

Town of Colchester Comprehensive Plan



Adopted December 2003

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
A Profile of the Town of Colchester	4
Location and Access	4
Natural Resources	5
Land Use	8
History	11
Demographic Profile of Colchester	13
Recreation	22
Transportation and Highways	22
Public Services and Government	24
New York City Watershed and the Town of Colchester	27
Community Survey Results	30
A Vision Statement for Colchester	40
Issues for the Comprehensive Plan to Address	41
Goals and Strategies	47
Agriculture and Rural Character	47
Environment	55
Colchester's Hamlets	58
Economic Development	59
Town Appearance	61
Public Services	62
Recreation	64
Historic Features	65
Housing	67
Transportation	68
New York City Watershed	70
Action Plan	71
Downsville Downtown Assessment	77
Maps of the Town of Colchester	90
<i>Acknowledgements: This Comprehensive Plan was developed for the Town by the Town of Colchester Planning Board with the assistance of the Delaware County Planning Department and planning consultants from Community Planning & Environmental Associates in Berne, NY. The Delaware County Planning Department also developed the maps and GIS data for this plan. This project was funded by a grant from the New York State Department of State. It was adopted by the Town Board, according to NYS Town Law 272-a in December, 2003.</i>	

Introduction

A Comprehensive Plan is a written document that identifies the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, and strategies for the growth and development of the community. The Town is authorized to develop and adopt a Comprehensive Plan by New York State Town Law Section 272-a. Since decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development are made by local governments, New York State considers adoption of a Comprehensive Plan to be a critical means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the Town and to give consideration to the needs of the people. It is the policy foundation upon which communities are built. It is not a law in itself, but state statutes require that all land use laws in a municipality be consistent with a Comprehensive Plan. Once a Comprehensive Plan is adopted, there are several implications:

- 1) All government agencies involved in planning capital projects in Colchester must first consider this plan. That means the Town now has a much larger stake in what other governmental agencies want to do when they are proposing a project in Town.
- 2) Development of the community inventory, shared vision, goals, and strategies can build consensus and support.
- 3) Programs and regulations may be adopted to implement your plan to protect the Town's resources and encourage desired development and growth. Comprehensive Plans are also important documents to help the Town be successful in finding grant monies.
- 4) In New York State, all land use regulations must be in accordance with a Comprehensive Plan (Section 272-a). The plan provides the basis for regulatory programs. All land use laws should be reviewed, and updated where necessary to be in accordance with this plan.

The Town Board assigned the task of developing this Comprehensive Plan to the Town of Colchester Planning Board. The planning process included: developing and implementing a resident survey; preparing background studies, gaining additional public input from a planning workshop and public meetings; preparing a series of maps and surveying existing land uses and conditions in Colchester; outlining issues to be addressed by the plan; defining goals and recommendations based on identified problems, opportunities and public comment; and presenting the draft plan to the public for comments. The following public events took place during the Comprehensive Planning process:

- Regular meetings of the Planning Board (April 2002 through April 2003)
- Resident Survey (Summer 2002)
- Planning workshop (June 2002)
- First Public Hearing on Draft Plan
- Recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board
- Town Board sponsored Public Hearing

The issues, goals and recommended strategies detailed in this plan are based upon studies of information and data gathered about the Town of Colchester, as well as the input of many Town residents. Specific sources of information used to prepare this plan included:

- Colchester Community Survey.
- Planning Workshop.
- Background studies of land use, population and economic profiles, housing, community facilities, transportation, recreation and educational resources, public safety programs, and environmental conditions of the Town and analysis of the regional growth patterns and trends that have affected, and will continue to affect the area's growth.
- Information and perspective from the Planning Board.
- Information from the Delaware County Planning Department and the Town's planning consultant.
- Public attendance at the regular meetings of the Planning Board.

This Comprehensive Plan attempts to answer four questions for Colchester:

- 1) Where are we now?
- 2) Where are we going?
- 3) Where do we want to be?
- 4) How can we get there?

The profile and public input sections of this plan answer the "where are we now?" and "where are we going?" questions. They describe current conditions, demographics, physical and cultural features, and information from the residents. The Vision for Colchester, articulated below, sets the tone and overall direction the Town should take in the future. It was developed directly from the surveys, planning workshop, and public comments received. The vision statement depicts in words and images what the community is striving to become. It should be considered as the starting point for the creation and implementation of action plans. The goals included in this plan are broad statements that reflect "ideal" future conditions desired by the Town. The goals offer more specific direction than the vision statement does. The recommendations are a series of strategies or options that the Town can take to accomplish each goal contained in this plan. When put into action, these strategies will help Colchester attain its vision.

Because many of the recommended strategies are general, specific standards and precise language will need to be developed during the implementation phase of the planning process. This Comprehensive Plan is not a local law. It will be implemented however, through local laws and programs. Each time a local law is amended or developed, public hearing(s), review by the county planning board, and an environmental review will be necessary.

A Profile of the Town of Colchester

Location and Access



The Town of Colchester is located in southern Delaware County, New York State. Colchester borders the Town of Hancock to the west, Walton and Hamden to the north, Andes to the east and Sullivan County to the south. Main thoroughfares through Colchester are State Routes 30 and 206 and NYS Route 17 (future Interstate), and County Routes 7, 17, and 26.

Natural Resources

A municipality's natural resources are integral to understanding past development patterns, existing conditions and future constraints. In Colchester, significant natural resources that shape the character of the Town include the area's geology, topography, soils, wetlands, streams and floodplain. The Town's timber and bluestone resources are other significant natural resources in Colchester that contribute to the areas economy. Another resource is a man-made reservoir that is part of the Catskill Watershed System for New York City's drinking water. These are discussed in this section.

In general, the Town's surface is a mountainous upland, broken by narrow valleys. The eastern branch of the Delaware flows westward through the Town, dividing the highlands into two distinct parts. From the north it receives West Trout, Downs, and Coles Brooks, and from the south, the Cambell Brook and several smaller brooks. The Beaver Kill flows through the Southwest corner, receiving Spring Brook as a tributary. The valleys of these streams are narrow, and are many hundred feet below the summits of the hills, which rise on either side. The soil is reddish clay, and is often very stony. A considerable portion of the surface is covered with forests.

Bedrock and Surficial Geology

The geological features of the Town influence drainage patterns, topography, groundwater availability, and soil types. An evaluation of the geology of the area can help direct the location of new projects to suitable areas and gain a better understanding of the Town's environmental resources and development constraints. Mr. Laurence Day, Soil and Groundwater Specialist with the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District made available most of the following information regarding the Town's geology.

Bedrock Geology

The characteristics of the area's bedrock geology affect land development, particularly in terms of water supply and soil types. Water is obtained from fissures and cavities in bedrock, and the quantity of water available depends on how much rock is fractured and how well the fractures and cavities interconnect. Variations in bedrock types also affect the permeability, porosity, and chemical makeup of the soils above, which, in turn, affect the type and density of development that is most appropriate in a given area.

The bedrock underlying all of the Town (and Delaware County) is of sedimentary origin that resulted from the erosion of a large mountain range which once existed to the east, some 370 million years ago. Westward flowing rivers deposited layers of sand, silt and clay that eventually became the beds of sandstone, siltstone and shale rocks of today. The thickest and most uniform beds of certain sandstones are now valuable for local "bluestone" quarries.

Important rock groups and some of their component rock formations found in Colchester are:

Sonyea Group

Dsw: lower Walton Formation – shale, sandstone, conglomerate

West Falls Group

Dwh: Honesdale Formation – sandstone, shale.

Dws: Slide Mountain Formation – sandstone, shale, conglomerate

Dww: upper Walton Formation – shale, sandstone, conglomerate.

Surficial Deposits

An analysis of the Town's surficial geology can help identify several issues related to topography, land development, and land use.

The most recent glaciation (where the entire area was covered in ice) occurred in Delaware County about 14 thousand years ago and left behind glacial till throughout Colchester. Glacial till is formed when glaciers crush and fragments rocks into a slurry of boulders, angular stones and gravel, sand, silt and clay. When these materials are transported beneath, within and on top of the glacier and deposited as a mixture of materials, it is called glacial till. Most of Delaware County's uplands and the Town of

Colchester are covered with till; and because layers of sandstone and siltstone were continuously ripped up and incorporated into the till, upland soils are commonly stony (or very stony) throughout their depth. There is also a substantial amount of exposed rock outcroppings.

As glaciers retreated northward, the melting created tremendous amounts of sediment – laden water in rivers and lakes. However, tongues or flows of ice tended to remain in the larger valleys long after the uplands were relatively ice – free. Eventually, these valley ice masses stopped flowing and melted away, creating landforms and deposits that are distinctly different from those in the uplands. Large amounts of meltwater flowed along the sides and beneath stagnant valley ice masses, washing through the rocky and muddy debris. This tended to separate and sort finer silt and clay from sand and gravel. In locations where washed and sorted debris was deposited (usually at the margins of major valleys such as the West and East Branches of the Delaware River), gravelly terraces and kames occur, giving this part of the landscape a hummocky appearance. In Colchester, Kame occurs mostly along the Pepacton Reservoir, the East Branch of the Delaware River, and Downs Brook.

Where relatively fast-flowing tributary streams enter major valleys; they quickly lose velocity as they flow across the flatter river floodplain. This abrupt slowing causes streams to drop their load of sand and gravel on the floodplains as subtle fan or delta-shaped alluvial fan deposits. Because these deposits are fairly level and well drained they make good farmland and building sites; the Hamlets of Shinhopple, GregoryTown, Corbett, Colchester, and Downsville and many of the Town's prime farmland soils are located on the alluvial fan landforms.

Surficial Geological materials found in Colchester

Till: An unsorted mix of clay, silt, sand, gravel and boulders deposited above the bedrock. Till has a low capacity to transmit water because of its clay and silt content and its high degree of compaction.

Kame: Similar to till but with a smaller percentage of finer grain materials. Consequently, kame deposits are generally more permeable than till.

Outwash Sand and Gravel: Deposited by glacial meltwater at the front of the glacier, the size of grains can range from sand to coarse gravel.

Alluvium: These deposits are relatively permeable and generally confined to valley floodplains. Because these deposits are fairly level and well drained they make good farmland and building sites.

Soils

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has studied and mapped the soils located within the Town of Colchester. The NRCS has evaluated these soils for their suitability for different uses such as farmland, septic systems, or buildings with basements (See Soil Limitations for Septic Systems Map). It is important to note that the

soil survey provided is intended as an inventory and evaluation that may be used "to adjust land uses to the limitations and potentials of natural resources and the environment." It is not meant as a substitute for thorough site examination and testing prior to development or land use decisions.

According to the NRCS analysis, approximately 61,021 acres or 67 percent of the Town's area is considered to have severe limitations for septic systems (calculation includes areas of surface water). Most of the same soils have severe limitations for buildings with basements due to flooding, or shallow depth to bedrock. Furthermore, much of the remaining soils have either moderate limitations for septic systems, vary too widely to be classified, are already built on, or are considered prime farmland. The result is that there is very little "easily developable" soil acreage remaining in Colchester.

There are 3,221 acres containing prime farmland soils in Colchester (see Prime Farmland and Agriculture Map). There are numerous, but scattered areas having prime farmland soils in Town. Most are found in valley areas and follow streams and creeks.

Slope

A significant portion of the Town has moderate to severe slopes, (see Slope Map). The steep slopes in Colchester provide for many scenic views and recreation opportunities. They contribute significantly to the rural character of the Town and to wildlife habitats. However, these areas are also especially susceptible to soil erosion (which contributes to water pollution) and development here can be prohibitively costly. The wooded slopes and ridges that surround the valley in Colchester help define the rural nature and character of the area.

Water Resources

The main water resources in Colchester are the East Branch of the Delaware River and the Pepacton Reservoir (created in 1954). In addition to these features, several other creeks, streams, ponds and lakes make up the Town's water resources. Streams and creeks include the West Trout Brook, East Trout Brook, Barney Hollow, Wilson Hollow, Downs Brook, Coles Clove, Fall Clove, Berry Brook, Spring Brook, Russell Brook, Beaver Kill, Cook Brook, Horton Brook, Cat Hollow, and Campbell Brook. Lakes and ponds found in Colchester include Higgins Lake, Mud Pond, and Cables Lake. Each of these lakes are on State-owned land in the southern half of Colchester.



Wetlands

Wetlands play an important role in regulating and purifying groundwater supplies and surface waters. They slow floodwaters and often act as natural retention basins. Wetlands also provide valuable wildlife habitats and open space, and combined with stream channels and ponds, form natural green space corridors through the Town.

Freshwater wetlands occur where the water table is at or near the land surface for most of the year. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has delineated several regulated wetlands that cover approximately 247 acres of the Town of Colchester. Under the New York State Freshwater Wetlands Act of 1975, the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) maps and regulates those wetlands covering at least 12.4 acres and smaller wetlands judged to be of unusual local importance (see Natural Resources Map). The law requires permits for all non-agricultural activities that could change the quality of a wetland.

Flood plain

Floodplains are low-lying areas that are inundated in times of heavy rain or snowmelt. They provide space for excess runoff in a drainage system and can serve as recharge areas for groundwater supplies.

Floodplains are mapped showing one hundred year floodplains as delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Maps (See Natural Resources Map). These are areas that have a one percent change of being completely inundated at any time, with an average occurrence of once every one hundred years. In Colchester, one hundred year floodplains are located along the Pepacton Reservoir and the Delaware River, and the Beaver Kill.

Land Use

The Town has several local laws and ordinances related to land use including minimum

requirements for new roads; streets and highways; and subdivision regulations. The Town has not established minimum lot sizes.

Predominant land uses in Colchester are forestlands and rural residential uses (See Land Use Classification Map). Specifically, there are:

Land Use	Number of Parcels	Total Number of Acres
Agriculture	13	1,616
Residential	1,522	26,102
Vacant	1,029	21,086 mostly forested
Commercial	53	144
Recreation/Entertainment	12	4,256
Community Services	28	104
Public Services	14	34
Wild, Forested, Public Parks	185	22,645
State-Owned		22,027
NYC Owned		244
Missing computerized data	44	4,966

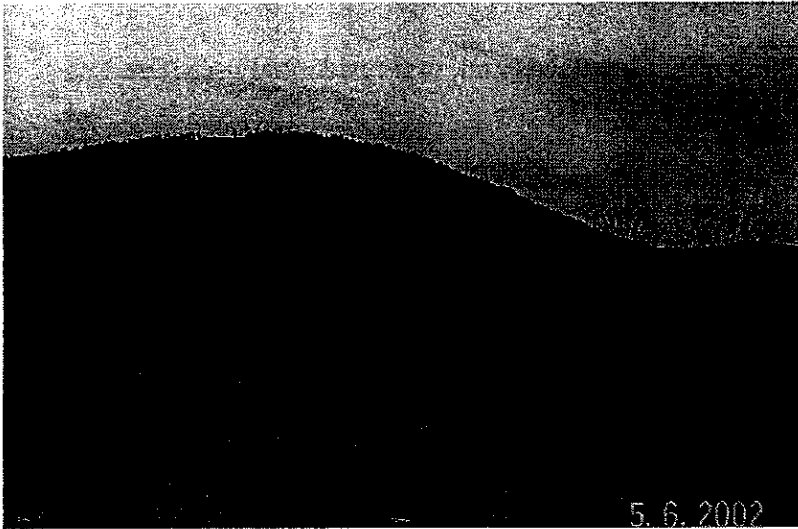
Building Permits and Subdivision Approvals

Since 1993, Colchester has issued approximately 99 total building permits for new homes (including seasonal and full-time). Seasonal home construction over the past nine years has outnumbered full-time residences by a ratio of almost 2:1. The most active year for new permits was 1993 with 20 permits issued, while the annual average number of new residences since 1993 is 11. The mid-1990s saw a slight lag in construction while recently (since 1999) there has been a noticeable increase in residential activity, mainly due to seasonal home building. Almost all of the seasonal homes, especially those built since 1996, were constructed for year-round residency (they have adequate insulation, utilities, etc). However, some of these homes are on private roads not maintained during winter months, and this makes them inaccessible during much of this season.

Table 1: New Residences in the Town of Colchester*

Year	Full-time	Seasonal	Total
1993	6	14	20
1994	4	6	10
1995	5	2	7
1996	2	6	8
1997	3	6	9
1998	2	6	8
1999	5	7	12
2000	5	8	13
2001	3	9	12
Totals	35	64	99

Source: Town of Colchester *This table was constructed by tabulating building permits issued from 1993 to 2001, eliminating replacement homes and those that are not close to completion.



Agriculture

There are only a limited number of dairy farms remaining active in Colchester. The Delaware County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan lists three dairy farms and one truck farm (vegetables, etc). The farms are scattered throughout the Town with a concentration along Route 30, Gregory Hollow Road, Cooks Brook Road, and Morton Hill Road. Although the number of dairy farms has declined over the years, those that remain utilize the lands from farms that have gone out of business. Thus, agriculture continues to be an important land use in Colchester as well as an important component of the local economy.

Prime Farm Soils

Prime farm soils, those that are best suited for agriculture and farm use, account for approximately 3,426 acres of the Town's land. The bulk of these soils are found mostly along the tributaries of the Delaware River in the northeastern portion of the Town and along the Beaver Kill (and its tributaries) in the southwestern section of Colchester (see Prime Farmland Map).

Prime Farm Soils of Delaware County

Source: Delaware County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, December 2000

Bc: Barbour loam

Bg: Barbour-trestle complex

Bs: Basher silt loam

BtB: Bath channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes

ChA: Chenango gravelly silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes

ChB: Chenango gravelly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes

CoB: Collamer silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes

De: Deposit gravelly silt loam

LhB: Lewbeach channery loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 LoB: Lordswotn channery silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
 MaB: Maplecrest gravelly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 MdB: Mardin channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 MnB: Mongaup channery loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
 OpB: Oquaga channery silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
 Pc: Philo silt loam
 Re: Red hook gravelly silt loam (Prime farmland if drained)
 RhA: Riverhead loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
 RhB: Riverhead loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 TkA: Tunkhannock gravelly loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
 TkB: Tunkhannock gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 TtA: Tunkhannock and chenango soils, fan, 0 to 3 percent slopes
 TtB: Tunkhannock and chenango soils, fan, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 Un: Unadilla silt loam
 VaB: Valois very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 VIB: Vly channery silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
 WeB: Wellsboro channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
 Wg: Wenonah silt loam

Agricultural Districts

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law 25AA allows farmers and landowners to form special districts where agriculture is encouraged and protected. This law includes many different techniques to protect farmland. In addition to the formation of agricultural districts, use-value assessment programs, right-to-farm legislation, and protection from unreasonable local regulation, this legislation requires agricultural impact statements on public projects being conducted in an agricultural district and agricultural data statements on local land use decisions.

Delaware County Agricultural Districts #9 and #18 are located partially within the Town of Colchester. Agricultural district #9 is located in the northeast portion of the Town (off of Cole's Clove Road) while district #18 is found along the East Branch of the Delaware River and Route 30 (location of most of the Town's prime farmland). The prime farmland and agricultural district map shows the relationship between these features.

History

Colchester was formed from Middletown, on April 10, 1792. The boundaries have changed over the years as a part was annexed to Walton in 1799; Hancock was taken off in 1806, and a part of Walton was annexed in 1827. The first settlement was established in May 1774. Joseph Gee, from Colchester, Connecticut, applied the name. The first religious services (Baptist) were conducted by Elder Haynes, and the first church (Baptist) was formed in 1803.

The following account on some of the changes occurring throughout the history of the Town of Colchester comes from the book "Colchester: People and Places Remembered 1792-1992."

Changes

"We people of the Town of Colchester have witnessed numerous changes in our 200 years. We have seen homesteads carved from the wilderness, many of which have grown back to wilderness – attested to by the stone walls, wire fences and foundations seen throughout the township, overgrown with forest. Farms, numbering in the hundreds, each with a few head of stock, have been transformed into a few farms, some with stock numbering in the hundreds. The railroads – the D&N and O&W – were chiseled along the rivers to replace the raft and wagon, and we have seen those same railroads tracks and ties torn up as automobiles and trucks on superhighways move more quickly to market. Villages were demolished and inundated. The village of Cooks Falls has remodeled itself from a major stop of the O&W to a quiet little community by-passed by Route 17. The hamlet of Horton was razed to make way for the Route 17 Quickway. The hillsides, once dotted with farms, have become dotted with homes. The trade pattern, which once moved toward the cities, with goods like lumber, stone, and tanned products, has become two-directional, as numbers of people come here for a more intimate taste of the country we've always enjoyed. We have witnessed all these changes, and many others, and we have interpreted their impact in differing ways. Through it all has been this constant: we the people of Colchester, as framers of our own destinies, have always been proud and secure in knowing one another as kin, as neighbors, and as friend."

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has done an historic inventory in Colchester. As of October 1999, several sites in Town have been evaluated for listing on a state or national historic register. Currently, the Dundas Castle, near Roscoe and the Downsville Covered Bridge are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Downsville Union Free School has been determined to be eligible for listing. Listing on the National Register recognizes the importance of these properties to the history of our country and provides them with a measure of protection. Owners of income producing properties may qualify for federal income tax benefits. Properties owned by municipalities and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for state historic preservation matching grants.

History of the Bluestone Industry in Colchester

Bluestone production has been one of the leading industries in the Town of Colchester for more than 150 years. Today it remains a vital part of the Town's economy. Bluestone deposits are found in the Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna and Chenango River valleys and is the only place in the world where this stone is found. Bluestone is sold all over the world. Stone from the Town of Colchester can be found in private homes and landscaping, in public buildings, on college campuses and in streets throughout the United States and in Europe.

Bluestone was shipped, primarily to New York City, from quarries on or near the Hudson

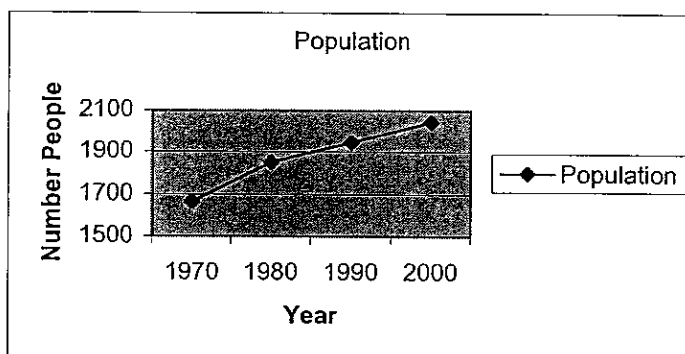
at least 200 years ago. Early in the 19th century, the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company opened a canal through an area known as the “quarry belt from the Hudson River at Rondout to Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Although the canal was built to handle coal, it readily accepted bluestone payloads. With the development of the canal, the bluestone industry now had a convenient way to transport the heavy stone.

Henry Delaney Mills was a pioneer of the quarry industry in the Hancock area. There were many stone buyers in the area by the late 1890’s and early 1900’s. John, Charles and Sam Kirkpatrick, from Kingston, opened a few docks in this area under the firm name of Kirkpatrick Brothers. John Rhodes also started a bluestone firm that continues as one of the largest in business today. Rhodes later formed a partnership with Thomas Johnston, a son of Colonel Johnston of Horton, a wealthy lumberman. Today, the business is known as Johnston and Rhodes Bluestone Co. of East Branch.

During the early days of the industry, nearly all of the work was done with hand tools and horses provided power to take the stone to the docks where it was shipped by boat or train. Handmade stationary derricks, along with ropes and pulleys, helped move the heavy bluestone as well as the dirt, rock and trees that overlaid it. Bulldozers and excavators eventually replaced this system and today, saws do much of the cutting. This has made it possible to return to some old quarries to obtain stone that could not be removed with older methods. Many of the old quarries are now overgrown and hard to find.

Demographic Profile of Colchester

According to the US Census, the Town of Colchester had a total 2000 population of 2,042 persons. The Town’s population has increased steadily over the past three decades, however the percentage of growth slowed somewhat between 1990 and 2000. Between 1970 and 1980, population growth was almost eleven percent, while during the most recent decade, growth slowed to five percent (an increase of 97 persons). Overall, since 1970, Colchester has grown by 22.64 percent or 377 persons.



Colchester’s age characteristics are very similar to other Towns in the area and to Delaware County figures. In 2000, 18 percent of the Town’s population was 14 years of age or under, down from almost 28 percent in 1970 (sum of first two rows in table 1a). Meanwhile, 36 percent of the Town’s 2000 population were 55 years or older, up from 28

percent in 1970. The table below shows Colchester as an area with a growing middle aged and elderly population and a shrinking youth population. The 2000 median age in Colchester was 44.6, up from 37.5 in 1980. As the population age increases, it is likely that there will be increased needs in the future for senior citizen housing and increased needs for medical services, transportation and activities for the elderly. At the same time, as the number of youth decline, it may impact the school system and make it more difficult to attract employers who might want to locate to the town.

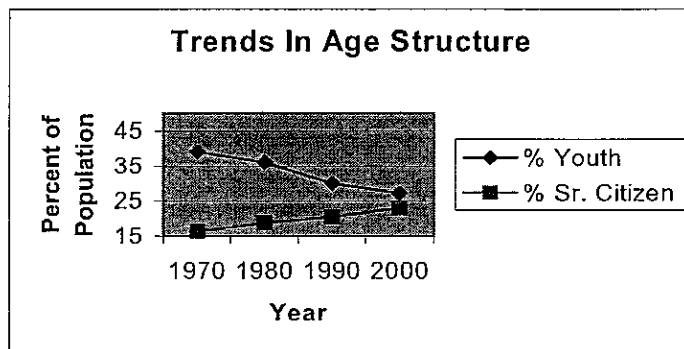


Table 2: Age and percent of population

Subject	1970	% of population	1980	% of population	1990	% of population	2000	% of population
Under 5 years	126	7.57%	116	6.28%	94	4.83%	111	5.44%
5-14	332	19.94%	259	14.02%	266	13.68%	247	12.10%
15-24	193	11.59%	291	15.75%	223	11.47%	196	9.60%
25-34	167	10.03%	201	10.88%	232	11.93%	183	8.96%
35-44	175	10.51%	196	10.61%	235	12.08%	296	14.50%
45-54	213	12.79%	209	11.31%	239	12.29%	275	13.47%
55 to 64	186	11.17%	229	12.39%	259	13.32%	266	13.03%
65 years and older	273	16.40%	347	18.78%	397	20.41%	468	22.92%

Source: US Census 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Ethnicity

In 2000, 98.5 percent of the Town's population was white, with only 16 persons or 1.5 percent counted as black, American Indian, or Asian.

Households

The number of households in Colchester has increased by almost 20% since 1980 (137 households) while the average household size has decreased by 12 percent (from 2.64 to 2.32). During the past decade, the number of families increased by eight percent while the number of families headed by a female with no male increased nine percent to 61 families. This represents 7.3% of all families in Colchester. The average household size

for Delaware County as a whole was 2.39 in 2000, and the percent of all families with no male present was 9%. The 20% increase in the number of households is a high rate of change compared to many other rural areas in New York State. Population levels in many communities are stagnant or have shown losses. A high rate of population increase along with a similar increase in housing indicates that Colchester is experiencing growth. This growth may make it more difficult for Colchester to maintain its rural character and environmental quality. On the other hand, more people may enhance the economy and success of local businesses.

Table 3: Selected Demographic Characteristics (1970 – 2000)

Subject	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1970-2000
Population and Age					
Total Population	1,665	1,848	1,945	2,042	22.64%
Under 5 years	126	116	94	111	-11.90%
5-14	332	259	266	247	-25.60%
15-24	193	291	223	196	-3.55%
25-34	167	201	232	183	9.58%
35-44	175	196	235	296	69.14%
45-54	213	209	239	275	29.11%
55 to 64	186	229	259	266	43.01%
65 years and older	273	347	397	468	71.43%
Median Age	NA	37.5	NA	44.6	
Households and Families					Percent Change 1990-2000
Number of Households	NA	700	755	837	10.86%
Number of Families	489	NA	506	547	8.1%
Married Couple Families	NA	NA	424	454	7.1%
Female householder, no male	NA	NA	56	61	7.3%
Average Household size	NA	2.64	NA	2.32	
Housing Characteristics					Percent Change 1970-2000
Number Housing Units	835	918	1,572	1,589	90.05%
Occupied Housing	552	700	755	837	51.6%
Owner-occupied	417	588	610	673	61.39%
Renter-occupied	135	112	145	164	21.48%
Vacant Housing	283	218	817	750	165.01%
Seasonal Vacant	164	114	749	635	287.2%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census from 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

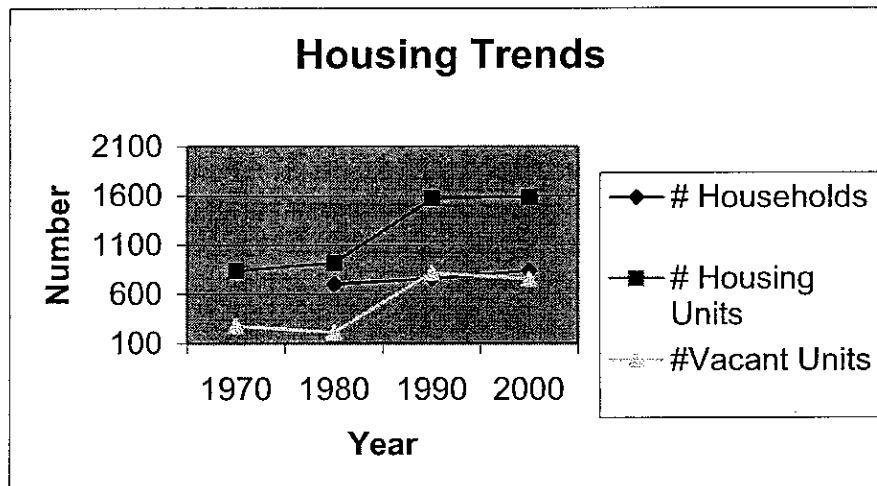


Table 4: Selected Demographic Characteristics (1990-2000) (Blank = Not Available)

Subject	1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
Lived in same house past 5 years	1,285	1,327	3.27
Lived in different house, same county	242	262	8.3
Lived in different house, out of county, same state	262	344	31.3
Lived in different house, different state	62	98	58.1
Worked in County	549		
Worked out of County	221		
Worked at home	39	41	5.1
< 9 th grade	183	125	-33.3
Attended 9-12 grade, no diploma	255	216	-15.3
Some college, no degree	151	273	80.8
Graduate or higher degree	177	275	55.3
In labor force	904	850	-5.8
Not in labor force	673	814	21
Unemployed	103	63	-39
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and mining	41	52	27
Construction	92	99	7.6
Manufacturing	92	58	-37
Transportation	21	39	86
Communications	16	8	-50
Wholesale Trade	11	16	45
Retail Trade	122	87	-29
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	40	31	-23

Subject	1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000
Business and Repair Svc and personal services	29	35	21
Entertainment/Recreation	6	25	317
Health and Educational Services	182	246	35
Professional services		24	
Other Services	50	35	-30
Public Administration	63	64	Same
Median Household Income	\$24,974	\$32,147	29
# With Earn self-employment income	8		
# With Social Security Income	263	310	18
# With Public Assistance Income	44	22	-50
# With Retirement Income	158	218	38
Median Family Income	\$28,187	\$37,895	34
Per Capita Income	\$10,789	\$15,636	50
People with income below poverty level	214	248	16
Single Family Units	1,063	1,138	7.1
2 or more units in structure	71	75	Same
Mobile Home or Trailer	382*	363	-5
Median Gross Rent		\$473	
Median Value of owner-occupied housing unit		\$73,500	

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census from 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000

*Does not include 56 units classified as "other"

Residency

The residency statistics show that most people in Colchester have not moved in the past five years. For those people who have moved, slightly more moved to Colchester from other New York State counties (344 people) than those that moved from within Delaware County (262 people). Ninety-eight people moved to Colchester from other states in the past five years.

Education

The residents of Colchester have substantially more years of education than those in the past. The number of persons who have attended some college (1-3 years) or more (bachelor's or master's degrees) has increased greatly. Those who attended some college increased by 80% while those actually graduating from college increased 55%. Meanwhile, the number of people who have not received a high school diploma dropped almost 15.3% between 1990 and 2000 (although there have been significant reductions in the number of school-aged children during that time).

Employment and Business

Between 1970 and 1990, the Town of Colchester's labor force grew by over 55 percent,

from 580 to 902 persons. In the past decade however, the labor force decreased by 5.8% and those not in the labor force increased 21%. The unemployment rate decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000 (by 39%.) This may, in part, reflect the higher number of senior citizens in Colchester.

As compared to Delaware County, the Town of Colchester has seen similar changes to its economy. Tables 5 and 6, below, compare the occupations of both the Town and county's residents between 1970 and 2000. The pattern has changed from craftsmen, foreman, and operators being the dominant occupation in 1970 to professional, technical and managers in 2000. Farming, fishing and forestry occupations decreased from 7.8% of all workers in 1970 to 1.3% in 2000. Since the classification system for occupations changed between 1970 and 1990, it may be more accurate to look at occupation trends between 1990 and 2000. In both years, managerial and professional occupations dominated. Service occupations actually decreased in that time period and farming, fishing and forestry occupations continued to decline in numbers. Local data collection indicated that there were 40 people employed in quarrying, 17 in farming, and 11 in forestry.

The trends mentioned above are not unique to Colchester nor are they contrary to trends seen in the county overall. County occupations are very similar to that in Colchester. Colchester has slightly higher numbers employed in construction, extraction and maintenance positions than the County as a whole, and fewer people involved in farming, fishing, and forestry. The County saw large decreases in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations between 1990 and 2000.

Table 5. Town of Colchester, Occupations: 1970, 1990 and 2000

Occupation, 1970*	%	Occupation, 1990**	%	Occupation, 2000**	%
Professional, technical, Managers and Administrators	18.5%	Managerial and professional specialty occupations	18.9%	Managerial and professional specialty occupations	28.1
Sales, clerical and kindred workers	11.0%	Technical, sales, and administrative support occupations	21.9%	Production, transportation and material moving	20.3
Craftsmen, foremen, operatives, and kindred workers	32.5%	Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	16.0%	Sales and Office	19.3
Laborers, except farm and mine	11.3%	Operators, fabricators, and laborers	18.6%	Service occupations	16.3
Farmers, Farm managers, farm laborers and farm	7.8%	Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	4.8%	Construction, extraction, and maintenance	14.8

Occupation, 1970*	%	Occupation, 1990**	%	Occupation, 2000**	%
foremen					
Service workers including private household workers	18.9%	Service occupations	20.0%	Farming, Fishing, Forestry	1.3

Source: US Census

*Count of employed population, 14 years old and over by occupation

**Count of employed population 16 years and over

Table 6. Delaware County, Occupations: 1970, 1990 and 2000

Occupation, 1970*	%	Occupation, 1990**	%	Occupation, 2000**	%
Professional, technical, Managers and Administrators	21.1%	Managerial and professional specialty occupations	22%	Managerial and professional specialty occupations	31.6%
Sales, clerical and kindred workers	17.4%	Technical, sales, and administrative support occupations	23.9%	Sales and office occupations	20.4%
Craftsmen, foremen, operatives, and kindred workers	31.6%	Precision production, craft, and repair occupations	14.7%	Production, transportation and material moving	17.9%
Laborers, except farm and mine	4.8%	Operators, fabricators, and laborers	17.9%	Service Occupations	16.9%
Farmers, Farm managers, farm laborers and farm foremen	11.3%	Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations	6.4%	Construction, extraction, and maintenance	10.9%
Service workers including private household workers	13.8%	Service occupations	15.0%	Farming, fishing, forestry	2.4%

Source: US Census

*Count of employed population, 14 years old and over by occupation

**Count of employed population 16 years and over

Local Business Inventory

The Delaware County Water and Economic Development Office has inventoried local businesses. There are a variety of local businesses ranging from service to retail included on this inventory. A total of 72 different businesses are included. The most common businesses include real estate and development (5 businesses), camps and trailer parks (5), beauty shops (3), restaurant and drinking establishments (3), dimension stone (3), bed and breakfasts (3), and antique stores (3). Others include gas service station (2),

excavation (2), auto repair (2), variety store (2), painting (2), and sports clubs (2). The remaining 33 businesses include a variety of manufacturing (metal products), services (general contractor, forestry services, insurance, and bank, for example), retail (grocery store, hardware for example), and recreational businesses (miniature golf, for example).

County Business Patterns: Industry Summaries

County Business Patterns is a source of economic information that provides data on annual series by industry. The data, from the US Census Bureau, is available by ZIP codes and reflects only those businesses that have filed with the state for an employer identification number. Since this is zip code data, the statistics presented here do not match Colchester's borders exactly. Further, the data excludes information on self-employed, railroad employees, agricultural production employees, and most government employees. However, this information does provide a snapshot of the Town's economy. Industries are classified using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). There are several additional businesses in Colchester located in the Roscoe zip code that is not accounted for in the following information.

ZIP Code 13752, DeLancey, NY

Annual payroll: N/A

Number of establishments: 3

Number of employees: 0-19

Industry	Establishments
Construction	1
Professional, scientific & technical services	1
Healthcare and social assistance	1
Total	3

ZIP Code 13755, Downsville, NY

Annual payroll: \$1,955,000

Number of establishments: 22

Number of employees: 121

Industry	Establishments
Forestry, fishing, hunting and agriculture support	1
Mining	1
Construction	1
Manufacturing	3
Wholesale trade	1
Retail trade	5
Information	1
Finance & insurance	3
Healthcare and social	1

assistance	
Accommodation & food services	2
Other services (except public administration)	1
Unclassified establishments	2
Total	22

ZIP Code 13782, Hamden, NY

Annual payroll: \$31,000

Number of establishments: 8

Number of employees: 7

Industry	Establishments
Wholesale Trade	1
Retail Trade	1
Finance & insurance	1
Healthcare and social assistance	1
Accommodation & food services	1
Other services (except public administration)	3
Total	8

Income Levels

Colchester's median household income levels (\$32,147) are the same as the county as a whole (\$32,461). The median household income rose 29% between 1990 and 2000. There was an 18% increase in those people receiving social security income, and a very large increase in those receiving retirement income (38% more.) Although the number of people living below the poverty level rose 16 percent in the past decade, those receiving public assistance decreased almost 50%. This may be due, in part, to changes made to the public assistance rules in the 1990's. These changes have resulted in more people being ineligible for public assistance, but not necessarily helping them move above the poverty level.

Housing Units

Since 1970, there has been a 90% increase in the number of housing units in Colchester. The largest increase in units came between 1980 and 2000 (a 71% increase). Since 1990, the number of housing units has increased, but at a smaller rate of 10%. This increase compares to a 5.8% increase in housing units countywide. Just over half of all units are occupied and most of those are owner-occupied (80%.) Seven hundred and fifty houses

are considered vacant, but most of those are seasonal dwellings (85%.) The true vacancy rate (those dwellings that are actually empty and available for rent or purchase) was about 7% in 2000. About 72% of all dwellings are single-family units. There are 75 multi-family units in Town. About 23% of all units are mobile homes (363 units). The median gross rent in 2000 was \$473 per month. This is a large increase in rent up from \$112 per month in 1980. The median value of a owner-occupied dwelling has also increased dramatically from \$27,300 in 1980 to \$73,500 in 2000.

Recreation

Public lands cover much of the total area of Colchester. The Bear Spring Game Management Area, located in the north-west portion of Town (straddling the border with Walton) offers cross country skiing, picnicking, camping, hiking, horseback riding, and swimming. State-owned land within the Catskill Park covers much of the southern section of Town both east and west of Route 206. According to the "Town of Colchester Recreational Trail Map" activities allowed on this land include cross country skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and camping. Popular fishing spots include the many streams and river access areas, especially in Cooks Falls. There are numerous camping areas along Route 30 in the Town. These campgrounds provide access to the trout streams and provide other recreational opportunities as well.

Segments of the Finger Lakes Trail, a 552-mile long trail that connects the Catskill Mountains with the Allegheny Mountains can be accessed at various points in Colchester. The Pepacton Reservoir, part of the Catskill Watershed Area for New York City drinking water, is accessible only for fishing by permit. The Fireman's Field and the school also provide important recreational facilities and programs. Some of the facilities at the school have deteriorated recently and there is need to maintain and use the Fireman's Field more. The Fire District owns the Fireman's Field.

According to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, there are 520 acres of city land open for hiking (permit access only) along NYC road just north of the Pepacton Reservoir (this area straddles the border of Colchester and Andes). Permits for the purpose of gaining access to New York City land can be found on the city's web page at www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/ruleregs/wsrecreation.html or by calling the Watershed Protection Office at (607) 363-7009/7010.

The Town of Colchester operates a swimming pool behind the school in Downsville that is open from the end of June until Labor Day, contributes to the local Little League and maintains a Town Park near the covered bridge (although there are no existing programs or activities that utilize this space).

Transportation and Highways

There are three State Highways (SR 206, SR 17 and SR 30) covering 28.78 miles, three County Highways (CR 26, CR 7, and CR 17) covering 20.43 miles, and 78 local roads

covering 100.38 miles in Colchester. Total road mileage in Colchester is 149.59 miles. There are numerous county-owned and maintained bridges in the Town. The Town contracts with the County to plow county roads. However, all reconstruction and maintenance associated with County roads and bridges are handled by the Delaware County Department of Public Works. Colchester has the most local roads of all Towns in Delaware County. Given the number and miles of roads, the Town is concerned about the effects of increased traffic and how road crews will be able to adequately maintain roads. A significant portion of the Town's budget goes to the Highway Department. There are many private roads that have, or are likely to be petitioned to become a Town-owned road. As private roads are taken over by the Town, there is concern as to what this will mean for Town budgets.

Table 7. Colchester Road System

	Number of roads	Miles	Percent of total road mileage
State	3 (Routes 206, 17, 30)	28.78	19.2%
County	3 (Routes 26, 7, 17)	20.43	13.7%
Local	78	100.38	67.1%
Total		149.59	100%

Source: Delaware County Planning Department

The Town Highway Department has 12 employees. There are two additional full time employees in the winter. The Superintendent of Highways participates in the Cornell Local Roads training programs. The Town receives highway improvement funds (\$126,000 in 2002). New York City pays for maintenance on city-owned roads, but the Town conducts the work.

One major road construction project taking place in the near future is the reconstruction of Route 17 to I-86. The interchange at Exit 93, in the Town near Cook's Falls is substandard and has a history of accidents. Here the westbound on-ramp runs parallel to County Route 17 and is very confusing to drivers. The Town owns property near the interchange that may be used to create a standard interchange. In addition, the NYS DOT recently conducted an interchange study and is considering eliminating the Cook's Falls interchange. This has been strongly opposed, especially by residents in Cook's Falls.

Traffic

The Delaware County Highway Department conducted its most recent traffic counts along county-owned roads located in Colchester in 1997. These counts show traffic volume increases since 1982 with the highest increases along CR 7 (69%) and CR 26 (43%). Weekend traffic is greater along Route 7 and NYS Route 17 while Route 26 sees higher traffic levels during the weekdays.

Table 8. Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts

Route	ADT 1982	ADT 1986	ADT 1991	ADT 1997	ADT Weekend 1997	ADT Weekday 1997	Percent Change (1982 to 1997)
County	1399	1822	2328	2365	2629	2013	69%

Route 7							
County Route 26*	656	911	934	941	932	956	43%
NYS Route 17	376	428	434	442	488	381	18%

*Used 1998 figures (in place of 1997).

The New York State Department of Transportation has conducted traffic counts at four locations within the Town of Colchester every few years since the early 1990s. According to the NYS data, the number of vehicles has increased along each road where traffic counts were calculated. The volume increases between the first count in early 1990s to the most recent count in 2000 ranged between 4 to 30 percent. The highest percentage increases in traffic counts (between early 1990s and 2000) occurred along State Route 206 traveling south from Downsville to Beaver Kill Road (30%) followed by State Routes 30 and 206 in Downsville (27%).

Table 9. New York State Department of Transportation Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts

Route	ADT*	ADT	ADT	ADT	Percent Change**
State Route 30 from NYS Route 17 (Hancock) to Downsville	800 (1992)	740 (1995)	880 (1998)	920 (2000)	15%
State Route 30 and 206 in Downsville	2050 (1991)	1750 (1996)	2550 (1999)	2600 (2000)	27%
State Route 30 (from intersection with NYC Road to Route 1 in Andes	560 (1991)	460 (1994)	540 (1997)	580 (2000)	4%
State Route 206 (between Walton and Downsville)	1700 (1992)	1550 (1995)	1950 (1998)	2050 (2000)	21%
State Route 206 from Downsville to Beaver Kill Road	1500 (1992)	1500 (1996)	1950 (1999)	1950 (2000)	30%

*Average Daily Traffic = number of vehicles (year)

**Represents percent change from first traffic count (early 1990s) and 2000.

Public Services and Government

Government Finance

In 2002, 44% of the Town's budget went to the general fund, 41% went to highways, and 14% went to the Downsville Fire District. The remaining items including the Downsville Light District, Beaverkill Fire District, Colchester Fire Protection, and Delinquent water bills account for less than 4% of the total budget. Seventy-two percent of the Town's expenses are paid by taxes received from New York City. Twenty-Eight percent are covered by taxes received from local property owners. There are 2,679 taxable parcels of

land in Colchester, 188 are state-owned, 12 listed as "special franchise", 13 parcels listed as utilities, and 54 wholly exempt parcels.

Public Services

Public Buildings

The Town owns a variety of properties for municipal functions including the Town Hall, highway garages, and a transfer station in Downsville. Other structures include pump houses, a water tank, storage facilities, and a gazebo. The Town Hall also houses the Town Historical Society and the Colchester Reading Room (library).

Utilities

There are no public sewer systems in Colchester. Sanitary facilities throughout the Town are private on-site septic systems. A 1988 study was conducted by NYS DEC and the Department of Health to evaluate the feasibility of a sewage system. This study indicated that there were currently not enough properties to sustain a traditional central sewer treatment facility.

Three public water systems are in operation. The Water District in Downsville serves 280 people from two wells with the primary source of water from a spring. This system has been recently upgraded. All hook-ups are metered. Cooks Falls Water District also has a spring fed system with a well as a back up. The hamlet of Corbet is a private system to serve that area and is also spring fed.

Police

The Town Police Force, the County Sheriff, and the New York State Police provide police services. New York City DEP also has enforcement officers. The Town police currently have one officer although they are looking to re-staff to two patrolmen.

Code Enforcement

The Town of Colchester adopted a building code in 1983. In 2002, the town adopted the International Building Code. There is one code enforcement officer. It has been suggested to re-write some local ordinances and laws to over new enforcement needs and requirements.

Emergency Services

All-volunteer departments staff emergency services in Colchester. There are two ambulance corps. Cooks Falls has a fire company, but not an ambulance corps. In the Downsville Fire Department, the rescue squad is part of the fire department. Cooperstown Medical Transport is a paid paramedic service that provides back up when the volunteer services are not available. The biggest issues facing the fire departments are lack of members and new membership recruitment.

Cellular Towers

Five cellular towers have been permitted through the Town of Colchester. Only two are operational at the current time and as such, cell coverage is not adequate.

Schools

Students in Colchester attend classes in either Downsville or Roscoe School Districts. The Downsville School plays an important role in the community life of Colchester. In addition to its educational role, it has an important cultural and recreational role as well. Some basic statistics and characteristics are included below. These numbers illustrate the changes related to the schools and their performance over the past few years.

Table 10 School District Data (*Source: New York State Education Department, The New York State School Report Card, 1999 – 2000*)

Downsville Central School District

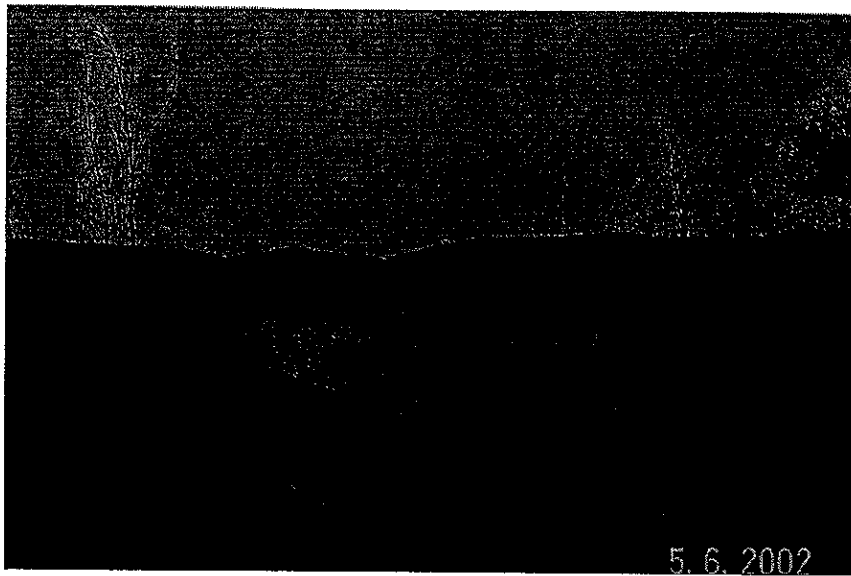
	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	
K-12 Enrollment	336	329	334	
Student Dropouts	14	6	5	
Annual Attendance Rate	94.8%	96.6%	96.6%	
Total Graduates	19	23	17	
# Teachers			41	
# Other professional staff			6	
# Total Paraprofessionals			11	
# Teaching out of certification			1	
Distribution of 1999-2000 Graduates				
To 4-year College	To 2-year College	To other post secondary	To military	To employment
47%	18%	0%	12%	24%

Roscoe Central School District

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	
K-12 Enrollment	335	330	322	
Student Dropouts	0	5	3	
Annual Attendance Rate	94.3%	94.4%	94.4%	
Total Graduates	17	21	23	
# Teachers			32	
# Other professional staff			4	
# Total Paraprofessionals			11	
# Teaching out of certification			6	
Distribution of 1999-2000 Graduates				
To 4-year College	To 2-year College	To other post secondary	To military	To employment
43%	26%	0%	17%	13%

The New York City Watershed and the Town of Colchester

The Town of Colchester is partially within the Catskill/Delaware Watershed Area of the New York City Watershed. The entire New York City watershed encompasses about 1,900 square miles of land. About 90% of New York City's water originates from the Catskill/Delaware portion of the watershed (the remaining 10% comes from the Croton Watershed east of the Hudson River). Water from the Delaware portion of the watershed travels under the Hudson River via the Delaware Aqueduct that empties into the West Branch Reservoir. The Pepacton Reservoir, constructed in 1954, is a major component of the watershed system and is located in the eastern portion of Colchester.



The Watershed Agreement is a legally binding document that outlines the obligations on the part of both New York City and the watershed Towns relating to the protection of water resources in the region. This agreement includes components for land acquisition, watershed rules and regulations and watershed protection and partnership programs.

A significant amount of land in the eastern portion of Colchester has been identified as Priority Areas 1A, 1B, and 4 for acquisition due to identification of water quality problems. Each area has specific requirements in order to be eligible for acquisition by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. These requirements include:

- 1) Parcels in Priority Area 1A must be at least 1 acre in size.
- 2) Parcels in Priority Area 1B must be at least 5 acres in size.
- 3) Parcels in Priority Areas 2, 3 or 4 must be at least 10 acres in size and must satisfy one of the following conditions:
 - The parcel(s) must be at least partially located within 1,000 feet of a reservoir.

- The parcel(s) must be at least partially located within the 100-year flood plain.
- The parcel(s) must be at least partially located within 300 feet of a watercourse as defined in the Watershed Regulations.
- The parcel(s) must contain, in whole or part, a federal jurisdiction wetland greater than 5 acres or a NYSDEC mapped wetland.
- The parcel(s) must contain ground slopes of greater than 15 percent.

The following table breaks down the priority areas found within the Town of Colchester included in the City's acquisition program.

Priority Area	Acres
Priority Area 1A	2,670.42
Priority Area 1B	821.63
Priority Area 4	2,945.04
Total:	18,669.86 (<i>includes the reservoir acreage</i>)

According to the Watershed Agreement, the City may only acquire vacant parcels outright and with a willing buyer. However, if a parcel to be bought has a habitable dwelling on it, the parcel must be subdivided so the City takes title only to the portion of property without the habitable dwelling.

Upon initiation, municipalities were given an opportunity to designate parcels of land to be excluded from the acquisition program. No land within the priority areas of Colchester was excluded from the acquisition program. Watershed rules and regulations went into effect in May 1997 and are designed to control sources of pollution including wastewater treatment plants, sewer systems, septic systems and stormwater pollution. The regulations include restrictions that reduce contaminants and prevent degradation of water supplies.

Some of the key elements of the watershed regulations that pertain to Colchester include:

- All septic systems installed, repaired or replaced in the Watershed require prior approval by the City. Existing systems that operate according to federal, state and local approvals are allowed to continue. However, if they need replacement, the repair must be made to the new standards. Routine repairs and maintenance are not affected by the regulations. The City will monitor, and approve design, treatment methods, construction, maintenance and operation of all new septic systems. In addition, no septic systems are allowed within 100 feet of a watercourse or wetland or 300 feet of a reservoir or on slopes greater than 15%. (These are also statewide standards).
- No impervious surfaces (paved or built areas) are allowed within 300 feet of a reservoir or 100 feet of a watercourse or wetland. There are some exemptions for villages, hamlets, and single-family home construction.

- No construction of new roads is allowed within 50 feet of intermittent streams or wetlands, or within 100 feet of perennial streams or 300 feet of a reservoir.
- Locations of new petroleum storage tanks are restricted.
- No new registered hazardous substance storage tanks are permitted within 100 of a watercourse.
- Some new commercial and industrial projects in the Watershed require the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.

The Watershed Protection and Partnership Programs includes funds for water pollution infrastructure, and education and economic development programs designed to protect water quality and improve the quality of life in the Watershed. Some examples of activities for which funding is available in this program include sand/salt storage facilities, stream corridor protection, alternatively designed septic systems, public education, a forestry management program, and economic development studies.

The Delaware County Action Plan (DCAP)

The DCAP program is intended to assist Delaware County's communities, residents, farmers and businesses in meeting water quality restrictions and objectives for the NYC watershed without loss of economic vitality and growth. It includes several components. Specifically, DCAP is designed to reduce contaminants and reduce phosphorous levels in the watershed. Components of DCAP include projects related to stormwater and flood management, work with dairy farmers via implementing precision feed management, stream corridor management, watershed modeling of the Cannonsville Basin, and reduction of pollutant loads originating from roads. The full report on DCAP is available from the Delaware County Planning Department.

Community Survey Results

448 surveys were returned (out of 2212). This 20% return is higher than most mailed surveys, which typically have a 10% return rate.

Appearance of Town: Almost half of the respondents rated the general appearance of the Town as “satisfactory” (47.3%). 31% feel that the appearance is “good”, while 17.4% said it is “poor”. Similarly, just over half also rated the overall appearance of properties as “fair” with 12 % saying it is “poor” and 29% saying it is “good”. When asked what people found least attractive about living in the Town, the top responses related to the Town’s appearance and included too much junk, junk cars, unkempt properties and abandoned buildings.

Future Town Size: There is no strong consensus on how large people want the Town of Colchester to grow. The majority would seem to want the Town stay about as it is or increase to a slight or moderate degree. There was a strong indication that people do not want to see large population increases (3.3% said they wanted to see large population increases.)

Job Opportunities: A large majority of respondents feel that job opportunities are poor (64.3%) in Town.

Taxes: About 30% felt that the Town effectively expends property taxes. 11% said that the Town is not effective. However most people were not sure (54% said this). Reasonable taxes were included in the list of features most attractive about the Town.

Satisfaction with Services:

Recreation: Overall, people who responded to the survey feel that they are “satisfied” with the availability of recreational opportunities including parks, playgrounds, libraries, and indoor and outdoor athletic facilities. For all these opportunities, fewer than 20% of respondents said they were very satisfied. Some people were not satisfied though. 24% were not satisfied with indoor athletic facilities, and about 18% were not satisfied with libraries and outdoor athletic facilities.

Schools and Emergency Services: About half of the respondents said they were “satisfied” with local services including the schools, ambulance, roads, and fire and police protection. Between 20 and 30% were “very satisfied” with everything but police protection. Only 7.4% said they were very satisfied with police services. Police protection received the highest number of people saying they were not satisfied (23.2%). About 30% of respondents were “very satisfied” with fire and ambulance services.

Overall, other services including health care, water supply and quality, solid waste disposal, the court system, the planning board, and the building department/code enforcement officer were rated most frequently as being “satisfactory”. Of these

services, only water quality and supply, and solid waste disposal received substantial numbers of "very satisfied" ratings (21% and 39.9%, respectively.) For each of these categories, there were a substantial number of people (generally about 30%) who had no response. This could indicate that these people had no knowledge of, or never had used, those services.

Need for Community Center: Almost half (49.6%) feel there is a need for a community social center, especially for the elderly. 31% said "maybe", while 14.5% said there is not a need. When asked what the elderly need in Colchester, the second most common response was a senior community center.

Retail Shopping: People shop at all of the locations included on the survey. Locally, about 23% shop in Downsville or Roscoe "often", 58.5% do so "sometimes", and 8% "never" shop here. Walton and Oneonta were the most frequented locations for shopping. Almost half said that they do Internet shopping "sometimes".

Control of Development: 57.4% of the respondents favor review of commercial and industrial development. 57.4% also favor controlling industrial development in Town. 64.7% also indicated they favored control over historic preservation districts. 10% or fewer people opposed any of these controls.

About the Participants: The survey participants can be characterized as people who are mostly middle aged to elderly, and long time and permanent residents. The survey underrepresents young people as only four people aged 15-20 years filled out and returned it. Almost half were between the ages of 20 and 60 with the other half aged over 60 years. Over half have lived in Colchester more than 15 years. 11% are newcomers to the area (living here less than 5 years). About 21% have lived here between 5 and 15 years. The majority of respondents are permanent residents (55.4%), followed by 18% seasonal residents and 16% weekenders.

Employment Characteristics of Participants: 29% of respondents said they are retired. More people listed themselves as being "retired" than any other employment category. Self-employment received the second highest numbers of responses with 11% indicating they were self-employed. The least common areas of employment included timber harvesting (1.5% of respondents), stone industry (3%), clerical (2.3%), and health care (3%).

Commuting Patterns: Most people did not answer the question about whether they commute to work. However, for those that did respond, 14% said they do commute and 21% said they do not commute. For those that do commute, slightly more people travel less than 30 miles than greater than 30 miles to reach their jobs. For those that said they were employed, most indicated they worked full time.

Children in Households: About half of the participants have no children living at home with them. This is consistent with the age and retirement status of many of the

participants. Slightly less than 20% of the participants have children still living at home.

Positive Features: The most attractive features about living in Colchester are (in order from most common response): natural beauty and the natural setting; the people; the peaceful and quiet lifestyle; the small Town atmosphere; outdoor recreational opportunities; reasonable taxes; a clean environment, and a safe area. The area's history, its schools, easy access to other locations, and the solitude of the area were other features listed by about 10 or fewer people. One or two people also listed an additional 12 features ranging from Colchester being a great place to raise a family to affordable property.

Negative Features: The least attractive features include (in order from most common response): junk yards and junk cars; unkempt properties and abandoned buildings; lack of retail shopping and services; long driving distance and lack of access to retail and services; lack of jobs. Other responses include lack of things for youth to do; lack of local laws and law enforcement; control of the area by New York City; no transportation services; and poor road conditions were listed as negative features by 10 or fewer people. One to four people also listed an additional 34 features as being negative, ranging from Colchester's lack of zoning to limited telecommunication capability.

What the Elderly Need: The elderly are felt to need (in order of response) transportation, a senior community center, enhanced medical services, senior housing, a pharmacy, and meals on wheels program. Some other identified needs include greater access to shopping and retail opportunities, a grocery store, delivery services, a volunteer visitation program, and computer education. One to two people also listed an additional 11 features, ranging from a better library to more places to walk safely.

How to Retain Timber, Stone and Tourism Industries: When asked what suggestions people had to retain the timber, stone and tourist industries in Colchester, the following were given as the most common responses: work to decrease regulations on the timber and stone industry; advertise the area and its assets more aggressively; clean up and enhance the maintenance of the Town; bring new businesses to Town instead of relying on these; give incentives and tax breaks; develop more trails and attractions for tourists; and be more tourist friendly. There were a wide variety of responses to this question with some people not being in favor of continuing these industries due to negative impacts associated with them, while others feeling more logging and stone quarrying should be done on properties owned by seasonal residents. Some comments related to the desire to increase environmental stewardship and conservation as a means to attract more tourists. Others related to the need for the Town to become more involved and active in business promotion.

Results of the Planning Workshop

A planning workshop was at the Downsville Fire House on June 4, 2002. About 20 people attended. The workshop was designed to involve residents in identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Colchester and to develop a vision statement for the Town. The workshop was also an opportunity to present and discuss the results from the written survey.

Negative Characteristics of Colchester

TOPIC	NUMBER OF PEOPLE GIVING ITEM PRIORITY STATUS	NUMBER OF TIMES THIS TOPIC WAS MENTIONED BY TABLE (3 TABLES TOTAL)
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
Lack of employment opportunities	2 people	3 tables mentioned
Lack of economic growth activities due to NYC regulations	2	2
Poor telecommunications and technology	2	2
Limited businesses, results in lack of competition		3
Lack of stores and services	1	2
State parks compete with local campgrounds		1
Surrounded by state land and parks that are regulated		1
ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION		
Lack of public and industrial transportation		1
Poor road conditions		1
Local roads s/b cleaned seasonally		1
Litter on roads		1
Speeding (Knox Ave.		1
AESTHETIC CHARACTER		
Junk cars and abandoned/neglected properties	1	3
Main St. is dirty	1	1
Town looks like an eyesore – has bad first impression		1
Lack of spring clean-up and garbage collection		1
Town Hall is a disgrace where it is and how it looks		1

Debris along brooks		1
Lack of landscaping on peoples property		1
School tennis court looks awful		1
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES		
Lack of waste water treatment management	1	1
Lack of solid waste management	1	1
No public sewer system		2
Lack of quality rental housing		1
Lack of emergency services		1
Lack of convenient health care		1
RECREATION		
Lack of youth and senior activities		3
Lack of reasons for people to come spend day here		1
Lack of public recreation (especially at the Pepacton Res.)	1	1
Lack of deer population		1
Dislike rails along covered bridge	1	1
Lack of fishing access from bridge		1
Lack of indoor pool		1
OTHER		
Too few people supporting Town and meetings, etc.	1	1
Handicapped access needed at Library and Historical Soc.		2
Too many police		1
Need more parking spaces		1
No more fireworks		1
Museum, Library and Historical Assoc. needs to be on Main St	1	1
Tractor trailers parked in pull off by Tub Mill Falls		1
Smoking outdoor wood furnaces in village area		1
Rules set by landlords		1
Different school districts and different telephone exchanges		1
Area is promoted for tourism but not for living in		1
Poor weather		1

Ideas To Improve Negatives

- ♦New York City should filter their water so the reservoirs can be open to recreation.
- ♦Increases in recreation would increase employment opportunities in recreation and services.
- ♦Town should enforce the new IBC regulations when they come into effect in July 2002.
- ♦Look into grants to help set up waste treatment.
- ♦Solid waste can be picked up more frequently.
- ♦Offer tax incentives and low cost loans to encourage businesses.
- ♦Assist in population surveys to show the area can support the businesses.
- ♦Town and County should work with State to abate proposed and existing regulations on bluestone and lumbering industries.
- ♦Work towards loosening liability restrictions for recreational activities on State and City lands.
- ♦Encourage telecommunication companies to activate towers and invest in new ones.
- ♦Encourage expansion of DSL and broadband access.
- ♦Encourage existing health care services to expand hours of operation.
- ♦Encourage local population to support existing health care services to make it feasible that they stay open.
- ♦Remove rails on the covered bridge or fix like Fitch Bridge.
- ♦Purchase a new building for the library and historical association where it is convenient, prominent, and attractive.
- ♦Keep fighting for reasonable regulations that recognize our needs and keep DEC, DEP out.
- ♦Zone to prohibit furnaces in Town or setback certain distances of a residence.
- ♦Keep contacting residents by mass mail or phone to get people to come to Town meetings and become involved.
- ♦Need zoning to have no junk cars, force people to mow their lawns and prohibit lawn "junk".
- ♦General clean up.
- ♦Paint houses, landscape, keep whiskey barrels nice and in shape on front lawns.



Positive Characteristics of Colchester

TOPIC	NUMBER OF PEOPLE GIVING IT ME RIORITY STATUS	NUMBER OF TIMES THIS TOPIC WAS MENTIONED BY TABLE (3 TABLES TOTAL)
Good school system	3 people	3 tables mentioned
Scenery, open space, good environment	3	3
Reasonable taxes	2	2
Historic covered bridge	2	2
The people, caring community		3
Bluestone and timber, canoeing, campgrounds, antiques and jobs created by these businesses	2	1
Historic characteristics	1	2
Schoolhouse Inn and their properties across the street and other local businesses	1	1
Trout fishing and the River	1	1
Reservoirs	1	1
Town police department		2
State land access		1
I-86 access		1
Family friendly environment		1
Low crime rate		1
Moderately priced housing		1
No pollution		1
Good roads, well maintained		1
Abundance of recreational lands and water (state and city)		1
Good tourism draw		1
Simple life		1
Availability of free services paid by taxes		1
Healthy heart walk through Town with mileage		1
Small Town atmosphere		1
This meeting		1
Neat and clean cemetery		1
Ambulance and rescue fire department		1
Snowmobile trails		1

Ideas to Maintain the Positive Characteristics of Colchester

- There is a need for a limited zoning law and junk car law.
- Create an "ugly" tax (you pay if you don't keep your property up).
- Apply for grant money to maintain existing historical areas.
- Have good upkeep of existing scenic areas such as the covered bridge park.
- Loosen regulations and promote agricultural activities.
- Protect rural roads and keep them 2 lanes.
- Stymie any effort of NYC to make the reservoir area state land.
- Encourage economic development to increase the tax base.
- Keep our government small, allow Town rule with less state rule.
- Open the City reservoirs to more public uses.
- Promote and provide continuing educational programs for teachers.
- Work with DEC on fishing access on private properties.
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism.
- Promote public awareness on budget hearings for tax proposals.
- Be supportive of nice looking businesses so they can keep them looking nice.
- Educate DCS students and bring in senior citizens to tell stories, etc. Seek grants to continue progress in this area.
- Support local businesses and work to promote them.

Summary of Workshop

Negative Features of Colchester

Negative features were identified in the areas of economic growth, aesthetic character, recreation, and public infrastructure and services. Negative aspects of the economy included lack of employment opportunities, lack of economic growth, lack of retail and services, and poor telecommunications and technology opportunities are seen as the biggest negative features of the Town. Junk cars, abandoned and neglected properties and various other locations described as needed improvement were identified as negative aesthetic features of Colchester. Lack of public sewer and water were also seen as priority negative features. Related to recreation, lack of activities for youth and senior citizens, and lack of public recreation opportunities (especially at the Reservoir) were important negative features. Twelve other characteristics such as too few people being involved in supporting Town business and the need for enhanced location for the library and historical association were identified as being negative. These results are consistent with those from the written survey.

Twenty-one different ideas were offered by participants to improve these negative features. Increasing recreational opportunities, offering tax incentives for business development, working to reduce regulatory pressures on the bluestone and timber industries, and enhanced local laws and programs to improve the aesthetic character of Town were all suggestions offered to improve Colchester. Seeking grants, promotion of local businesses and services, and working towards general clean-up of the area were other ideas offered.

Positive Features of Colchester

Twenty-eight different features were identified as positive. The school system and the scenery, open space and environment were considered to be the most important positive features by those who participated. This is also consistent with results from the written survey. Other important positives include a reasonable tax rate, the historic covered bridge, the people and caring community of Colchester, and the various local businesses. A low crime rate, moderately priced housing, a simple life and small Town atmosphere, and access to state land were all seen as positive attributes.

Seventeen different ideas were generated to keep these features from declining. These ideas ranged from adoption of additional local laws to ensure that properties were well maintained to encouraging more aggressive business development, and support of existing businesses. Education of the area's youth, involvement of senior citizens, and working with the State and NYC to gain more recreational access were other ideas.

A Vision for Colchester

Participants were asked to develop a future vision for the Town. Each person contributed ideas to what the future should be for Colchester. Three groups of people worked together to identify elements of this vision and to develop the following draft statements:

1. "We will be able to afford to live here and have good services. We have a healthy, clean, and neat environment. We feel safe in our community. People still care about their neighbors. People can shop locally and we have an abundance of activities for young and old. The Town and community in all facets encourage economic growth. We have an excellent school system. There is an abundance of rental and seasonal housing options. People are encouraged to come here for recreational activities. We have availability of the latest technological communications and regular trains to New York City."
2. "Public use of the Reservoir has a positive impact on the Town. The Town is cleaned-up. It has an active local government that is more in touch with the public. A diversity of small businesses that fit into Colchester creates economic opportunities and other services and products that are available locally. School enrollment is up and school activities create community spirit. The friendly people of Colchester are one of our greatest aspects. The Town has maintained its small Town charm, has aesthetic beauty and has protected its' environment. A variety of recreational activities exist, along with public transportation and quality emergency services."
3. "We have invested in our natural resources and put our Town to work doing it. We sell it to the City. We have safe and caring neighborhoods and Town organizations that work to better the community. Colchester is a unique, well-maintained and manicured Town that shows a lot of effort. It is a place where people are proud to bring up their families. Our Town's life includes a variety of thriving small businesses, an excellent school, and tourism. We have a new Town hall, library and historical association on Main Street. Our wildlife is still wild and our environment is clean. There are a variety of community events for young and old, and our senior citizens have adequate care,

housing, and transportation. We are proud of our history and have events to showcase it.”

Common Vision Elements

Most people included the following characteristics of the future vision for Colchester:

- ♦ Small, thriving businesses that fit into the Town.
- ♦ A higher employment rate.
- ♦ Enhanced tourism.
- ♦ Activities for young and old.
- ♦ Transportation and services for the elderly.
- ♦ Showcase of the area’s history.
- ♦ Protection of the area’s environment.
- ♦ Strong community spirit.
- ♦ Well-maintained properties and buildings.
- ♦ More recreational opportunities.
- ♦ Friendly and caring people.
- ♦ An excellent school system.
- ♦ Houses are affordable.

A Vision Statement for Colchester

The Town of Colchester, with its hamlets of Cooks Falls, Shinhopple, Corbett, Downsville, and Horton, is a friendly, safe, and caring community with a positive community spirit. Thriving small retail and service businesses cater to both locals and tourists and they fit in with the character of our Town. Quality employment opportunities exist, and the Town actively supports and promotes business and tourism development. Low taxes, affordable housing, and an excellent school system make Colchester a desirable residential location. New infrastructure and technology services exist to support residents and businesses.

Our abundant natural resources are protected and continue to contribute to our economy, recreational activities, and quality of life. More recreational activities are available for young and old alike. Greater access to the Reservoir and public lands has created new recreational and economic opportunities. The Town has a small Town charm, aesthetic beauty, and well-maintained properties. We have deep pride in our history and we have preserved it for future generations. A variety of events and programs exist to support and showcase our history, natural resources, and community.

Issues for the Comprehensive Plan to Address

Based on the written survey, the planning workshop, and analysis of data and trends in Colchester, the following issues have been identified (not listed in any priority order):

Population and Demographics:

- Issue: The population of Colchester grew faster than the county average during the 1990s (Colchester grew by 5% compared to 1.75% for Delaware County). Continued uncontrolled growth at these levels could lead to degradation of several highly valued environmental features such as important agricultural lands, open spaces, and scenic areas.
- Issue: Following statewide trends, household sizes continue to shrink while the median age of the population continues to rise. The draw of the area as a seasonal or retirement location will have implications in terms of housing types and service needs.
- Issue: There is a “disconnect” and lack of communication between residents of various locations within Colchester.
- Issue: There are increasing numbers of senior citizens in Town that will need services in the future. At the same time, there are decreasing numbers of infants, school-aged children and young adults. These trends could have many repercussions related to public services, emergency service needs, schools, and recreational opportunities.

Recreation:

- Issue: There is a need for more recreational programs, facilities, and access to existing open spaces. There are no indoor community recreational facilities. The major recreational opportunities are located at the school. Some of these, such as the tennis courts, are in poor repair. Further, the Town has no control over use of these school facilities. Few other facilities are available. According to the Community Survey many feel that the Town’s athletic facilities are insufficient. Some feel the school should open their facilities (computers, library, indoor recreation) to the community more.
- Issue: While much of the Town’s area is open space or preserved (NYS or NYC land), a substantial amount of this land is inaccessible to residents for active or even passive recreation. There is limited access to the Reservoir.
- Issue: There is a lack of organized recreational activities for all ages.
- Issue: The Fireman’s Field is an important recreational resource in Colchester and it

needs to be maintained and used.

Historic Features

- Issue: There is a desire to promote Colchester's historic identity. There are no local historic districts or incentives to rehabilitate older structures. The historical markers placed along roads were taken down and not replaced.

Agriculture

- Issue: There is a continued loss of farmers and farmland. There are no local mechanisms in place (incentives, programs or regulations) to protect remaining farmlands. There are however, state incentive programs and the ag district program that could be taken advantage of.

Land Use Controls:

- Issue: Existing land use regulations and local laws regarding development do not address many of the issues important to Town residents such as open space, environmental protection and the preservation or enhancement of small Town character.
- Issue: There is a perception among some people that there are not enough building inspection and enforcement efforts. Local laws and ordinances have not adequately authorized the building inspector to carry out enforcement activities and should be amended to enhance enforcement capabilities and to match new state requirements. There is also a need to educate residents on code enforcement procedures in Town.

Public Services

- Issue: Adequate public water facilities exist in the hamlet of Downsville. The water system is private in Corbet, and the Town is currently working on the system in Cooks Falls. None of the hamlets have public sewer systems. All sanitary facilities are private, on-site septic systems.
- Issue: According to the Community Survey, the Town library is inadequate. The facility is crowded and not handicapped accessible. The library needs to be in a more prominent location. Since volunteers run it, staffing may be an issue should the library desire to expand services.
- Issue: According to the survey, a substantial number of people are not satisfied with the police protection in Colchester. Part of the dissatisfaction comes from the fact that various police agencies (Town, NYC, New York State Police, or Sheriff) respond to requests for assistance when people are expecting Town officers to respond.

- Issue: Seniors currently meet at the Firehouse for activities. There is not a dedicated senior citizen center, nor is there a community center for youth and other residents.
- Issue: There is a need for more senior programs such as meals on wheels and volunteer visitation.
- Issue: There are an insufficient number of volunteers to staff the emergency services.
- Issue: According to the Community Survey, existing medical services are not adequate. There are no specialists available locally and it has been hard to maintain medical staff in the area. The medical building is inadequate for its purposes and hours are limited. There is a lack of eye and dental care. There is no local pharmacy and the closest ones are in Walton and Hancock.
- Issue: Lack of information about potential grants, and lack of professional help in seeking these grants mean that Colchester may be missing out on funding for new projects.

Environment:

- Issue: The visual and natural resources of the Town are highly valued by residents. There is concern that growth will negatively impact these features. Continued population growth and scattered development could lead to the loss of small Town character (as well as the remaining agriculture). Outside of the NYC Watershed, there are no programs or regulations in place to promote, preserve or enhance the Town's natural, cultural and aesthetic resources.
- Issue: Colchester has a substantial amount of land where slopes are 15% or higher. These lands are highly susceptible to erosion, contribute to the Town's scenery and vistas, and are locations that are often expensive to develop and install septic systems. Disturbance of ridgelines and steep slope areas of the Town can also contribute to loss of wildlife habitats and travel corridors, and can cause a decrease in water quality due to erosion and sedimentation. The Town currently has insufficient erosion and sediment control provisions for new development, and does not establish specific standards or practices designed to protect these vulnerable areas.
- Issue: Hilltops above steep slopes in Delaware County are often the most sensitive areas regarding water quality and possible pollution. While easier to develop than slopes or hillsides, negative impacts may be equally as severe, especially related to scenic and water quality impacts.
- Issue: A significant portion of the Town of Colchester has limitations to future development such as wetlands, steep slopes, shallow soils, impermeable soils, and floodplains. Furthermore, a significant portion of the Town poses limitations for use of conventional septic systems due to poor soils. In these areas, development may be limited, prohibited, or made more costly because alternative disposal systems or construction techniques may need to be implemented. Current Town programs and

regulations of land use do not adequately ensure protection of these resources.

Town Appearance

- Issue: The area of Downsville is in need of general repair and enhanced upkeep. A Main Street Assessment was done, but has not yet been implemented. Littering and dumping of trash is prevalent.
- Issue: There has been a noticeable amount of vandalism in Town, specifically on seasonal homes and properties during the off-season.
- Issue: According to the 2002 Community Survey, almost 20% of those surveyed felt that the overall appearance of Colchester is “poor.” For the most part, the dissatisfaction is related to junk cars, unkempt properties and abandoned buildings.
- Issue: There is need to beautify the waterfront area along the river.
- Issue: There is a lack of aesthetic and proper siting standards for cell towers.

Economy

- Issue: There are limited job opportunities to bring, and keep young families in Colchester.
- Issue: Colchester is a popular location for tourists, and outdoor recreation such as hunting and trout fishing. Many visitors are drawn to Colchester from outside the area. There is an opportunity to increase employment and tourist spending in Colchester.
- Issue: According to the Community Survey, there is not a strong consensus on what role the timber and stone industries should play in the Town’s economy. Some people wish to see a strong continuation of both industries. Others desire an expanded and more diverse economy.
- Issue: The bluestone mining industry in Colchester has been negatively impacted recently by DEC mining regulations.
- Issue: There is a desire for enhanced small business and retail growth in Colchester. At the same time, however, residents stressed the importance of Colchester’s small Town appearance and character. There needs to be a balance between these needs. According to the community survey, the Town’s residents desire small-scale commercial development such as convenience stores and other retail entities and “Green” and environmentally-friendly businesses. However, guidelines or incentives are not in place to promote certain types of small businesses or deter undesired uses.
- Issue: There is a lack of parking in Downsville.

- Issue: There is a lack of cellular service in Colchester even though numerous cell towers exist in the area.
- Issue: Residents, tourists and visitors travel outside of the Town's boundaries for much of their daily shopping.

Housing

- Issue: According to the survey, there is a need for senior housing options. If current trends continue, more elderly and retirees will locate in Colchester further exacerbating the need for alternative housing.
- Issue: Housing is currently affordable for the average household in Colchester. A housing analysis shows that rental rates are affordable and that the average family would be able to afford a mortgage on the average house. There is a need to keep it this way.

Transportation:

- Issue: Town of Colchester has 100 miles of locally owned and maintained roads. This creates a significant strain on municipal budget and resources. Many private roads have been, or are likely to be petitioned to become a public road. Addition of more public roads will further strain the Town's highway budget and ability to properly maintain this large mileage of roads.
- Issue: There is a need for having road maintenance standards in place.
- Issue: Colchester continues to be a popular location for seasonal homes. Most are located on private roads that are not maintained during the off-season. Conversion from seasonal to year-round could substantially increase the already strained highway maintenance department.
- Issue: Existing transportation services are inadequate for seniors and those without access to automobiles.
- Issue: Traffic levels have increased on most major roads throughout the Town. Specifically, County Route 7 (69% increase since 1982), County Route 26 (43% increase since 1982) State Route 30 in Downsville (27% increase since 1991), and State Route 206 from Downsville to Beaver Kill Road (30% increase since 1992) have seen substantial traffic increases.
- Issue: There is a great deal of confusion between State Route 206 and County Route ???.

NYC Watershed:

- Issue: There is a general distrust of NYC's watershed program. Furthermore, the program's regulations and potential benefits (such as grants and technical assistance) are not completely understood or taken advantage of.
- Issue: There is no clear understanding of the long-term impacts of the New York City Acquisition program on the Town.
- Issue: the New York City Watershed regulations do not apply to most areas outside of the general vicinity of the Pepacton Reservoir. The inequality of regulation may force more development into non-watershed regulated areas because it will cheaper and easier to build.
- Issue: There is limited access to the Pepacton Reservoir.
- Issue: Poor water level control of the Pepacton Reservoir has resulted in hazardous conditions and flooding downstream.