

# CHAPTER 10 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## 10.1 Existing Conditions

Commercial development in Rye Brook is largely comprised of retail, office and hotel uses. As discussed in Chapter 3, retail uses comprise approximately 21 acres, while office buildings, often in campus settings, comprise 113 acres. Two large hotels comprise 68 acres. Map 10-1 shows the locations of these commercial, retail and office land uses.

### A. Retail Land Use

Commercial retail development in Rye Brook is largely focused at the southern end of the village along the major thoroughfares of Bowman Avenue, Westchester Avenue and South Ridge Street. The intersection of Bowman Avenue and South Ridge Street is generally the intersection that marks the “downtown” of the village as it is where the Rye Ridge Shopping Center is located, which is the village’s largest retail center. Additional, smaller scale retail and commercial uses line both sides of South Ridge Street south of Bowman Avenue. Small scale commercial uses are also located with semi-regular frequencies on Westchester Avenue and Bowman Avenue east of South Ridge Street

Figure 10-1. Retail Development in Rye Brook



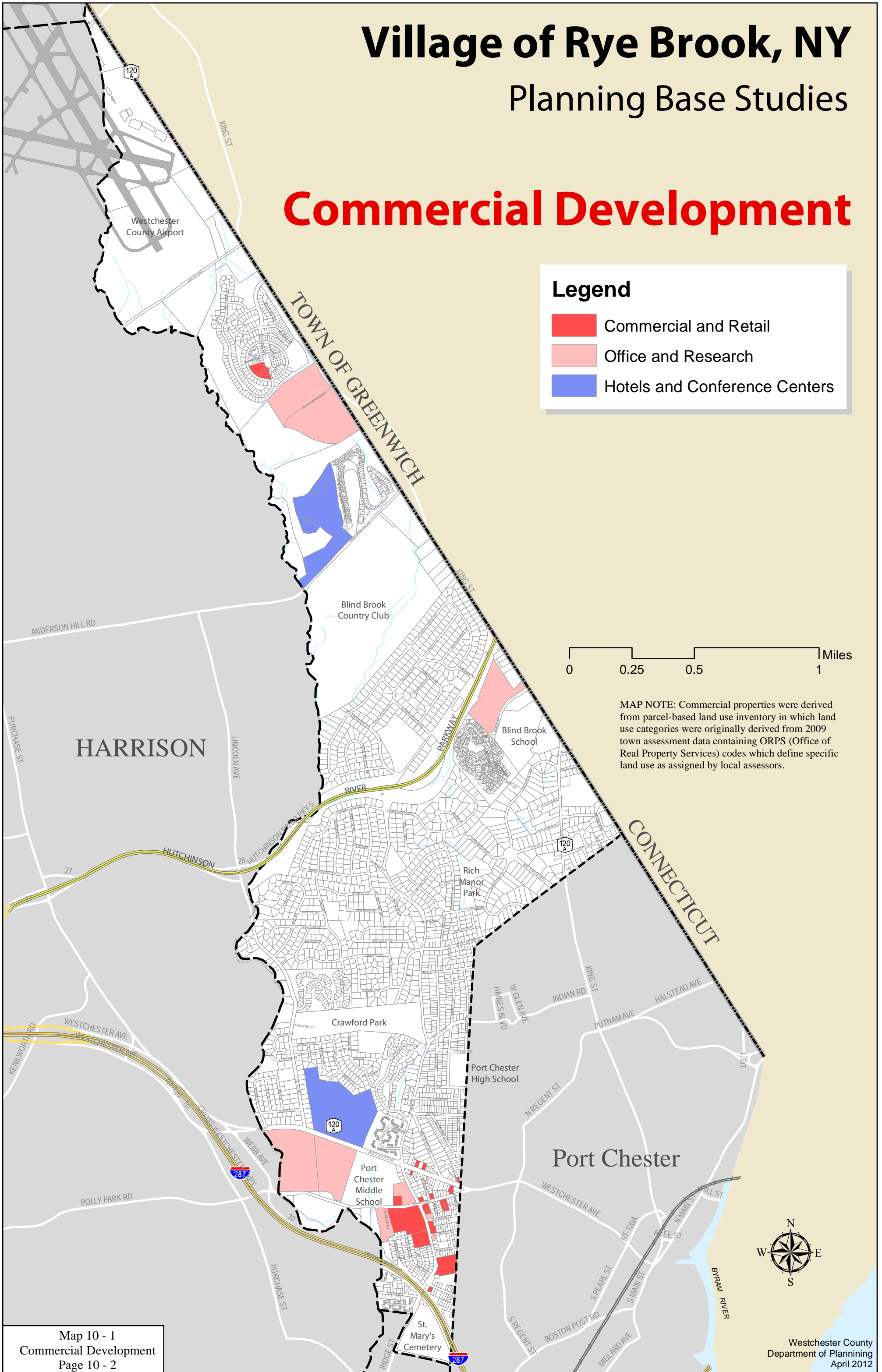
# Village of Rye Brook, NY

## Planning Base Studies

# Commercial Development

### Legend

- Commercial and Retail
- Office and Research
- Hotels and Conference Centers



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

MAP NOTE: Commercial properties were derived from parcel-based land use inventory in which land use categories were originally derived from 2009 town assessment data containing ORPS (Office of Real Property Services) codes which define specific land use as assigned by local assessors.

### B. Office Land Use

Larger scale commercial developments, mostly involving office building and hotel uses are located along the periphery of the Village. The most notable of these is 800 Westchester Avenue, which contains 532,680 square feet of “class A” office space and essentially serves as the gateway to the village when entering from the west on any of the major roadways. While this office building was originally constructed as the worldwide headquarters for General Foods in 1983, it has since evolved into a multi-tenant facility. 800 Westchester Avenue is also connected to 760 Westchester Avenue on the same site via underground tunnels. This secondary building contains 62,000 square feet of office space.

The Reckson Executive Park is another cluster of seven “class A” office buildings located at the north end of the village along King Street. This office park contains a total of 855,204 square feet. An additional, multi-tenant office property is located on Arbor Drive at the eastern edge of the village near the Village municipal complex.

### C. Hotel Land Use

Hotel and conference center uses also comprise a significant portion of Rye Brook’s commercial development. The Hilton Westchester - Rye Brook (locally sometimes referred to as Rye Town Hilton), located at 699 Westchester Avenue, contains 445 guest rooms and flexible meeting/conference room space up to 9,520 square feet in size. While located at the western gateway to the Village, this hotel facility (along with 800 Westchester Avenue across the street) serves as an anchor to the Westchester Avenue “platinum mile” in Harrison and White Plains.

The Doral Arrowwood hotel and conference center is both a resort and business-focused hotel containing 373 guest rooms, several meeting spaces and a golf course. This facility is located on 114 acres at the north end of the Village on Anderson Hill Road. Pfizer Corporation also has a 110,000 square foot training center on the grounds of this facility.

### D. Commercial Zoning

The existing commercial uses largely reflect existing zoning. Retail uses can generally only be put in the C1 or C1-P districts, all of which are located in the general vicinity of Bowman Avenue and South Ridge Street. A few outlying retail properties east of Ridge Street on Bowman Avenue or Westchester Avenue are pre-existing non-conforming uses in residential districts.

The Village has four office zoning districts which relate to different minimum acreages ranging from 3 to 15 acres. These districts are generally mapped where the existing office uses are located.

**Figure 10-2. Reckson Executive Park**



Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

**Figure 10-3. Major Employer List for Rye Brook**

| <b>Employer</b>                                   | <b>Number of Workers</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
| Southern Westchester BOCES                        | 1,080                    |
| Doral Arrowwood                                   | 500                      |
| MCI   | 400                      |
| Hilton  | 350                      |
| A&P Fresh   | 250                      |
| Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District        | 204                      |
| United Cerebral Palsy                             | 200                      |
| Marriott  | 150                      |
| New York State Department of Taxation and Finance | 150                      |
| King Street Nursing Home                          | 130                      |
| Compass Group USA                                 | 125                      |
| Hoenig & Co Inc.                                  | 108                      |
| D'Agostino's                                      | 100                      |
| Pfizer  | 100                      |
| Market Data Corporation                           | 100                      |
| Worldcom  | 90                       |
| Ben-Lee Distributors                              | 90                       |
| Dental Study Club of New York                     | 75                       |
| Village of Rye Brook                              | 74                       |
| Port Chester-Rye Brook Ambulance                  | 50                       |
| Parsons & Whittemore Inc.                         | 50                       |

Source: InfoUSA and the Westchester/ Putnam School Board Association, 2008

The Village has two hotels zoning districts. One is currently located on the existing Hilton Westchester-Rye Brook property. The other hotel district is at the corner of King Street and Anderson Hill Road, where a housing development has been approved, but has not yet been constructed. Doral Arrowwood is in a PUD-Planned Unit Development district. PUD districts can also include retail, residential and office uses. For more information about zoning, go to Chapter 12.

**E. Major Employers**

The majority of employers in Rye Brook involve white-collar jobs requiring at least some college education. According to U.S. Census statistics, in 2009 at least 60% of the workers in the village had attained a level of education above the high school level. Most of the jobs are in educational services (27%), public administration (15%), health care (11%), professional, scientific and technical services (5%) and finance and insurance (5%). Retail jobs account for 8%.

Because of the focus on professional white-collar jobs, most of the employment tends to be in the multi-tenant office spaces in the periphery of the village. The most recent data on major employers is from 2004 and may be substantially different currently due to the flexible nature of these multi-tenant office environments. See Figure 10.3 for the major employer list as of 2004. The majority of the employment is within the major office buildings as well as at the village’s school complex. Retail jobs are clustered near the Rye Ridge Shopping Center.

**F. Spatial Relationship of Jobs to Residency**

2010 Census data and 2009 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) have allowed for a more recent snapshot of employment by industry and where people live in relationship to their jobs. This data is included in tabular form in Appendix 10-1.

According to LEHD data, there are 5,820 jobs within the village. There are 3,589 residents who have jobs, which represents a positive net inflow of jobs given that the number of jobs in the village is higher than the number of residents who have jobs. However, of the 3,589 residents with jobs, only 314 (8.7%) live and work within the village. The remaining 3,275 resident workers commute elsewhere. This also means that 5,506 workers come in to the village from elsewhere to work.

**a. Out-Commutation**

Of the 3,589 residents with jobs, only 314 (8.7%) live and work within the village. The rest likely commute to other places for work. The overwhelming majority of Rye Brook working residents commute to other places in Westchester (39.8%), Manhattan (22.9%) or Fairfield County (11.4%). All other New York Metro region counties receive approximately 2% or less of the Rye Brook resident work force.

Within Westchester, the majority of the out-commutation is focused on the southern half of the county in Port Chester (5.9%), White Plains (5.8%), Harrison (4.7%), Rye (city) (3.6%), New Rochelle (2.2%) and Yonkers (2.2%).

**Figure 10-4. Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2009**



Source: 2009 LEHD Data

**b. In-Commutation**

Of the 5,820 workers in Rye Brook, only 314 (5.4%) live in the village as well. The rest must commute from other places for work. Just over half (50.9%) come from other places in Westchester. The remainder are scattered amongst the various metro-area counties in relatively low quantities: Fairfield (7.4%), the Bronx (5.2%), Putnam (3.8%), Manhattan (3.4%), Rockland (3.3%), Queens (2.8%), Nassau (2.4%), Suffolk (2.3%), Dutchess (2.1%), Orange (1.7%), Brooklyn (1.3%) and Bergen (1.2%). This scattering of employment residency is perhaps a function of the office park development that is prevalent in the village, pulling more educated workers in from a wide geographic catchment. Within Westchester, the majority of the in-commutation is focused on the southern half of the county: Port Chester (9.4%), Yonkers (5.3%), White Plains (4.7%), New Rochelle (3.1%), Mount Vernon (2.9%) and Harrison (2.6%).

**10.2 Potential Future Conditions****A. Existing Commercial Zoning and Future Commercial Growth**

Future commercial growth is limited by two factors: the fact that a majority of the village is not commercially zoned, and the fact that most of the village is already built-out. According to Westchester County land use data, only 75 acres (or 3%) of the Village is vacant or undeveloped. (see Chapter 3, the Use of Land). Only a portion of this undeveloped area is commercially zoned.

The most notable vacant commercially zoned area is immediately east of the Reckson Executive Park. This area is where a “Phase III” expansion of the Reckson Executive Park has been approved, but has not yet been built. See Chapter 13, Zoning Build-out and Analysis, for further discussion and analysis of future village-wide development potential.

Other existing commercially zoned parcels could be developed further though changing the uses on them, or potentially subdividing pieces off for future development.

**B. Potential Commercial Development Scenarios Through Zoning Changes**

Given the built-out nature of the village, and the relatively low amount of vacant, commercially zoned land available, the village will not experience a huge growth in commercial properties unless there is a desire to change zoning regulations. The Village of Rye Brook Vision Plan, written in 2000, articulated a number of strategies which could still be relevant today for increasing commercial development:

- Undertake a study to help define and create a “village center” through the establishment of new zoning regulations and design standards, which could potentially lead to more downtown retail.
- Create a Business Overlay District as a way to allow for more mixed-use development.
- Increase development densities, either through rezonings or transfer of development rights from lesser developed areas to established commercial areas.

### **C. Changes In Employment Levels**

Given the fact that college-educated office jobs are the majority of employment in the village, major employment levels will likely be a function of office space occupancy within the village’s office properties. Most recently, the trend in office space usage has been away from large, single-tenant properties, in the direction of multi-tenant spaces. This situation has played out at 800 Westchester Avenue, which was originally designed as a world headquarters for General Foods, but has since changed into a multi-tenant building. This type of trend may mean more total employers in the village, but with fewer employees in each organization than if these properties remained as single tenants. Given that almost all of the office space in the Village is “class A”, office tenants will tend to be more established companies as opposed to start-up ventures, or back-office operations which typically utilize non-class-A spaces.

Focusing attention on the creation of new regulations to define a “village center” in Rye Brook, could offer an opportunity for more retail, or mixed-use-with-retail, development, allowing for an expansion of retail employment.