



NYRCR Rye

Public Engagement #1 Summary

Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2014

Time: 7 pm – 9 pm

Location: Rye Town Park Pavilion, 95 Dearborn Avenue

Description

This was the first public engagement event for the Rye NY Rising Community Reconstruction Committee. The meeting was designed to present residents with a general understanding of the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program and to gather their input on the Vision and Values of the Community Reconstruction Plan, the Community Asset Inventory, and storm damage from Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Irene. Approximately 60 residents attended and participated in the event.

Agenda: As an open house without a presentation, the evening did not have a formal agenda.

Meeting Summary in Brief

Residents arrived throughout the two-hour window and participated in discussions with Committee Members, GOSR staff, and the Consultant team, provided written feedback on worksheets and posters, and participated in the Photo Booth by recording their vision for a more resilient Rye and what they thought Rye's greatest assets are on white boards.

This Document

All of the written feedback from people attending the meeting and people who emailed Committee Members after receiving an invitation to the meeting is documented on the subsequent pages. The comments provide insight into what is important to the community and gives us rich qualitative input that can be integrated into the final Community Reconstruction Plan. The feedback has been organized by station in the same order as they were laid out at the event: Photo Booth, Vision and Values, Asset Mapping, and Storm Impacts Mapping.

A number of meeting attendees were particularly passionate about the Rye Nature Center, so many comments focused on this particular asset, a unique facility for a community of this size. Although Playland Park is owned by Westchester County, it too was viewed as a valuable asset for the community. Comments on storm damage reiterated the distinction between Superstorm Sandy as a wind event and Hurricane Irene as a flood event, but residents from the Milton Harbor House development emphasized that some parts of the city did have severe coastal flooding.

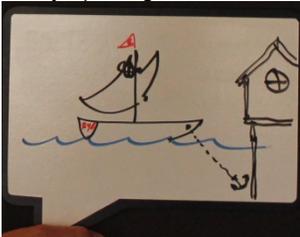
Photo Booth

Rye's Greatest Assets are ...

- It's people.
- Nature Center.
- Rye Nature Center.
- The trees.
- Very friendly.
- Location on the sound and not far from NYC.
- Playland beach.
- Playland.
- Playland.

My vision to make Rye more resilient is...

- [To] preserve open space.
- To have a better entrance to Rye Nature Center that doesn't cross Blind Brook.
- [A] new entrance road into the city's Nature Center so over 15,000 annual visitors can continue to enjoy Rye's treasured forest and proactive approach to stream bank rehabilitation.
- Lower taxes!
- Fix sewers!!
- Fill the shops on the boardwalk.
- Preventative measures: pervious surfaces, rain barrels/gardens, fewer pesticides.
- Make streams bigger.
- Make the rides sturdier.
- Better drainage.
- Study opening the culvert at 95 and RR merger. Let the water flow to the sound, follow natural solutions.



Vision and Values

There were no comments that directly altered the draft Vision and Values.

The following comments were recorded at the station.

- When will Rye fulfil its 2001 promise to FEMA to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) that FEMA runs?
- Clean out storm drains. Fix valves. Correct sewage pipes.
- This sluice gate caused Blind Brook to flood during a release in 2014. (Refers to a photograph of the new sluice gate on the vision station poster).

Community Asset Mapping Station and Worksheet

Meeting attendees were asked to circle the 10 community assets that they thought were the most critical. Residents circled anywhere from 1 to 20 assets on the worksheets and those listed below were selected at least once. Those selected multiple times have the total number of votes listed in parentheses.

Economic

Central Business District (4)

Health and Social Services

City Hall (3)

Locust Avenue Fire House (5)

Midland School

Milton Point Fire House (5)

Milton School

Osborn School

Police Station and Rye City Court (4)

Post Office

Rye Beach Pharmacy (2)

Rye Middle School and Rye High School

Rye Walk In Medical Center

Housing

Highland Hall (2)

Indian Village Neighborhood

The Osborn

Wappanocca Neighborhood

Infrastructure Systems

Blind Brook Retaining Wall (2)

Blind Brook Sewage Treatment Plant (2)

Bridge at Locust Ave & Blind Brook (2)

Bridge at Orchard Ave & Blind Brook (2)

Bridge at Central Ave & Blind Brook (2)

Bridge at Playland Pkwy & Blind Brook (2)

Bridge at Oakland Beach Ave & Blind Brook (2)

Moorehead Footbridge over Blind Brook (2)

Bridge in Cemetery

Bowman Avenue Dam (2)

Consolidated Edison

Department of Public Works (5)

Metro North Railroad Station

Pump Station at Brevoort Lane & Rye Rd (7)

Pump Station at Forest Ave & Hewlett Ave (7)

Pump Station at Glen Oaks & Belmont Rd (7)

Pump Station on Stuyvesant Ave (7)

Pump Station on Dearborn Rd (7)

Pump Station on Van Rensselaer Road (7)

Sewer Trunk under I-95 culvert

Natural and Cultural Resources

American Yacht Club

Greenwood Union Cemetery

Milton Cemetery (2)
Milton Harbor
Rye City Boat Basin
Rye Marina
Rye Friends Meeting House
Rye Nature Center (5)
Rye Town Park and duck pond
Shenorock Shore Club
Square House

Three new assets were added.

Playland Parkway access
Rye Nature Center Bridge (3)
Westchester Children's Museum - watershed education

Residents also provided additional comments in the available space on these worksheets.

- Flooding of Rye Brook. Rebuild small bridge at Milton Road and Disbrow Park. Retention of water above Rye county corporation [sic]
- New entrance [to Rye Nature Center] provides greater resiliency during flooding (through snow storage field)
- Open I-95 culvert. Study up and downstream impact. Opening the culvert will lower flood elevations in Indian Village. My thesis is that downstream impact will be neutral.
- If you merely focus on recovery and reconstruction, you're bound to face the same catastrophic outcomes after every flood event. The questions should be how to mitigate flooding, not one building or asset preservation over another. Decreasing the probability of damage via researched flood mitigation measures should be the goal of this exercise.

Storm Damage Station and Worksheet

Residents shared how they were personally affected by Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Irene as well as how the community was impacted by these storms. Their responses to the questions on the worksheet are below.

How were you impacted by Superstorm Sandy (October 2012)?

- Milton Harbor House (88 residences) suffered \$1.6 million damage; only half of our costs were reimbursed. I had to cover my share of the co-op's costs.
- 3.5 feet of water above grade. Power out 11 days. Sewer overflow.
- Flooding; electrical outage for about 10 days. We took in many families who were also suffering.
- My house and family did not have damage but our community came to a standstill as most of the town was affected.
- Business closed for two weeks (Rye Nature Center). Severe tree damage and loss of canopy.
- Only power outages, schools, communication etc.
- The impact was absorbed via anxiety of how much flooding we would sustain. Just because we ultimately did not sustain any flood or wind damage does not mean we were not impacted.
- No power for 10 days.
- My wife and I live in Milton Harbor House (MHH) on Milton Road. We had to evacuate and stay at a hotel in Stamford. When we returned, there was no heat or electricity for about two weeks. MHH was flooded by water overflowing from Milton Road. The electrical and heating systems of MHH were destroyed and there were other structural damages. Damage was in excess of \$1.6million. Con Edison did not restore gas service for heating to the townhouses for 7 weeks.

How was Rye impacted by Superstorm Sandy?

- Flooding. Residents forced to leave their homes with mandatory evacuation.
- Power out 11 days. Severe flooding. Library, Main Street, Mayfield Street sewer overflow.
- Our emergency response teams and police were very busy; coned commandeered our public spaces and everyone was pre-occupied with emergency response and/or surviving without power.
- Very disruptive.
- Long-term power outages.
- Primarily about effects of wind rather than major flooding.
- The areas of vulnerability were exposed – and they were numerous: flooding, evacuation procedures, community assistance for those displaced, power outages due to fallen dead tree limbs.
- Extensive trees down – power.
- Severe flooding and damage to many homes from fallen trees all over Rye and many homes did not have electricity for a long time. Rye Boat Basin was totally flooded and Milton Road from the fire house to MHH was flooded and inaccessible.

How were you impacted by Hurricane Irene (August 2011)?

- Forced to move to a hotel because of electricity going off. My wife has COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] and requires supplemental oxygen which needs electricity.
- 3.5 feet of water above grade. Sewer overflow.
- Terribly – 18 inches of flood waters in first floor; \$350k of damage to our house – homeless for 5 months
- Flooding nearby.
- Business closed for two weeks due to long term power outage. Nature Center bridge was closed due to severe flooding.
- Flooded basement.
- Extensive flooding.
- Some water in basement.
- The townhouses in front of MHH were flooded from water coming over from the Rye Boat Basin and water coming from Milton Road from the north and Stuyvesant Avenue in the east, causing damage to the structures and furnaces.

How was Rye impacted by Hurricane Irene?

- Almost as bad as Sandy.
- Severe flooding. Sewer overflow.
- Entire neighborhood destroyed – over 15 families had to move.
- Major flooding and disruption.
- Severe flooding throughout downtown and within homes.
- Massive downtown flooding. Many friends with flooded homes lost access to community businesses and non-profits.
- Significantly more damage – Superstorm Sandy was predominantly a wind event for most of Rye. Irene, because of its rainfall amounts, was a flood event displacing families for months – not days.
- Flooding and tree damage.
- Severe flooding in downtown Rye caused by overflow from Blind Brook. Rye Boat Basin was flooded and so was Milton Road from the fire house to MHH.

How have you been impacted by other storms?

- Yes, the storm several years before flooded Rye's main shopping area.
- Frequent storm water flooding in rain of 2-5 inches. Sewage back up.
- Yes – 2007 two times; 2004.
- Constant struggle with water damage flooding.
- Storms of 2007.
- 2007 April storm similar as above.
- Nor'easter of 2007 – huge flood event, freak rainfall six weeks earlier. Two extensive flood events in 6 weeks.
- Trees down.
- Milton Road gets flooded and becomes inaccessible often from heavy rain. MHH gets flooded in the front from water coming down Stuyvesant Avenue in the east and Rye City drains from the north overflowing onto the MHH property. The City's drains go into MHH's drains to go into the Sound. Every time there is heavy rain, our townhouse residents are on pins and needles even with employees on watch to pump water out.

Have you taken any steps to make your home or business more resilient? If so, please describe.

- We asked the city to improve drainage in front of Milton Harbor house about 8 years ago. They agreed to do so but was only completed last year. Future drainage improvements on Milton Road are needed.
- Raised utility room.
- Yes – all utilities move above flood level. Reorganized household possessions to be less in harm's way.
- Rye Nature Center has planted over 300 trees to replace loss of trees from hurricane. We have started stream bank rehabilitation along Blind Brook. We are actively working with City of Rye to build a new, resilient road into the Nature Center.
- Yes – added French Drains sump pump etc. to 1954 home that had never before flooded. Every house on the block has done the same.
- House elevation for flood mitigation at great personal expense.
- New roofing.
- MHH is installing submarine doors to protect the boiler room and electrical room of the apartment buildings. The city has installed new drains to reduce the flow of rain water coming from the east down Stuyvesant Avenue into MHH. However, the drains on Milton Road from the north have not been replaced and they are still flooding the MHH property when there is heavy rain.

Additional comments from Storm Damage worksheets.

- Fix storm drains – clear them out. Fix flap valves. Fix sewer pipes.
- Have back-up generators for neighborhood.

Other Comments Received from the Community

The Committee and Committee Members have also received comments via email. These are listed below:
Flood and Drainage Problems At or Near 720 Milton Rd., Rye

Arthur Stampleman

The residents in the 88 homes at Milton Harbor House (MHH), 720 Milton Rd. have incurred significant flood damage over the years as a result of everything from heavy rain storms to Hurricane Sandy, with damage of the latter the most costly storm at \$1.6 million. Accordingly, we are most appreciative of the state's NY Rising initiative. In that connection, we would like highlight for the NY Rising organization and the Rye flood advisory committee these flood issues that are our greatest concern and for consideration in the development of flood mitigation plans.

1. The city's Milton Rd. drainage at the north-east corner of the property.

With heavy rains or water overflowing from the marina from major storms, water flows down Milton Rd. and into our property, either directly or through a city easement pipe. The city pipe is intended to take Milton Rd. water into the Sound at the marina via our storm drains. During high tide or large storms these storm drains back up because they are unable to handle to the volume of water and flood our parking lot. This overflow or flood water then enters eight townhouse garages in our M building almost every heavy storm, thus creating a hardship for the shareholders as well as damage to the building.

If the city was to build its own larger pipe to handle "city" water and thereby separate the water into two new, larger drain pipes, one for the city, one for MHH, this should minimize or possibly eliminate most of the flooding issues. Such a project costing the city approx. \$250k was completed last year by the city to address flood water problems at the south-east corner of our property and shows good results thus far.

2. Illegal sump pumps.

We were told by city officials that many homeowners have illegally connected their home sump pumps into the sanitary lines. This places a burden onto the system. In response to this overburden, Disbrow Park cannot handle the rate of flow and thus has to "throttle" back on the valves so the equipment can "keep" up. This throttling back causes much of the sewers and drains then to back up onto Milton road causing some flooding. The "flow back" also results in some residents experiencing a flow of Sewage into their basements. The flow of water on to Milton Rd. often makes the road impassable for emergency vehicles, creating obvious risks.

Peter To

Flooding at Milton Harbor House has increased over the years which could be caused by more water going into the Rye City drains or by rising tide level. The Rye City drains go through Milton Harbor House's property to go into the Sound. Rye replaced the drains from the east coming down Stuyvesant Avenue to Milton Road last year and raised the outlet into the Sound and that improved the flooding situation in MHH from the east. However, the drain on Milton Road north of Milton Harbor House has not yet been replaced because of a lack of funding. The drains are not large enough to handle the volume of water and the outlet is covered during high tide causing the water to back up onto the Milton Harbor House property. Whenever there is heavy rain, water is bubbling out of the manholes on Milton Road flooding the road.

Edward Fox

A former Board of Education member and former facilities chair who negotiated a major and complex project for us with ConEd.

BURY THE POWER LINES!!!! Electricity is everything and the lack of it affects everybody. Loss of productivity due to lack of power was the biggest loss (but likely the least obvious and hardest to measure) in the storm's aftermath.

Jim Culyer

A former Board of Education President and facilities committee chair.

I'm out of town, but here is a way out thought: triple decker parking garage behind Wells Fargo and on School Street. It would address the parking issue in Rye, provide for increased revenue to the city, and provide for a safe parking scenario vs. brook level parking in the event of flooding. It addresses a need. Provides for increased revenue. And sales tax revenue would also increase as a result of available parking in down town Rye.

William Slattery

Community member

The homes along the water are in crisis mode: they all have grandfathered flood and homeowners rates, but can't sell them because of the cost for new owners to insure [I'll add that this applies to homes along marsh lands and brooks.]

There is a beautiful, albeit modest house on Bird Lane...they and fellow home owners have homes that were built in the AE flood zone. Post Sandy two things happened, FEMA re zoned, making their homes in the VE zone (highest risk potential) and rates went through the roof.

As a consequence, home owners cannot sell their home in an as is condition, instead require elevations to be increased between 8 and 12 feet. Even with the increase in elevation, the cost of homeowners insurance which requires flood insurance is between 30 and 50 thousand per year for even a modest home.....home owners is required for any owner wishing to take out a bank mortgage.

So the problem becomes the cost to raise the elevation (all in between 300-500k) plus the need to obtain DEP and local approval from planning boards and immediate community, a proposition with few standards and a reluctant planning board.

Impact: first order is impact to homeowner...they cannot sell at anywhere near market rate. Second impact is to City of Rye...these "Water front" properties have tax bills in the 45-65k range (these are 3500 square foot homes...so nothing crazy...they are clearly being readied for reassessment and a series of expensive lawsuits....

So there is a very "big" problem that will affect every person in the City of Rye in one way or another....just think about the impact of tax revenue decline on School tax. The home owners are in a major bind...and virtually every house on the water must have a revised elevation report...

A great example are the two homes on the end of Forrest...697 and 699...699 sold but the family cannot move in... 697 went into contract but the estate was forced to "raise" the house prior to closing...that is the project you see underway....and even with it raised, the new homeowners will be charged \$42k for their flood and home owners insurance...add that to the \$60 k in taxes and you have a house that few can afford to live in!

Brings new meaning to the term "underwater"

And I didn't even mention the sea wall. If you raise the house, you need to adjust the seawall; otherwise you fall off a cliff! The sea wall is regulated by the State of New York DEP. It is a long tedious process designed to protect both the community as well as the wild life surrounding the water line. It is very expensive, prone to conflicting requirements, takes forever to obtain the correct permits, and of low priority at the state level, so a home owner says, I wish to sell, agrees to finance, and can expect a delay of nearly a year before the sea wall is approved before they can begin the work. Some Rye residents don't have years to wait, forcing them to sell their home at discounts if at all. What a dilemma.

Paula G

A former Deputy Mayor

I can't attend the meeting Wednesday; however, I took a look at the most recent CIP (attached, although I expect you've already memorized the report), and made a list of projects that seem to apply to flooding mitigation. I included the MTA parking lot, as its water run-off is a major contributor to flooding at that end of the downtown, and we need to find a way to retain water on the site. I also added costs for drainage not included in the CIP where only a study has been proposed -- these represent mere speculation on my part and would need to be vetted.

To generalize, we already have a multi-million dollar demand to fund identified projects. I would ask the city manager and city planner to prioritize. My list is below.

Flooding Mitigation Projects -- CIP

<i>Description</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>CIP Page No.</i>
DRAINAGE		
LaSalle Avenue drainage	150,000	11
Forest to Stonycrest Road drainage	385,000	12
Red Maple Swamp drainage study	15,000	13
Hix Avenue drainage study	20,000	14
Colby Avenue drainage	120,000	15
Ellsworth Street drainage	90,000	16
Martin Road drainage	50,000	17
Total CIP drainage	830,000	
<i>Red Maple Swamp drainage -- need estimate</i>	<i>300,000</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Red Maple Swamp -- acquire property need estimate</i>	<i>1,000,000</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Hix Avenue drainage - need estimate</i>	<i>500,000</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Estimated additional drainage</i>	<i>1,800,000</i>	
BLIND BROOK BRIDGES		
Locust Avenue bridge complete reconstruction	1,800,000	36
Nature Center Bridge complete reconstruction	1,100,000	37
Orchard Avenue bridge rehabilitation	180,000	38
Milton Cemetery bridge	40,000	42
Total CIP Blind Brook bridges	3,120,000	
MTA parking lot	2,650,000	39
SUMMARY		
Total CIP projects	6,600,000	
Estimated additional drainage	1,800,000	
Grand total	8,400,000	