

11. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There are many challenges facing the Town of Raymond, not the least of which is the town's continuing high rate of growth. Raymond continues to be one of the fastest growing towns in Cumberland County.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

There are at least 25 significant historical properties and archaeological sites in Raymond, the importance of which are unrecognized by many local residents. Unfortunately, the importance and location of these sites are unknown by many Raymond residents. One negative consequence of this situation might be the accidental demolition or irreversible alteration of one of the Town's historic and archaeological resources. Unfortunately, little is being done to provide for recognition of and appreciation for Raymond's historic properties. Moreover, there is nothing in place to prevent archaeological sites from being destroyed as land is developed, or to educate the public about the importance and need of protecting these sites.

Natural Resources

Raymond has an abundance of fresh water lakes which draw a large population of summer residents to the community (the Town's estimated population in July and August is 12,000). These lakes include all or a portion of Sebago Lake, Raymond Pond, Crescent Lake, Panther Pond, Thomas Pond, Nubble Pond, and Notched Pond.

Raymond has taken a number of measures to protect its water bodies and other natural resources. Phosphorus controls have been implemented through the subdivision, site plan review, and shoreland zoning ordinances. These same ordinances all require written erosion and sedimentation plans as a condition of approval for new developments. The Town has improved its septic system regulations, it has included wetlands of two or more acres in the Resource Protection District, and it has added protection of fish and waterfowl habitats and deer wintering areas to the subdivision and land use ordinances. Raymond has also preserved significant parcels of open space including the Morgan Meadow area (which is over 1,000 acres in size) and a town beach area. The Town has recently amended its subdivision ordinance to include an open space subdivision provision.

These are just a few of the many steps the Town has taken to protect its surface water resources. However, given the intense development pressures facing Raymond over the next 10 years, these efforts may not be enough to protect Sebago Lake and the Town's other water bodies. Current and future threats to water quality include:

- Septic systems - Many septic systems bordering these lakes are very old and may not comply with current wastewater disposal requirements. Yet many are being used more intensely than in the past, particularly when seasonal dwellings are converted to year-round use.
- Non-point phosphorus pollution – Many areas of town are within the watershed area of Sebago Lake, but are not subject to the erosion and phosphorus control standards that apply to the immediate shoreland zone.
- Public education – The public may not fully understand the importance of actions they can take on a household level to protect water quality.

- Boat wastewater – Wastewater discharges from large boats are a continuing concern, but there currently are no facilities for disposing of this waste.
- Aquifers – The Town does not have specific standards aimed at protecting its sand and gravel aquifers.
- Open space programs – There is no organized effort aimed at working with large landowners who might be willing to participate in various programs aimed at keeping their land as open space. As more of these parcels are developed, there is the potential for increased runoff and possible pollution of the Town’s surface water resources.

The Town doesn’t have any tools for preserving important wildlife habitat areas.

There are a number of scenic areas in the community, but there has been no effort aimed at identifying and preserving them. In time, growth pressures may destroy some of the scenic values that contribute to Raymond’s rural character.

Raymond does not have an open space plan that would guide future open space preservation efforts. It is important that any expenditure of public funds be made strategically so as to maximize the benefits of such preservation efforts.

Despite significant progress in protecting natural resources, Raymond has fallen short in directing growth to designated growth areas, while minimizing growth in its rural areas. Most of the growth in recent years has taken place in the Town’s rural areas, most of it in the form of lot-by-lot development which is not subject to the same controls as larger developments. This pattern of scattered development negatively impacts many of the Town’s natural resources.

Population

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town’s population grew from 3,311 to 4,299, an increase of 988 people or 30%. Since 1960, when Raymond had 732 year-round residents, the population has grown by 487%. The Town is projected to grow from 4,299 people in 2000 to 5,335 people, an increase of 1,036 people or 24%. Approximately 82% of the growth is expected to occur in combined “45-64” and “65+” age categories. This is bound to have an effect on household size (2.66 in 2000). Assuming that Raymond’s household size approaches the 2000 County figure of 2.38, the additional 1,036 people will result in a demand for 435 additional housing units.

Since most of the Town’s projected population growth will be in the “45-64” and “65+” categories, affordable housing will be less of a problem than would be the case if most of the growth were projected to be in the “18-44” category. It is reasonable to assume that people in the two older categories will have had more opportunity to accumulate equity and buying power than younger people, and thus will be better able to afford housing in Raymond. It is also likely that some of the Town’s projected growth will include people who currently own seasonal property in Raymond, and will retire to these homes and convert them to year-round use.

Based on the 2000 Census, the median household income in Raymond (\$52,224) is significantly higher than in Cumberland County (\$44,049) and the State (\$37,240). The percentage of the Town’s population living below the poverty level (3.4%) is lower than in Cumberland County (8.3%) and the State (7.8%). Raymond residents thus are better able to afford a home than residents living outside the community.

Housing

Between 1990 and 2000, Raymond experienced an increase of 484 housing units, resulting in a growth rate of 24% (compared to 12% for Cumberland County and 11% for Maine). Most of the recent residential growth has been in the form of single-family dwellings. Single-family dwellings account for 93% of the housing stock, although the York Cumberland Housing Coalition Authority has constructed a 23-unit elderly housing project adjacent to Route 85 near Route 302. Based on 2000 Census data, the median value of a home in Raymond (\$126,900) was somewhat lower than it was in Cumberland County (\$131,200), but substantially higher than in the State as a whole (\$98,700). The 2000 Census also indicates that 20% of homeowners and 33% of renters are spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.

Some highlights of Raymond's housing growth over the past 10 years includes the following:

- **Rural area growth.** Raymond has undergone significant housing development during the past 10 years. Based on a review of that development, most of the development in the last five years has occurred within the rural areas. Recent seasonal conversions on lakeshores in the rural areas have exacerbated this trend. Approximately 75% of residential development has taken place on individual lots not created as part of a subdivision. The recommendation in the 1991 Plan to reduce lot sizes and road frontages in the growth zones has not been fully implemented.
- **Growth patterns.** Raymond remains rural. However, development has spread along Town roads, in old farm fields and wood lots and especially on lake frontages and gravel camp roads. There has been a gradual but pervasive fragmentation of large land tracts. The Town's subdivision ordinance encourages cluster development, but does not require it. There are no incentives to cluster. There have been relatively few subdivisions constructed in the last 10 years.
- **1991 Plan deficiency.** A major deficiency of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan (and subsequent ordinances) is its failure to direct growth into growth areas and away from rural areas. There is still significant open space in the community, but most of it is in the hands of private citizens. There is a real threat of losing open space as market pressures grow for developable lots and as increasing taxes force landowners to seek income from their land.
- **Housing types.** Most of the residential construction in Raymond has been in the form of single-family dwellings. Mobile home parks are permitted in the Village Residential II zone, but no parks have been built there or anywhere else in Town. Other than the senior housing project, there have been few multi-family dwellings constructed in the Village Residential I District where they are permitted.

The Town does not have an effective strategy for ensuring that at least 10% of all new housing units are affordable for people at 80% and above the median county household income, or that at least 10% of all new rentals are affordable for the same income group.

Economy

The Town of Raymond is not a major employment center (only 15% of residents work in the community), but is primarily a residential community with a number of small businesses. In 2001, Raymond had one of the lowest unemployment rates (2.8%) in the region. Approximately 42.5% of the

Town's labor force was employed in management, professional and related occupations (compared to 31.5% at the State level). A little over half (54%) of the labor force works in either Portland, Windham, Westbrook or South Portland. This means that over 1,000 people are commuting south every day, most likely on Route 302. As the population grows, it is likely that traffic volumes and congestion on Route 302 will increase because a growing number of Raymond commuters will join additional commuters from nearby, growing communities, all using Route 302. The Town has not been able to expand its employment base very much (more local jobs would mean less commuting). Nor has the Town taken strong steps to ensure that commercial growth along Route 302 does not interfere with the traffic carrying capacity of the arterial.

Transportation

Route 302 from the Raymond/Windham town line to the Raymond/Casco town line (3.81 miles) is classified by the Maine Department of Transportation as an arterial. Most of the Town's businesses are located along Route 302. Significant congestion occurs during most of the year, but especially during the summer months. The Town has restricted commercial zoning to approximately one-half the length of Route 302 in the community.

In 2003, the Town undertook a number of improvements to this corridor in conjunction with a State overlay of Route 302. The improvements were undertaken in accordance with a plan for improving safety, signage, aesthetics, and pedestrian amenities. The Town worked with the State and with businesses to implement the plan.

The major transportation challenge facing Raymond is increased congestion on Route 302 (see discussion above). Raymond cannot address this problem in a vacuum. Long-term solutions will require working cooperatively with the State and with other communities along the Route 302 corridor. The Town does not have sufficient local access management standards to regulate roadside development on Routes 302, 85 and 121.

In addition to the problems of Route 302, the Town has fallen behind in the maintenance of Town roads. The Town does not have a road improvement plan, and there is no policy for accepting private roads as public roads. Raymond's policy of accepting private roads in rural areas may have contributed to sprawl over the years.

Public Facilities and Services

Volunteers contribute significantly to the manner in which Raymond is governed by serving on various boards and committees, participating in the provision of recreation and library services, and manning crucial services such as fire and rescue. There have been a number of improvements in town facilities in recent years including a new school, a new public safety building, acquisition and development of a town beach, establishment of the Sheri Gagnon Park, acquisition of Morgan Meadow, and expansion of the range and number of recreation programs being offered to Raymond residents. In 2001, the Town voted to join the Portland Water District, and to extend a water main from the Windham Town line to the EmbedTech facility. In 2002, residents voted to extend the line even farther to the new public safety building. Challenges facing the community include creating a regional dispatching capability, and expanding town facilities and services including the town office, public works building and a community building. Other challenges include hazardous waste disposal, continuing to encourage communication among the town's board and committees and its residents, encouraging

responsible powerboat use, encouraging private efforts to establish a greenbelt, and developing a park or parks for community activities.

Municipal Finances

Raymond's full value per capita valuation (\$86,334) is higher than that of surrounding communities, and is also higher than that for Cumberland County (\$65,009) and the State of Maine (\$56,711). Based on a recent study prepared by the Maine Municipal Association, the tax burden in Raymond is lower than in nearby communities, in large part because the median household income (\$52,158) is higher than that of nearby communities.

The Town has created a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District along the Portland Natural Gas Transmission System. Proceeds from the TIF District will be used to facilitate economic and community development in the Town's business district. Raymond also has a long-range Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) that includes reserve funds for anticipated capital expenditures during the next five years. However, there is a need to estimate major capital needs for the five-year period beyond the current CIP.

Challenges facing Raymond are the fact that the Town and the School do not always work cooperatively on the sharing of capital resources. The capital needs of the School Department are not fully included in the CIP. The Town does not have a system of impact fees to help offset the costs to Town services, nor does it have reserve funds for the expansion of Town facilities or the purchase of land for natural resources protection.

Land Use

Overall, it is apparent that sprawling, low-to-medium density residential development in waterfront and rural areas is the predominant land use trend in nearly all parts of Raymond. It is also apparent that the 1991 Comprehensive Plan's goal of directing a majority of the then-projected growth (perhaps as much as 70%) into designated growth areas was not met, and that just the opposite trend actually occurred.

Raymond is among Cumberland County's three fastest growing communities in recent years. The Town's population has almost doubled in just the past twenty years. Because land is still relatively inexpensive compared to Portland, Raymond has become a popular community for new housing starts and the conversion of seasonal dwelling units to year-round dwelling units. Some of the negative impacts of all this growth are:

- Loss of open space
- Fragmentation of large parcels of land
- Threats to the community's natural resources including water quality and ground water
- Congestion, particularly on Route 302
- Increased pressures on the town's facilities and services including schools and recreation
- Increased costs of providing public services
- A growing mil rate
- Reduction of the quality of life for existing residents

