



Raymond Comprehensive Plan Summer Survey

Results and Analysis

October 2023



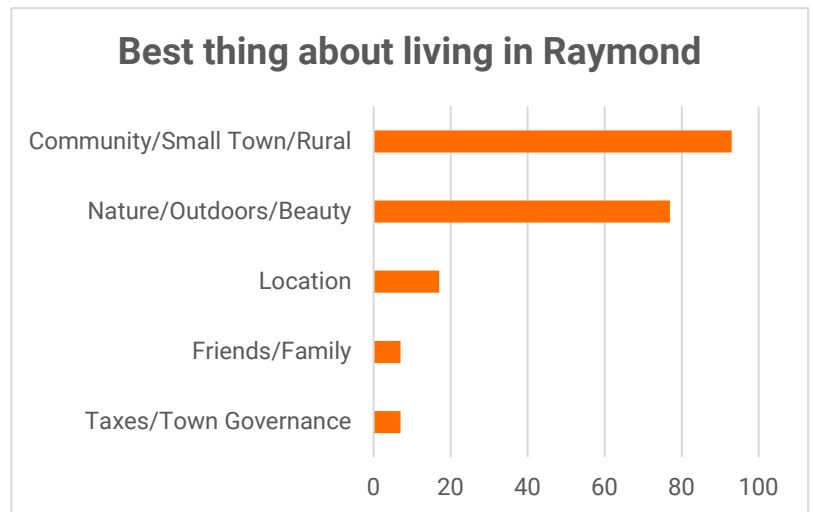
Overview

The Raymond Summer Survey was administered by the project team from June 8 to September 20, 2023 and received 206 responses. The survey consisted of 16 questions that asked high-level visioning and values questions to inform the drafting of a vision statement for the comprehensive plan. Questions consisted of open-ended prompts as well as rating questions where respondents shared their perceptions of the quality of life and public services in Raymond. The open-ended questions were analyzed by identifying themes and calculating the number of mentions of each. Responses that did not fit into the categories were designated “other”.

Open-Ended Questions

1. What’s the best thing about living in Raymond?

People like living in Raymond, and in particular appreciate the small town and rural community it provides to its residents. Respondents also note the natural beauty of Raymond and easy access to outdoor activities. Raymond’s location – both its proximity to natural resources as well as amenities in Windham and Portland – is also an important benefit to living in Raymond.



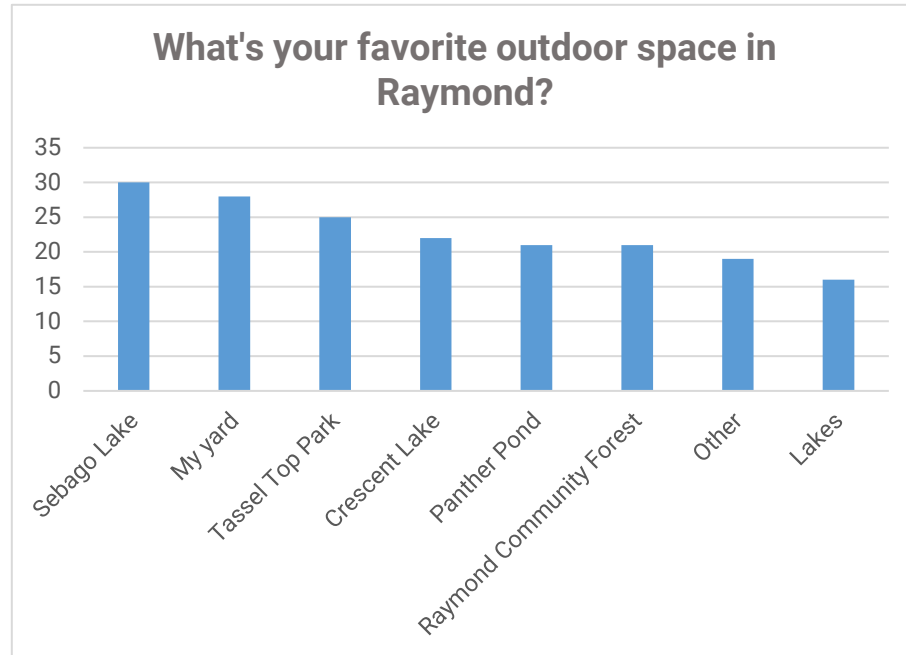
Analysis shows that the length of residency in Raymond did not impact responses to this question, suggesting that both new and established residents enjoy the same attributes.

Not one of the 206 respondents mentioned economic opportunity as the best thing about living in Raymond; this reinforces that the residents of Raymond enjoy a high quality of life that features a rural town with access to nature and outdoor pursuits and are likely not living in Raymond for work-related reasons.

2. What’s your favorite outdoor space in Raymond?

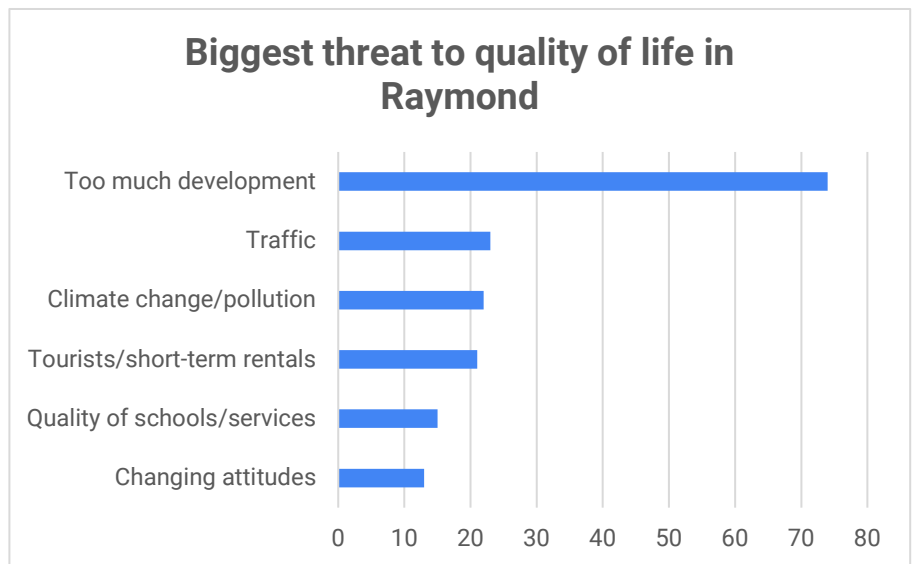
Raymond’s lakes were the most common favorite outdoor space in Raymond: Sebago Lake, Crescent Lake, Panther Pond, and lakes in general were all among the most popular answers. The second most common reply was the respondent’s own yard or backyard. Raymond’s conserved lands were also popular, with Tassel Top Park and Raymond Community Forest

ranking highest; Rattlesnake Mountain, Pismire Mountain, Raymond Beach, Thomas Pond, and Morgan Meadows all received multiple mentions. The “Other” category included recreational playing fields, neighborhoods, and other specific lakes/ponds and trails; Raymond’s lakes generally were also a popular response.



3. What is the biggest threat to quality of life in Raymond?

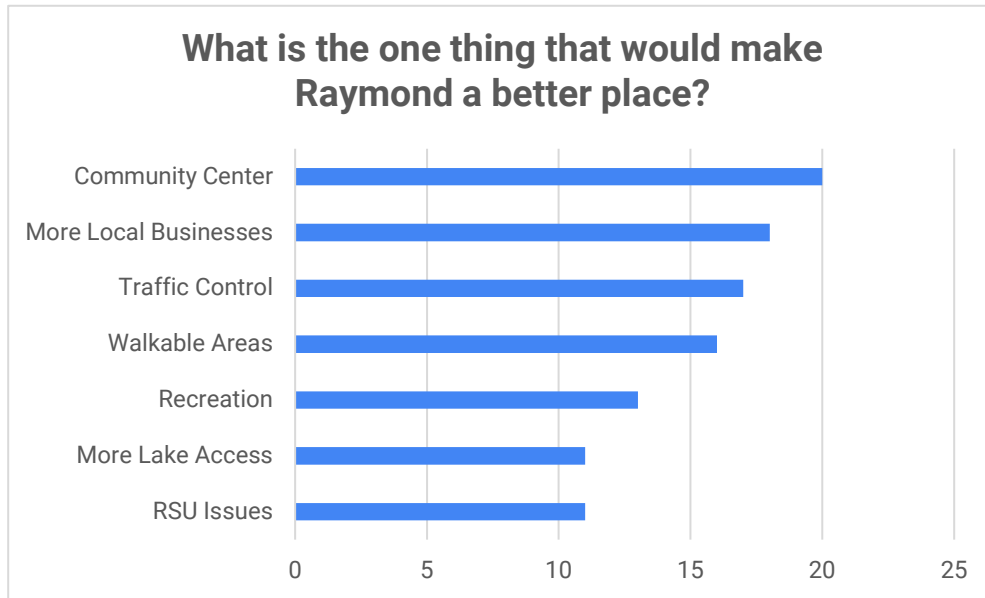
Respondents are most concerned about too much growth and development, followed by worsening traffic in town (particularly congestion on Route 302.) Other top concerns are pollution and overuse of recreation areas, as well as the conversion of homes into short-term rentals that bring in more tourists and change the dynamics of neighborhoods. Others were concerned about the quality of schools, town governance, and public services, and changing attitudes from the influence of new residents.



Additionally, roughly 6% of respondents report that affordability is the biggest threat in Raymond, which is noteworthy during a time of rising home and energy prices throughout the region and Maine. Another 6% said lack of diversity or racism is the biggest threat, another concern that connects to larger regional and national issues.

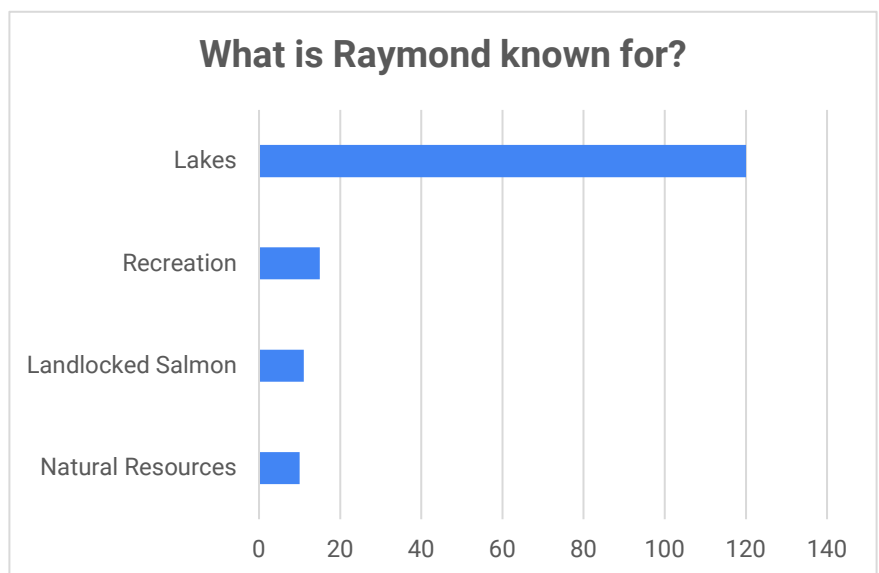
4. What is the one thing that would make Raymond a better place?

Survey responses to this question were varied. 20 respondents noted that a community center would benefit the town, the most frequent answer. Other top answers were having more local businesses or a more active Main Street, better traffic control, more sidewalks and safe places to walk around town, and more recreation opportunities and public lake access. The closure of the middle school and the RSU14 district continues to be a concern, and improving education was among the top issues.



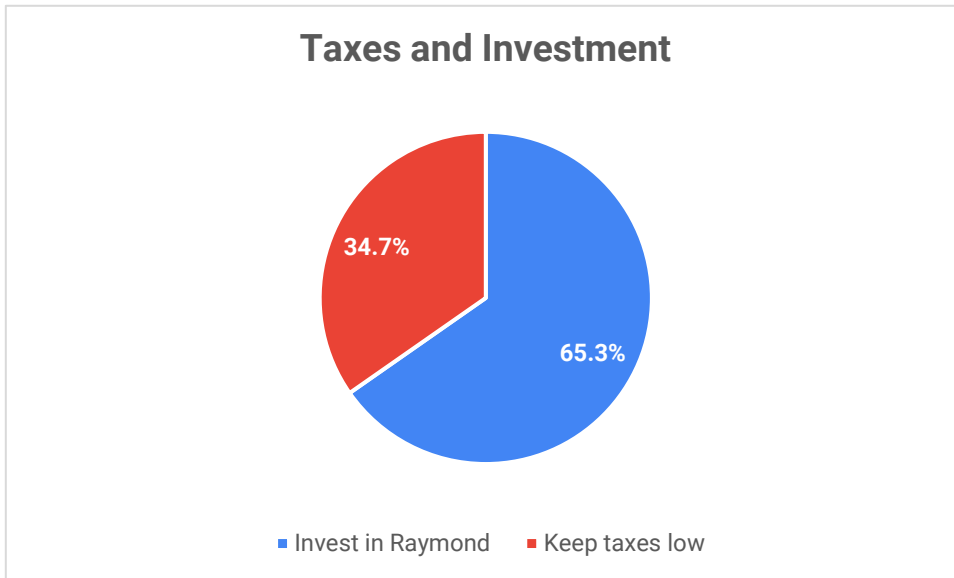
5. What is Raymond known for?

The overwhelming answer to what Raymond is known for is the lakes, with 120 responses. Other top responses were related to natural resources.



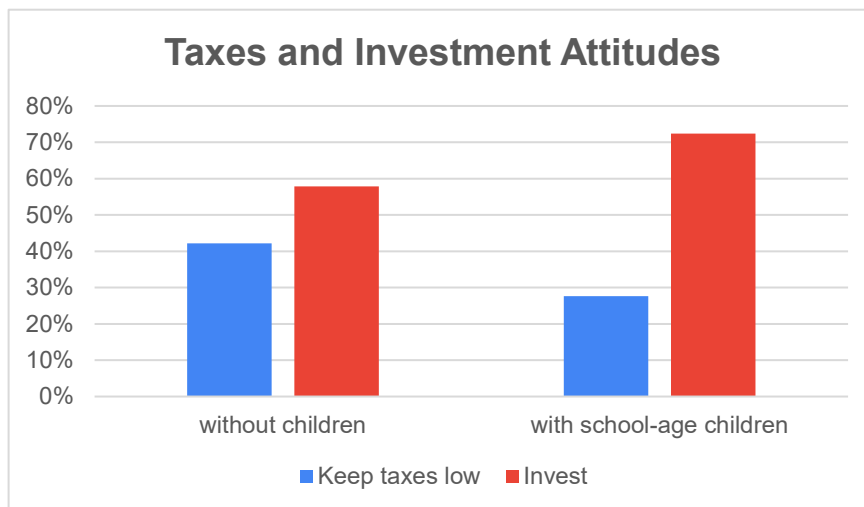
6. Taxes

Almost two-thirds of respondents support investing in town services and infrastructure, such as a community center, even if taxes are likely to increase.



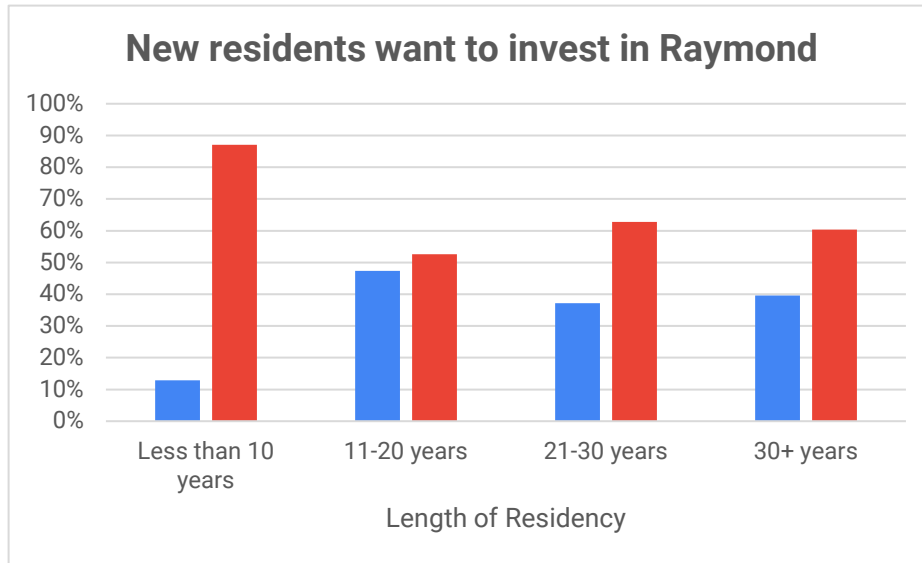
Additional analysis looked at whether or not there were certain demographics that could predict who was more in favor of investing in the town of Raymond. There are two predictors of attitudes on tax and investment: whether or not a citizen of Raymond has children, and length of residency.

Nearly 58% of residents without children were in favor of investing in Raymond; that percentage jumped to 72% if the resident has school-age children in their household.



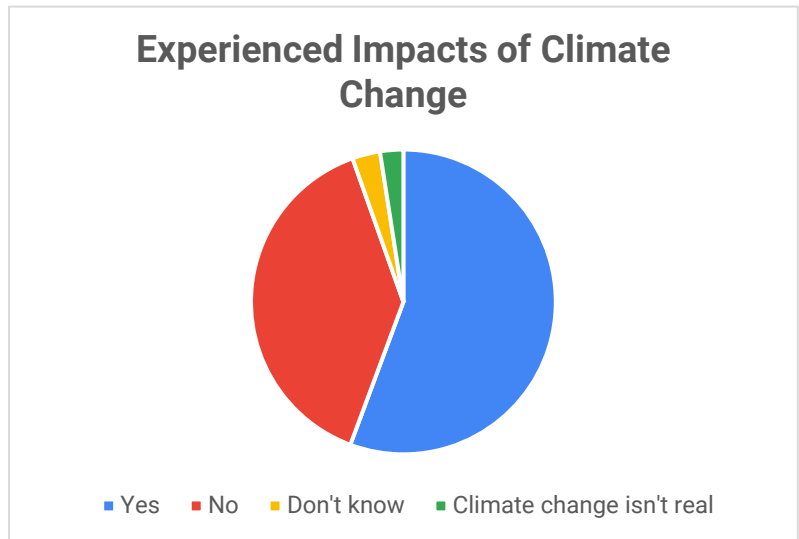
The effect of length of residency in Raymond on the desire to invest in the town was even more pronounced. 87% percent of residents who have spent 10 years or fewer in Raymond support

investing in Raymond, even if taxes could increase. This percentage is between 52-62% for those who have lived in Raymond longer.



7. Climate Change

Responses to whether people have been impacted by the effects of climate change in Raymond was mixed. 55% said they had been experienced effects of climate change in Raymond, while 39% had not. 3% didn't know, and 2.5% denied the existence of climate change. This response indicates that at least a slight majority (55%) of Raymond residents are concerned about climate change, but overall sentiments regarding the priority of climate resilience for Raymond are divided.



8. Raymond in 2040

Respondents were given an open-ended prompt to describe what Raymond should be like in 2040. Responses were varied. To analyze the responses, up to 4 themes were identified in each answer. Then, the total mentions for each theme were tallied.

In 2040, Raymond should be...

1. The same as today (51)
2. Protect/maintain quality of natural and water resources (32)

3. Welcoming and inclusive (27)
4. Small-town feel (24)
5. Have more community resources (18)

Other common responses were:

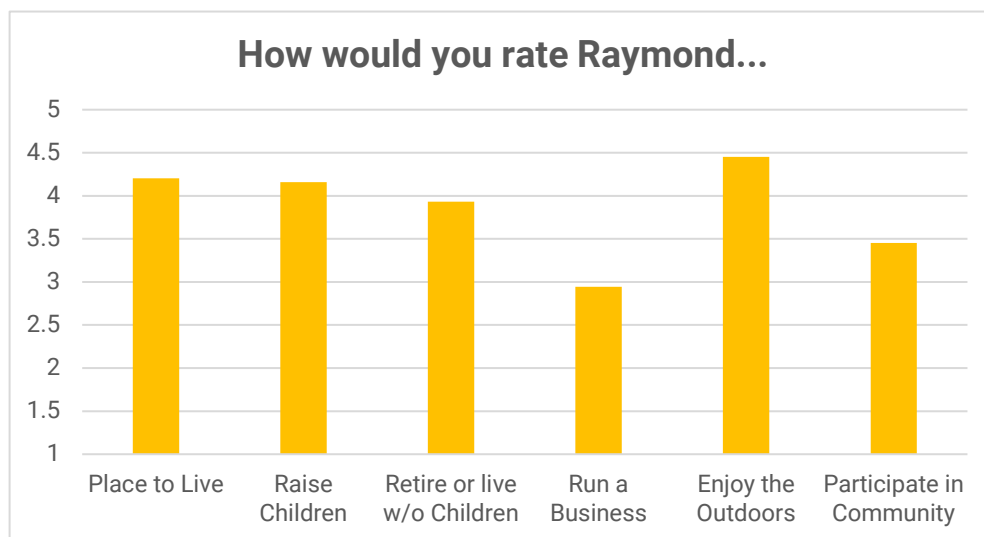
- More active downtown/Main Street (15)
- A place for outdoor recreation (13)
- Safe (13)
- Rural (11)

These responses indicate strong support for preservation of what people said is best about Raymond in a previous answer – the small-town feel and natural resources. Second to preservation, respondents are interested in improving the availability of activities and sense of community through places to gather and things to do.

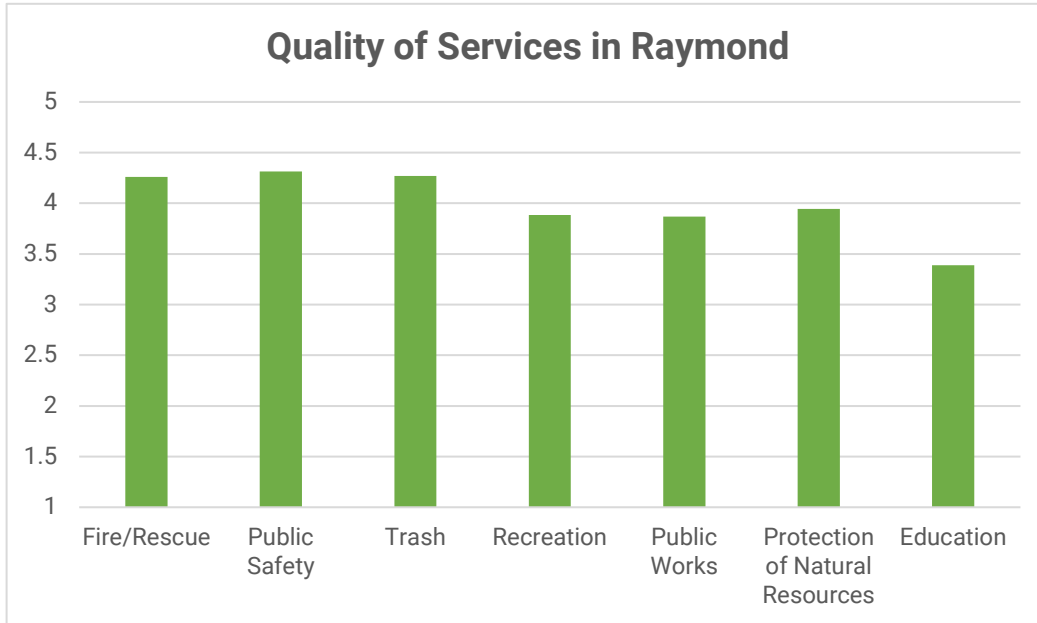
Rating Questions

The 2023 survey provided the opportunity for the residents of Raymond to evaluate and score various aspects of the town. Each question asks the respondent “What is your satisfaction with each of the following in Raymond,” and residents could select “poor- 1”, “fair-2”, “average-3”, “good-4”, and “excellent-5.” Scores were averaged. The mean for each question is reported in the figure below; abstentions were not averaged.

The first set of ratings were for quality of life in Raymond. All aspects rated “good” or “excellent” except for running a business, which was between fair and average, and opportunities to participate in the community, which was between average and good. The highest average rating was for Raymond as a place to enjoy the outdoors – which corresponds to the prevalence of the outdoors/natural resources as the best thing about living in Raymond.

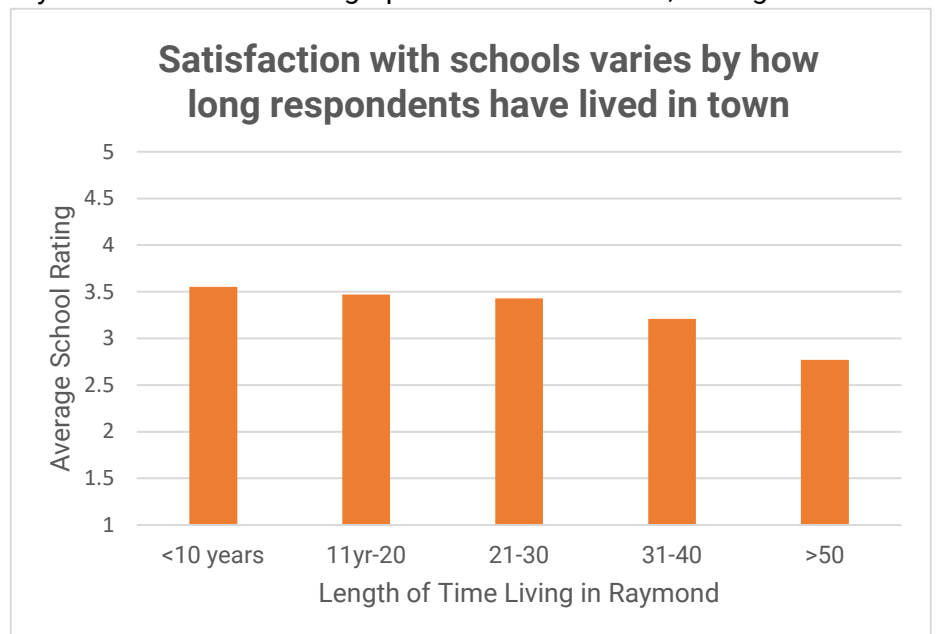


Respondents then rated quality of services in Raymond. Fire/Rescue, Public Safety, and trash pickup all averaged between “good” and “excellent.” Recreation, public works, and protection of natural resources averaged between “average” and “good.” Education had the lowest average ratings, averaging between “fair” and “average.”



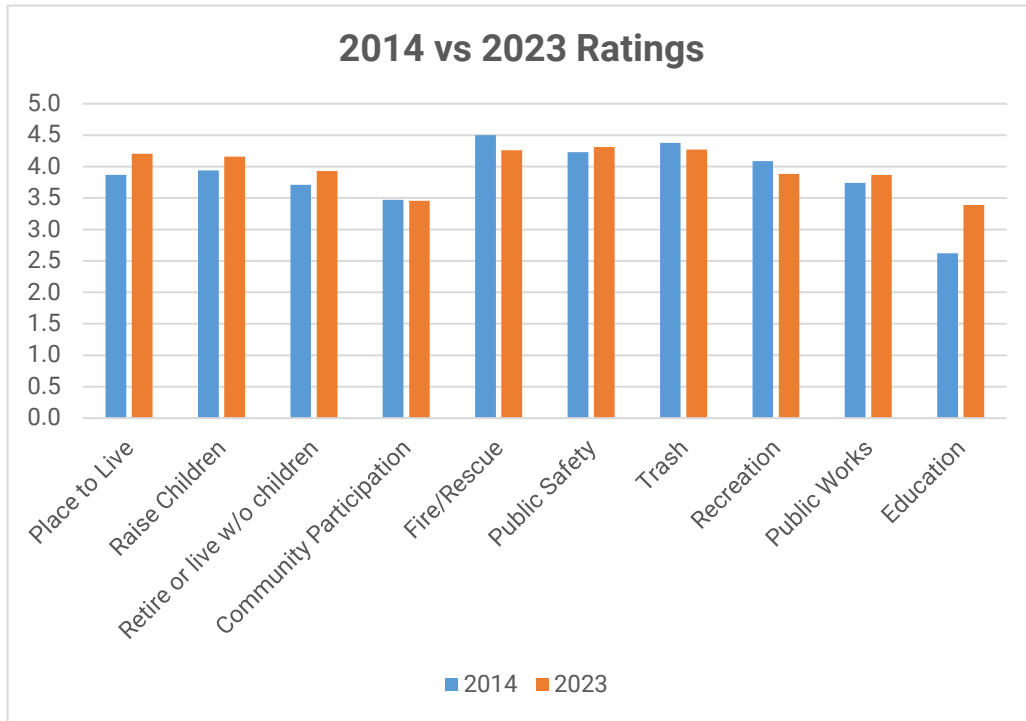
Further analysis of these ratings demonstrated that most of these scores were not correlated by length of a respondent’s residency in town or other demographic factors. However, average satisfaction with the school systems was negatively correlated with length of residency in Raymond (i.e., those who have lived in town longer are less satisfied with the quality of the schools.)

Additionally, respondents without children rated the school system higher, on average (3.6) compared to respondents with children (3.1). Newer residents (lived in Raymond for less than 10 years) without children had the highest average rating for the schools (3.9.)



The 2023 summer survey asked a number of rating questions that were also asked on a 2014 Community Survey. Comparing the rankings in 2023 vs 2014 showed almost no difference in the

rankings. The biggest difference between the 2014 and 2023 survey is the satisfaction with the schools, which has increased (2014 rating of 2.6 vs 2023 rating of 3.4.)



There were multiple methodological and response rate differences between the 2014 and 2023 surveys. Still, the similar results indicate a generally high quality of life that has remained stable in Raymond. These findings may also help to explain respondents' desire for Raymond to stay the same as it is today (see open-ended question 8) as a preference for this stable, high-quality of life to continue.

Demographics

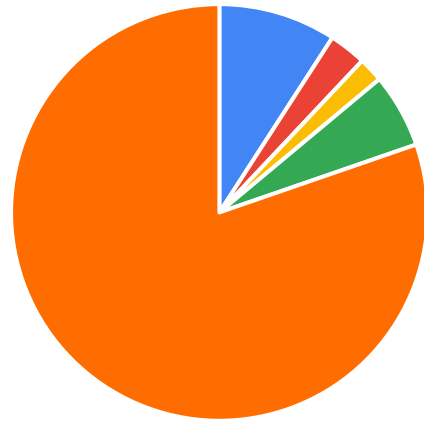
Results of the optional demographics questions in the survey follow. The majority of survey respondents were 35 or older, year-round residents of Raymond who have lived in Raymond for 20 years or less. About 40% have school-age children. Most respondents are college-educated with a household income over \$100,000.

Age of Respondent



- Under 18
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-80
- 80+

Relationship to Raymond



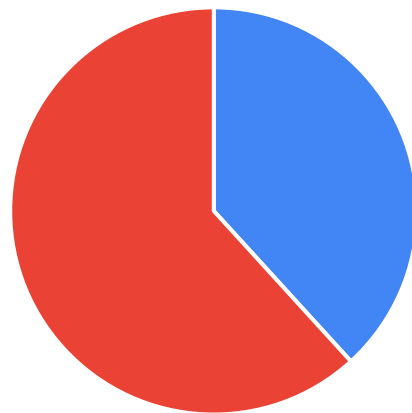
- Seasonal Resident
- Visit Raymond
- Work in Raymond
- Live and Work in Raymond
- Year-Round Resident

Length of time living in Raymond



- 10 or less
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 40+
- I don't live in Raymond

Do you have school-age children?



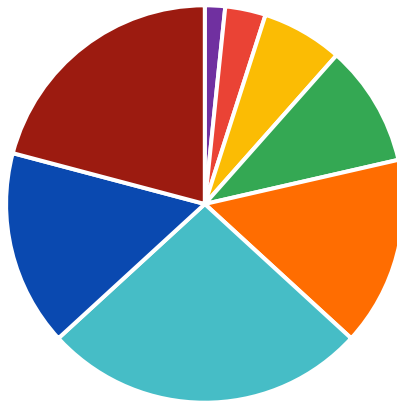
- Yes
- No

Educational Attainment



- Some High School
- High School Diploma or equivalent
- Associate's (2-year) degree
- Bachelor's (4-year) degree
- Graduate or professional degree

Household Income



- Up to \$25,000
- \$25,000-\$34,999
- \$35,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$199,999
- Over \$200,000