



TOWN OF COLONIE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) administered a survey to registered voters in the Town of Colonie to learn about their activity in the town, what their beliefs of the Town's priorities should be and how initiatives should be funded.

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Overall, voters within the Town of Colonie are satisfied with where they live with 95 percent of respondents saying that Colonie is either an excellent or good place to live. A majority engage in or perform activities within the Town of Colonie utilizing the amenities available. Eighty-six percent of registered voters believe that property taxes are about right considering the services they receive. Respondents are mostly satisfied with the Town's services. Ninety-one percent say where they live feels like a neighborhood, and more than three quarters say they feel safe walking or biking in their neighborhood.

The top three supported initiatives in the Town of Colonie Comprehensive Plan are construction of new sidewalks along main roads, designing local roads to slow speeds and investing in improvements to Town Parks. Respondents feel that it is very important to protect environmental resources, provide incentives for reuse of old commercial sites, preserve historic sites, strengthen clearing undeveloped land regulations and to actively conserve farmland.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Nearly all respondents rate the Town of Colonie as a place to live as either excellent or good. More than half, 54 percent, rate the town as excellent with another 41 percent indicating good. The remaining 5 percent said the Town of Colonie was a fair place to live. When asked if the overall quality of life in the Town of Colonie is improving, staying the same or getting worse, 31 percent of respondents say that the quality of life is improving, 43 percent report that it is staying the same, and 23 percent report it is getting worse.

TOWN OF COLONIE

The Town of Colonie is located within Albany County in New York State. The Town of Colonie is broken up into the hamlets of Latham, Loudonville, South Colonie, Westside, and North Colonie. The Town of Colonie (not including the villages) has a population of approximately 70,000 and is home to historic sites, recreation areas, and businesses.

When asked about issues that could impact the quality of life in the Town of Colonie today and over the next several years, a substantial majority of respondents say the following are very significant: feeling safe and secure in the area around your home (71 percent), the quality of life in your neighborhood (70 percent) and traffic congestion (62 percent).

Activity engagement in town

Respondents report that they perform the following activities within the Town of Colonie:

- Grocery shopping (93 percent)
- Personal business like running errands (93 percent)
- Shopping for things other than groceries (85 percent)
- Engage in physical exercise (85 percent)
- Go to restaurant or bars (78 percent)
- Attend entertainment venues (56 percent)
- Go to their primary physician (53 percent)
- Attend religious services (50 percent)
- Go to work (26 percent)

Respondents report that they engage in the following activities in the Town of Colonie very or somewhat often:

- Gone to The Crossings (66 percent)
- Visited the William K. Sanford Town of Colonie Library (43 percent)
- Gone to Colonie Town Park (23 percent)
- Used the Ciccotti Family Recreation Center (21 percent)
- Volunteered in the town (19 percent)
- Attended public meetings (13 percent)
- Gone to the Town of Colonie Golf Course (11 percent)

Property Taxes

In regards to property taxes, respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: Property taxes we pay in the Town of Colonie are about right considering the services we receive. Eighty-six percent indicate that this is completely (33 percent) or somewhat descriptive (53 percent).

Neighborhoods

Respondents report that the following statements are somewhat or completely descriptive of their neighborhood:

- It is easy to get to stores and services (95 percent)
- It is easy to get to parks (90 percent)
- Where I live feels like a neighborhood (91 percent)
- Housing costs are reasonable (85 percent)

- I feel safe walking or biking along the roads in my neighborhood (78 percent)
- People tend to drive safely on roads in my neighborhood (65 percent)
- Roads are in good condition (63 percent)
- Commercial development is adversely affecting the neighborhood where I live (44 percent)

Town Services

Respondents report that they are somewhat or completely satisfied with the following town services:

- Police services (91 percent)
- Parks and recreation (89 percent)
- Sewer services (88 percent)
- Fire Services (87 percent)
- Water services (87 percent)
- Emergency services (85 percent)
- Library services (79 percent)
- Community relations (69 percent)
- Road maintenance (59 percent)
- Code enforcement (59 percent)
- Responsiveness of local government (57 percent)
- Senior services (50 percent)
- Youth services (43 percent)
- Development approval process (37 percent)
- Home rehabilitation and maintenance programs (24 percent)

TOWN OF COLONIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

More than half of respondents indicate that they either somewhat or strongly support the following initiatives that may be included on the Town's Comprehensive Plan:

- Construction of new sidewalks along main roads (85 percent)
- Design neighborhood and local roads to slow speeds (81 percent)
- Invest in improvements to Town Parks (80 percent)
- Reduce the amount of new residential development (71 percent)
- Improve public transportation options (69 percent)
- Reduce the amount of new commercial development (68 percent)
- Update the Library (67 percent)
- Construct additional off-road recreation trails (66 percent)
- Create additional public access to the Mohawk River (65 percent)
- Widen existing thru-roads (65 percent)
- Create bicycle lanes on existing thru-roads (65 percent)

When asked their opinion of investing in updating Town Hall, respondents are split: 42 percent are in support and 41 percent are opposed.

Respondents were also asked to state their opinion about how important the following initiatives should be moving forward. Percentages denote either somewhat or very important:

- Protect environmental resources including wetlands and wildlife habitat (91 percent)
- Provide incentives for the reuse of old commercial buildings or sites (90 percent)
- Provide incentives for preserving historic sites and structures (88 percent)
- Strengthen regulations governing the disturbance or clearing of undeveloped land (87 percent)
- Actively conserve open land including farmland (85 percent)
- Provide incentives to assist the development and growth of local businesses (78 percent)
- Reevaluate commercial design standards (76 percent)
- Provide incentives that attract businesses to the Town (69 percent)
- Reevaluate standards for commercial signs (63 percent)
- Provide incentives for the development of affordable housing (61 percent)
- Promote the development of more single-family, detached housing (58 percent)
- Promote the development of more multi-family housing (34 percent)

Town Growth

Nearly half (48 percent) of respondents report that the rate of growth within the town has been too fast, while 49 percent believe it is acceptable, and two percent say it is too slow.

Funding Amenities & Aspects of Comprehensive Plan

Respondents indicated they would be willing to financially support these amenities at various rates:

- Conservation of open and environmentally sensitive land (55 percent)
- Construction of new sidewalks on main roads (51 percent)
- Conservation of farmland (39 percent)
- Construction of off-road recreation (27 percent)

When asked how much they would be willing to pay, the majority of respondents (65 percent) stated that they would be willing to pay something, but less than one hundred dollars annually to support the amenities. Another 14 percent said they are willing to pay more than one hundred dollars.

Support for alternative methods of raising the funds to pay for amenities included:

- Requiring developers to contribute to offset the potential impacts of their project (92 percent)
- Increasing the Real Estate Transfer Tax (51 percent)

- Borrowing of the money necessary (42 percent)
- Increasing the Town property taxes (38 percent)

Preferred Information Sources

The top three ways to reach people in the community with updates on the Comprehensive Plan are by mail (71 percent), the local newspaper (66 percent) or the Town Website (55 percent).

METHODOLOGY & NATURE OF THE SAMPLE

The Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) conducted a survey of 607 Town of Colonie registered voters (excluding the villages of Colonie and Menands) between the dates of April 3 and June 12, 2017. The survey was conducted by mail, web and phone to obtain the highest possible response rate. The demographics of the final sample of respondents is similar to the demographic profile of those who voted in 2015. Below is a map indicating the geographic location of those who completed the survey from throughout the Town of Colonie.

