Colchester. . .Looking Ahead / 2009 Edition

our community ◆ our government ◆ our choices

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

October 2009

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

Thank you for participating in the ***Colchester Citizen 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 just circling the number 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 County.

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 the Colchester Municipal Council in this past year? **Would you say you pay . . .**

7%	A lot of attention
58%	Some attention
35%	Not much attention

2. Council meets twice a month to review issues, develop policies, set budgets and oversee the general direction for the County. **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%	64%	3%	<1%	30%
b. Decisions made by Council	2%	59%	4%	1%	34%
c. Availability of Mayor to public	9%	45%	2%	1%	43%
d. Availability of Councillors to public	7%	49%	5%	1%	38%
e. Speed of response by Council to County issues	2%	45%	9%	2%	42%

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 County Newsletter +	Colchester County Website	Radio	Newspaper	Waste Management Help Line	Waste Collection Schedule
1. Council agenda, discussions and decisions	**55%**	4%	26%	**34%**		
2. Recreation programs and services	**51%**	6%	24%	**30%**		
3. Waste management programs and services	**52%**	2%	7%	**15%**	7%	42%
4. Other Municipal programs and services	**57%**	5%	20%	**31%**		

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

25.2%	Yes, have contacted a department
74.8%	No, have not **[IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 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	25%	61%	7%	7%
b. Time to complete your business	27%	62%	7%	4%
c. Courtesy of staff	42%	55%	1%	2%
d. Speed of response to inquiries	31%	48%	11%	10%
e. Quality of service	30%	53%	10%	7%
f. Overall performance	30%	53%	10%	7%

6. The 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)

Programs & Services					
Public Works	**Very Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Have not used the service***
a. Municipal sidewalks-maintenance, repair	4%	47%	9%	2%	37%
b. Municipal sidewalks-snow removal	7%	44%	12%	2%	35%
c. Public sewer system-maintenance	5%	39%	1%	1%	54%
d. Water supply and distribution	4%	24%	1%	1%	70%
e. Municipal streets – snow removal	7%	56%	10%	4%	22%
f. Municipal streets – maintenance, repair	3%	39%	28%	9%	20%
Protective Services	**Very Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Have not used the service***
g. Dog control	9%	34%	7%	1%	49%
h. Emergency Management	8%	38%	2%	1%	50%
Solid Waste	**Very Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Have not used the service***
i. Collection of garbage, recyclables & compost	37%	54%	3%	2%	3%
j. Waste Management Programs	22%	55%	4%	2%	17%
k. Compost Giveaway Program	15%	36%	3%	2%	44%
l. Roadside clean-up initiatives	22%	52%	9%	3%	14%
m. Household Hazardous Waste services	13%	47%	9%	1%	30%
n. Spring and Fall clean-up	36%	53%	4%	2%	5%
Development Control	**Very Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Have not used the***

Programs & Services

						service
o.	Building Inspection services	3%	25%	4%	1%	68%
p.	Issuing permits	4%	27%	2%	1%	66%
q.	Land-use planning, zoning	2%	19%	4%	1%	73%
r.	Subdivision development	2%	17%	3%	1%	77%
s.	Responding to dangerous or unsightly premises complaints	3%	19%	5%	3%	70%
Recreation Services		**Very Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Have not used the service***
t.	Parks and playground	13%	52%	2%	1%	33%
u.	Trails	17%	48%	2%	1%	33%
v.	Support for community groups and associations	8%	50%	3%	1%	39%
w.	Health fitness – Mayor's challenge	10%	30%	2%	0%	58%
x.	Community access to schools for recreation	8%	32%	7%	1%	52%
Administrative Services		**Very Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very Dissatisfied**	***Have not used the service***
y.	Colchester County Newsletter	23%	68%	1%	0%	8%
z.	The Colchester County website	6%	26%	3%	0%	66%
aa.	Tax office – tax payments	13%	63%	3%	2%	20%
bb.	Low income property tax exemption	6%	18%	1%	2%	73%

7. Compared to five years ago, would you say these broad areas of municipal services are **better** today, have **stayed about the same** or are **worse** today than before?

Service Areas	Service is BETTER	STAYED ABOUT THE SAME	Service is WORSE
a. Public works	22%	73%	6%
b. Protective service (police/fire)	24%	72%	4%
c. Solid waste management	38%	58%	4%
d. Development control and planning	19%	78%	3%
e. Recreation services	35%	63%	2%
f. Administrative services	18%	80%	2%

8. 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 check the three that more most important to you

Possible policing priorities – check top three	
a. Impaired driving	**69%**
b. Break and enter	**57%**
c. Damage to property, vandalism	**54%**
g. Drug enforcement	**52%**
d. Speeding	33%
f. Youth initiatives	16%
e. Seniors' initiatives	13%
h. Use of all-terrain vehicles	12%
i. Other – please explain	4%

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

   a. Yes Go to Q. 10 – **19%**
   b. No Go to Q. 11 – **81%**

10. **[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 confidence. ❍ ✓)*

Confidence to . . .	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	None at all
a. Quickly respond to a fire emergency	80%	14%	3%	2%
b. Save lives	74%	24%	0%	2%
c. Preserve property	59%	34%	4%	2%
d. Provide fire prevention education	56%	35%	5%	3%
e. Provide the service in a knowledgeable and professional manner	67%	26%	4%	2%
				N = 92

SECTION 3: Financial Matters

11. The following statements focus on the municipal taxes and budget for Colchester County. Please note whether your strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree by checking the appropriate space ❍ ✓

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Considering the services I receive and the property taxes I pay, I am getting good value from the County	10%	30%	57%	3%
b. I would be willing to pay more taxes to increase services and programs I would like to have	27%	55%	15%	4%
c. I would support cuts to some services I USE, if property taxes would then be lowered in the Municipality.	12%	46%	35%	8%
d. I believe my assessment reflects a fair market value for my property	6%	21%	71%	2%

SECTION 4: Looking to the future

12. Colchester County and our partners are working to improve your opportunities for Active Transportation such as walking, jogging or cycling. For each of these, could you indicate whether or not you do them regularly, occasionally or not at all? If you do these "active" modes of transportation, please indicate why or where this active transportation takes you.

"Active" transportation	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely/not at all	If you do, check all that apply – where to, why?
Walking	45%	33%	22%	2% To school 8% To work 96% For recreation 10% For work
Jogging/running	5%	15%	81%	
Cycling	6%	21%	73%	

13. What improvements could be made in Colchester to improve your "active transportation" experience or make it safer?

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

❍ Check here is you do not have a suggestion

14. Do you think the Municipality of Colchester has a role to play in making our community more sustainable?

97% Yes 3% No

15. Do you think that individuals and families have a role to play in making our community more sustainable?

98% Yes 2% No

16. Have you made changes to your household to make it more sustainable?

82% Yes 18% No

17. Looking into the future, how would a **sustainable Colchester** be different from the Colchester of today? Please check any of the following that you think are most important to indicate that progress has been made toward achieving sustainability?
(Select all that apply and / or add your own items.)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Cleaner rivers and streams	**63.9%**	**242**
'Green' buildings are common place	35.9%	136
'Greener' industrial / business parks	42.0%	159
Higher wages	34.6%	131
Larger population	16.9%	64
Less air pollution	**53.0%**	**201**
Local public transit system	38.3%	145
More arts & cultural opportunities & events	26.1%	99
More industrial and commercial businesses	25.6%	97
More cycle infrastructure - bike racks	22.7%	86
More efficient transportation network for Central Colchester	34.3%	130
More electricity produced from renewable sources	**65.2%**	**247**
More venues to showcase local talent	28.2%	107
More jobs	**59.1%**	**224**
More farmland in use	43.8%	166
More local food available	**70.7%**	**268**
More 'natural' park areas	37.7%	143
More recreation space	28.8%	109
More room for wildlife to live	42.5%	161
More sport and wellness facilities	33.8%	128
More wildlife / biodiversity	24.8%	94
More young people	25.3%	96
People use their cars less	39.8%	151
The needs of future generations are considered when making decisions today	47.2%	179
Safer cycle routes and lanes	43.5%	165
Other: _____	5.5%	21
There would be no difference	2.1%	8
Other (please specify)		27
	answered question	**379**
	skipped question	**15**

18. When you think of sustainability, what words or phrases immediately come to mind? (Please check all that apply)

Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Healthy economy	73.9%	274
More locally produced goods and services	72.2%	268
Alternative energy	67.1%	249
Preserving opportunities for our children	66.8%	248
The natural environment	58.8%	218
A more comfortable life	52.6%	195
Looking after my community	52.3%	194
Changes to the way I live that are easy to make	46.4%	172
Business opportunity	36.7%	136
Climate change	30.5%	113
Healthy arts and culture community	22.6%	84
Government rules and regulations	14.3%	53
Changes to the way I live that are difficult to make	10.5%	39
Conditions that make it more difficult for business and entrepreneurship	3.5%	13
Just a buzz word	2.7%	10
Declining economy	1.6%	6
Fewer jobs	1.3%	5
A less comfortable life	1.3%	5
answered question		**371**
skipped question		**23**

19. The following are some municipal services that could be expanded or that we do not provide today. The Municipality could expand or add these services but each would add costs to our municipal budget. *(Please consider the following service priorities and check ❍ ✓ whether you consider these new or expanded services very important, somewhat important or not important at all.)*

Answer Options	**Very important**	**Somewhat important**	**Not important at all**
a. Public transit, bus service	26%	42%	32%
b. Septic tank pumping	28%	42%	31%
c. An expanded public waste-water (sewer) system	26%	49%	25%
d. Additional recreation facilities (e.g., ball fields, curling rinks	21%	50%	29%
e. Festivals and community events	29%	51%	19%
f. Additional parks	17%	53%	30%
g. Expanded system of trails	21%	53%	26%
h. Regional roadway improvements	**70%**	27%	3%
i. Expanded organic collection (Green carts to rural areas)	28%	47%	25%
j. The introduction of clear garbage bags to help us meet provincial waste diversion targets	18%	45%	36%
k. Weekly garbage collection	**37%**	32%	30%
l. Weekly compost collection	25%	37%	38%
m. An expanded public water system	18%	41%	41%
n. Other: _____	56%	17%	28%

answered question: 376

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.

1. How long have you lived in Colchester	15% 1 - 10 years 11% 11 - 20 years 19% 21 – 30 years 19% 31 – 40 years 27% 41 – 60 years 9% 61 years or more
2. Gender	52% female 48% male
3. Age	3% under 25 20% 25-44 52% 45-64 26% 65 and over
4. What is the name of **your community** in Colchester County AND **in which region is it located**? Please check the region.	**My community is:** _____ It's located in: **12% West Colchester** (for example, Debert, Great Village, Folly Lake, Five Islands, Bass River, Masstown, Londonderry, Economy, Glenhome) **14% North Colchester** (for example, Earltown, Tatamagouche, Kemptown, Denmark, Brule, Nuttby, New Annan, McCallum's Settlement, Bayhead) **18% South Colchester** (for example, Old Barns, Shortts Lake, Middle Stewiacke, Wittenburg, Green Oaks, Brookfield, Shubenacadie East, Upper Stewiacke, Coldstream) **56% Central Colchester** (for example, Onslow, Bible Hill, Valley, Harmony/Camden, Hilden, Belmont, Truro Heights, East Mountain, Lower Truro, Greenfield, North River, Salmon River)
5. Do you . . .	85% Own your home? 8% Rent? 8% Other arrangement?
6. Does your household include school aged children?	78% No 22% Yes
7. Which of the following best describes your community?	23% **Suburban** with public sewer, street lights and paved roads; 11% **Rural Subdivision** with on-site septic field, gravel or paved read, located in a neighbourhood of homes, lot created as part a mutli-lot subdivision; 49% **Rural** with on-site septic field, larger lots fronting on an existing road and greater distance between neighbours; 17% **Village** Settlement of homes and shops, perhaps served with public sewer, water, street lights and sidewalks.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey!

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.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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

Colchester Citizen Survey
c/o 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