

9. LAND USE

The Town of Raymond's current land use consists primarily of residential dwellings and undeveloped forested land. While it was once a relatively self-contained rural community with a strong seasonal population presence, Raymond has increasingly felt the influence of growth moving outward from Greater Portland.

Inventory and Distribution of Existing Land Uses

Raymond's total land area equals 26,602 acres. The map "Buildings in Raymond, Maine: 1892-2001" on page 9-6 2001, 4th panel, shows the approximate location of structures in Raymond as of 2001. Table 1 on the next page gives the number of parcels, number of acres, and percent of the total acreage of Raymond in each type of land use, according to the Raymond Assessor's database. (Note that because this database cannot assign more than one use to any given parcel, the acreages and percentages given will count an entire large parcel with a single family house on it as single family residential, when in fact actual residential use may occupy only 1 acre out of 25 acres, for instance, 24 acres of which is in forest.)

Referring to figures shown in Table 1, the largest land use category in Raymond is "vacant/forested", which comprises 35.6% of total acreage. Of the other land use categories, year-round residences (single family including mobile homes, plus 2 family and multifamily) represent the largest land use category, consisting of 26.9% of Raymond's total land area. Road rights-of-way and possibly other land not listed in the Assessor's database make up 9.0% of the Town. Seasonal residential units are the next largest land use with 4.2% of the total acreage, tied in size with land owned by the State of Maine (outside of highway rights-of-way) which owns another 4.2% of Raymond, almost entirely accounted for by Morgan Meadow, but including Tasseltop, the rest area at Route 85 and 302, and the boat landing at the public beach. Summer camps own 3.1% of Raymond. Land that is unbuildable because of lot dimensions, natural resource constraints, or dedication as common land or open space amounts to 1.8%. And land in commercial use is only 1.4% of the total acreage. All other categories of land use in Raymond—municipal, agriculture, home business, utility, industrial, gravel pit, cemetery, religious, and day care only--each occupy less than 1% and together total only 3.5% of the total land area.

In the "vacant/forested" category, which totals approximately 9,472 acres, about 1,047 acres or 11%, is enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program. When land is voluntarily enrolled in this State program, it is managed for timber production according a plan prepared by a licensed professional forester, and the owner has agreed to keep managing it for timber production indefinitely. In exchange, the State provides that the land will be taxed based on its current use value, which is only a small fraction of the potential use value. The owner can decide to withdraw from the program, but is subject to tax penalties if he or she does. Although it is a disincentive to development for some landowners around the state, some calculate it to be worth regaining the ability to develop the land. So at best it can be said of land in Tree Growth it is less likely to be developed in the near future than forested land that is taxed at full market value.

**Table 1
Raymond Land Use Distribution, 2002**

Land Use Categories	No. of Parcels	Acres*	% of Total Acres
Vacant/Forest	757	9,472	35.6
Single Family/Mobile Home	1,646	6,901	25.9
Lakes and Ponds	NA	2,620	9.8
Public Road Rights-of-Way**	NA	2,382	9.0
Seasonal Residential	661	1,118	4.2
State	4	1,117	4.2
Summer Camps	16	818	3.1
Recreation, Common Land, Unbuildable	570	480	1.8
Commercial	61	380	1.4
Municipal	23	236	0.9
Agricultural	12	233	0.9
Two Family Residential	34	230	0.9
Home Business	56	226	0.8
Utility	8	132	0.5
Industrial	7	122	0.5
Gravel Pit	1	60	0.2
Multifamily Residential	8	37	0.1
Cemetery	7	21	0.1
Religious	9	15	0.1
Day Care Only	2	2	0.0
Total	3,871	26,602	100

* Not adjusted to compensate for large lots with single structures

** May include other land not listed in Assessor's 2002 database

In general, the highest residential densities are found on the shores of Raymond's lakes and in Raymond village, now by-passed and separated from Sebago Lake by Route 302. Although many of these properties are occupied year round, these higher density areas are where the greatest number of seasonal residences are concentrated. Lower density, more predominantly year round residential uses are spread over much of the existing network of Town roads inland of the lakes and on some newer roads ending in cul-de-sacs. Single-family residential uses include traditional housing and mobile homes on individual lots. There are no mobile home parks in Raymond. Almost all of the year round housing is single-family (1,646 dwelling units). Year-round two-family houses occupy only 34 parcels and year-round multifamily structures occupy only 8 parcels.

Among residential uses, some 56 parcels are occupied by homes with home businesses. These businesses are auxiliary in nature to the principal residential use of the property. About 61 parcels are classified as commercial. Most of these are located along Route 302 to the east of the intersection of Routes 121 and 302. These uses include gas stations, convenience stores and automotive repair shops, restaurants, motels, a supermarket, a dry cleaner, a marina, boat rentals, an animal hospital, a gun shop and a bank among other retail and service uses.

Industrial uses are few, but significant. The largest is Dielectric, a fabricator and designer of radio antennas used in telecommunications, which serves a global market and employs hundreds from

Raymond and surrounding communities. Dielectric is located off Route 121. Another Raymond industry is Sabre Yachts, located on Route 302 west of Sebago Lake.

Municipal uses include the Town Hall, the schools, the new public safety building, the fire station and public works garage, the library, an island off Raymond Beach, the salt shed, Memorial Park and small parcels of vacant land. Utility uses include power lines, telephone company facilities, and the Portland Pipeline, which carries oil from Portland Harbor to Montreal, and runs parallel to and west of Route 121. The new Portland Water District public water main newly installed in the eastern portion of the Route 302 right-of-way.

Recent Land Use Trends, 1991-2001

The largest and most visible change in land use in Raymond since the 1991 Comprehensive Plan was adopted has been the conversion of undeveloped land to residential use. For a six-year period, beginning approximately when the Town had finished adopting ordinance changes pursuant to the 1991 plan, new residential building permits have been mapped to show where residential growth has been taking place within the Town.

The Town of Raymond issued a total of between 252 and 269 building permits for new residential construction during the period 1995 through 2001. Of the total the largest portion, about half (50-54%) were issued within the Limited Residential Recreational I (LRR-I) district and the Limited Residential Recreational II (LRR-II) district, which make up much of the shoreland zone in Raymond. About a third (31-35%) of the total new residential building permits were issued in the Rural and Rural Residential districts. Only about 15% of permits issued for new residential construction were issued in the Village Residential I (VR-I), Village Residential II (VR-II) and Commercial zoning districts, the principal designated Growth areas of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

Clearly, both the waterfront and the large minimum lot size of inland rural districts, by themselves and together, have been more powerfully attractive to people building or buying new housing in Raymond. Permits in the LRR-II south of Route 302, on or close to Sebago Lake, totaled about 65 and in the LRR-I and LRR-II north of Route 302 they totaled about 71. There were no permits issued on Nubble Pond, but at least 3 were issued on Notched Pond, on least 4 at Thomas Pond, at least 15 on Panther Pond, at least 17 on Raymond Pond, and at least 24 on Crescent Lake.

By contrast to the rapid and ubiquitous residential growth, the growth and distribution of commercial and industrial uses in Raymond has changed very little over the last twelve years. Perhaps the largest change has been the addition of EmbedTech which was made possible by the extension of a public water main north along Rte 302 from Windham into the heart of Raymond's Commercial district.

New municipal uses include the new school, directly across Route 85 from the Jordan Elementary School, and the new Public Safety building on Route 302. The new school is well positioned with respect to the elementary school in that it will add to an existing draw for new residential development rather than creating a new one. But it will still amount to one more reason to move to what is now a rural area in the Town.

Overall, it is apparent that sprawling low to medium density residential development in waterfront and rural areas is the current 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 then projected growth, perhaps as

much as 70%, into designated growth areas was not met and that just the opposite trend actually occurred.

This trend of more development occurring in rural areas than in growth areas has been the dominant trend in nearly all rapidly growing communities in Southern Maine. The term used, in Maine and other states, to characterize this pattern of development is “sprawl”.

Long Term Land Use Trends: Past and Future

Town Planner Bob Faunce has prepared a series of maps that serve to present the big, long-term picture of changing settlement patterns and land use trends from the 1890s to the present and projected to the year 2026. Four of these have been reduced to a single map on page 9-6:

1892: The first panel on page 9-6 shows that there were 242 buildings in all of Raymond. It clearly shows a concentration at Raymond Village and another near where the present Town Office is located. There are no buildings on the lakes, just farms and houses along the main roads.

1941: The second panel shows that the number of buildings has nearly tripled to 673 and in addition there are now 6 organized summer camps. Development has begun to appear on the shores of nearly all the lakes in Raymond.

1975: The third panel shows that the number of buildings has more than doubled to 1,607. And in addition 3 more summer camps have been established. As before much though not all of the new development has taken place on lakes.

2001: The fourth panel shows that there are now about 2,560 buildings in Raymond, not including summer camps and most commercial businesses. The number of summer camp locations has increased from 9 to 10.

2026 Buildings: A final map on page 9-7 shows the projected 953 new buildings placed on the map along with the existing buildings in 2001, assuming a continuation of the existing pattern of development.

Future Land Use Policy Issues

It is clear from both reviewing both the recent history of development in Raymond and the long-term view, embodied in the maps just discussed, that the 1991 Comprehensive Plan’s goal of directing a majority of growth to designated growth areas and away from rural areas was not realized and will not be realized using current land use regulations. Improved incentives and/or regulations of some kind will be needed if this goal is to be achieved in the future.

Moreover, goals related to water quality, natural resources, wildlife habitat, community character, rural character, open space protection, safer roads, cost effective delivery of municipal services, and low tax rates all depend to a large extent on how well this central goal of directing most growth to growth areas and away from rural areas is achieved.

While only time will tell if the projected growth shown on page 9-7 will materialize in precisely the way shown, it is reasonable to presume that the general pattern, in the absence of better land use controls, will continue and a pattern approaching that shown on page 9-7 will come to pass. In some

ways, the map on page 9-7 is conservative in that it shows development massing relatively close to existing roads. In fact, as demonstrated in other rapidly growing Maine towns, new roads often accompany new housing development and as the existing road and shore frontage fills up, the pressure to make inroads into the back lands will increase. This means that if the same, or perhaps even a lesser number of projected housing development takes place in Raymond in the next 25 years, the division of large undeveloped areas into neighborhoods and dead-end roads will likely accelerate, and the quality of wildlife habitat, the number of wildlife species and the rural qualities of Raymond's rural character will all diminish at an accelerating pace.

A faster rate of back land development will lead to a faster rate of road construction in relation to the number of new dwelling units constructed. Increasing total road mileage, whether public or private, will lead to higher total service costs for delivering several important municipal or association services. These include school bussing, snow plowing, general road and ditch maintenance, sheriff's patrols, and possibly others.

The cumulative length of new roads will strongly influence these additional service costs and the per capita share that taxpayers and road or homeowners associations pay to achieve them. It follows that these additional service costs can be strongly influenced by the minimum road frontage requirement, as well as overall density, and how frequently and intensively cluster subdivision provisions are used.

At the same time it must be recognized that traffic on existing local roads will increase with the population, and the safety and capacity of these roads will diminish. Increased traffic on existing roads will come from new development on these roads themselves and from new subdivision roads that feed into them. If the new roads added can be designed as new or potential connecting roads, rather than a series of cul-de-sacs, the new roads may create alternate routes for local or even regional travel that may help take additional traffic off of existing roads and provide travelers within Raymond a better choice of routes. Such networks, however, would need to be close to existing roads and small in scale, or they might risk accelerating the breakup of remaining large blocks of unfragmented wildlife habitat by development.

The new water line in Route 302 allows for the possibility of a higher density of development and/or types of development nearby. On the other hand it is also located on a sand and gravel aquifer that supplies some unknown portion of existing homes and businesses located on the aquifer (some wells may draw on bedrock below). Higher density would need to protect recharge rates and protect against excessive nitrate loading for existing uses.

Insert 4-panel fold-out map

Insert 2026 Buildings map