

**WHAT MAKES
RAYMORE HOME?**
a community conversation.



**Strategic Plan Update
Community Conversation
Summary Report**

October 18, 2018

Executive Summary

In summer 2015, the Raymore City Council gathered to consider broad goals and the future of our community. Led by John Nalbandian, a highly regarded professor in the University of Kansas's School of Public Affairs and Administration, the council's discussion revealed that each member had a slightly different view of what would make our community a success in the coming years as well as the need for input from residents.

Rather than write a plan and wait for public comment, City leadership decided to put our residents first and invited them to a series of interactive Community Conversations where we asked residents to Reimagine Raymore.

Partnering with the University of Kansas Public Management Center and CoVision, a company specializing in creating interactive meetings, the City invited residents not only to come up with new ideas and initiatives to include in the strategic plan, but also to prioritize the ideas and focus areas for Raymore's future.

Under the guidance of trained meeting facilitators, Raymore received input from more than 350 residents who helped build a foundation for a strategic plan to guide the growth and prosperity of our community.

Using that feedback as well as information from its citizen survey, the strategic plan was crafted around four strategic focus areas:

- Community Identity and Connections
- Safe, Well-Designed and Beautiful Places
- Economic Vitality
- High-Performing Organization

Nearly three years later, much has been accomplished in each focus area as follows. To build on the momentum from those accomplishments, the City once again invited residents to come together, this time to answer "What brings you home to Raymore?"

About 125 residents participated in the conversation conducted October 1 at Centerview, the City's event space that resulted from the earlier round of conversations. The goal of this conversation was not simply to develop report card on what had been accomplished. Instead, the goal was to ask residents – using the same 21st century town hall technology - to once again think about the future of Raymore and their hopes for the community they call home.

While the goal was not to simply develop a report card, residents attending the forum are overwhelmingly positive about the progress in Raymore and hopeful about the future.

It is notable that no new strategic focus areas emerged based on the suggestions and polling conducted during the Community Conversation. This indicates that the four focus areas in the current strategic plan remain relevant. Therefore, recommendations for new priorities are made within the context of the existing strategic focus area themes.

These identified priorities might be considered as new goals, new strategies under existing goals, or new action steps under existing strategies, depending upon the item. In other cases, these items might already be identified within existing action plans, but there may be a need to increase community awareness of the city's work in that area. For purposes of this summary, these priorities for the future are simply categorized under each of the Strategic Focus Areas. (A complete tabulation of the responses has been provided under separate cover.)

Strategic Focus Area 1: Community Identity and Connections

1. Identify and implement additional community events that bring together residents and businesses alike
2. Focus on efforts to develop intergenerational relationships and experiences
3. Expand communication efforts to build on initiatives already in place

Strategic Focus Area 2: Safe, Well-Designed and Beautiful Places

1. Develop communication mechanisms specifically designed to enhance public safety
2. Continue community policing efforts, including active involvement in neighborhoods to foster relationships through their residents
3. Make infrastructure improvements designed to increase safety, including enhanced street lighting, bike lanes, and roadway maintenance and improvements.
4. Develop a beautification program that includes a spectrum of initiatives from community art to well-maintained landscaping to holiday décor
5. Implement landscaping standards for new development and enforce standards for existing development

Strategic Focus Area 3: Economic Vitality

1. Attract businesses that will provide job opportunities for Raymore residents, including light industry, manufacturing and technology
2. Offer resources to support small businesses, focusing on unique and locally owned businesses
3. Increase retail offerings, including sit-down restaurants, small anchor stores and boutiques, and entertainment options

Strategic Focus Area 4: High-Performing Organization

1. Expand communication efforts to build on initiatives already in place (as identified in strategic focus area 1.)
2. Engage community routinely through town hall meetings, opportunities to discuss issues with elected officials, and surveys

A few ideas and comments from community conversation participants did not rise to the level of a common theme, but merit some consideration in the development of new strategies or action steps.

There were a number of references to changing and increasing diversity within the City of Raymore. These ranged from suggestions to hold more cultural events to concerns about community profiling (stopping persons walking in the community). The City should consider ways to be proactive in fostering an inclusive community, such as hosting certain cultural celebrations or building strong relationships between law enforcement and under-represented communities. One option would be to add a specific strategy related to diversity and inclusion under Goal 1.3 – Foster Opportunities for All Citizens to Feel Valued and Connected within the Raymore Community.

In addition, the City staff is to be commended for its regular updates to the City Council as well as the community regarding its strategic initiatives and in seeking input regarding new ones. Those efforts should continue so that the strategic plan remains as a living document, adapting to Raymore's evolving needs and opportunities.

Introduction

In the 2.5 years since the development of the Strategic Plan, much has been accomplished in the City of Raymore. To check in with residents on their perceptions of progress and ideas for future, the City again contracted with the KU Public Management Center to conduct a session with the Governing Body and a Community Conversation. The Public Management Center brought back the original technology partner, (now with CoCreative Consulting) to enable the use of 21st Century Town hall interactive technology for the community conversation.

The primary goal of the engagement was to:

- Assess satisfaction with the strategic plan; and
- To identify any new areas of focus, goals or strategies that should be considered for the future.

Following the meetings with the governing body and the community, the KU Public Management Center summarized the ideas generated and analyzed these ideas to develop recommendations regarding the future goals and priorities that are included as a part of this report.

Governing Body Review

Prior to conducting the conversation with the community, the Mayor and City Council discussed the City's strategic plan, progress made, how they'd like to describe the Raymore of 10 years hence, and hopes for the next strategic plan.

The governing body first was asked to reflect on the last two to three years and identify of what they were most proud. The responses are reflected in the table below:

As you look back over the last two to three years, what are you most proud of as a councilmember and Raymore citizen?
• Development and implementation of the strategic plan generated from community input
• Overwhelming passage of the general obligation bonds
• Continued citizen engagement through other processes and on volunteer committee
• Updated and added to infrastructure without raising taxes
• Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Retained existing businesses and added new commercial and residential development;○ Solidified credibility of the governing body with developers and prospective developers
• While advancing and expanding, stood on solid foundation and maintained the reputation of Raymore as a first class city
• Enhanced communication, including further development of the communications department and rebranding the community

Next, as the Mayor and City Council considered what might happen within the next several years, they were asked to share how they hoped the community would be described in 10 years. Themes that emerged were as follows.

Raymore is:

- The premier suburb in the Kansas City area.
- A community in which people live, are employed and enjoy leisure activities.
- A well-planned community with a diversified economy that has residential, commercial, industrial, and multi-use development and businesses.
- A community of all ages.
- Full of residents who are proud to call it home.
- Served by the best staff in the public sector.
- A destination location, with unique restaurants, shops, events at which residents and visitors alike gather together.
- Safe, where all are welcome and feel at home.

The Council then considered what they hoped to achieve in the next several years under each of the strategic focus areas within the strategic plan. The following is a summary of themes from that discussion.

Community Identity and Connections

- Continued communication and citizen engagement, through volunteerism, events and outreach
- Gathering spaces and opportunities, including parks, City Circle, events, and private and public facilities
- A sense of pride
- Homegrown businesses
- Transparency
- An active and involved governing body

Safe, well-designed and beautiful places

- Improved transportation systems, including redesign and rebuild of Highway 58/I-49 bridge, improvements to Highway 58, construction of trails
- Connections between neighborhoods
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure

Economic Vitality

- Diversified development: commercial, residential, industrial and mixed use, that encourages job growth
- Programs and partnerships to train and maintain a skilled workforce
- Unique businesses that define Raymore as a destination
- Support local business retention

High-Performing Organization

- Be an employer of choice
- Continued focus on customer service and engagement
- Provide all the tools necessary to maintain satisfied, productive staff
- Prepare for staff transitions through succession planning and growing city staff from within the community
- Provide opportunities for professional development, continuing education and certification

Finally, the governing body was asked what they wanted to learn from the community at the Oct. 1. They wanted to know whether:

- Residents were happy with the path that has been taken;
- There was interest in annexing around Highway 58 east; and
- There was anything that needed to be addressed in the meeting that would not be included in the questions that had been developed. Specifically, the Council asked that mechanisms be put in place to ensure that participants have the chance to share anything they wanted to add to the Conversation.

The results of the governing body work session were used to inform the specific questions asked at the Oct. 1 Community Conversation – What Makes Raymore Home? The governing body directed the facilitators to design conversations to both assess current satisfaction and perceptions of progress with new ideas for the next phase of the City's strategic plan.

October 1 Community Conversation: What brings you home to Raymore?

The Community Conversation – *What Brings You Home to Raymore* – was held on Oct. 1. Approximately 125 community members attended the conversation, along with about 30 City staff, seven team members from the KU Public Management Center, and two technology partners from CoCreative Consulting.

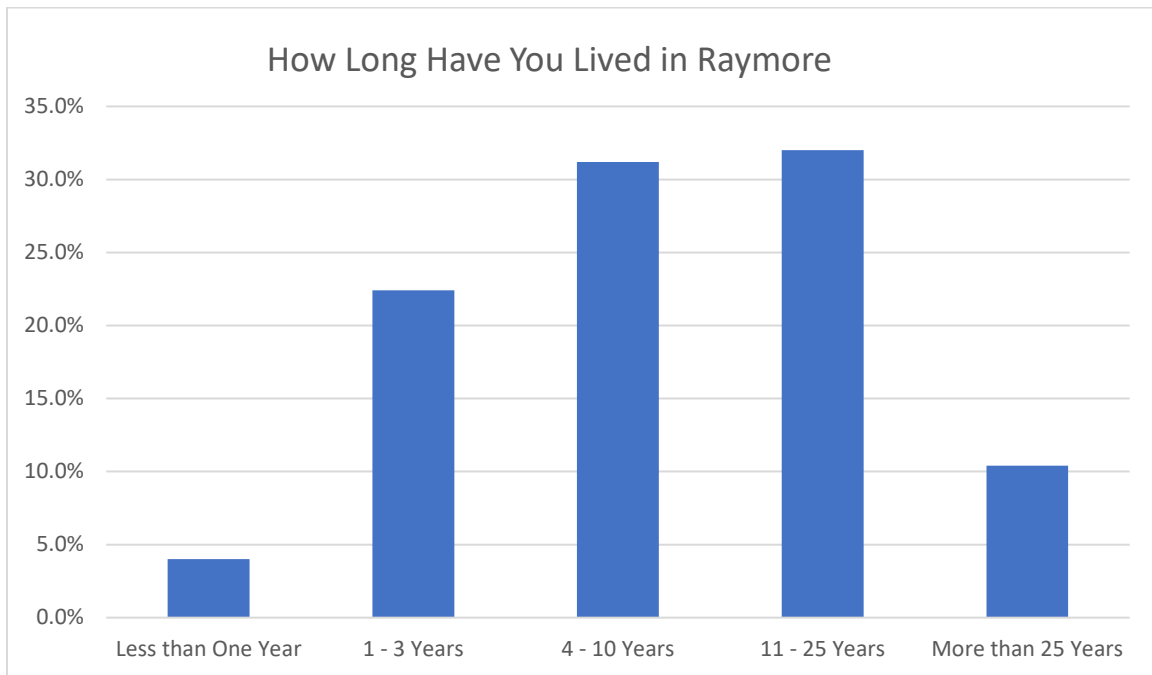
The goal of this conversation was not simply to develop report card on what had been accomplished. Instead, the goal was to ask residents – using the same 21st century town hall technology - to once again think about the future of Raymore and their hopes for the community they call home.

Demographics

Raymore residents attending the conversation were asked a series of demographic questions to learn more about who was attending the Community Conversation. Participants generally had lived in the community for between 4 and 25 years; were 60 years old or older; and had not participated in the February 2016 community conversations. Responses to these demographic questions follow.

How long have you lived in Raymore?

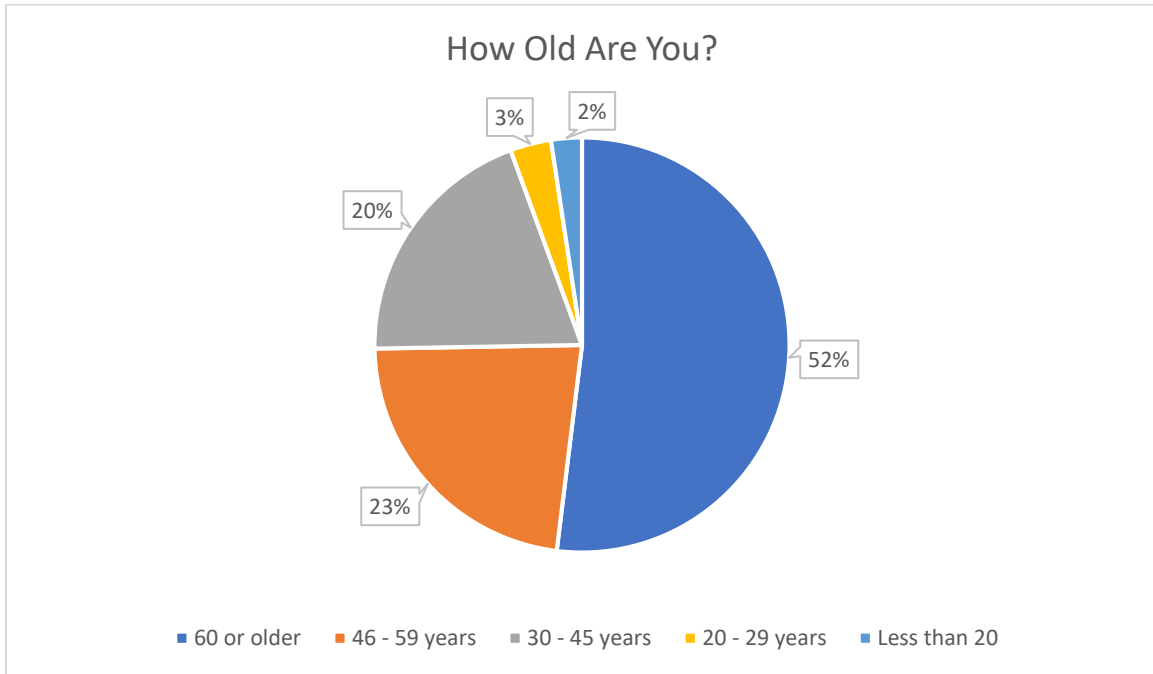
Nearly one-third of the participants have lived in Raymore between 4 and 10 years and another third between 11 and 25 years.



The length of time in Raymore for participants in the October 2018 community conversation are similar to the length of time in Raymore for participants of the Reimagine Raymore conversations in 2016.

How old are you?

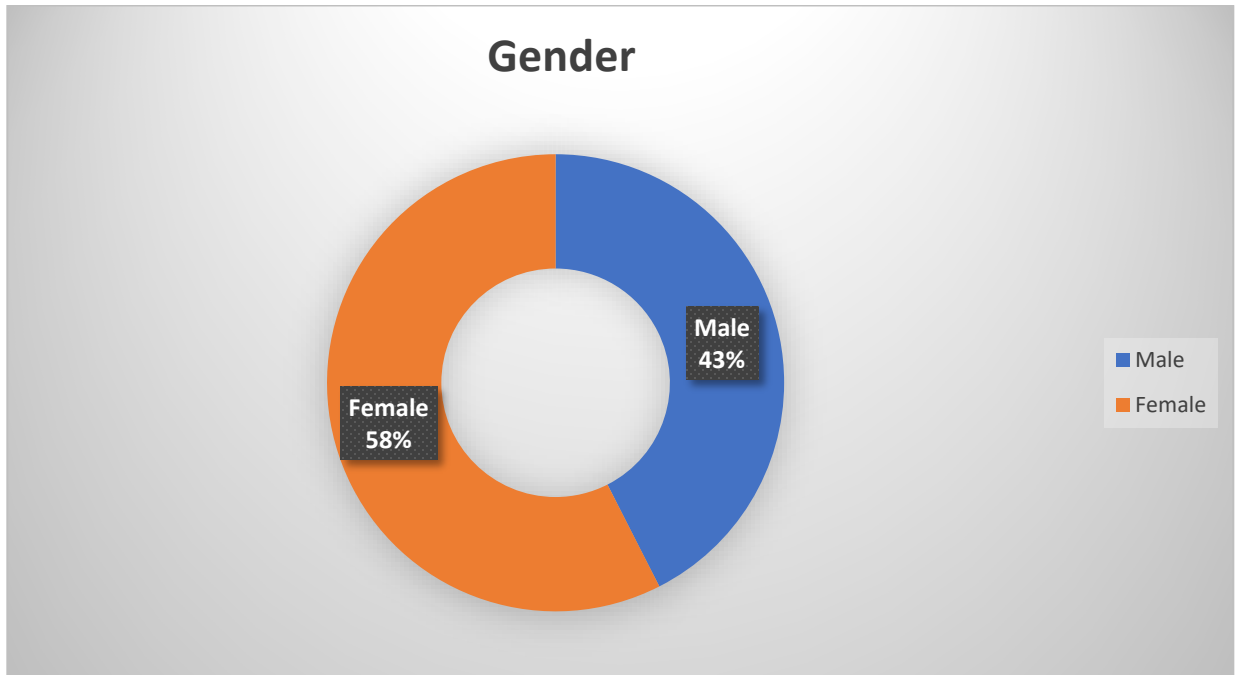
More than half of the attendees were 60 or older as is illustrated in the following graphic.



Attendees at the October 2018 community conversation tended to be older on the whole than participants in the Reimagine Raymore conversations in 2016, where just over 30 percent were aged 60 or older.

What is your gender?

Just a few more women attended the community conversation than did men as illustrated in the graphic below:



Attendance at Reimagine Raymore Community Conversations

In response to the question, *Did you attend any of the Reimagine Raymore Community Conversations in February 2016*, more than two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had not attended any of the 2016 Reimagine Raymore community conversations, while almost 16 percent had attended all three. The detailed responses are in the table below:

Attendance at Previous Events	
Yes, all three	15.87%
Yes, two of them	10.32%
Yes, only one	7.14%
Not sure	0%
I did not attend	66.67%

The Identity of Raymore

Finally, the respondents were asked their view of Raymore. Respondents were asked whether they view Raymore as a small town, bedroom community, suburb in a metro area, all of the above or other.

Do You See Raymore as:	
A small town	9.7%
A bedroom community	22.6%
A suburb in a metro area	23.4%
All of the above	41.9%
Other	2.4%
Total	100.0%

Notably, more respondents viewed Raymore as a small town than in the 2016 conversations (9.7 percent compared to 3.0% in 2016). Additionally, more participants labeled Raymore a bedroom community in 2018 (22.6% compared to 11.0% in 2016). The percentage labeling Raymore a suburb in a metropolitan area remained steady.



Opening Question – What has been accomplished that you are most proud of?

Before sharing information about what the City has accomplished, participants were asked to identify from their perspective what has been accomplished in the last 2.5 years in Raymore that makes them proud.

As you reflect on the Reimagine Raymore process from February 2016 and think about the last 2.5 years in Raymore, what has been accomplished that makes you most proud?

They are most proud of:

- Development of places to gather, including Centerview, parks and the activity center;
- Rebranding and listening to what the community thinks;
- Creation of public art, such as the one outside Centerview, the mural on the parks building, and at the entrance to Raymore;
- City improvements around lighting, sidewalks, parks, public art;
- Responsive and engaged city and community, both directions;
- Infrastructure improvements designed to connect neighbourhoods, including sidewalks, trails, new street connections; and
- Community events including movies in the park, farmers market, mud run, etc.

Strategic Focus Areas

The accomplishments of the last 2.5 years then were briefly reviewed as follows.

Community Identity and Connections Accomplishments

- Launched the new City branding and logo
- Record attendance at City events such as the Mini Mud Run, The Celebration of America, Summer Scene, Trucktober Fest (food truck festival) and many others
- Launched campaign to bring City's first inclusive playground
- Continue to add original art to parks and public spaces
- Expanded online communications with a goal of and responding to requests or questions within 24 hours
- Host regular town hall meetings with Council members

Safe, Well-Designed and Beautiful Places Accomplishments

- Received a 99% satisfaction rating for Police Department and overall feeling of safety in community ETC survey
- Continue local and regional leadership as a model City for emergency management and disaster preparedness
- Currently reviewing entire City Code for necessary updates and compliance
- Completed reconstruction of nine intersections to include new crosswalks to improve mobility and water quality

- Awarded AARP grant for enhanced walkability around Municipal Circle
- Added audible signals at crosswalks for those with vision limitation
- Overlaid and re-striped all of 58 Highway
- Completed two major roadway construction projects creating needed east-west connections (with a third on the horizon)

Economic Vitality Accomplishments

- Re-organized the Community Development department into a Development Services Department that can streamline developer and homebuilder requests
- Welcomed two new businesses to the Raymore Market Place at the corner of 58 and Dean
- Secured a master developer for a large-scale light industrial project on the south side of I49 and North Cass Parkway
- Secured a master developer for a master-planned mixed-use commercial development on the north side of I-49 and North Cass Parkway
- Continue to work with 50+ outside real estate developers and brokers and other related businesses to encourage investment in our community
- Work closely with the Missouri Partnership and Kansas City Area Development Council to create interest in our community

High-Performing Organization Accomplishments

- Updated and rebuilt the City's website to focus on service delivery
- Successfully undertook a Charter Update that included 15 charter amendments
- Migrated all employees to a step salary system to ensure clarity and understanding of salary ranges
- Enhanced retirement benefits for Public Safety and full-time employees
- Introduced strategic benchmarks for the budget to mirror goals set and achievements in a given fiscal year
- Promote ethics training and professional development for all employees in the organization

Following the opening question and the review of actions taken by the City in the last 2.5 years, participants were asked a series of questions for each of the strategic focus areas. For each set of two questions, participants were asked to identify their priority answer for the second question only. The results follow.

Community Identity and Connections

For the community identity and connections strategic focus area, participants were first asked, *What brings you home to Raymore? What are the reasons that you make Raymore your home?* Following that question, to further develop priorities, participants were asked, *What would specifically strengthen Raymore's community identity and connections among residents?* Both questions were themed, and priorities were identified through polling on the second question.



No. 1: What brings you home to Raymore? What are the reasons that you make Raymore your home?

The themes that emerge are detailed in the table that follows:

What brings you home to Raymore? What are the reasons that you make Raymore your home?
• Award winning school district
• Small town community feel, with big-city amenities nearby
• Parks and trails accessibility
• Raymore is a safe place to raise your family
• Family and grandchildren
• Raymore has the best roads, infrastructure, sidewalks
• Great options and services for retirees
• Housing opportunities that provide more value than other KC metro communities
• Crime rate is lower, quiet, feel safer

The themes that emerged relate to the quality of life that Raymore residents seek for themselves and their families.

No. 2: What specifically would strengthen Raymore’s community identity and connections among residents?

Participants were then asked to think about what would strengthen Raymore’s community identity and connections among residents. Community conversation participants provided numerous responses that were then themed, and voted on by the participants.

The following themes emerged and are listed in order as prioritized by community conversation participants through the polling process:

What specifically would strengthen Raymore’s community identity and connections among residents?	Percentage
Hold more public events including Jazz on the Lawn, parades, block parties, etc.	28.9%
Centralized and easy communication method for notifying residents of important information (social media, email, flyers, digital billboard, community access channel)	23.9%
Continue to stay safe	17.9%
More local business involvement in public events	9.8%
Be inclusive and welcoming of all ages and abilities/welcome wagon	8.1%
Encouraging connectivity of residents through trails and recreational opportunities	8.1%
City should try to do more activities with Foxridge/Senior Living	3.4%

Two areas stood out in the responses. Community forum participants are clearly enthused about the public events that the city has brought forward in the last few years. Almost 30 percent would like to see more community events ranging from community-wide activities such as Jazz on the Lawn to neighborhood-focused activities such as block parties. The second priority that emerged under community identity and connections was selected as a priority by almost one-fourth of participants. Residents continue to have interest in centralized and easy community methods to receive important information from the City.

Safe Places

The safe, well designed and beautiful places strategic focus area was split into safe places and well-designed and beautiful places. For safe places, participants were first asked, *What makes you feel Raymore is a safe community?* Following that question, to further develop priorities, participants were asked, *What specifically can we all do to make Raymore an even safer community?* Both questions were themed, and priorities were identified through polling on the second question.

No. 1: What makes you feel Raymore is a safe community?

The themes that emerged are detailed in the table that follows:

What makes you feel that Raymore is a safe community?
• Visible police presence throughout the community, both streets, trails and parks
• Feeling well-connected with my neighborhood/neighbors. Neighbors watch out for neighbors
• Police and fire engage with the community in many ways (drug take-back, outreach and communication, weekly blotter)
• Excellent response times by police and fire and animal control
• Well-lit streets and neighborhoods

It should be noted that the themes that emerged in response to this question about what makes Raymore a safe community focused primarily on issues of crime and personal safety. There were a few participants who focused on the characteristics of streets or highways, but this was not the predominant focus in terms of what leads residents to feel Raymore is a safe community. These responses suggest a high level of satisfaction with police and fire personnel in the city, which is supported as well through the community citizen survey.

No. 2: What specifically can we all do to make Raymore an even safer community?

Participants were then asked to think about what we all can do to Raymore an even safer community. Community conversation participants provided numerous responses that were then themed, and voted on by the participants.

The following themes emerged and are listed in order as prioritized by community conversation participants through the polling process:

What specifically would strengthen Raymore’s community identity and connections among residents?	Percentage
Develop communication mechanisms for residents to be more aware, including text alerts	26.0%
Continue community policing efforts	22.5%
Encourage neighbors to watch out for each other and report any suspicious activity	21.2%
Enhance street lighting system	17.8%
Make improvements to the transportation system, including bike lanes and share-the-road signs	12.6%

Enhanced methods to communicate with residents as well as more focus on neighborhoods received strong responses from participants. Additionally, almost a quarter of respondents specifically stressed the importance of continuing community policing efforts. The issue of transportation system safety emerged as participants were asked to think about how to make Raymore safer, with specific focus on bike safety.

Well-designed and Beautiful Places

Community conversation participants were then asked about the second part of the Safe, Well-Designed and Beautiful Places focus area. For Well-Designed and Beautiful Places, participants were asked, *What are examples of well-designed and beautiful places in Raymore? What makes them so attractive?* Following that question, to further develop priorities, participants were asked, *What specifically can we do to make Raymore spaces even more desirable and attractive?* Both questions were themed, and priorities were identified through polling on the second question.

No. 1: What are examples of well-designed and beautiful places in Raymore? What makes them so attractive?

The themes that emerged are detailed in the table that follows.

What are examples of well-designed and beautiful places in Raymore? What makes them so attractive?
• Walking trails and playgrounds offer a variety of natural areas and manicured plantings
• City facilities (including parks) are clean and well-maintained (no trash or litter)
• Neighborhoods are attractive (ex., Creekmoor)
• The installation of public art is attractive and unique to our community
• The new city facilities (Centerview, RAC, and City Hall) are well-planned and attractive. They fit in with the community.
• Trails are accessible, easy to use, and safe
• New developments at 58 Highway & Dean Avenue are attractive
• The roundabouts and landscaping look good

Community conversation participants appreciate how well-maintained parks and facilities are. They also seem to have a positive view of new developments, public art and landscaping efforts.

No. 2: What specifically can we do to make Raymore spaces even more desirable and attractive?

Participants were then asked to think about what we can do to make Raymore spaces even more desirable and attractive. Community conversation participants provided numerous responses that were then themed, and voted on by the participants.

The following themes emerged and are listed in order as prioritized by community conversation participants through the polling process.

What specifically can we do to make Raymore spaces even more desirable and attractive?	Percentage
City beautification with murals, fountains, artwork, painted hydrants, etc.	15.8%
Identify Raymore’s entry point and make it appealing and memorable	15.2%
Holiday décor throughout town to beautify the city	12.7%
Landscaping upkeep in public areas, parks and in subdivisions	12.2%
More lighting for streets, trails, ballpark, etc.	12.2%
Better visibility of park and trail signs as the parks/trails can be difficult to find	11.3%
Trees, mandatory for developers to plant in front yards and enforcement	8.8%
More marked bicycle paths throughout Raymore	5.8%
Allow for adoption of flower beds or parks	5.2%

There was less consensus among participants in prioritizing the most common themes that emerged around Well-Designed and Beautiful Places. As the table shows, participants places about equal emphasis on continued community beautification efforts, making Raymore’s entry point appeal and memorable, holiday décor, further landscaping upkeep, and additional lighting efforts.

Economic Vitality

For the economic vitality strategic focus area, participants were first asked, *What are the current strengths of the Raymore economy?* Following that question, to further develop priorities, participants were asked, *What is necessary for Raymore to have a thriving economy with businesses, job opportunities and financially secure families?* Both questions were themed, and priorities were identified through polling on the second question.

No. 1: What are the current strengths of the Raymore economy?

The themes that emerged are detailed in the table that follows:

What are the current strengths of the Raymore economy?
• Consistent growth, with several opportunities for more (housing, commercial, retail, etc.)
• Good location. Easy access to major arteries (I-49; MO-291)
• Breadth of retail and commercial opportunities within Raymore. We can spend our money locally.
• Fiscally responsible City with the willingness to listen to the community.
• Qualities that attract and maintain a solid tax base (schools, housing options, retail)

Community conversation participants appear to be pleased with how the City is listening to the community as it relates to economic growth. Participants also recognized growth that has been taken place, as well as those characteristics that could support further growth (location, highways, schools, housing).

No. 2: What is necessary for Raymore to have a thriving economy with businesses, job opportunities and financially secure families?

Participants were then asked to think about what is necessary for Raymore to have a thriving economy with businesses, job opportunities and financially secure families. Community conversation participants provided numerous responses that were then themed, and voted on by the participants.

The following themes emerged and are listed in order as prioritized by community conversation participants through the polling process.

What is necessary for Raymore to have a thriving economy with businesses, job opportunities and financially secure families?	Percentage
Focus on businesses that will provide job opportunities for Raymore residents, including light industry, manufacturing and technology	20.4%
Bring a variety of sit-down restaurants to town	13.9%
Attract businesses that provide high-paying job opportunities	13.6%
Offer resources to support small businesses, including a business incubator and shared spaces	13.3%
Create opportunities for mixed-use development that encompasses housing, retail and entertainment	12.6%
Make the Raymore experience unique, with diverse businesses that are locally owned	11.0%
More entertainment options such as Sky Zone, bowling alley, roller skating	8.4%
Attract more retail options to town, from small anchor stores to boutiques	6.8%

The greatest emphasis from participants was on the creation of job opportunities within Raymore. Just over 20 percent named this the number one priority for Raymore to have a thriving economy. Other priorities complemented this response, including attracting businesses with high-paying jobs; supporting small businesses through an incubator or shared spaced; and an emphasis on locally-owned diverse businesses to make the Raymore experience unique. Other priorities focused on expanding the availability of sit-down restaurants and indoor entertainment options.

High-Performing Organization

For the high -performing organization strategic focus area, participants were first asked, *What do you think the City is doing best in terms of providing services to Raymore residents?* Following that question, to further develop priorities, participants were asked, *How would you like city leaders to keep you engaged to ensure that we provide the highest quality services possible?* Both questions were themed and priorities were identified through polling on the second question.

No. 1: What do you think the City is doing best in terms of providing services to Raymore residents?

The themes that emerged are detailed in the table that follows:

What do you think the City is doing best in terms of providing services to Raymore residents?
• Consistent and timely communication the public can access easily
• Provide multiple communication methods (newsletters, website, social media, e-mail and in-person) about the city and events
• Trash and yard waste service contract provided by the City to keep the community clean
• The elected officials and employees are approachable and they care about the community
• Excellent snow removal service
• Well-maintained infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, buildings)
• Police and fire are high quality and they have excellent response times
• City staff professional attitude, responsive to citizen needs
• The City encourages community involvement and citizen input
• The City provides great community events

Community forum participants are very complimentary of the city's trash, yard waste, snow removal, infrastructure/public works and police and fire response. Additionally, the common theme that emerged was the quality of communications from the city, the professionalism of the city staff and the caring and responsiveness of both council members and city staff. The City Council and staff members have clearly generated tremendous good will from the Raymore public. This is a valuable commodity for any governing body and City to have. It gives opportunity to take some risks, while also sets a high bar to sustain that standard into the future.

No. 2: How would you like city leaders to keep you engaged to ensure that we provide the highest quality services possible?

Participants were then asked to think about how they would like city leaders to keep them engaged to ensure that the City provides the highest quality services possible. Community conversation participants provided numerous responses that were then themed and voted on by the participants.

The following themes emerged and are listed in order as prioritized by the participants.

How would you like City leaders to keep you engaged to ensure that we provide the highest quality services possible?	Percentage
Continue these types of community meetings to get community feedback in an easy, well-constructed manner	24.4%
Make improvements to the website. Needs more info, who to call, calendar of city events, who our elected officials are, what wards we are located in, etc.	20.5%
Increase communication through various methods such as Facebook, internet posts on city activities and text messages	16.1%
Increase face to face communication with Council Members and Mayor along with face-to-face town hall with ward council members	16.1%
Strengthen or expand volunteer opportunities	12.7%
Polls, surveys, other ways to communicate with the City	5.4%
Communication through community boards, weekly/quarterly reports	4.9%

Participants clearly appreciated the modality of the community conversation and the opportunity it gave to provide feedback. They have expressed the desire for more such opportunities (such as polls, survey), as well as added opportunities to engage with council members and the Mayor, perhaps at the ward and/or neighborhood level. The other priority that emerged was a desire for additional improvements to the website.

Final Questions

At the conclusion of the meeting, residents were asked two final questions: what else they would like to be captured as part of this conversation and what makes them excited for the City of Raymore. First, participants were asked, *What else is important to you that you want to make sure we capture as a part of this conversation?* Then, participants were asked *What are you taking away from this Community Conversation that makes you excited for the City of Raymore.* Brief summaries follow. All responses are detailed in the CoCreative report that has also been provided.

No. 1: What else is important to you that you want to make sure we capture as part of this conversation?

Community conversation participants offered 61 comments to this question. The Council and City are encouraged to review the complete responses. Comments ranged from the mention of specific desired amenities (dog park, own library, aquatic park) to comments regarding the quality of the tap water and the sewer system. Additionally, respondents took the chance to identify some of what they feel is most important looking forward such as:

- *Don't take the small town out of Raymore;*
- *Focus on green technology improvements;*
- *Find ways to get young citizens more involved; and*
- *More services, connections with the senior citizen community.*

Residents also made very specific suggestions related to their own neighborhoods regarding items such as promised curbing, traffic flow or turn lanes.

No. 2: What are you taking away from this Community Conversation that makes you excited for the future of the City of Raymore? What's the Headline?

Some of the most frequent responses to this question included:

What are you taking Away from this Community Conversation that makes you excited for the future of the City of Raymore – What's the Headline?
• Raymore Listens
• Sky's the Limit
• Our voices matter – leaders listen to us
• Everyone coming together in a team effort
• Engaged citizens of the community
• Raymore Cares
• The Best is Yet to Come
• Raymore has more to come home to
• Growing the Right Way
• Communicating progressive and innovative ideas
• Concerned and approachable city officials
• City government is invested in our community
• Other cities don't do this
• To know that our voices and input will make a difference
• Community coming together to provide direction for the future
• Chickens!

Recommendations

In assessing citizen satisfaction and perception of progress under the Strategic Plan, responses from community conversation participants make it clear that residents attending the community conversation are overwhelmingly positive about the progress in Raymore and hopeful about the future. Whether those changes are new infrastructure, new businesses or new community events, residents are paying attention and noticing the changes that are taking place. Of particular significance is the level of satisfaction with and praise directed towards the Council and the staff.

It is notable that no new strategic focus areas emerged based on the suggestions and polling that was conducted during the Community Conversation. This suggests that the four focus areas in the current strategic plan remain relevant. Therefore, recommendations for new initiatives are made within the context of the existing Strategic Focus Area Themes. These recommendations might be considered as new goals, new strategies under existing goals, or new action steps under existing strategies, depending upon the item. In other cases, these items might already be identified within existing action plans, but there may be a need to increase community awareness of the city's work in that area. For purposes of this summary, these priorities for the future are simply categorized under each of the Strategic Focus Areas. City staff are in a better position to assess (A complete tabulation of the responses has been provided under separate cover.)

Strategic Focus Area I: Community Identity and Connections

Community Identity and Connections – Recommendations for New Initiatives/Priorities
1. Identify and implement additional community events that bring together residents and businesses alike (perhaps at a neighborhood level).
2. Focus on efforts to develop intergenerational relationships and experiences.
3. Expand communication efforts to build on initiatives already in place.

The community events that have been instituted by the City have been well-received, leading residents to look for more opportunities for engagement. There is an opportunity to further build connectedness through strategic expansion of community events, and through city support for engagement at the neighborhood and ward level. Perhaps due to the turnout of senior citizens at the community conversation, a focus on increased engagement with seniors and intergenerational activities was a strong focus. The city might consider ways to enhance its programming for senior citizens, perhaps through its Parks and Recreation program or through partnerships with the Cass County Library. Also, from an intergenerational standpoint, there were a number of recommendations from community conversation participants about how to more effectively engage youth. The City should consider those ideas as it looks at youth programming and ways to gather more input from youth residents of the city.

The last area of improvement under community identity and connections builds on one of the City's strengths – its communications. Residents continue to look for new avenues to stay informed about what is happening and to receive information from and engage with the citizen. New initiatives in this area will continue to build the high level of public trust and support the city's transparency efforts.

Strategic Focus Area 2: Safe, Well-Designed and Beautiful Places

Safe, Well-Designed and Beautiful Places– Recommendations for New Initiatives/Priorities
1. Develop communication mechanisms specifically designed to enhance public safety.
2. Continue community policing efforts, including active involvement in neighborhoods to foster relationships with and among residents.
3. Make infrastructure improvements designed to increase safety, including enhanced street lighting, bike lanes, and roadway maintenance and improvements.
4. Develop a beautification program that includes a spectrum of initiatives from community art to well-maintained landscaping to holiday décor.
5. Implement landscaping standards for new development and enforce standards for existing development.

One new priority that emerged under this strategic focus area is the development of new communication mechanisms to enhance public safety. One possibility might be the use of Next Door or like technologies to alert neighborhoods in a targeted way of any public safety threats. It should be noted that a number of the priority ideas under this strategic focus area are already included with the city's FY 18 work plan, but residents may not be aware of some of these activities. Those not yet accomplished should be considered for inclusion in the FY 19 work plan.

Strategic Focus Area 3: Economic Vitality

Economic Vitality -- Recommendations for New Initiatives/Priorities
1. Attract businesses that will provide job opportunities for Raymore residents, including light industry, manufacturing and technology.
2. Offer resources to support small businesses, focusing on unique and locally-owned businesses.
3. Increase retail offerings, including sit-down restaurants, small anchor stores and boutiques, and entertainment options.

The priority ideas identified within the economic vitality strategic focus area reflect ongoing work of the city's economic development team. One area where additional emphasis might be placed is on the second priority item – offer resources to support small businesses, focusing on unique and locally-owned businesses. Community forum participants had a number of ideas from incubator space, to shared working space, to ongoing trainings. The City might considering identifying some specific strategies targeted at developing and retaining locally-owned small business under this strategic focus area.

Strategic Focus Area 4: High-Performing Organization

High-Performing Organization -- Recommendations for New Initiatives/Priorities
1. Expand communication efforts to build on initiatives already in place (as identified in strategic focus area 1).
2. Engage community routinely through town hall meetings, opportunities to discuss issues with elected officials, and surveys.

While the City has been commended on its strong communication and engagement with residents, clearly community conversation participants continued to focus on these areas in looking to the future. The City might look at ways to leverage existing engagements between residents and Council members, or city staff and residents to incorporate added feedback mechanisms. Utilizing various types of brief polling on issues through electronic means or at in-person events could continue to build on the resident engagement experienced at the community conversation without the need for such an extensive gathering.

Other Recommendations and Final Thoughts

A few ideas and comments from community conversation participants did not rise to the level of a common theme, but merit some mention in this report.

There were a number of references to changing and increasing diversity within the City of Raymore. These ranged from suggestions to hold more cultural events to concerns about community profiling (stopping persons walking in the community). The City should consider ways to be proactive in fostering an inclusive community, such as hosting certain cultural celebrations or building strong relationships between law enforcement and under-represented communities. One option would be to add a specific strategy related to diversity and inclusion under Goal 1.3 – Foster Opportunities for All Citizens to Feel Valued and Connected within the Raymore Community.

In addition, the City is commended for its regular updates to the City Council as well as the community regarding its strategic initiatives and its efforts to seek input on new priorities. The City is also commended for building its strategic plan focus areas into its regular agenda and budget discussions. Those efforts should continue so that the strategic plan remains as a living document, adapting to Raymore's evolving needs and opportunities. The City is also encouraged to look for additional ways to inform the residents of progress on the strategic plan's goals, and to make the public aware of those action steps that become priorities in the FY19 Work Plan.