



RYE POLICE DEPARTMENT

555 Washington Road Rye, New Hampshire 03870

6-10-24 Agenda Item D



Kevin Walsh
Chief of Police
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To: Rye Select Board
From: Chief Kevin Walsh *KW*
Date: April 24, 2024
Re: Report to Select Board in reference to Article # 30

On March 12, 2024, the town voters voted in favor of warrant article 30.

Article # 30

Shall the Rye Board of Selectmen implement a plan to determine which (if any) town roads or portions thereof, having a posted speed limit 35 mph are not currently in compliance with State law, and establish a speed limit 30 mph on such roads, per RSA 265:60 and RSA 265:118.

- An implementation plan is a document that outlines the steps your team should take to accomplish a shared goal or initiative. Implementation planning is the counterpart to a strategic plan.
- The Rye Driver Compliance Plan is a document outlining the steps the Town of Rye (team) Select Board, citizens, visitors, police have taken to accomplish shared goal, SAFE ROADS in Rye. Since 2018 traffic crashes have reduced consistently every year.
- On January 29, 2024, David Walker Assistant Director of Rockingham Planning Commission emailed William Lambert P. E. State of NH Safety Administrator, NH Department of Transportation, also NH DOT Traffic Engineer prior to March 12, 2024, vote. The email / communication was done at the request of Dania Seiglie Town of Rye RPC representative and Attorney Roger Wiegley. The communication started the implementation of a plan to determine which (if any) town roads or portions thereof, having a posted speed limit 35 mph are not currently in compliance with State law. Warrant article # 30 criteria began with the plan to have RPC review NH RSA 265:60 Speed Limitations, urban residence district (30 mph) RSA 265:118 and rural residence district. (35 mph) RSA 259:93.
- An email dated January 29, 2024, NH DOT employees William Lambert P. E. State of NH Safety Administrator Traffic Engineer and David Smith Project Manager communicated with Dania Seiglie the Town of Rye RPC representative and Attorney Roger Wiegley and David Walker Assistant Director of the RPC, comparison of the Town of Rye's 35 MPH zone with examples of other New Hampshire town and city roads.
- The comparisons William Lambert used demonstrate A section of Washington Road in Rye, NH are in compliance with State law.
- At a Rye Select Board meeting dated April 17, 2024, the Select Board asked other 35 MPH zones in Rye implement the plan to determine if the 35 MPH zones are currently in compliance with State law.

On April 17, 2024, the Rye Select Board implemented a plan to determine if certain roads or portions of roads have a posted speed limit of 35 mph if the roads are current with State law.

1. Washington Road near Wallis Road east towards Ocean Blvd, posted 35 mph zone.
2. Washington Road near Fern Ave west towards Route 1 / Lafayette Road.
3. Central Road from Meadow Lane to Grove Road.
4. Lang Road from Washington Road to Portsmouth town line.

On or about January 29, 2024, I spoke with and received an email from William Lambert. William Lambert, PE is employed by the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) as the State Highway Safety Administrator. He is a traffic engineer. William Lambert's training and employment qualifies him as an experienced traffic engineer.

Mr. Lambert, at the request of Dania Seigle, David Walker, Assistant Director of Rockingham Planning Commission, implemented a plan to determine Washington Road in Rye, between at approximately Long John Road and Brackett Road, a 35 MPH zone, is in compliance with NH State law.

As part of his work, Mr. Lambert used the following areas as comparisons when evaluating Washington Rye, NH approximately at Long John Road east towards Brackett Road (a 35 MPH zone):

- Exeter, New Hampshire, Water Street (a Business District classic "downtown")
- Union Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and other streets in the immediate area (Urban Residence District - which is more of a suburban/transitional area)

Mr. Lambert found Washington Rye, New Hampshire approximately at Long John Road east towards Brackett Road a 35 MPH zone is in compliance with NH State law. RSA 259:93 Rural Residence District.

I conducted the following comparisons using the same areas cited by Mr. Lambert (Exeter and Portsmouth):

- Rye, NH, Washington Road Rural Residence District: Washington Road Rye, NH Approximately from Fern Ave to Grove Road, to Dow Lane a 35 MPH zone demonstrates Washington Road, 35 MPH zone is in compliance with NH State law. RSA 259:93.
- Rye, NH, Central Road Rural Residence District Central Road Rye, NH: Approximately from Meadow Lane to Locke Road to Grove Road, a 35 MPH zone demonstrates Central Road, 35 MPH zone, is in compliance with NH State law. RSA 259:93.
- Rye, NH, Lang Road Rural Residence District: Lang Road Rye, NH from Washington Road to Portsmouth town line a 35 MPH zone demonstrates Lang Road, 35 MPH zone is in compliance with NH State law. RSA 259:93.

In conclusion: According to William Lambert's expertise as a State Traffic Engineer, a comparison of the Town of Rye's 35 MPH zones with examples of other New Hampshire town and city roads that comply with RSA 259:118 Urban Residence District demonstrates that all posted 35 MPH zones in Rye are consistent and in compliance with New Hampshire State law, specifically RSA 259:93. Furthermore, The existing posted 35 MPH speed zones are consistent with NH RSA 265:60 and good traffic engineering practices.

See attached Google Maps and William Lamberts examples and e-mailed dated January 29, 2024.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Cc: Town Administrator Matt Scruton
Assistant Town Administrator Becky Bergeron
Director of Public Works Jason Rucker
Fire Chief Mark Cotreau

From: David Walker <dwalker@therpc.org>
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 11:19 AM
To: Lambert, William <William.R.Lambert@dot.nh.gov>
Subject: Urban Residence Districts

EXTERNAL: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

Bill,

I know you aren't at the Traffic Bureau any longer but I thought you might be my best shot at getting some insight or at least know the right person to talk to. Rye is asking about "urban residence districts." This is related to setting speed limits in town and is being driven by residents concerned about speeding. I can't find anything beyond the definition in RSA 259:118:

RSA 259:118 Urban Residence District. – "Urban residence district" shall mean the territory contiguous to a highway not comprising a business district when the frontage on such highway for a distance of 300 feet or more is mainly occupied by dwellings or by dwellings and buildings in use for business.

As I am sure you are aware, speed limits are set lower by law in urban residence districts vs rural residence districts. Rye (or at least these residents) is looking to determine if some of the areas currently defined as rural could qualify as urban for this purpose. I can't find anything that gives any indication of how to measure "mainly occupied" or any sort of methodology for measuring the 300+ ft frontages.

In my time at RPC this is the first time that the issue has come up. The closest has been discussing urban compacts. To your knowledge, has NHDOT done any work to define these districts? If so, who would be the best person to talk to?

Thanks. I appreciate any insight you might have.

Dave

David Walker
Assistant Director
Rockingham Planning Commission
156 Water Street
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603.778.0885 (main office line)
603.658.0514 (direct line)
dwalker@therpc.org



From: Lambert, William <William.R.Lambert@dot.nh.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 12:17 PM

To: 'David Walker' <dwalker@therpc.org>

Cc: Baronas, Lee <Lee.J.Baronas@dot.nh.gov>; Kevin Walsh <KWalsh@town.rye.nh.us>; Smith, David <David.S.Smith@dot.nh.gov>

Subject: RE: Urban Residence Districts

Dave,

Good to hear from you and I am always willing to share institutional experience (some may say I'm too willing to share).

Full disclosure, Dania Seiglie reached out to Dave Smith, NHDOT Project Manager, with a similar question so she may be contacting me as well.

I have also been in contact and working with Chief Walsh on speed limit and speed concerns in Rye. I have copied him on this reply so that he isn't surprised if it were to come back to him.

That being said, the term "Urban Residence District" is only used in statute with regard to the statutory speed limit (RSA 265:60) (to my knowledge).

Chapter 259 also includes definitions of "Business District" and "Rural Residence District". I suspect all of these derived at some point from the "Uniform Vehicle Code" (UVC), which includes "model laws and ordinances" recommended for adoption by all states.

I have always had a hard time interpreting these definitions and often use pictures.

Business District would be the classic "downtown" (see Exeter below):

Exeter



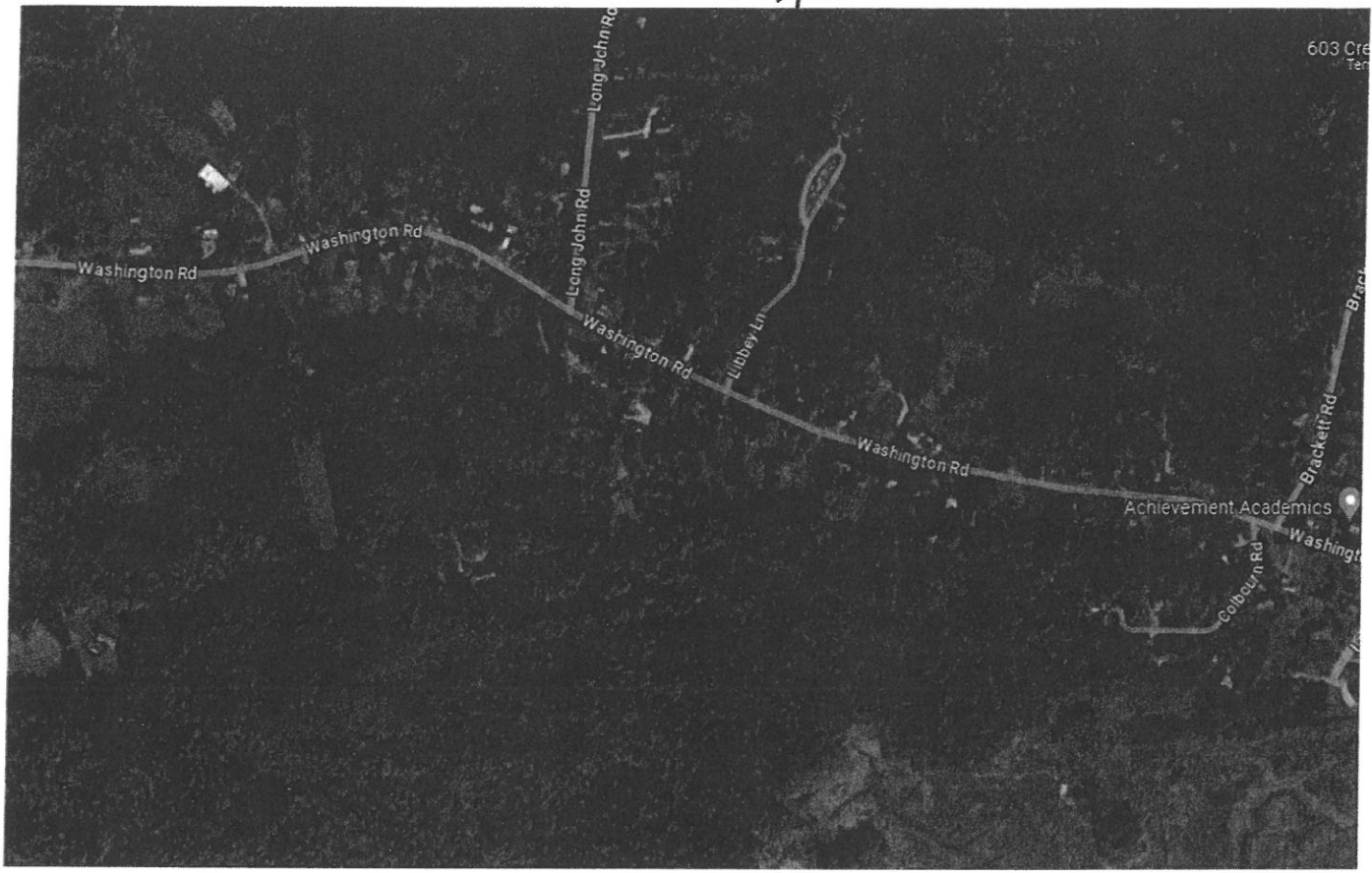
Urban Residence District is more of a city/urban neighborhood (see Portsmouth below):

Portsmouth



Rural Residence District is more of a suburban, transitional, description (not ironically, see Rye below):

Aye



In my opinion, the 30-mph speed limit is the most mis-used in the state, on state or local roads. We have 30-mph speed limits (State Speed Zones, per RSA 265:62, not statutory speed limits per RSA 265:60) for rural village settings where no one expects drivers to go 30-mph, as there is a long history of trying to solve speed concerns with lower speed limits.

It would be good to have a layer of GIS that identified the statutorily defined districts, but I think it always ends up being somewhat subject to interpretation.

Happy to discuss if you want to give me a call.

Bill

William R. Lambert, PE

State Highway Safety Administrator
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 483, 7 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302-0483
(603) 271-2604

Kevin Walsh

From: Smith, David <David.S.Smith@dot.nh.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 3:03 PM
To: rwiegley wiegleylaw.com; dmseiglie@gmail.com
Cc: Baronas, Lee; Kevin Walsh; Lambert, William; 'David Walker'
Subject: RE: Urban Residence Districts

Caution: External (david.s.smith@dot.nh.gov)

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Good afternoon,

Mr. Roger Wiegley and Ms. Dania Seiglie reached out to me in regards to Urban Residence Districts having seen my contact information on an NHDOT project near Rye. They are looking for insight on the URD topic as it applies to Rye which I committed to assist them in finding some information here at the NHDOT if available. Having discussed this with Bill Lambert here at the NHDOT, I understood that he was in coordination with Mr. David Walker on this same topic, which Bill had cc'd me on the email below, which I am hereby sharing with Roger and Dania to bring them into this discussion.

Best
Dave

David S. Smith, P.E.

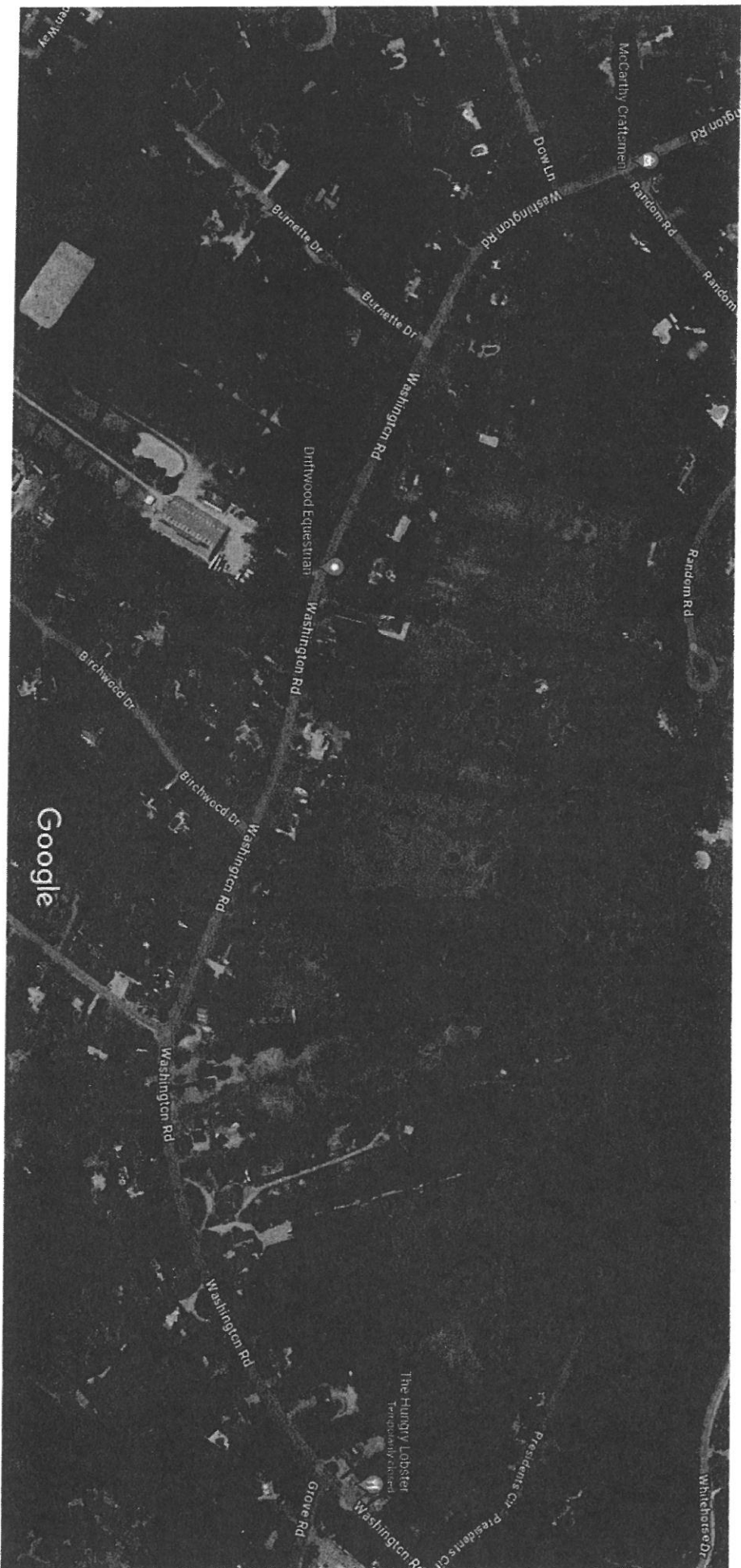
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Google Maps

Washington Rd (Grove to Dow)



Google

Imagery ©2024 Airbus, Maxar Technologies, USDA/FPAC/GEO, Map data ©2024 200 ft

Google Maps

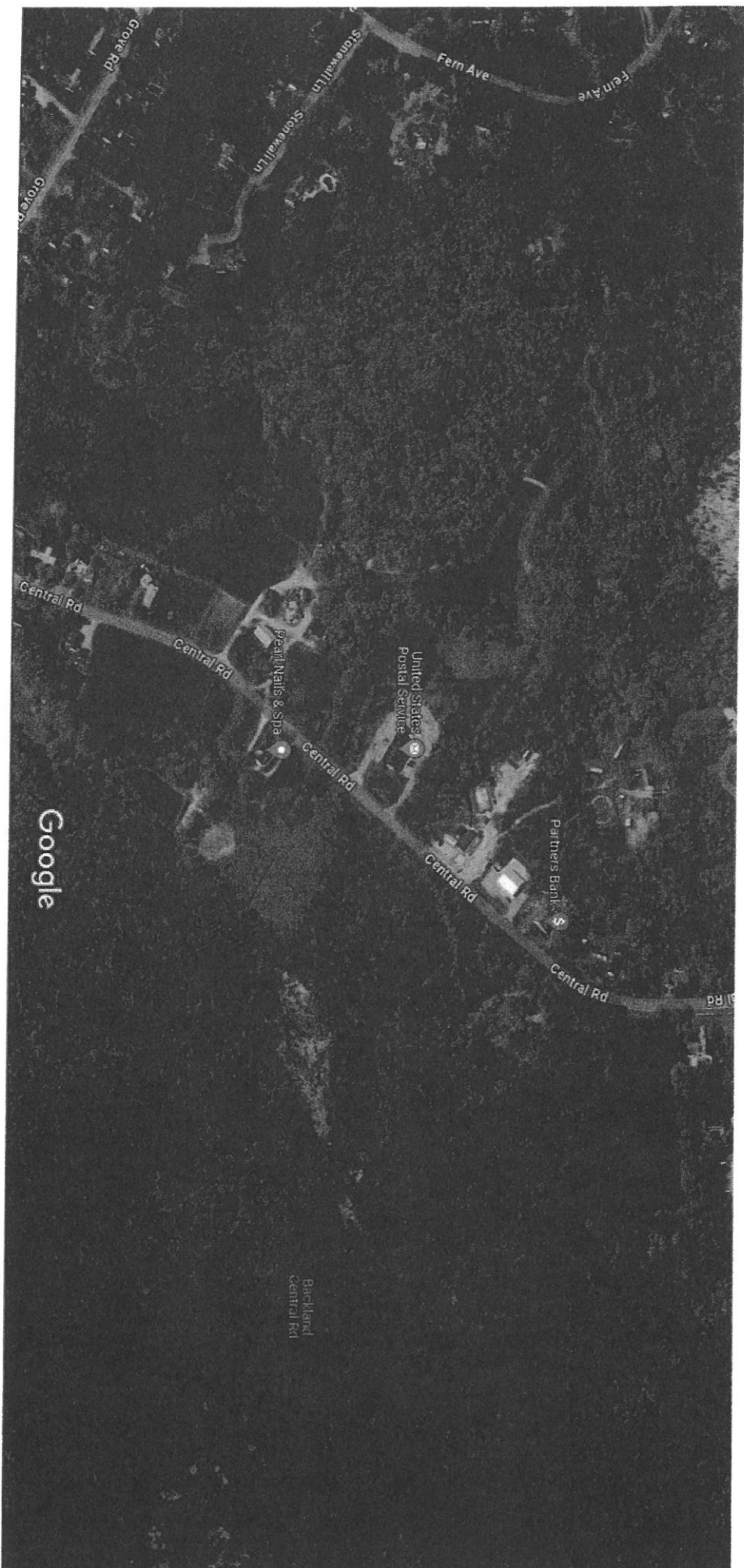
Central Rd



Imagery ©2024 Airbus, Maxar Technologies, USDA/FPAC/GEO, Map data ©2024 200 ft

Google Maps

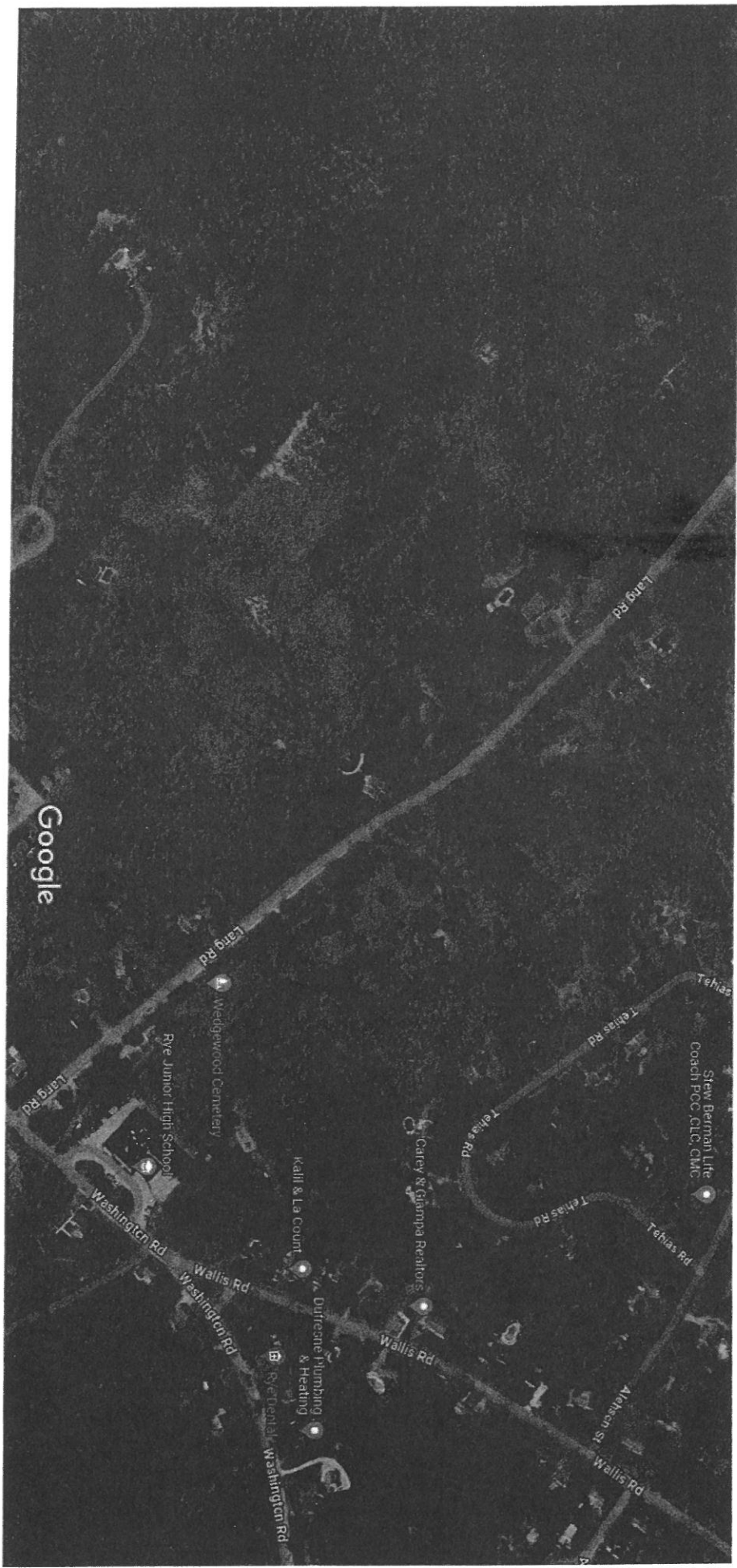
Central Rd (Locke to Grove)



Imagery ©2024 Airbus, CNES / Airbus, Maxar Technologies, USDA/FPAC/GEO, Map data ©2024 200 ft

Google Maps

Lang Rd



Imagery ©2024 Airbus, Maxar Technologies, USDA/FPAC/Geo, Map data ©2024 200 ft