

## **TOWN OF RYE MASTER PLAN: FORGING A PATH TOWARD AN UPDATE OF THE MASTER PLAN**

### **WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY?**

#### **THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF MASTER PLANNING**

By NH statute RSA 674, municipal Planning Boards are charged with updating their Master Plan “from time to time” with updates recommended every 5-10 years. A Master Plan serves many functions and provides many benefits to a community including the following:

- An **enabling document** necessary to support municipal decision making, investments, zoning ordinances, land use regulations and resource protection.
- A **forward looking and aspirational vision** of how the town can improve its operations, management, services and respond to the needs of the community efficiently and effectively.
- A **living document** that can respond to changing conditions, emerging challenges, and address community and environmental priorities
- A **vehicle to clearly articulate** the town’s future goals, objectives and desired outcomes.
- A **tool to advance support** from federal, state and regional agencies for grants and funding opportunities for capital improvements, resource protection and protection against coastal hazards.

#### **2021 SUMMARY OF WORK BY YOUR LOCAL PLANNING BOARD**

In 2021, the Planning Board (PB) appointed a Long Range Planning Sub- Committee (LRPC) to explore the idea of a comprehensive Master Plan Update through the lens of a “visioning” framework. The LRPC convened, accepted two ad-hoc committee members, and worked closely with Planning & Zoning Administrator Kimberly Reed to launch the project. Planning Consultant Julie LaBranche was contracted to help lead the Master Plan effort through 2021. The LRPC met monthly throughout the year, working with Ms. Reed and Ms. LaBranche to frame what a Master Plan update might look like, how an update might be crafted, and ways to gain input about priority issues from Rye residents. During 2021, extensive municipal and community outreach was conducted through several surveys, a public workshop, and via email, all the while being diligent to protect public health and safety during COVID. The town’s Planning webpage and newsletters, Rye Civic League news, Planning Board and LRPC minutes, and Rye Magazine consistently informed the citizens.

By January 2022, the LRPC voted unanimously on a strategy to undertake a comprehensive update of the town’s Master Plan focused on a draft Vision Statement, and organizationally aligned with a themed based approach. A power point presentation, a draft Vision Framework, and data from the public workshop was shared with the Planning Board during their February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. The preliminary Master Plan themes drafted by the LRPC include content focused on:

#### **DRAFT MASTER PLAN THEMES**

- **COMMUNITY**
- **MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATION**
- **LAND DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH**
- **ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY**
- **CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE**

The Planning Board will discuss the process of a comprehensive Master Plan update at their next meeting on March 15, 2022. Members of the public are welcome!

Rye Planning Board