

# Quality of Life Report

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RIVERDALE MUNICIPALITY



Matthewson  
& Co.

We Build Communities

Prepared by: Matthewson & Co.  
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## Mission, Vision and Principles:

### Our Mission:

The purpose of Riverdale Council is to provide a safe, healthy and sustainable community for everyone.

### Our Vision:

Riverdale is a safe, family-oriented municipality facilitating opportunities that encourage a modern, progressive community for all.

### Our Principles:

- Transparency and Accountability
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Due Process
- Honesty and Integrity
- Future Impact and Sustainability
- Needs Driven and Evidence-Based
- Committed and Reliable

## Riverdale Council & Staff

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
Mayor	Heather Lamb	mayorlamb@riverdalemb.ca
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Community Services Manager	Christine Walker	
RCC Operators	Mel Gross Steven Hay	
RCC Operator Part-Time	Vacant	
Operations Manager	Darrel Link	

Equipment Operators	Derek Kolesar David Dickenson	
Utility Operator	Jeff Worth	
Public Works Operator	Mark Freeman Ian Brennan Jason Verboom	
Casual	Byron McMurachy	
Landfill Attendant	Norm Johnson	

## Introduction:

The Council and Administration are committed to working with the public to develop a Strategic Plan with actionable items.

Matthewson & Co. and Riverdale Municipality work through this process together. So far, we've:

1. Had an in-person strategic planning session with Matthewson & Co.
2. Matthewson & Co. assisted with publicizing a quality-of-life survey.
3. Matthewson & Co. analyzed the data from the quality-of-life survey.
4. Matthewson & Co. reviewed Council meeting minutes going back three years.
5. Matthewson & Co. reviewed the Statistics Canada census.
6. Matthewson & Co. wrote this draft to act as a point of reference to be reviewed by the Council and the public.

Once the Council and public have reviewed this draft and had the opportunity to make comments or suggestions, Matthewson & Co. will update the document and begin implementing the plan.

## Quality of Life Survey Results:

### Demographics:

The survey received 173 responses, representing almost 10% of the population (not including children).

64.7% of respondents were female, and 33.5% were male—this suggests that we may need to try different strategies to engage the male population in future attempts.

98.3% of respondents' first language is English. Statistics Canada tells us that there are non-English speakers in the community. We should also make a point to engage those residents in future attempts.

The survey responses represented many age groups, the majority between 31 and 40 years old. This could indicate that all age groups are actively engaged in their community or that Riverdale has effective engagement techniques.

Most respondents (42.8%) have lived in Riverdale for over 20 years, though 2.3% moved into the community in the last year. New people would move to the community for many reasons, including its attractiveness, economic growth, population trends, and real estate trends.

76.7% of respondents are urban residents, and 23.3% are rural. This could impact responses to things like road conditions.

### Attractive Attributes:

Riverdale residents shared many things they enjoy about the community and what sets it apart from other communities of the same size in Manitoba. These are some of the things that came up several times.

- Respondents indicate a strong sense of community in Riverdale and see the community as quiet and safe.
- The proximity to Brandon makes Riverdale an attractive community for commuters and quick trips to the city.
- The nearby lakes and Provincial Park, with their campgrounds, fishing, beach, etc., are a significant draw for youth and young adults and tourism.
- The rink is enjoyed by many.
- The ambulance services and emergency services available are appreciated.
- There are a variety of local businesses where necessities can be found, although some businesses have limited hours of operation.
- There are many sports/recreation opportunities available.

### Opportunities for Improvements:

- Some roads and sidewalks need improvement.
- There is a need for improved accessibility of local businesses and municipal facilities.
- Many people said the taxes and water rates are very high.
- Many stated that there is very little communication between the Council and the residents regarding local events, job postings, town meetings, and town information like the municipal election process.
- Many residents think the quality of life would increase with the addition of a splash park or swimming pool.
- Residents are confused about how they are being policed and would like to see the local police force reinstated.
- Residents would like to see more options for restaurants and stores and extended business hours to increase job opportunities and convenience for residents. Many currently go to Brandon for shopping and services.
- Many voiced their concern over the hotel's closing and would like to have it reopened or replaced.

### Arts and Culture:

21.2% of respondents would be “for” the town investing money to enhance arts and culture programming. However, 60.6% of respondents indicated that it depends on what exactly they would be investing in. The most popular arts and culture initiatives suggested by residents were as follows:

- More programs for kids and youth, including dancing, art, cooking, gymnastics and music classes.
- More community events for the whole community, such as farmers' markets, dances, community days, festivals, all classes above, and live music.
- Inclusion and education of Indigenous culture.

### Recreation:

The following recreation opportunities were the top mentioned throughout the survey:

- Hockey, skating, curling, and the rink in general.
- The gym.
- Lake activities, including the beach, boat launch, and fishing.
- Golf.
- Soccer and rugby are enjoyed, but there are complaints about the frequent flooding of the soccer field.

### Summary of Quality-of-Life Survey Results:

Overall, respondents are generally happy with Riverdale's quiet, small-town living but felt the Town could communicate better with residents and provide more opportunities to be involved in community decision-making. Residents are confused by the policing in town and would prefer their local police be reinstated. There also seem to be concerns regarding a lack of programs and events/activities aimed at every age group and for community-wide events and celebrations.

## SWOT Analysis:

This section includes Riverdale's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on reviewing meeting minutes, the Quality-of-Life survey responses, and Matthewson & Co.'s assumptions based on Riverdale's website and social media page. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

### Strengths:

- The municipality is considered small, safe, quiet and friendly.
- The municipality is located close to Brandon.
- Riverdale offers most major services.
- Riverdale has a great rink/recreation facility.
- There are lakes and a Provincial Park nearby.
- Many outdoor trails enjoyed by residents.
- The presence of law enforcement is appreciated.
- The community is seen as "family friendly."
- The availability of health care services.
- There are two schools.
- Many amenities are available (pharmacy, gas station, grocery store, restaurants, hardware, etc.).
- Municipal services are generally seen as effective.
- There are childcare options available.
- Recreation opportunities, including the golf course, playgrounds, camping, fishing, gun range, sports, the library, etc.
- New people are moving into the community.

### Weaknesses:

- Road conditions and maintenance are a concern for many.
- Some respondents consider taxes and water rates to be high.
- Lack of community events or programs (or communication of such.)
- Some business hours impede the opportunity for local shopping.
- Issues with pets roaming freely.
- No senior transportation services.
- No car wash.
- A perceived lack of effort to welcome newcomers.
- A perceived lack of local jobs.
- Some personal properties would benefit from maintenance and beautification.
- No dog park.
- Traffic speed is a concern to some.



### Opportunities:

- Use the proximity to Brandon and the Provincial Park in marketing efforts.
- There is an opportunity for a group to start a daycare cooperative.
- There is an opportunity to apply for infrastructure funding.
- There is an opportunity to improve the accessibility of the community.
- There is an opportunity to determine the current demand for accommodations. The results can be used for potential funding or even investment in the future.
- There is an opportunity to inform the community about how taxes and water rates are calculated/set.
- There are opportunities for funding community programs and events.
- There is an opportunity to ask local businesses if they would consider extending business hours even one day a week so those who work late or out of town can still support local businesses.
- There is an opportunity to improve communications between Council and residents.
- There is an opportunity for funding or fundraising for a dog park.
- Town beautification and yard care bylaws could help improve the community's aesthetics.

### Threats:

- The local police force is no longer. (RCMP only.)
- Some poor road conditions, potholes, and outdated infrastructure.
- Perceived lack of recreational facilities, events, and social activities for all age groups.
- Minimal affordable housing.
- Power supply in some areas of town is prone to outages.
- Lack of accommodations for out-of-towners.
- Though childcare opportunities exist, there aren't enough availabilities to service everyone who needs them.
- Perceived lack of communication/transparency from Council to residents.
- Employment opportunities are considered insufficient.

### Strategies for Addressing the SWOT:

1. Use Brandon's proximity as a marketing tool to attract those interested in small-town living but appreciate being close to the city.
2. The proximity to the Provincial Park can also be used as a marketing tool, though it would be a more effective strategy if there were somewhere for tourists to stay in Rivers.
3. Focus on marketing. The community has several things that would entice someone to live there. It is small, safe, and quiet, close to parks and larger centers, healthcare services

available, and two schools. Potential residents won't know this about the community unless a point is made to *promote* it!

4. Engage the community. Residents should be informed about events, boards, committees to join, recreation opportunities, volunteer opportunities, meeting minutes, and more!
5. Use public meetings to improve transparency between the Council and residents. Meetings can be live-streamed to improve attendance and are more accessible! Residents think their taxes are too high, possibly because they are unaware of how we calculate taxes. "Taxes are way lower in larger centres." Yes, because they have a larger tax base to support the hundreds of other budget items!! People are confused about how the town is being policed, with most wanting the local police back; there are some complaints that the RCMP take too long to get to town, with others stating that the police presence is too aggressive. Explaining why the decisions regarding the policing of the municipality were made may help clear up some of this confusion.
6. Prepare for infrastructure grants, such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure, to improve road conditions. Having quotes, studies, and money in place before applying for funding improves your chances of being approved and is generally a requirement for grant applications.
7. Prepare for funding opportunities for projects that approve community accessibility, including sidewalks and municipal facilities.
8. Research funding for accommodations. This could include tourism funding for tiny houses, huts, glamping tents, etc.
9. Prepare for funding opportunities to support community programs and events. Surveys like this one (QOL) can support funding applications because they show that you are engaged with the community.
10. Improve communication between the Council and residents by using multiple communication channels. Targeting online and offline residents, such as social media, the website, email notifications, monthly newsletters, and community bulletin boards is important.
11. Host town hall meetings at least annually. Other ideas are open houses or focus groups.
12. There are many ways to address the issue of free-roaming pets. Consider leash laws, public awareness campaigns, a 24/7 animal control hotline, dog parks, etc.
13. Establish a senior transportation program. Partnering with local non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, or senior centres may be possible.
14. Develop a welcome package for newcomers, including informational materials, contact information, events, orientation sessions, etc. A local volunteer may be interested in buddying with newcomers to show them around.
15. Create a job board for local and surrounding community job postings, including Brandon, due to the short commute.
16. Establish clear bylaws that define what constitutes an unruly yard, including specifics on grass height, debris presence, and landscaping maintenance. Consistently enforce the bylaw through

regular inspections and issuing warnings or fines for non-compliance. Other ideas include setting up a tool library where residents can borrow gardening and maintenance tools for free or at a low cost or organizing beautification contests with prizes to encourage residents to maintain their yards.

17. Look into funding to support a dog park.
18. Create a list of available rentals in the community. A needs assessment might be the first step to securing funding for housing project(s).
19. Develop an asset management plan for addressing the road/sidewalk improvements where funding isn't available.

### Implementation Plan:

To be determined.