CHAPTER 7 RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

7.1 Overview
The Village of Rye Brook has close to 3,000 acres of open space, which may be found in public parks and schools, along parkways and natural waterways, at privately-owned country clubs, and within housing developments and corporate parks. These areas are variably designated for both active and passive recreation, open or limited access, or for natural resource conservation. Rye Brook’s parks and open spaces serve as places of recreation and respite, as community gathering places, centers of learning, and as reflections of its culture and history.

Municipal parks and open space account for approximately 34.7% of total land area in the Village of Rye Brook, approximately 0.25 acres per resident. Residents also benefit from nearby regional parks and facilities owned and operated by neighboring municipalities. The Village is located in a region that is rich in recreational resources. Its neighbors within Westchester include the City of Rye, the Village of Port Chester, the Town of North Castle and the Town of Harrison, which provide a variety of both public and private recreational opportunities. The Village’s location on the Connecticut state border affords Rye Brook residents access to a significant number of out-of-state parks, historic sites and nature preserves.

A. Recreational Resources
Public parks provide a large portion of the outdoor recreational resources within the Village of Rye Brook; however, other opportunities for outdoor recreation include:

- Country clubs
- Walking paths
- Trailway routes
- Community centers
- Schools

B. Open Space
The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation defines open space as, “An area of land or water that either remains in its natural state or is used for agriculture, free from intensive development for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional use.
MAP NOTE: Open Space parcels derived from parcel-based land use data originally compiled from 2009 town assessment data containing ORPS (Office of Real Property Services) codes which define specific land use as assigned by local assessors. For this map, the data was extracted and condensed into nine open space categories.
Open space can be publicly or privately owned. It includes agricultural and forest land, undeveloped coastal and estuarine lands, undeveloped scenic lands, public parks and preserves. It also includes water bodies such as lakes and bays. The definition of open space depends on the context. In a big city, a vacant lot or a small marsh can be open space. A small park or a narrow corridor for walking or bicycling is open space, though it may be surrounded by developed areas. Cultural and historic resources are part of the heritage of New York State and are often protected along with open space.” (source: http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/317.html).

For the purposes of this report, open space will include lands associated with:
- Parkways
- Airports
- Corporate sites
- Public schools
- Cemeteries
- Churches
- Historic properties
- Streams, wetlands, waterways, lakes, ponds
- Undeveloped/vacant land

7.2 Public Parks
The Village of Rye Brook has five main municipal parks within its borders. They are:

- **Crawford Park** (36 acres) is a Town-owned large multi-purpose park located between North Ridge Street and Lincoln Avenue. It includes gardens, lawns, woods, a walking/jogging path, playing fields, and school facilities, as well as the historic Crawford mansion, an early 20th century structure used for weddings and special events. The park contains hundreds of mature trees, an expansive lawn, a playground, a large picnic pavilion and a sunken garden.

- **Pine Ridge Park** (9 acres) is located on the corner of Latonia Drive and Mohagan Lane. This facility has minor and major little league baseball fields, two and a half basketball courts, four tennis
courts, a playground, a tennis wall, sand box, a walking path, two bathrooms, three water fountains, a storage shed, parking area, and two bathrooms. In Spring 2012, a new scoreboard is planned to be installed at the Old Field at Pine Ridge Park for use by the Rye Brook Little League.

- **Rye Hills Park** (7 acres) is located adjacent to Crawford Park, off Parkridge Court in the Hidden Falls development. It has a walking path, a basketball court, two game tables, a circle ring for storytelling, two water fountains and a belvedere, which overlooks Long Island Sound. (Parking is limited to handicapped vehicles--other patrons must park in the circle next to Crawford Mansion and walk through the path into the park).

- **Rich Manor Park** (10 acres) is a passive park adjacent to Rock Ridge and Acker Drive. It consists of an open field and has wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, views of Blind Brook and a path to Woodland Drive.
Rye Brook Athletic Fields (6 acres) is the Village’s newest recreational facility, located at 830 King Street, adjacent to Blind Brook High School. This complex includes artificial turf football and soccer fields, a baseball/softball field for youth, a full-size soccer field, a walking path, a concession stand, a storage garage, and bathrooms. Parking for this facility is in the Blind Brook High School campus. This facility is available for rent on a permit basis, and reservations for field use can be made by the public online.

Smaller Rye Brook public parks include:

- **Harkness Park** (4 acres) is located on King Street adjacent to the Blind Brook High School campus. Harkness Park has four tennis courts, water fountains and an open field.

- **Garibaldi Park** (2 acres) is located on Garibaldi Place opposite the Anthony J. Posillipo Community Center. This facility has a tennis court, two basketball courts, minor little league baseball
Rye Brook Department of Parks and Recreation
938 King Street, Rye Brook, New York 10573

Rye Brook’s Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for maintaining the Village’s municipal open space. The department operates organized activities for the public and/or special events in the Village Parks, including a wide range of sports (basketball, tennis, soccer, floor hockey, lacrosse, ice skating), teen, youth and adult programs, programs for seniors and people w/ disabilities, (classes, trips, educational programs), and seasonal special events.

Telephone Numbers:
Office: (914) 939-3235
Parks Department: 939-1796

and softball fields, a playground, two water fountains, two bathrooms and a storage shed.

- **Meadowlark Park** (2 acres) is an undeveloped park approved as a stormwater management facility with a detention basin, wetlands, flood plains and steep slopes.

- **Magnolia Park** is a passive park with an open field located on Magnolia Drive.

- **Roanoke Park** (2 acres) consists of an open lawn area and is located in a floodplain.

- **Elm Hill Park** (2 acres) is undeveloped land located adjacent to Crawford Park.

- **Bowman Avenue** (2 acres) is privately-owned by K& M Realty Group. It is approved for a park on private property that is planned to be dedicated to the Village. It has wetlands, ponds, flood plains and steep slope areas.

Other local recreational facilities available to Rye Brook residents include:

- **Rye Town Park** — Located in the City of Rye, this 62-acre preserve on Long Island Sound has 28 acres of lawns and paths with mature plantings, rolling hills, benches, a naturalized duck pond, and a beachfront and swimming area of 34 acres. The beach is open to the general public. Residents of Rye Brook, Rye City, Port Chester, and Rye Neck may purchase seasonal permits with discounts for parking and beach access. Non-residents can also purchase seasonal permits for higher fees. Daily admission fees are available for both residents and non-residents. A variety of scheduled activities take place at Rye Town Park throughout the year, particularly during the spring, summer and fall months.

- **Anthony J. Posillipo Community Center** (< 1 acre) — Located at 32 Garibaldi Place, this Rye Brook facility includes a meeting room, teen center, a crafts room, TV room, pool room and a full-size basement. Recreational, social and enrichment activities are available at the Center for all age groups including after-school programs, lectures, small group activities, day and overnight trips and special support for senior citizens, including hot meals, exercise classes, and health-related screenings. On weekends the facility is available for rent by community residents The Village also hosts an indoor farmer’s market here.
Brief History of Rye Town Park

The Rye Town Park was established in 1907 by an act of the New York Legislature. The main building complex, completed in 1909, includes a two-towered administration building, pavilions, restaurant and service facilities with Spanish style architecture, water views, and beach access to Long Island Sound. Many of the park’s trees and shrubs have been labeled with their common and Latin names. After dark, several of the park paths are illuminated by old-fashioned streetlights. There are three sets of bathrooms. The restaurant operates two beach snack bars – one at the middle beach area and the other at the north beach. Beach supplies and apparel can be purchased, as well.

The park's crescent-shaped 1,200-foot long white sand beach offers the general public splendid access to the shores of the Long Island Sound. Three gates provide access to the beach. The north gate is near Rye Beach Avenue, and the south gate is on Dearborn Avenue. The center gate, which is usually the busiest, is located next to Seaside Johnnie’s Restaurant.

*Source: Town of Rye*
Proposed East Coast Greenway Routes
Westchester County, NY

Legend
- Existing Off-Road Path
- Off-Road Path Under Construction
- Proposed Off-Road Path
- Existing On-Road Bike Route
- Proposed On-Road Bike Route

Map Prepared by the Westchester County Department of Planning
Updated June 2008
This map is a result of a comprehensive county-wide update to the 1994 major open spaces GIS data layer and was completed in 2006. The Open Spaces map is processed to reflect selected new open space acquisitions such as county and state parks and state supply lands. Selected reservations were excluded using urban and transportation criteria. The new acquisitions and exclusions reflect a current status as of August 31, 2006. This map satisfies the mandates of the Open Space Preservation Act of 1972 (L.1972, c.59) and the Open Space Land Preservation Act of 1976 (L.1976, c.82). The Open Spaces category includes many smaller properties that were not previously mapped including many parcels held by the Westchester Land Trust.

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Blind Brook Country Club – The privately-owned club, located at 980 Anderson Hill Road, has 160 acres, with an 18-hole golf course.

Doral-Arrowwood Hotel Conference Center — The approximately 114-acre private facility contains a 9-hole golf course, housing development, parking lots and clubhouse with outbuildings complex. It is currently zoned to permit single-family residences on 20,000 square-foot lots.
7.3 School Facilities
- **Ridge Street School** – (15 acres) Located at 390 North Ridge Street, facilities include baseball, soccer, and softball fields, outdoor basketball courts, a playground, two gymnasiums and a multi-purpose room.

- **Blind Brook High School/Middle School** – The 21-acre campus at 840 King Street, includes soccer and baseball fields, two gymnasiums and an auditorium.

- **Port Chester High School** – Located at One Tamarack Road in the Village of Port Chester, the 24 acre campus was built on the grounds of the former Port Chester Country Club. The school has 6 acres of open space with a gymnasium, ball fields and tennis courts.

- **Port Chester Middle School** – Located at 113 Bowman Avenue in Port Chester, the campus has school recreational facilities and 23 acres of open space.

7.4 Bicycle Routes/Trailways
A segment of the East Coast Greenway, a developing trail system spanning 2,750 miles between Canada and Key West, Florida, is planned to cross through the northern corner of Rye Brook. The Proposed East Coast Greenway Routes are shown on the Map 7.2.

There has been some discussion regarding the creation of a Hutchinson/Merritt Pathway which would utilize the green right-of-way of the Hutchinson and Merritt Parkways, a portion of which would run through Rye Brook. There are no immediate plans in place to implement this project.

7.5 Parks & Open Space
Open space in Westchester County is shown in Map 7.3. In Rye Brook, 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. Acreage of open space parcels in Rye Brook are listed in Figure 7.6.

Key open space elements in Rye Brook are:
- **Westchester County Airport** — Almost 200 acres of the airport is located in the Village, making it the largest single land use in the Village.
Source: Prepared by the Westchester County Department of Planning, November 2004.

Based on an open space mapping update conducted in 2004 and includes thirteen categories of both protected and unprotected open space lands that are viewed as part of the county's open space network. Acreage summaries were calculated using GIS (Geographic Information System) and may not reflect actual deeded acreage figures. A two-acre minimum threshold was established except in cases where there were smaller contiguous parcels or groupings of parcels under the same ownership. Properties classified as farms were primarily derived from the Westchester County Agricultural District established in 2000.

Figure 7-6. Village of Rye Brook Major Open Spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hutchinson River Parkway Lands</td>
<td>State Parks/Parkway Lands</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford Park</td>
<td>Local Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harkness Park</td>
<td>Local Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Ridge Park</td>
<td>Local Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Manor Park</td>
<td>Local Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye Hills Park</td>
<td>Local Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrowwood Golf Course</td>
<td>Private Recreation Facility</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BelleFair Open Space</td>
<td>Private Recreation Facility</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Brook Country Club</td>
<td>Private Recreation Facility</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind Brook High School</td>
<td>Public Institutions</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Chester High School</td>
<td>Public Institutions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Chester Middle School</td>
<td>Public Institutions</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridge Street School</td>
<td>Public Institutions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westchester County Airport</td>
<td>Public Institutions</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Street Nursing Home</td>
<td>Private Institutions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Private Institutions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Cemetery</td>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Hutchinson River Parkway Lands** — A total of 81 acres of open space create a green corridor along the Hutchinson Parkway, which traverses the northern end of Rye Brook. Past Interstate-684, the parkway heads east and north into the town of Rye and the Village of Rye Brook, where it connects to New York Route 120A and becomes the Merritt Parkway at the Rye Brook/Connecticut state line.

- **BelleFair** — A private housing association at 24 BelleFair Blvd. in Rye Brook with 261 single-family homes, a meeting house, village green and a large enclosed playground. The site contains wetlands, open space (60 acres) and a Village composting site.

- **St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church** — The church property at 761 King Street in Rye Brook has 5 acres of open space.

- **King Street Nursing Home** is located at 787 King Street in Rye Brook on the border of the Greenwich, CT town line and has 13 acres of rolling hills and open green space.
In 1924, the Westchester County Parks Commission recommended construction of a new north-south parkway in the eastern part of the county. At that time, Boston Post Road (which became US 1 in 1926), the primary north-south route along Long Island Sound between New York City and New England, had become clogged with automobile and truck traffic seven days a week. Moreover, the rapid growth of Mount Vernon, Pelham, New Rochelle, Eastchester and Port Chester threatened the water supply of these communities. Preservation of right-of-way for a parkway along the Hutchinson River would offer relief along US 1 by providing a faster, more scenic route for automobiles. It would also furnish parks for local residents and protect water supplies.

Figure 7-8. BelleFair Planned Unit Development
Figure 7-9. William E. Ward House

The William E. Ward House, located on Comly Avenue, is the only property in the Village of Rye Brook which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The property and the house are on the border with Greenwich, Connecticut. Built between 1873 and 1876, the imposing castle-like residence is famous for it being the first and oldest extant reinforced concrete structure in the United States. Named for its builder, a mechanical engineer, only the doors, frames, windows and trim are of wood. The building is also locally known for its past use as the Museum of Cartoon Art between 1976 and 1992. The house was listed on the National Register in 1976 and was later jointly designated as a National Historic Civil and Concrete Engineering Landmark by the American Concrete Institute and the American Society of Civil Engineers. The house is currently a private residence.

Sources: U.S. Parks Service, National Register of Historic Places; American Society of Civil Engineers

- **St. Mary's Cemetery** (18 acres) is located the southern most end of the Rye Brook between High Street, South Ridge Street and I-287.

- **William E. Ward House** (8 acres) — Known locally as Ward's Castle, this historic property is located on the state line between Rye Brook, New York and Greenwich, Connecticut.

### 7.6 Undeveloped Land

Little undeveloped land remains in the Village and much of which currently exists has either valid or pending approvals for development projects.

The Village of Rye Brook owns an undeveloped 24-acre property consisting of two contiguous parcels in the northern-most portion of the Village, on the south side of Lincoln Avenue between King Street and the municipal boundary of the Town/Village of Harrison. The two parcels were dedicated to the Village as part of the development of the BelleFair community for recreation and general municipal use. Both parcels may allow the Village the opportunity to develop a recreational facility for Village residents.
The smaller of the two parcels, located at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and King Street, is nine acres. The larger parcel is 16 acres and is located to the west and adjacent to the smaller parcel. The western boundary of the larger parcel is adjacent to, and surrounds on three sides, a third, five-acre Village-owned parcel, currently used as a composting facility. The property is bounded on the north by Lincoln Avenue, to the east by King Street, to the south by the BelleFair residential subdivision and to the west by land owned by Purchase College of the State University of New York (SUNY Purchase). Although all of the smaller lot, and most of the larger, are in the Village of Rye Brook, a very small portion of the southwestern corner of the larger lot is on the west side of the Blind Brook in the Town of Harrison. There is an easement on a portion of the larger lot that gives Westchester County the right to trim trees within the easement. The easement extends 200 feet south from the Lincoln Avenue property line and runs parallel to the property line approximately 600 feet to the east and 600 feet to the west of the centerline of Westchester County Airport. A portion of the easement is on the parcel used as a composting facility.

Both parcels contain areas of wetlands and watercourses, the largest area of which is situated on the smaller lot. The Blind Brook crosses the southwestern corner of the larger lot. A secondary emergency access road for BelleFair that crosses a stream channel is also located on the smaller lot. Both lots contain some steep slopes as well as structures, including a concrete dam and spillway, culverts, foot paths, old roads, dry rock walls and concrete foundations for a lost structure.

Aside from one small open area on the larger lot, the site is largely occupied by deciduous woodlands. The open area is located at the end of an old road leading south from the Village compost facility. On the smaller parcel, the wetland has a small open area of shrub cover, but it too is mostly wooded.

Both parcels are generally sloped away from King Street and Lincoln Avenue down towards watercourse and wetland areas on each lot. These slopes are between 10 and 15 percent. There are isolated sloped areas that would be classified as moderately steep slopes (15 to 25 percent) and very steep slopes (25 to 35 percent).

7.7 National Recreation & Park Association Standards
A. Mini-Parks
(Example in Rye Brook: Magnolia Park.) These small parks focus on limited, unique, or isolated recreational needs. They are specialized facilities that serve a concentration or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.
Planning Base Studies
Village of Rye Brook, New York

Chapter 7 Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Resources

Service Area: Less than \( \frac{1}{4} \) - mile radius, Desired Size: one acre or less
Acres per 1,000 Population: \( \frac{1}{4} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \) acres
Desired Site Characteristics: These parks should be situated within neighborhoods and in close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouse development, and/or housing for the elderly. Users should be able to see the opposite end of a mini-park.

B. Neighborhood Parks
(Example in Rye Brook: Pine Ridge Park). Small and large neighborhood parks offer similar recreation opportunities; however, the larger neighborhood parks generally feature between five and 10 acres in size. (This is a modification of the previous NRPA standard for neighborhood parks that calls for one to two acres of parkland per 1,000 people.) Small and large neighborhood parks can provide both passive and active recreation. In general, they feature areas for intense recreational activities, such as ball field games, court games, crafts, playground equipment, skating, picnicking, and more. Undeveloped natural areas are also desirable in these parks.

Service Area: \( \frac{1}{4} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \) mile radius, Desired Size: Small: one to five acres; Large: five to ten acres
Acres per 1,000 Population: one to two acres
Desired Site Characteristics: These parks should be suited for intense development and be easily accessible to the neighborhood. Ideally, they should be geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. These parks can be developed as school – park facilities.

C. Community Parks
(Example in Rye Brook: Crawford Park). These park components focus on serving larger, community-wide outdoor recreational needs.

General Use: These parks have areas of diverse environ-

Figure 7-11. Standards for Parkland, National Recreation and Parks Association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Type</th>
<th>Acres/1000 Population</th>
<th>Minimum Size</th>
<th>Service Area Radius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Park</td>
<td>0.25-0.50</td>
<td>1 acre or less</td>
<td>&lt; .25 mile/5 minute walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park</td>
<td>1.0-2.0</td>
<td>15 acres</td>
<td>.5 mile/12 minute walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>5.0-8.0</td>
<td>25 acres</td>
<td>1-2 miles/5 minute drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Park</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>200+ acres</td>
<td>30 miles/1 hour drive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on parkland and recreational standards for municipalities, see: http://www.nrpa.org/Professional-Development/Accreditation/CAPRA/CAPRA-Standards/
mental quality. They may include areas for intense recrea-
tional facilities, such as athletic complexes for organized
sports, large group picnicking, and community gatherings.
They may also feature areas of natural quality for activities
such as walking, biking, and viewing that are supported by
trail systems.
- Service Area: Several neighborhoods - One to two mile ra-
dius, Desired Size: 30 to 50 acres
- Acres per 1,000 population: five to eight acres
- Desired Site Characteristics These parks should be easily
accessible to the neighborhoods that are served and include
areas for intense outdoor recreational development. Other
desirable components include natural features such as water
bodies.

D. Special Purpose Parks
(Examples in Rye Brook: Garibaldi Park/Anthony J. Posillipo
Community Center) These park system components focus on a
single use, such as historic preservation or downtown open space.
The NRPA has no specific standards for special purpose parks as
they are unique to each community.
- General Use: These parks are centered on a specific envi-
ronmental feature, historical event or setting and offer a

Figure 7-12. Anthony J. Posillipo Community Center

Photo Source: Westchester County Department of Planning
unique place that assists in creating a sense of place in the community.

- Service Area: No applicable standard, Desired Size: Varies
- Acres per 1,000 population: Varies
- Desired Site Characteristics: These parks cater to a cultural, historic, or social recreational needs.

E. Urban Green Space
Example in Rye Brook: Hutchinson Parkway Lands

- These park system components are typically made up of lands set aside for preserving drainage corridors, wetlands, or other significant community natural resource areas. The NRPA has no specific standards for these areas.
- General Use: These features are generally open to the public, but usually do not contain many facilities beyond access points and trail systems.
- Service Area: No applicable standard, Desired Size: Varies
- Acres per 1,000 population: Varies
- Site characteristics vary based on the resource being conserved or protected. Typically, these areas should have nature-based, low impact recreational facilities. These park system components are typically made up of lands set aside for preserving drainage corridors, wetlands, or other significant community natural resource areas. The NRPA has no specific standards for these areas.

SOURCES
- Village of Rye Brook Action Plan (http://www.ryebrook.org/documents/administration/visionpln.pdf)
- http://www.ryebrook.org/cit-e-access/webpage.cfm?TID=31&TPID=3846
- http://www.townofryeny.com/index.phpact=view_cms&id=26&contentFull=full
- http://www.friendsofcrawfordpark.org/about.htm
- http://planning.westchestergov.com/westchester-trails
- http://www.nrpa.org/Professional-Development/Accreditation/CAPRA/CAPRA-Standards/
- http://www.ryebrook.org/FCpdf/Bowman%20Ave%20Dam%20Flood%20Mitigation%20StudyText_Reduced.pdf
- http://www.nycroads.com/roads/hutchinson/
- https://www.purchase.edu/AboutPurchase/History.aspx
- http://www.stpaulsryebrook.com/
- http://shs.portchesterschools.org/
- http://www.bellefair.org/
Chapter 7 Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Resources

Planning Base Studies
Village of Rye Brook, New York

May 2012
Prepared by the Westchester County Department of Planning