



**Raymond Comprehensive Plan Workshop  
& Community Listening Sessions  
Results and Analysis**

**February 2024**



## Overview

On January 20, 2024, North Star Planning (NSP), with assistance from the Raymond Comprehensive Plan Committee, held a public workshop at the Jordan Small Middle School from 9 AM - 4 PM. This workshop presented key data highlights of the comprehensive plan inventory chapters and planning work so far, showing how Raymond has changed over time and what issues face the community, and solicited feedback on several key planning topics as well as the draft vision statement.

The workshop was open house style and informal. Public participants were free to walk around the room at their own pace and write comments for questions and place dots on maps. At 1pm, NSP gave an approximately 15-minute presentation of data analysis and trends from the inventory chapters and summer survey.

54 people (including all 9 committee members) signed in at the event, and about 10 additional people attended but did not sign in. Following the event, an online survey questionnaire with identical questions to the workshop was sent to the project email list. The survey received 57 responses.

The workshop included 2 map activities, 3 open-ended questions, and 2 multiple-choice questions. Attendees and online participants were also provided with a draft vision statement for Raymond, and given the opportunity to comment or make suggestions.

## Results & Analysis

Responses to the open-ended questions were grouped according to category. All other closed questions and dot activities were tallied based on the majority of responses.

### Map Activity: Places to Preserve and Places for Growth

Participants were asked to place a green dot on the map for places they want to see protected and a blue dot on the map for places for growth and development. Places people want to see protected include all the lakes, ponds, and rivers; conserved lands like Raymond Community Forest, Morgan Meadows, and Tassel Top Park; and areas of undeveloped land. Places where people want to see growth and development include along the Route 302 corridor, Main Street, Webbs Mills Road near the Town Office, and Egypt Road. (See full-page map results on page 14.)

Nearly half of Raymond's land area is vacant, and 60% of vacant land is buildable. This presents a major opportunity for the town to work to conserve and protect additional land and to consider appropriate development on some of these vacant parcels.

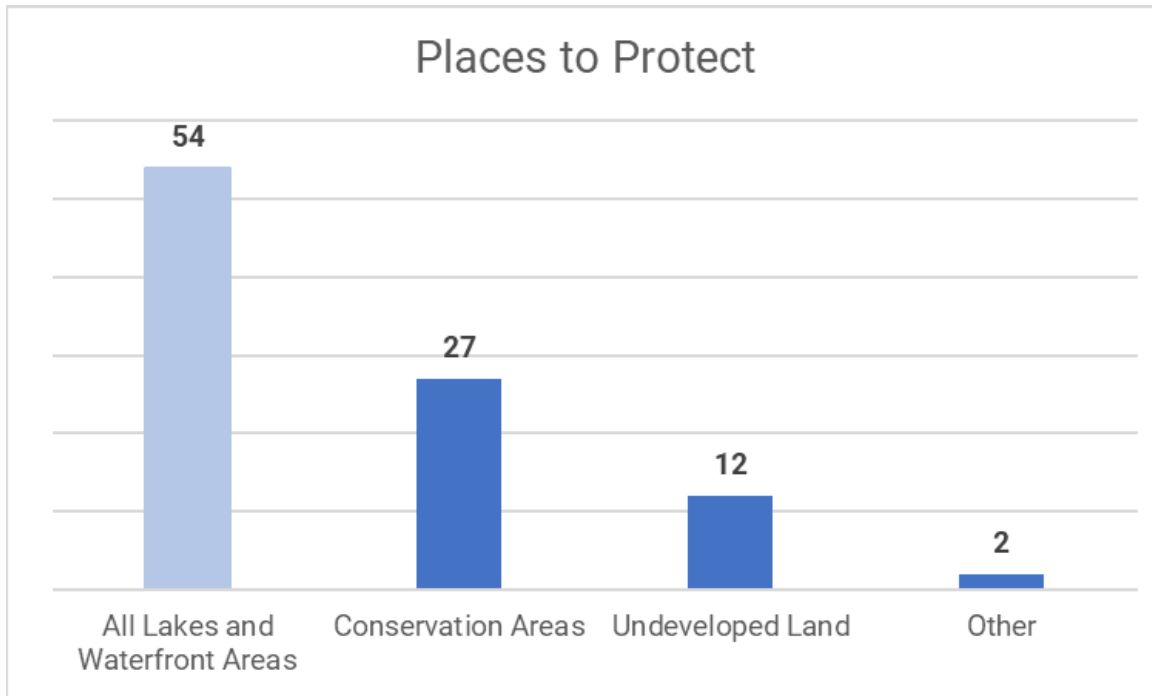


Figure 1. Workshop and online results of places in Raymond to protect.

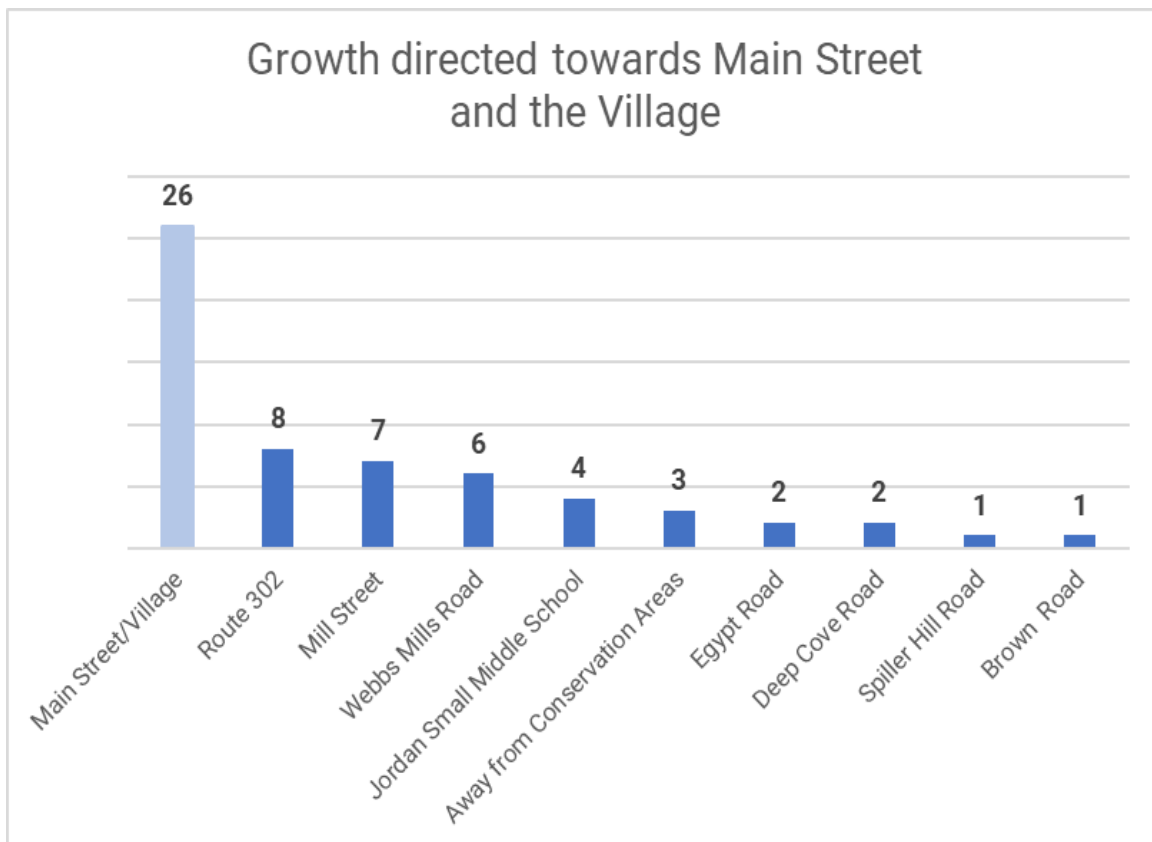


Figure 2. Workshop and online results of places where growth and development is appropriate.

## Map Activity: Places Unsafe to Bike/Walk or Drive

Participants were asked to place a red dot on the map for places they feel unsafe walking or biking, and a yellow dot for places they feel unsafe driving. People placed yellow dots on nearly every road in town; roads unsafe for walking or biking include Webbs Mills Road, Raymond Cape Road, North Raymond Road and Route 302. Roads that feel unsafe for driving include Raymond Cape Road, Egypt Road, Valley Road, Webbs Mills Road, and North Raymond Road. Participants also remarked that speeding is a huge issue in town and that drivers can be quite reckless. (See full-page map results on page 15.)

The selected locations correspond to some of Raymond’s high crash locations designated by Maine DOT (Route 302 off Main Street, Egypt Road, Valley Road, and Spiller Hill Road.) Respondents indicated that commuter traffic and increased seasonal traffic, especially along Raymond Cape Road, Webbs Mills Road, and Route 302, contributes to these roads feeling unsafe. Fewer dots were placed along Route 302 than other roads, despite its status as a major arterial and a high crash location. This may be because it is a wider road with more traffic controls, and is in an area with sidewalks and crosswalks, whereas the other roads are not.

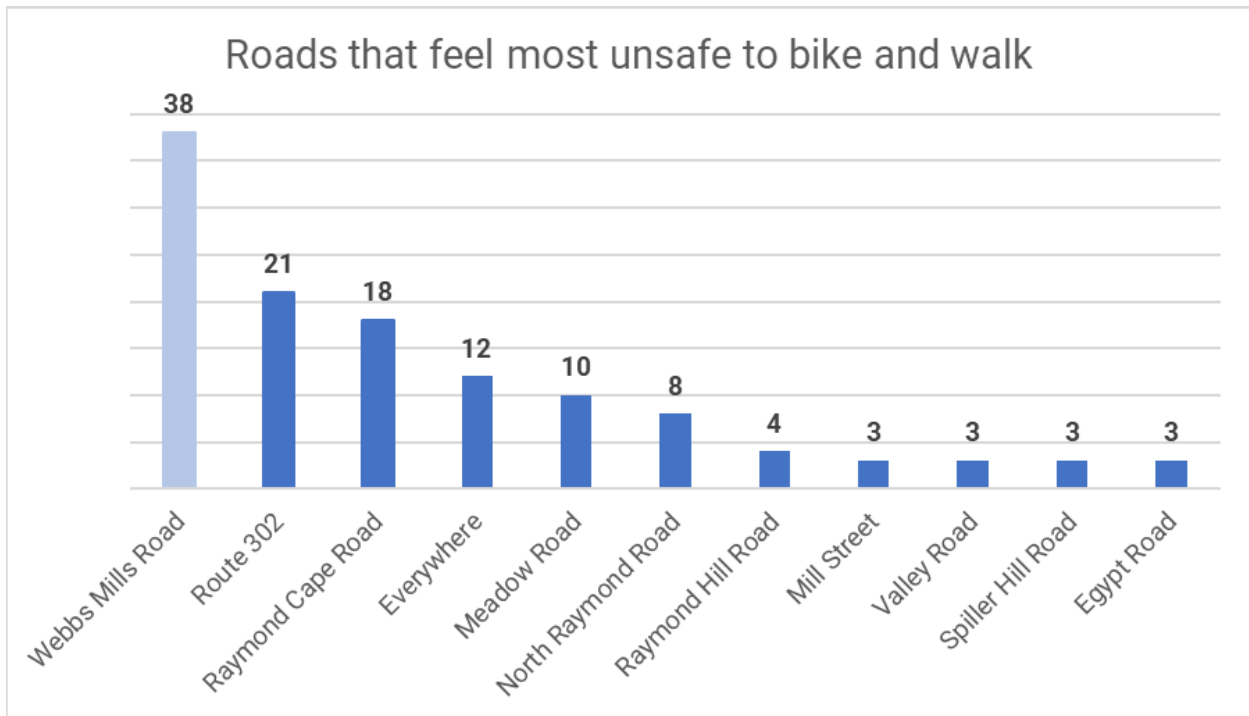


Figure 3. Workshop and online results of places that are unsafe to bike or walk.

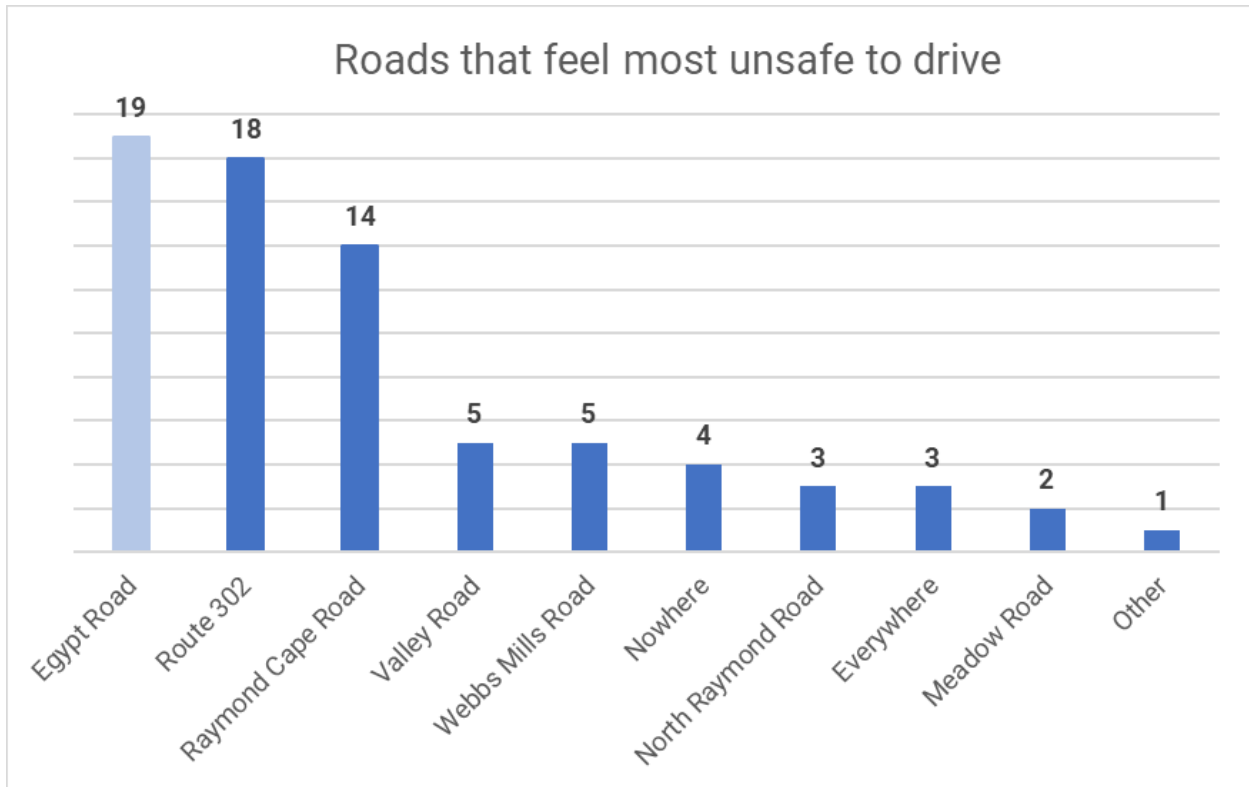


Figure 4. Workshop and online results of places that are unsafe to drive.

## Balancing the needs of Seasonal and Year-Round Residents

Participants were asked to answer an open-ended question on how Raymond can balance the needs of year-round and seasonal residents. Responses were categorized the following:

- Town center/community center
- Transportation and traffic control
- Community representation
- Short-term rental regulation
- Natural resource access and protection
- Affordable housing for year-round residents
- Summer activities for year-round residents

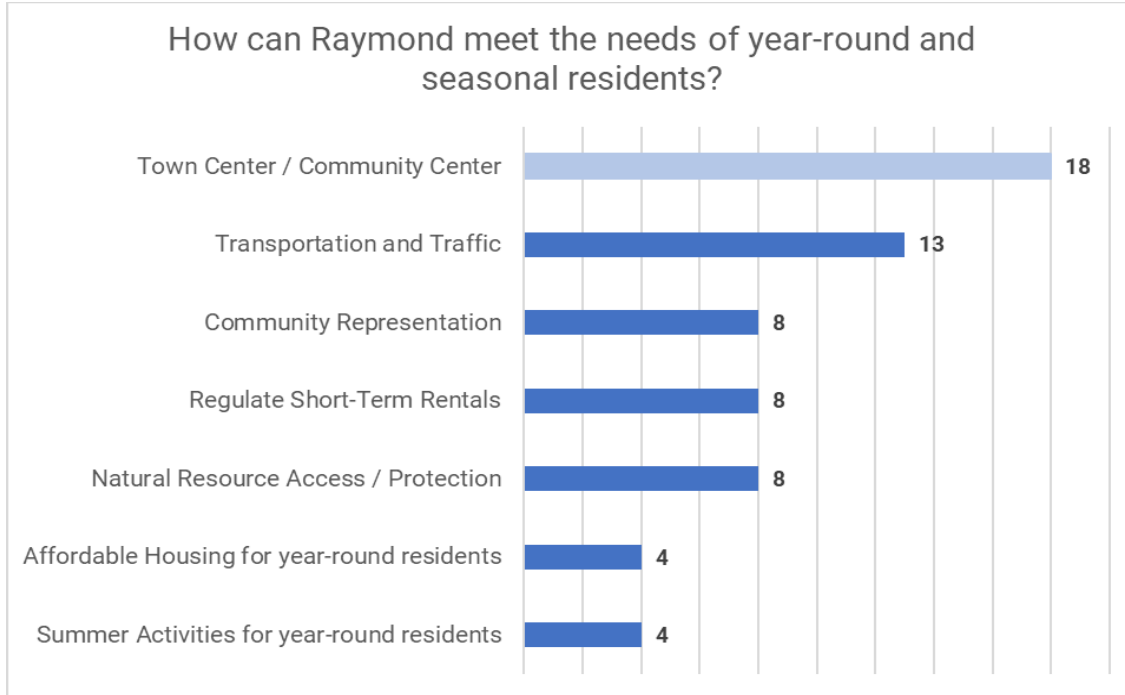


Figure 5. Workshop and online results for how Raymond can balance the needs of year-round and seasonal residents.

The most popular category suggested Raymond should develop a walkable Main Street or “center of town” area with community gathering spaces to benefit both year-round and seasonal residents. Improved transportation options and traffic control was the next most popular category. Respondents also discussed ideas about community representation - how to ensure both year-round and seasonal residents are engaged in municipal decisions. Additionally, community members are concerned about the impact short-term rentals and ensuring adequate affordable housing for year-round residents, and protecting natural resources as well as access to water bodies and open spaces as the town grows. Finally, several respondents shared that while Raymond has a significant number of summer camps for children, they largely attract out-of-town or out-of-state attendees, and suggested there could be scholarships or other summer activities for local children.

Raymond’s year-round population of about 4,500 grows to 10,000-12,000 during the summer months, which has a significant impact on traffic through increased road volumes on both arterial and rural roads, as well as on housing and development - around 30% of Raymond’s homes are seasonal, and most recent housing growth has occurred on lakefront properties with limited public access to water bodies. The results suggest that creating increased opportunities for all residents to feel a sense of community, while dealing with the pressures caused by the seasonal surge, could improve quality of life for all.

## Business and Economy

Participants were asked to answer an open-ended question on what one business they wish Raymond had. Responses were categorized the following:

- Restaurants
- Local businesses
- Grocery stores
- Indoor recreation/community space
- Manufacturing

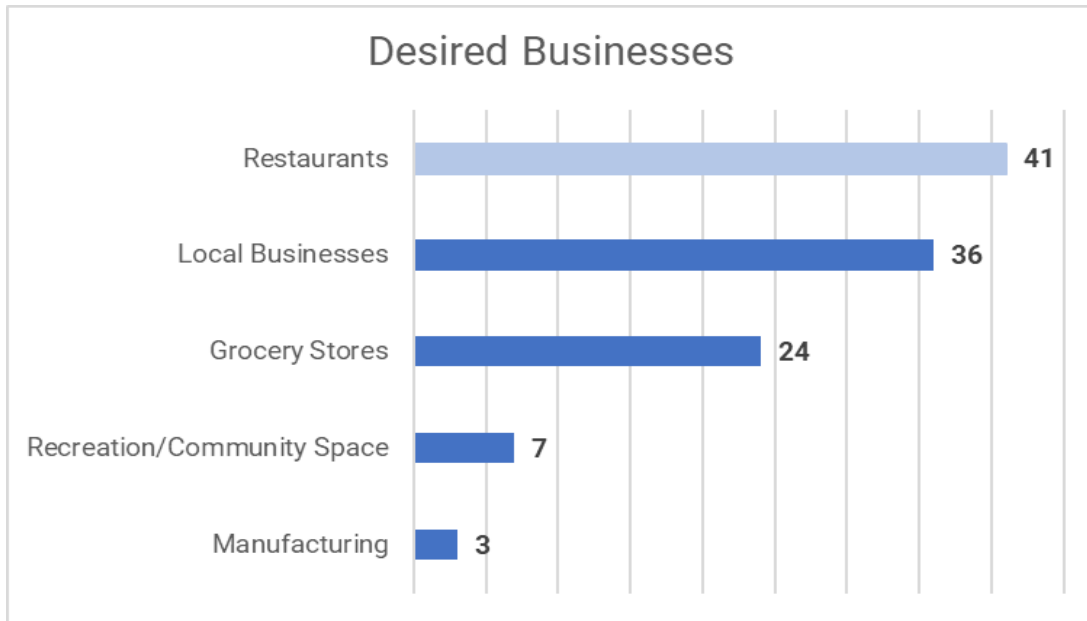


Figure 6. Workshop and online respondents' desired businesses.

Participants agreed that Raymond needs more restaurants, specifically ones that are family friendly and have outdoor seating, and more small businesses, like boutiques, retail shops, mom and pop stores, small grocery stores, and lakeside businesses. Other suggestions included indoor recreation or community activities, like a gym, recreation center, pool, bowling alley, or place for families; and small manufacturing businesses that would benefit the town tax rolls.

Raymond is not an employment center. The town's largest employers are Sabre Yachts, the public schools, and summer camps. Most residents commute outside of Raymond for work, and travel to Windham to meet their daily needs. Raymond will not become a major employment or business center, and there is no desire to replicate the large-scale retail center of Windham. However, respondents are interested in smaller-scale shops, restaurants, stores, and gathering spaces within Raymond that would be more convenient as well as add to a sense of community.

## Community Services and Facilities

Participants were asked to answer an open-ended question on what community services and facilities Raymond needs to support residents of all ages. Response were categorized the following:

- Community center
- Transportation improvements
- Playgrounds and parks
- Adult and senior programs
- School programs
- Infrastructure and town services
- Community events
- More town staff
- Affordable housing

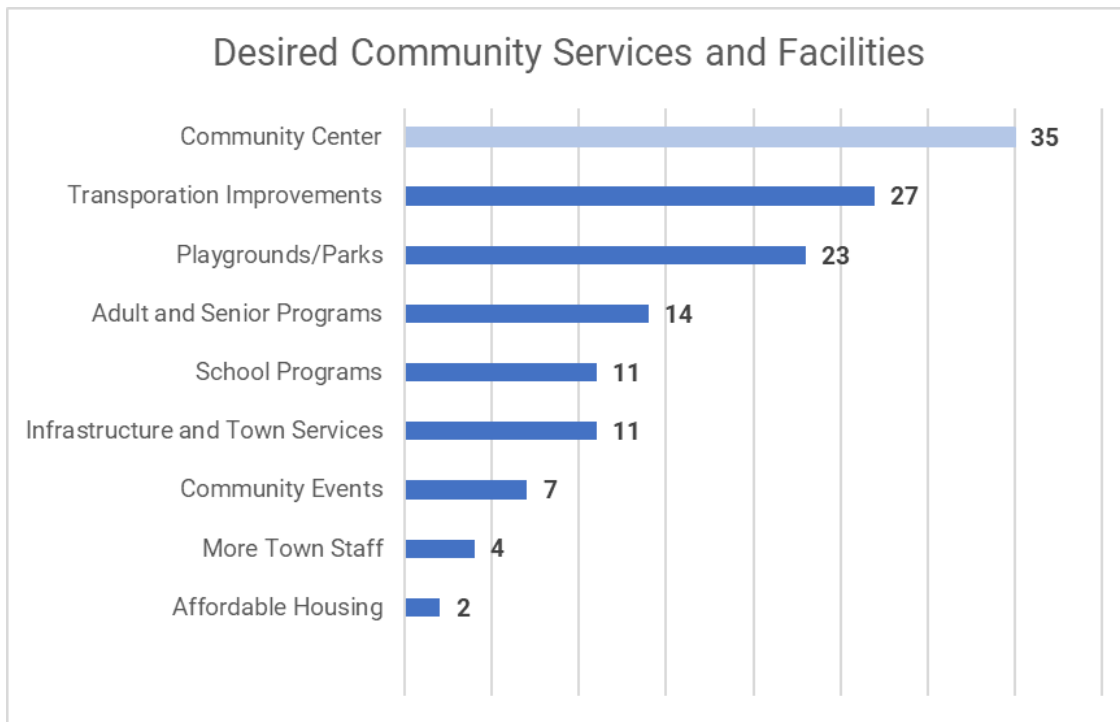


Figure 7. Workshop and online respondents' desired community services and facilities.

The most common suggestion was a community center that could serve residents of all ages, from young families to teens to older adults. Ideas about increasing the sense of community and providing more activities and programs for people of all ages were also captured in responses about classes or programs for adults/seniors; increased before and after school and summer programs for children; more community festivals or events; and a desire for more playgrounds and parks, including public water access and a dog park.



The second most popular suggestion was improved transportation that focused on providing alternatives to driving, such as more sidewalks, bike paths or trails, and offering public transportation or a van service for older adults. Others discussed the need for more infrastructure, town services, and town staff, in areas spanning garbage pickup to recreation.

These results echo the comments in previous questions that Raymond could use more things to do and places to go to help build a greater sense of community, as well as ways to ease traffic and improve transit options. Several responses noted their concern that the middle school is slated to close, noting that a local school is a major amenity for attracting the young families who are key to balanced population growth in Raymond. Finally, some responses acknowledged that Raymond is a small community that has prioritized low taxes, and it may not be most efficient or cost-effective for the town to provide more services and facilities alone.

## **Housing Types**

Participants were asked to select what kind of new housing Raymond needs from six options: traditional single-family, duplexes, single-family with accessory dwelling unit, multifamily (3+ units), affordable housing (restricted to people earning less than median income), and senior housing (restricted to people age 55+.) Participants could select as many options as they wanted.

The top-selected option was traditional single-family housing, followed by senior housing, and single-family homes with accessory dwelling units. Multifamily, affordable housing, and duplexes were less popular.

Raymond's housing is dominated by single-family homes, and the results indicate that people largely desire this pattern of development to continue. Senior housing was a higher concern than affordable housing for respondents; this could be because of awareness of Raymond's growing population of older adults, or because affordable housing was not a personal concern for those who responded.

Results indicate support for a variety of housing types, including and in addition to the current available housing in Raymond. The preference for traditional single-family homes suggests that residents may prefer that new multifamily, senior, and affordable housing be designed to fit look like homes that fit into Raymond's neighborhoods.

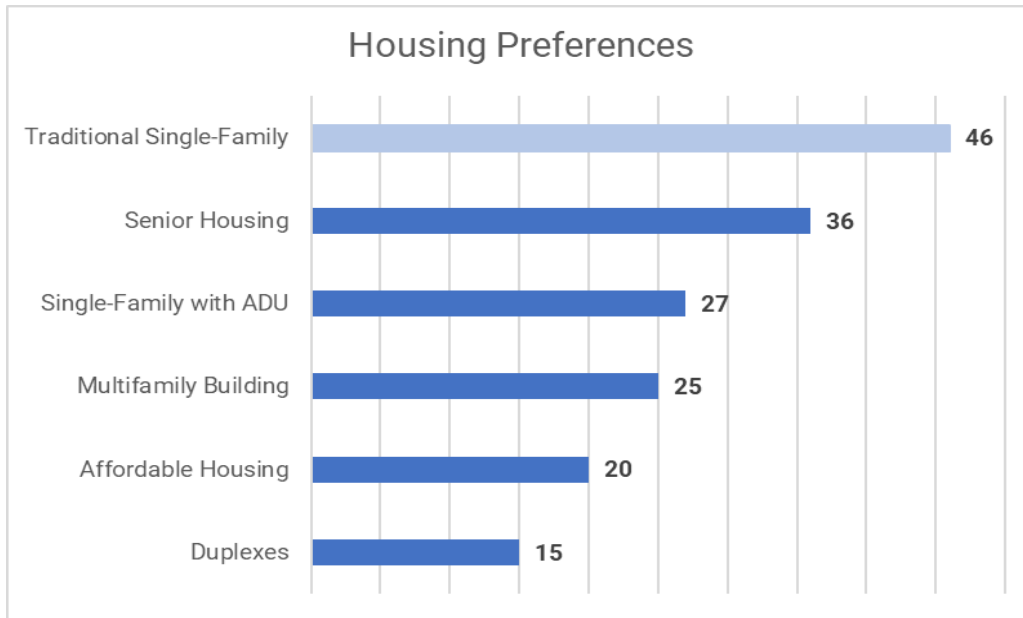


Figure 8. Housing type preferences of workshop and online respondents.

## Traffic and Transportation

Participants were asked to select ways Raymond could address increasing traffic and busy roads from six options: bring back the Lakes Region Bus; local vanpool program from Raymond to popular commute locations; more sidewalks and bus lanes; encourage walking, biking, or taking the bus to school; transit service for older adults; and a regional summer trolley to popular recreation spots. Participants could select as many options as they wanted.

The most popular option was more sidewalks and bike lanes. Other frequently selected options were transit service for older adults, a regional summer trolley, and bringing back the Lakes Region Bus. Walking, biking, or taking the bus to school, and a commuter vanpool program were less popular.

Raymond's lack of sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes was frequently discussed in all topic questions. All but one small area of town lacks bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and most rural roads have no paved shoulders. Improving safety and accessibility for walking and biking is a clear priority.

As of 2024, Raymond is no longer serviced by the Lakes Region Bus because the town declined to fund it. Respondents are interested in bringing back the bus or providing other alternatives to driving. However, people indicated that Raymond's large area and low density make vanpools and walking/biking/school buses less desirable and convenient for commuters and families. Alternatives for driving are more popular for specific populations, like a service for older adults or a summer service.

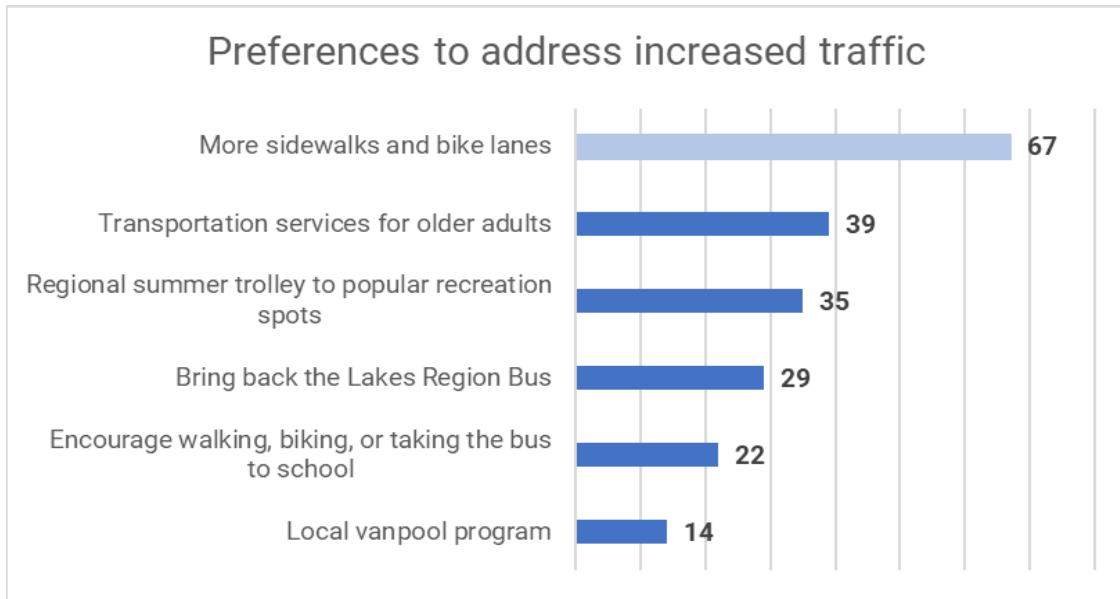


Figure 9. Workshop and online respondents' preferred ways to address increased traffic.

## Vision Statement

Participants in-person and online were presented with the draft vision statement for Raymond and asked to provide feedback. In general, participants supported the draft vision statement. General areas for improvement include making it shorter; adding language about Raymond as a welcoming community of people of diverse backgrounds; acknowledging that traffic speeding on roads is an issue; promoting regional partnerships; and expanding the town's identity to be about more than just lakes and natural resources.

## Community Listening Sessions

From December through January 2024, North Star Planning and the Comprehensive Plan Committee conducted targeted outreach to key community members, including representatives from lakes and road associations; community organizations; Raymond's senior affordable housing complex; and local businesses and summer camps. 10 conversations were held. Feedback is organized by respondent category.

### *Local Businesses and Summer Camps*

Local businesses and summer camps are happy to be located in Raymond. Employees are largely high school or college students who live in the area, or who are housed at the summer camps, and employee housing is not a major issue. The two summer camp owners who responded are very concerned about being good stewards of Raymond's lakes and water quality, and preserving their land. One noted that taxes and land value for the waterfront camp property are quite high, and both said that their camps are family businesses and may not continue to be profitable for future generations.

### *Road Associations*

Raymond has a significant number of private roads that are maintained by road associations. The road association representatives who responded all enjoy rural living and Raymond's natural beauty, but said that maintenance and plowing costs continue to rise and can be an issue. Beyond their local road issues, concerns of these community members include increased traffic and crowding from the seasonal population, development along the waterfront, and the need to balance support for young and old residents and seasonal and year-round residents together.

### *Lakes Associations*

These respondents value Raymond's rural landscape, quality of life, and kind community. Concerns include maintaining high water quality, beauty and the small-town atmosphere as Raymond continues to grow, including through better zoning, ordinances, and enforcement of shoreland regulations.

The biggest threats they see to Raymond's water bodies are invasive milfoil, algae, and phosphorus runoff. Volunteer groups monitor and help eradicate milfoil, as well as conduct water samples; one respondent suggested the town could be more involved in monitoring water quality.

### *Community Organizations*

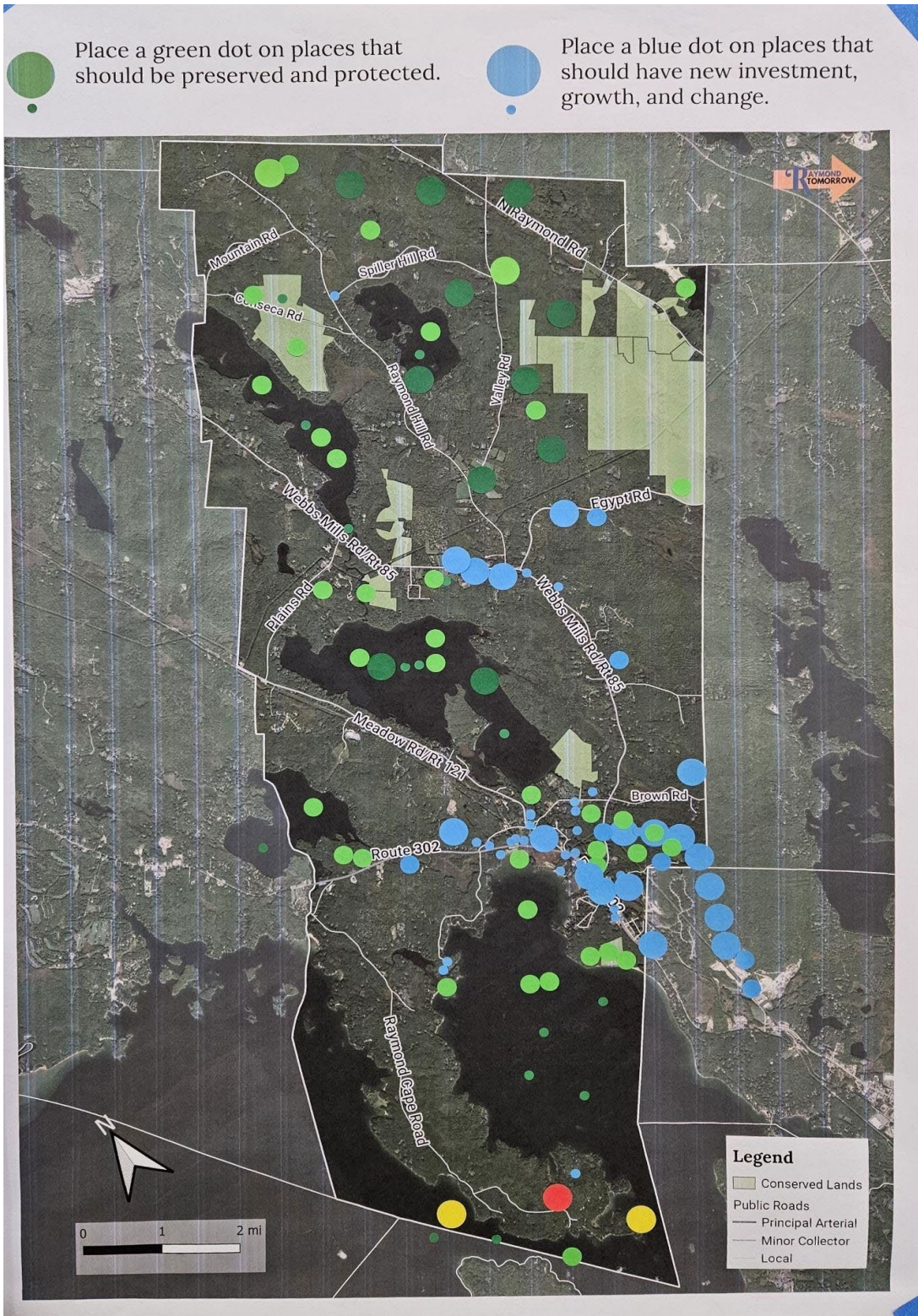
Representatives from community organizations cited Raymond's small-town feel, schools, and recreation as highly valued. They see opportunities for Raymond to continue working on regional partnerships for broadband, economic development, and community programs.

One respondent suggested Raymond must be mindful of maintaining its strengths and values as the community continues to grow. Another said the middle school issue is causing divisions in the community, and wished there was more cooperation and discussion between people who may not agree. Another respondent cited inadequate town staff capacity and a lack of volunteers to keep up with town needs.

### *Jordan Bay Place*

Twenty residents and staff from Jordan Bay Place, an affordable senior living housing complex, met with a member of the Raymond Comprehensive Plan Committee. Lack of transportation and isolation were the major issues cited by residents. There is not a sidewalk to connect their facility to existing town sidewalks, which limits the ability of people to walk for exercise and enjoyment. Residents also have difficulty accessing existing programs and events at places like the library because they do not have transportation to get there, and they need transportation to get to medical appointments and shopping areas. Additionally, they desire more recreational opportunities for the senior community for which would benefit health and a sense of community connection.

Raymond Comprehensive Plan  
Results of Workshop & Community Listening Sessions



Map results from January 20 workshop.



Map results from January 20 workshop.