



CHESTER

The town of Chester is a hilltown community located on the far western border of the Pioneer Valley region. Chester’s landscape is rugged, with extremely sloping hills that allow for minimal residential or industrial development.

Established in 1783, the town of Chester is comprised of three distinct neighborhoods: Chester Village, Chester and North Chester. In its heyday, there was a granite quarry along what is now Route 20. The arrival of the Western Railroad, once a major employer (later named the Boston and Albany Railroad) shifted the town center to Chester Village from its original site, whose earlier purpose, because of its position on higher ground, was to avoid Indian attacks. Today the railroad has diminished in importance to the town, but remnants of the once industrial boomtown include the historic train station and the “Old Chester Jail” in Chester Village, now housing the headquarters of the Chester Historical Society. The Congregational Church and former schoolhouse, built in 1763, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The town gained national attention as the birthplace of the abrasives industry due to the expansive emery deposits once actively mined in town. Currently, the town’s largest employer is a lumber company. Chester takes part in the Gateway Regional School System. The Town’s “miniature Theatre,” an actors’ equity production company, features nationally known stage and movie stars who perform in the historic Town Hall.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
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Profiles covering all forty-three communities in the Pioneer Valley Region and a range of other topics are available. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Regional Information Center provides demographic, economic, and geographic data and services including mapping, research, and analysis to its constituent communities and to the public. Contact the Information Center for additional information.

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Type of Government:

Open Town Meeting, 3 Selectmen

Transit System:

Public Carrier None

Private Carrier None

Para-Transit Carrier None

MUNICIPAL OFFICE

Town Hall
 15 Middlefield Rd..
 Chester, MA 01011
 Phone: (413) 354-7760
 FAX: (413) 354-2268

LAND AREA and TAX BASE

| | |
|--|---------|
| Acres | 23,788 |
| Square Miles | 37 |
| 2012 | |
| Vehicle Registrations <i>(autos and light trucks)</i> | 1,466 |
| 2015 | |
| Property Tax Rates | |
| Residential | \$19.30 |
| Commercial/Industrial | \$19.30 |

POPULATION TRENDS

| | |
|------|-------|
| 1970 | 1,025 |
| 2014 | 1,123 |
| 1990 | 1,280 |
| 2000 | 1,310 |
| 2010 | 1,337 |
| 2014 | 1,528 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 2014 | Race and Latino Population | |
| White | | 96.1% |
| Black | | 1.0% |
| Asian | | 0.8% |
| Other | | 2.1% |
| Latino (of any race) | | 2.9% |

Note: Race %s can be greater than 100% because of multiple race persons.

Percent of Population by Age

| Age | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|-----------|------|------|------|
| 0 - 4 | 7.9 | 5.5 | 4.6 |
| 5 - 9 | 8.3 | 5.9 | 6.0 |
| 10 - 14 | 7.9 | 8.6 | 6.3 |
| 15 - 19 | 5.5 | 7.6 | 7.0 |
| 20 - 24 | 4.2 | 4.7 | 4.3 |
| 25 - 34 | 19.5 | 9.1 | 8.9 |
| 35 - 44 | 15.9 | 21.1 | 12.9 |
| 45 - 54 | 11.1 | 16.3 | 19.9 |
| 55 - 59 | 3.1 | 5.7 | 9.5 |
| 60 - 64 | 5.6 | 4.1 | 6.7 |
| 65 - 74 | 6.9 | 6.4 | 8.0 |
| 75 & over | 4.2 | 5.1 | 5.9 |

LAND USE 2005

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Total Square Miles | 37 |
| Total Road Miles | 2009 66 |

| Land Use | Acres |
|----------------------|--------|
| Residential | 497 |
| Commercial | 32 |
| Industrial | 20 |
| Urban Open/Public | 40 |
| Transportation | 47 |
| Outdoor Recreational | 12 |
| Agricultural Land | 832 |
| Undeveloped Land | 21,839 |
| Water | 432 |

RECREATION AREAS

PARKS: Town Watershed, Canada Hill
Wildlife, Chester State Forest, Hampden Street Park.

GOLF COURSES: none.

OTHER: Brookside Lodge, Walker Island Campground, Littleville Fairground, Chester Hill Winery.

Data Sources: Massachusetts Department of Revenue; Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development; Massachusetts Department of Education; United States Census Bureau; The Warren Group; Resource Mapping; University of Massachusetts; Applied Geographic Solutions; Local Municipal Offices

EMPLOYERS and EMPLOYMENT

2014

| Industry | Number | Percent of Community Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries | 0 | 0.0% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 0 | 0.0% |
| Construction | 0 | 0.0% |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 0 | 0.0% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 8 | 7.0% |
| Information | 0 | 0.0% |
| Manufacturing | 0 | 0.0% |
| Services | 74 | 64.9% |
| Transportation, Comm. & Utilities | 13 | 11.4% |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade | 0 | 0.0% |

Note: Above does not include self-employed, where many work in the agriculture, construction and service industries.

Average Weekly Wage \$547

Self-employed (includes all business types) 81

WHERE RESIDENTS WORK 2014

10.4% work in Chester
89.6% commute out of Chester

RESIDENTS IN THE LABOR FORCE

| Year | Labor Force | Percent Unemployed |
|------|-------------|--------------------|
| 2004 | 731 | 5.5% |
| 2005 | 731 | 5.3% |
| 2006 | 721 | 4.0% |
| 2007 | 716 | 4.2% |
| 2008 | 712 | 5.2% |
| 2009 | 720 | 9.4% |
| 2010 | 721 | 9.8% |
| 2011 | 723 | 8.7% |
| 2012 | 713 | 6.3% |
| 2013 | 725 | 7.6% |
| 2014 | 731 | 6.2% |

HOUSING PRICES

| Year | Number of Sales | Median Sales Price |
|------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2010 | 23 | \$129,900 |
| 2011 | 23 | \$97,000 |
| 2012 | 23 | \$120,000 |
| 2013 | 18 | \$120,000 |
| 2014 | 29 | \$118,000 |

EDUCATION

Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older *

2013

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Less than 12 years | 8.7% |
| 4 years High School | 43.0% |
| Less than 4 years College | 31.2% |
| 4 or more years College | 17.3% |

*Expressed as the highest level attained.

| District | Grades | Integrated Per Pupil Cost 2013 |
|------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Gateway | PK-12 | \$14,619 |
| Smith Vocational | 9-12 | \$17,954 |

HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2010-2014

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| \$0 - \$9,999 | 4.1% |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | 3.9% |
| \$15,000 - \$24,999 | 3.9% |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 11.1% |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 12.0% |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 25.1% |
| \$75,000 & over | 39.7% |

Median Household Income: 2010-14 \$65,648

Persons Below Poverty Level: 2010-2014 9.2%