

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE DRAFT 2013 RYE MASTER PLAN

(Prepared by the Rye Civic League, August 12, 2013)

A subcommittee of the Rye Planning Board, the Long Rang Planning Committee (LRP), has been working since May 2011 (according to the minutes) to update the 2006-2009 Master Plan. According to RSA 674:3, "During the preparation of the various sections of the master plan, the board shall inform the general public and the office of energy and planning and regional commissions and solicit public comments regarding the future growth of the municipality in order to involve citizens in the preparation of the master plan in a way which is most appropriate for the municipality. "

What is new in the draft Master Plan (2013)?

The Rye Energy Committee, with the assistance of the Rockingham Planning Commission, wrote an Energy chapter. The LRP members stated that the chapter was too long and it was subsequently edited.

The Rye Recreation Department wrote its own Master Plan in 2011 and a section of that plan has been incorporated in the draft Master Plan (2013) – both in the Civic Life and in the Municipal Services chapters.

Chapter 1: Our Vision for Rye

Several vision statements were added to the Vision chapter:

- To protect access to all town beaches and Rye Harbor;
- To collect, catalogue, and preserve Rye's rich and diverse heritage, such as artifacts created by World Wars;
- To create a viable communications environment by offering a free internet "hot spot" when and if recommended additions to the Town Center are realized and by striving to have the entire town accessible by cell phone service;
- To create an atmosphere that will allow commercial development of the land to the west of Route 1, and to that effect, explore the feasibility of extending the public sewer lines from Portsmouth along the Route 1 corridor;

- To protect the aquifer so as to further insure the integrity of the town wells for present and future generations by banning the use of lawn treatments, garden fertilizers and snow melt products within the aquifer protection zone;
- To expand housing opportunities for both the work force and seniors (only seniors were mentioned in the prior plan);
- To foster the expanded transparency of town government by providing easy access to meetings, agendas and minutes;
- To encourage increased participation of Rye residents on boards, committees and commissions (pp. 1-1 to 1-3).

Chapter 2: Demographics

Minor changes were made to the chapter, such as updating the 2000 US Census Data with the 2010 US Census Data. The content of the paragraphs remains the same but for one sentence in parentheses at the end of the segment “Population Characteristics: Age of Rye’s Population.” The following sentence was added: “(this highlighted set of sentences identify important fundamental characteristics of the Town regarding future zoning law changes) (p. 2-3).

Chapter 3: Land Use

Data was updated to reflect the 2010 US Census Data in regards to demographics and housing.

Two new additions were made:

13.0 SUBDIVISIONS

- Two short paragraphs describing the need to create a new zoning approach in regards to subdivisions in order to define new standards that would help preserve Rye’s distinct character, defined by the words “rural” and “open space.” Town ordinances should allow clustered development for subdivisions to promote open space (p. 3-12).

14.0 LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

- Two short paragraphs describing the need to incorporate “Low Impact Development” (innovative approach to storm water management by managing rainfall at the source) in order to protect our water quality (p. 3-13).

Chapter 4 – Housing

The vision statements for the chapter remain the same with one vision removed: “this desire [to remain semi-rural] was evident in the 2003 passage of a 5 million bond to purchase conservation land” (p. 4-1). Language was added to emphasize Rye’s adaptation to challenges. For instance, “Our success as a Town will be judged on how we treat all residents and how we grow and adapt to challenges as they are presented to us. As we have seen in the past, our Town can rise up to any challenge and work for the benefit of all” (p. 4-1).

Tables showing data were updated to reflect 2010 US Census Data for Southeastern New Hampshire, such as housing units; housing stock; median housing values and rents; housing, ownership & occupancy; and maximum supportable house prices for median household incomes. Home sales data for Rye was updated to reflect 2010 figures.

A few paragraphs have added sentences, yet the overall analysis in relation to the charts remains the same as the 2006-2009 Master Plan. Indeed, while the data in the tables have been updated to reflect the 2010 Census data, **the text remains the same and the analysis does not correspond to the data in the tables.** See Table H-1 through Table H-7. For instance, the data from the Table H-7 have been updated to reflect the 2010 Census Data, yet the text below provides these same data as currently exist in the 2006-2009 Master Plan. In some instances the year has been updated to 2010 (in the text), yet the other data/analysis reflects facts for 2000 (p. 4-7).

The following statement was added “the Planning Board has since the last Master Plan Update added Work Force Housing to its Zoning Ordinances and Land Development Regulations in an effort to expand the types of housing and development available to developers and potential new residents” (p. 4-3).

The “Next Steps” for the Housing Chapter remain similar with only a few minor changes, such as edits from the 2006/2009 Master Plan.

Chapter 4 –A Workforce Housing

(It should be noted that in 2009, the Planning Board added a workforce housing section to the 2006 Master Plan in order to address NH RSA 674-58-61, regarding workforce housing.)

Minor edits were done to some of the paragraphs while statements appearing in the 2009 Master Plan were removed, for example the mention of the “controversial 15 lot Whitehorse Farm Subdivision approved in May 2002.”

A chart on page 4 A-3 from the 2009 Master Plan, entitled “Excerpt Indicating Workforce Housing Needs” with 2015 projected need, was not included in the current draft Master Plan.

Two new recommendations were made at the end of the chapter:

1. The town needs to amend its zoning ordinance to allow for multifamily workforce housing. This amendment needs to establish unit design (at least five dwelling units per structure) as well as areas of Town where such uses will be permitted.
2. The Town needs to adopt an application process.

Chapter 5 – Transportation

The chapter has been shortened from eleven (11) pages to seven (7). A section covering data and analysis regarding commuting patterns that appeared in the 2006-2009 Master Plan has been removed.

Only minor changes to wording were made in the section of the chapter, called “next steps.”

Chapter 6 – Natural Resources

The preparation of the 2006 Master Plan was characterized by an “Invitation to Community Planning in Rye” (Introduction, p. ix), which mentioned three visioning sessions held in 2004 and

2005. In contrast, there was no invitation to community planning during the preparation of the current Master Plan draft (2013), and certainly no visioning sessions. However, there is new subtitle on the first page of the Natural Resources chapter called “**Master Plan Visioning Process**” which replaced “Vision.”

The following statement was added to reflect what was implemented since the 2006-2009 Master Plan in relation to the visioning sessions: “many of the concerns mentioned have been worked on and improved, such as, keeping our beaches clean, maintaining our scenic views, improving our marshes and wetlands, preserving more open space, increasing our bike paths, providing senior housing and repairing the sidewalks of Cable Road. These visioning sessions have provided benefit for the Planning Board and should be continued in the future” (p. 6-1).

The chapter has been reorganized with all the sections moved around (It is a bit confusing when comparing the 2006-2009 Master Plan with the present draft).

The section called “**Unique Coastal Resources**” which used to be at the end of the chapter is now the first item listed under “Identifying our Most Important Natural Resources.”

There is a new segment on “**Protecting Beach Access**” (6-3). As it is stated,

In 2011, a study was conducted on beach access points and a Power Point presentation was presented to the Selectmen on two different occasions. See minutes of the Selectmen meetings to learn more about the presentation on the Town Website at http://www.town.rye.nh.us/pages/RyeNH_SelectMin/2011/BOS_Minutes_9-26-11.pdf. (p. 6-3).

The segment continues by stating that “the Selectmen approved signage to be placed at the approved beach access points located at..” A list of all of the locations follows.

There is also a new brief segment on “Rye Harbor” (p.6-5).

There is a new heading called “**Coastal Storm Concerns; Protecting Rye Citizens from the affects of Global Warming and increased coastal storms.**” One short paragraph summarizes the concerns, including “we can expect conditions that we faced during the famous storm of 1978 to occur again, and we must be prepared for it” (p. 6-5).

The Rye Floodplain section has a different content and is made of four short paragraphs covering general facts. These include some more specifics but are somewhat outdated, for example the document states that “Rye’s 500 plus homes located within the floodplain or the High Hazard Flood Area are at risk of flooding during these events” and “In 1998 Rye adopted a “Floodplain Building Development Ordinance’ to help mitigate these hazards” (p. 6-6).

There is a section entitled “**Preservation of Open Space.**” It reflects what was purchased with the five (5) million dollar bond issue, which was approved in 2003, namely “the purchase of fourteen (14) easements, thereby protecting over 238 acres for \$ 4,414,000” (p. 6-7). Another 200 acres was purchased for \$ 4,684,900 by leveraging other owned lands and different grants. The total figure of land protected is over 1,030 acres.

A new segment on “**The Goss Farm**” has been written. It provides a short historical background of the farm, stating that it was purchased by the Town of Rye in 2010 with “funds from the Town and assistance from the U.S.D.A (sic) National Resources Conservation Service and through a farm and ranch land program award” (p. 6-7). It also describes of the main purpose of the property, which is to promote local agriculture.

There is another “**Open Space**” segment (p. 6-12) in relation to the wild life. Also, a new section is called “**Advantages for dog owners:**”

In addition to benefiting our wildlife, open space has made it easier to accommodate the needs of dogs. While most neighboring towns have restricted dogs from traveling off leashes, we have the advantage of walking our pets on trails in our Town Forest as long as they are under the owners’ control.

There has been some concern about having dogs on the beaches. Dogs are allowed on the beaches during restricted hours during the summer months as long as they are under their owners' control and the owners' commitment to picking up pet waste. The pet owners are obligated and should encourage others to abide by the local regulations in order to maintain these privileges not provided by other communities (p. 6-12)

There is a new short paragraph on "**Inventory of Conservation Land**" indicating that "it is time to present an inventory of these parcels and designate the proper uses..." (p. 6-12).

Minor changes were made to the "Forest Land Resources" section.

Minor changes to wording were made to the "Odiorne Point State Park" section.

There is a section called "Importance of Rye's Water Supply" emphasizing the need to protect groundwater and surface water.

Under "**Ground Water Quality**," there is a new paragraph addressing septic systems:

Septic systems that have failed or are not working properly can introduce excess nitrogen and bacteria into groundwater. Other constituents in septic effluent are not treated by infiltration and assimilation in the subsurface as well. New threats to groundwater and surface water include pharmaceuticals and personal care products that pass to groundwater from human waste through septic systems and from wastewater discharge. Household and landscape chemicals if not properly used or applied can also become incorporated into runoff and groundwater (p.6-15).

A chart describing "Threats to Groundwater" and corresponding "**Proposed Solutions for Rye**" has been considerably expanded (p. 6-16).

In regards to the "threats to groundwater," two additional sources have been listed:

- Pharmaceuticals and personal care products and excess nitrogen can also be introduced through waste discharge.
- Lawn irrigation and landscape water use places demands on water resources during the time of the year when water levels are typically lowest.

The section “**proposed solutions for Rye**” to protect groundwater has been expanded and contains six (6) proposals including regular updates of the Aquifer Protection Ordinance, which was adopted in 2008, as well as “to follow recommendations of Berry’s Brook Watershed Management Plan” (p. 6-16).

Under “Threats to the Working Landscape” a segment about “**Climate Change**” has been added (p. 6-21), containing two short paragraphs. It should be noted that the content of the two paragraphs came from the Energy Chapter.

The section acknowledges the impact of climate change on the regional economy, “including winter tourism, agriculture, maple syrup production, coastal real estate values due to sea level rise and increase in storm intensity, and health costs associated with respiratory health and heat related illnesses.” Also, it describes “the potential future impacts of climate change including sea level rise, flooding, coastal erosion, increased intensity and frequency of storms, and the effects of changes in temperature and precipitation.” (p. 6-21).

There is another section on “Septic System” dealing with the “Impact of Septic System Expansion on Natural Drainage” (p. 6-23). In relation and in addition to the **Aquifer Protection Overlay district**, which was adopted in 2008, a new set of recommendations are made:

- Promote low impact development to protect all water resources in the town.
- Continue to promote best management practices for municipal, commercial and residential land use and provide outreach and education to constituents on threats to surface water and groundwater quality and resources.

- Continue to work closely with the Rye Water District on their groundwater management activities.
- Seek to permanently protect land through land purchase or conservation easement to protect the groundwater resource especially in the vicinity of water supply wells (p. 6-23).

The Figure NR-2 Goals, Strategies and Actions at the end of the chapter contain new additions and modifications (p. 6-25).

Among the new topics/goals are:

Community visioning meeting: to hold a meeting where citizens and Board members can voice concerns about natural resources. The timeline is one year.

Inventory of conservation land: to create something for the public to view all conversation lands. The timeline is one year.

Prepare for ocean front storms: with threat of rising tides and more ocean front storms the community needs additional protection. The timeline is one year. (DPW, State of New Hampshire, Building Inspector as responsible party.)

Water quality: utilize new and existing information on aquifers, water supply, waste discharge and water usage to plan for the future land use. Strategy is to review aquifer protection ordinance and educate landowners about proper chemical disposal. Ongoing (Rye Water District, Hydrologist, Planning Board, Selectmen as responsible party.)

Need for cluster and/or pocket neighborhood type zoning: in order to protect our Open Space. The timeline is one year. The Planning board is the responsible party.

Chapter 7: Energy Chapter (new)

Chapter 8: Civic Life

Some changes were made in the Civic Engagement section, namely information was updated and some of the paragraphs have added

language. Data and analysis that came from the 2004-2005 visioning sessions, such as “other less popular suggestions,” e.g., “a cable TV link to our meetings” was replaced by a description of one of the suggestions having been implemented:

As of May 1, 2013, the Town provides broadcasts to meeting of town boards at the Town Hall via the internet with live on-line streaming and on demand access archived broadcasts including those per Article 9 of the 2013 Warrant (p. 8-3).

Two “opportunities” were added under Town Center:

-Create a natural outdoor experience in Parson’s field by adding more recreational opportunities for children; and

-Establish an Internet “hot Spot” in our Town center. By doing so we encourage our citizens and visitors to enjoy the ambience of the Town Center (p. 8-2).

A section of the Recreation Department Master Plan (2011) is incorporated in the draft Master Plan. It should be noted that the same section is also incorporated in Chapter 9: Schools – Recreation (p. 9-22).

The next steps for the chapter are identical as stated in the 2006-2009 Master Plan, however, they have been renamed “**Rye Recreation’s Next Steps**” even though some of the steps “we will encourage greater participation in the deliberative session in order for our SB 2 form of government to succeed” (p. 8-13), do not pertain to the Rye Recreation Department.

A new section has been added to the chapter called “**Historical Resources**” (p. 8-14). It is two pages long and concludes with the following next steps” “We will foster an increasingly vibrant Town Center” and “We will update our inventory of the Town’s cultural and historical resources.”

Chapter 9: Municipal Services

Police

The statements regarding “**Police Protection**” remain the same, however, there was new language added. Data describing the workload of the current police department was updated.

Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Data was updated in regards to the Rye Fire & Rescue Vehicles as well as the Fire Department Emergency Activity (p. 9-7).

Public Works Department

Some changes were made. Data reflecting Public Works Equipment was updated. The Solid Waste Management segment was rewritten and a new chart is provided showing revenues from recycling.

Under “Personnel,” some changes were made as well.

In the 2006-2009 Master Plan, the Drainage segment contains the following statement: “Rye is developing a Master Drainage Plan encompassing the entire town.”

The statement has been modified:

Rye is currently in the process of contracting for an engineering firm to provide a storm water infrastructure analysis in order to develop a ‘Master Drainage Plan’ encompassing the entire town (p. 9-13).

Rye Water District

The overview segment has been rewritten and there is added language and paragraphs under “**Water Quality**.” Specifically, there is more emphasis on protecting the aquifers: “protection of these aquifers can be enhanced via appropriate and consistent enforcement of Town ordinances” (p. 9-14).

The section **System maintenance, operations, and Improvements** contains additional paragraphs, in particular, in regard to implementing better budget planning:

The RWD has initiated activities to develop and implement an Asset Management Program. The basic objectives of this

program are to provide a structure asset management approach for both near term and long term requirements of the RWD (p. 9-15).

In addition, “based upon the result of an engineering study conducted in 2005, the RWD at its Annual Meeting in 2009 received approval to proceed with engineering and design of a Central Water Treatment Plant (CWPT) (p. 9-15).

Next Steps

The list has been considerably expanded. Among the major “next steps” is “complete the final design of the CWTP in 2012” and “continue with activities to establish an Asset Management Program” (p. 9-15-16).

Schools – no update has been made. As stated above, a section of the Rye Recreation Department Master Plan (2011) has been incorporated at the end of the “Schools” section. (The same section has also been incorporated in the Civic Life chapter.)

The **Public Library** has a new Vision and Mission statement - adopted by the Rye Public Library Board of Trustees, February 9, 2012.

A new – and notable- addition is the “**Three-Year Strategic Plan 2012-2015**”, which can be accessed in its entirety through the Rye Library website: www.ryepubliclibrary.org

