

Quarterly Update on Strategic Priorities 2020-24

March 2022



Overview of the Municipality

The Municipality of Colchester is a community of communities stretching over the agricultural heartland of Nova Scotia, from the Northumberland Strait, to the Minas Basin, to the border of HRM, making it the 4th largest county in Nova Scotia and home to a variety of employment, educational, social, and housing opportunities.

The Municipality of Colchester is home to approximately 38,000 people and growing in terms of numbers and diversity of our residents.

While we cherish and protect our rich history, Colchester is also a modern municipality focused on the ever-evolving needs of our communities. Colchester delivers services, solely or in collaboration with community and government partners, in five distinct areas of a sustainable community:

1. **Environment and safety**

Maintaining a healthy and natural environment through responsible use, protection, and sustainable practices.

2. **Infrastructure**

Well maintained infrastructure and facilities that meet community needs and allow growth and development for prosperity.

3. **Economy**

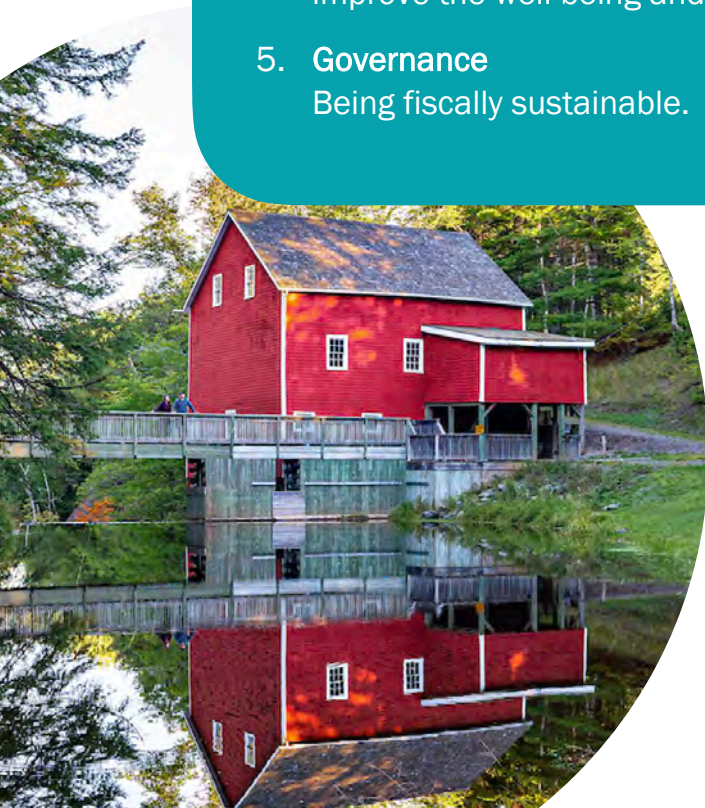
Building a strong and vibrant community by attracting, supporting, and retaining businesses and residents.

4. **Social**

Building social capital and engaging citizens and partners to improve the well-being and diversity of the community.

5. **Governance**

Being fiscally sustainable.



Overview of Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities document provides an overarching framework to communicate to the public, staff, community stakeholders, and government partners, a path by which we will achieve our commitments to creating a municipality that embraces innovation, good governance, and fiscal responsibility.

Identifying priorities allows Council and staff to make informed policy, operational and budget decisions, and provides a structure to ensure oversight and management of County initiatives and services.

Reporting regularly on progress related to our priorities allows us to assess how we are doing and what adjustments may be needed.

Our strategic priorities were developed through an engagement process with Council and consisted of:

- A strategic scan
- Brainstorming issues and opportunities
- Shortlisting priorities
- Exploring desired outcomes and response options
- Developing an action plan
- Committing to regular updates

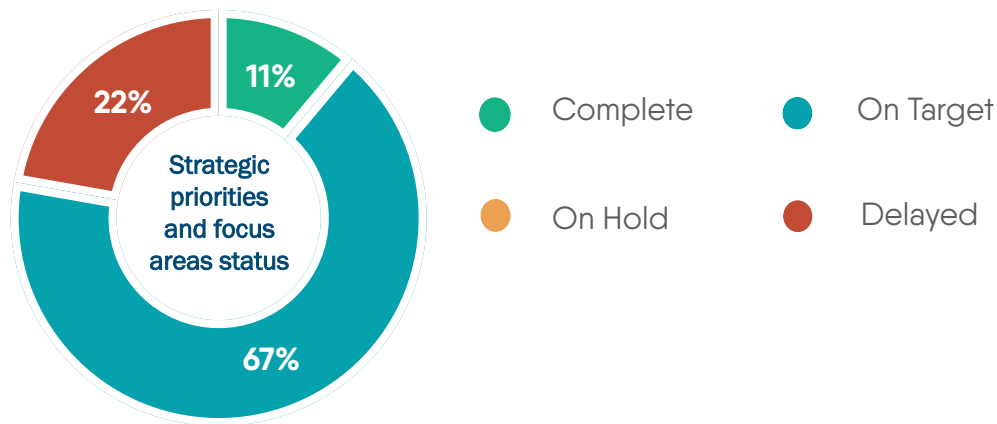
The strategic priorities were further developed with input and guidance from municipal management from all departments. The result was the *Municipality of Colchester Strategic Priorities 2020-24*.

With this plan, Colchester will be able to make progress on its strategic goals and objectives as well as work to improve the core services we provide. The plan is intended to provide further direction to all staff and Council and is also intended to be a resource for the public.



Priorities and Focus Areas

- This document reports on Council's 5 strategic priorities, as well as 31 administrative and operational focus areas, for a total of 36.
- Of the 36, 78% are either completed or on track to be completed by their original time frame.



Strategic Priorities

As identified on page 8 of the strategic priorities document, these are the 5 priorities that Council identified as needing immediate attention based on organizational importance, community benefit, urgency of time, and the ability to act on the initiative in the short-term.

1. Police Review (on target)

While initial discussions began in earnest with the Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2019 with respect to undertaking a policing review; inclusive of completing a GDPRM, in 2020, an external consultant with expertise in policing (Mr. Bill Moore) was hired to serve as a technical advisor to Council. After undertaking a scan of the existing policing model utilized in the Municipality and having interviewed senior police and administrative leaders throughout the region/province, a survey was undertaken to verify Council's policing priorities. The report findings were subsequently presented to Council for consideration, including a ranking of components relative to Council's view of an ideal policing model. A subsequent meeting was held between municipal senior staff and the command staff of the Northeast Nova RCMP detachment to advise them on Council's stated priorities as it relates to policing, and to discuss the main findings of the consultant's report. It was agreed that RCMP Command Staff would be invited to a future municipal Council meeting to present and discuss options for RCMP policing moving forward, with the acknowledgment that Council may wish to undertake an RFP process should they wish to do so. Currently, RCMP Command Staff are scheduled to present to Council in mid-May.

2. Debert Business Park Development Plan (on target)

The Debert Business Park Advisory Committee (DBPAC) has been presented with an asset inventory of Debert Business Park and opportunities for growth and development have been discussed. The next steps for staff and the committee are to organize and conduct planning sessions to develop a strategic framework for the park. This will be followed by the creation of an RFP and subsequent engagement of a consultant(s) to assist the DBPAC in developing a 10-year plan. Timeline to have a consultant engaged and working on DBP planning, July 2022. Estimated timeline for completion of a plan, December 2022.

3. Debert Airport Strategy (on target)

Council was provided updates on the Debert Airport and Debert Aviation Centre in both September 2021 and March 2022. These updates included a history and timelines of the Debert Business Park, airport and the aviation centre; an overview of current airport operations including information on the Truro Flying Club management agreement, aircraft traffic, annual revenues and expenses, and potential business opportunities both within the airport and the aviation centre; as well as proposed infrastructure improvements to bring the airport up to industry operational standards. In March, Council requested that staff develop a business plan to present to Council, including an option to explore selling the airport; timeline June 2022.

4. Debert Housing Prospectus (on target)

The Debert housing prospectus is on target. Since the strategic priorities' session with Council, an RFP was issued for the development of schematic design options for housing on the chosen property in Debert, and a contract was awarded to Fathom Studios. The consultants worked with the Debert Business Park Advisory Committee and a draft report was presented to the committee in February outlining three options. An online public engagement session to present the options was held online with about 10 people participating. Outcomes on the concept were positively received by those attending. The consultants will finalize the report in March. Next steps include examining servicing requirements for a proposed development, investigating private / public development partnerships and confirming a preferred project delivery approach; timeline May 2022.

5. J Class Roads and Roads Assessment (delayed)

This initiative is delayed. Various options for additional investment by the Municipality have been presented to council in previous months and years, all of which were not adopted. The Province is currently undertaking a review of its Municipal Service Exchange Agreement, which was last updated in 1995. In September, the Minister of Municipal Affairs stated he expects the review to take a year or longer. New funding formulas for J Class Roads, as part of an overall new service exchange agreement, may be included. In February, Council agreed to add J Class Roads to the upcoming operating budget deliberations.

Administrative and operational focus areas

The additional focus areas contained in the Strategic Priorities 2020-24 document dashboard (page 8) are arranged in the following pages according to departmental responsibility. Each focus area is listed and provided a short update, next steps, and estimated timeline for completion.

Administration

The Administration Department, under the CAO model of governance, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Municipality, ensuring the implementation and delivery of programs and services that are approved by Council. In addition to this, the Administration Department is responsible for:

- Economic development, including the Debert Business Park
- Research, policy, and community engagement
- Emergency management
- Corporate planning and strategic initiatives



Status	Focus Areas	Update Sept–March	Next Steps	Timeline to Completion
	Colchester Tourism Strategy	Staff have collaborated with regional partners to leverage funds for 2022 regional tourism efforts.	With regional partners, develop a 2022 tourism plan focused on promoting the Colchester region & attractions to Atlantic Canadian markets.	Update to be provided end of March 2022.
	Government relations	Mapped current intergovernmental relationships; review of NS departmental mandate letters to identify areas of mutual interest.	Develop an information package to provide to staff and Council.	Package will be completed by April 2022.
	Business planning	Two business planning capacity building sessions with staff; development of planning templates	Host a ½ day business planning session with staff; develop business plan.	Business planning session, May 2022; Business plan finalized in June 2022
	Community engagement strategy	Formed staff Communications Committee in March 2022 to better inform strategy revisions; complete revised draft for Committee to review.	Quarterly updates to be provided to Council on program progression, next update scheduled for April 2022.	Strategy completion, June 2022
	Phase 2, internet project	Council was provided a project update as part of a joint committee meeting with Cumberland in Jan. 2022. Program delays due to Covid-19 have pushed the timeline.	Staff will continue to work with program partners to oversee the completion of the internet build. Seek funding sources for Phase 2 accessibility program.	Quarterly updates to be provided to Council on program progression, next update scheduled for April 2022.



Corporate Services

Corporate Services is led by the Director of Corporate Services as well as the Manager of Computer and Information Systems, and the Manager of Finance. This department is responsible for providing services such as:

- **Procurement**
- **Finance and taxation**
- **Human resources**
- **Computer and information services**
- **Municipal building services**



Status	Focus Areas	Update Sept–March	Next Steps	Timeline to Completion
	E-commerce plan adoption (for items other than tax payments)	Implemented EFT for accounts payable; implemented Paymentus option for payments made such as permits.	No further action required.	Complete
	Migration of email from traditional servers to cloud base	Integration with Azure Active Directory; licensing for current exchange members; test mailbox creation and mail flow completed; sync between one premises and exchange 365 completed.	Final testing and Azure AD preparedness checks; migration of user data; redirection of inbound mail flow; DNS changes to reflect changes for clients.	May 2022
	PSSP pension plan transfer	Transferred pension administration to PSSP.	Awaiting final payment to PSSP of funds for transfer.	May 2022
	Bi-annual Non-union salary review	Began sampling comparator groups for salary scales.	Obtain more samples; analyze salary scales; review with Directors/ CAO.	August 2022
	Staff drug and alcohol policy	Draft policy has been reviewed.	Legal review pending; presentation to Council.	June 2022
	Building lease negotiation with Dept of Justice	Draft terms accepted; direction given to proceed.	CAO to sign new terms.	April 2022






Solid Waste

Solid Waste is led by the Director of Solid Waste (currently vacant) as well as the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Manager, Waste Reduction Manager, and the Balefill Site Manager. This department is responsible for providing services such as:

- Recycling facility services, administration, and maintenance
- Balefill and composting facility services, administration, and maintenance
- Waste reduction education



 COMPLETE
  ON TARGET
  ON HOLD
  DELAYED






Status	Focus Areas	Update Sept–March	Next Steps	Timeline to Completion
	Development of a Colchester wide litter strategy	Colchester Clean program developed Plan presented to Council.	Finalizing implementation Roll out of program in spring.	June 2022
	Replacement of 25-year-old landfill baler	Tender awarded, Construction has begun.	Installing baler	May 2022
	Reissue of MRF contracts for 2022	Presented to Council Terms redrafted and circulated.	No further action required.	Complete
	Advocacy role for EPR being established province wide	Response from Regional Chairs/AMA/NSFM to the EPR PPP consultation by the province drafted.	Continued advocacy	TBD
	Develop a tender for environmental monitoring of sites	Drafting tender for issue this spring.	Review of tender; issue tender award	June 2022

Engineering and Public Works

Engineering and public works is led by the Director of Engineering and Public Works, the Manager of Operations, Transportation and Waster Water Collection, the Wastewater Treatment Manager, and the Water Utility Manager. This department is responsible for providing services such as:

- Project management
- Road maintenance
- Sidewalk maintenance and construction
- Municipal sewer and water collection systems
- Various capital projects
- Debert airport



Status	Focus Areas	Update Sept-March	Next Steps	Timeline to Completion
	Debert Airport strategy	Presented information to Council in September 2021 and March 2022.	Business Plan to be brought back to Council.	June 2022
	Asset management plan	Informal processes in place for inventories and condition assessment, formal procedures to be documented.	Update any related Council policies.	December 2022
	By-law compliance plan	Already monitoring compliance among known industrial users.	Documented approach to annual monitoring, including steps for compliance follow-up.	December 2022
	Debert services	Service capacity RFP issued for water services, internal review completed for sewer service capacity. RPF for new well issued.	Funding application, treatment plant expansion, siting for new well.	September 2022
	Engineering standards review	No action taken due to workload.	Internal review and update of existing document.	December 2022









Community Development

Community Development is led by the Director of Community Development, as well as the Senior Planner, Manager of Recreation, GIS Analyst, and the Manager of Inspection Services.

- Community planning and development agreements
- Sustainability planning
- Building and fire inspections
- Building permits
- Heritage properties
- Recreation, culture, parks, and trails



Status	Focus Areas	Update Sept–March	Next Steps	Timeline to Completi on
	Energy and Emissions Plan – “Carbon Free Colchester”	SGE presented final report and plan to Council in February. Council approved Carbon Free Colchester plan in late February.	Develop micro plans 3 to 5 years out. Identify priorities and external funding programs that feed into the Capital Budget. Report on progress annually.	Ongoing
	Tatamagouche plan	Progress has slowed due to COVID gathering restrictions, other time sensitive planning matters and reduced staff resources. 90% of engagement and background work is complete. In the early stages of developing draft documents.	Complete draft documents. Review draft documents with Tata PAC and community. Bring to Council for hearing and consideration to adopt.	May 2022
	Housing policies	No progress has been made in terms of broader approaches to address housing policies. Debert housing initiative, while focussed, forms part of this initiative. Tatamagouche MPS will modernize housing policies to address current issue areas.	Review existing housing policies in Central Colchester MPS. Identify possible policy solutions and municipal initiatives to facilitate affordable housing. Report to Council on findings and recommended changes.	September 2022
	Fundy Discovery site (AT)	Provincial support and approval received for the bridge project. Federal approval process is imminent which requires additional background study to support application. Power line relocation design is underway with NSP which is necessary before any on-site construction can begin. Provincial permits and approvals have been received.	Finalize powerline relocation plans and work with NSP and communication companies to complete work over the summer of 2022. Complete studies and background work required for federal approval process.	September 2022

Status	Strategic Priority	Update Sept-March	Next Steps	Timeline to Completion
	County-wide Planning	Province is likely to mandate planning across the Nova Scotia. Although some issues and areas of interest have been identified, work has not started on this initiative.	Budget for additional resources and services to assist with community engagement component (initial) Confirm focus / issue areas with PAC.	October - November 2022
	Debert Memorial Park	Concept drawings are done, fundraising and community support is happening. Applied for Provincial Funding raised about \$80,000 so far for project.	Update to Council coming in April; starting to order material and start work in spring.	Phase 1 by August 2022
	Trail plan update	Started to review Trail Plan.	Update trail plan.	Present to Council in September 2022
	Tatamagouche recreation plan	3 focus groups have occurred (Jan and 2 in Feb.). 1 in person focus group happening last week of March.	Committee will apply for funding; plan completed by April.	Plan completed by April 2022
	Salmon River school property	Survey was sent out; information has been received and put in a document; final stages of updating the presenting document.	Public meeting to be held in the spring.	Information and recommendation to Council 2022
	Sport Hub	Received funding for initial support of developing web page. Meeting with Community sport Groups (March - June). Inputting data in Colchester-Truro Sport Hub portal.	Spring launch; continue to update new sport groups.	Spring 2022

