Colchester. . .Looking Ahead

our community ◆ our government ◆ our future

2009 Edition

A Survey of Colchester Businesses on
Municipal Services, Governance and Future Directions
for the Municipality of Colchester

November 2009

This survey is being conducted for the Municipality of Colchester
with the cooperation of the School of Public Administration, Dalhousie University

Thank you for participating in the ***Colchester Business Survey***. Your contribution to this review of municipal service and governance is very important.

Please answer all of the questions. If you want to comment on any of the questions, please use the **Comments** section at the end of the questionnaire. If a question does not apply to you, write "NA" for "not applicable" next to the question.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Ms. Kim Paterson at 897-3164. She will be glad to help.

Most of the questions can be answered by checking the appropriate circle that corresponds to your choice of response. For some we need your written comment. Your responses are necessary to make certain the survey findings represent everyone in the Municipality.

Thanks again!

Section #1 The Municipal Council at work

Please answer the following questions by checking the response that best expresses your assessment or opinion ❍ ✓

1. Generally speaking, how much attention have you given to the work and decisions of Colchester Municipal Council in this past year? **Would you say you pay . . .**

10.3%	A lot of attention
54.3%	Some attention
35.3%	Not much attention

2. Council usually meets twice a month to review issues, develop policies, set budgets and oversee the general direction for the Municipality. **How are we doing?** (*Please check your level of satisfaction with the performance of Council for each item* ❍ ✓)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Unsure / Don't Know
a. Overall performance	*2%*	*59%*	*5%*	*2%*	*32%*
b. Decisions made by Council	*4%*	*57%*	*7%*	*1%*	*31%*
c. Availability of Mayor to public	*15%*	*42%*	*5%*	*0%*	*38%*
d. Availability of Councillors to public	*12%*	*52%*	*4%*	*2%*	*30%*
e. Speed of response by Council to Municipal issues	*2%*	*48%*	*9%*	*2%*	*40%*

Section #2 Some Questions about Programs and Services

3. How do you find out about municipal activities? Which of the following is **most** important to you as a source of information concerning each activity? *(Please check the most important source of information for each activity.* ❍ ✓*)*

	Colchester Newsletter	Colchester Website	Radio	Newspaper
a. Council agenda, discussions and decisions	*51%*	*3%*	*17%*	*44%*
b. Other Municipal programs and services	*55%*	*3%*	*12%*	*39%*

4. Did you contact any municipal department during the past 12 months either by phone, e-mail or in person?

   a. Yes **Go to Question 5** *(39.4%)*
   b. No **Go to Question 6** *(60.6%)*

5. **[If YES],** how satisfied were you with the service you received in terms of the following? *(Please check your level of satisfaction. ❍ ✓)*

		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
a.	Time spent waiting	*23%*	*60%*	*13%*	*4%*
b.	Time to complete your business	*20%*	*63%*	*11%*	*7%*
c.	Courtesy of staff	*43%*	*53%*	*2%*	*2%*
d.	Speed of response to inquiries	*28%*	*60%*	*6%*	*6%*
e.	Quality of service	*25%*	*58%*	*10%*	*6%*
f.	Overall performance	*23%*	*62%*	*9%*	*6%*

6. Colchester municipal staff is responsible for the delivery of the Municipality's programs and services on a daily basis. **How are we doing?** *(Please check your level of satisfaction with the performance of the municipal staff for each program or service. ❍ ✓* ***If you have not used a program or service****, please check that.)*

		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	*Have not used the service*
a.	Building Inspection Services	*8%*	*31%*	*3%*	*4%*	*55%*
b.	Development Control Service	*1%*	*22%*	*3%*	*1%*	*74%*
c.	Emergency Management Services	*3%*	*19%*	*1%*	*1%*	*77%*
d.	Engineering, Public Works	*2%*	*24%*	*6%*	*3%*	*65%*
e.	Property Information Service	*6%*	*39%*	*5%*	*1%*	*50%*
f.	Finance, Tax Office	*6%*	*50%*	*3%*	*0%*	*41%*
g.	Land Use, Planning Zoning	*3%*	*31%*	*3%*	*2%*	*62%*
h.	Municipal Sidewalk-maintenance, repair	*3%*	*23%*	*5%*	*3%*	*67%*
i.	Municipal Sidewalk-snow removal	*3%*	*38%*	*5%*	*3%*	*52%*

j.	Municipal Streets – maintenance, repair	*4%*	*38%*	*14%*	*8%*	*36%*
k.	Municipal Streets – snow removal	*4%*	*48%*	*8%*	*5%*	*35%*
l.	Water supply and distribution	*1%*	*31%*	*4%*	*0%*	*65%*
m.	Public sewer system maintenance	*3%*	*46%*	*3%*	*1%*	*48%*
n.	The Municipal website	*1%*	*24%*	*0%*	*0%*	*75%*
o.	The Municipal newsletter	*15%*	*65%*	*1%*	*1%*	*18%*

7. There are organizations that exist to strengthen economic development within our region. We would like to know your level of satisfaction with the performance of the following organizations. *(Please check your level of satisfaction ❍ ✓.)*

		Very Satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Unsure/ Don't know***
a.	Colchester Regional Development Agency	*10%*	*32%*	*7%*	*5%*	*46%*
b.	Central Nova Tourist Association	*1%*	*34%*	*9%*	*3%*	*53%*

8. Have you had to use the services of your local Fire Department?

   a. Yes **Go to Question 11** *(20.4%)*
   b. No **Go to Question 12** *(79.6%)*

9. **[If YES],** how much confidence do you have in the capability of your **local volunteer fire department** in each of the following areas? *(Please check your level of satisfaction. ❍✓)*

		A Great Deal	**A Fair Amount**	**Not Very Much**	**None At All**
a.	Quickly respond to a fire emergency	*96%*	*0%*	*4%*	*0%*
b.	Save lives	*83%*	*13%*	*0%*	*4%*
c.	Preserve property	*70%*	*26%*	*0%*	*4%*
d.	Provide fire prevention education	*50%*	*38%*	*13%*	*0%*
e.	Provide the service in a knowledgeable and professional manner	*76%*	*24%*	*0%*	*0%*

10. The RCMP in Colchester County would like to know your priorities for policing within our

Municipality. Please review the following areas of policing priorities and put and check the three that are most important to you. Possible policing priorities – check top three.

Possible policing priorities – check top three	❍ ✓
a. Impaired driving	76.7%
b. Break and enter	53.4%
c. Damage to property, vandalism	75.0%
d. Speeding	18.1%
e. Seniors' initiatives	4.3%
f. Youth initiatives	16.4%
g. Drug enforcement	44.0%
h. Use of all-terrain vehicles	9.5%
i. Other – please explain:_____	1.7%

11. How would you rank the importance of the following factors as they relate to the continuation and future growth of your specific business? (*Please check the level of importance* ❍ ✓)

Business Resources:	**Very Important**	**Somewhat Important**	**Not Important**	**Unsure/ Don't know**
a. Labour skills & education	48%	33%	11%	8%
b. Labour availability - local	53%	29%	10%	7%
c. Labour availability - through immigration	8%	20%	54%	18%
d. Skill enhancement programs	33%	36%	20%	11%
Services:				
e. Central water	21%	22%	38%	19%
f. Central sewer	33%	22%	28%	17%
g. Sidewalks	20%	31%	31%	18%
h. Paved roads	69%	21%	5%	5%
i. Street lighting	38%	32%	20%	11%
j. Land-use planning, zoning	32%	33%	23%	12%
k. Fire protection	73%	20%	3%	4%
l. Police protection	74%	19%	3%	3%
m. Municipal Taxes	50%	38%	7%	5%
Location:				
n. Highway access	53%	32%	10%	5%
o. Railway access	7%	21%	62%	10%

p. Airport access	*10%*	*28%*	*49%*	*12%*
q. Visibility	*41%*	*37%*	*15%*	*8%*
r. Close to population	*34%*	*36%*	*22%*	*9%*
s. Affordable land & development costs	*47%*	*26%*	*17%*	*9%*
t. Availability of vacant land	*22%*	*37%*	*34%*	*8%*
Personal Resources:				
u. Housing Costs	*38%*	*40%*	*15%*	*7%*
v. Shopping Choices	*25%*	*45%*	*23%*	*7%*
w. Health Care Facilities	*70%*	*21%*	*6%*	*3%*
x. Educational Facilities	*55%*	*27%*	*14%*	*4%*
y. Recreation/Cultural Amenities	*38%*	*44%*	*14%*	*4%*
z. Quality of Living Environment	*53%*	*38%*	*5%*	*3%*

12. **From the point of view of your business**, what do you consider to be Colchester County's strengths and weaknesses?

Strengths: *(88.6%)* (individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)
Weaknesses: *(90.0%)* (individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)

13. As a community, we want to be in a position to attract new businesses and expand our existing commercial base. **How important are the following programs and services for the continued growth of our business community?** (*Please check the level of importance* ❍ ✓)

Capital Works:	**Very Important**	**Somewhat Important**	**Not Important**	**No Opinion**
a. Regional transportation and roadway improvements	*74%*	*20%*	*0%*	*7%*
b. Municipal industrial park development	*36%*	*45%*	*5%*	*14%*
c. Infrastructure investments in. . .				
water	*42%*	*35%*	*10%*	*13%*
sewer	*45%*	*37%*	*6%*	*12%*
road improvements	*67%*	*23%*	*3%*	*7%*
sidewalk	*34%*	*37%*	*18%*	*12%*
lighting	*43%*	*32%*	*14%*	*10%*
d. Public transit	*20%*	*35%*	*31%*	*14%*
Municipal Programs				
e. Increased supply of land zoned commercial and industrial	*22%*	*49%*	*13%*	*16%*
f. Waste management				
garbage collection	*59%*	*29%*	*8%*	*4%*
compost collection	*49%*	*34%*	*15%*	*3%*
recyclables collection	*56%*	*32%*	*9%*	*3%*
g. Promotional materials and programs	*24%*	*55%*	*13%*	*8%*
h. Land use controls aimed to preserve Colchester's rural character	*36%*	*47%*	*10%*	*6%*
Tourism Promotion:	**Very Important**	**Somewhat Important**	**Not Important**	**No Opinion**
i. Sponsorship of festivals & special events	*40%*	*39%*	*15%*	*5%*
j. Organizing & coordinating community events	*31%*	*51%*	*13%*	*5%*
k. Convention centre	*31%*	*41%*	*20%*	*8%*
l. Additional tourist information centres	*18%*	*44%*	*30%*	*8%*
m. Campgrounds, parks and other amenities	*30%*	*42%*	*21%*	*7%*
Business Support:				
n. Development of incubator malls	*5%*	*44%*	*29%*	*22%*

o. Development on an "eco" industrial park (Debert)	*25%*	*43%*	*19%*	*14%*
p. Available commercial buildings/space	*16%*	*56%*	*18%*	*10%*
q. Business development programs	*27%*	*59%*	*9%*	*6%*
r. Skills development & upgrading programs	*43%*	*49%*	*5%*	*3%*
Community Enhancement Programs				
s. Main street beautification	*34%*	*50%*	*9%*	*6%*
t. Roadside clean-up	*67%*	*31%*	*1%*	*2%*

14. Why did you choose to locate your business in the Municipality of Colchester?

- *Most responses cited historical/personal/family reasons for being in Colchester*
- *Colchester's central location and community attributes were mentioned by some*

15. Looking 10 years into the future, do you see your business: (Please check all that apply ❍ ✓)

33%	Expanding
27%	Remaining the same
9%	Downsizing
27%	Under new ownership
3%	Relocating outside of the Municipality
15%	Unsure, don't know

16. [**If considering relocating**] Why will you be relocating your business outside of the Municipality of Colchester?

(individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)

Section # 3 Financial Matters

17. Considering the types of services your business receives (ie. infrastructure, tourism promotion, sponsorship of economic development activities, etc.) how would you rank the value of these services relative to the commercial taxes your business pays? (*Please check your assessment* ❍ ✓)

5%	Excellent value
22%	Good value
35%	Fair value
22%	Poor value
16%	Unsure, don't know

18. The following statements focus on the municipal taxes and budget for the Municipality of Colchester. Please note whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree by checking the appropriate space. ❍ ✓

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I would be willing to pay more taxes to increase services and programs I would like to have	*23%*	*54%*	*21%*	*3%*
b. I would support cuts to some services I use if property taxes were lowered in the Municipality	*8%*	*43%*	*39%*	*10%*
c. I believe my assessment reflects a fair market value for my property	*3%*	*12%*	*79%*	*5%*

Section # 4 Looking to the Future

The following section contains questions on Active Transportation, Sustainable Communities and future Municipal programs and services

19. Is your company actively implementing "green" programs at this time?

Yes	*74%*
No	*26%*

20. If you are implementing "green" programs what types have you initiated?

Alternative heat/ cooling source	*29%*
Energy audit	*19%*
Employee car pooling	*9%*
Installing energy efficient machinery	*28%*
Reducing trucking costs	*26%*
Reducing traditional energy use & costs	*43%*
Waste reduction & recycling programs	*83%*
Waste exchange with other businesses	*15%*
Other	*4%*

21. Do you require assistance to become more sustainable as a company and if so what type of assistance would be of benefit?

Business does not require assistance	*53%*
Information on programs offered	*29%*
Energy audit	*10%*
Financial (grants & loans)	*25%*
Support network or information exchange with other businesses;	*4%*
Other	*3%*

22. Looking to the future of the Municipality of Colchester, what are the **three most important things (programs, policies, services)** that you think the Municipality should address over the next 5 to 10 years?

For the future, #1	(individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)
For the future, #2	(individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)
For the future, #3	(individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)

Section #5 A Little About You

Information in this section provides us with a general picture of those who respond and will be used for the purpose of interpreting this survey only.

23. Length of time your business has operated in Colchester.	*29.5 (Average)* Number of years		
24. Would you say the market your business serves is: (Please circle appropriate letter)	a. Local (ie. neighbourhood, town, or county)		*50%*
	b. Regional (ie. northeastern Nova Scotia)		*29%*
	c. Provincial/Atlantic Canada		*29%*
	d. National		*7%*
	e. International		*10%*
25. What is the size of your business?	*7.43 (Average)* Number of Employees in Colchester?		
26. Are you a member of the following organizations?		**Yes**	**No**
	a. Chamber of Commerce	*25*	*82*
	b. Central Nova Tourist Association	*5*	*95*
27. Identify the Region in which your business is located (Place . ✓ in appropriate box)	West Colchester		*16.7%*
	North Colchester		*14.0%*
	South Colchester		*21.1%*
	Central Colchester		*50.0%*
28. Is your business serviced by public sewer?.	Yes		*46.9%*
	No		*53.1%*
29. Which of the following best describes your type of business (please circle appropriate letter)?	a. Retail		*25.5%*
	b. Department Store		*0.0%*
	c. Food & Hospitality Service		*8.2%*
	d. Business, Financial, & Professional Services		*3.6%*
	e. Communications		*0.0%*
	f. Transportation		*5.5%*
	g. Manufacturing & Fabrication		*10.0%*
	h. Construction & Building		*10.0%*
	i. Wholesale & Warehousing		*3.6%*
	j. Automotive Sales & Service		*10.0%*
	k. Tourism		*4.5%*
	l. Home Based Business		*7.3%*
	m. Health Care		*2.7%*
	n. Personal Service (hair care, tailoring, etc.)		*3.6%*
	o. Recreation & Leisure		*6.4%*
	p. Specialized Trades		*12.7%*
	q. Land Development		*4.5%*
	r. Technology		*0.0%*
	s. Resource (forestry, mining, etc.)		*5.5%*
	t. Agriculture		*10.9%*

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Your responses will help to ensure that the views of citizens are made known to Municipal Council and will help us to better tailor our services to your needs.

If you would like to make other comments about the survey or community issues, please do so on the space below, or attach extra paper if you need more space.

(individual responses were compiled separately and are not included in this summary)

In case you have misplaced the return envelope, please return this survey to:

Colchester. . .Looking Ahead
School of Public Administration
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 1J5

or drop it off in person at the County Court House, 1 Church Street, Truro