RYE
New Hampshire











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Community Resilience Building

Summary of Findings

JULY 2026

Town of Rye, New Hampshire
Community Resilience Building
Summary of Findings

Overview

The need for municipalities, regional planning organizations, academic institutions, corporations, states, and federal agencies to increase resilience to extreme weather events and a changing climate is strikingly evident amongst the communities across the state of New Hampshire. Relatively recent events such as Hurricane Irene (2011), major flooding events (2019), COVID-19 pandemic, and coastal flooding (2022, 2024) have reinforced this urgency and compelled leading communities like the Town of Rye to proactively collaborate on planning and mitigating risks. Ultimately, this type of leadership is to be commended because it will reinforce the strengths and reduce the vulnerability of people, infrastructure, and ecosystems and serve as a model for other communities in New Hampshire, New England, and the nation.

Recently, the Town of Rye signed on with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to complete a Community Resilience Building process in partnership with the New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW). The process included community-driven steps designed to assess current hazard and climate change impacts and to generate prioritized actions to improve resilience and sustainability. In July 2026, Rye's Core Team helped organize a Community Resilience Building workshop facilitated by TNC in partnership with CAW. The core directive of this effort was the engagement with and between community members to define strengths and vulnerabilities and the development of agreeable, priority resilience actions for the Town of Rye.

The Rye Community Resilience Building Workshop's central objectives were to:

- Define top local, natural, and climate-related hazards of concern.
- Identify existing and future strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Identify and prioritize actions for the Town.
- Identify opportunities to collaboratively advance actions to increase resilience alongside residents and organizations from across the Town, and beyond.

The Town of Rye employed an "anywhere at any scale", community-driven process called Community Resilience Building (CRB) (www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org). The CRB's tools, reports, other relevant planning documents, and local maps were integrated into the workshop process to provide both decision-support and visualization around shared issues and existing priorities across Rye. The recently updated Master Plan for Rye (Rye 2035) and the Rye Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2022) were particularly instructive as references. Using the CRB process - rich with information, experience, and dialogue - the participants produced the findings presented in this summary report. This includes an overview of the top hazards, current concerns and challenges, existing strengths, and proposed actions to improve Rye's resilience to hazards and climate change today, and in the future.

The summary of findings transcribed in this report, like any that concerns the evolving nature of risk assessment and associated action, is offered for comments, corrections and updates from workshop attendees and other stakeholders alike. The leadership displayed by the Town of Rye on community resilience building will benefit from the continuous participation of all those concerned.

Summary of Findings

Top Hazards and Vulnerable Areas for the Community

Prior to the CRB Workshop, the Rye Core Team identified the top hazards for the Town. The hazards of greatest concern included inland flooding, storm surge along the coastal areas, extreme wind events, drought, and sea level rise. Additional hazards highlighted by participants during the CRB Workshop included severe winter storms (resulting in power outages), extreme weather resulting in cold snaps and heat waves, and hurricanes and tropical storms. These hazards have direct and increasing impacts on the infrastructure, environment, and residents of and visitors to Rye. These effects are seen within residential areas, natural areas (wetlands, rivers, forests, watersheds), roads, bridges, businesses, municipal facilities, churches, schools, social support services, tourism, and other critical infrastructure and community assets within Rye.

Current Concerns and Challenges Presented by Hazards

The Town of Rye has several concerns and faces multiple challenges related to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. In recent years, Rye has experienced a series of highly disruptive and damaging weather events including a drought during the summer of 2022, major winter storms in December 2022 and 2023, two significant winter storms in January 2024, and other less impactful but more frequent events. Impacts from these events have included extensive coastal destruction of roadways, homes, and natural resources, inland flooding, tree damage and associated power outages across the Town. The magnitude and intensity of these events and others across New Hampshire have increased awareness of natural hazards and climate change, while motivating communities such as Rye to proactively improve their resilience.

This recent series of extreme weather events highlights that the impacts from hazards are diverse. In Rye this included coastal and riverine flooding of critical infrastructure, roads, private property with septic systems, and low-lying areas; localized flooding from stormwater runoff during intense storms and heavy precipitation events; and property damage and utility outages from wind, snow, and ice. Longer periods of elevated heat, particularly in July and August, have raised concerns about vulnerable segments of the population, including elderly and/or disabled community members. The combination of these issues presents a challenge to preparedness and mitigation priorities and requires comprehensive, yet locally specific actions for the Town.

The workshop participants were generally in agreement that Rye is experiencing more intense and frequent storm events and heat waves. Additionally, there was a general concern about the increasing challenges of being prepared for the worst-case scenarios (e.g., major tropical storms and hurricanes (Cat-3 or above)) particularly in the late summer and in the fall/winter months when more intense storms coincide with colder weather (i.e., snow/ice storms, Nor'easters, blizzards).

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges

As in any community, Rye is not uniformly vulnerable to hazards and climate change. Certain locations, assets, and populations have been and will be affected to a greater degree than others. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key areas of concern and challenges across several broad categories. Vulnerabilities and associated mitigation actions identified in the Rye's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2022) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference.

Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:

- Concerns about future economic vulnerability given the lack of a strong economic or capital improvement planning process coupled with a relatively small tax base.
- Rye is generally misunderstood to be a predominately wealthy population of residents.
- Large and growing population of residents over the age of 62 with many living on fixed incomes.
- Lack of clarity on the purposes of various municipal boards and commission and other groups in Rye, which has created friction and disagreements on decision making.
- Lack of adequate inclusion of information about the environment and the Town in student curriculum at schools in Rye.
- Abundance of summer visitors that do not have the same level of commitment to conservation and stewardship of the waterfront and beaches as well as respect for the use of the resources as that of full-time residents.
- Seasonal residents currently utilize 20% of the residences in Rye ("amenity traps" of being liked so much in a particular season).
- Increase in tourism due to state of New Hampshire advertising campaigns but Rye is having to spend more money and resources managing the influx. There has been minimal support from the state to support the influx of seasonal traffic relative to the municipal financial and staff contributions. Increases in parking revenue are not shared equally between the state and Rye.
- Reoccurring drought over the last decade could become more pronounced in the future due to unpredictable precipitation patterns which may lead to more stringent water conservation restrictions.
- Ongoing and escalating storm-induced (plus sea level rise) damage to waterfronts including municipal infrastructure and private property.
- Coastal flooding issues amongst residential homes in the Rye Beach community.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Dozens of residential properties have been granted exemptions that allowed building in highly vulnerable wetland areas over the years.

Emergency Management & Preparedness:

- Mounting concerns around the uncertainty of the magnitude and frequency of coastal flooding due to ongoing storm events.
- Coastal areas that experience storm surge events result in access issues for residents and emergency vehicles.
- Limited availability and awareness of a communication system to alert residents and visitors to what is happening in Rye as well as emergency alerts regarding issues such as crime and road closures.
- Residents are experiencing power loss to their homes during high heat and storm events.
- Currently, there are no emergency shelters and no heating or cooling centers in Rye.
- Challenges to effectively and efficiently evacuate two senior living communities in Rye.
- Mobile home park (Adam's Park) may be increasingly vulnerable to extreme wind events.
- Despite the new cellular antenna many locations in Rye have limited cellular coverage. This is of particular concern for coastal residents that rely on cellular coverage during and after storm events to ensure the safety of themselves and their families.

Roads, Bridges, Seawalls, & Dams:

- Low lying roads and associated infrastructure such as Ocean Boulevard regularly flood. Flooding also relocates the stone, sand, and gravel from antiquated seawalls across the Boulevard which increases cost and time to restore use of this state-owned and maintained roadway in Rye.
- Periodic flooding impacts various roadways including Harbor Road, Cable Road, Lot Road, and Wallis Road, among others.
- Ongoing issues with speeding in Rye which present a safety challenge for pedestrians and other motorists.
- Growing concerns about the viability of the Harbor Road Bridge in the face of more intense scour from storm surge coupled with sea level rise (i.e., winter storms in 2024). The Bridge provides critical access to approximately 25 residential homes.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Seawall at Sawyer Beach and Harbor Road is compromised with no current plan to make improvement while seawalls associated with state roads along the coast in Rye are being repaired and/or upgraded.

Stormwater, Waste Systems, Drinking Water Supply, & Electrical Power Systems:

- Stormwater management systems (pipes and culverts) cannot handle the current inflows from routine storms.
- Outdated or insufficient mapping of stormwater management system in Rye which prevents accurate planning of necessary repairs and upgrades.
- Current sewer system has limited capacity resulting in overload of the system during storm events which costs the Town due to suspended solid violations along with impacts to the coastal environments.
- Vulnerability of the sewer system where the sewer mains are located along the coast including 180 manholes (40% of total number in system). Winter storms in 2022 and 2024 stand as benchmark events that exposed the vulnerability of the sewer system.
- Two sewer pump stations, including the pump at Jenness Beach and at Cable Road extension, are extremely vulnerable to flooding. There are also challenges accessing these pumps during flooding events.
- Repeated beach and wetland area (Parson's Creek) closure due to high coliform bacteria counts which is likely due to failing leech fields associated with privately-owned septic systems. Standing regulations requiring septic tank pumping on a regular basis did not reduce bacteria levels. Currently no ordinance requiring broader testing of viability of residential septic systems ("we need new regulations for the entire septic system – tanks and leech fields").
- Ongoing storm surge impact to propane tanks and septic systems in multiple coastal areas in Rye.
- Many residential septic systems lack accurate public record of age and history of servicing and/or upgrades.
- Longer term concerns regarding the available supply of drinking water given the growing needs and changes in precipitation patterns.
- Single aquifer provides drinking water via three to four municipal-owned wells which could all simultaneously become polluted from a single source or spill.
- Storm surges have the potential to expose and damage drinking water supply pipes situated alongside roadways at risk. (Example: 300-foot water main section burst in the Rye Beach and Jenness Beach areas two years ago.)

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Fuel island at the transfer station is located above the aquifer that provides all the municipally provided drinking water for Rye. Concerns that a fuel leak from the location could affect this critical resource.
- Above ground power lines remain vulnerable to high winds and other extreme events that can knock down power poles and lines.
- Lack of understanding that power generated via residential solar will not be available if the grid goes down unless the residences have solar-charged batteries.



Credit: Wikipedia



Credit: Marinas.com



Credit: VisitingNewEngland.com

Current Strengths and Assets

Just as certain locations, facilities, and populations in Rye stand out as particularly vulnerable to the effects of hazards and climate change, other features are notable assets for Rye's resilience building. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key strengths and expressed interest in centering them as the core of future resilience building actions.

Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:

- Clearly, the responsive and committed engagement exhibited by leadership, staff, and residents is a very appreciated strength within and across Rye. Ongoing collaboration between municipal staff, committee/commission/board volunteers, business community, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, adjoining municipalities, regional planning entities (i.e., Rockingham Planning Commission, New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup, etc.), and various state-wide organizations (i.e., The Nature Conservancy, etc.), among others, on priorities identified herein will help advance comprehensive, cost-effective, community resilience building actions.
- Rye is a 400-year-old parish with 200 years as an incorporated municipality ("lot of decisions about what goes where over the last four centuries").
- Rye is populated by a mix of both longtime, multigenerational families alongside recent newcomers ("lots of history and heritage").
- Town staff are creative and resourceful and do a good job at working with wide assortment of partners.
- Strong inter-departmental collaboration with many engaged committees, commissions, and interest groups (i.e., Historic District Commission, various beach committees, among many others).
- Great deal of engagement from educated and talented residents with time they devote to public activities intended to make Rye a more livable and supportive community for all.
- Very engaged community with a wide range of interests where "residents don't always get along but everyone has an equal voice".
- Rye is a place that residents and seasonal visitors want to be due to deep connections and universal feeling of "sense of place".

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Rye places a great deal of emphasis on conducting planning activities coupled with many supportive partners including regional entities such as the Rockingham Planning Commission and the New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (network of over 35 organizations helping coastal communities prepare for climate change, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events).
- Planning Board recognizes that growth is inevitable while balancing the efforts to maintain conservation, resilience, and a high quality of life for residents. This balance is managed through proactive planning and zoning.
- Four municipal buildings have installed solar including two schools (Rye Elementary School, Rye Junior High School) and two public buildings (i.e., Public Safety Building, Rye Recreation Garage).
- Approximately 180 residential buildings have installed solar panels and have storage batteries.
- Solid commitment and background in collecting data about municipal systems in Rye that continue to inform management practice improvements over time.
- Strong working relationships amongst entities to address the drought challenge in Rye including the Rye Water District, Aquarian Water Company, Select Board, and Land Use Boards, among others.
- Solid communications are provided by the Seacoast Drinking Water Commission and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Resources on drought issues and financial support for local communities such as Rye ("good communications between local, regional, and state").
- Recent improvements in communication and collaboration on drinking water supply issues in Rye with the hire of a new director at the Rye Water District.
- The four state parks located in Rye help to increase local revenue sources via monies being spent on accommodation, entertainment, and food and beverages.
- Rye collaborates with the state to help protect the four state parks as well as supporting the Seacoast Science Center.
- Rye is currently conducting a municipal facilities assessment.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Due to overwhelming community support, the Town passed and adopted a solar ordinance in 2023.
- Rye was the first in the state to have C-Pacer which encourages investments in resilience in the commercial sector via solar installation, insulation improvements, and elevating equipment above flood levels, among other measures.
- Planning Board and the Select Board have introduced and maintained zoning restrictions that have helped to protect the Town from many natural hazards over the decades (i.e., stormwater management), which have not always been popular decisions amongst all the residents.
- Community is environmentally aware and know what needs to be done to protect the environment they love.
- Rye has a strong and stable tax base with the ability to raise funds to fix issues of concern in the community ("well-positioned financially"). Town also has a demonstrated ability to secure grants for needed projects and programs.
- Rye Planning Board were recently awarded the Housing Championship Award for recognition of trying to have diversified housing, while working on infrastructure and stormwater management issues in the Bailey Brook Watershed.
- Rye has two ordinances where the Select Board can require 20% Workforce Housing if developers apply for Multifamily in Business and Commercial Districts (Section 190-4.2, 190-4.3 (Rye Zoning Ordinance)).

Emergency Management & Preparedness:

- Emergency Management Service has well established and tested protocols within a well-run department with an emphasis placed on collaborative operations with safety teams from other departments including DPW, Sewer, Water, Police, and Fire, among others.
- Rye is a relatively independent municipality when it comes to handling events but has mutual aid agreements in place for critical services with neighbors including Exeter and Portsmouth with easy access along State Route 1 (i.e., hospitals, etc.).
- Rye has two ambulances that are fully staffed by the Fire Department.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Public Works and the Fire Department have plans in place to maintain and update equipment needs (i.e., plows, equipment for fire response, etc.).
- New communications antenna has been activated in the center of Town which has helped to improve cellular coverage.

Roads, Bridges, Seawalls, & Dams:

- Department of Public Works (DPW) is in the process of upgrading the municipally owned Harbor Road Bridge, which has been exposed to risk during recent high tide events (i.e., 2024 high tides). Work is being conducted in conjunction with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The DPW is also working with FEMA to make improvements to the seawall in Rye's harbor.

Stormwater, Waste Systems, Drinking Water Supply, & Electrical Power System:

- Sewer system currently supports approximately 550 households. Town is currently conducting a "infiltration and inflows" assessment with associated forward looking planning as to where the sewer system capacity may be expanded in the future to accommodate community growth.
- Rye has installed new water mains along Ocean Boulevard which has reduced concerns over erosion of the old mains due to salt-water corrosion.
- Water conservation restrictions in place that allows odd numbered houses to use outside water on odd days with even numbered houses use on even days with additional time limitations. Restrictions and associated fines have resulted in more efficient use of a limited resource in Rye.
- Rye Water District is migrating to smart meters where water supply and distribution is digitally monitored on a more regular basis.
- Ever increasing awareness in the community regarding water quality issues and the need for water conservation with some new developments electing for landscaping with native meadow material instead of more water dependent, traditional grass lawns.
- Department of Environmental Protection provides water quality monitoring for private drinking water wells in Town.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Residents of Rye have consistently provided strong support for drinking water system upgrades over the decades.

Watersheds, Wetlands, Rivers, Open Space, Forests, & Trees:

- Rye is home to a well-loved assortment of conservation lands, state and local parks, and beaches that are proximate to cultural and commercial destinations (i.e., downtown Rye, Portsmouth, etc.).
- Conservation Commission has delineated all the natural resources in Rye for the Natural Resource Inventory which is used in collaboration with the Planning Board to make decisions about land use. Currently, these two entities are working on a strategic land conservation plan.
- Large percentage of protected or conserved wetlands in the low-lying areas with populations densely clustered in the upland areas.
- Health of the wetlands and the marshes are considered a major asset for the resilience and strength of the community and helps "getting its feet back on the ground following floods". Rye makes the case for conservation and preserving these landscape features and their ability to help reduce the impacts of coastal flooding on municipalities.
- Conservation Commission works diligently to protect salt marshes and adjoining upland areas to accommodate marsh advancement over time (i.e., Fair Hills Salt Marsh, etc.).
- Recent updated to land development regulations brought regulations up to modern standards with an emphasis on restrictions associated with avoiding wetlands in Rye.
- Ongoing planning and activity efforts designed to further protect the Bailey Brook Watershed which provides most of the drinking water for Rye.
- Fair Hills Salt Marsh system has an upcoming restoration project that will support the advancement of marsh onto adjoining upland areas through the engagement of abutting landowners.

Recommendations to Improve Resilience

A common theme among workshop participants was the need to continue community-based planning efforts focused on developing adaptive measures to reinforce Rye's strengths and reduce vulnerability to extreme weather, climate change and other common concerns raised. To that end, the workshop participants helped to identify several priority topics requiring more immediate and/or ongoing attention including:

- **Long-term vision and growth** (i.e. sustainable growth, volunteerism, conservation & recreation, affordable housing, vulnerable group provisions, regionalization, economy);
- **Infrastructure improvements** (i.e. roads/bridges/seawalls, stormwater, sewer, and drinking water infrastructure/management systems);
- **Quality of life improvements** (i.e. parks and recreation, open space & accessibility, sustainability, health & safety, economic prosperity, housing, education, regionalization);
- **Emergency management** (i.e. communications, outreach, education, continuation of services, business recovery, evacuation, vulnerable populations).

In direct response, the Community Resilience Building workshop participants developed the following actions and identified, but not ranked, as priority or as additional actions. Mitigation actions from the Rye Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2022) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference with actions presented herein. Maps provided during the CRB Workshop, gathered from the Rye Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and the Master Plan for the Town of Rye (Rye 2035), are provided in Appendix B. Actions from the Action Matrix in the Rye 2035 plan are provided in Appendix C.

Priority Actions

- Build and reinstate a capital improvement plan for Rye that incorporates projects that will increase the resilience and sustainability of the community in the short and long-term.

- Complete the ongoing municipal facilities assessment and use to develop an asset management plan for all entities in Town.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Find a way to put a price tag on inaction around resilience efforts to showcase the need to spend money on resilience projects.

- Work to increase the support from the community to secure matching funds for federal grants to design and implement priority projects that will enhance the resilience of Rye.

- Try to identify costs that can be shared with visitors such as pay for parking, meals and occupancy taxes along with a better way to redistribute monies collected by the State but generated at the municipal level.

- Hire a Communications Director for the town of Rye.

- Develop a "Water-at-a-Glance" guide or dashboard to help educate homeowners on the various water-dependent system in Rye (drinking water, irrigation, septic/sewer).

- Adopt an ordinance that would require a full septic system assessment prior to a property being sold with an emphasis on homes purchased in the Parson's Creek Watershed.

- Continue to advance critical assessments to address the significant and well known vulnerabilities on the sewer system in Rye.

- Eversource to conduct a study of the electrical distribution system in hopes of better understanding the pattern and causes of the power outages in Rye.

- Improve town-wide communications systems to help with emergency alerts. Ensure system is complementary with the existing Code Red system which is currently used only for major events.

- Work with cellular companies to identify a new location for a cell tower in hopes of improving coverage in Rye.

- Explore micro-cell technology for cellular communications which requires smaller cell towers that are less disruptive of viewsheds.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Develop a Complete Streets Guide for Rye to provide focus and an approach to reducing automobile speed through travel lane narrowing, improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, and elevating select road segments above advisable elevations to avoid current and future closures and impacts due to flooding.

- Create material and systems to educate and inform residents and visitors on sea level rise and storm surge risks coupled with descriptive discussions on historical conditions and past extreme weather events that had significant impacts on the Town.

- Engage with the Seacoast Science Center on education campaigns to help elevate awareness and understanding of the environment, hazard mitigation, and natural disaster response.

- Educate visitors to be more aware of the environment in Rye and to be conscientious of actions that have impacts (i.e., littering, etc.).

- Explore the potential of utilizing the schools in Rye as emergency shelters which would require the installation of large-scale generators that could be connected to solar panels along with other needs (i.e., beds, food, showers, staffing, etc.).

- Continue to explore options for a back-up drinking water supply or treatment solutions.

- Advance discussions on relocating the fuel island to the far end of the transfer station or moving it to an entirely new location that is completely outside of the aquifer overlay area to permanently eliminate contamination possibilities.



Credit: Homes.com



Credit: Town of Rye



Credit: Yankee Magazine

Additional Actions

- Master Plan Implementation Committee to conduct meetings with all municipal departments in fall of 2026 coupled with a community-wide outreach effort on the recently completed Master Plan to further identify which of the 150 actions the larger community would like to see move forward for Rye.

- Determine the status to the $25M in federal government funding set aside for revetment of the seacoast including a portion of Rye. Review the associated report developed by the Rockingham Planning Commission for further details.

- Advocate at a community level to improve state funding or other resource support to alleviate burden on towns regarding changing federal funding availability.

- Develop and distribute "Welcome to Rye" homeowners guide and brochure to help ensure new residents are made aware of important regulations, nearby natural resources, recycling opportunities, water conservation, and services available through the municipality, among other items of importance. Also explore developing an educational information packet for landlords to provide to short-term and seasonal renters.

- Improve the usefulness and useability of the Town website to ensure it is helpful resource for residents and visitors.

- Engage superintendent of schools to ensure more information about the environment and the Town are included in the curriculum for students across the school system in Rye.

- Work across departments and organizations to finds ways to promote the benefits of a life in Rye in hopes of attracting young professionals and families (i.e., "diversify the demographics").

- Conduct a system-wide assessment of the stormwater management infrastructure and operations for infiltration and inflows to inform and immediate and long-term plan to improve the capacity and resilience of the system.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Need to conduct a full inventory of the location and condition of the stormwater management infrastructure (pipes and culverts) across Rye coupled with a mapping of issues via GIS.

- Increase Town staff capacity to lead tracking and enforcement activities for homeowners that fail to upgrade both tank and leech field components of septic systems.

- Continue to enforce the septic system pump out schedule for residential property in the Parson's Creek watershed along with the maintenance of a public spreadsheet of who is or isn't in compliance. Look to expand ordinance across Rye to help improve the public record of age and dates of servicing and/or upgrades.

- Work to increase the installation of solar panels on homes and public facilities across Rye in tandem with the installation of storage batteries.

- Create an educational flyer focused on drinking water use and quality to be distributed to owners of private drinking water wells. Incorporate elements and narrative used in other outreach materials in Town (i.e., elementary school curriculum).

- Continue to support the Rye Water District's upcoming projects including a new treatment system upgrade which will treat pre- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in one well, upgrading system to treat iron and manganese in a second emergency source well, and overall, bringing up the capacity to supply drinking water to residents and business owners.

- Ensure commissioners and staff remain proactive on communicating and working on drinking water and sewer system projects.

- Work with Aquarion Water Company to explore the potential for a drinking water interconnect between Rye and Portsmouth. Portion of water used in Portsmouth is already being supplied from Rye with newly installed pumps and controls (June 2026).

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Work to strengthen knowledge and resource-sharing opportunities with the nearby municipalities of Portsmouth, Hampton, and others. Explore possibilities of coordinating purchases with cost sharing across multiple municipalities as well as renting existing equipment with one another (e.g., hot asphalt machine recently purchased by Rye could be rented to other municipalities to avoid a large one-time purchase).

- Advance contract to develop an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 9-point Watershed Action Plan for Bailey Brook (Phase 1), which discharges to Jenness State Beach.

- Identify and hire a consulting firm to work directly with all municipal department heads on scoping out town-wide municipal services and facilities ("what currently exists, what are the needs"). Ensure this action is included in Rye's 2027 annual budget.

- Evaluate and potentially strengthen the protections of the aquifer overlay district in Town.

- Explore the potential for requiring water controllers or flow regulators when new irrigation systems are installed to help further enhance water conservation measures in Rye.

- Make improvements to the fuel pipes at the fuel island within the transfer station as a precautionary measure to ensure fuel does not leak into the Garland Well aquifer which is the single source of public drinking water in Rye.

- Look to improve the antiquated transfer station to better respond to the needs of the current residents.

- Conduct an education campaign to highlight recycling opportunities and correct recycling etiquette.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Review activities conducted at the Public Works Garage to ensure best practices.
- Identify and prepare a centralized emergency shelter facility along with multiple warming and cooling centers that are accessible and advertised to residents and visitors (closest option currently is in Portsmouth).
- Continue to meet and coordinate with the FEMA for funding and design approvals for the Harbor Road Bridge and the harbor seawall improvements.
- Continue working on improving the cellular coverage across all of Rye.
- Explore methods to support additional services and improvements that may be required from upcoming housing development affected by recent legislative changes.
- Develop an improved tracking and enforcement system for development near wetlands.
- Explore ways the state might be working on sustainability and resilience issues across state parks and other state-owned and managed assets.
- Build off the example set by the sidewalk system in the Village District to expand and install sidewalks elsewhere in Town. Incorporate sidewalk installation and maintenance budgets into the Capital Improvement Plan (when reestablished) for Rye.
- Evaluate the need and cost for putting in a 3-way stop at the end of Lang Road.
- Establish better control on State Route 1 during storm events by improving the emergency alert system for the State that warns people in Rye (i.e., public service announcements) not to use the roadway when flooded.
- Identify critical locations to bury power lines to avoid impacts and wind damage and subsequent power outages.
- Look for funding to install HVAC systems and generators for all Town facilities.

CRB Workshop Participants: Department/Organization

Town of Rye – Select Board
Town of Rye – Department of Public Works
Town of Rye – Sewer Department
Town of Rye – Emergency Management Department
Town of Rye – Planning Department
Town of Rye – Police Department
Town of Rye – Fire Department
Town of Rye – Master Plan Implementation Committee
Town of Rye – Energy Committee
Town of Rye – Budget Committee
Town of Rye – Conservation Committee
Town of Rye – Recreation Commission
Town of Rye – Heritage Commission
Town of Rye – Planning Board
Town of Rye – School Board
Town of Rye – School Facilities
Rye Water District
Rye Congregational Church
New Hampshire House of Representatives – Rockingham District 24

Rye Core CRB Project Team

Kim Reed – Planning and Zoning Administrator, Town of Rye
Pat Losik – Planning Board Chair, Town of Rye
John Shaw – Master Plan Implementation Commission Chair, Town of Rye
Kara Campbell – Land Use & Environmental Administrator, Town of Rye

Online CRB Workshop Facilitation Team

The Nature Conservancy – Adam Whelchel, Ph.D. (Lead Facilitator)
The Nature Conservancy – Drew Goldsman (Small Group Facilitator)
New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup - Lisa Wise (Small Group Facilitator)
The Nature Conservancy – Tim Clark (Small Group Facilitator)
The Nature Conservancy – Melissa DeFrancesco
The Nature Conservancy – Erica Anderson
The Nature Conservancy/RIDEM – Beth Bannar (Scribe)

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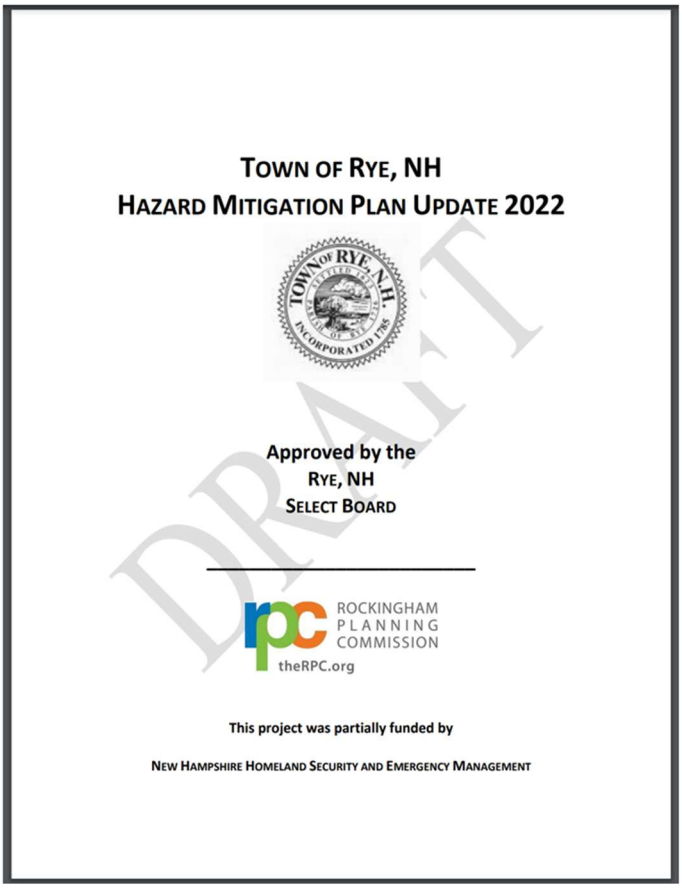
Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

Rye

Mitigation Action Plan and Actions*



***Gathered from Rye Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2022).**

Table 13: Action Plan for proposed mitigation actions

Score	Project	Responsibility/ Oversight	Funding/ Support	Estimated Cost	Timeframe
40	Replace and install two generators for two sewer pump stations	Sewer Director/Sewer Commissioners	Utility users/ Grants	$70,000	Medium Term 2-3 years
40	Purchase and install manhole improvements to prevent floodwater from entering sewer system	Sewer Director/Sewer Commissioners	Utility users/ Grants	$30,000	Long Term 5 years
36	Develop a pandemic preparedness plan focused on planning and communication	EMD	Town/ Grants	$2,500	Medium Term 2-3 years
36	Complete risk assessment of water and sewer infrastructure to identify mitigation measures to increase system resilience	Rye Water District (RWD) Superintendent/ RWD Commissioners/ Sewer Director/Sewer Commissioners	Utility users/ Grants	$10,000	Short Term 1 year

Score	Project	Responsibility/ Oversight	Funding/ Support	Estimated Cost	Timeframe
36	Purchase and install external plugs for mobile generators for three sewer pump stations	Sewer Director/Sewer Commissioners	Utility users/ Grants	$9,500	Long Term 5 years
35	Work with NH DOT, Town of North Hampton, and Rockingham Planning Commission on a long-range plan for flood hazard areas along Ocean Boulevard	DPW/EMD	DOT	Unknown	Long Term 5 years
35	Purchase and install accessible isolation valves in water system to prevent floodwater intrusion	RWD Superintendent/ RWD Commissioners	Utility users/ Grants	$75,000	Long Term 5 years
33	Participate in the Community Rating System	Town Planner/Select Board	Grant	$5,000	Medium Term 2-3 years
33	Review building codes to ensure adequate compliance for wind speed	Building Inspector	Town	No cost	Short Term 1 year
32	Work with Rye Water District and Aquarion on water use guidelines designed to strengthen resiliency of water supply system	RWD Superintendent/ RWD Commissioners/ Aquarion	Utility users/ Grants	$5,000-$25,000	Medium Term 2-3 years
32	Purchase and install a generator for Junior High School	EMD	Grants	$100,000	Long Term 5 years
31	Purchase and install new HVAC in Library and establish building as a cooling and heating station for vulnerable populations	EMD/Library Director/ Library Trustees	Grants	Unknown	Long Term 5 years

Score	Project	Responsibility/ Oversight	Funding/ Support	Estimated Cost	Timeframe
31	Research land and building regulations designed to reduce damage caused by seismic activity and earthquakes	Town Planner/ Building Inspector	Grants	$10,000	Medium Term 2-3 years
29	Establish local cable television channel for pre-disaster mitigation information and outreach	Select Board	Grants	$10,000	Long Term 5 years
27	Replace Harbor Road Bridge Deck	Select Board/DPW	Town/Grants	Unknow	Long Term 5 years
25	Purchase and install a generator for Town Hall	Select Board	Grants	Unknown	Long Term 5 years
24	Earthquake proof Junior High School	EMD/School Board	Grants	Unknown	Long Term 5 years
18	Communicate with State Police regarding Ocean Boulevard to address Town concerns regarding spectators driving, biking, and walking along the road during storms	EMD	None	None	Short Term 1 year

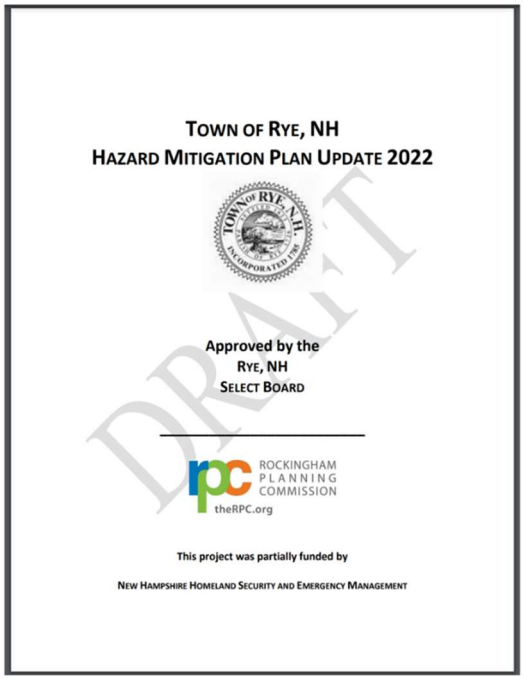
Appendix B

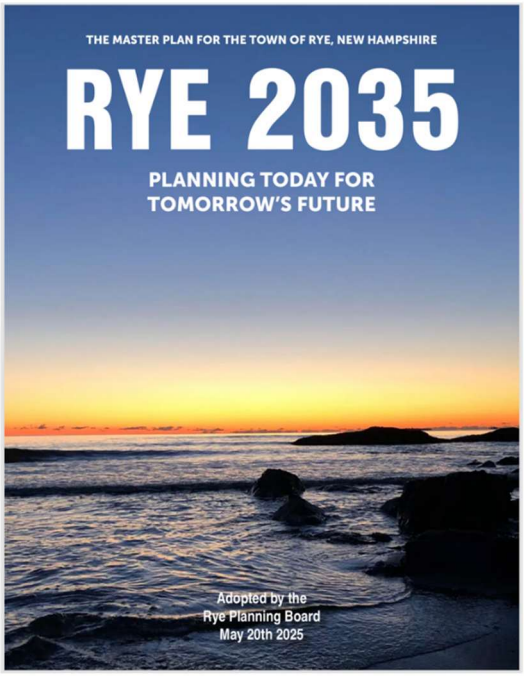
Rye

Map Resource Packet*

Used During

Workshop





***Gathered from Rye 2030 (2025) and the Rye Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2022).**

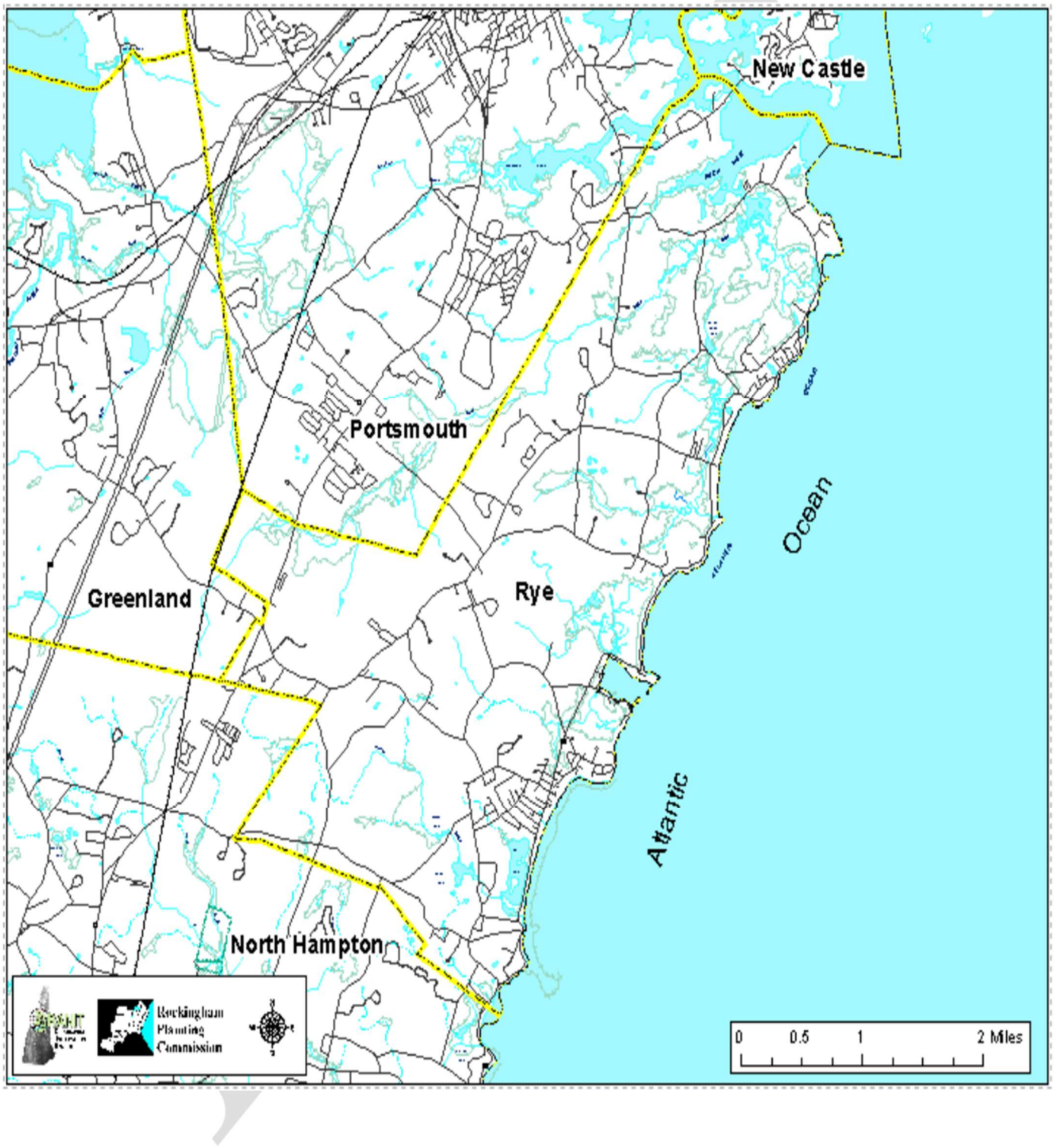


Figure 1: Location Map of Rye, New Hampshire

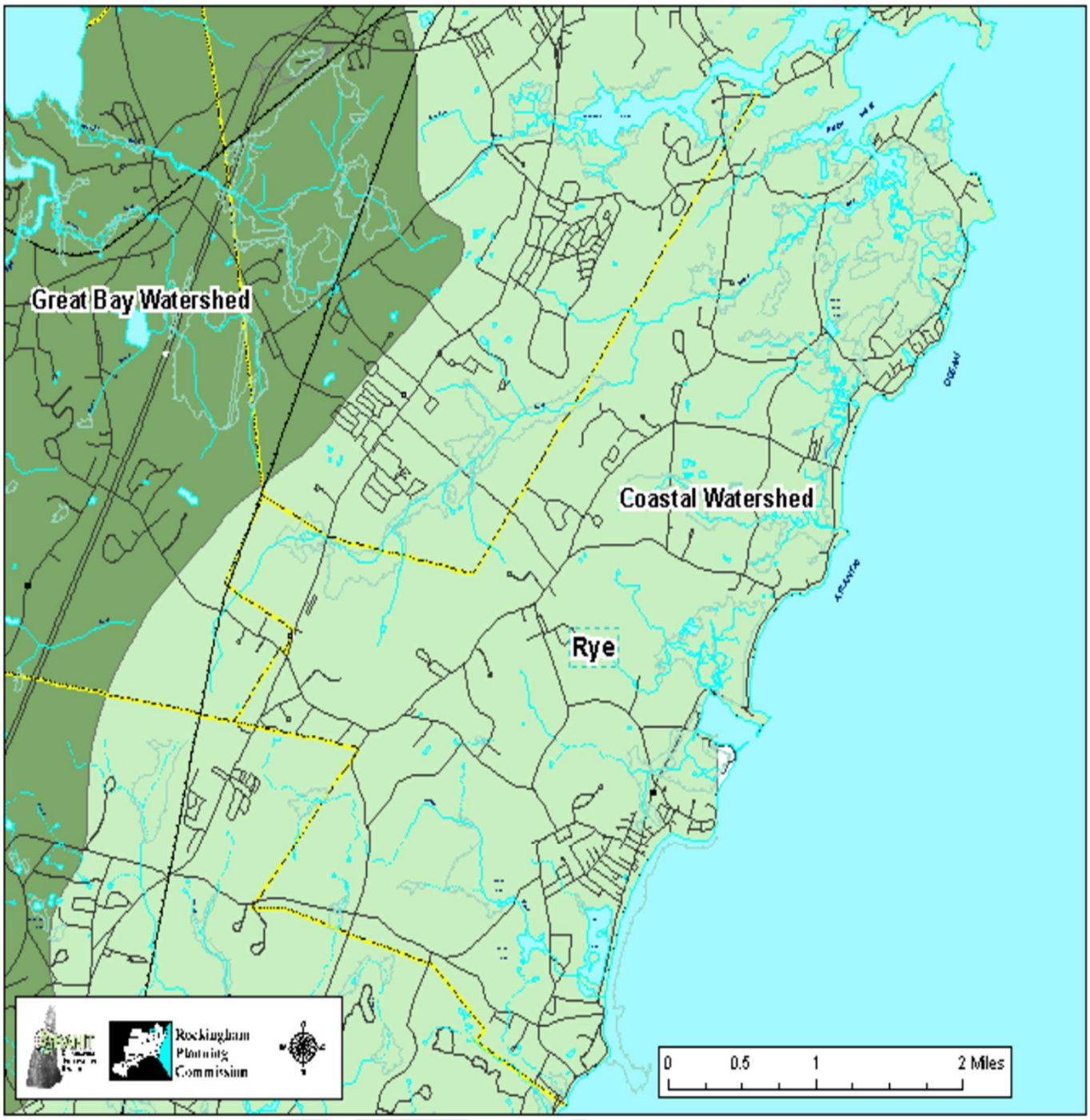


Figure 2: Watershed Map of Rye, New Hampshire

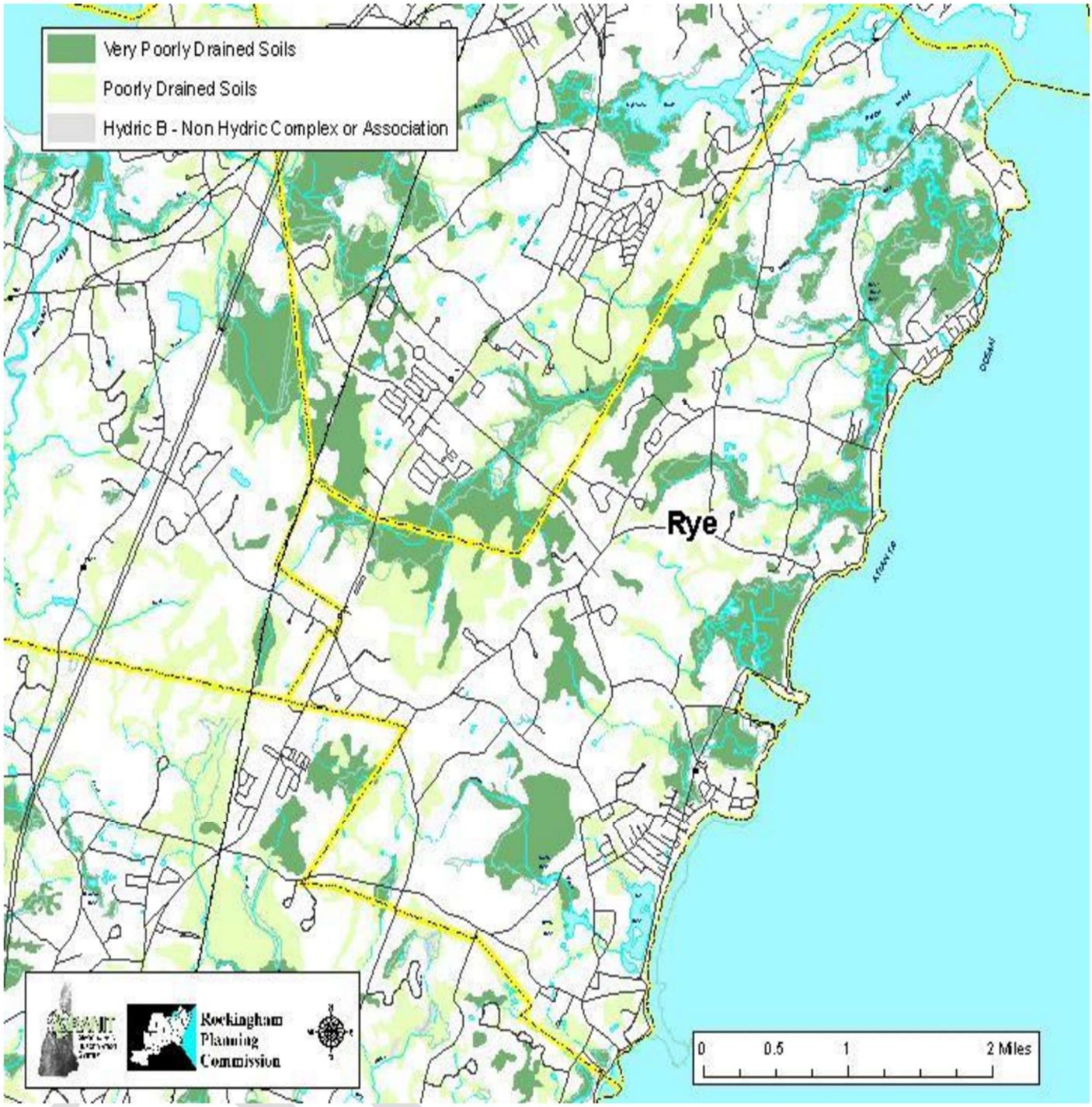


Figure 3: Wetland Map of Rye, New Hampshire

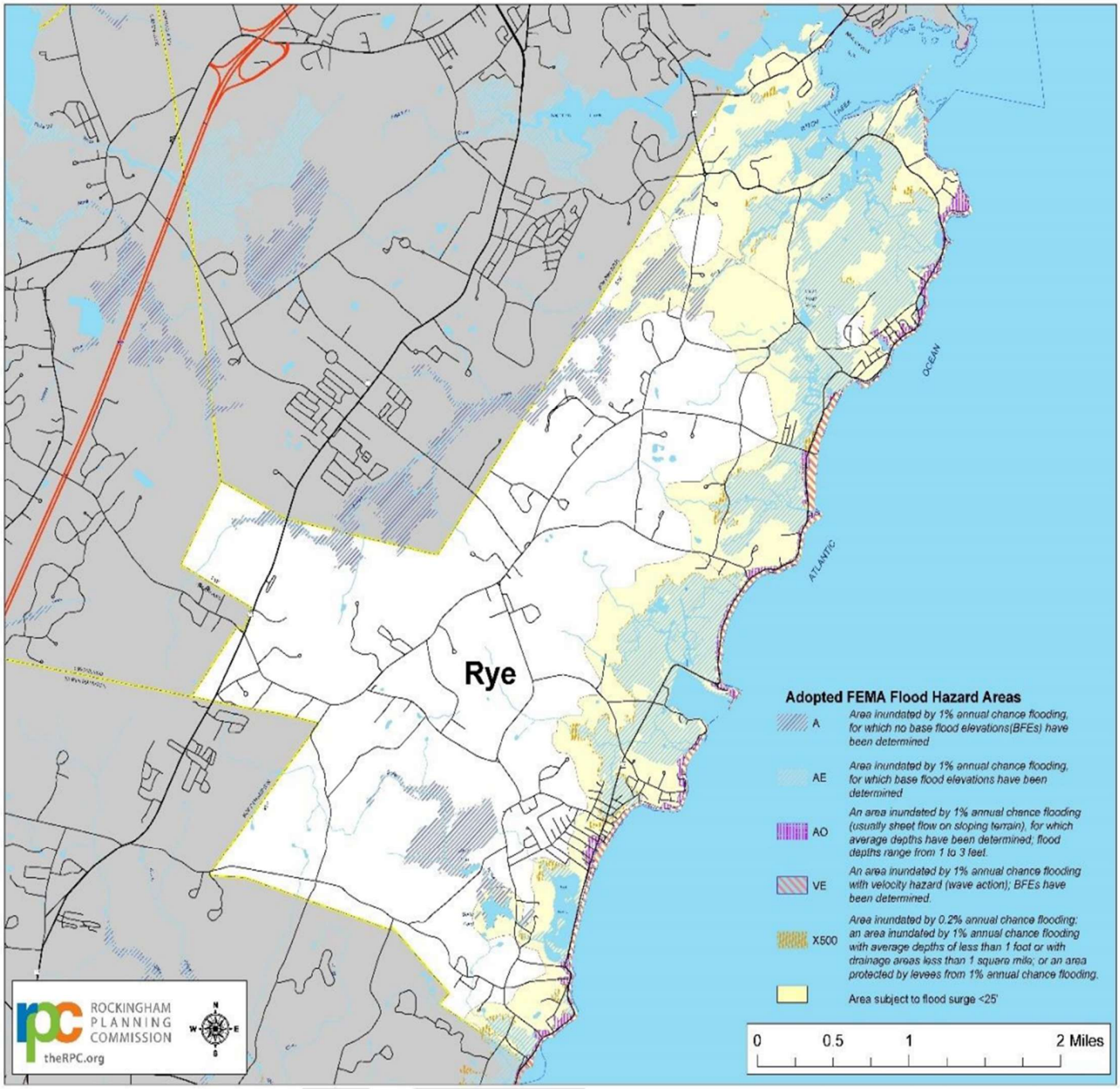
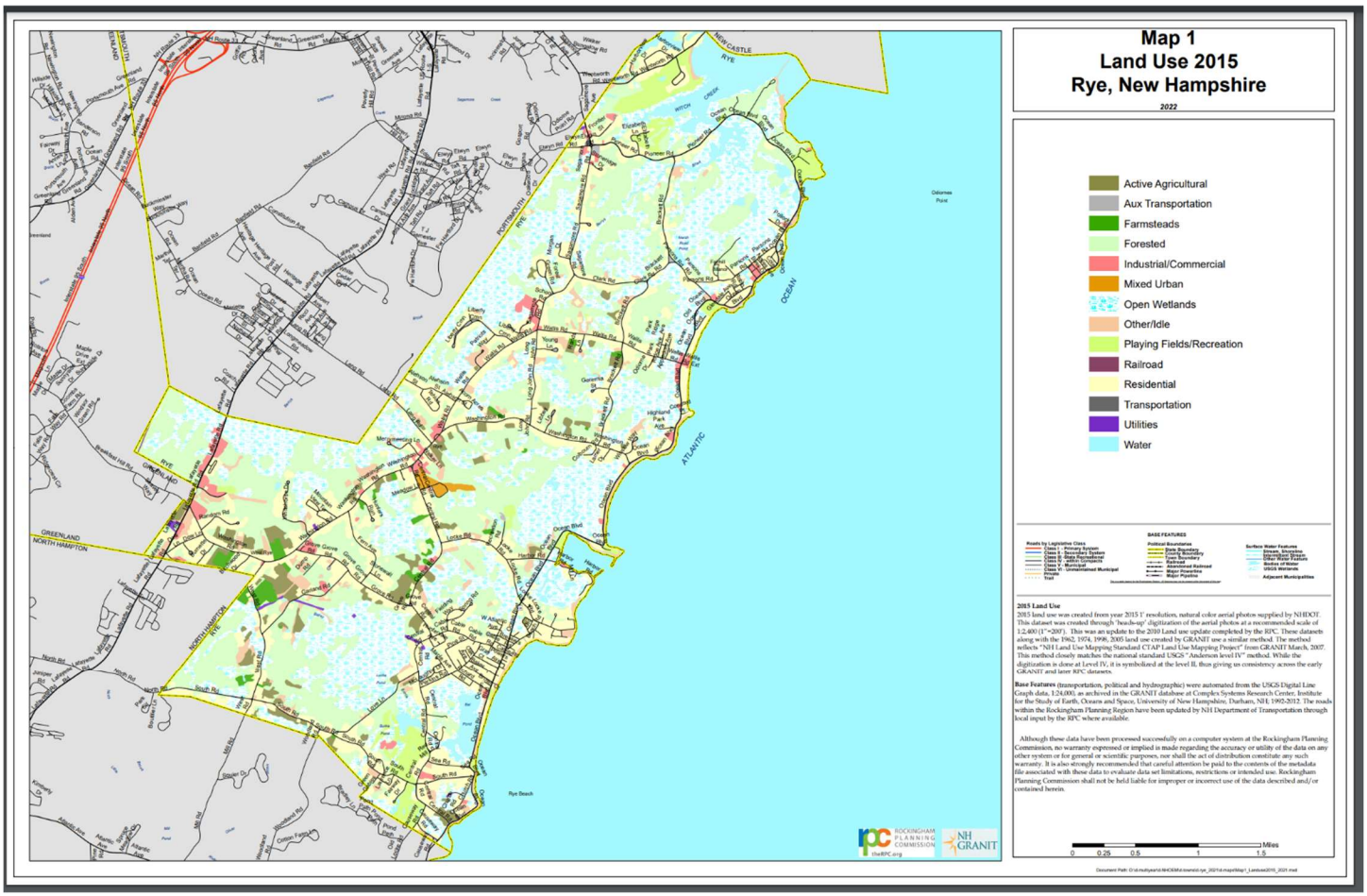
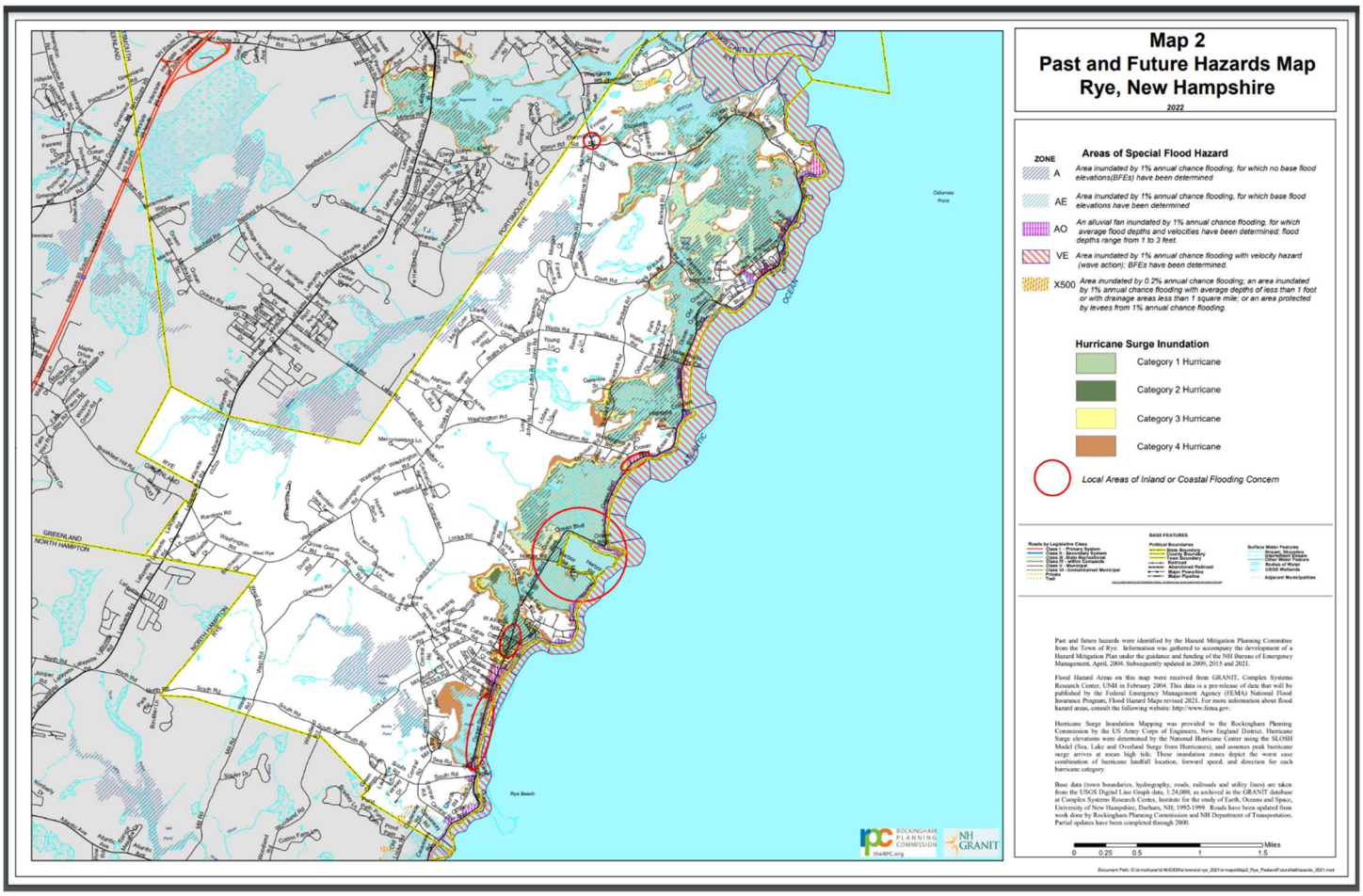
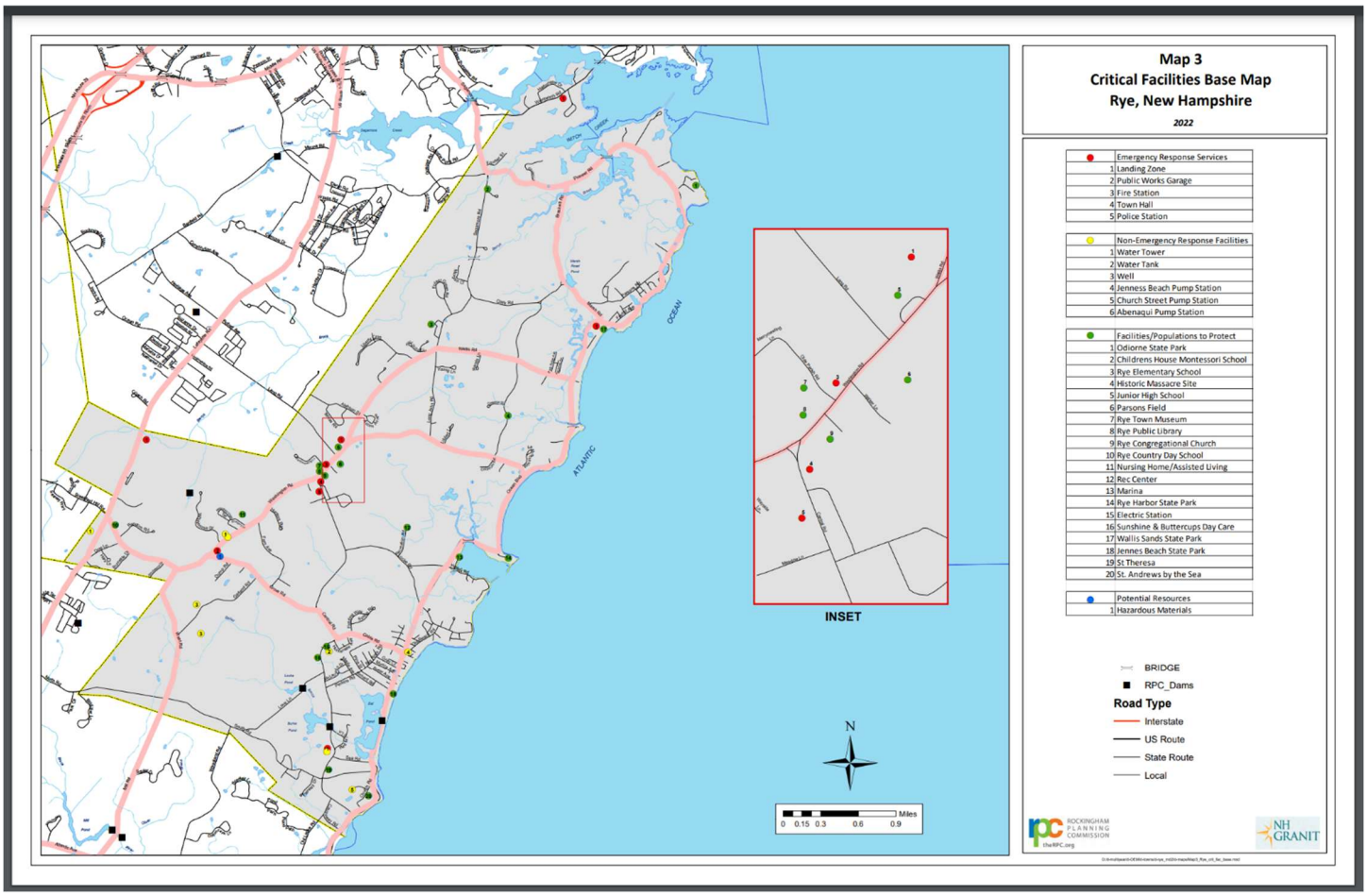
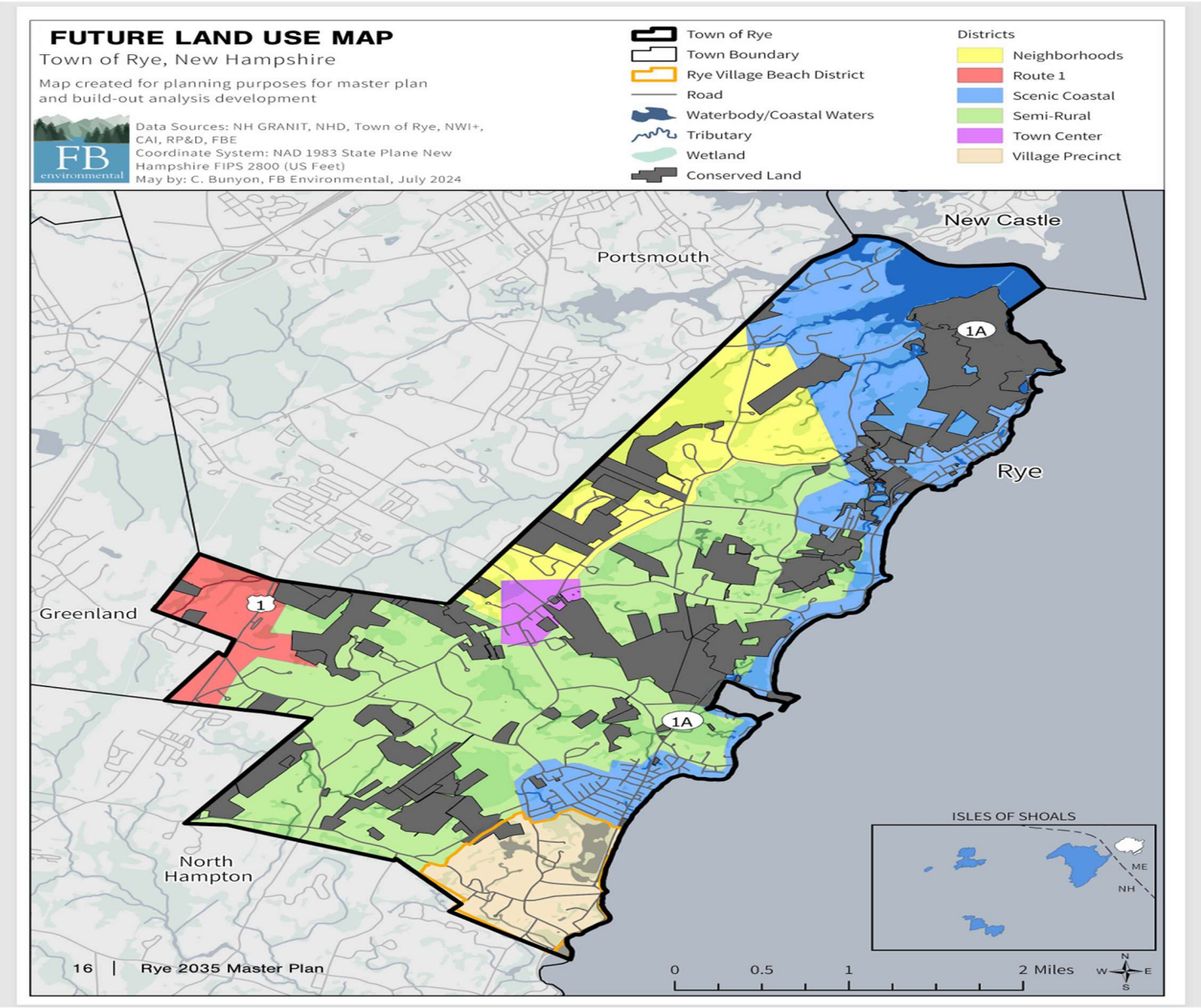


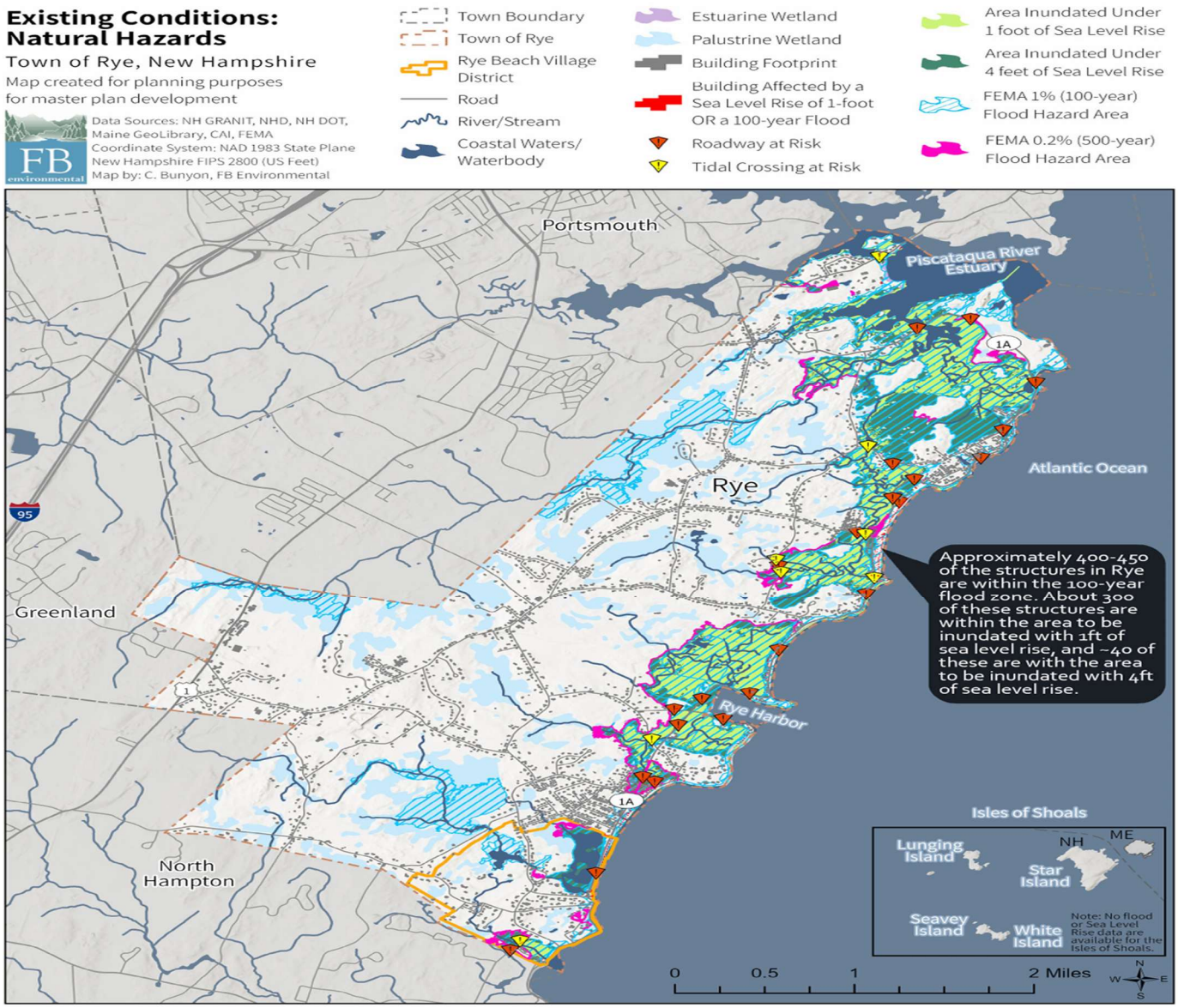
Figure 4: Floodplain Map of Rye, New Hampshire


Map 1
Land Use 2015
Rye, New Hampshire
2022
Active Agricultural
Aux Transportation
Farmsteads
Forested
Industrial/Commercial
Mixed Urban
Open Wetlands
Other/Idle
Playing Fields/Recreation
Railroad
Residential
Transportation
Utilities
Water
BASE FEATURES
2015 Land Use
2015 land use was created from year 2015 1' resolution, natural color aerial photos supplied by NHDOT. This dataset was created through 'heads-up' digitization of the aerial photos at a recommended scale of 1:2,400 (1"=200'). This was an update to the 2010 Land use update completed by the RPC. These datasets along with the 1962, 1974, 1998, 2005 land use created by GRANIT use a similar method. The method reflects "NH Land Use Mapping Standard CTAP Land Use Mapping Project" from GRANIT March, 2007. This method closely matches the national standard USGS " Anderson level IV" method. While the digitization is done at Level IV, it is symbolized at the level II, thus giving us consistency across the early GRANIT and later RPC datasets.
Base Features (transportation, political and hydrographic) were automated from the USGS Digital Line Graph data, 1:24,000, as archived in the GRANIT database at Complex Systems Research Center, Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH; 1992-2012. The roads within the Rockingham Planning Region have been updated by NH Department of Transportation through local input by the RPC where available.
Although these data have been processed successfully on a computer system at the Rockingham Planning Commission, no warranty expressed or implied is made regarding the accuracy or utility of the data on any other system or for general or scientific purposes, nor shall the act of distribution constitute any such warranty. It is also strongly recommended that careful attention be paid to the contents of the metadata file associated with these data to evaluate data set limitations, restrictions or intended use. Rockingham Planning Commission shall not be held liable for improper or incorrect use of the data described and/or contained herein.
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 Miles
ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION
theRPC.org
NH GRANIT


Map 2
Past and Future Hazards Map
Rye, New Hampshire
2022
Areas of Special Flood Hazard
ZONE
A
Area inundated by 1% annual chance flooding, for which no base flood elevations(BFEs) have been determined
AE
Area inundated by 1% annual chance flooding, for which base flood elevations have been determined
AO
An alluvial fan inundated by 1% annual chance flooding, for which average flood depths and velocities have been determined; flood depths range from 1 to 3 feet.
VE
Area inundated by 1% annual chance flooding with velocity hazard (wave action); BFEs have been determined.
X500
Area inundated by 0.2% annual chance flooding; an area inundated by 1% annual chance flooding with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile; or an area protected by levees from 1% annual chance flooding.
Hurricane Surge Inundation
Category 1 Hurricane
Category 2 Hurricane
Category 3 Hurricane
Category 4 Hurricane
Local Areas of Inland or Coastal Flooding Concern
BASE FEATURES
Political Boundaries
Surface Water Features
Past and future hazards were identified by the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee from the Town of Rye. Information was gathered to accompany the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan under the guidance and funding of the NH Bureau of Emergency Management, April, 2004. Subsequently updated in 2009, 2015 and 2021.
Flood Hazard Areas on this map were received from GRANIT, Complex Systems Research Center, UNH in February 2004. This data is a pre-release of data that will be published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program, Flood Hazard Maps revised 2021. For more information about flood hazard areas, consult the following website: http://www.fema.gov.
Hurricane Surge Inundation Mapping was provided to the Rockingham Planning Commission by the US Army Corps of Engineers, New England District. Hurricane Surge elevations were determined by the National Hurricane Center using the SLOSH Model (Sea, Lake and Overland Surge from Hurricanes), and assumes peak hurricane surge arrives at mean high tide. These inundation zones depict the worst case combination of hurricane landfall location, forward speed, and direction for each hurricane category.
Base data (town boundaries, hydrography, roads, railroads and utility lines) are taken from the USGS Digital Line Graph data, 1:24,000, as archived in the GRANIT database at Complex Systems Research Center, Institute for the study of Earth, Oceans and Space, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH; 1992-1999. Roads have been updated from work done by Rockingham Planning Commission and NH Department of Transportation. Partial updates have been completed through 2000.
Miles
0
0.25
0.5
1
1.5
ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION
theRPC.org
NH GRANIT


Map 3
Critical Facilities Base Map
Rye, New Hampshire
2022
Emergency Response Services
1 Landing Zone
2 Public Works Garage
3 Fire Station
4 Town Hall
5 Police Station
Non-Emergency Response Facilities
1 Water Tower
2 Water Tank
3 Well
4 Jenness Beach Pump Station
5 Church Street Pump Station
6 Abenaqui Pump Station
Facilities/Populations to Protect
1 Odiorne State Park
2 Childrens House Montessori School
3 Rye Elementary School
4 Historic Massacre Site
5 Junior High School
6 Parsons Field
7 Rye Town Museum
8 Rye Public Library
9 Rye Congregational Church
10 Rye Country Day School
11 Nursing Home/Assisted Living
12 Rec Center
13 Marina
14 Rye Harbor State Park
15 Electric Station
16 Sunshine & Buttercups Day Care
17 Wallis Sands State Park
18 Jennes Beach State Park
19 St Theresa
20 St. Andrews by the Sea
Potential Resources
1 Hazardous Materials
BRIDGE
RPC_Dams
Road Type
Interstate
US Route
State Route
Local
INSET
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
N
Miles
0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9
ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION
theRPC.org
NH GRANIT


FUTURE LAND USE MAP
Town of Rye, New Hampshire
Map created for planning purposes for master plan and build-out analysis development
Data Sources: NH GRANIT, NHD, Town of Rye, NWI+, CAI, RP&D, FBE
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane New Hampshire FIPS 2800 (US Feet)
May by: C. Bunyon, FB Environmental, July 2024
FB environmental
Town of Rye
Town Boundary
Rye Village Beach District
Road
Waterbody/Coastal Waters
Tributary
Wetland
Conserved Land
Districts
Neighborhoods
Route 1
Scenic Coastal
Semi-Rural
Town Center
Village Precinct
New Castle
Portsmouth
Rye
Greenland
North Hampton
1
1A
1A
ISLES OF SHOALS
ME
NH
0
0.5
1
2 Miles
N
W
E
S
16 | Rye 2035 Master Plan

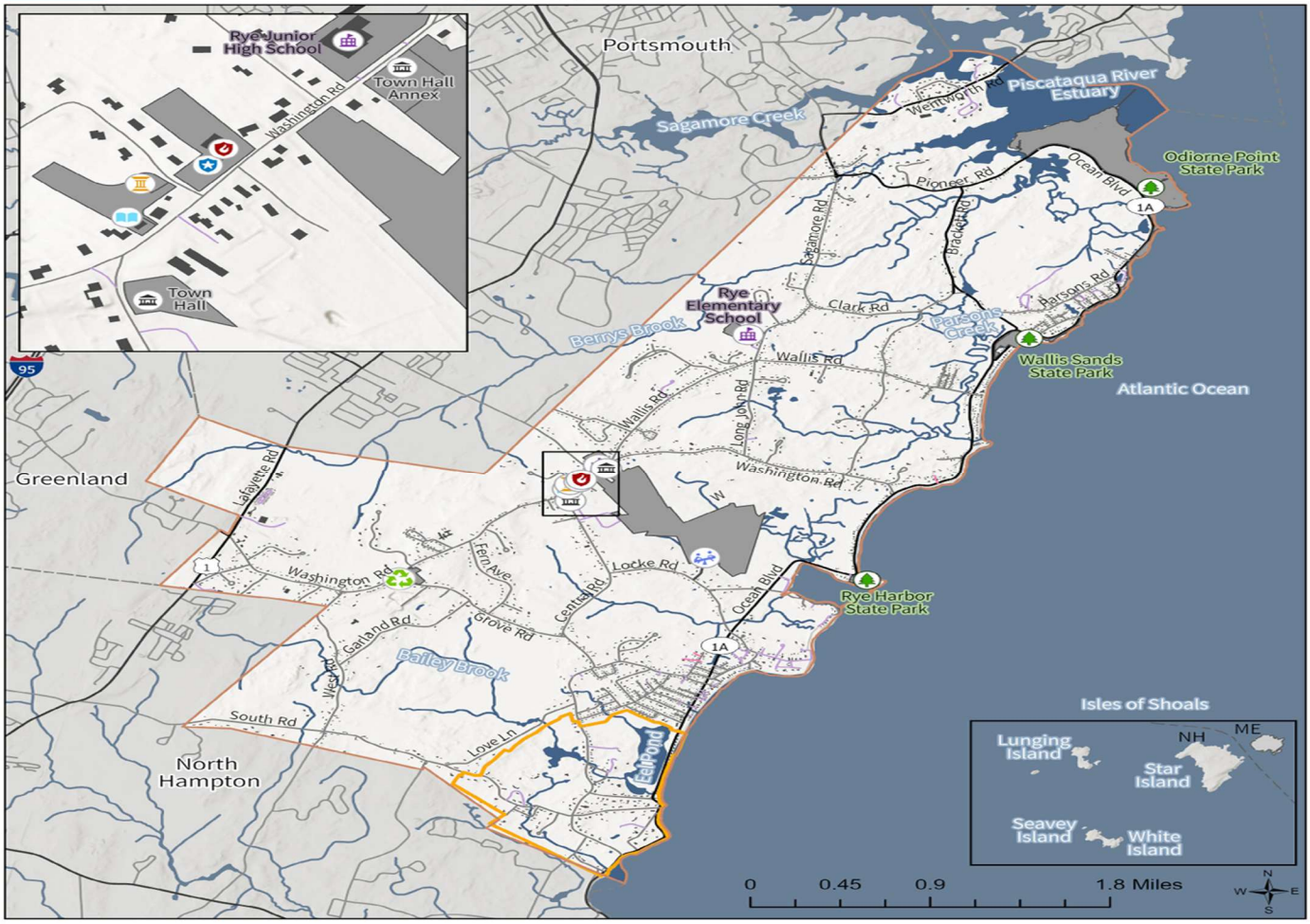

Existing Conditions:
Natural Hazards
Town of Rye, New Hampshire
Map created for planning purposes
for master plan development
Data Sources: NH GRANIT, NHD, NH DOT, Maine GeoLibrary, CAI, FEMA
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane New Hampshire FIPS 2800 (US Feet)
Map by: C. Bunyon, FB Environmental
Town Boundary
Town of Rye
Rye Beach Village District
Road
River/Stream
Coastal Waters/ Waterbody
Estuarine Wetland
Palustrine Wetland
Building Footprint
Building Affected by a Sea Level Rise of 1-foot OR a 100-year Flood
Roadway at Risk
Tidal Crossing at Risk
Area Inundated Under 1 foot of Sea Level Rise
Area Inundated Under 4 feet of Sea Level Rise
FEMA 1% (100-year) Flood Hazard Area
FEMA 0.2% (500-year) Flood Hazard Area
Portsmouth
Piscataqua River Estuary
Rye
Atlantic Ocean
Greenland
North Hampton
Rye Harbor
Approximately 400-450 of the structures in Rye are within the 100-year flood zone. About 300 of these structures are within the area to be inundated with 1ft of sea level rise, and ~40 of these are with the area to be inundated with 4ft of sea level rise.
Isles of Shoals
Lunging Island
Star Island
NH
ME
Seavey Island
White Island
Note: No flood or Sea Level Rise data are available for the Isles of Shoals.
0
0.5
1
2 Miles
N
W
E
S

Existing Conditions: Public Facilities

Town of Rye, New Hampshire

Map created for planning purposes
for master plan development

Data Sources: NH GRANIT, NHD, NH DOT, Maine GeoLibrary, CAI
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane New Hampshire FIPS 2800 (US Feet)
Map by: C. Bunyon, FB Environmental



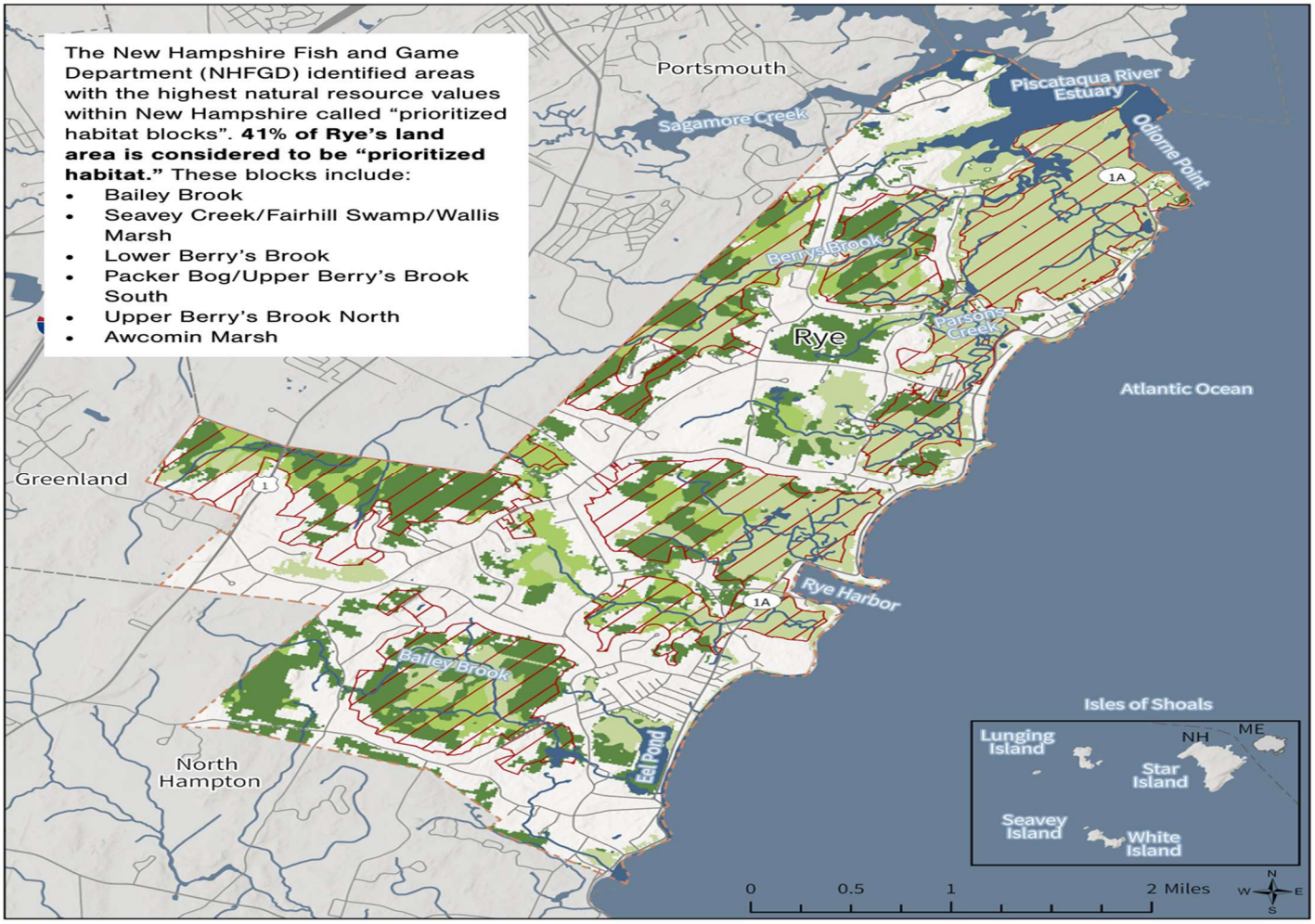
Existing Conditions: Natural Resources - Wildlife Habitat

Town of Rye, New Hampshire

Map created for planning purposes
for master plan development

Data Sources: NH GRANIT, Maine GeoLibrary, NHD, NWI, NHDES, NHFGD, CTC
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 State Plane New Hampshire FIPS 2800 (US Feet)
Map by: C. Bunyon, FB Environmental

- Town Boundary
- Town of Rye
- Road
- Coastal Waters/ Waterbody
- River/Stream
- Highest Ranked Habitat in New Hampshire
- Highest Ranked Habitat in Biological Region
- Supporting Landscapes
- Prioritized Habitat Blocks



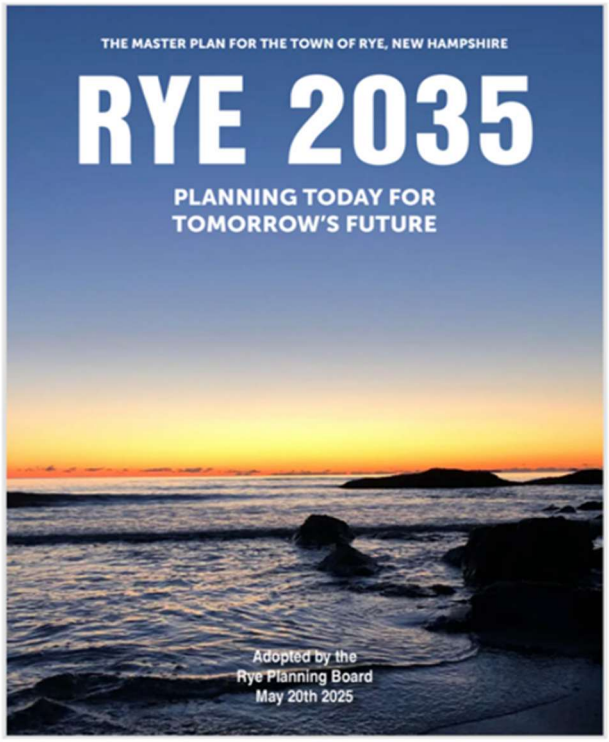


Rye Historical Society, 10 Old Parish Road, Rye, NH 03870
www.ryenhhistoricalsociety.org

Appendix C

Rye 2035

Action Matrix Tables*



***Gathered from Rye 2035 (2025).**

ACTION MATRIX				
#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
1. GENERAL ACTIONS				
1.1	Structure Master Plan Steering Committee (MPIC) based on Planning Board Rules of Procedure.			
1.2	Coordinate an annual end-of-year joint meeting of all boards, committees, and local officials in Rye that are active partners in the implementation of the Master Plan to evaluate progress from the past year and plan for the upcoming year. This would include the Planning Board, Select Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board, Town Departments, Schools, Town service suppliers such as Rye Water District and Aquarion Water Company, and other select groups.			
1.3	Regularly report on the progress of the 2035 Master Plan to the public through media channels, the town's email lists, a newsletter, and through the town's website.			
1.4	Provide a progress report on the Master Plan annually at Town Meeting and in the Town Report.			
1.5	Ensure a Member of the MPIC serves the role of "tracker" to document progress and the completion of specific action items in a master implementation table that includes detailed information including responsible party, potential partners, and level of priority. This will ensure consistency and accountability over the coming years.			
1.6	Annually review the goals identified in the Master Plan related to housing and other issues and amend them when necessary due to changes in conditions, information, or legal requirements. This should be done in a manner that is coordinated with the Rye Beach Village District's efforts, when possible, given the unique planning and zoning relationship between the Town and Village District and compliance with RSA 674: 59. The Planning Board is responsible for review and approval of amendments to the Master Plan after a public hearing.			
1.7	Consult with neighboring communities early in the implementation process about Rye's Master Plan and learn about their long-range planning efforts to determine opportunities and impacts.			
2. LAND AND DEVELOPMENT				
Economy and Future Development				
2.1	Create a Planning and Design Workshop Series for the Route 1 Corridor to create a vision for this area of town that is compatible with the Future Land Use Strategy. The Planning and Design series will include a study component to evaluate and ensure that water systems, sewer systems, and municipal infrastructure are able to support expansion, and will include: environmental and economic analyses for all components. This will inform the drafting of land use regulations and infrastructure investments that will support the desired vision for this area of town. The resulting zoning should promote mixed use development, including housing and commercial activity, as outlined in Rye's Future Land Use Strategy.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
2.2	Work with the public to identify potential parcels in the Town Center suitable for small businesses, like a coffee shop, and ensure these areas are zoned to support and foster this type of development. Update land use regulations in this area to accommodate desired uses.			
2.3	Consider establishing a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) to fund future investments along the Route 1 corridor.			
2.4	Consider establishing an impact fee ordinance per NHRSA §674:16.V to help meet the needs occasioned by certain development activities.			
2.5	Develop an initiative to collect data to reflect the seasonal related attributes of the Town. This includes demands and impacts on town services, resources, etc.			
2.6	Support existing businesses and the economy as well as promote and encourage new businesses and economic opportunities along the coast and beach areas, as part of the scenic coastal future land use strategy.			
2.7	Continue to improve the streetscape environment in the Town Center and the commercial areas of Rye's coastline by:			
2.7A	Creating new and maintaining existing landscaped areas			
2.7B	Maintaining and expanding pedestrian-scale walkways and lighting as needed,			
2.7C	Incorporating wayfinding signage as needed, and			
2.7D	Ensuring land use regulations support the creation of a pedestrian-oriented and vibrant streetscape.			
Water and Sewer				
2.8	Review and evaluate studies of the existing water and sewer infrastructure capacity and service areas and the potential for new areas to be serviced. The findings from these efforts should be used to inform the location and density of future development within Rye. On an annual basis, consult with water and sewer service providers and assess impacts to future development and resource needs based on Build-Out Analysis, or other relevant studies.			
2.8A	In connection with 2.8, obtain a updated Public Services map which accurately depicts and differentiates sewer and water pipe overlays. Public Services map is currently p. 109 of Existing Conditions Analysis.			
Housing Solutions				
2.9	Review the findings of the 2025 Rye Land Use Regulation Audit and pursue possible land use regulation modifications that increase housing opportunities. Engage the public in this process and consider the pros and cons, level of effort required, identify support (or lack thereof) for such changes, and anticipate the level of impact of these regulation changes would have on housing.			
2.9A	Pursue grant opportunities to assist in funding these efforts.			
2.10	Identify development regulation amendments that will help Rye meet its housing needs as identified in the 2023 Rye Housing Needs Assessment while maintaining the characteristics of the community expressed in the Master Plan. These could include:			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
2.10A	Promote accessory dwelling unit construction to homeowners. This could include creating design guidance and educational materials on ADU construction, allowing detached ADUs by right, and reviewing the town's ADU regulations on a regular basis to identify ways to make improvements to the ordinance.			
2.10B	Review the conservation land development ordinance and identify ways to reduce barriers and encourage this type of subdivision in town.			
2.10C	Consider allowing duplexes by-right strategically in certain areas of town, following the Future Land Use Strategy.			
2.10D	Investigate zoning changes to allow for higher density housing along the Route 1 corridor.			
2.10E	Consider the establishment of an inclusionary zoning provision to promote the development of affordable housing units which could include, but is not limited to, density bonuses, growth control exemptions, and a streamlined application process.			
2.10F	Assess the potential for a short-term rental ordinance and tracking mechanism to better regulate short term rentals in the community.			
2.11	Evaluate and incorporate architectural standards where appropriate in zoning and land use regulations as guided by Rye 2035. Define "excellence in design" currently used in zoning."			
2.12	Conduct additional public outreach on housing related land use regulation changes, particularly those regulation modifications that could be made to help Rye address the housing needs of residents and help the town to follow state housing laws.			
Multi-Modal Transportation Solutions				
2.13	Develop and adopt a town-wide Complete Streets Policy to ensure all new roadways are designed to accommodate all modes of transportation. This will ensure bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation improvements, along with vehicular traffic improvements, are considered during roadway maintenance and planning projects to the greatest extent possible.			
2.14	Review the 2009 Safe Routes to School Plan and determine how it can inform future pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the town center, especially when looking at connectivity between the town center, junior high, and the elementary school. Coordinate with town center plans for Washington Road per TAP grant, and Rye Town Center Committee efforts (see Select Board landing page: TAP Grant Committee, Town Center Committee charge, and Rye Town Center Committee Minutes).			
2.15	Expand pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks and multi-use paths, where appropriate and enhance pedestrian connectivity throughout town. Priority areas should be roads that connect active areas of town, like the coast or the town center; specific destinations, like the schools or recreation facilities; and neighborhoods where people live. Priorities should include portions of Washington Road, Route 1A, Sagamore Road, and Wallis Road. Explore grant opportunities through NH Department of Transportation to help fund these projects.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
2.16	Expand bicycle infrastructure, including bicycle lanes and off-road paths, where appropriate and enhance connectivity throughout town. Priority areas should be roads that connect active areas of town, like the coast or the town center, and specific destinations, like the schools or recreation facilities; and neighborhoods where people live. Utilize NHDOT's recommended bike routes map to identify opportunities for bike infrastructure expansion.			
2.17	Investigate ways to connect potential bicycle traffic from the NH Seacoast Greenway and key locations in Rye including the coastline by creating bike-friendly roadways.			
2.18	Continue to allocate additional annual funding for regular road pavement projects. Repaving roads also provides an opportunity to create additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Investigate paving remaining unpaved roads, as appropriate.			
2.19	Coordinate with pertinent DOT projects, including Rye's RPC TAC representative. For ex, nascent planning is in the news for bicycle and pedestrian lanes on Rt. 1 Portsmouth from Ocean Road north to Wilson Road (Ocean is an east west road which is proximate to Rye's Lang Road). An overall plan may benefit the experience of multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-use along Rt. 1.			
2.20	Improve beach accessibility. This includes identifying areas where pedestrian safety can be improved, including adding sidewalks, bike lanes, traffic calming, crossing devices, and improving parking regulations to alleviate congestion.			
2.21	Investigate the feasibility of expanding Rye's Senior Serve public transportation service, including identifying alternative options and services.			
2.22	Coordinate with cellular telecommunication infrastructure and service providers to ensure high quality service throughout the community from multiple service providers, addressing related town regulatory issues as appropriate.			
2.23	Coordinate with broadband internet service providers to ensure universal coverage throughout the community from multiple providers, addressing local policy and regulatory issues as appropriate.			
#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
3. CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE *The action items listed below are meant to be complementary and add to those thoroughly provided in previous reports such as the Rye Natural Resource Inventory, Rye Hazard Mitigation Plan, Rye Vulnerability Assessment, and others.*				
Building Code, Zoning, and Regulatory Changes				
3.1	Continue to minimize development in areas likely to be inundated by sea level rise and storm surges through regulatory amendments and best practices. Consider the following:			
3.1A	Review land use regulations and identify potential amendments based on the 2019 and future iterations of the NH Coastal Flood Risk Guidance.			
3.1B	Implement zoning changes to prevent new construction in vulnerable areas of the coast.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
3.1C	Adapt building codes to ensure new developments are designed to account for flooding, sea level rise, and increased storm intensity.			
3.1D	Increase building setbacks in shoreland zones.			
3.1E	Encourage the protection of riparian buffers and maintain floodplains in their natural state through updated zoning.			
3.1F	Review Rye's wetland conservation ordinance to ensure it meets or exceeds best practices set out by the NH Department of Environmental Services for buffers, setbacks, etc.			
3.1G	Evaluate existing vegetative buffer requirements and setbacks from tidal wetlands, freshwater wetlands, and surface waters and identify improvements to strengthen these to better address the impacts of climate change.			
3.1H	Establish a Coastal Hazard Overlay District with boundaries encompassing projected future flood hazard zones presented in the New Hampshire Coastal Viewer platform. The Coastal Hazard Overlay District shall have higher regulatory standards to protect against flood impacts from sea-level rise and coastal storm surge. As an example, the Town of Durham recently adopted a Coastal Hazard Overlay District which applies higher standards for building freeboard height and other provisions to lessen vulnerability of new buildings and facilities to flooding due to sea level rise.			
3.1I	Establish a Marsh Migration Overlay Zone to prohibit new development in areas of predicted marsh migration under specific scenarios and timeframes. Maintain ecosystem services (e.g. flood storage, storm surge attenuation) and allow for inland migration of tidal marsh systems and conversion of fresh freshwater systems to tidal systems to accommodate projected changes in sea-levels. Utilize the 2024 NH Salt Marsh Plan as a resource.			
Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment and Resiliency Upgrades				
3.2	Augment state efforts and identify and conduct a vulnerability assessment of coastal infrastructure (such as roadways, culverts, hard structures, etc.). Engage other partners and landowners in these efforts as needed. Based on the assessment results, implement infrastructure improvements and coastal protection measures to minimize the impacts from flooding and erosion. This includes maintenance of existing infrastructure, and new measures that may include bank protection, berm construction, elevating the site on fill, constructing floodwalls, and upgrading drainage systems. Living shorelines should be utilized as much as possible to minimize the negative impacts of protection measures on local habitats, reduce "reflectance" of wave energy on adjacent sites, increase the lifespan and decrease management requirements for the protection measure, and provide environmental benefits.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
3.3	Conduct a comprehensive coastal overlay district study of flooding projections and impacts on the coastal neighborhoods in Rye and identify an appropriate plan of action for increasing resilience in this area of town. Aside from rebuilding seawalls, this may include drain repair, replacing collapsed pipes, and ongoing maintenance efforts by the town and state. As part of this study, assess the level and adequacy of emergency services, which are of great risk to flooding, and identify ways to improve and budget these services. Include Rye Beach Village District and Jenness Beach Village District representatives in this initiative.			
3.4	Collaborate with DPW Director and determine sources of funding for infrastructure projects and implementation efforts. The American Flood Coalition developed a document on Federal Funding Opportunities for Flood Resilience – A Guide for Small Cities.			
3.5	Consider establishing a stormwater utility fee to fund stormwater related coastal and groundwater resilience projects.			
Emergency Preparedness				
3.6	Continue to support and implement the action plan identified in Rye's 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan. This should include:			
3.6A	Updating this document regularly.			
3.6B	Ensuring written evacuation plans and procedures are prepared for Rye's at-risk areas.			
3.6C	Ensuring evacuation routes are well-publicized and understood by the public and that they are marked with signage.			
3.6D	Communicating evacuation routes to the public on the Town's website.			
3.6E	Coordinating evacuation plans with other towns in the coastal region, as well as with the State.			
3.6F	Consider allocating emergency funds for natural disaster cleanup and repair.			
3.6G	Continue to support and enhance communication systems for residents during storm events, including text alerts, etc.			
3.6H	Evaluate roads for sufficient emergency access and make improvements to those that are insufficient. Maintain emergency access to critical facilities and essential services including schools, emergency response buildings, and municipal infrastructure. Maintain emergency routes with expanded road shoulders should Route 1A become inundated from a weather event or natural hazard.			
3.6I	Coordinate with neighboring towns and state agencies to coordinate emergency management services and planning.			
Public Outreach and Education				
3.7	Prioritize public outreach efforts to engage and inform community members of flood hazards, vulnerabilities, and opportunities to increase resiliency. This also provides an opportunity to solicit input from residents. Education should include what to do when a flood occurs or is forecasted, and other important information. Outreach efforts could include:			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
3.7A	Providing information to property owners about constructing living shorelines and the importance of retaining the functions of natural shorelines. This should include ways to implement landscaping best practices.			
3.7B	Educating property owners on steps they can take to reduce the impact of hazards on their properties. Encourage private property owners to incorporate the best available climate science and vulnerability assessments in their decision making and preparedness plans.			
Salt Marsh and Coastal Open Space Protection and Restoration				
3.8	Participate in regional or state-wide groundwater rise and saltwater intrusion studies. Identify representatives and reporting responsibility.			
3.9	Coordinate with water suppliers in Rye on their drinking water resources to better understand potential threats, impacts, and solutions.			
3.10	Assess lands where the protection of tidal and freshwater wetlands would provide tangible benefits to protect against flooding, or where conservation of open space will reduce flooding and promote the inland migration of species and habitats such as tidal marshes. Then, prioritize properties that can be permanently preserved as a mitigation strategy to reduce impacts from development in high-risk coastal areas and from rising sea levels. This should include prioritizing land conservation initiatives and marsh restoration in areas of projected marsh migration. This effort should be built into the Strategic Conservation Plan action referenced under the Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability section.			
3.11	Assure uninhibited saltmarsh tidal flow by regularly inspecting and cleaning out culverts and bridges of debris. Consider replacing culverts that are undersized, perched, or misaligned.			
3.12	Work with the New Hampshire Salt Marsh Plan to guide town action and priorities for marsh restoration, conservation of adjacent lands to tidal and freshwater wetlands, improving marsh condition, reducing vulnerability, or facilitating migration. Reference current 2021Natural Resource Inventory regarding SLAMM and Map 6, or more current relevant documents.			
Coordinated Beach Stewardship and Access				
3.13	Work with partners to make beach improvements that enhance resiliency and address erosion, cleanliness, and runoff from parking areas and other impervious surfaces.			
3.14	Continue to improve the accessibility of Rye's beaches and coastal areas for residents and visitors. Review of statutory guidance for parking and relevant regional studies. Identify opportunities for improvements, including increased parking.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
4. MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATION				
Municipal Processes				
4.1	Continue to review the town's permitting and administrative procedures as they pertain to the land use codes, and build on the efforts of the Land Use Informational Guide Advisory Committee. Identify ways to streamline the processes, make applications easy to find and navigate, digitize forms, and ensure the materials and process are easy to follow by applicants.			
4.2	Evaluate ways to improve the enforcement of Rye's land use regulations. This includes improving the tracking systems used (including conditions of approval, variances, special exceptions, etc.) and identifying where capacity needs to be increased or shifted. Consider ways to recover costs.			
4.3	Explore alternative governance structures such as expanding the Select Board or evaluating a Town Manager position. Investigating the potential to create a Town Manager position may require requests for more information, cost-benefit analysis, and clarity on specific duties and responsibilities of such a position.			
4.4	Identify ways to improve participation by the community in local governance.			
4.5	Develop strategies and an overarching approach to enhance municipal communication to residents and other community members regarding town projects, initiatives, permitting regulations, and events. This should include examining the use and effectiveness of the town website, newsletter, media channels, and other forms of communication.			
Municipal Facilities Assessment				
4.6	Commission a Municipal Buildings Assessment to support a Town wide Facilities Master Plan. The assessment should identify building's condition and performance to identify areas of improvement including: • Engineering and architectural review, • Regulatory compliance review, • Safety and hazard review, • Efficiency, capacity and utilization review, • Services suitability/function, • Technology readiness, • Community space opportunities, and • Cost assessments			
4.6A	Review all facilities' assessment management plans or related studies.			
Planning and Tracking				
4.7	Ensure the implementation asset management program for tracking the maintenance of all town-owned facilities and infrastructure, and to inform Rye's Capital Improvement Planning.			
4.8	Improve the capital improvement planning process by forecasting capital improvement needs further into the future beyond the current standard of six years. This will ensure there is enough time to properly plan for funding and communicate projects clearly to residents.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
4.9	Ensure that public infrastructure is managed to meet capacity demands and risk management/resilience.			
5. ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND SUSTAINABILITY				
Community Power				
5.1	Increase participation in Rye's Community Power Program through public education and outreach.			
5.2	Coordinate with electric service providers on infrastructure improvements for risk management and service expansion.			
5.3	Investigate community fuel programs for oil and gas usage.			
Renewable Energy Development and Energy Efficiency				
5.4	Consider developing community solar projects on town-owned land.			
5.5	Reduce regulatory restrictions for larger solar projects.			
5.6	Support the efforts of residents, landowners, and businesses to complete energy efficiency measures, upgrade heating systems, install renewable energy systems, and invest in battery storage systems.			
Sustainable Transportation				
5.7	Research and investigate the feasibility of transitioning Rye's municipal fleet to hybrid/electric vehicles.			
5.8	Investigate investments and identify regulatory barriers for electric vehicle charging stations.			
5.9	Amend, as appropriate, regulatory barriers that may exist to electric vehicle charging stations.			
Strategic Land Conservation				
5.10	Create a Strategic Conservation Plan for Rye that identifies and prioritizes the remaining undeveloped lands for acquisition/ conservation, preserves the character of the rural areas of town, increases Rye's coastal resilience, protects water quality and quantity, and creates wildlife corridors and ecological connections. Identify key parcels of concern and critical importance, as part of this planning process especially, in Rye's coastal drainages which include: Berry's Brook, Parson's Creek, Rye Harbor Drainage and Bailey Brook. Prioritize the conservation and regulatory protection of lands over or near public water supply aquifers, priority habitat blocks, wellhead protection areas, coastline, and marshes for viewing and recreation and public use where appropriate. Review species and habitat information per NH Department of Forest and Conservation and NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to inform environmental, mitigation, and conservation planning. Utilize the Natural Heritage Bureau's (NHB) database information on native plants, wildlife, and exemplary natural communities in NH. NHB's recent report: Nichols, W.F, P. Bowman, and M. Severance. 2024. *Documenting Wetlands with High Ecological Value to Inform Environmental Review, Mitigation, and Conservation.* Report completed under EPA Grant No. CD-00A01006 by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau, Concord, NH. Includes 12 exemplary wetland systems in Rye.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
5.11	Continue to support and implement the recommendations from the 2021 Natural Resource Inventory. This should include documenting key natural resource features and updating the natural resource inventory on a regular basis. Ensure the NRI informs future regulatory updates.			
5.12	Continue to pursue conservation opportunities through partnerships with local land protection organizations and local landowners to acquire and conserve important open space in Rye. This is especially important for land near the drinking water aquifers, priority habitat areas, the coastline, and in the semi-rural areas of town. Balance other community needs, such as housing, with the prioritizing of these future conservation efforts.			
5.12A	Map existing conservation lands in the wellhead protection areas. Identify areas for further protection either by acquisition or conservation easements.			
5.13	Devise a funding strategy for future conservation that includes more than taxpayer money. This could include grants, use fees, and other sources that increase available funding for land conservation. As part of this, investigate the feasibility of developing a conservation fund to help supply funding for future land acquisition and conservation projects.			
Surface and Subsurface Water Quality and Quantity Protection				
5.14	Prioritize wetland restoration in areas identified in the Natural Resource Inventory for stormwater mitigation.			
5.15	Continue to engage landowners to practice stormwater management best practices through MS4 permit requirements.			
5.16	Continue investing in long term water quality monitoring and investigatory sampling of Rye's water bodies.			
5.17	Monitor and continue multi agency guidance and efforts to protect headwater streams, particularly Berry's Brook where the impacts of pollution on the brook's water quality restrict fishing currently; and Bailey Brook, which is home to important groundwater resources including two gravel wells, two bedrock wells, and other potential wells under investigations.			
5.18	Conduct a vernal pool survey for the town to inform future wetland protection efforts, as advised in the 2021 NRI report.			
5.19	Encourage green infrastructure, low impact design, nature-based solutions, and stormwater infiltration best practices in future development projects through Rye's land use regulations.			
5.20	Develop an inventory of properties along shorelines that have septic systems that need to be upgraded. Provide educational materials to those homeowners to inform them of potential funding options for system replacement.			
Stewardship of Open Space Resources				
5.21	Maintain existing and implement stewardship plans for major public open space parcels to address any needed resource enhancement and improvements to public access. Create stewardship plans for those open space areas without one.			
5.22	Develop a plan to control the spread of invasive species, as identified by the Conservation Commission website.			

#	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
5.23	Plant native trees and plants to support pollinators and other wildlife and improve current land management practices on municipally owned lands to reflect best sustainable management practices and nature-based solutions. Encourage public and private landowner to do the same.			
Public Education and Outreach				
5.24	Conduct public education to increase awareness and understanding of Rye's natural resources, best management practices, and other environmental assets. This could include:			
5.24A	Educating town staff and the broader community on reducing or eliminating fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide use on town property and residential lawns; and alternative pest management mechanisms that do not harm water quality. Consult Rye Land Development Regulation's Appendix G irrigiation practices.			
5.24B	Potentially expand town recycling and educating the broader community on the importance of recycling and composting and how they can engage in these practices in town.			
5.24C	Educating the broader community on the importance of water conservation to mitigate the impact of droughts. Evaluate strategies aligned with the Town's water suppliers, the Select Board, NHDES drought guidance including Model Water Efficient Landscaping Regulations for Municipalities, and the Rye Conservation Commission.			
6. COMMUNITY				
Community Events and Programming				
6.1	Support existing annual community events in town and identify opportunities for new community events.			
6.2	Utilize existing community spaces as Rye continues to provide community building and recreation programming, including the school gyms and library.			
6.3	Create new public outdoor gathering spaces, as opportunities arise, that provide opportunities for flexible programming, events, and informal gathering in Rye.			
Recreation Improvements				
6.4	Implement the Town's newly developed Recreation Road Master Plan Update.			
6.5	Identify and prioritize existing recreational facilities in need of improvement to better address safety, access, and general maintenance issues. Estimate the related costs and develop a six-year schedule that can be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).			
6.6	Evaluate and add amenities as appropriate to existing recreation facilities (parks, trailheads, and athletic fields) including benches, trash cans, bike racks, dog waste bags, restrooms, and water fountains.			
6.7	Work with the state to make improvements to Wallis Sands Beach including the addition of accessible restroom facilities, trash receptacles, and better year-round access.			
6.8	Make improvements to Goss Farm including more defined parking and trails.			

18	Action	Responsible Parties	Timeframe	Status
6.9	Make improvements to Parson's Field to ensure it is better utilized as a community gathering space.			
Expand Recreation Infrastructure Town-Wide				
6.10	Explore opportunities to expand recreation infrastructure in town to meet public needs, including accessibility.			
6.11	Investigate opportunities to add new trails on existing or new conserved lands and increase trail connectivity throughout the community. Enhance accessibility to trail systems where possible.			
Recreation Promotion and Outreach				
6.12	Publicize Rye's parks, open spaces, and recreation resources to residents and other community members and encourage their use by:			
6.12A	Creating a public GIS layer of open spaces, trails, parks and playgrounds in Rye.			
6.12B	Maintaining maps for all parks, forests, and recreation resources and distribute at the town office, library, and elsewhere.			
6.12C	Improving signage and trail markings, as necessary,			
6.12D	Partnering with local organizations to identify other strategies for publicizing these resources to the public.			
Partnerships and Collaboration				
6.13	Encourage collaboration between the Recreation Department and Rye Senior SERVE to coordinate a broad range of day trips and outings for older adults.			
6.14	Maintain strong partnerships with organizations and entities like the Rye School District, Public Library, Rye Water District, Aquarion Water Company, and other municipal service providers. Encourage collaboration amongst all community organizations and entities.			
6.15	Evaluate and improve, where needed, the ADA accessibility of Rye's public facilities, transportation network, parks, and public spaces.			
Heritage and Culture				
6.16	Seek ways to highlight Rye's history and culture through public art and signage at key locations across Rye's built environments and natural landscapes.			
6.17	Consider implementing the state barn preservation incentive program to protect historic barns in town.			
Accessibility				
6.18	Provide educational resources to the public on the relationship between Rye's history and heritage, recreation, conservation, community pride, and more.			
An Aging Population				
6.19	Evaluate elder services in Rye and the surrounding region and determine if services are adequate for the town's aging population.			
6.20	Review elderly exemptions.			





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