

Peter Crawford Rye Master Plan comments
October 12, 2017

Based on 10/11/17 version posted on town website.

Pages numbers referenced are based on the position in the PDF file. All chapters should have page numbers added at the bottom of each page.

Major points are in bold

Chapter 3: Coastal Hazards and Climate Adaptation

Overall: It appears that some hyphens are missing from hyphenated words. Potentially hyphenated words should be checked against a dictionary.

Overall: Commas are missing in numerous places.

p. 2. Insert space in “June22”

p. 3, top line should read “have affected Rye”

p. 3, line 4, should read “these stormm events” or just “these storms, particularly...” Also, there is a reference to shale piles at Sawyers Beach and low-lying segments. It’s unclear whether the latter reference is to the areas in general or to the shale piles protecting them. This should be made clear. In any case, isn’t Sawyers also a low-lying segment of Route 1A as well?

p. 3, Figure 2. Some information is lacking such as the dates of the “King Tides” and the surge height of the Oct. 1999 storm, the rain amount for Super Storm Sandy.

p. 5, Figure 5 refers to 4.4 feet Mean Higher High Water. Is this relative to Mean High Water (i.e. normal high tide) or something else? Without an explanation it’s difficult to tell. Also, **I have trouble squaring the 6.6 foot sea level rise in 2100 with the 1.3 inches per decade referred to on the prior page. Over the 108 years from 1992 to 2100, this would be 14 inches or a little over a foot. If these numbers are in fact consistent due to acceleration in later years, some explanation of why this is likely to occur should be provided.**

p. 6, Figure 7. Are these rainfall amounts in inches? The units need to be stated.

p. 6, middle, should read “less of an increase” or “a smaller increase” This paragraph could also use some commas in appropriate places.

p. 7, Figure 8. Is “SLR” sea level rise? If so need to state somewhere.

p. 9, Figures 9 and 10. The prior page refers to green and pink, but I see green and purple on this page and purple and pink on Figure 10. If possible a key should appear on the figure itself, with the actual color adjacent to a description. It's unclear why two figures are needed. The two figures are confusing and I don't understand what they are saying.

p. 11 should read "[t]he primary drinking water sources in Rye are private wells, and, in their respective areas, water supplied by the Rye Water District and Aquarion Water Company. Most, but not all of Rye not served by Aquarion Water (as indicated in Figure 11) is served by the Rye Water District, a Village District governed separately from the town, with its own taxing authority. A small portion of Rye is served by the Portsmouth Water Department."

p. 12. The increase in affected parcels and aggregate value is meaningless. The point is that much of the town, by assessed value, is in the areas most likely to be affected by sea level rise. The \$2.252 million figure for assessed value is inclusive of properties that are not taxed, such as those owned by governments and churches, or which are partially exempt due to senior citizens' or veterans' exemptions. This should be mentioned. The point seems to be that much of the tax base is at risk if there is flooding, and the town might lose significant revenues in the event of a catastrophic event. This should be stated.

p. 12. Should read "critical habitats supporting commercial and recreational fisheries..."

p. 13. The more than doubling of impervious surfaces is hard to believe in light of the 14.6% increase in population. Are there that many expanded driveways, and new houses and facilities like the restaurant at Foyes Corner? It doesn't seem like it. If this figure is correct, the major sources of the impervious surface increase should be stated.

p. 13. Should read "contributing drainage areas..."

p. 13, second to last paragraph, should read "...Atlas increase the volume..."

p. 13, last line, should read "...Tides to Storms vulnerability assessment..."

p. 14 shouldn't this read "coarse sediments"

p. 14. Beach nourishment has been rejected by the BOS in the past as it seemed that the Army Corps of Engineers or whoever was doing the dredging needed a place to deposit the dredge spoils. Do we really want to imply that we want this material? Was the BOS wrong to reject it?

p. 15 refers to zoning districts, but Rye has Commercial, Business, Single Family and General residence districts. How do the rows relate to those categories, if at all? This needs to be explained, or it should not refer to zoning districts at all.

p. 15 refers to AE zone. The various zones are mentioned earlier, but there needs to be a table of what each of these codes mean.

p. 19, Figure 16. Legend should probably be under the photograph as I believe was intended.

p. 19. Love Ln. is a pond? I think that some pond near Love Ln. was intended to be referred to here.

p. 19 re purchasing high-risk properties. I doubt that I'm in favor of this, as it could constitute bailing out owners that made bad decisions.

p. 19, section 2.0. Isn't almost all of Rye already served by water infrastructure? Those small sections that don't are inland, away from the high risk flood areas, I believe.

p. 22. Re water service to Wentworth Rd. I believe that the water already comes from Portsmouth for this. Portsmouth just meters the water that Rye Water District redistributes over short sections of its pipes that are not contiguous with the rest of the Rye Water District system. Rye Water District provides and reads the individual customer meters and it bills the customers for the water that they use that comes from Portsmouth. Where the water comes from and who bills for it are not always the same.

p. 22, R5.2, p. 23 R5.6. Increased building heights. I need to understand this. Does this mean buildings on stilts? It seems that construction is now being done with steel posts for the first floor, with that floor then enclosed with sacrificial walls that would be swept away in a major event. Total square footage available for a given height is unaffected, it would seem.

p. 23, R5.21. Re buffers. I'm not sure I understand the rationale even for the current 75 and 100 ft. buffers and why vernal pools always have a buffer, regardless of size, and wetlands under an acre do not. Do we really need even more buffers, especially when this is a major source of readily-granted variances by the ZBA?

Chapter 4: Existing and Future Land Use

Overall: check use of commas. A number of commas need to be added. Also check hyphenation. A number of hyphens appear to be missing.

p. 1. RBVD does not have jurisdiction over the granting of building permits, only planning and zoning.

p. 1. Check the \$631,145 average property value. Multiplying that by the 2252 units gives only about \$1.4 billion in property value. Total assessed valuation after the revaluation this year is over \$2 billion. I doubt we have over \$600 million in commercial properties.

p. 3, first line. Should read “[d]evelopers’ requests for...”

p. 3. I disagree that there is not that much buildable land remaining. See the build out study done in the early 2000s, which showed a couple of thousand buildable lots. There is a lot of back land that can be built on if access can be provided, which isn’t always easy. But, when owners get together (i.e. Falzone South Rd. development) there’s a way to get access.

p. 4. Should read “forestt tracts” This also appears in an incomplete sentence, which needs to be fixed.

p. 4, Figure 4-1. Slow growth in residential acreage and minimal and declining commercial use supports my doubt regarding chapter 3’s statement that impervious coverage has doubled since 1990. Is there any data for the 1980s and early 1990s? The gap from 1974 to 1998 is a long one.

p. 5. I disagree that ConCom and Rec. have seen overwhelming support. \$3 million conservation bond in 2014 passed by only about 7 votes. This year, warrant article to fund next steps with Rec. Community Center was voted down.

p. 6. I don’t think it’s true that multi dwelling units can no longer be built. See zoning ordinance 204.1.B. The proposed Rye Airfield development also has multiple units in a building.

p. 6. Should state how many RCD units remain after the development of Seaglass Ln. It’s not many.

p. 7, bottom should read “prevent future development”

p. 8 bottom should read “stormm events”

p. 9 Figure 4-3. Inconsistent numbering scheme with chapter 3. Are these inches of rainfall? Need to state units.

p. 9 first paragraph should read “land in some areas has...”

p. 9 second paragraph should read “water quality”

p. 10. Impervious. Doubling reference. See comments for chapter 3 above.

p. 10, Figure 4-4. Need space after “figure” Are these inches? Need to state units.

p. 12. Zone definitions. Here are the definitions I said were missing in chapter 3. Should duplicate there as well. Also, later on the page there is a reference to the VE zone, but that is not one of the ones defined. **Finally, much of this portion of Chapter 4 seems to be repetitive with Chapter 3. Perhaps consolidation and reference could save some paper. Just these four chapters are about 150 pages.**

p. 13. What is meant by “water concerns”? Do you mean wetlands? Almost all of Rye has public water available at this point.

p. 13. Slopes ranging from 3 to 8 percent? A 3 percent slope is 150 feet per mile and Breakfast Hill is more than a mile from the coast. I doubt the 3-8 percent figure is correct as an average slope, as is implied, although I’m sure there are short portions of Rye that have that much of a slope.

p. 14. Blasting interrupts the water table? What do you mean by this? I think the testimony in the South Rd. development case was that there may be temporary disruption of the aquifer, not that the water table, which is the height of the water in the ground.

p. 14. I disagree commercial development has been on Routes 1 and 1A. There are also lots of small pockets of businesses along the Washington/Wallis/Sagamore corridor and on Central Rd.

p. 14. Cluster zoning. If this means more Sea Glass Lanes, I’m opposed. Clusters need to be shielded from view from major roads and not cookie cutter homes.

p. 15. Fragmentation. There is a reference to work, residences and stores in separate locations. I don’t think you’re implying high-rise mixed commercial/residential/business development, but that is what is literally said. I think you mean that having these too far apart necessitates more auto use.

p. 16. Bicycle access, two points of connectivity. I’m all for this. However, nearly every subdivision approved ends up with a waiver to allow a longer-than-permitted dead end street. We already require two points of connectivity in all but the smallest subdivisions, but it isn’t enforced.

p. 16. Limit lengths of cul-de-sacs (hyphen missing). See above.

p. 17. Light pollution. Second column needs rewording as doesn’t make sense as is.

p. 18. Tides to storms paragraph. Sentence starting “[b]y far” makes no sense.

p. 21. Old Police Station (Trolley Barn). Strongly agree with looking at future use. Tear it down or use it, but don’t just let it decay with mold and failed septic and heating systems. There is no mention in any of these four chapters (or as I recall, in the rest of the Master Plan) of putting existing town and school facilities to use before we spend money on more, particularly in the face of declining school enrollments.

p. 22 LU10-10c. should read “greater density”

p. 21 LU11-11b. Inventory of RCD units. This shouldn’t be hard to do and include the figures in the Master Plan. It shouldn’t be a recommendation to get this data.

p. 21. LU12-12a. Sewer on Route 1. Support this if user-financed. What is the strategy to encourage development on Route 1 and increase the tax base without necessitating greater school expenditures? I haven’t seen this yet.

p. 21. LU13-13d. Paths and trails for public use. Strongly support this as well. How do we get ConCom to spend the budget they get every year to provide more public access and signage for the lands they are stewards of for the town and its residents? There may be ways to develop walking/biking trails on town-owned land to allow significant portions of Rye to be traversed without needing to walk/ride on the roads which are narrow and dangerous, with speed limits of 30-35 and traffic generally moving at that speed or more. This would support the goal of decreased fuel use and reliance on the automobile and permit children to bike to school safely.

Chapter 6 Natural Resources

Note: There appears to be no 10/11/17 version of this chapter as the link to the purported 10/11/17 version of Chapter 6 appears to be to Chapter 7. Thus, the 8/25/17 version is reviewed here.

Note: The version reviewed is labeled Chapter 6 on the town website, 10/11/17 (i.e. the link). The text, however, refers to Chapter 7. There is another document labeled Chapter 7 on the town website, which is assumed to be identical and was not reviewed.

Overall: Additional commas are needed in places.

p. 1, Figure 7-1. Need totals for each column. I think this same figure appears in other chapters, so you could just refer to them or copy and paste.

p. 2. Progress on bike paths? Haven’t seen much of this.

p. 3. Burning wooded lots? I think you're talking about burning of brush, not intentional burning of tracts of land as is implied. Should reword.

p. 3. Wetlands. There are also those that are not for stricter enforcement, witness the attendees at the Wetlands Ordinance Committee meetings a couple of years ago.

p. 3. Restrict back lot development. Perhaps it's time to consider an increase in the minimum lot size and frontage requirements. I'm not sure that back lot development can be restricted per se.

p. 3. Are you referring to deer as pests or are you talking about deer ticks. I don't put deer in the same category as mice and insects.

p. 3. Link the two schools with paths? Closing of one of the schools is currently under study. I haven't seen anything about dealing with declining enrollment and the surplus of town space, including in schools, yet.

p. 6. Beaches. Should specifically refer to Sanders Poynt Beach, not start the bullet point (which is actually missing) with "After a court case.."

p. 6. Purdy case actually went to the NH Supreme Court, should provide cite, i.e. ___ N.H. ___ (19xx).

p. 7. Rye Harbor. Harbor will be dredged in next couple of years, but no new mooring spaces will be created. Should recommend that Rye work with State reps and senator to push the state to increase the size of the mooring field so that some of the 160 on the waiting list can be granted moorings.

p. 10. Second from last paragraph. There was an additional \$3 million raised in 2014 for conservation land/easement purchases. There were easements purchased as well as outright purchases of land. The full details of where the \$5 million and \$3 million went, and the additional sources from grant funds are in the CIP Plan.

p. 12. The text says 8406 acres of farmland, but only 3078 acres appears in Figure 7-4.

p. 12. Goss Farm barn restoration has been done. I'm not sure it's complete (could use some painting or staining), but all of the money voted in 2013 has been spent.

p. 14. Rye Historic Commission? Should be Historic District Commission.

pp. 14-15. Third highest PFC concentrations in the world have been found in Berry's Brook surface waters. This should be mentioned.

p. 16. I don't think Cedar Swamp Run is a wellhead protection for the one Aquarion Well in Rye (5A), which is off of Central Rd., near the border of the Rye Beach Village District (large tank visible from road). Ditto Awcomin Marsh (p. 17)

p. 16, Lower Berry's Brook. Do you mean "low-brackish"?

p. 17. Adams Mobile Home Park Wellhead protection district? I've never seen this mentioned before. Is it more than the 75 or 100 feet radius that all wells get in terms of separation from septic systems? I don't think that this is an official protection district.

p. 19. First paragraph. RWD has 3 wells in Rye. Two are bedrock. The largest (Garland) is a gravel-pack well. Aquarion has one well in Rye, but water is mixed with that from the rest of their system, which serves Hampton and North Hampton as well. Portsmouth Water still serves a small section of Rye, along Pioneer Rd. Water service north of Foyes Corner also receives Portsmouth Water, but in many, if not most cases, RWD buys the water from Portsmouth and sells to the customers that it individually meters with its mains that branch off of Portsmouth mains. There is more detail on pages 20-21 which is inconsistent with the top of p. 19.

p. 23. Only one sentence about PFCs despite all of the recent publicity and resident concern? Much more is needed here. There are testing results on the town website. Not only have PFCs been detected in NH, but they've been detected in Rye and some tests have yielded a result of over 70 parts per trillion, which is the state standard for drinking water (recent legislation to lower it to 20 failed to pass). These tests were from sampling wells, not actual drinking water. However, there has been one test from the Garland Well that has been above 20 and Aquarion has shut one well (not in Rye) down due to high PFCs.

p. 23. Berry's Brook pristine? See above re third highest PFCs in the world.

p. 25. See prior comments for other chapters on the doubling of impervious coverage and the lack of units for the rainfall table, Figure 7-10 (need space after "figure")

p. 25, last paragraph. Should read "...percentage of impervious surfaces..."

p. 26, second paragraph. More reasons not to allow so many dead end roads. See prior comments.

p. 27, bottom of page. Plural of "ammunition" is "ammunition." Should read "...prohibition of lead sinkers..."

p. 28, top should read “...annual Hazardous Waste...” Is it now annual? It used to be twice a year.

p. 29, second paragraph should read “[i]mpervious surfaces...”

p. 29, last paragraph. Winter tourism? I don’t think we have much of that in Rye. Statewide, yes.

Chapter 7 Transportation

Overall: check word hyphenation. There are hyphens where there should be none, and vice versa

p. 1. Little has been done to accommodate bicycle traffic.

p. 2, bottom. Should read “...culvert at the end of Wallis Rd. at Route 1A...”

p. 3, Figure 6-3. It appears that the addition of mileages to the figure was intended, but the data are missing. Regarding the note at the bottom, I believe Planning Board approval is required for tree removal along scenic roads, which all town roads have been designated, or at least I so understood. It’s not any local official that may approve. The second from last paragraph first suggests that roads added after 1973 may not be automatically have been designated scenic and thus what is written seems contradictory as it also says that all town roads are scenic.

p. 6, Figure 6-5. 2010 appears three times, with 9 accidents each time. At least one should be deleted. The last one is out of order and may be intended to read 2016. If so, is 9 the right number for that year? That number doesn’t seem right anyway, given that 24 is the lowest number in any other year.

p. 7 Emergency vehicle access. Another reason to enforce the cul-de-sac limits in the zoning ordinance.

p. 8. The plan to convert the old railbed in the far western part of Rye, well west of Route 1, to a trail for bikes and pedestrians is underway, pending negotiations with Pan Am, the current owner. They have appeared before the BOS, which appeared supportive. The small section in Rye is part of the much larger statewide and east coast plan to provide off road trails throughout much of the eastern seaboard. This trail won’t be of much benefit to Rye residents, though, given how far it is from where most people live.

p. 10 first paragraph, starting “[b]y far...” This sentence doesn’t make any sense as was noted earlier, as it appears in another chapter as well.

p. 10, first bullet. Should read “culverts and bridges...”

p. 10, fourth bullet, should read "...Route 1A may disrupt..."

p. 12, T12. Need a space after "US-1"

pp. 12-13, 16b and 16c are inconsistent. One refers to 3 foot shoulders and the other 4 foot. Perhaps there is an intentional distinction for the busier Route 1A/1B. It's unclear. With regard to Route 1A, the issue of parked cars has not been mentioned. A shoulder does no good for bicyclists and pedestrians if there are cars parked there. That's a big problem, mostly during the summer. The state's denial, at least for now, of Rye's request to install meters (or kiosks) along Route 1A needs to be mentioned. Reasons cited were denial of beach access and safety, although it is unclear how meters would decrease safety if they are located outside of areas currently used for parking. The problem is the cars (and large campers) parked on the road. Meters would help get that under control and also provide money for beach-related costs paid by the town, such as lifeguards, trash collection, enforcement of ordinances, which are woefully underfunded. Visitors come to Rye for free and park on Route 1A, but the residents have to pay \$20 annually for parking stickers, and still aren't assured of a place to park.

p. 13, 16f. Signs, benches and sheltered waiting areas along Transit routes??? It was said earlier that we have no regularly scheduled public transit in Rye.

p. 13, 16g. Seasonal park and ride at schools and in municipal lots. I think that this is a pipe dream. I doubt that the economics would work. Buses, bus drivers, fuel, etc. to take people to the beach from an inland lot would be very expensive to provide and you'd have to pay for the infrastructure on rainy days as well as sunny. In addition, the state is pushing this as a way to keep from allowing meters along Route 1A. We don't want to seem accepting of that.