

The Heritage Project



Malletts Bay

Community Strategic Plan
2012–2022



Building Our Future

- Message from Community Strategic Planning Chair
- Colchester Heritage Committee
- Background
- Our Process
- Community's Vision and Future
- Goals and Objectives Summary
- Results by Area



Message

Dear Community Member:

I'm honored to have the opportunity to submit the Colchester Heritage Project for 2012–2022 to our Vermont community. The plan emerged following almost two years of working with community committees as well as residents on developing a vision of how Colchester should change over the next ten years. I am very appreciative to all of you that gave your interest, support, and dedication to help our community take this important first step. The community came together and proposed positive and fundamental change to the area and region. With continued local commitment and support, these important goals will be achieved.

Colchester is a community at a turning point. Our community can best be described as a collection of very different neighborhoods and areas that lack a common vision and direction. Despite being one of the most populous communities in Vermont, Colchester has less capacity in our local government, community organizations, and cadre of volunteers than many of our less developed neighbors.

I am excited that this plan will unlock the full potential of our community and provide a blueprint for how to improve the quality of life of those who work in, live in, and visit Colchester. Although it will require time to implement this plan, the investment is well worth the benefits.

The first step in improving our community is reading this plan. With so many action steps in so many areas, there is something for everyone. I challenge you to get involved in the areas that interest you most. Working together, we can show how citizens can make their community a better place. In order to learn more about how you can help, please contact our plan coordinator, The Director of Community and Economic Development at 802-264-5508 or kmurray@colchestervt.gov.

Sincerely,

Nadine Scibek
Colchester Heritage Project Chair
Select Board Member



Steering Committee

Julie Benay

Roger Bourassa

Kiersten Bourgeois

Ray Clavelle, Jr.

Dr. Bud Meyers

Jacob Morton-Black

Tom Mulcahy

Dr. Dorothy Pumo

Marcel Rainville, SSE

Karen Richard

Nadine Scibek, Chair

Jerry Tarrant

Dawn Terrill

David Usher

Stephen Wark

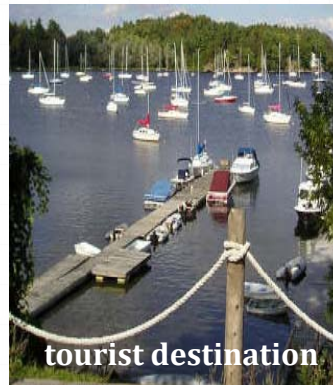
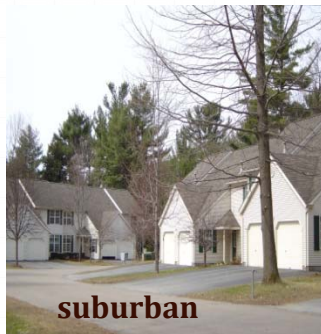
Larry Waters

Background

The impetus for creating a community vision arose from the need for Colchester to have a consistent image or vision for its future and to address how best to integrate into the evolving regional, national, and international economy. Before this process initiated, there were four core images of the community held by residents: **suburban, agricultural, tourist destination, and mixed community**. Although this splintered image has allowed the community to offer something to everyone, it has resulted in little consistency in the overall policy direction of the community, and it has forestalled opportunities for resource coordination among local governmental and nonprofit entities. Similarly, as the economy has transformed over the last decade, many communities have found that what drew investment, visitors, and jobs to their area in the past no longer possesses the same appeal. Colchester is at a crossroads and needs to determine the best path to remaining a flourishing community.

The Colchester Heritage Committee was formed to guide the community through the visioning process and to address these issues in the fall of 2010. The project goals included:

- developing and implementing a plan for creating and validating a community vision;
- developing and implementing a comprehensive, sustainable strategic plan for the town; and
- completing work on the plan in two years.



Who We Are

- Population has remained stable from 2000 to 2010
- Average age is mid-thirties (35.4 years)
- Significant majority of population is white

Census 2010 & 2009 Community Survey Abstract	Town of Colchester		Chittenden County
	2010	2000	2010
Total Population	17,067	16,986	156,545
Median age (years)	35.4	32.6	36.2
Male population	49.60%	49.00%	48.70%
Male population median age	34.6		34.9
Female population	50.40%	51%	51.30%
Female population median age	36.4		37.5
Total Population one race	98.60%	99.20%	98.10%
White	94.60%	96.50%	92.50%
Black or African American	1.20%	0.60%	2.10%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.30%	0.17%	0.30%
Asian	2.10%	1.50%	2.80%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Some Other Race	0.30%	0.25%	0.40%
Two or More Races	1.40%	0.80%	1.90%
Hispanic or Latino	1.60%	1.11%	1.80%



Where We Live

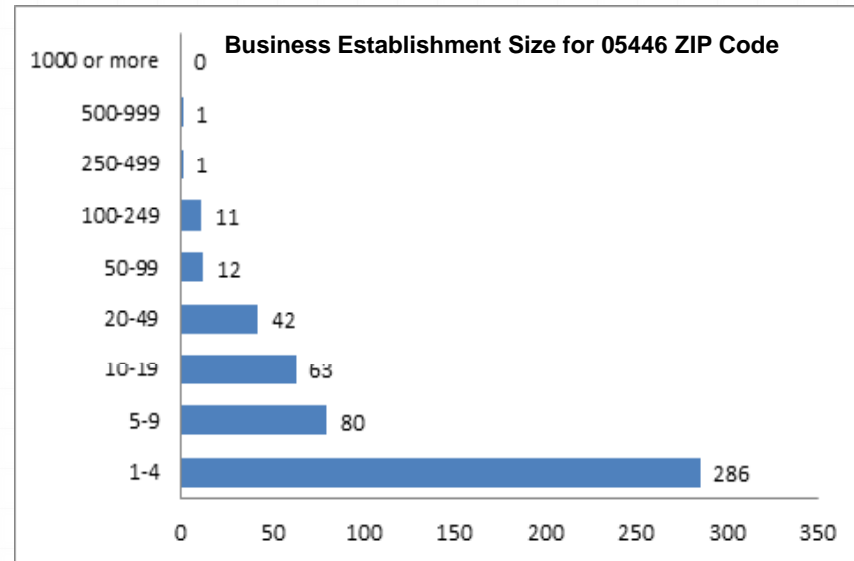
Census 2010 & 2009 Community Survey Abstract	Town of Colchester		Chittenden County
	2010	2000	2010
Total population in households	89.30%	90.40%	93.70%
Total population in households w/ children	23.50%	26.00%	23.90%
Total population in households w/ other relatives	2.60%	2.30%	2.60%
Total population in households w/ other relatives over 65 yrs. of age	0.60%		0.50%
Total population in households w/ nonrelatives	7.80%	6.00%	9.40%
Total population in group quarters	10.70%	9.60%	6.30%
Total population in group quarters (institutionalized)	0.50%	0.00%	0.70%
Total population in family households	64.90%	68.10%	59.20%
Total population in family households w/ own children	29.00%	34.10%	27.10%
Total population in family households (husband & wife family)	49.80%	55.20%	46.40%
Total population in family households (husband & wife family w/ children)	19.60%	25.50%	19.40%
Total population in non-family households	35.10%	31.90%	40.80%
Households with individuals under 18 years	31.10%	36.00%	28.80%
Average household size	2.41	2.5	2.37
Average family size	2.85	2.96	2.92
Total housing units	7,104	6,727	65,722
Total occupied housing units	88.90%	91.30%	94.10%
Total vacant housing units	11.10%	8.70%	5.90%
Total vacant housing units for rent	1.80%		1.20%
Total vacant housing units rented not occupied	0.20%		0.20%
Total vacant housing units for sale	1.40%		0.90%
Total vacant housing units for sold not occupied	0.10%		0.20%
Total vacant seasonal housing units	7.30%	7.00%	2.70%
Total vacant housing units - other vacancy reason	0.50%		0.80%
Homeowner vacancy rate	2.10%	0.50%	1.40%
Rental vacancy rate	6.40%	2.00%	3.60%
Owner-occupied housing units	71.40%	70.90%	65.20%
Renter-occupied housing units	28.60%	29.10%	34.80%
Average household size of renter-occupied units	2.18	2.17	2.09

- Household population decreased slightly
- Households with children under 18 decreased
- Average household size decreased
- Vacant housing units increased
- Rental vacancies increased



Our Workplaces

- Most businesses employ four or fewer employees
- Sales and office enterprises make up 26 percent of establishments

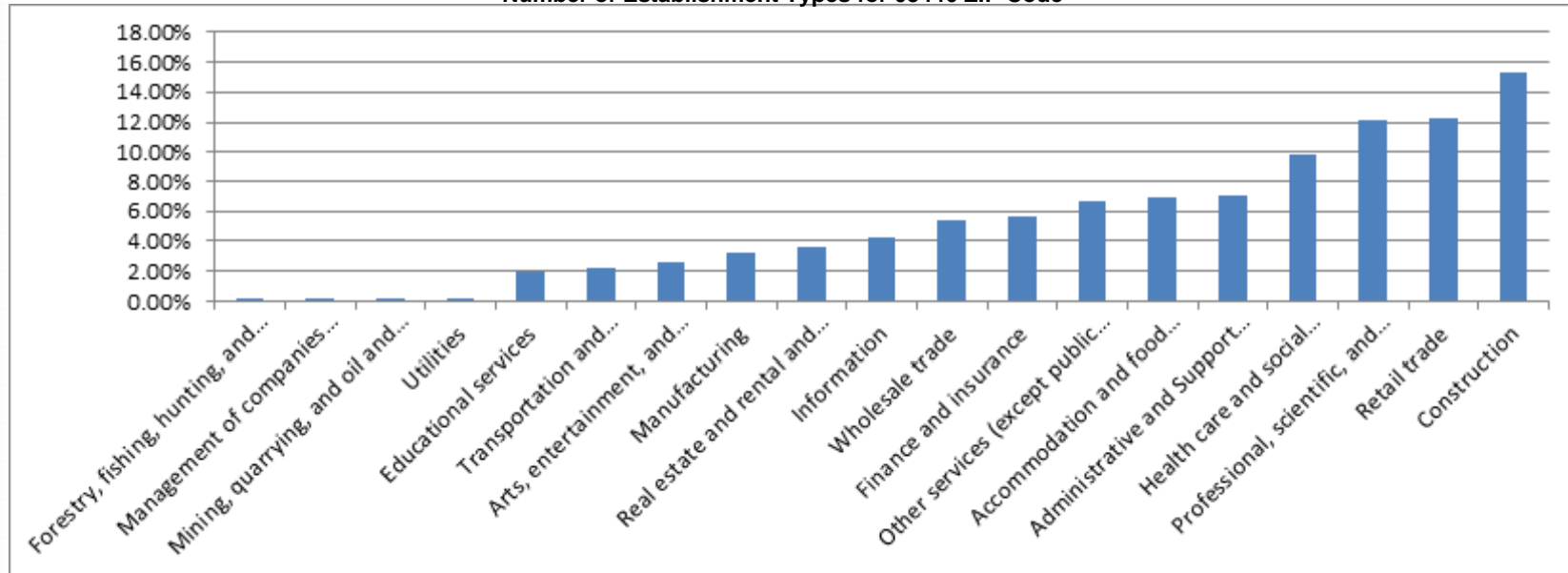


Source: Business Census 2009; censtats.census.gov.



Our Workplaces

Number of Establishment Types for 05446 ZIP Code



Source: Business Census 2009; censtats.census.gov.



Our Process

The process of visioning provides an opportunity for a community to come together and form consensus on what is important for their collective future. A successful process gathers community opinions, creates a vision of the future, determines the goals that support the vision, and designs action steps. In many ways, a community planning process is like a map that illustrates for a community how it can go from its current location to a new and better location in the future.



The Colchester Heritage Committee guided our process over the last twenty-four months on this journey.

Six subcommittees were formed from community members to assist with developing goals, objectives, strategies, and action plans. Town of Colchester staff participated in all phases of the project and were invaluable in providing necessary expertise in order to develop sound and actionable recommendations. In addition, numerous people from the community embraced this process and participated in public forums and other events.



This document summarizes the goals, objectives, strategies, and recommended actions necessary to successfully embark on our journey to taking Colchester into the twenty-first century.

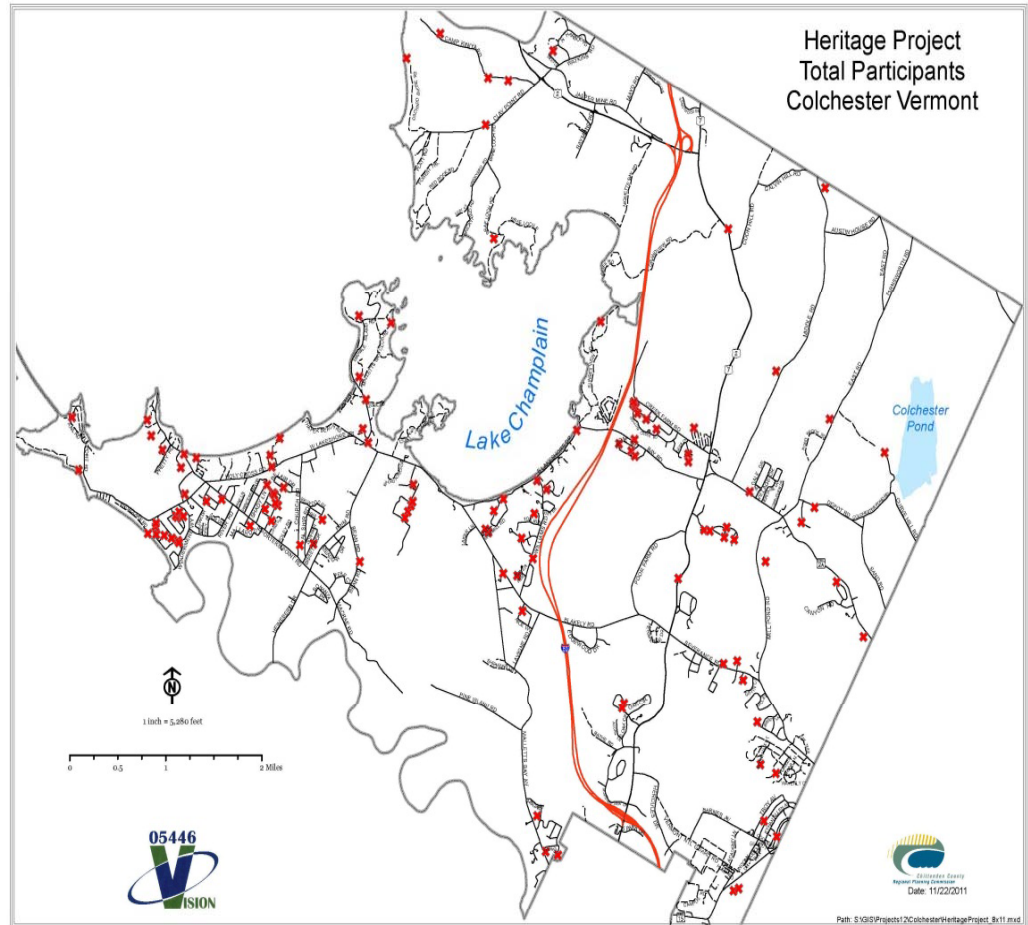
Benefits of Our Plan

Colchester will benefit from this process in numerous ways.

- ✓ Resources (time, talent, funds) will be properly allocated to the activities that provide the most benefit.
- ✓ Awareness of the changing environment will provide a foundation for needed change.
- ✓ The internal business culture will be analyzed, and its impact on the town's performance will be evaluated.
- ✓ The impact that the changing business environment is having on the town will be recognized, and the needed changes in direction will be effected.
- ✓ The town will become aware of its potentials in light of its strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ Available opportunities and potential threats will be identified and analyzed.
- ✓ Strategic issues will be brought up for top management review.
- ✓ Setting more realistic objectives that are demanding yet attainable will be possible.
- ✓ Decisions will be made based upon improved information.
- ✓ Growth will be accelerated and improved.
- ✓ Poor-performing areas can be identified and eliminated.
- ✓ Enhanced communications with those both inside and outside the town will be developed.
- ✓ A road map showing where the town is going and how to get there will be provided.
- ✓ Better internal coordination of activities will be developed.
- ✓ A frame of reference for budgets and short-range operating plans will be developed.
- ✓ A sense of security among employees that comes from a better understanding of the changing environment and the towns ability to adapt will be gained.

Community Input

Two community input sessions were conducted that included several hundred participants from across Colchester. During the first two forums in December 2009, community members identified what the future of Colchester should look like. These discussions provided the basis for creating the community vision statement. The second forum in March 2010 collected goals and objectives for reaching the vision within each goal area (governance, infrastructure, economic development, tourism and recreation, environment and agriculture, and education) over the next ten years.



Our Future

Vision Statement

Colchester, Vermont, located on Lake Champlain's Malletts Bay, is a diverse, civic-minded community endowed with a rich heritage of commercial, agricultural, recreational, and educational gifts. Proud of the quality of life already enjoyed here, the people of Colchester seek to build upon this foundation to ensure economic prosperity, recreational opportunity, and an entrepreneurial spirit for future generations.



Community's Future

- Colchester will be governed efficiently, effectively, and cost responsibly.
- Infrastructure should improve the quality of life of the citizens and increase linkages available to businesses.
- The economy should be diverse, create local jobs, and result in responsible and sustainable growth.
- Colchester should build on its natural beauty to provide recreation opportunities for citizens and visitors.
- Colchester should preserve its natural resources for future generations.
- All citizens should be educated to maximize opportunities and improve the community.

Goals

Governance	Infrastructure	Economic Development	Tourism and Recreation	Environment and Agriculture	Education
Create and implement structural, operational, and regional options to optimize the transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and cost of Colchester's government and public services. The town should foster communications, citizens' trust, active participation, and cooperation in an efficient and effective form of government that addresses needs as they pertain to economic vitality, social and environmental responsibility, and prosperity in a dynamic future.	Plan for the maintenance, management, and development of critical infrastructure to optimize quality of life and nurture responsible and sustainable residential, business, and community growth. The Town of Colchester will demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship and infrastructure resilience for the benefit and safety of all so that Colchester can thrive in a rapidly changing world. Critical infrastructure encompasses clean water, wastewater, energy, transportation, storm water, and communications systems.	Economic development will address programs, policies, and activities that seek to improve the economic well-being of Colchester by creating and retaining jobs and businesses that facilitate planned and responsible growth, self-reliance, and sustainability.	Establish Colchester as a premier destination in Vermont.	Protect, preserve, and enhance Colchester's natural resources to ensure a healthy environment and a viable working landscape for future generations.	Integrate community services and education at all levels for the purpose of educating all citizens.

Priorities *

Area	Priority
Education	
Merge Heritage Project education efforts with the school district's strategic planning work through participation in the School District's Strategic Planning Process.	1
Economic Development	
The current residential-to-commercial ratio is 78 to 22 percent. The goal is to broaden our existing tax base such that the residential-to-commercial ratio is 75 to 25 percent in 2016 and 70 to 30 percent by 2021.	1
Develop a branding/marketing plan for Colchester.	2
Adopt an approach to local economic development in our growth centers that supports our current and future economic drivers, provides the necessary physical and social infrastructure, and leverages our assets and resources.	1
Environment and Agriculture	
Preserve and strengthen the viability of Colchester's working landscape and agricultural economy in support of local economic development, economic self-reliance, and Colchester's agricultural heritage.	2
Improve the ecological and environmental viability of Colchester's water resources—lakes, ponds, wetlands, surface waters, and groundwater.	1
Improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions through actions that reduce automobile use and promote public and alternative modes of transportation.	3
Reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions by improving building efficiency, exploring and incorporating alternative energy sources, and supporting energy conservation and resource reuse and recycling.	3
Tourism and Recreation	
Establish Colchester as a premier destination in Vermont.	2
Infrastructure	
Strive for walkable and livable community features in all infrastructure planning, recognizing that in the long term, transportation and businesses will benefit.	2
Plan transportation to better connect Colchester residents, businesses, educational entities, and recreation opportunities with each other and surrounding communities. New transportation planning should attempt to reduce congestion, increase safety for all users, and encourage lower energy use. Transportation plans should include both traditional and alternative transportation modalities, including considerations required by Complete Streets legislation recently enacted by the State of Vermont.	2
Ensure and maintain diversity of housing alternatives (multiple pricing and types [i.e., single-family homes, condos, etc.]). New planned housing should be convenient to amenities like stores, food, schools, parks, professional offices, and workplaces so as to appeal to residents of all ages.	3
Take the initiative to interact and collaborate regionally for improved critical infrastructure.	2
Foster the deployment of the latest information technology throughout Colchester.	1
Governance	
Maintain high-quality services—determine actions to maintain and enhance the general high quality of services provided at lower overall cost to tax and ratepayers.	1
Building community capacity—find ways to increase the contribution and participation of more people who live and work in Colchester, including but not limited to recruitment of candidates for elective office, volunteer boards, committees, and commissions; youth participation and learning about town affairs; and valuing Town of Colchester employees and their contributions.	1

(Each objective per goal area is rated between 1 and 3, with 1 being the highest priority.)

The Colchester Heritage Committee created objectives for each goal area. Given the scarcity of resources, priorities were set across all objectives. The criteria for scoring included community need, immediacy of need, feasibility, and relative impact on the community. Committee members rated each objective between 1 and 3, with 1 being the highest priority. Medians were used to determine the rank ordering that appears in the table to the left. The seven 1s represent the primary priorities for the community and are marked throughout with a red asterisk (*).



Governance



Governance

GOAL

Create and implement structural, operational, and regional options to optimize the transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and cost of Colchester's government and public services. The town should foster communications, citizens' trust, active participation, and cooperation in an efficient and effective form of government that addresses needs as they pertain to economic vitality, social and environmental responsibility, and prosperity in a dynamic future.

➤ OBJECTIVE 1:

Maintain and enhance the overall high quality of services delivered to Colchester residents and businesses and constrain costs to tax and ratepayers.

➤ OBJECTIVE 2:

Find ways to increase the contribution and participation of people who live and work in Colchester, including but not limited to recruitment of candidates for elective office, volunteer boards, committees and commissions; youth participation and learning about town affairs; and valuing Town of Colchester employees and their contributions. Increase the cohesion, confidence, and communications of Colchester people with local government.

Governance

***OBJECTIVE 1:**

Maintain and enhance the overall high quality of services delivered to Colchester residents and businesses and constrain costs to tax and ratepayers.

Strategy:

Explore and implement viable alternatives for providing services to Colchester residents and businesses.

Recommended Actions:

1. Conduct a municipal charter review and make appropriate changes in two phases.

- Short term—Update Colchester’s municipal charter to reflect current requirements and realities, including but not limited to eliminating outdated positions and review of Town of Colchester taxing authority; updating charter for efficient governance and administration.
- Target for Voter/Legislative Approval: Spring 2012
- Longer term—Convene a group to consider whether a different governance/organizational structure will better suit Colchester’s future. Study alternatives with the assistance of Vermont League of Cities and Towns and other experts.
- Target for Voter/Legislative Approval: Spring 2015

2. Leaders of Colchester and other chartered corporations appoint a team to evaluate the potential benefits of consolidation of Colchester’s fire and water/sewer districts and their relationship to Town of Colchester government.

3. Energetically pursue the regionalization of essential services, such as fire, police, rescue, and ancillary support activities (e.g., information technology, purchasing, and human services administration) that may be provided more cost effectively by partnering with other towns. Consider Colchester’s fire and water/sewer districts and other regional entities (e.g., Champlain Water District) in regionalization discussions.

Governance

***OBJECTIVE 2:**

Find ways to increase the contribution and participation of people who live and work in Colchester, including but not limited to recruitment of candidates for elective office, volunteer boards, committees, and commissions; youth participation and learning about town affairs; and valuing Town of Colchester employees and their contributions.

Increase the cohesion, confidence, and communications of Colchester people with local government.

Strategies:

1. Create a trusting and cooperative atmosphere through a revitalized program of interaction and participation by community members in municipal affairs. Town leaders should model trust by speaking directly and honestly through the written and spoken word and be willing to listen, compromise, and negotiate for the best interests of the community.
2. Devise ways, including closer connections with or potential merger with the schools, for the town to foster communications, citizens' trust, active participation, and cooperation in Colchester's affairs.

Recommended Actions:

1. Existing or new citizens' groups should recruit more candidates for elective office.
2. Town leaders and department heads develop and maintain an up-to-date, vibrant communications approach with Colchester youth, businesses, and citizens using both electronic and legacy media, public meetings, and other means relevant to the town's demographic groups. Use the appropriate approach for each group of stakeholders.

Youth Involvement

- Establish and enthusiastically foster electronic connections with vibrant and engaging electronic media that will involve young and old alike through the use of tools like Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites, as well as discussion forums and e-mailed announcements via an interactive website.
- Annually meet with high school student leaders for brainstorming sessions with an agenda and follow-up; try to implement at least one of their ideas while involving them in the process.
- Create and offer with Colchester High School "Outstanding Civic Student Award" with public recognition and nominal cash amount.

Governance

- Involve local college students with internships in Town of Colchester departments and local groups.
- Create opportunities for town leaders and employees to have a panel discussion annually with Colchester High School civics classes.

Business Connections

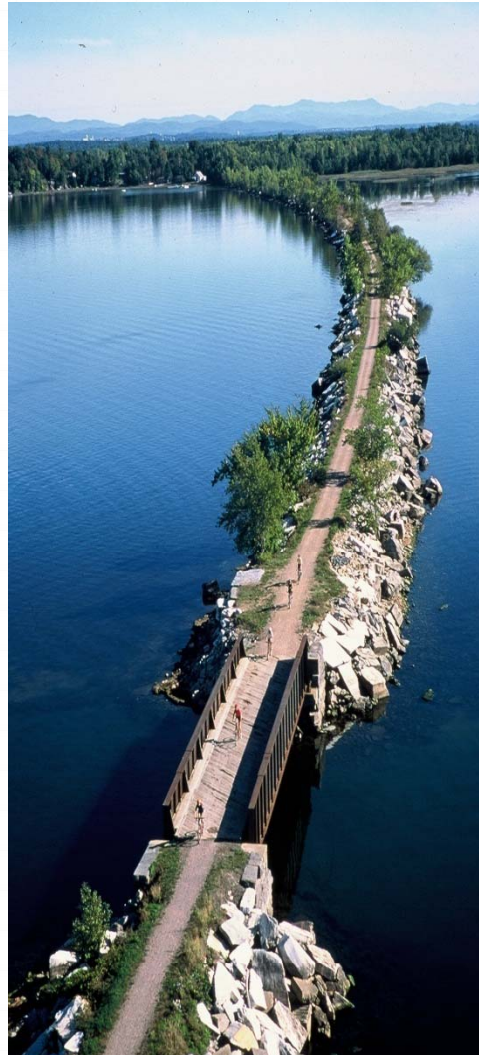
- Empower Colchester Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC) to conduct round-table discussions with local businesses in a variety of formats, to include elected leadership and department heads, and solicit business involvement in town affairs.
- Department heads should be speakers at business clubs and other civic group events; create and hand out a brochure that lists volunteer opportunities in town and the appropriate contact people.
- Create a “welcome to Colchester” memento to be delivered in person to new businesses in town.

General Outreach

- Leadership—Creatively use print and electronic media outlets to more effectively reach citizens.
- Town leaders—Seek out public input and advice from volunteer boards, experts, and others when tough issues must be resolved.
- Convene a citizens’ group to develop ways to increase the participation of more Colchester people for volunteer boards, committees, and commissions, including a focus on youth participation. At least annually, brainstorm the notion of town leaders staying relevant, appropriate, and effective in communicating with the public.



Infrastructure



Infrastructure

GOAL

Plan for the maintenance, management, and development of critical infrastructure to optimize quality of life while nurturing responsible and sustainable residential, business, and community growth. The Town of Colchester will demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship and infrastructure resilience for the benefit and safety of all so that Colchester can thrive in a rapidly changing world. Critical infrastructure encompasses clean water, wastewater, energy, transportation, storm water, and communications systems.

***OBJECTIVE 1:**

Support improvements to communication infrastructure so that all residents, government services, businesses, and the like can take advantage of existing and developing technologies.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Strive for walkable and livable community features in all infrastructure planning, recognizing that in the long term, transportation and businesses will benefit.

OBJECTIVE 3:

Create a Colchester transportation plan and set of protocols that aim to reduce congestion, improve roadway safety, and reduce energy consumption. The plan will enhance access to business and recreation areas of town for residents of Colchester and neighboring regions. Consider both conventional and alternative transportation modalities during planning.

OBJECTIVE 4:

Take the initiative to interact and collaborate regionally for improved critical infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 5:

Ensure and maintain diversity of housing alternatives (pricing and type), such as owned, rental, single-family homes, condos, apartments, cohousing, and so on. New planned housing should be convenient to amenities like stores, food, schools, parks, professional offices, and workplaces so as to appeal to residents of all ages.

Infrastructure

***OBJECTIVE 1:**

Support improvements to communication infrastructure so that all residents, government services, businesses, and so on can take advantage of existing and developing technologies.

Strategies:

1. Develop infrastructure improvement and management plan with leaders from the community and government for the goal of providing fertile ground for future growth.
2. Link physical infrastructure goals with communications infrastructure objectives.

Recommended Actions (The following steps are required to meet this objective):

1. Retain a professional communications consultant to move this objective forward.
2. Evaluate existing wired and wireless coverage.
 - Broadband Internet
 - Cell phone services
3. Inventory and categorize current assets.
 - Existing assets may be public or private. These may include schools, government property, hilltops, poles, buildings, towers, or any other place where coverage may be deployed.
 - Telecommunications infrastructure
4. Develop a plan to fill existing gaps discovered during the assessment.
5. Develop protocols to facilitate communication among various entities (asset holders, school board, water and fire districts, the Town of Colchester, etc.).
6. Seek and attract service providers to utilize current resources and expand and develop communication access.
7. Continue to reassess telecommunication infrastructure needs and close all remaining gaps.
8. New or upgraded facilities should consider and reflect emerging technologies and attempt to accommodate future needs.

Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 2:

Strive for walkable and livable community features in all infrastructure planning, recognizing that in the long term, transportation and businesses will benefit.

Strategies:

1. Regulate construction to ensure compliance with state and local laws and ordinances.
2. Partner with developers to ensure understanding and cooperation with ordinances and building preferences.
3. Incentivize responsible construction by reducing financial obstacles to success for contractors.

Recommended Actions (The following steps are required to meet this objective):

1. Monitor and encourage compliance with [Vermont Complete Streets legislation](#) to ensure that all development plans include:
 - Pedestrian walkways and bikeways (paths or appropriate street markings)
 - Sidewalks
 - Wide enough to allow comfortable walking
 - Buffered from the street and on-street parking with protective and pleasing edges, such as trees and plantings
 - Constructed to be easily maintained in all seasons
 - Traffic-calming mechanisms as appropriate for centralized business, residential, school, and mixed use areas
2. Approve development plans contingent upon prior arrangements for adequate clean water, storm water, and wastewater removal, as well as energy, transportation, and communication systems.
3. Work with developers to ensure that the overall design and arrangement of project components will be aesthetically pleasing. The development should:
 - Be in character with the surrounding community;
 - Be interesting and welcoming to passersby, including vehicular traffic;
 - Provide for parking on the street or behind the buildings rather than in large, street-facing parking lots; and
 - Develop or enforce building codes which mandate such requirements. This includes:
 - Working with planning and zoning department to draft code language; and
 - Codifying updated building and zoning requirements.
4. Remove current tax assessments for alternative energy (e.g., solar) and encourage incorporation of resource and energy conservation into designs and siting of new buildings.

Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 3:

Create a Colchester transportation plan and set of protocols that aim to reduce congestion, create new roadways, improve roadway safety, and reduce energy consumption. The plan will enhance access to business and recreation areas of town for residents of Colchester and neighboring regions. Consider both conventional and alternative transportation modalities during planning.

Strategies:

1. Amend regulations dealing with transportation to mirror goals.
2. Plan for congestion and changes in energy use and availability.

Recommended Actions (The following steps are required to meet this objective):

1. Create an ad hoc committee comprised of citizens and municipal leaders to assess the transportation needs of the community.
2. Modify all Planning & Zoning Regulations, Public Works Standards, and Town Ordinances to benefit from the Vermont Complete Streets guidelines.
3. Advance public transit.
 - a. Survey local business organizations and commercial real estate brokers in conjunction with the Town of Colchester's Office of Community and Economic Development to identify potential users of public transportation. Include anticipated rider numbers, routes and terminals, and preferred hours of operation. High priority should be given to a route from Exit 16 to Severance Corners.
 - b. Develop a transportation plan and schedule that meets the requirements that emerged in (a). Incorporate existing services serving the region where reasonable.
 - c. Design proper metrics and locations to measure congestion reduction/trip reduction on routes and at terminals.
 - d. Create a Request for Proposal (RFP) based upon the planned route(s) and schedule in (b) and required metrics in (c). Broadcast RFP to all existing transportation service providers and to providers of nontraditional or emerging transportation modalities. Require ridership enhancement/incentive plans of each provider.
 - e. Evaluate proposals received and determine—based upon anticipated ridership—where the initial service offering(s) and expansions will be most effective.
 - f. Apply for funding to the Colchester Select Board and other appropriate nonprofit, local, state, and/or federal agencies.
 - g. Complete contract, initiate service, track ridership for a predetermined period of time, and compare results to plan in (b).

Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 3:

4. Improve roadway safety.

- a. Gather statistics from the police database to determine areas prone to vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian incidents.
- b. Assess the feasibility and need for a third-party traffic study contingent on the amount of useful data available from police databases.
- c. Identify high-priority pedestrian access areas in Colchester Public Works plan.
- d. Survey local bicycle clubs (e.g., Fellowship of the Wheel, Green Mountain Bicycle Club, and Local Motion) to identify best and worst roads for cycling in town. Investigate future Colchester Public Works plans for bikeways/paths.
- e. Locate and map areas, zones, and corridors identified in (a), (b), and (c). Prioritize.
- f. Determine characteristics of (c) areas that make some roads friendly to non-vehicular traffic and others dangerous. Design strategies for improving safety and estimate costs.
- g. Work with Colchester Public Works Department and Colchester Police Department to develop standard protocols for traffic calming and safety enhancements.
- h. Implement protocols developed in (f) targeted in (a), (b), and (c). Design metrics to determine efficacy. Revisit (a) after a period of time and rerun the process.

5. Reduce energy consumption.

- a. Create a “Loop Route” campaign that encourages consumers to design trips in a logical and physical loop, thereby reducing multiple in-and-out trips. Do the same for business with a GPS-based component.
- b. Allow local and state government properties to be used by private enterprises to establish electrical “refueling” or charging stations for lower-carbon vehicles.
- c. Time and synchronize traffic signals to optimize flow and minimize idling at critical intersections like Exits 16 and 17 and Blakely Rd./Severance Rd. Implement “smart” controls that respond to traffic changes.
- d. Encourage the development of additional “park & ride” lots and expand those insufficient to meet present demand. Establish park & ride as “anchors” for bus/shuttle service.
- e. Establish an information service for access to bus/shuttle options, park & ride locations, reservations, carpooling, and so on.

Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 4:

Take the initiative to interact and collaborate regionally for improved critical infrastructure.

Strategies:

1. Determine with whom specifically the Town of Colchester should be communicating.
2. Determine methods of interaction.

Recommended Actions (The following steps are required to meet this objective):

1. Prepare a regional list of town governments, state agencies, and public and private planning organizations. Include key personnel, contact information, and area of specialization (in the case of planning organizations).
2. Enumerate areas or projects in which regional collaboration is already happening (e.g., CCMPO/Town of Colchester/AOT collaboration on double crossover diamond intersection at Exit 16; Colchester Fire Districts, Champlain Water District, and cities of Burlington and South Burlington on drinking water).
3. Share Colchester's vision, goals, and objectives with surrounding communities and organizations (e.g., Local Motion, CCMPO, Lake Champlain Committee, Efficiency Vermont), and invite them to identify areas of commonality and projects that would benefit from collaborative effort.
4. Develop and strengthen collaboration on all infrastructure, particularly transportation and environmentally sound wastewater management.
5. Seek and attract funding (grants, state, federal, etc.) to study options and execute projects.
6. Continue to reassess needs and opportunities for collaboration and efficiency.
7. Maintain awareness of future resource limits (e.g., Peak Oil [projected reductions in worldwide oil reserves]), conditions (e.g., aging population, budget limitations, climate change), and needs (population projections, need for job creation, local/regional production of necessities) during all infrastructure planning. (An implied environmental issue that should be dealt with in conjunction with the environmental subcommittee.)

Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 5:

Ensure and maintain diversity of housing alternatives (pricing and type), such as owned, rental, single-family homes, condos, apartments, cohousing, and so on. New planned housing should be convenient to amenities like stores, food, schools, parks, professional offices, and workplaces so as to appeal to residents of all ages.

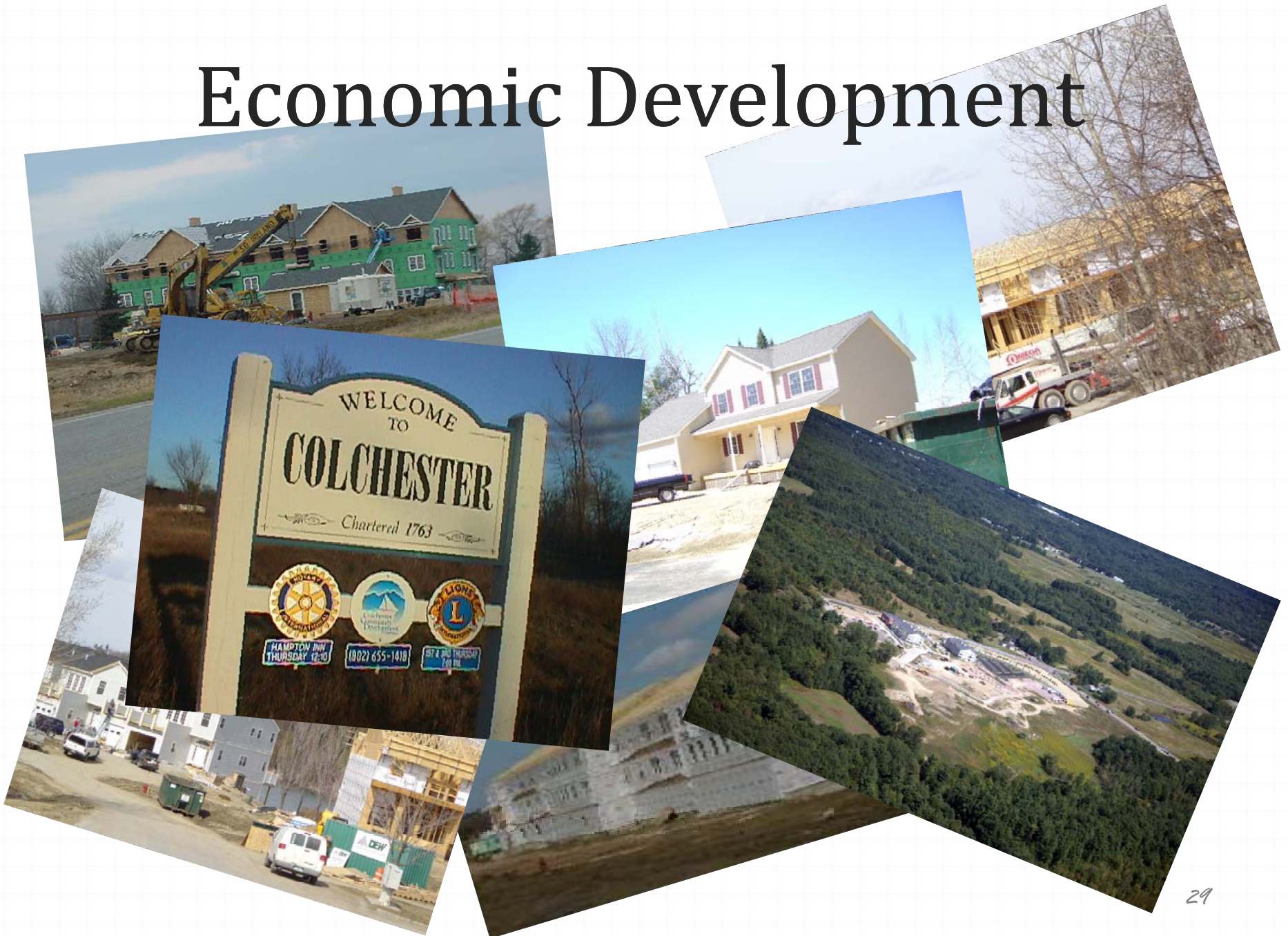
Strategies:

1. Define diversity standards for housing levels relative to demographic diversity.
2. Define planning committee structure and roles.

Recommended Actions (The following steps are required to meet this objective):

1. Using current census and employment data, project additional housing needed before 2025.
2. Develop a ten-year plan for both new construction and rehabilitation that will provide 10 percent of the 2025 needs each year.
3. Recruit competent, reliable developers who value walkable, livable communities and will work cooperatively with the Town of Colchester and each other as described in Objective 2.
4. Review all planned projects to ensure that they will contribute to diverse housing and community standards as described in Objective 2.
5. Plan and build specific projects to meet the needs of the aging population, including moderately priced units, consistent with information collected in (1).

Economic Development



Economic Development

GOAL

Economic development will address programs, policies, and activities that seek to improve the economic well-being of Colchester by creating and retaining jobs and businesses that facilitate planned and responsible growth, self-reliance, and sustainability.

*OBJECTIVE:

Define and engage the local community so that they are proactively involved in economic development activities for Colchester, supporting the efforts of the Colchester Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC).



Economic Development

***OBJECTIVE:**

Define and engage the local community so that they are proactively involved in economic development activities for Colchester, supporting the efforts of the Colchester Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC).

Strategies:

1. Increase revenue through commercial tax growth.
2. Grow the local economy.
3. Develop a brand identity and marketing plan.

Recommended Actions:

1. Implement Tax Increment Financing (TIF) at Severance Corners to further the development of this growth center.
2. Increase the town's commercial tax base from 22 percent to 25 percent of the grand list over the next five years and to 30 percent over a ten-year period to minimize reliance on residential property taxes.
3. Integrate economic strategies with town policy. For example, expand plans for form-based zoning.
4. Develop the infrastructure required at Exit 16/I-89 to allow further commercial development.
5. Improve the quality of the Colchester's assets and then leverage them. For example, build on synergies centered within the bioscience and technological communities at Exit 16 through continued efforts to bring in additional partners, such as the State of Vermont, Canada, the University of Vermont (UVM), St. Michael's College (SMC), Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC), Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS), Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC), Colchester Community Development Corporation (CCDC), and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC).
6. Create an economic marketing and branding plan.
7. Promote smart, diversified job growth/retention and improve economic opportunities to further the well-being of young people and families.
8. Focus on attracting and retaining value-added businesses that are dependent on our assets—such as biotech—while retaining manufacturing/industrial sector companies and sustaining agriculture.
9. Promote Colchester's Community and Economic Development Department as an asset to Colchester business community for recruiting, retention, and support.

Action Plans

Economic Development

Implement Tax Increment Financing (TIF) at Severance Corners to further the development of this growth center.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
Town Staff, Colchester Select Board, and Voters of Colchester	2012	Submit the final financing plan to the State of Vermont for approval and warn ballot item for voters to vote on	Staff time and cost of ballot

Increase the town's commercial tax base from 22 percent to 25 percent of the grand list over the next five years and to 30 percent over a ten-year period to minimize reliance on residential property taxes.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
Community & Economic Development Director	Begin now	TBD	TBD

Integrate economic strategies with town policy. For example, expand plans for form-based zoning.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
Colchester Select Board, Planning Commission, and CEDAC	FY12 and ongoing	Community Economic Development and town manager in coordination with Town Boards shall analyze current policies in relation economic development strategies and propose and evaluate changes to policies and regulations	Staff time, volunteer time, and consultant

Action Plans

Economic Development

Develop the infrastructure required at Exit 16/I-89 to allow further commercial development.


Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
VTrans, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, and Town Staff	Since Tropical Storm Irene, the scheduling of any transportation project in the State of Vermont is now uncertain, and it will probably remain so for the next six to twelve months. The previous three- to five-year time horizon may now be extended.	VTrans using federal and state funds supplemented with local funds match if necessary which would most likely come from a Special Assessment District. However, similar to the schedule, funding is an uncertainty at this point.	\$5 million plus.



Action Plans

Economic Development

Improve the quality of Colchester's assets and then leverage them. For example, build on synergies centered within the bioscience and technological communities at Exit 16 through continued efforts to bring in additional partners, such as the State of Vermont, Canada, the University of Vermont (UVM), St. Michael's College (SMC), Fletcher Allen Health Care (FAHC), Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS), Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC), Colchester Community Development Corporation (CCDC), and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC).

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
<p>CEDAC & Town Staff</p> 	<p>Since Tropical Storm Irene, the scheduling of any transportation project in the State of Vermont is now uncertain, and it will probably remain so for the next six to twelve months. The previous three- to five-year time horizon may now be extended.</p>	<p>In the short term, have an understanding of the roles and objectives of the various organizations. In the long term, have a developed working relationship with partners that support growth and work together. Identify business/economic development stakeholders. Completion of the communication/cooperation survey for these agencies and organizations. Share the results of the communication/cooperation survey with business/economic development organizations to celebrate successes and respond to identified obstacles/barriers. Create a committee to hold follow-up meetings and discussions with the identified group to ensure that they understand the economic development plan. Establish a plan for how the synergies of this group can be coordinated to capitalize on opportunities for economic growth. Set up an annual meeting with organizations involved with business/economic development to network, share information, and plan for the next twelve months. Set up a process whereby those agencies involved in business/economic development share newsletters, strategic plans, and new initiatives regularly.</p>	<p>TBD</p>

Action Plans

Economic Development

Create and implement a marketing and branding plan to build consensus for an identity and economic vision for Colchester that builds upon its assets and makes the community competitive in all arenas.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
Consultant & Town Staff	When the money is available and long-term enacted. Suggest a grant application here.	Request for proposal	\$25,000

Promote smart, diversified job growth/retention and improve economic opportunities to further the well-being of young people and families.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
CEDAC & Town Staff	Immediately	Identify development areas of concern from the communication/cooperation survey being completed and other sources. Develop a plan to understand development processes and work toward removing any barriers that may exist. Review marketing and promotional materials. Identify ways that the promotion of our open and welcome environment can be maximized. Engage the local business people to promote Colchester as a preferred business location.	TBD

Action Plans

Economic Development

Focus on attracting and retaining value-added businesses that are dependent on our assets—such as biotech—while retaining manufacturing/industrial sector companies and sustaining agriculture.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
CEDAC & Town Staff	Immediately	Complete the communication/cooperation survey of existing businesses and analyze the results. Act on areas identified in the communication/cooperation survey as needing support. Develop a plan to improve the availability of skilled labor. Profile existing businesses to understand their economic impact on the community and to understand their unique contributions. Develop a plan for ongoing communication with existing businesses.	TBD

Promote Colchester's Community and Economic Development Department as an asset to Colchester business community for recruiting, retention, and support.

Who?	When?	How?	How Much?
Colchester Select Board & Town Management	Ongoing	Promote goodwill	Free

Tourism and Recreation



Tourism and Recreation

GOAL

Establish Colchester as a premier destination in Vermont.

OBJECTIVE:

Establish Colchester as a premier destination recreation area.



Tourism and Recreation

OBJECTIVE:

Establish Colchester as a premier destination recreation area.

Strategies:

1. Increase visibility and publicity of the area—both regionally and nationally.
2. Emphasize water-based tourism without ignoring other viable revenue sources.
3. Establish growth benchmarks to measure success of committee efforts.

Recommended Actions:

1. Form a town-wide citizens' committee to direct the analysis of the issue, supported by Town of Colchester staff.
2. Develop plans and identify funding to expand Colchester's land-based recreational opportunities. Focus on interconnecting the existing network of trails and building a community center (with assistance by a citizens' group if/as necessary).
3. Develop plans and identify funding to expand Colchester's water-based opportunities. Priority should be given to expanding public beach access and building a community boathouse through a public/private partnership (with assistance by a citizens' group if/as necessary).
4. Identify existing town-owned assets and their potential as resources for improving Colchester's water-based tourism and community recreation opportunities. Such assets might include undeveloped land, underdeveloped land, conceptual plans previously created, including but not limited to "The Village on Malletts Bay" and the "Village Park." (The Town of Colchester needs to list/evaluate current assets and create a master plan for their use and development).
5. The Town of Colchester needs to finish projects that have been approved and/or not yet completed before undertaking new initiatives. (For example, before building a community center, finish the police station project). (This should be a responsibility of the Town of Colchester government.)



Environment and Agriculture



Environment and Agriculture

GOAL

Protect, preserve, and enhance Colchester's natural resources to ensure a healthy environment and a viable working landscape for future generations.

*OBJECTIVE:

Improve the ecological and environmental viability of Colchester's water resources—lakes, ponds, wetlands, surface waters, and groundwater.



Environment and Agriculture

***OBJECTIVE:**

Improve the ecological and environmental viability of Colchester's water resources—lakes, ponds, wetlands, surface waters, and groundwater.

Strategies:

1. Comply with and enforce water quality standards (Clean Water Act) to maintain and improve the lake and associated waterways.
2. Consider advanced septic systems or municipal waste treatment as necessary to meet water quality standards.
3. Minimize the use of pollutants, including pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers, by both public and private entities.
4. Coordinate water, sewage, land use, and transportation services with other municipalities.



Environment and Agriculture

Action Items:

1. Create ad hoc committee for environmental and agricultural issues. The committee would be comprised of citizens and employees of the town.
2. Continue to be an active partner with federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and local businesses in supporting, advocating for, enforcing, and monitoring state and federal regulations to improve water quality in Lake Champlain through such efforts as public education; publishing and distributing guidelines, tips, and other communications; and identifying sources of water pollution.
3. Make it a top priority for the town to develop a comprehensive, long-term plan for municipal waste disposal.
 - Form a town-wide citizens' committee to direct the analysis of the issue, supported by Town of Colchester staff.
 - Conduct a feasibility study of various options, including cost estimates.
 - Explore expanding or continuing existing or additional partnerships with neighboring communities for municipal waste treatment.
 - Identify high-risk residences and inform homeowners of actions they can take to prevent failure of private septic systems.
4. Adopt a Town of Colchester policy of using environmentally friendly, least harmful alternatives to pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers wherever practical in maintenance of Town of Colchester properties and roadways.
5. Ensure that Town of Colchester employees have proper training in the environmentally friendly use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
6. Lead efforts at the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission for more regional infrastructure integration and coordination (e.g., for water, waste disposal, land use, and transportation services).
 - Join Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) and expand public transportation.



Education



Education

GOAL

To integrate community services and education at all levels for the purpose of educating all citizens.

*OBJECTIVE:

Develop a plan to allocate school and town resources for the purpose of community education.



Education

***OBJECTIVE:**

Develop a plan to allocate school and town resources for the purpose of community education.

Strategies:

1. Combine resources wherever legally possible.
2. Prioritize education at all stages of life for community members.

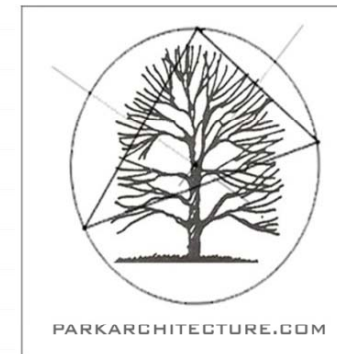
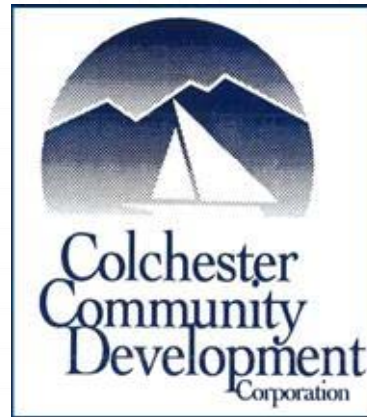
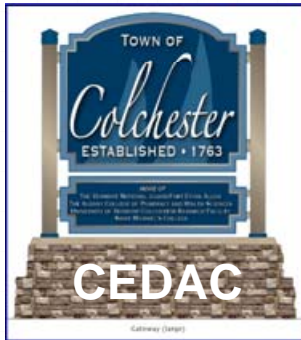
Recommended Actions:

1. Combine town and school resources wherever legally possible.
2. Prioritize education in the community for *lifelong learning*.
3. Convene a meeting of the town manager, superintendent of schools, chairs of each board, and others as needed to discuss the feasibility of a joint budget for the community. Meet weekly and include community leaders, citizens, and business leaders from the Heritage and Visioning projects in order to integrate the plans and ensure consistency in actions.
4. Assess and survey community resources for the town and schools for the purpose of determining assets that may be leveraged to further create educational opportunities for students and adults.
5. Communicate our process and progress by publishing meeting minutes and information.
6. Examine existing statutes to determine what changes to current policy and practice would be needed in order to maximize the impact of the town/school resources.
7. Present the entire School Visioning Report to the Heritage Committee for discussion and endorsement.

Details can be found in the Colchester School District Strategic Plan 2011–2016 document. It is available at www.csdvt.org.



Thank you to our funding partners and community members.



Colchester School District



➤ *Photos and images courtesy of the following contributors:*

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Colchester Heritage Project

Community Strategic Plan
2012–2022



Malletts Bay