

VILLAGE OF RYE BROOK VISION PLAN

Prepared For:

Village of Rye Brook Board of Trustees

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December 2000

Table of Contents

Village of Rye Brook **Vision Plan**

<i>Sub-Title</i>	A Plan for Action to Preserve and Enhance the Village's Quality of Life.
<i>Adopted by Village Board of Trustees</i>	_____, 2000
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<i>Page i</i>	Prologue
<i>Page v</i>	Vision Plan Participants
<i>Page 2</i>	Introduction
	Section I: Planning Context
<i>Page 4</i>	History
<i>Page 6</i>	People
<i>Page 8</i>	Land Use
<i>Page 12</i>	Natural Resources
<i>Page 14</i>	Transportation
<i>Page 16</i>	Community Resources
	Section II: Goals, Policies, Strategies and Action Steps
<i>Page 18</i>	Built Environment
<i>Page 22</i>	Natural Environment
<i>Page 26</i>	Mobility
<i>Page 30</i>	Community Resources
<i>Page 32</i>	Governance
<i>Page 33</i>	Public Participation Process Appendix -- Outline (separate document)

Vision Plan Task Force and Advisory Committee Members

Village of Rye Brook Vision Plan 2000

A Prologue

“Vision – the act or power of imagination; mode of seeing or conceiving; unusual discernment or foresight.”

-Merriam-Webster Dictionary

“There was that law of life, so cruel and so just, which demanded that one must grow or else pay for remaining the same.”

- Norman Mailer

“Don’t dream it; be it.”

-Tim Curry in “Rocky Horror Picture Show”

In early 1999, a number of concerned Village of Rye Brook citizens recognized the need for a master planning process. Our Village had grown substantially since its founding nearly two decades prior and no comprehensive “road map” existed in which to manage our burgeoning community. After two “Town Meetings” organized by the Mayor and Trustees to address such a void, it became apparent that a master planning process was necessary and appropriate.

The Board of Trustees entrusted the Rye Brook Planning Board with the responsibility of figuring out such a planning process. A Task Force of the Planning Board, comprised of Paul Feinstein, John Grzan, Harry Krausman and myself, Richard Lubkin, was formed to explore planning methodologies. At the end of 1999, the Task Force suggested a “Vision Plan” process. We decided that a “Master Plan,” primarily dealing with land use issues, was unnecessary. The Village was substantially developed. The residents and resident businesses were more concerned with “Quality of Life.”

Thus, a “Vision Plan” was born. The original Planning Board Task Force evolved into a separate special purpose commission of the Village comprised, not coincidentally, of the same four individuals as the exploratory group. We attempted to understand the determinants affecting our community, prioritize our concerns, and propose solutions to make our Village a better place in which to live and work.

After substantive research and soul searching, the Vision Plan Task Force agreed on a number of essential project determinants. They are, as follows:

Vision Plan Task Force and Advisory Committee Members

1. The Village was not in need of a traditional Master Plan, that is a glorified land-use map, so much as a quality of life road map. We needed to attack community lifestyle issues as well as, for example, building and traffic design.
2. It is very difficult to know where you are going if you don't know where you've come from. That is, we needed to understand Rye's Brook's past in order to plan its future.
3. Community planning cannot happen in a vacuum. Any sort of master plan dictated down from on high is destined for failure. We would only succeed in our efforts with a free market of ideas, as well as consensus building. The Vision Plan Process would include and embrace distinctly unique points of view.
4. We desired a mechanism for integrating the viewpoints of the many diverse stakeholders in our community. We created an Advisory Committee to achieve that aim - a broad array of Rye Brook Citizens, officials from neighboring communities, business leaders and Village employees. We chose this Advisory Committee because of its ability to be advocates for these disparate interests and its shared goal of creating a better community for all of us.
5. Our aim for this Vision Plan process was to initiate dialogue among the community stakeholders, build foundations for productive relationships, establish priorities regarding the most important issues affecting the community and identify future strategies to address these issues.
6. Those of us in the Task Force did not pretend to know all of the answers, we did not even assume to know the right questions. We recognized that the process was an evolution and that the product would essentially be the process.

As the Vision Plan process progressed, we asked ourselves a few critical questions to direct our thinking:

- a. What is our essential nature as a community? Who are we? What are our goals and dreams? What do we really want to be when we grow up?
- b. Can we achieve these goals via mutual symbiosis with our neighboring communities, or must we define ourselves through varying degrees of separations?
- c. What is our "vision" for our community? What will this "vision" be in five, ten, twenty years?

Now, as we review our work this past year, we can enunciate a few dominant themes:

Vision Plan Task Force and Advisory Committee Members

- The Rye Brook Aspiration. Our Vision is the cumulative conglomeration of our citizens' individual and family dreams and goals. While there is no one person who dictated to the problems, solutions and priorities documented here, there is a common thread of which this community wishes to become. Taken holistically, this Vision Plan hopes to represent that communal denominator of our aspirations.
- The Rye Brook Dialectic. Lurking somewhere behind every issue is the essential dialectic of community identity and inter-community interdependence. In Rye Brook's past and its future, we have and will continue to grapple with this basic contradiction, as described below.
- Community Identity. With few exceptions, the citizens of Rye Brook are proud to be such. We are happy with our independence and our separation from other communities around us. In fact, we wish an even greater centrality of the concept of Rye Brook with some sort of physical presence in an eventual long-term development of a "Downtown Rye Brook."
- Community Interdependence. Not lacking the critical mass and historical inertia, our Village finds itself deeply enmeshed with other communities and agencies for our basic services. For example, we share our fire services, commuter facilities and public transportation with neighboring communities; we even share one of our two school districts. For us to adequately and efficiently survive as a community, we must mutually co-exist with a number of neighboring governments.
- Life-Style. As a community, we are more concerned with life-style issues than basic services. Yes, we expect our garbage to be collected properly, but that is not enough. We want our community, and conversely our government to better provide for our overall quality of life. For example, we want more and better parks; we want a better sidewalk system; we want traffic minimized.
- Quality of Governmental Services. Like the shampoo ad, we want better quality, because we are worth it. There is a greater expectation of better government, for example, better policing, better recreation programs, better coordination between the Village and two School districts.
- Communication. Frequently, the issues that are the most troublesome and the ones with which we are most pleased with have a common factor of quality of communication among the participants. Things work out well when the involved individual makes the effort to be understood, and to truly understand what the others are saying. Bad situations arise when we communicate poorly, or not at all – particularly when disparate groups or agencies must cooperate to achieve a goal.

Vision Plan Task Force and Advisory Committee Members

- Trade-Offs. There is no utopian situation and no ideal process to achieve whatever goals we may aspire to. Everything in life comes with trade-offs. Fancy services come with fancy prices. Land and other community resources can generally only be directed at one program at a time. Ultimately, our wish lists must be prioritized for what is important at that time.
- Excellence. In the end, we want our community and government to strive for excellence. Sometimes, we don't know how to ask for it, and frequently we are not quite sure how to define it, but the common denominator remains the same: we want our quality of life in all areas to be as good as it can be.

Now, should we expect this Vision Plan process to be a panacea for all that is wrong with our community? Of course, not. Fortunately, things here in Rye Brook are pretty good to begin with.

Should we expect more and better of our community and our government? Of course, yes. We should not be complacent with any aspect of our community, as we can always strive to be better.

We might not succeed in enacting each of the programs and initiatives outlined on the following pages. Our process has exhaustively studied many of the issues affecting the lives of our citizens. Our leaders must now prioritize and budget the areas that need immediate attention. We will not solve all of these concerns simultaneously, but all are within our grasp. And if only one program actually happens, we still will have succeeded – because our work will have instigated some positive change.

In any light, the Vision Plan process has already been a rousing success. We have created meaningful dialogue among many different factions of our residential, business and governmental communities. We have discussed issues in new and unique formats and have developed mutual respect for the concerns of varied stakeholders in our community. For those who participated, the process has been intellectually and emotionally satisfying.

Christian Miller of F.P. Clark Associates has been an invaluable resource in the conception, design, and implementation of this process and this finished product. Christian has been a beacon and an inspiration for our Task Force. We will miss our academic lessons and theoretical arguments.

The members of the Vision Plan Task Force, the group that ushered this process, now offer both a sense of pride with the presentation of this document and a sense of sadness at the culmination of this remarkable process. The Rye Brook Vision Plan 2000 process allowed us to briefly exit the mundane world of budgets, deadlines and reality, and do a little dreaming. We thank the citizens of Rye Brook for that honor.

Vision Plan Task Force and Advisory Committee Members

We would like to also thank the scores of people, both within and outside the Village, most notably the current and former Trustees, who gave generously of their time, energy, and, most importantly, their Vision to help secure a better place for our children.

Richard F. Lubkin

Chairman

Rye Brook Vision Plan 2000 Task Force

Vision Plan Task Force and Advisory Committee Members

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Chamber of Commerce

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Reckson Assocs.

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Dean Stanton

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Former Rye Brook Rec. Dept.

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Rye Ridge Shopping Ctr.

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Village of Port Chester

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Phyllis Lachance
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James Perry, Vice President & Manager,
New York-American Water Co.

Bruno Ponterio
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Suzan Porto, Chairman
Environmental Conservation

Lolly Prince, 1st Selectman
Town of Greenwich, Town Hall

Richard Romm, Chairman
Architectural Review Board

Rabbi Robert Rothman
Rye Community Synagogue

Christopher Russo
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Robert Santoro, Police Chief
Rye Brook Police Dept.

George Szczerba, Fire Chief
Rye Brook Fire Dept.

Kevin Tompkins, Manager
D'Agostino's Supermarket

Stephen Weimar

Introduction

This document is the first comprehensive planning effort for the entire Village of Rye Brook. It represents the culmination of a process that began in the spring of 2000 to identify and prioritize through extensive public involvement and consensus building exercises key issues confronting the Village's future quality of life. This document provides recommended policies and possible action strategies based on the input and participation of a wide array of interests. For the first time, residents and other community interests from within and outside the Village were asked to think about a future vision with respect to a comprehensive range of issues. This examination resulted in the following unifying vision statement to serve as a guide to all interests that may make decisions affecting the Village of Rye Brook:

Vision Statement

The future of the Village of Rye Brook shall be one that strives to maintain and enhance the quality of life of its residents, businesses, interest groups and future generations based on a community consensus that establishes, reinforces and strengthens the Village's distinct identity and independence yet proactively seeks out the assistance of neighboring communities and other concerns to achieve desired or shared goals.

Public Input

Public input was a key component in the Vision Plan process. An advisory committee and task force was established that, combined, included more than 60 representatives from a broad range of backgrounds and interests. Representatives of the advisory committee and task force completed questionnaires, attended community meetings and provided direction to the planning consultant in the preparation of the Vision Plan. In addition, a community-wide meeting was held to identify issues and brainstorm for possible solutions.

Document Organization

This document is not a master plan in the traditional sense. It is a policy statement that establishes a vision and specific action strategies for the future of the Village across a broad range of issue areas. Section I of the document identifies the planning context for the Vision Plan. It includes a general overview of the Village and a synopsis of some of the key issues identified by participants in the Vision Plan process. Section II recommends goals and policies to meet the Village's future challenges. It also assigns responsibility to various boards and committees for the implementation of over 100 specific strategies and action steps. An appendix, which is provided in a separate document, describes the public participation and input provided in the Vision Plan process.

A Plan for Action

The completion of this document does not represent the end of a process. In fact, it is just the beginning. A plan is not a substitute for action. The success of this document depends on the community taking the next steps to follow through on the plan's recommendations. The plan should be used as a guide in the decision-making process. It is not essential that each action strategy be completed as specified identified in the plan. It is more important that the community adhere to the overriding vision and goals of the plan as its guide for its future.



***Single-Family
Homes on
Bowman
Avenue***

History

1982 Village is formed

The Village of Rye Brook was formed on July 7, 1982, making it the youngest community in Westchester County. It was the last municipality to be formed from the unincorporated area of the Town of Rye. The Village of Port Chester was the first to incorporate in 1868, followed by the Village of Mamaroneck and the Rye Neck section within the Town of Rye in 1895. In 1904, Rye Village was formed, which later became a city in 1942.

The concept of becoming an independent Village began to gain momentum in the early 1980s when a group of residents formed the Independent Civic Association (ICA). The ICA was looking to improve representation in municipal decision-making, achieve greater independence from the Town of Rye and preserve and enhance the Village's tax base. Over a period of approximately 18 months the ICA held meetings and initiated a petition leading to a referendum that was approved by a majority of the Village's voters.

First European Settlers

Rye Brook's earliest European history began in 1640, when the Town of Rye was purchased from Native American inhabitants. As with many settlements of its day large tracts of land were owned by just a few individuals. Among the first settlers were the Browns of Beechworth in the County of Kent, England. Subsequent purchases and sales included families with names such as Denham, Will, Kniffens, Wilson, Minuse, Park, Merritt, Studwell, Sherwood and Saterlee¹. Some of these names can still be seen in the community today.

The unincorporated area of the Town of Rye maintained its agricultural character well into the mid-twentieth century. It did not develop as a significant cultural, commercial or industrial center as did its adjoining neighbors in the City of Rye, Village of Port Chester or Town/Village of Harrison. The growth and character of these communities was influenced by their access to the railroad in the early- to mid-1800s.

The Village's oldest residential neighborhoods are generally located south of Westchester Avenue. Residential estates were also created during this period further north off of King Street along Hillandale Road, Woodland Drive, Lock Lane and Comly Drive. The Village's only nationally designated historic structure, the William E. Ward House, is located in this area. These areas developed, in part, because of their relationship to employment and cultural centers in adjacent communities, particularly the Village of Port Chester.

Suburban Growth

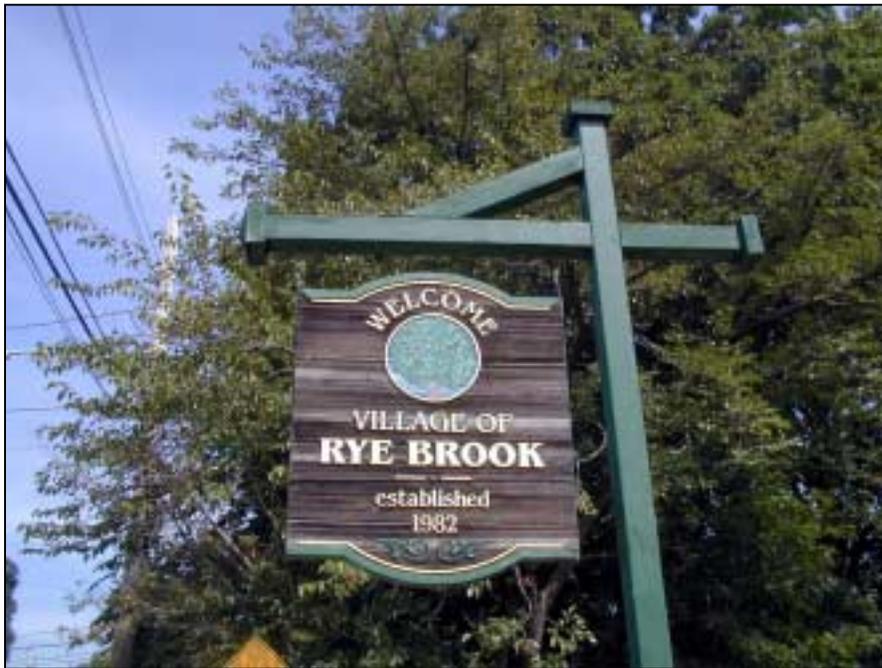
As with many communities in the New York City metropolitan region, periods of unprecedented suburban growth occurred following World War II. More than half of the Village's current residences were constructed in the short period between 1950 and 1970. Supporting this largely residential growth was new or expanded infrastructure, roads and community services.

¹ *Village of Rye Brook 16th Anniversary Annual Report – 1998-1999*

In the 1980s and early-1990s, growth in the Village expanded further north and included more commercial development such as the current General Foods office building, Arrowwood Conference Center and the Reckson Office Park.

Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources

The history of Rye Brook as a Village is still developing. Much of its history relates to the Town of Rye and the past cultural and economic influences of its neighboring communities. Participants in the Vision Planning process suggested that more should be done to identify and preserve the historic resources in the Village. Enhancing historical or cultural resources was also seen as a means of reinforcing the Village's distinct character and identity.²



Village Entry Signs Are Provided on Most of the Village's Major Roadways

² Special thanks to Jules Harris for his assistance in the compilation of Rye Brook history.

People

Historic Population Declines

Recent decades have shown a decline in the Village's population. The most dramatic loss occurred between 1970 and 1980. During this time period the Village's population fell by more than 16 percent, from 9,560 to 7,996 residents. Most of the population loss, over 1,100 persons, occurred in census tract 83.02, which roughly coincides with the southern half of the Village. Population declines continued in the 1980s, falling by approximately 3 percent for the decade. Tremendous periods of population growth preceded these periods of decline. Between 1940 and 1960, the unincorporated area of the Town of Rye grew by more than 200 percent from roughly 2,000 to 6,000 residents.

Anticipated Future Population Growth

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the Village had a population of approximately 7,750 persons, with roughly 5,300 of those residents located in the Village's southern half. In the near future, the Village's overall population is expected to grow with the completion of major residential projects currently under construction in the northern half of the Village. This growth is anticipated to be in excess of 1,000 persons and will likely increase demands for new and expanded community services and facilities. Concerns regarding the impact of this growth, particularly on the northern portion of the Village were expressed throughout the Vision Plan process.

Growth for Rye Brook's Oldest and Youngest Residents

Age Group	Percent Change				
	1970	1980	1990	1970-1980	1980-1990
Under 5	708	363	530	-49%	46%
5 to 9	916	515	485	-44%	-6%
10 to 14	888	710	375	-20%	-47%
15 to 19	1,196	731	443	-39%	-39%
20 to 24	956	462	447	-52%	-3%
25 to 34	979	962	1,025	-2%	7%
35 to 44	1,236	1,162	1,244	-6%	7%
45 to 54	1,201	1,153	1,037	-4%	-10%
55 to 64	882	978	933	11%	-5%
65 to 74	395	588	692	49%	18%
75+	203	372	535	83%	44%

Source: U. S Census Bureau and the Westchester County Department of Planning *DataBook*.

Over the last twenty years the Village's population has aged. Residents over age 65 were the fastest growing age group in the Village between 1970 and 1990, increasing by over 160 percent. Teens and young adults all declined during this period. Consistent with countywide trends there has been recent growth in the under 5 age group. The growth in this age group is expected to continue due in large measure to the completion of new residential developments. Growth in the oldest age category is also expected to continue with the completion of a recently approved senior living facility on King Street within the Bellefair residential community. Meeting the increased community service, housing and other demands of the Village's oldest and youngest residents will be a significant and challenging issue for the future.

By most measures, Rye Brook is a wealthy community. According to the Westchester County Department of Planning, the median household income for the Village was over \$93,000 in 1996. This was higher than its neighbors in the Village of Port Chester, City of Rye and Town/Village of Harrison. Housing in the Village is also expensive. In 1996, median sales price for a single-family home in the Village was over \$363,000 compared to \$285,000 for Westchester County.

***Household
Incomes and
Property Values***



***New Homes in
the Bellefair
Community***

The extent of wealth in the Village is not uniform, however. Family incomes and property values tend to be greater in the northern half of the Village within the Blind Brook School District. Participants in the Vision Plan process noted that differences in economic conditions must be taken into consideration when developing policies and funding strategies to meet the Village's future needs. Others indicated that maintaining affordability, particularly housing for those on fixed incomes, as a growing concern.

Land Use

Residential Land Area

Rye Brook is a residential community and preserving that character was a common theme throughout the Vision Plan process. More than one-third of the approximately 2,230 acres in the Village are designated in this category. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, almost 80 percent of the residential dwellings in the Village are single-family detached. This percentage is greater than its neighbors in Harrison (51%), Rye (69%), Port Chester (29%) and Town of Mamaroneck (65%). Less than three percent of the Village's land area consists of multi-family units. Almost 85 percent of the residential units in the Village are owner-occupied. The Village's Zoning Code reinforces this residential pattern. A majority of the Village's land area is residentially zoned allowing single-family dwellings on properties having a minimum lot area of between 5,000 and 20,000 square feet.

Summary of Village Land Use, Year 2000

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total
Residential	830	37.2
Road Right-of-Way	309	13.9
Private Open Space	303	13.6
Airport	197	8.8
Office	113	5.1
Public Park/Open Space	106	4.8
Undeveloped	85	3.8
School	80	3.6
Hotel	71	3.2
Multi-Family Residential	62	2.8
Municipal/Semi-Public/Church	25	1.1
Retail	22	1.0
Cemetery	18	0.8
Nursing Home	9	0.4
Total	2,230	100%

Source: Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc. Geographic Information System.

Open Space

Open space is the second largest land use category comprising more than 400 acres or 18 percent of the Village's land area. This includes both public parks (106 acres) and private open space (303 acres) such as the Arrowwood/Doral Greens Golf Course and Blind Brook Club located along Anderson Hill Road. The amount of open space in the Village is decreasing as a result of new development. Throughout the Vision Plan process many participants indicated concern with the loss of this resource and expressed a desire to preserve the Village's remaining open space.

Almost 200 acres of the Westchester County Airport is located in the Village, making it the largest single land use in the Village. Its impacts, however, are felt well beyond its borders. The Village and its neighboring communities lie directly in the airport's flight path, which has approximately 500 airplane landings and take-offs per day. New development, both within and outside the Village, is locating closer to the airport, which will likely increase conflicts in the future between the operation of the airport and the quality of life of its neighbors. While the airport is understood as convenient transportation asset and an important economic development incentive for the region, there was consensus among Vision Plan participants that the operation of the airport should be carefully monitored and any expansion of activities should be resisted.

**Westchester
County
Airport**



Little undeveloped land remains in the Village and that which currently does exist has either valid or pending approvals for development projects. It would be a mistake, however to assume that future development will not occur. There will likely be increased pressures for the redevelopment of existing uses, such as the expansion or reconstruction of existing residences or commercial buildings. Redevelopment will also occur on a larger scale such as the modification or expansion of existing office buildings or shopping centers in the Village.

**Redevelopment
of Existing Uses
is likely in Future**

Land Use

Blind Brook Club

Among the largest use with redevelopment potential is the approximately 160-acre Blind Brook Club, which is currently zoned to permit single-family residences on 20,000 square-foot lots. There was general consensus among participants in the Vision Plan process that the Village should better prepare for the possible redevelopment of this property in the future. Many suggested that the open space character of this property should be preserved or possibly acquired for municipal use.

Future Developers

Future development in the Village will not be limited to that proposed by developers. It will also include projects initiated by government, such as the modification of existing State roadways, new construction at the Westchester County Airport or new or expanded community facilities sponsored by the Village itself. Public, semi-public or private institutions such as the State University of New York (SUNY) property in Harrison, churches, private schools or other similar facilities will also likely be proposed in the future. Understanding the extent of development potential both within and outside the Village, evaluating its impacts, seeking cooperation with adjacent communities and proactively establishing policies and regulations for such inevitable future development will be critical issues for the Village to maintain and enhance its quality of life.

Rye Ridge Shopping Center

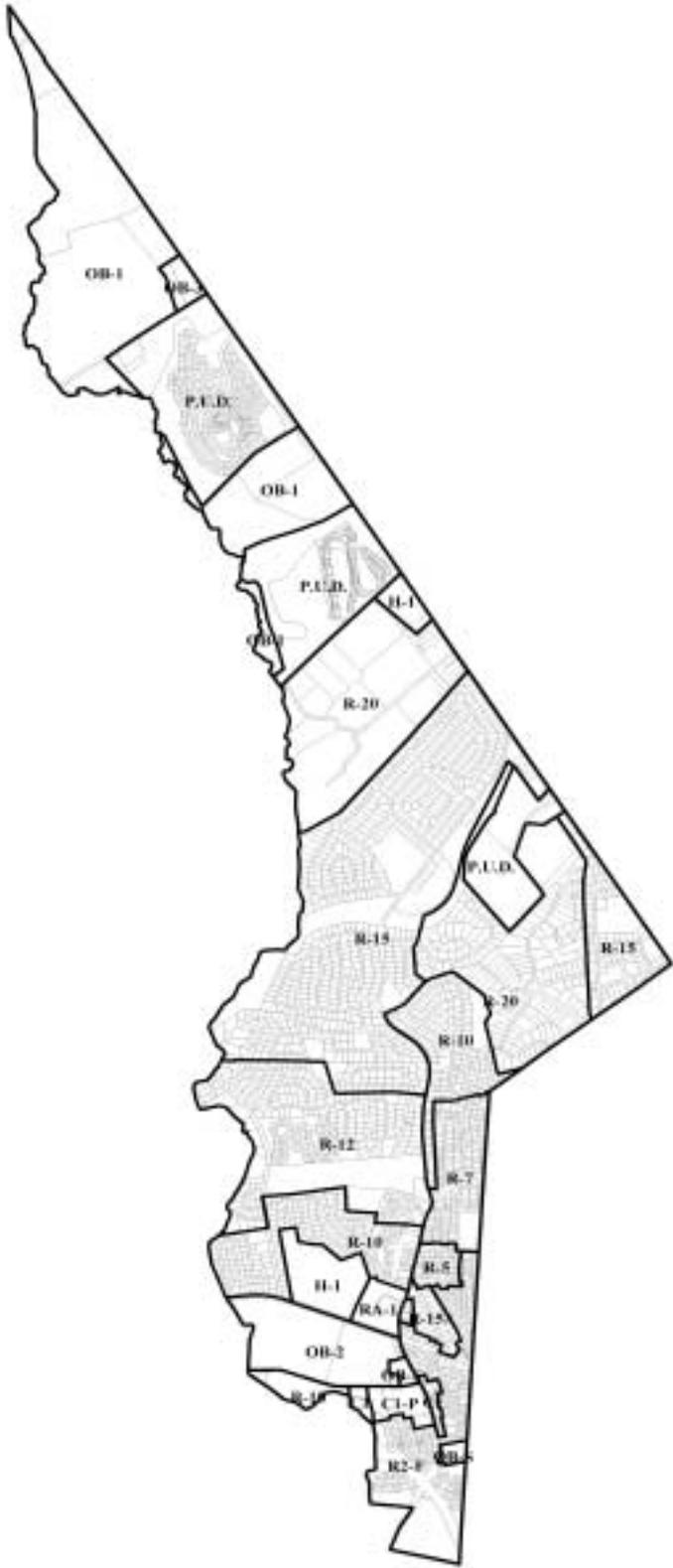


Redevelopment as Opportunity

Participants in the Vision Plan process expressed concern about future development, but also recognized it as an opportunity to enhance the Village's character, aesthetics, identity and tax base. This was particularly true for the commercial areas in the southern end of the Village, along Ridge Street south of Westchester Avenue. Recommendations to enhance the character of these areas included improved landscaping, streetscape and building design. Participants in the Vision Plan process also suggested that properties in this area could be redeveloped to create more of a "downtown" that included community focal points and gathering places.

Zoning Map

Village of Rye Brook
Westchester County, New York



Residential Districts

- R-20 One Family Residential 20,000 Sq. Ft. minimum
- R-15/15A One Family Residential 15,000 Sq. Ft. minimum
- R-12 One Family Residential 12,500 Sq. Ft. minimum
- R-10 One Family Residential 10,000 Sq. Ft. minimum
- R-7 One Family Residential 7,500 Sq. Ft. minimum
- R-5 One Family Residential 5,000 Sq. Ft. minimum
- R2-F Two Family Residential 5,000 Sq. Ft. minimum
- RA-1 Restricted Multi-Family 10 Acres minimum
- P.U.D. Planned Unit Development 30 Acre minimum

Office Districts

- OB-1 Campus/Office Building 15 Acre minimum
- OB-2 Office Building 5 Acre minimum
- OB-3 Office Building 5 Acre minimum
- OB-S Office Building & Business District 3 Acre minimum

Business Districts

- C1-P Planned Neighborhood Retail 1 Acre minimum
- C1 Neighborhood Retail 13,000 Sq. Ft. minimum
- H-1 Hotel 12 Acre minimum

Natural Resources

Topography

The topography of the Village of Rye Brook varies from a low of approximately 60 feet above sea level immediately south of Bowman Avenue to a high of approximately 405 feet above sea level at the community center adjacent to the village green located in the Bellefair residential community off King Street and Lincoln Avenue. The Village is generally level but does contain isolated pockets of steep slopes including areas along North and South Ridge Streets, Lincoln Avenue and within the Bellefair community.

Soils and Geology

The geology and soils in the Village is typical of that found in many Westchester County communities located near the Long Island Sound. Upland soils tend to be fairly well drained. There are few areas of exposed rock outcroppings though recent construction activities have encountered shallow bedrock in isolated portions of the Village. Low-lying areas in the Village tend to be poorly drained and have a low depth to water table, which contribute to flooding problems in the Village.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Vegetation and wildlife is fairly typical of that found in Westchester County's more developed suburban communities. The greatest concentration of vegetation tends to be located around existing streams such as the Blind Brook and wetland areas. Some of the vegetation that exists today represents secondary growth that occupied the land after the discontinuance of agricultural activities in the second half of the twentieth century. Other former agricultural areas such the Blind Brook Club and Arrowwood Conference Center properties have maintained to some degree their open character as managed golf courses. Wildlife habitat in the Village is most significant around open space properties and the Blind Brook corridor. No federal or state wildlife habitat is located in the Village.

Streams and Wetlands

Surface water hydrology is among the most significant environmental resources in the Village. Nearly all of the Village's land area is located within the Blind Brook watershed, which ultimately drains into the Long Island Sound. Rye Brook plays a significant role in contributing to the water quality of the Sound. Non-point source pollution, stormwater run-off from impervious areas, soil erosion, fertilizer and pesticide use and other activities within the Village can have adverse impacts on water quality in the Long Island Sound and downstream communities. Increasing environmental regulations from Federal, State and County authorities will likely require modification of many of these practices in the future.

Flooding

During the Vision Plan process representatives from within the Village and downstream communities indicated a concern with flooding and the stormwater runoff impacts from upstream development. Historically, flooding has been a problem within neighborhoods located on the southern end of the Village and in isolated low-lying areas. Many of the flooding conditions within the community have been aggravated by existing development that pre-dates modern stormwater management practices.

Vision Plan participants noted with considerable concern the potential adverse environmental impacts of the Westchester County Airport. Air traffic from the regional facility affects the Village's air quality and contributes to noise pollution. The 60 Ldn noise contour, which extends across the northern half of the Village to approximately Anderson Hill Road has been designated a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) by the Westchester County Legislature. Deicing fluids and other chemicals used at the airport are present in stormwater runoff, contributing to non-point source pollution in the Blind Brook. Vision Plan participants suggested that the Village should remain vigilant over monitoring the Airport's operations, discourage activities that adversely impact the environment and advocate projects that could enhance the Village's natural resources.

***Westchester
County Airport***

The loss of the Village's open space character was a repeated concern throughout the Vision Plan process. In response to a questionnaire circulated to the advisory committee many indicated that preservation of the Village's remaining undeveloped or under-developed properties was a high priority or that they would support acquisition of open space for both active and passive recreational uses and environmental protection. Identifying and funding parcels for preservation and strengthening techniques to enhance the Village's visual character will be important issues for the future.

***Open Space
Character***



***Blind Brook,
south of Bowman
Avenue***

Transportation

Traffic Concerns Vision Plan Participants

Throughout the Vision Plan process, traffic on Village roads was among the top concerns both in terms of its impact on quality of life (i.e. congestion, vehicle delays) and safety (i.e. travel speeds, pedestrian safety). Many noted that traffic delays have increased significantly over the past few years during the weekday morning and afternoon peak hours. Traffic congestion on roadways around schools within the Village was a particular concern. Others noted a general increase in traffic during most times of the day and week.

Traffic Growth

Traffic studies over the years support this perceived increase in vehicle traffic. For instance, New York State data shows an over 13 percent increase in daily vehicular traffic on King Street between 1987 and 1997 and an over 30 percent increase in traffic on the Hutchinson River Parkway during the same period. Most traffic growth tends to be limited to the Village's major thoroughfares such as the Hutchinson River Parkway, King Street, Anderson Hill Road, Betsy Brown Road, North and South Ridge Street, Westchester Avenue and Bowman Avenue. Local or neighborhood roads do not appear to be significantly impacted by increases in vehicle traffic.

Afternoon Traffic on King Street at the Arbors Access Drive



Rye Brook's traffic growth is due in part to development in the Village that generates significant traffic levels, such as the General Foods building, Reckson Office Park, Westchester County Airport and Arrowwood Conference Center. Traffic growth is also due to people, including Village residents, traveling along the many regional roads that pass through the Village to get to growing employment centers within the region such as those in Harrison, White Plains, Armonk and Stamford, Connecticut. This trend in increased traffic growth is expected to continue in the future. No new roadways or significant road widening projects are proposed within the area that would significantly reduce traffic impacts within the Village.

Regional Traffic Implications

Traffic congestion is also increasing despite the frustration of traffic delays because people prefer driving to any other mode of transportation. The 1990 U.S. Census estimated that more than 77 percent of the Village's labor force travels to work by automobile. People are also driving more often throughout other periods of the day and week, such as on weekends. Alternatives to driving in the Village are available, but limited. The Village does not have a particularly effective pedestrian network of sidewalks or pathways that is perceived as either safe or convenient. The Westchester County Bee-line system provides limited local, express and railroad shuttle bus service to only the northern-most and southern-most portions of the Village. Only the Village's largest employers provide limited shuttle bus service to local Metro-North railroad stations.

Driving Alternatives

Complicating matters further is the fact that nearly all of the major roadways within the Village are under the jurisdiction of New York State or Westchester County. Portions of King Street, which straddles the Village's eastern boarder and carries over 14,000 vehicles per day, is under the jurisdiction of the State of Connecticut and Town of Greenwich. The Village does not have absolute control over providing new improvements to these roadways to accommodate anticipated traffic growth. It's not clear, however, that such projects would be even be desired. The general consensus among Vision Plan participants was that new roadway projects in the Village that increase the number of travel lanes would have an adverse effect on community character and the environment. Any necessary improvements should be limited to the most congested intersections roadway segments.

Limited Village Control

Given these constraints, long-term solutions to improve mobility within the Village needs to focus more on cooperating with other communities in the region, encouraging limited roadway improvements, enhancing alternatives to automobile travel and supporting development that reduces dependence on the automobile

Solutions

Community Resources

Growth in Community Resources

Since its creation in 1982 the number of community services and facilities within the Village has grown. Initially, Village staff was small operating out of the basement of the Port Chester Middle School. Many of the services provided in the Village were contracted from private companies or adjacent communities such as the Village of Port Chester. Over the last twenty years, the Village has desired more services and less dependence on outside service providers.

Today, the Village staff has grown to 64 full-time employees providing a range of services including Village administration, police, public works, road maintenance, recreation and senior citizen programs. Supporting the Village staff is a complement of volunteer boards and committees that provide further assistance in providing services to the Village. Some of the Village's other services are contracted such as refuse collection, emergency medical service, and a portion of the Village's fire service. The number of community facilities has also grown, including the recent completion of a Village Hall, senior center and the acquisition of a single-family dwelling adjacent to Village Hall for conversion to a municipal use.

School Districts

The Village has two school districts including the Blind Brook School District and of the Port Chester School District, which serves the Village of Port Chester and the southern portion of the Village of Rye Brook located south of Crawford Park. Current enrollment in the Blind Brook School District is approximately 1,100 students and the entire Port Chester School District has an enrollment of approximately 3,400 students. Enrollments in both districts have been increasing over the years and that trend is expected to continue in the future.

Increasing Future Demands

The demand for additional community services and facilities is expected to increase in the future. This demand will be driven by the Village's continued desired to establish greater independence and less reliance on outside service providers, as well as the anticipated population growth in the Village's northern end. The projected population growth will likely require more services, particularly with respect to schools, but it will also extend existing service boundaries to the extreme edges of the Village.

Non-Village Service Providers

As with any community, the Village and its school districts are not the only providers of community services. Town of Rye provides recreational facilities such as Crawford Park and the Rye Town Beach to Village residents. Westchester County provides sewer service to the Village. Private companies are responsible for providing water and telecommunication service in the Village. Some of Rye Brook's community service needs are also provided outside the Village. Churches, synagogues, private schools and private organizations within and near the Village and to some extent, over the state line into Connecticut, provide community services such as day care and education. Nearby YMCA's provide recreational facilities and programs used by Village residents.

Participants in the Vision Plan process generally viewed the community services provided in the Village favorably, especially its schools and recreation programs. Many noted, however the need to expand services and facilities such as school improvements, ball fields, gymnasium space, recreation center, pool, a teen center and expanded recreation programs. Others noted a need to improve utilities such as water pressure in the Village and telecommunication facilities.

There was consensus that the highest community facility priority should be the construction of a new Village firehouse. There was no consensus, nor was there a charter to achieve such a consensus, on where the firehouse should be located, but many participants suggested that the location should be centrally located such that it allows the Village to operate its own independent fire service without the need to contract service from adjacent communities.

***Need for New
Village Firehouse***

Meeting the community service needs of the Village will be one of the most challenging issues for the Village in the future. Funding limitations and the inability of various interests in the Village to potentially afford new community services and facilities will be significant issues. In addition, land for additional facilities in the Village is becoming increasingly scarce and residents concerned about quality of life impacts often oppose new facilities located within their neighborhoods.

***Community
Resource
Challenges***



Crawford Park

Prioritizing and developing a long-term planning and funding program for providing new or expanded community services and facilities should be explored. Participants in the Vision Plan process suggested that more creative solutions will be necessary to provide such services and facilities including partnerships with businesses, adjacent communities or other organizations.

Built Environment

Goal:
*Preserve
 Character of
 Residential
 Neighborhoods*

Policy: **Maintain the Quality And Preserve the Character Of Residential Structures.**

Strategy	Action Step
Modify Village Zoning Code regulations to encourage preservation of community character.	Establish committee to survey existing character of structures in Village, review existing regulations with respect to building size and bulk and recommend amendments to the Village Zoning Code.
Develop building design guidelines for architectural review that are consistent with the desirable aspects of surrounding neighborhood character.	Village Architectural Review Board should prepare design guidelines, with assistance from professional architect.

Goal:
*Enhance Sense
 of Community
 through Changes
 in the Built
 Environment*

Policy: **Minimize Activities That Adversely Impact the Quality Of Life in Residential Neighborhoods.**

Strategy	Action Step
Support expansion of commercial activities that minimize adverse impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.	<p>Future development should provide adequate buffers between residential and commercial properties.</p> <p>Planning Board and business interests should review development potential of commercial districts and recommend amendments to Village Zoning Code.</p>
Balance municipal-wide benefits of future community facilities with impacts to local neighborhoods.	Village Board and Facilities Committee should consider neighborhood impacts and possible mitigation measures in siting community facilities.
Implement traffic-calming strategies to preserve character and pedestrian safety within residential neighborhoods.	Village Traffic Committee should undertake study to survey existing parking availability and traffic conditions of residential streets and recommend traffic calming measures such as traffic circles, traffic signage, or modification in roadway design.

Policy: Preserve and Enhance the Visual Character of the Village’s Major Roadways.

Goal:
Enhance Sense of Community through Changes in the Built Environment (cont.)

Strategy	Action Step
Enhance and increase the number of Village entry signs along major roadways.	Village staff should continue sign maintenance and enhance landscaping at entry signs.
Maintain or improve the character of prominent or highly visible parcels along the Village’s major roadways.	Committee of Village Planning Board, Architectural Review Board and affected property owners should identify prominent parcels in Village and recommend preservation or redevelopment guidelines.
Preserve and enhance streetscape of major roadways and aesthetics at key Village intersections	Establish committee to prepare a streetscape program for the Village’s roadways and intersections such as Anderson Hill/King Street; Bowman Ave and Ridge St.; Westchester Ave. and Ridge St.; Hutch interchanges.

Policy: Enhance Community Identity by Creating Community Focal Points.

Strategy	Action Step
Identify prominent properties and consider design of future municipal facilities that enhances community identity.	Village Board and Facilities Committee should identify prominent parcels in Village for location of future municipal facilities (e.g. teen center, recreation center, firehouse, etc.)
	Direct architect in design of municipal facilities to consider “civic pride” and the enhancement of community identity
Develop a centralized municipal complex including Village Green.	Facilities committee should undertake study to identify the possible location and feasibility of a centralized municipal complex.

Built Environment

Goal:
*Enhance Sense
of Community
through Changes
in the Built
Environment
(cont.)*

Policy: **Enhance Community Identity Through the Redevelopment of Existing Commercial Areas To Create A Village Center.**

Strategy	Action Step
<p>Define a Village Improvement Business District for existing commercial areas along and south of Westchester Avenue</p>	<p>Establish committee consisting of representatives from Village Boards and business interests to undertake a study that defines a Village Business District and provides recommendations for large and small commercial properties to improve and better coordinate building design, traffic flow, parking, pedestrian circulation, signage, landscaping land use compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods and other improvements.</p>
<p>Enhance streetscape and pedestrian safety along commercial roadways.</p>	<p>Develop streetscape plan for Bowman Ave., Ridge Street and Westchester Ave. Plan should include the identification of possible funding and implementation strategies.</p> <p>During land development review process, require redevelopment applications to enhance streetscape and sidewalks along street frontage</p>
<p>Encourage mixed-use development that includes institutional, open space, commercial, market-rate residential and affordable housing opportunities for senior and young residents of the Village.</p>	<p>Establish committee consisting of representatives from Village Boards and business interests to review existing land development controls and recommend possible amendments to Village Zoning Code, including the possible implementation of a Business Overlay District.</p>

Building Footprints

Village of Rye Brook, New York
Westchester County



Natural Environment

Goal:
Preserve the Remaining Open Space Character

Policy: Preserve the Character of the Remaining Under- or Undeveloped Properties in the Village.

Strategy	Action Step
<p>Identify and preserve parcels, including public parks, with significant open space character.</p>	<p>Village Board and Planning Board should oversee the preparation of a Village Open Space and Park Plan. The plan should identify future park improvements and and recommend potential open space preservation techniques for specific parcels including: transfer and/or purchase of development rights; recreation zoning district designations; Federal, State or local funding for property acquisition; Conservation Zoning; and other strategies.</p> <p>Moreover, it should be ensured that Crawford Park, a Town of Rye facility that is fully within the borders of the Village of Rye Brook, meets the needs and concerns of both Town and Village residents.</p>
<p>Identify properties outside the Village that if developed could adversely impact the quality of life and open space character of the Village.</p>	<p>Village Environmental Commission should work with adjacent communities to assess and help preserve nearby properties with open space character such as SUNY, corporate office parks and other significant underdeveloped properties.</p>
<p>Concentrate inevitable future development pressures in established commercial areas rather than undeveloped or underdeveloped areas.</p>	<p>Planning Board should review existing Zoning Code and recommend changes that would reduce or transfer development potential from some areas and increase development potential in established commercial areas.</p>
<p>Ensure that Crawford Park, which is fully within the borders of Rye Brook, meets the needs and concerns of both Town of Rye Brook residents and the Village of Rye Brook subset populations.</p>	<p>The Town of Rye, the Village of Rye Brook, and any other neighboring communities that actively use the facility should draft a “Park Plan”. The plan should address the needs of all persons who use the park.</p>

Policy: Preserve and Enhance Significant Open Space Vistas and Other Visual Resources Important to the Community.

Goal:
Preserve the Remaining Open Space Character (cont.)

Strategy	Action Step
Identify and preserve significant open space vistas and visual resources.	Village Environmental Commission should identify and recommend strategies to preserve significant vistas such as views of Long Island Sound, Blind Brook, undeveloped land and other important visual resources and natural features in the Village.
Create open space buffers to preserve the visual character along major roadways.	Establish committee of Planning Board and Environmental Commission representatives to recommend amendments to Village Zoning Code to require enhanced buffers along major roadways such as King Street North of the Hutchinson River Parkway and Anderson Hill Road.
Strengthen regulations regarding tree preservation, steep slopes protection, cut and fill activities and other environmental resources.	Establish committee of Planning Board and Environmental Commission representatives to review existing regulations and recommended changes to the Village Code.
Discourage new buildings or structures that adversely impact significant vistas or are inconsistent with surrounding visual and community character.	Village Board and Planning Board in its review of future development applications should consider building bulk and design and require appropriate site design measures that preserves existing open space vistas and visual and community character.

Natural Environment

Goal:
Maintain and Improve the Quality of the Blind Brook and the Long Island Sound Watershed

Policy: Reduce Sources of Non-Point Pollution and Preserve Environmental Resources in the Blind Brook Watershed.

Strategy	Action Step
Strengthen or establish Village regulations that preserve water quality, minimize non-point source pollution, manage flooding and preserve environmental resources including plants and wildlife.	Village Environmental Commission should review and recommend amendments to the Village Code to improve regulations with respect to sedimentation and erosion control, pesticide and fertilizer use, wetland and wetland buffer disturbances, development in flood-prone areas, impervious site coverage and other environmental protection legislation.
Participate in regional planning efforts that preserve the environmental quality and manage flooding of the Blind Brook Watershed.	Village Environmental Commission should work with State, County and adjacent communities to establish a comprehensive plan for the Blind Brook Watershed that identifies potential environmental threats and encourages regional measures to improve the water quality and flood control of the Blind Brook.
Discourage activities within and outside the Village that would adversely impact the environment including plants and wildlife.	Village Airport Committee should monitor operations of Westchester County Airport as it pertains to potential environmental impacts. Village Environmental Commission should work with adjacent communities to identify and preserve undeveloped properties that significantly contribute to maintaining the water quality of the Blind Brook.

Policy: Improve Access to and Raise Awareness of the Blind Brook

Goal:
Maintain and Improve the quality of the Blind Brook and the Long Island Sound Watershed (cont.)

Strategy	Action Step
Provide a pathway along the Blind Brook.	Establish committee consisting of representatives from Village Boards, adjacent communities and large property owners to undertake a study to identify existing pathways and evaluate the feasibility of pathways along the Blind Brook extending from SUNY to neighborhoods located south of Blind Brook Club and along Blind Brook from Westchester Avenue to Bowman Avenue.
Enhance awareness of Blind Brook.	School districts and environmental organizations should cooperate to provide education programs regarding the environmental qualities of Blind Brook.

Mobility

Goal:
Improve Traffic Circulation while Minimizing Impacts on the Environment and Community Character

Policy: **Initiate and Actively Participate in Regional Transportation Planning Efforts.**

Strategy	Action Step
Become more involved in monitoring proposed transportation projects within and outside the Village.	Establish Village Committee to monitor transportation initiatives proposed by regional authorities and neighboring communities that may impact traffic flow in the Village.
Initiate as soon as possible proactive measures to improve traffic conditions within the Village.	Planning Board should initiate joint land use and transportation planning study of the King Street Corridor with regional authorities and neighboring communities.
Maintain and enhance dialogue with neighboring communities regarding land use and transportation issues.	Village Board should establish reciprocal arrangements (including regular meetings) with neighboring communities to share information and resources regarding land use and transportation issues.

Policy: **Identify Roadway Improvements that Enhance Vehicle Safety and Improve Traffic Circulation without Increasing the Number of Roadway Travel Lanes.**

Strategy	Action Step
Establish transportation planning and roadway improvement program.	Village Traffic Committee should undertake Village-wide transportation plan to examine existing traffic flow and future traffic patterns and recommend improvements at congested intersections and thoroughfares.
Improve traffic conditions at Village's most congested locations.	Village Traffic Committee should work with School Districts, transportation agencies and major employers to recommend possible roadway improvements to improve traffic flow during congested peak hours around schools and businesses.

Policy: Encourage Transit-Oriented Development.

Goal:
Improve Traffic Circulation while Minimizing Impacts on the Environment and Community Character (cont.)

Strategy	Action Step
Encourage appropriate development within areas served by mass transit.	Planning Board should review relationship between future development and transit routes.
Discourage auto-dependant uses that adversely impact traffic flow on Village roadways.	Planning Board should recommend amendments to Village Zoning Code to limit auto-dependent uses that generate high levels of traffic within congested roadway corridors.
Accommodate the needs of mass transit and its users in site plan review process.	Village Board and Planning Board should consider mass transit needs such as bus access and sidewalks in the review of development applications.

Policy: Promote Strategies that Increase Mass Transit Use.

Goal:
Increase and Promote Viable Alternatives to Automobile Travel

Strategy	Action Step
Increase transit use for Village's largest employers and developments.	Establish committee to assist and coordinate with local business and residential developments to increase transit use and carpooling.
Increase transit use to Village schools.	Establish a committee that includes School District representatives to develop strategies to decrease automobile use and increase school bus ridership to local schools.
Make access to area train stations more convenient for Village residents and businesses.	Establish committee to undertake a study to examine the viability and funding of Village-sponsored shuttle bus service, bike racks to or increase parking at Metro-North at Train Stations.
Increase transit service in Village.	Village Board should work with neighboring communities and regional transportation authorities to increase mass transit service in the Village.

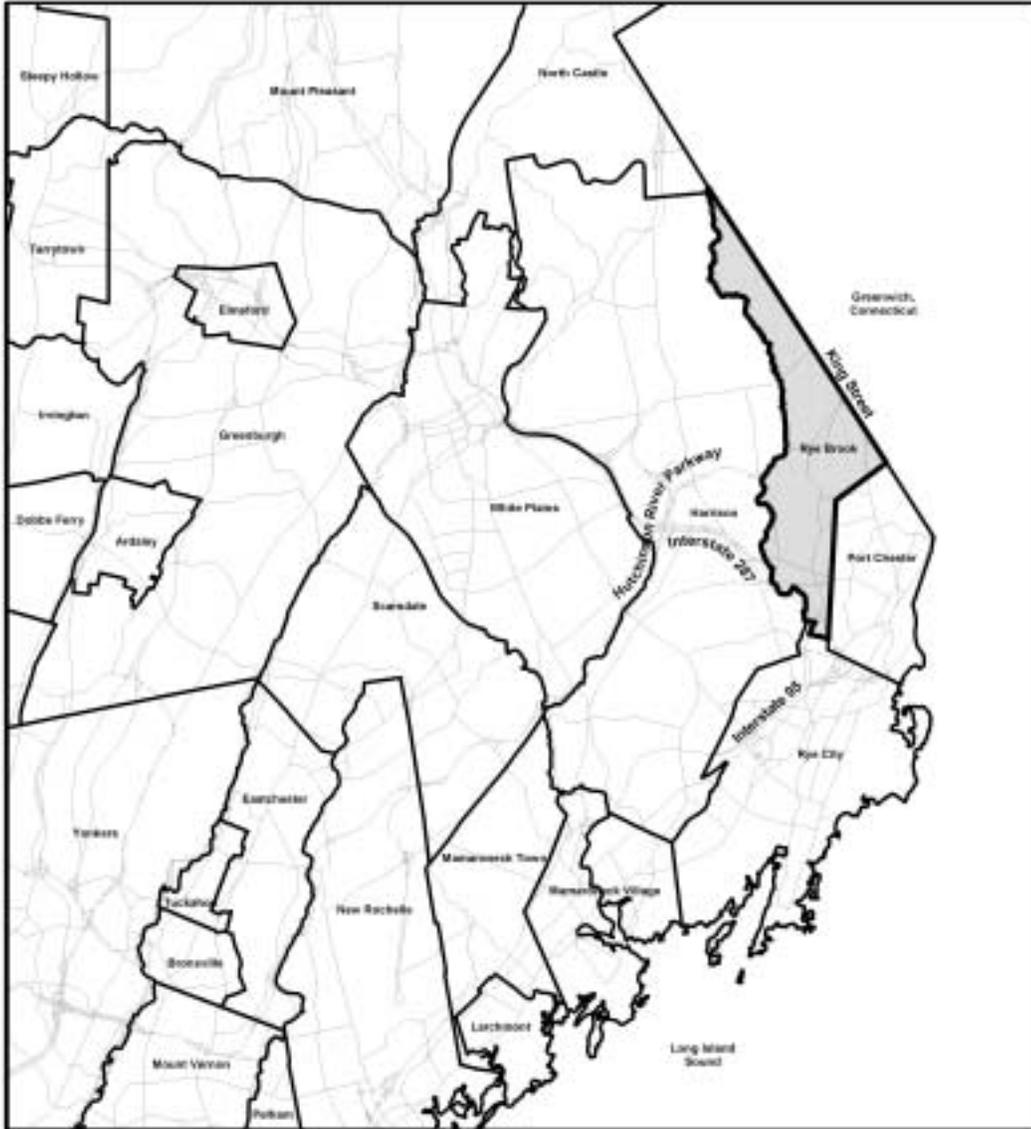
Mobility

Goal:
Increase and Promote Viable Alternatives to Automobile Travel (cont.)

Policy: Improve Pedestrian Safety and Increase Pedestrian Circulation Opportunities.

Strategy	Action Step
Initiate a pedestrian circulation plan and improvement program	Establish committee to undertake a study to survey existing pedestrian network and provide recommendations and funding strategies to increase pedestrian and bicycle circulation opportunities including sidewalk improvements, new dedicated pathways or “pedestrian corridors” along major roads such as King Street, Anderson Hill Road, Ridge Street or the Hutchinson River Parkway.
Improve pedestrian safety	Village Traffic Committee should provide recommendations to improve pedestrian safety at congested intersections and along roadways, with priority to those areas that are used by school children.

**Regional
Roadway System**



Community Resources

Goal:
Enhance the Quality and Availability of Community Services and Facilities, While Respecting Limited Resources

Policy: **Preserve and Increase Opportunities for Self-Sufficient Village Facilities and Services.**

Strategy	Action Step
Identify, prioritize and plan for community service and facility needs for the Village.	<p>Village Facilities Committee should prepare a comprehensive community services plan that identifies and prioritizes anticipated community service and facility demands and identifies the location for such facilities.</p> <p>Village Board and Administration should determine cost of desired future services and facilities and adopt a long-term capital improvement program.</p>
Consider multi-purpose community facilities.	Village Facilities Committee should consider flexible multi-purpose facilities that serve multiple community service functions.
Build new Village Firehouse.	Village Board should approve construction of new firehouse in the central portion of the Village to allow for possible independent Village fire service in the future.
Improve and increase recreation programs and facilities in Village.	Village Recreation Committee should review and update the 1987 Village Recreation Study and provide recommendations for expanded use of existing facilities and new or recreation facilities and programs.

Policy: Promote Community Identity through Enhanced Services, Facilities and Other Community Resources.

Goal: Enhance the Quality and Availability of Community Services and Facilities, While Respecting Limited Resources (cont.)

Strategy	Action Step
Increase number of cultural events that encourage Village-wide participation.	Establish committee to expand and seek funding for Village cultural events.
Preserve Village's historic and cultural identity.	Village Board should establish a Rye Brook Historical Society or Committee.

Policy: Cost-effectively improve and increase community services and facilities.

Strategy	Action Step
Privatize Village services when costs can be reduced and service levels can be maintained or improved.	Village Board should direct Village Administration to undertake a service efficiency study to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of existing services and possible cost-cutting strategies.
Pursue strategies to share services and expand use of existing facilities.	Village Facilities Committee should undertake study to recommend services that could be shared with neighboring communities or partnerships between the Village and local businesses, schools or nonprofit organizations.
Increase awareness of the availability of community resources.	Village Administration should coordinate the preparation of a document identifying existing services and facilities available to Village residents.

Governance

Goal:
*Encourage
 Village
 Governance that
 Efficiently and
 Effectively
 Serves Village
 Interests*

Policy: Promote Unity and Cooperation among Village Interests

Strategy	Action Step
<p>Improve communication and coordination among Village boards and committees.</p>	<p>Village Board should conduct regular round-table coordination meetings with representatives of all Village Boards and Committees.</p> <p>Village Board should consider allocating Village Board seats on both an at-large and geographic basis.</p>
<p>Improve coordination of Village activities with outside interests.</p>	<p>Village Boards and committees should improve communication including regular meetings with representatives of school boards, Town of Rye, adjacent municipalities and other interests.</p> <p>Village Board should establish joint legislation with adjacent communities to provide for intermunicipal cooperation to resolve potential disputes.</p>

Policy: Improve the Effectiveness of Village Government

Strategy	Action Step
<p>Reduce extensive decision-making demands of Village Board.</p>	<p>Village Board should consider amending Village laws to delegate, where legally permissible, more approval authority to local boards and committees.</p>
<p>Reduce decision-making demands of Village Board with respect to Village Administration.</p>	<p>Village Board should undertake study to examine the benefits of a Village Manager verses Village Administrator form of government.</p>
<p>Increase support to volunteer boards and committees to improve decision-making and recommendations.</p>	<p>Village Board and Village Administration should explore additional staff support and funding for activities of local boards and committees.</p>

