

RTCC Poster Text:

Article 10 on the March 2020 ballot supports bringing a sidewalk, bike lanes and new crosswalks to Washington Road. This schematic design safely connects town center destinations – Rye Public Library, Rye Junior High, Parsons Field and the town forest trails, and the congregational church, where Rye Rec is leasing space for a multigenerational community center. The design also includes landscaping and lighting that will increase visibility – and safety – for students walking on winter afternoons and in inclement weather when the light is poor.

A “yes” vote on Article 10 approves \$300,000 toward the \$800,000 plan, and seeks approval for the town to apply for a state Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant that will, if awarded, supply the remaining \$500,000. If the grant is not awarded there will be no cost to the town.

Communications:

Dear [charrette participants]

[I wanted to provide you with an update on the work you helped start by participating in the charrette with Plan NH on May 31-June 1, 2019, to discuss Rye’s town center.

The Board of Selectmen formed the Rye Town Center Committee (RTCC) to continue the planning started at the charrette, specifically to review and consider the findings presented by Plan NH and to develop a related warrant article for the March ballot.

The RTCC reviewed the primary areas of consensus among residents revealed during the charrette:

- We want safer and more accessible multimodal travel in the town center,
- We want to preserve and enhance the historic nature of the town center,
- We want to maintain and promote multigenerational gathering places, and
- We would like to see town-owned buildings reimaged as efficient and functional spaces.

The RTCC is committed to helping develop a comprehensive plan for the town center, but the time pressure to develop a warrant article required narrowing focus on a specific issue. The committee decided to focus first on accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists on Washington Road for reasons including 1) the charrette-identified concerns about traffic speed 2) the vulnerability of bicyclists and the 25-30 children walking and biking to school and the library, and 3) critical timing around the potential availability of a state grant through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Every two years communities apply for TAP matching grants for nonmotorized projects, and the application process begins this spring.

Working with a surveyor, transportation planners and engineers, and after consultation with town officials and employees, the RTCC developed a preliminary design that will slow Washington Road traffic, safely connect destinations with a separated sidewalk and dedicated bike lanes, and appropriately define and accentuate the historic district with lighting and landscaping. The design extends the existing sidewalk at the Public Safety Building to fully connect Rye Junior High with the Rye Public Library. The plan will narrow car travel lanes, naturally resulting in slower speeds, and road crossings will be redesigned for pedestrian safety and vehicle efficiency.

The RTCC is recommending the proposed town center project, estimated at \$800,000, for the spring 2020 TAP application process. A “yes” on Article 10 will raise \$300,000 from the town, with the remaining \$500,000 coming from the state if the TAP grant is awarded. A “yes” vote on Article 10 also will increase Rye’s chances of being a selected community because part of the state’s TAP selection criteria is demonstrated local support.

Rye Town Center Committee

Karen Stewart (chair), Nina Parrott (vice chair), Kaitlyn Coffey (secretary), Victor Azzi, Mae Bradshaw, John Loftus, John Mitchell, Phil Winslow (Selectman’s representative)