


TOWN OF RYE


LAND AND DEVELOPMENT


Historically a rural farming and fishing town, Rye is a semi-rural coastal community that has since transitioned to mostly residential development and has numerous beaches, natural lands, and accessible open spaces. Major commuting routes, NH Route 1 and Route 1A, provide Rye residents access to employment and services available in neighboring towns. The town is defined, in part, by its legacy of tourism. Looking ahead, Rye must develop a strategy for guiding future development and growth to protect what community members love about Rye, consider the realities of development constraints (such as wetlands and conserved land), and account for climate change.

 **64** miles of roadway extend throughout Rye, including municipal, state, and privately owned roads.

 **32%** of Rye's land area is wetlands.

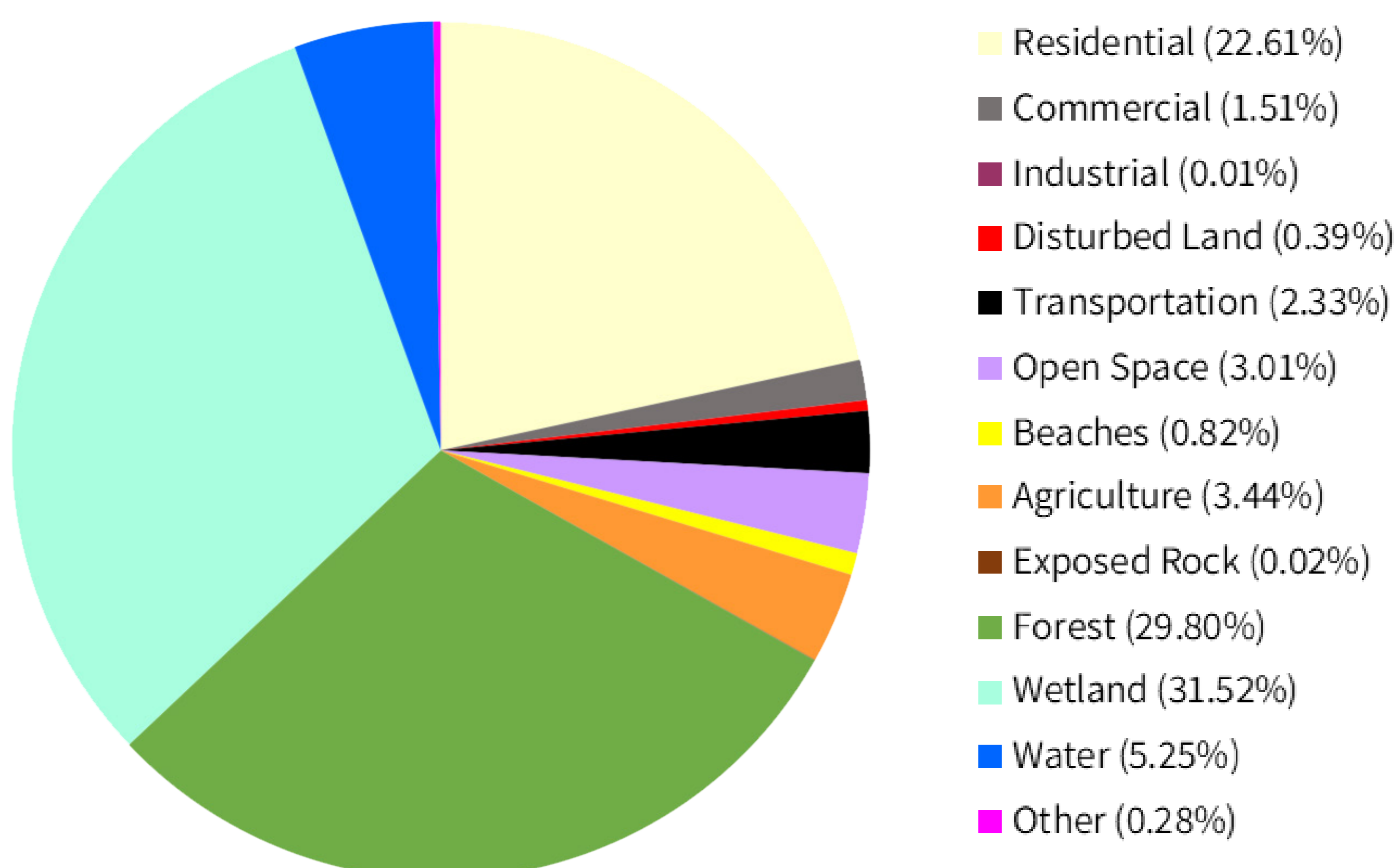
 **71%** of town is zoned residential.

 **4%** of Rye's land are state-owned parcels including Odiorne Point State Park, Wallis Sands Beach, Jenness Beach, and Rye Harbor State Park.

 **25%** of Rye's land area is conserved and includes properties like the Town Forest, Marden Woods, and Seavey Acres.

 **68%** of Rye's agricultural land has been converted to development between 1962 and 2015.

Mapped Land Cover Within Rye (2015)



Land cover refers to the characteristic of the land surface. **Land Use** refers to the way in which the land is utilized, whether it be for residential housing, commercial infrastructure, agriculture, or forests; that is managed by zoning.

Above: The residential land cover category accounts for specific buildings, not lots. For example, if a house on a single parcel is surrounded by forest land, the building portion of that parcel would be classified as residential, and the remainder would be classified as forest.

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Rye completed a **build-out analysis** in 2023 to better understand the potential for future development based on current municipal land-use regulations and vacant land areas.

This analysis identified that approximately **13% (1,116 acres of approximately 8,407 acres) of the Town is buildable** under current zoning regulations.

Many of the lots that were identified as being able to **accommodate future growth** could be considered **“backlands”**, or parcels not currently accessible to development by existing roads.

The build-out indicated that due to extensive environmental development constraints (particularly wetlands), conserved land, and existing buildings, **the Town of Rye has a moderately low buildable area for future development** compared to other New Hampshire communities.

At current population growth rates, and under existing regulations, **the Town of Rye could reach full build-out in approximately 50 years.**

Rye’s Transportation Infrastructure

Rye’s transportation network consists of **roadways, culverts, bridges, sidewalks, trails, pedestrian crossings, vehicles, and safety signage**. Due to Rye’s seacoast location, many visitors utilize Rye’s roadway system and this results in heavy seasonal traffic patterns.



What are some of Rye’s KEY ISSUES related to future transportation planning?

- ***Climate change impacts on roadways***
- ***Walkability, bikeability, and pedestrian and bicycle safety***
- ***Traffic congestion and speed control***
- ***Seasonal traffic***
- ***Stormwater management***
- ***Public transportation opportunities***