

Economic Development Task Force

A look at potential improvements by the Town of Raymond
to help attract new business to the town and retain current business

Committee Members

Rolf Olsen, Chair

Elissa Gifford, Vice Chair

Teresa Sadak, Recording Secretary

Sharon Dodson

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Assisted by

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May 2014

Economic Development Task Force Final Report

Executive Summary

The Town of Raymond has historically been concerned with attracting homeowners and maintaining the rural nature of the town and has done little to promote and attract business or other economic generating entities to the Town. The current models, regulations and infrastructure are seen by some potential businesses as confusing, overburdening or inconsistent with a desire by the town for economic or business growth.

Recognizing the need for a balance of both residential and business growth in the town, the task force investigated our current structure and impediments to growth and the structure and programs in other towns regarding economic development. Additionally, we surveyed current businesses to ascertain obstacles and deficiencies they felt hindered potential growth.

The following outlines the work undertaken by the task force and gives a series of recommendations on key areas the Select Board might consider and act upon to help the Town move forward in its desire both to grow economically and to maintain the quality of life valued by the residents of the Town.

"Livability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities..."

~ Partners for Livable Communities

Economic Development Task Force Final Report

Charge to the Task Force

Establishment of an Economic Development Task Force

Whereas the town of Raymond offers residents and visitors a desirable place to live, work, and play in the heart of the Lakes region,

Whereas the Town of Raymond seeks to generate business investment and expansion in order to create jobs, balance the property tax base, and foster attractive development,

Whereas the Town of Raymond seeks to generate robust dialogue amongst business, community, and government leaders with the goal of improving the local business climate,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Raymond Town Selectmen hereby appoints an Economic Development Task Force comprised of the following individuals:

Sharon Dodson
Elissa Gifford
Mike McClellan
Teresa Sadak

Laurie Forbes
Bob Harmon (withdrew)
Rolf Olsen

This Task Force shall marshal the resources and expertise necessary to report back to the Town Council no later than March 15, 2014 regarding the following:

- Best municipal practices for supporting business retention, expansion, and attraction;
- Barriers to business expansion in Raymond, including specific town regulations and ordinances; and,
- Organizational models to promote economic development suited to the town of Raymond, including staff capacity and budget.

Methodology & Research

1) Regulatory bodies: The task force studied the current structure and lines of authority and how they interact with one another and with economic development: Select Board, Code Enforcement, Planning Board, Appeals Board, Town Planner, Public Works, DOT, Cumberland County Commission, legal review, and other town committees dealing with land use, such as the Conservation Commission. *(See Attachment 1)*

2) Regulations: The task force reviewed current ordinances pertaining to or limiting land use and learned about ordinances in the works pertaining to zoning and land use. With respect to ordinances, the task force was particularly interested in those that have created past or ongoing issues with existing business owners and those that might be discouraging businesses seeking to locate in Raymond. We also discussed the Design Guidelines from the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Committee. **Raymond's current Comprehensive Plan expires in 2014.**

3) Economic Development models: The task force learned from GPCOG about standard economic development models, and the upsides and downsides of each. We obtained information on what models other area towns and cities use. *(See Attachment 2)*

4) Raymond businesses: The task force identified the existing businesses in Raymond, including the approximate size of each business and discussed ways to interview them. Raymond has 130 businesses, several dozen of which are home-based. According to GPCOG data, we have lost 400 jobs over the past 6 years, mostly in manufacturing. *(See Attachment 3)* Many of our existing manufacturing buildings are currently underutilized, unused or not being used to their highest and best use.

5) Survey: The task force reviewed and modified a draft questionnaire that was in the works by the Code Office in order to obtain "business climate" information from local businesses and developers. The survey was then conducted by Danielle Loring, who mailed 45 postcards and also posted the survey online. We received 31 responses from local business owners and developers. *(See Page 6 and Attachment 4)*

Methodology & Research continued

6) The *Best Practices for Promoting a Business-Friendly Climate* checklist: The task force reviewed this self-evaluation tool, which was developed by GPCOG from a Massachusetts model. Several dozen “should do” statements on the list are organized into four major categories: Economic Development Planning, Communications with Applicants, Technical Review, and Standardizing the Permitting Process. (*See Attachment 5*)

Findings

1) Actions Already in Progress: Early in our research and prior to formulating our recommendations, the task force became aware that certain business-related issues have already been raised and that various efforts are under way to address certain deficiencies that affect the business climate.

a) Parking standards in the Commercial District: As raised by survey respondents. (*See Page 6 and Attachment 4*) We brought this issue to the Planning Board immediately.

b) Website: The current web site does not have a single area a business can go to in order to easily find the steps, forms and regulations relating to a new or expanding business. The Technology Committee is already working on a design to improve the listing of businesses, and will include how-to information, links and forms.

c) Informational packet: The Town does not currently have an information packet available for a business seeking information on how to start or expand a business in Raymond. The Town Office is developing a handout of the process and requirements for this.

Findings continued

2) Survey

- 60% of respondents plan to expand their businesses;
- 87% of respondents plan to stay in business in Raymond;
- Quality of life ranked high, as did the performance of the Town Office staff;
- Ordinances and policies, such as permitting costs and parking restrictions, were cited as issues;
- Barriers to businesses locating in Raymond included lack of infrastructure, such as natural gas, sewer, and city water;
- Businesses leaving Raymond cited landlord issues and not enough parking;
- Businesses requested education on financial/capital information and opportunities, as well as on ordinances, regulations and Design Guidelines. *(See links on Page 9 and Attachment 6)*
- Businesses are seeking networking, marketing, and new business opportunities, as well as publicizing being open year round. “Branding” was mentioned.
- Businesses support the idea of a real estate open house, as well as the application by the Town for certification as a “business friendly” community. See details and the application at <http://www.maine.gov/decd/cbfc/> .

Recommendations from survey respondents:

- Conduct an open house to publicize available commercial real estate;
- Establish a single point of contact (SPOC) for economic development from an existing Town staff position;
- Create a disaster recovery plan for the Town to deal with economic and intangible losses encountered when a business closes, moves or downsizes.

Findings continued

3) Economic Development: Organizational Models

There are many approaches a municipality or region can take to economic development, including business associations, Chambers of Commerce, committees, and contracting with professional groups or agencies.

As stated earlier, the task force obtained detailed information from GPCOG on the four most commonly used models in this geographical area: municipal department, quasi-public economic development corporation, local or regional economic development corporation, and redevelopment authority. A chart is provided as *Attachment 2*, comparing these models as to reporting structure, responsibilities, funding sources, and pros and cons. Each category also shows a list of area towns using that particular model. GPCOG may also be able to obtain a current municipal- or county-based breakdown of economic development expenditures, should this be of interest, as this information is compiled periodically by MMA for its member towns.

Task Force Recommendations

We recommend the implementation of a blend of two of the Economic Development organizational models: Municipal Department and Quasi-public Economic Development Corporation, as not only being the closest fit for the Town of Raymond but also taking advantage of certain current circumstances and momentum, as follows:

- Create an Economic Development Advocate staff or position in the Town Office. The responsibilities would include guiding new or expanding businesses through the application and permitting processes and design requirements; connecting businesses to resources; and acting as liaison with the Business Advocacy Advisory Board. A key to this is having one person the business would work with throughout the full process; the advocate will help the application move through the chain.
- Appoint a Business Advocacy Advisory Board comprising a cross-section of those with a stake in Raymond: developers, officials, citizens, people who work in Raymond.
- Host or support networking opportunities for businesses.
- Provide access to, or information about, business-related educational workshops and seminars, such as for planning, funding and grants.
- Explore ways to make Raymond a more business-friendly community, while maintaining its high quality of life.
- Branding: Market Raymond as a business-friendly community.
- Review and update the expiring Comprehensive Plan, especially with regard to parking and land use in the Commercial District. Some grants and government support programs depend upon an active plan. Investigate potential TIF development.

Links and Attachments

Links:

This report and attachments:

<http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>

Town of Raymond Ordinances:

<http://www.raymondmaine.org/town-office/code-enforcement/town-ordinances-0>

Town of Raymond Comprehensive Plan:

http://www.raymondmaine.org/sites/default/files/webfm/town_office/documentation/complan.pdf

Comprehensive Plan – Design Guidelines:

<http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/cpic/design-guidelines>

Referenced Attachments:

- 1) Workflow of Approvals at the Town Office (Pg. 4)
- 2) Chart of four municipal “Economic Development” models (Pgs. 4, 7)
- 3) Manufacturing Jobs in Raymond (Page 4)
- 4) Task Force’s survey of businesses (Pgs. 4, 5, 6)
- 5) “Best Practices” checklist (Pg. 5)

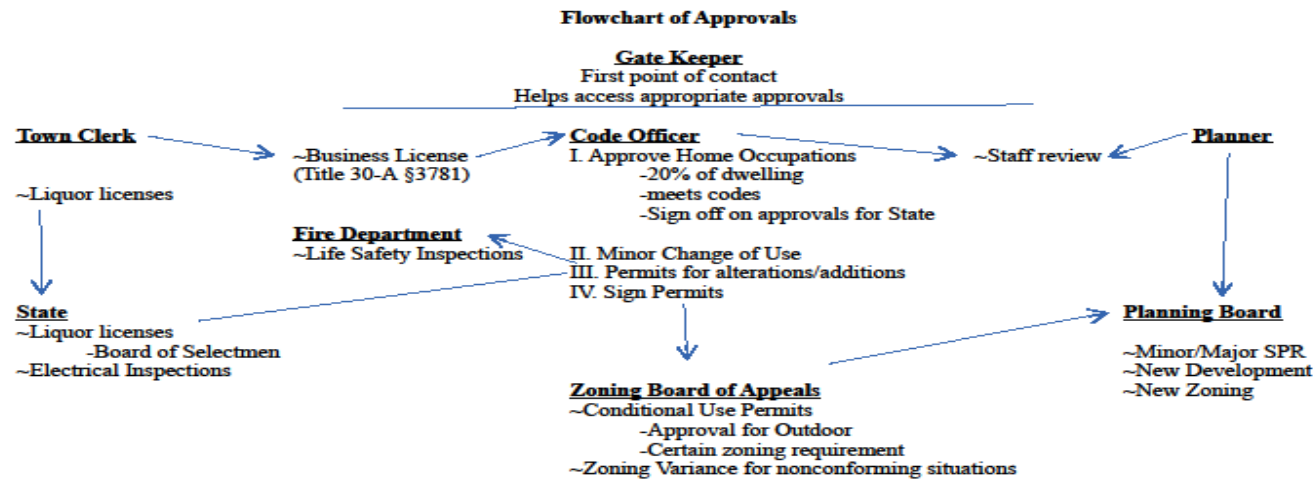
Additional Information:

- 6) Detail on Raymond’s Commercial District
- 7) Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategy Matrix as of 2010, with items referring to the Commercial District highlighted.

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Attachment 1: Flowchart of Approvals

Also here: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>



Economic Development Task Force Final Report

Attachment 2: Four Economic Development Models

Also here: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>

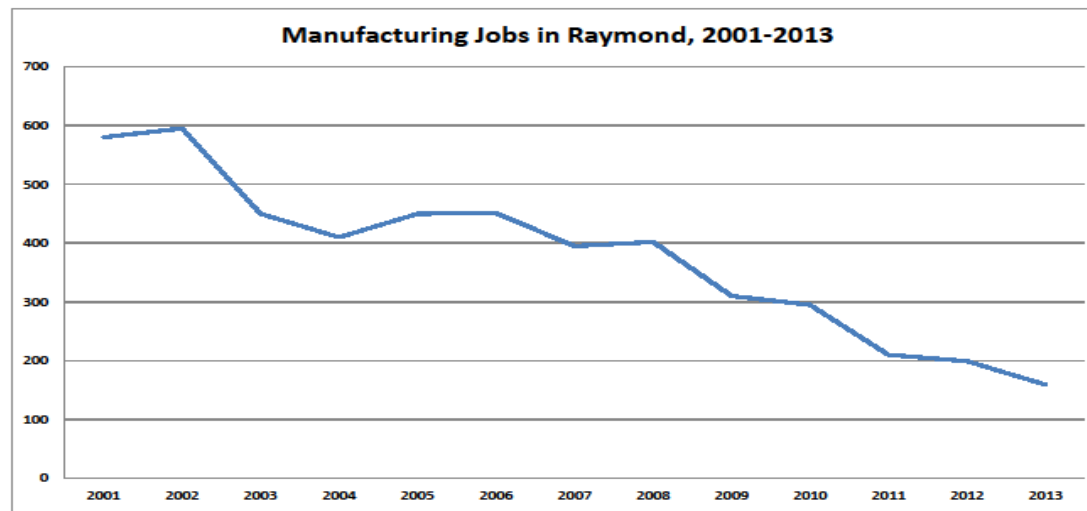
Organizational Models for Economic Development
prepared by the Greater Portland Council of Governments

	Municipal department	Economic Development Corporation (EDC)		Redevelopment Authority
		Quasi-public	Local or Regional	
Authority	30-A M.R.S. §5201	Public charter	By-laws	30-A M.R.S. §5101
Accountability	Town manager; Town Council or committee establishes priorities and policies	Board of Directors (with some municipal appointments) that reports to the municipality	Board of Directors	Board of trustees appointed by the municipality
Funding	Municipal, including CDBG, TIF, and general fund	Mostly municipal, typically from a TIF	Dues from municipalities, counties, businesses and institutions; State and Federal grants	Municipal; State and Federal grants; real estate
Staffing	Municipal employee, often combined with planning or assistant town manager	Municipality's economic development director acts as corporation's executive director	Executive Director	Executive Director
Examples	Portland South Portland Westbrook Bridgton Falmouth Cumberland Gray	Gorham EDC Windham EDC Scarborough EDC Freeport EDC	Greater Portland EDC Sunrise County Economic Council Greater Franklin Development Corp Piscataquis County EDC Somerset EDC Sanford Regional Economic Growth Council Lewiston-Auburn Growth Council	Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority Loring Development Authority Kennebec Regional Development Authority
Pros	Municipal agenda-setting Single point of contact for businesses	Arm's length from local politics Confidentiality of property transactions Diverse representation on board Dedicated source of funding	Removed from local politics Confidentiality of property transactions Diverse representation on board Diversity of funding sources	Independent power of eminent domain, taxation and bonding Public agency separate from municipality
Cons	Conflict between business regulation and business attraction Insulated from business community Staff Turnover Budget appropriations and property transactions subject to political scrutiny	Perceived lack of public accountability, value and purpose Staff turnover	Constant need to demonstrate value to dues-paying members Constant demand for fundraising	Perceived lack of public accountability Limited in scope and purpose

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Attachment 3: Manufacturing Jobs in Raymond

Also here: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>



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Attachment 4: Survey of Businesses

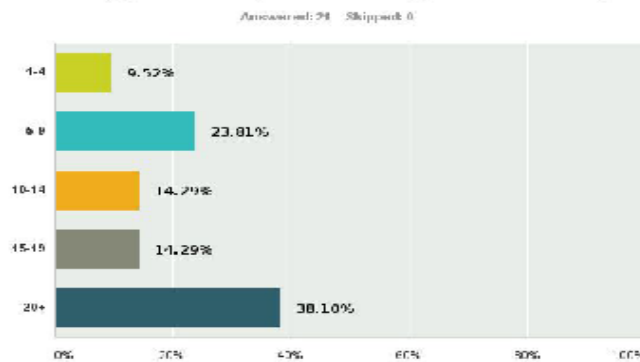
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Complete: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>

Economic Development Task Force Raymond Business Survey

The survey was emailed to thirty-one (31) business/property owners, developers, and commercial real estate brokers. Postcards were sent out to an addition fifteen (15) individuals for a total of approximately forty-five (45). There were twenty-one (21) responses. The demographics of the individuals are as such:

Q1 How many years have you been doing business in Raymond?



Respondents in business 20+ years in Raymond classified themselves as property owners (3), summer/children camps (2), retail (2), educational (2), service providers, medical civic/charitable and manufacturing. Those in business 10-19 years classified themselves as service providers (2, one being child care), and property owner. Those 10-14 years were classified as retail (2) and professional/ technical / business Services; 5-9 years identified themselves as retail (2), service provider (2), restaurant/bar and real estate. Those just starting their business to 4 years classified themselves as builders / developers (2) or as a service provider.

Q3: why did you decide to locate your business in Raymond? (17 answers, 4 skipped)

- Already established = 6
- Live in/ near Raymond = 5
- Right / reduced price = 3
- Family driven = 1
- Great town = 1
- No reason = 1

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Attachment 5: “Best Practices” Checklist

Also here: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>

Best Practices for Promoting a Business-Friendly Climate A Self-Evaluation

KEY:

+ **Has service formally in place**

* **Service provided informally**

/ **In the Works**

- **Does not have service**

Planning: The community has...

- (-) Adopted an economic development plan with vision, goals, strategies, and metrics
- (-) Adopted a comprehensive plan that identifies future commercial growth areas
- (-) Identified targeted industry clusters for business attraction, expansion, and investment
- (-) Pre-permitted sites for industrial and commercial development
- (+) Appointed a citizen committee to pursue economic development policies, programs and projects
- (-) Adopted policies for granting a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district
- (-) Developed a working relationships with K-12 schools, community college and university
- (+) Developed a partnership with neighboring towns to pursue regional economic opportunities
- (/) Developed a local and/or regional branding and marketing presence

Communications with Applicants:

- (*) The community has designated a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to consult with businesses
- (*) SPOC maintains listing sheets with available commercial properties for lease or sale
- (*) SPOC can direct businesses to resources, such as counseling, financing, and training
- (*) SPOC can describe available utilities, including water, sewer, 3-phase power, gas, broadband
- (*) SPOC can interpret technical guidance from department heads, boards, and consultants
- (*) Other municipal staff are cross-trained to assist the SPOC
- (/) There is written guidance on the permitting process
- (+ /) There is a checklist of submittable requirements for applications
- (/) There is a flow chart of the site plan approval process
- (+) Forms, permits, notices, and agendas are available on the community’s website

Technical Review: Municipal staff will...

- (+) Host a pre-application meeting to discuss preliminary concepts and designs
- (+) Convene a Project Technical Review Team to review applications
- (+) Obtain third party consulting assistance when necessary
- (+) Coordinate concurrent reviews by multiple boards
- (+) Schedule combined public hearings for multiple boards
- (+) Ensure volunteers receive adequate training and preparation to carry out their board duties

Standardizing the Permitting Process: The community has...

- (-) Adopted predictable impact fees
- (+) Outlined objective criteria to approve conditional zoning, special permits, waivers, etc.
- (+) Minimized the use of contract zones with by-right zoning
- (+) Adopted clear site plan approval standards
- (+) Delegated minor decisions to staff
- (+) Created a two-tier assessment process to review small v. large-scale projects of the same nature
- (/) Created an electronic filing process for applicants
- (+ /) Developed an electronic system to track the status of permits and applications

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Attachment 6: Detail on Raymond’s Business Practices and Policies Page 1 of 35

Complete: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>

Town of Raymond: Commercial District

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DESIGN GUIDELINES:

<http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/cpic/design-guidelines>

TOWN ORDINANCES:

<http://www.raymondmaine.org/town-office/code-enforcement/town-ordinances-0>

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Attachment 7: Comprehensive Plan Implementation Strategy Matrix

Page 1 of 4

(Note: Green/blue highlighting indicates items that directly affect the Commercial District.)

Complete: <http://www.raymondmaine.org/boards-committees/economic-development-task-force/report>

POLICIES/STRATEGIES ACTION MATRIX

	Strategy	Priority	Action Taken
1	c. Undertake a revaluation to ensure fair share taxation	High	Completed
2	b. Adopt access management standards for Routes 302, 85 and 121	High	Completed
3	c. Require shared driveways and parking lots for commercial uses	High	Completed
4	a. Maintain buffer strip requirements around water bodies	High	Completed
5	c. Maintain erosion and phosphorus standards around water bodies	High	Completed
6	d. Prepare a 10-year road improvement program	High	Done
7	a. Implement a growth cap in the Town's rural areas	High	Done
8	b. Reduce VR-1 lot size requirement to 1 acre and 100 feet of frontage	High	Done
9	c. Maintain the existing boundaries of the Commercial District	High	Done
10	d. Eliminate the VRII District; allocate land to Rural Residential, VRI	High	Done
11	e. Change LRR1 from 2 to 3 acres except for open space subdivisions	High	Done
12	f. Change RR from 2 to 3 acres except for open space subdivisions	High	Done
13	g. Change Rural from 3 to 5 acres except for open space subdivisions	High	Done
14	b. Allow denser development in the Commercial District	High	Done
15	a. Create an open space plan for prioritization of open space purchases	High	Done
16	a. Allow accessory apartments	High	Done
17	f. Allow mobile home parks in new VRI (currently zoned VRII)	High	Done
18	e. Develop additional standards for Route 302 commercial development	High	Done
19	a. Maintain Resource Protection District around 2-acre wetlands	High	Done
20	b. Continue Resource Protection District for waterfowl, deer habitats	High	Done
21	a. Encourage low impact businesses in the Commercial District	High	Done
22	c. Use TIF revenues to facilitate growth in Commercial, Ind. Districts	High	Done
23	b. Continue to allow light industry in the Industrial District	High	Done
24	c. Maintain road standards	High	Done
25	a. Maintain local standards for curb cuts and driveway openings	High	Done
26	a. Work with the County to establish a regional dispatch center	High	Done
27	a. Continue curb side pickup of recyclable materials	High	Done
28	a. Use Budget/Finance Committee for advice on Town needs	High	Done
29	h. Allow sale of one lot in any district at 2003 requirements	High	Done
30	a. Concentrate commercial development in Commercial District	High	Done
31	c. Exclude commercial development elsewhere along Route 302	High	Done
32	a. Evaluate the need for additional code enforcement assistance	High	Done
33	a. Integrate the Town's digital maps into development reviews	High	Ongoing
34	c. Increase police coverage	High	Ongoing
35	a. Evaluate sharing of resources between departments and the school	High	Ongoing
36	e. Inform property owners of importance of protecting water quality	High	Ongoing
37	f. Encourage citizen based water quality monitoring efforts	High	Ongoing
38	i. Continue to inspect motorboats for invasive aquatic plants	High	Ongoing
39	j. Continue efforts to control/eliminate aquatic plants in all Town lakes	High	Ongoing
40	a. Maintain requirement for hydrogeologic assessment	High	Ongoing
41	a. Encourage CC to continue work on regional watershed projects	High	Ongoing
42	b. Work with surrounding towns on water quality protection	High	Ongoing
43	b. Continue to provide money for the open space fund	High	Ongoing
44	c. Target land purchases to protect large tracts of connected open space	High	Ongoing
45	b. Work at the regional and state level on tax reduction	High	Ongoing
46	b. Maintain capital improvement program for facilities and equipment	High	Ongoing
47	e. Accept private roads in growth areas when built to town standards	High	Ongoing

1/2/11/2010