighbouring residential properties while also prioritizing safety and visibility. Key guidelines focused on ensuring that both parking and building lighting did not direct glare onto neighbouring residential properties, particularly after 11pm.

CONSIDERATIONS: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Should buildings on Highway 3 be subject to any design guidelines? Residential? Commercial? Both?

What is more important to you (for multi-unit developments) - building appearance or total number of units?

Should new developments on Highway 3 have site design requirements? (Ex. location of parking, landscaping etc.)

Currently, parts of a building viewed from Highway 3 are held to a higher design standard. Do you support maintaining this type of regulation?



Cape Cod style dwelling in Chester (House & Home, 2021)



4067 Highway 3, Chester (Viewpoint, 2022)

DISCUSSION



In this section, several key questions and issues related to future development along Highway 3 in the Village will be identified and considered by staff. A brief analysis of each question and issue will be provided, which will serve to inform the “Staff Re-zoning Scenarios” that follow this section.

DISCUSSION



(1) Residential Zoning

The Low Density and Medium Density Residential Zones are nearly identical in what land uses they allow. Is it necessary to have both?

Both zones permit the same types of as of right developments. The main difference between these two zones is that the Low Density Residential zone allows for residential conversions up to 4 units and for mini homes, while the Medium Density Residential Zone does not. It is estimated that there are currently 11 undeveloped lots along the Highway 3 Development Area that fall within the Medium Density Residential Zone. Were these two zones merged to allow for the same residential uses, there would be a small number of undeveloped lots impacted. While the allowance for residential conversions would be of no concern for these 11 undeveloped lots, the allowance of mini homes is worth discussing with the public and municipal planning advisory committees. Were these two zones merged into one (e.g. “The Highway 3 Residential Zone”), there would be greater clarity and certainty in what type of residential development can take place within the Highway 3 Development Area.

(2) Commercial Zoning

Should residential uses be excluded from the Highway Commercial Zone?

Currently, the Highway Commercial Zone permits the same residential uses as the Low Density Residential

Zone, which is the more permissive of the two residential zones mentioned in this paper. In the past this has caused issues, particularly with regards to illuminated signage. While business owners within the Highway 3 Development Area were in favor of illuminated signage, neighbors and local residents stood in opposition, arguing that this type of signage did not align with the character of the Village. Staff believe that a stricter separation of land uses could work to reduce these types of conflicts. This will be further gauged at the workshop in August.

(3) Multi-unit Development

How should multi-unit residential development proceed in the Highway 3 Development Area (density, design, location etc.)?

As it currently stands, residential developments up to 12 units are permitted by site plan approval in both residential zones in the Highway 3 Development Area. For several reasons, multi-unit developments should continue to be encouraged in this area. First, Council has already authorized amendments to permit multi-unit structures within the Central Commercial Zone by development agreement to address an acute housing shortage (VSPS, 2022) - an action that indicates a need for new, denser housing in the Village. Second, encouraging and enabling the development of residential multi-units in the Highway 3 Development Area would align with Policy L-16 from the Municipal Planning Strategy, which states “Council shall encourage a range of housing types and densities that respond to

DISCUSSION

the needs and physical character of each area . . . “

Whether 12 units is the correct cap on size for multi-unit developments is still unclear, since apartment buildings and condos of this size are not typical for the Village. In terms of denser developments in the Village, there are three main examples: (1) Chandler's Cove, (2) Shoreham Village, and (3) 122 Queen St. (10 unit apartment building). Residents from the Village have historically voiced the opinion that the Village's character should be protected and preserved, which typically refers to single-detached homes that have the “Chester look”. What the “Chester look” entails should be more clearly defined once FBM's *Built Form & Character-Defining Elements Study* is completed.



Townhomes at Chandler's Cove, Chester Village

While FBM is mainly focused on the architectural character of homes and structures within the Inner Residential Area, the architectural styles they identify as appropriate for future development in the Village will need to be considered when selecting the level

of architectural controls to place on residential developments in the Highway 3 Development Area. Staff will likely recommend less restrictions on residential development in the Highway 3 Development Area, given its separation from the Central Village Area. Several examples of 3 to 12 unit developments will be provided at the workshop to gauge interest in different styles, sizes, and materials.

While it is anticipated that multi-unit developments up to 12 units will be undesired in the Inner Residential Area (see [Map 2](#), Page 5) by residents, the Highway 3 Development Area offers a part the Village that is separated from the Village centre, with lots better suited for multi-unit developments. Further, it is becoming clear that developers are becoming interested in building in the area just outside of the Inner Residential Area. A recent public information meeting was held regarding Halyard Inc.'s *Chester Hills* development, who's 200+ unit proposal features 4 apartment-style structures containing roughly 30 units each. While this proposed development would occur just outside of the Chester Village Planning Boundary, it would be occurring just off of Highway 3, north of Stanford Lake.

As the provincial population continues to grow, it can be reasonably assumed that interest in new development will also grow. A number of factors will contribute to Chester Village's attractiveness as a place to live, including: (a) its unique character and heritage, (b) the rise in work-from-home arrangements, and (c) the 45 minute driving distance to Halifax.

DISCUSSION

(4) Re-zoning Commercial Lots

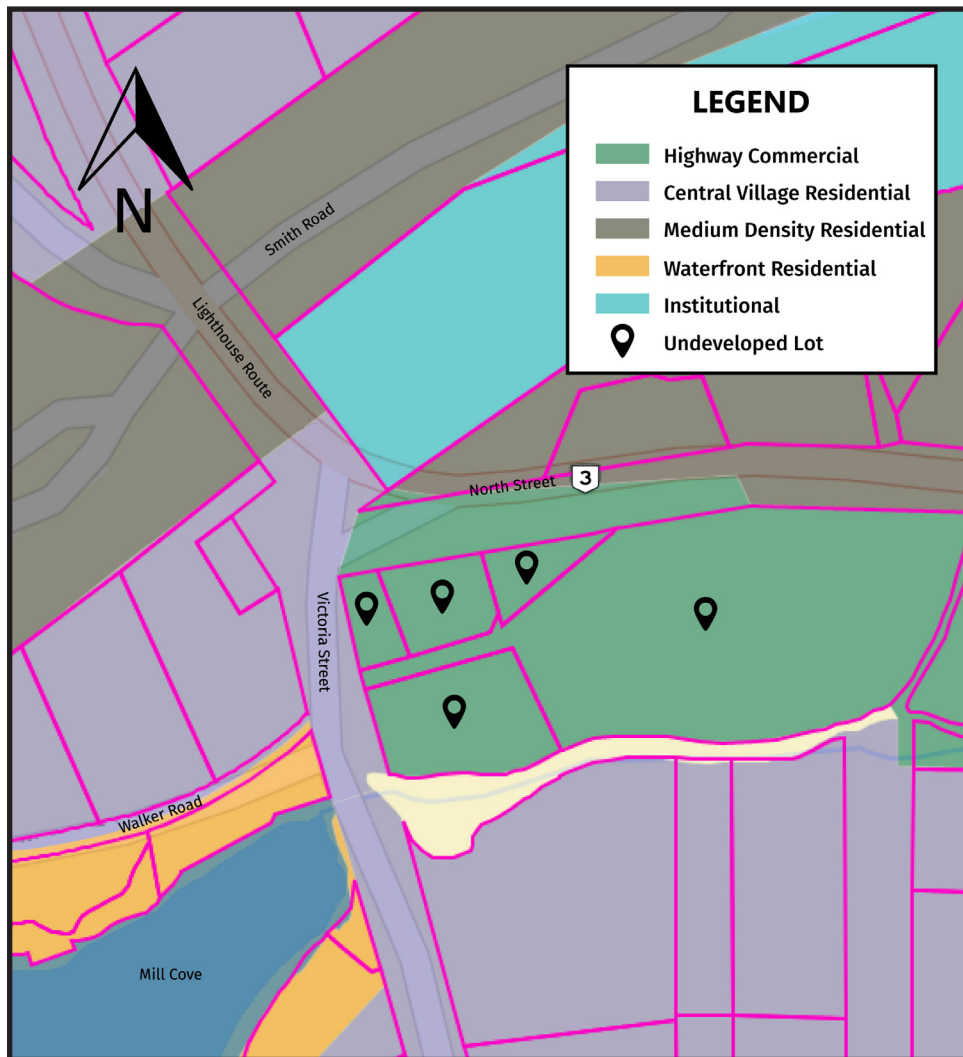
There are five lots located at Victoria St. & North St. currently zoned as Highway Commercial. Should these lots be re-zoned for residential purposes exclusively?

There are five undeveloped lots at Victoria Street and North Street in the Village (see Map 3 below) that are currently zoned as Highway Commercial. In 1999, Hawboldt Industries relocated from this area

to a new location slightly north of the Village. These lots have been zoned as Highway Commercial since 1992. In 2011, Council affirmed that this area was to remain zoned Highway Commercial, and would consider re-allowing light industrial uses were an operation similar to Hawboldt Industries' to express interest in re-developing the area. These lots remain undeveloped in 2022 - a lack of action that suggests its zoning and future uses should be reconsidered. While residential uses are permitted under the

current Highway Commercial Zone these lots fall under, the option of zoning them for exclusive residential use should be considered.

The lot sizes vary from 1 acre to 3,229 sq. ft., with the two larger lots being of a size that could reasonably support multi-unit development. Were these lots to be re-zoned for exclusive residential use by moving them to a revised "Highway 3 Residential Zone", multi-unit structures that help to satisfy municipal housing goals could be built that also take into account the feedback we will receive at the workshop in August.



Map 3: Undeveloped site at North St and Victoria Street, Chester Village

DISCUSSION



(5) Design Guidelines

There are 33 pages in the Village Land Use By-law that list design guidelines for the Highway 3 Development Area. Should these design guidelines be simplified and/or less restrictive?

In 2011, the Municipality of Chester adopted many of Ekistics' design guidelines for Highway 3 in the Village. While these guidelines are in place to ensure that development along Highway 3 takes place in a way that is complementary to the historic character of Chester Village, staff are now questioning whether this high number of prescriptive design guidelines are necessary. Further, there is anecdotal evidence suggesting that businesses will take efforts to avoid triggering design guidelines (e.g. a business may choose not to expand current operations, or will size down expansion plans).

Firstly, staff are seeking input from the public with regards to architectural guidelines on buildings. Staff want to know whether residents still want to see future residential and commercial developments within the Highway 3 Development Area held to strict guidelines, similar to the Inner Architectural Control Area (see [Map 1](#), Page 4). While a degree of architectural controls may still be needed, staff will inquire whether the building itself is the public's main concern, or whether the site design (e.g. location of parking spaces, landscaping) is more important. If the building itself is less significant, this could allow for (a) more creative/emerging residential development types, and (b) a wider range of

commercial uses along Highway 3.

One outlook staff have developed is that the architectural controls should be strictest in the core village area, moderately strict within the Highway 3 Development Area, and less strict outside the Chester Village Planning Boundary. This hierarchy is visualized through a map in [Appendix D](#) (Page 33). This outlook aligns with how development and other initiatives are unfolding in Chester. On one end, FBM is currently conducting the *Built Form & Character-Defining Elements Study* of Chester Village, which is expected to conclude with a set of guidelines for new development in the Inner Residential Area (core of the Village). These guidelines will ensure that new development in the Inner Residential Area is compatible with the historic character of existing structures in the Village. On the other end, Halyard Inc.'s proposed 200+ unit development just north of Stanford Lake features a combination of single-detached homes, duplexes, townhomes, and apartment buildings that will not be subject to any defined design guidelines. Staff view the Highway 3 Development Area as the middle ground between these two poles, where development should be allowed to occur with less restrictions than the Inner Residential Area.

During the workshop in August, staff will provide residents with a variety of residential development types (e.g. photographic examples) to get a better idea of what building types are perceived as acceptable for the Highway 3 Development Area.

STAFF RE-ZONING SCENARIOS



So far, this paper has provided an overview of recent planning initiatives along Highway 3 and current municipal objectives and priorities when it comes to residential and commercial development. Next, a series of discussion questions were posed and answered from the perspective of municipal staff. This paper will now conclude with two different “Zoning Scenarios”. In each scenario, staff will provide an overview of how they believe the Highway 3 Development Area could be re-zoned for future land use. These re-zoning scenarios are broad in nature, and meant to be examples of how land along Highway 3 can be reimagined in consideration of the preceding sections of this paper.

These are not meant to be “choose one” scenarios. Instead, staff are hoping to identify what residents like and don’t like about each option and generate discussion. What we hear at the workshop in August about these scenarios will serve to inform how the Highway 3 Development Area is eventually re-zoned.

ZONING SCENARIO 1



Overview

In this scenario, there are only two zones in the Highway 3 Development Area, which are the **Highway 3 Residential Zone (HRZ)** and the **Highway 3 Commercial Zone (HCZ)**. The HRZ replaces the Low and Medium Residential Zones that currently exist, and allows for residential uses exclusively. The HCZ replaces the current Highway Commercial Zone, and allows for commercial uses exclusively. In this scenario, the pre-existing cluster of commercially-zoned land from Duke St. to Pig Loop Rd. of the Highway 3 Development Area (see [Map 5](#), Page 26) is maintained. The clusters of previously commercially-zoned land at Victoria St. & North St. and Zinck Rd. & Douglas Ave (see [Map 4](#), Page 25) are, however, re-zoned for residential use ([Map 5](#), Page 26).

Highway 3 Residential Zone

While many of the same uses that are permitted in the Low and Medium Density Residential zones will be permitted in the HRZ, this new zone will be more permissive in how it handles multi-unit developments. Once the desired sizes and styles for multi-unit residential structures are established for the Highway 3 Development Area, these building types will be permitted as of right in the HRZ, meaning they would not be subject to site plan approval or any process involving public input. By allowing multi-unit developments as of right, the municipality can ensure that it is encouraging diverse housing types and increasing its housing stock, while at the same time ensuring that these structures adhere to the public input

received at the workshop in August and through plan review.

It is also important to note that in the HRZ, land will be for residential use exclusively. One reason for this was to ensure that the site at Victoria St. & North St. is used for residential development in the future. Staff have identified this site as an area where residential development should be encouraged (see [Discussion Question 4](#), Page 19), particularly for multi-unit development. As for the larger remaining area that will be zoned HRZ, staff believe that encouraging exclusive residential use will reduce land-use conflicts (e.g. like those seen with illuminated signage). Further, this will help to maintain the Village's housing supply. Current commercial operations (e.g. ABLE Engineering) will be permitted in the new HRZ indefinitely.

The one exception to the residential-only nature of the HRZ is that it will allow for small home-based businesses. This is a use permitted in most of the Village's residential zones, which staff believe should remain consistent in the new HRZ.

Highway 3 Commercial Zone

In terms of commercial activity, this scenario would permit all of the commercial uses listed under the Highway Commercial zone as it currently exists (see [Appendix A](#), Page 30), so long as this conforms with the feedback staff receive at the workshop in August. Light industrial uses would be excluded from

ZONING SCENARIO 1

the new HCZ, since these align less with the character of the Village, and more with area outside of the Chester Village Planning Boundary. Unlike the Highway Commercial Zone that currently exists, the new HCZ will not allow for residential developments. Again, this is to separate land uses and ensure that residential development occurs in areas identified as most suitable by staff and the public.

This scenario intends to foster a cluster of commercial activity where businesses can grow and expand with fewer restrictions in place. While anecdotal, staff are aware of the perception that businesses in the Village, particularly along Highway 3, are sometimes de-incentivized to grow their business physically in fear of triggering new architectural/design standards.

Design Guidelines

In this scenario, design guidelines are simplified and less stringent, only incorporating those identified as most important for maintaining a certain character along Highway 3 (this should be further solidified after the workshop). In doing so, the municipality would be allowing for a more diverse range of developments to take place along Highway 3, while at the same time being mindful of the community's concerns with regards to the look and size of structures. Examples of design guidelines that could be maintained in this scenario are:

- Public-facing sides of structures must adhere to architectural and/or style standards;
- No parking on land fronting Highway 3;

HRZ HIGHWAY 3 RESIDENTIAL

Key Features

- ✓ Residential uses exclusively
- ✓ 1 and 2 unit structures permitted as of right
- ✓ 3 to _ * unit structures permitted as of right
- ✓ Simplified design guidelines
- ✓ Victoria St. & North St. site zoned for residential use

HCZ HIGHWAY 3 COMMERCIAL

Key Features

- ✓ Commercial uses exclusively
- ✓ Allow for currently listed commercial uses
- ✓ Less restrictive architectural controls
- ✓ Simplified design guidelines
- ✓ Loss of previously-zoned commercial land

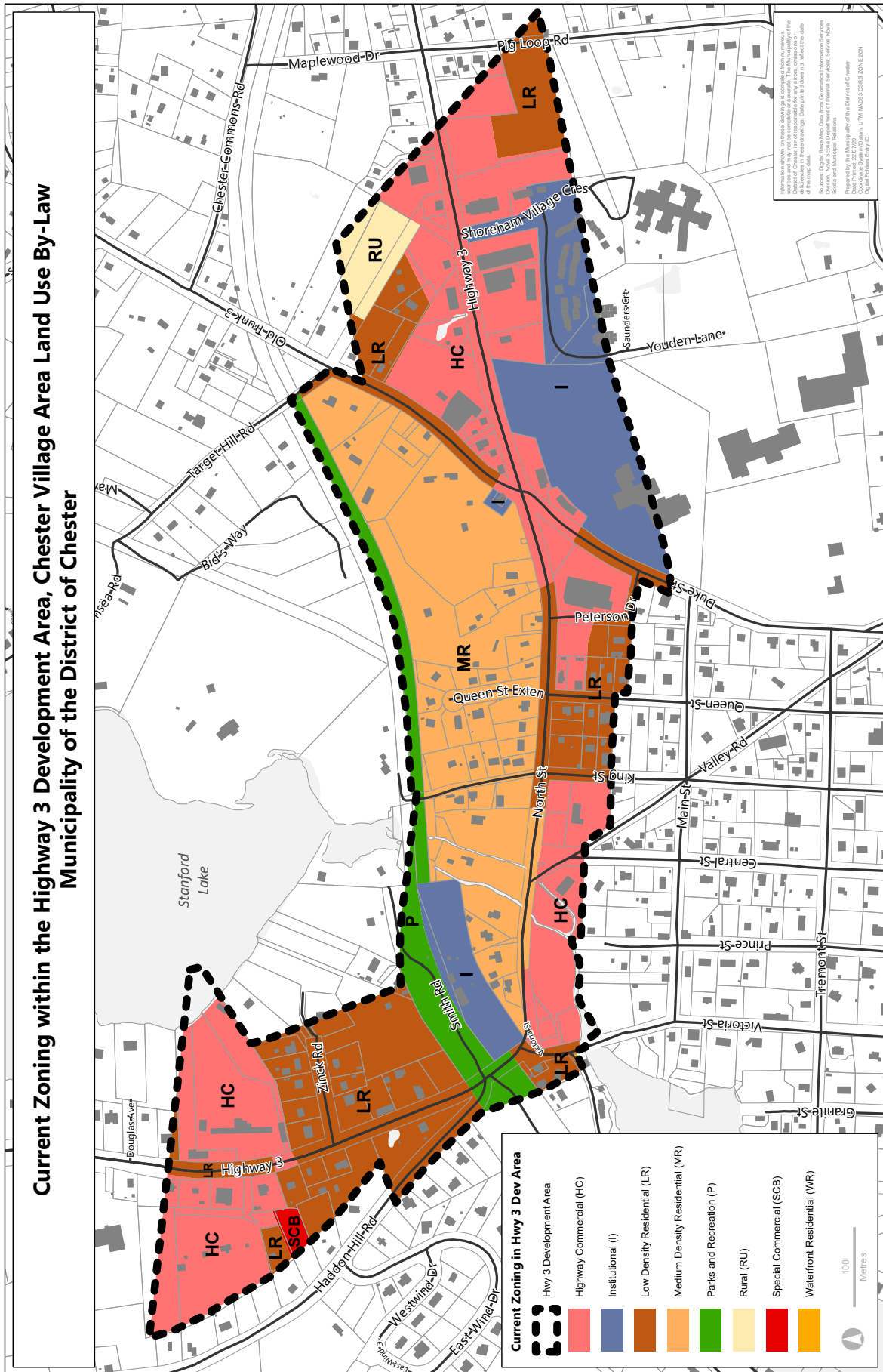
Figure 2: Scenario 1 Zoning Overview

ZONING SCENARIO 1



- Maintenance and landscaping standards;
- Accessibility standards.

Design guidelines do not need to be the exact same between residential and commercial developments in this scenario. While staff do envision less stringent regulations in this scenario, this could take different forms depending on the development (e.g. businesses being held to higher design standards).



Map 4: Current Zoning, Highway 3 Development Area

**Proposed Zoning within the Highway 3 Development Area, Chester Village Area Land Use By-Law
Municipality of the District of Chester**

Proposed Zoning in the Hwy 3 Dev. Area

- Hwy 3 Development Area
- Highway 3 Commercial (HC)
- Highway 3 Residential (HR)
- Institutional (I)

100 Metres

Information shown on these drawings is compiled from numerous sources and is not intended to be a final or definitive statement of the District of Chester and is not responsible for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies. The drawings are for informational purposes only and do not constitute a contract or a guarantee of any kind. The District of Chester is not responsible for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies. The drawings are for informational purposes only and do not constitute a contract or a guarantee of any kind.

Source: Digital Base Map Data from Geomatics Information Services Division, Town of Chester, Department of Information Services
Prepared by the Municipality of the District of Chester
Date Printed: 2/20/2022
Scale: 1:10,000
Copyright: 2022
Digital File: Hwy 3 Dev. Area

Map 5: Staff Re-zoning Proposal, Highway 3 Development Area

ZONING SCENARIO 2



Overview

Similar to the first scenario, the Highway 3 Residential Zone (HRZ) and Highway 3 Commercial Zone (HCZ) replace the zones that exist currently. The main difference in this scenario is that residential and commercial uses are not exclusive to either zone. As such, there is more flexibility in what land uses can occur along Highway 3, but with less proactive decision-making being made.

The areas zoned as HRZ and HCZ are the same as Scenario 1 (see [Map 5](#), Page 26), meaning that the area at Victoria St. & North St. is again zoned HRZ, as well as the cluster of previous commercially-zoned land between Zinck Rd. & Douglas Ave. While the intention of this change is to encourage residential development in these areas, commercial development is still an option were a property owner interested in pursuing that option in this scenario.

Highway 3 Residential Zone

In the HRZ, 1 and 2 unit structures would be permitted as of right, consistent with current zoning regulations. Regulations for multi-unit residential structures would be more stringent than in Scenario 1, closely reflecting those regulations currently in place (see [Page 8](#)). This would mean some form of approval process would be necessary for 3+ unit developments, which would take the form of either (a) site plan approval or (b) a development agreement, with the latter triggering a public hearing.

Maintaining stricter regulations for multi-unit structures could serve to better protect the existing character of the Village, since developments would be further scrutinized by staff and/or the public throughout the development process. It should be noted, however, that higher degrees of regulation can make construction more expensive and burdensome from the developer's perspective. Further, strict regulations also have the potential to work directly against Council's housing goals (e.g. the housing priorities outlined on [Page 7](#)), indicating the need for a balance to be struck between character preservation and new development.

Commercial land uses will be permitted in the HRZ in this scenario. A list of approved commercial uses for the HRZ would be created following the workshop, where staff hope to receive feedback on which commercial uses are most compatible with residential development.

Highway 3 Commercial Zone

Nearly all of the currently permitted commercial uses (see [Appendix A](#), Page 30) will continue to be allowed in the HCZ. Residential uses will also be permitted in the HCZ in this scenario. This means that 1 and 2 unit structures would be permitted as of right, and that multi-unit developments with 3 or more units would be permitted, subject to some form of approval process. Unlike Scenario 1, light industrial uses will be permitted in the HCZ, and will

ZONING SCENARIO 2

likely be subject to a development agreement to ensure there is minimal disturbance to the Village. This would allow for a wider range of business opportunities in the Village core.

While there is a greater number of land parcels that can be developed for commercial use in this scenario, the trade-off would be that a higher level of architectural/design standards would need to be met, since this scenario more closely reflects current zoning regulations.

Design Guidelines

This scenario would see stricter design guidelines than presented in Scenario 1, meaning many currently standing regulations (see Pages [13-14](#)) would remain in place. While staff would still like to see these design guidelines simplified and shortened in this scenario, there would be an openness to preserve as many design guidelines as necessary, based on feedback received from the workshop in August.

HRZ HIGHWAY 3 RESIDENTIAL

Key Features

- ✓ Residential and commercial uses
- ✓ 1 and 2 unit structures permitted as of right
- ✓ 3+ unit structures by site plan or development agreement
- ✓ Maintain some design guidelines
- ✓ Victoria St. & North St. site zoned for residential use

HCZ HIGHWAY 3 COMMERCIAL

Key Features

- ✓ Commercial and residential uses
- ✓ Allow for currently listed commercial uses
- ✓ Light industrial uses permitted through approval process
- ✓ Maintain some design guidelines
- ✓ Commercial uses remain possible at re-zoned residential areas

Figure 3: Scenario 2 Zoning Overview

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APPENDIX A



Current permitted commercial land uses in the Highway Commercial Zone:

- Animal Hospitals and Animal Shelters
- Automobile Sales and Repair
- Automobile Service Stations
- Automobile Washing Stations
- Bakeshops
- Banks and Financial Institutions
- Beverage rooms
- Body Shops
- Craft Workshops
- Day Care Centres
- Dressmaking and Tailoring
- Drive-through Sales
- Existing Beverage Rooms and Lounges
- Existing Industrial Developments
- Existing Marinas
- Existing Mobile Homes
- Existing Multi-Family Dwellings
- Existing Multi-Unit Dwellings
- Existing warehouses and enclosed distribution centres
- Funeral Homes
- Hotels
- Industrial Workshops
- Motels
- Laundry and Dry Cleaning Depots
- Lounges
- Medical Clinics
- Office Buildings and Office Uses
- Outdoor Storage and Displays
- Parking Lots
- Parks and Recreation Uses
- Personal Service Shops
- Printing Establishments
- Places of entertainment, recreation and assembly, within wholly enclosed buildings
- Rental Depots
- Repair Shops
- Residential conversions containing a maximum of four dwelling units
- Residential units in the same building as a commercial use to a maximum of four units
- Retail and Wholesale Sales
- Schools
- Shopping Centres
- Skilled Trade Shops
- Studios for the practice or instruction of fine arts or crafts
- Taxi and Bus Stations
- Tourist Information Centres
- Warehouses and enclosed distribution centres

APPENDIX B: SCENARIO 1 OVERVIEW

HRZ HIGHWAY 3 RESIDENTIAL

The following land uses would be permitted in the Highway 3 Residential Zone:

Residential	Approval Process
1 - 2 dwelling units on a lot	As of right
3 - 8* dwelling units on a lot	As of right
Over 8* dwelling units on a lot	Development agreement
Commercial	Approval Process
Home-based businesses	As of right

*Placeholder until appropriate total is determined

What's changed?



Residentially-zoned land expanded



Multi-unit (3+) developments as of right



Simplified design guidelines to support new residential development

Goals

- ✓ Increase & diversify housing stock
- ✓ Maintain character
- ✓ Separate land uses

HCZ HIGHWAY 3 COMMERCIAL

The following land uses would be permitted in the Highway 3 Commercial Zone:

Commercial	Approval Process
Current Highway Commercial Zone uses. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automobile shops • Hotels/motels • Leisure uses • Healthcare • Restaurants • Retail 	Site plan approval

What's changed?



New residential uses not permitted



New industrial uses not permitted



Simplified design guidelines to support commercial growth and expansion



Loss of commercially-zoned land

Goals

- ✓ Support commercial growth and expansion
- ✓ Separate land uses

APPENDIX C: SCENARIO 2 OVERVIEW

HRZ HIGHWAY 3 RESIDENTIAL

The following land uses would be permitted in the Highway 3 Residential Zone:

Residential	Approval Process
1 - 2 dwelling units on a lot	As of right
3 - 8* dwelling units on a lot	Site plan
Over 8* dwelling units on a lot	Development agreement
Commercial	Approval Process
Home-based businesses	As of right
Specific commercial uses**	Site plan or development agreement

*Placeholder until appropriate total is determined

**Uses will be based on feedback received from workshop

What's changed?



Increase in residentially-zoned land



Minor design guideline rollbacks



Commercial uses permitted

Goals

- ✓ Maintain approval processes for new developments
- ✓ Encourage new residential developments

HCZ HIGHWAY 3 COMMERCIAL

The following land uses would be permitted in the Highway 3 Commercial Zone:

Commercial	Approval Process
Current Highway Commercial Zone uses	Site plan
Light industrial uses	Site plan or development agreement
Residential	Approval Process
1 - 2 dwelling units on a lot	As of right
More than 3 dwelling units on a lot	Site plan or development agreement

What's changed?



Minor design guideline rollbacks

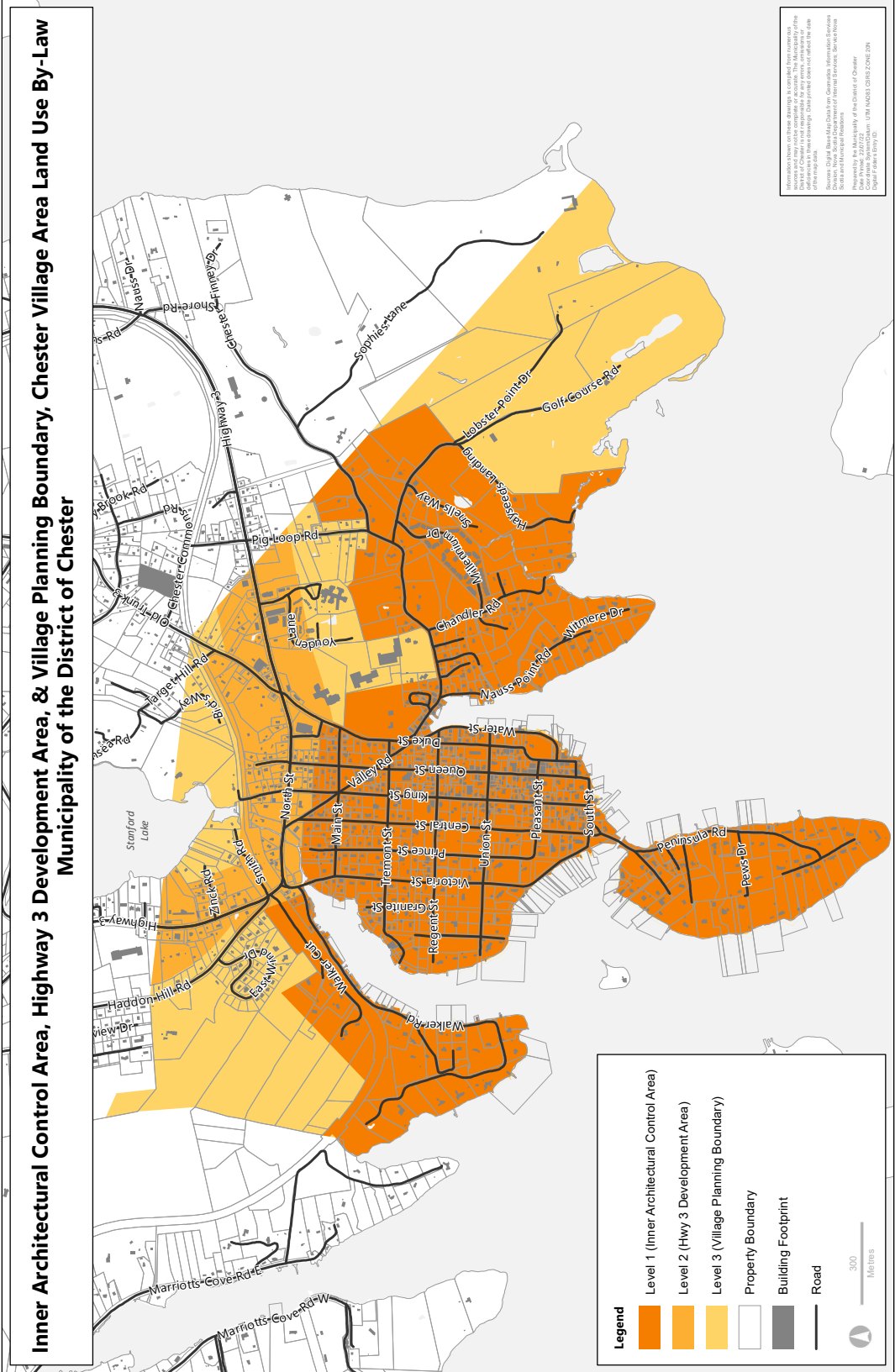


Commercially-zoned land re-zoned to Highway 3 Residential

Goals

- ✓ Strike balance between character preservation and new development
- ✓ Support commercial growth and expansion

APPENDIX D:
MAP, DEVELOPMENT HIERARCHY



Appendix D: Hierarchy of Development Areas in Chester Village