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What is a Comparative Analysis?

A Comparative Analysis is a benchmarking exercise that is meant to measure how the Town of Raymond is doing in various categories compared to other similarly sized municipalities. The report provides a number of statistics that should help elected officials, staff, residents, business owners and anyone else who is interested in getting a better sense of how the Town operation is run. None of these statistics provide 100% clarity on any particular issue and shouldn't be interpreted that way.

What Information is Considered in the Report?

The sheer volume of data available in publicly accessible documents and reports makes it possible to develop any number of metrics for evaluating a municipal operation. To simplify its approach, and in order to avoid being seen as “cherry-picking” statistics that happen to reflect favourably on the Town in a given year, the Town will be conducting this comparative exercise every year, and also for the Town to remain as consistent as possible in terms of what metrics are considered on a year-over-year basis. This report will compare the following five benchmarks:


- 1) Revenues & Expenditures
- 2) Salaries & Wages
- 3) Long-term Debt
- 4) Tax Rates
- 5) 5-Year Assessment Growth Trend

What Municipalities is the Town Comparing itself Against?

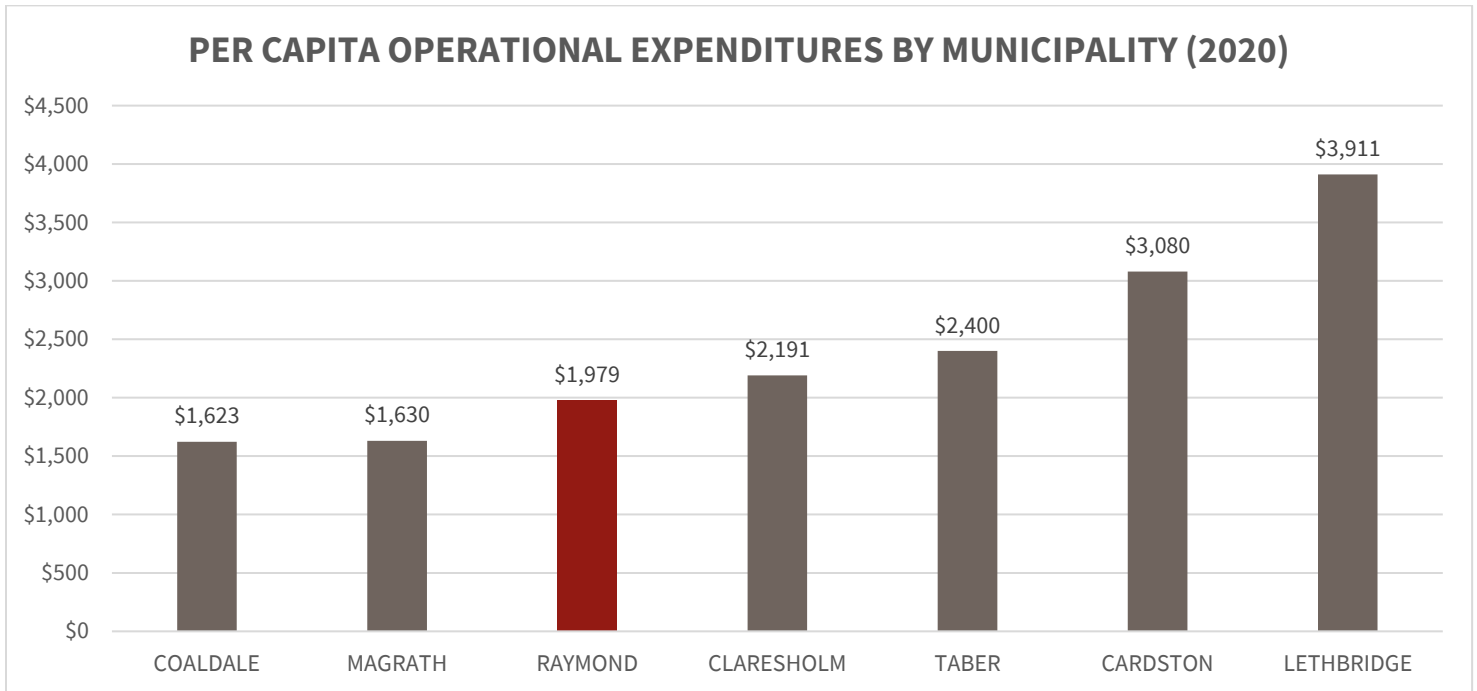
For the purposes of this report, the Town will compare itself against the following communities:

- 1) Cardston
- 2) Coaldale
- 3) Claresholm
- 4) Lethbridge
- 5) Magrath
- 6) Taber

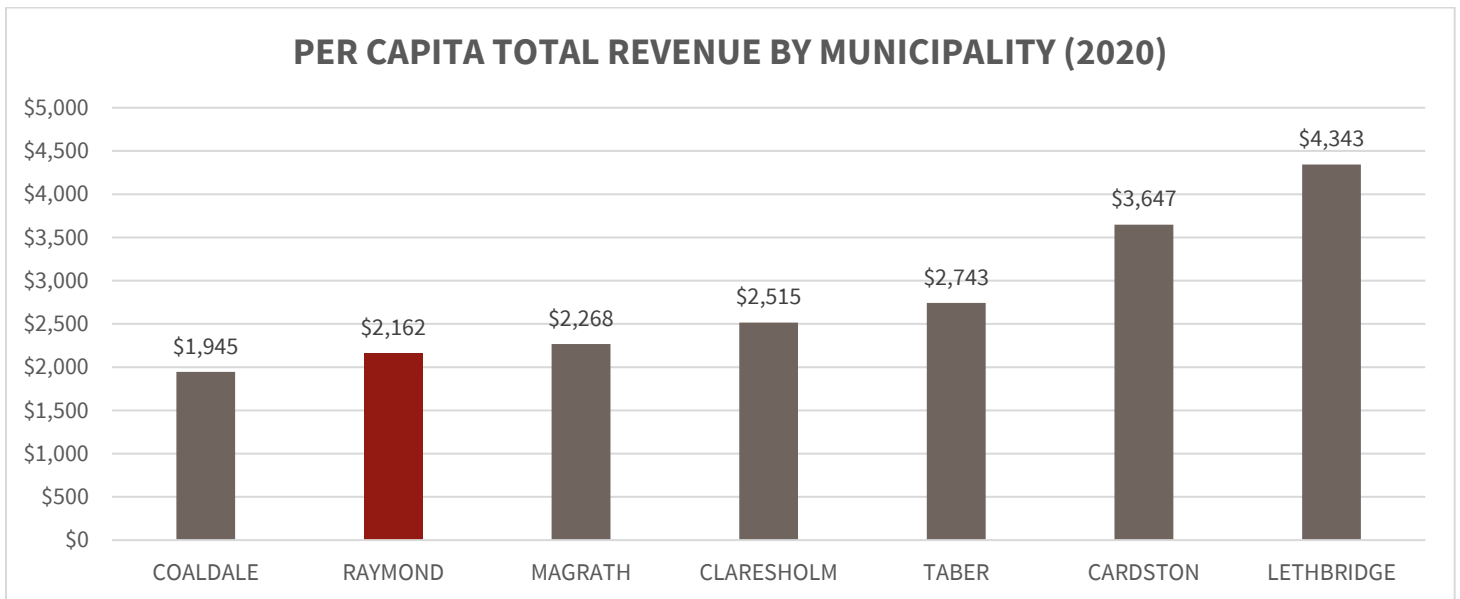
These urban municipalities were chosen due to their proximity to Raymond, population or competing markets for growth.



Benchmark 1: Revenues & Expenditures



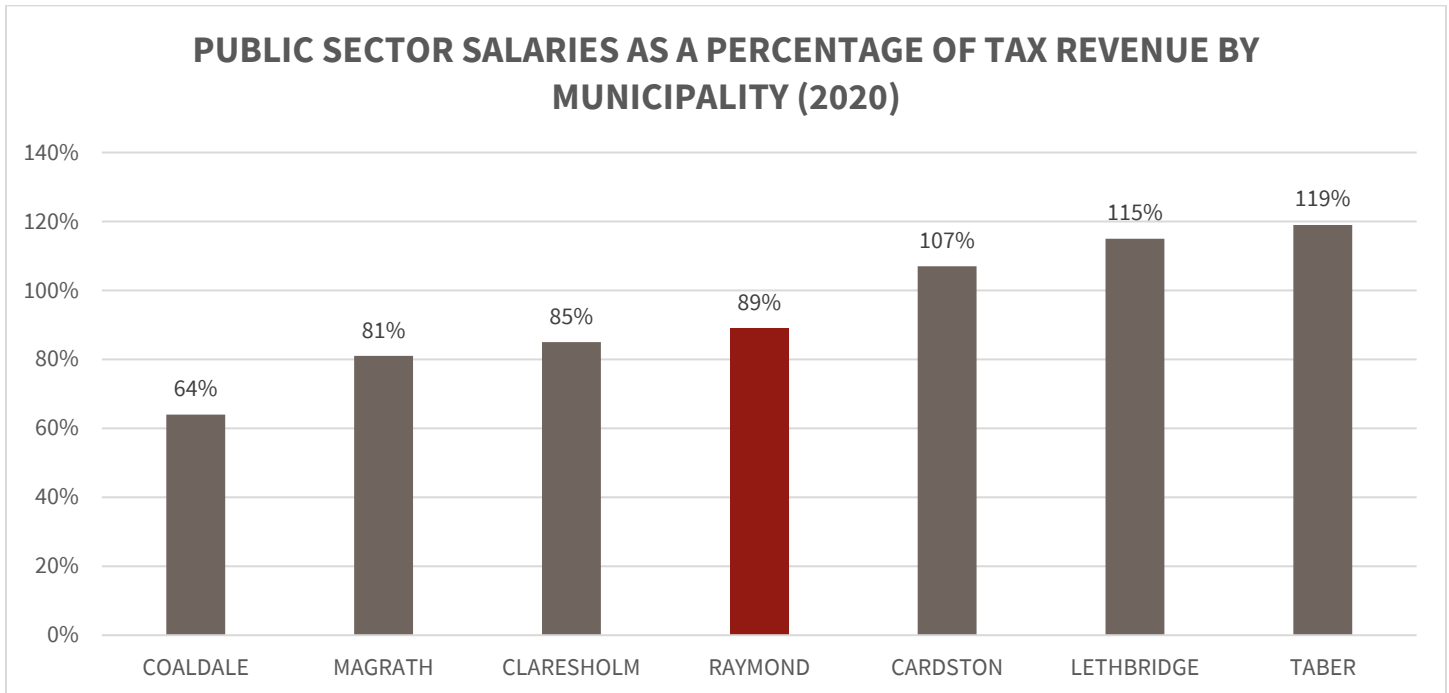
When you take the Total Operational Expenditures for the Town and divide it by our population, you get a dollar amount per person. Using this comparison, Raymond is doing well against Claresholm, Taber, Cardston, and Lethbridge, but does have a higher operating cost per capita than Coaldale and Magrath.



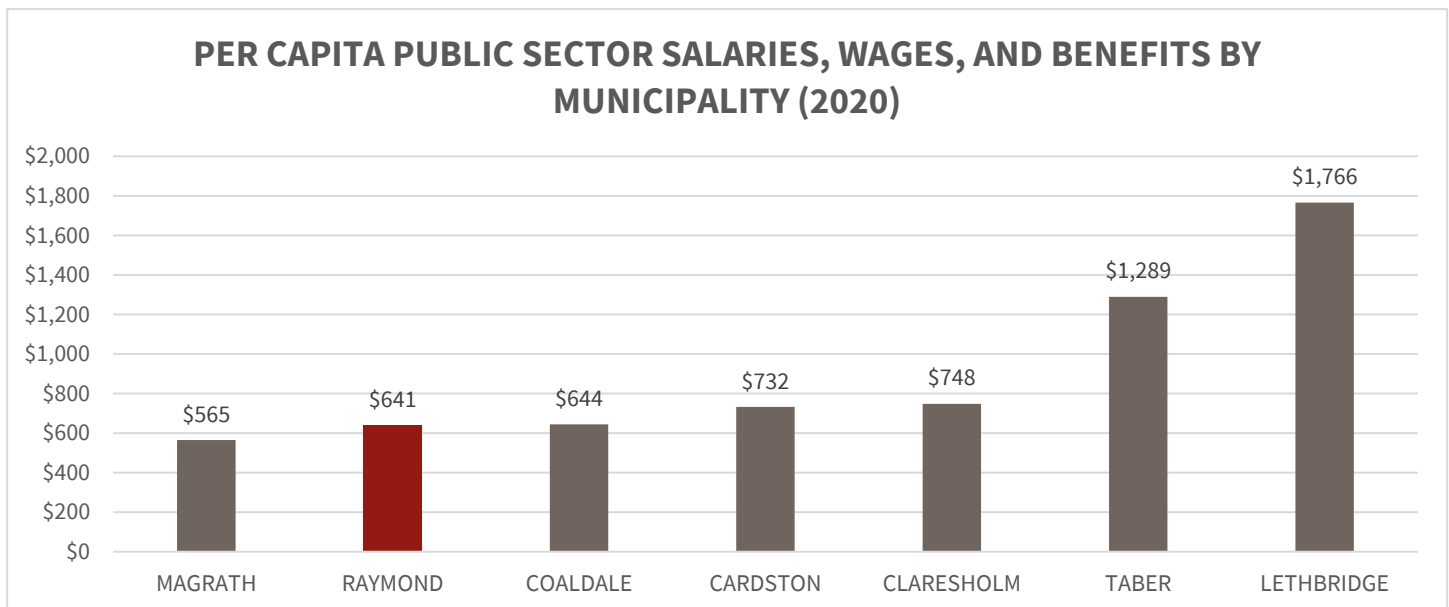
Total Revenue Per Capita however is a challenge. Raymond's high residential tax base (approx. 95%) vs our non-residential tax base (approx. 5%) means that more dependance is on home taxes, user fees and charges.



Benchmark 2: Salaries & Wages

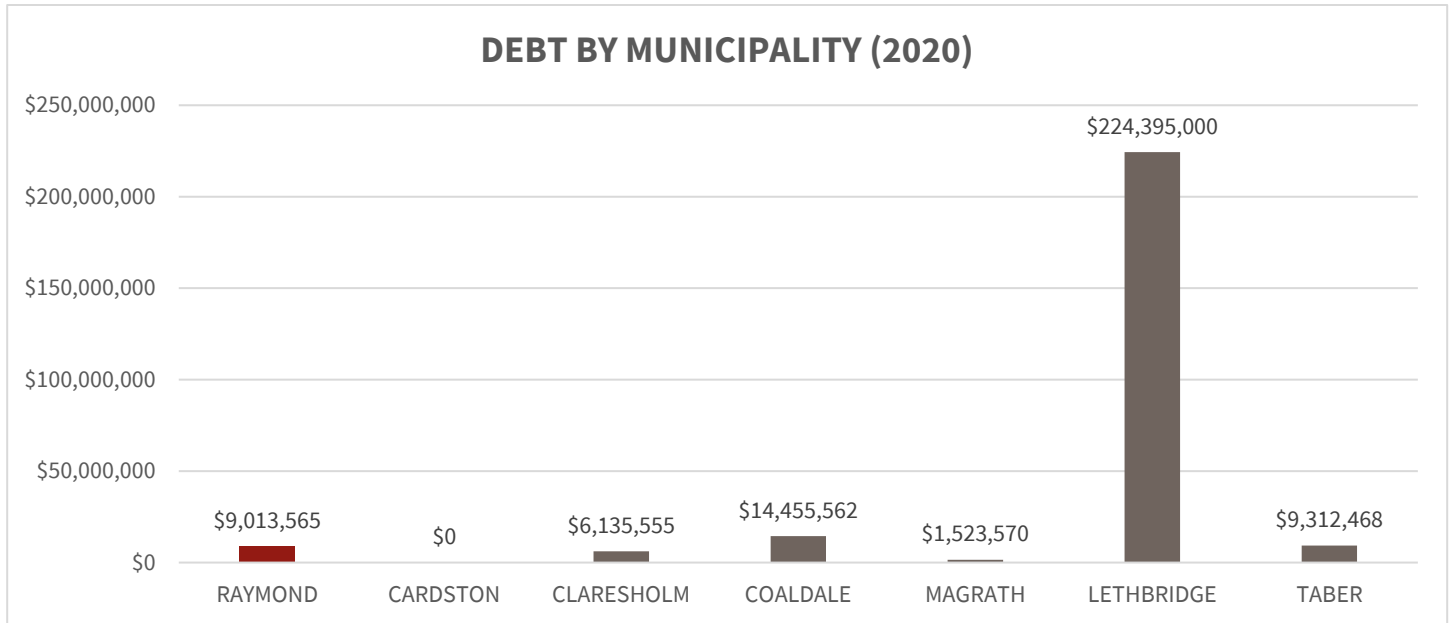


As a reflection of total wages (including Fire dept, Council and all town staff) vs tax revenue (not including user fees & charges or grants) Raymond is right in the middle of the pack in this area. Raymond also owns and operates the Hell's Creek Golf & Footgolf Course which adds additional staffing related expenditures that the other communities do not incur, with the exception of Cardston.

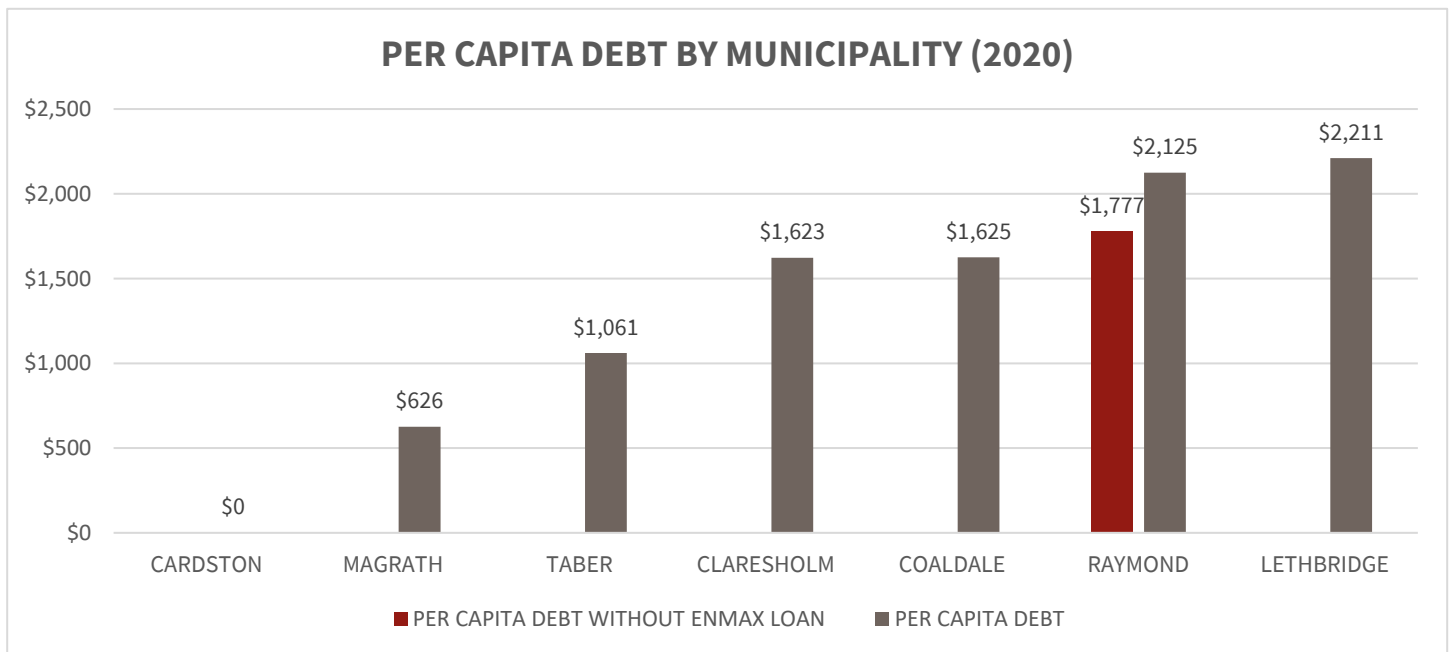


When you compare the costs of paying for all Town employees (including seasonal and golf course staff) the Town pays less per person than all the comparative municipalities, with the exception of Magrath (which is almost half the size of Raymond). Between 2019 and 2020, the Town reduced wage expenditures by over \$1.1 million dollars.

Benchmark 3: Long-term Debt



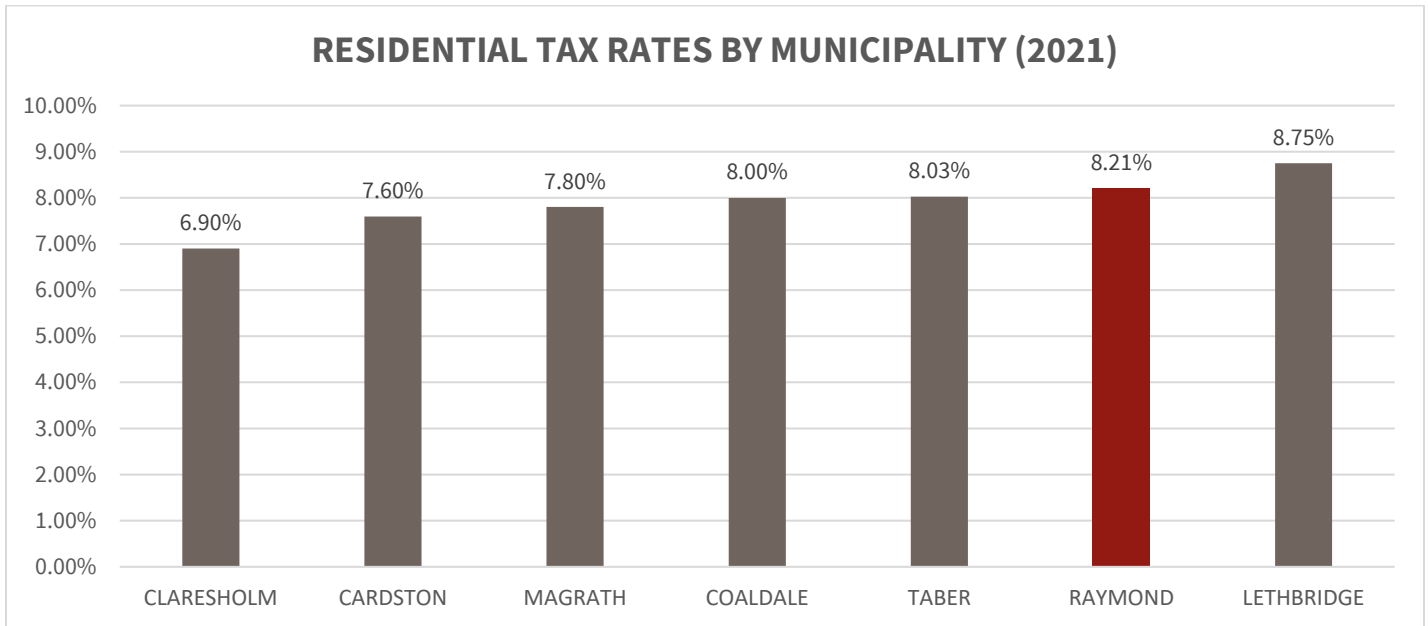
Total debt load per municipality is regulated through the Municipal Government Act (MGA). The MGA also establishes debt limits and debt servicing limits for each municipality in Alberta. In 2020, the Town had utilized 75.8% of its \$11,887,140 debt limit and 45.8% of its \$1,981,190 debt servicing limit. Raymond has the 4th highest total debt load of the sample group.



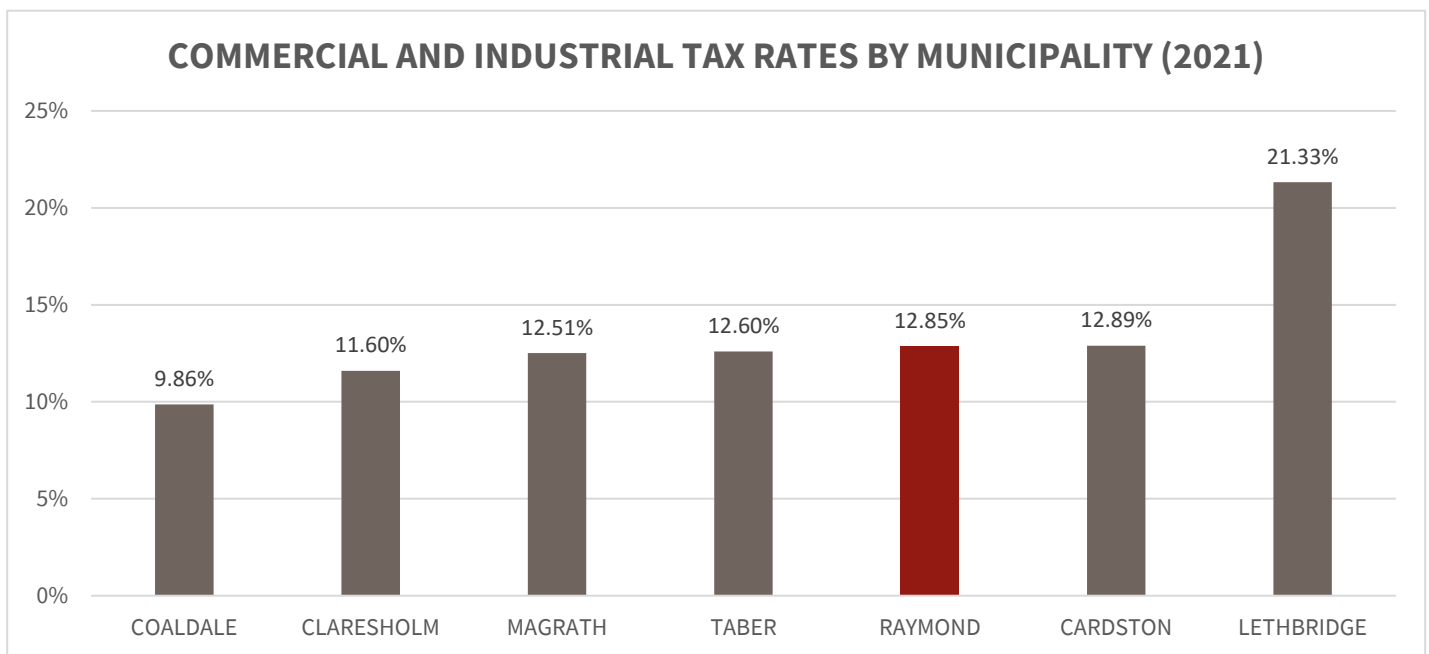
Not all debt is the same, however. Of the \$9,013,565 of long-term debt that the Town has incurred, \$1,476,889 of Raymond’s debt is part of our Municipal Solar Project. This project created an entirely new revenue stream for the Town that is independent of taxes and user fees. Without the ENMAX debt, the Town’s per capita debt is still the 2nd highest in the sample group, but more comparable to Claresholm and Coaldale.



Benchmark 4: Tax Rates



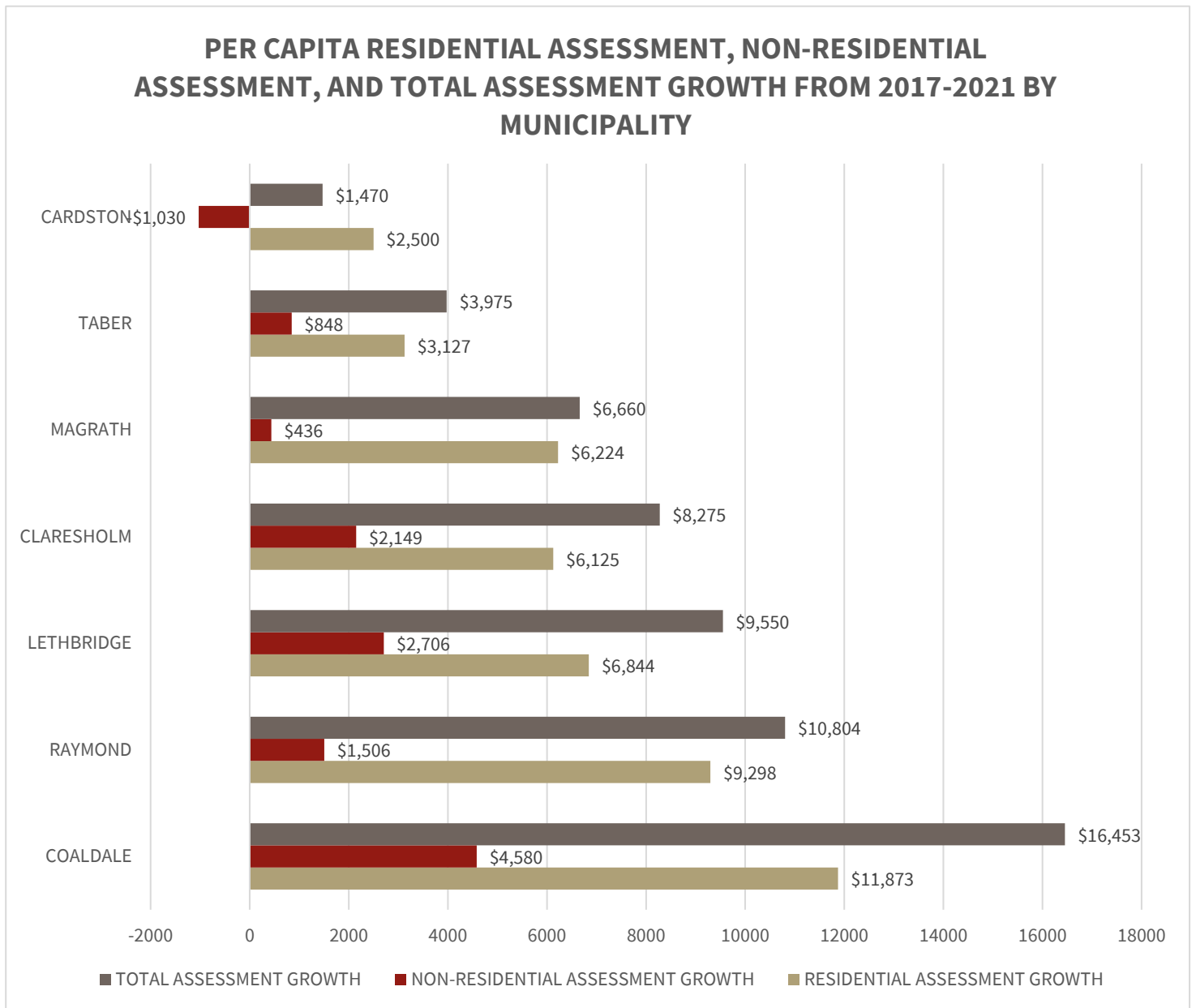
Mill rates are 1 of 2 parts that determine how much someone pays in property taxes. The other is the assessed value of the property. In recent years, Raymond’s mill rate has increased and is currently the second highest of the comparison group. The increases can largely be attributed to increasing RCMP funding and supporting debenture payments from the Town.



Council has been trying to balance the impact of rising provincial costs between homeowners and business owners. In 2020, our Non-Residential mill rate is the 3rd highest in the comparator group.



Benchmark 5: 5-Year Assessment Growth Trend



Between 2017 and 2021, the Town experienced \$45,819,400 dollars in new growth. Of that amount, \$39,433,580 was new residential assessment, and \$6,385,820 was new non-residential assessment. Per capita, Raymond added almost \$11,000 of new assessment per person during the term. This rate is second only to the Town of Coaldale in the sample group.



Final Thoughts

Since 2006, successive Councils have shared the vision of growing Raymond's assessment base by investing in amenities and services that attract young families to our community. Our overall assessment base has more than tripled in the intervening 14 years and we have welcomed over 1,000 new residents to our community. This strategy is working and will continue to have a positive impact on our community for decades to come.

With each election comes an opportunity for the new Council to re-evaluate the direction the Town is heading. We would like to thank those who have put their names forward to make a difference in our community. With 2 candidates vying for Mayor, and 14 candidates competing for 6 Council positions, the health of our local democracy is not in question. Administration is looking forward to working with whomever is elected to achieve their collective vision for Raymond. We are confident that our future will be in good hands with our new Council during their 2021-2024 Council Term.

Please make voting a priority on October 18, 2021. Your voice matters!

The image below is our out-going Council's "Commitment Statement" that has guided their decisions throughout their term.

Our Commitment:

- We recognize that different values and perspectives are inevitable; our approach to conversations is with the understanding that everyone has something to contribute.
- We consistently pursue the best interests of the community.
- We create conditions for success by anticipating and adapting to changing and evolving needs and environments.
- We accept responsibility for and support efforts to achieve better outcomes. Transparency and citizen engagement ensure accountability.
- We strive to work together as individuals, organizations, municipalities and communities to enhance our capacity.

