

The Rye Public Library is requesting voters to support an initiative to develop the Library Common, the open space adjacent to Library. Specifically, the RPL seeks to create a welcoming and functional space in Town Center to be used for Library and Town events.

For over two years, the RPL Board of Trustees have explored options for the space, including working with an advisory committee to gather input on what the Library Common should entail. Consistent with prior surveys conducted, this feedback described a desire to create a more vibrant Town Center where people from all generations will gather. In 2023, the Trustees engaged Terra Firma Landscape Architects, a Portsmouth based firm that has been involved in many prominent projects around the Seacoast including the Music Hall, 3S Artspace and York Public Library.

Features of the design include a performance space (i.e., a gazebo/bandstand), smaller seating areas for informal gatherings, book clubs and smaller Library events, a larger patio, gardens using native plants and new hardwood trees. The goal is to create an iconic Town Center which will act as a magnet to bring people together. The Trustees are excited to share specific design elements with the public in the near future as we continue reviewing options.

Initial estimates indicate that the Library Common project will cost approximately \$500,000. The Trustees seek \$160,000 in public funding to assist with this effort, with privately raised funds making up the remainder of funding for the project. We believe that the result will be a space that the people of Rye will enjoy for generations.