



# Quality of Life: Town of Colonie



Community Research and Consulting Class  
25th of April 2016



SIENNA *college*™

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Siena Research Institute





# Purpose of the Class

A map of the Town of Colonie, New York, showing major roads, water bodies, and landmarks. The map is centered on Colonie, with surrounding areas like Schenectady, Troy, and Westmere visible. Major roads include I-190, I-87, and I-90. Water bodies include the Hudson River and several creeks. Landmarks include the Albany Pine Bush Preserve and the University at Albany. The text "Mission: To measure the Quality of Life in the Town of Colonie" is overlaid in large, bold, black font.

# Mission: To measure the Quality of Life in the Town of Colonie



# Class Methodology:



Identify issues facing Colonie.



Meet with Town Supervisor, Paula Mahan.



Interview town residents, elected officials, teachers, law enforcement, etc...



Analysis of collected data.



Present findings

# Town of Colonie Observations:

4 Teams observed following locations:





# Field Pictures









# Observations:

2 women embracing in the driveway of one of the houses while kids played in a tree → **Indicates relationships with neighbors**

Emerson  
Drive



# Observations:

Multiple construction sites → Indicates development

Wolf  
Road





# Observations:

Full parking lot → Indicates active consumers

Heavy shopping center and social center → Family-Oriented



Colonie  
Center



# Observations:

- **Stewarts:** “Regular Customers” who knew the employees → **Community feel**
- **Memory Gardens:** “Winter Clean Up” event advertised → **Community Programs**





# Qualitative Data: Interviews

Interviewed 35 individuals

Groups of 2 students or one-on-one  
with a recording

Questions regarding their experience  
in the town

Data gained used in creation of survey



# Qualitative Interviews

35 Qualitative interviews were conducted for the project.



Police officer



Teacher



Realtor



Small Business  
Owner



Friar



Social Service  
Worker



Youth Sports  
Coach



Business  
People



Long-time  
Residents



Everyday  
Citizens



# Quantitative Data: Survey Questions

Interviewer Web COM210\_0418\_CAT1 - INT01 - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://10.0.0.220/Survey/IntWeb\_01

Progress

Navigate: INT01 | GO | Back | Prev | Quit

Comments/Notes Language

**INT01**

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from the Sierra College Research Institute. We're speaking confidentially today to people about life here in the Town of Colusa. No one will try to sell you anything.

This survey is part of a partnership between Sierra College and the Town of Colusa and is part of a Community-Based Research class here at Sierra. It should only take about 12 minutes to complete.

Are you 18 years of age or older?

IF NEEDED: May I speak with the youngest person in the household age 18 or older?

**OK**

- Continue with survey
- 21 • Call back at a later time
- 22 • Appointment
- 23 • Not a Private Residence
- 24 • No Eligible Respondent
- 81 • Soft Refusal
- 82 • Hard Refusal
- 83 • Do Not Call
- 31 • Spanish Speaking
- 32 • Not English or Spanish Speaking
- 41 • No Male in Household

Next

Interviewer Web COM210\_0418\_CAT1 - Q1 - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://10.0.0.220/Survey/IntWeb\_01

Progress

Navigate: Q1 | GO | Back | Prev | Quit

Comments/Notes Language

**Q1**

Is the Town of Colusa on the right track or is it headed in the wrong direction?

1  Right track  
2  Wrong direction  
9  [DO NOT READ] Don't know/No opinion

[IF NEEDED: "If you had to pick, would you say right track or wrong direction?"]

Next

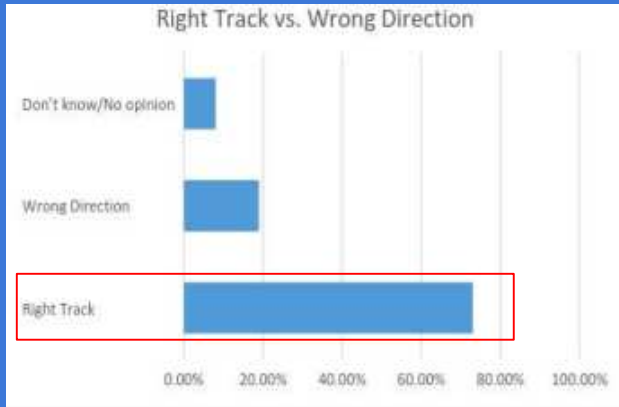
343 completions  
Fielded from April 3-6

# Quantitative Surveys

343 Surveys



# Icebreaker Questions:



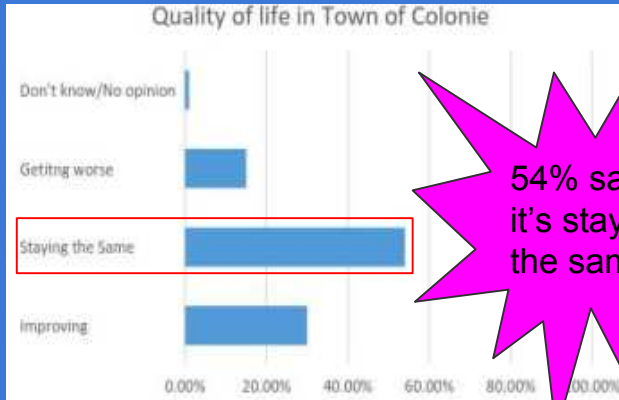
When asked if Colonie is on the right track or wrong direction:



73% say Colonie is on the right track



19% say Colonie is headed in the wrong direction



54% say it's staying the same

When asked if Quality of Life is improving, staying the same or getting worse:



30% say the quality of life is improving



15% say the quality of life is getting worse

## Why Colonie is on the Right Track (Overview):

-The following aspects of life were rated by residents as “Excellent” or “Good”

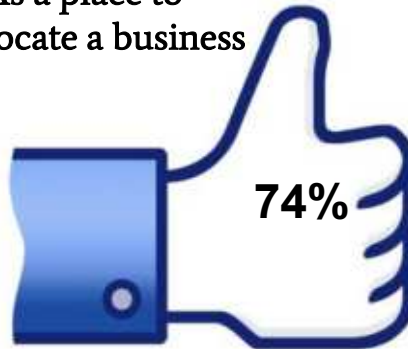
Availability of goods/services



As a place to raise children



As a place to locate a business





# Location/Availability of Goods and Services:

97% agree that the statement “Colonie is a great location, close to work and recreational opportunities” is either completely or somewhat descriptive of the Town

“I think there’s a good balance and that affects prices. We can go to upscale places and to cheaper places for people who are on a budget.”



# Economic Development



“Recent economic development has improved local quality of life.”

70%  
Say this is  
descriptive

The Job Done by the Police Force



The Job Done by the Fire Department



Why Colonie is on the Right Track (Overview):

-The following institutions and people were rated by residents as "Excellent" or "Good"

Parks and Recreation Facilities



Library Services



# Family Life:

“The Town of  
Colonie is a great  
place to raise a  
family”

Completely/  
Somewhat Descriptive

97%

“One reason to live here in  
Colonie is the excellent quality  
of our schools”

North Colonie  
Schools

South Colonie  
Schools

89%

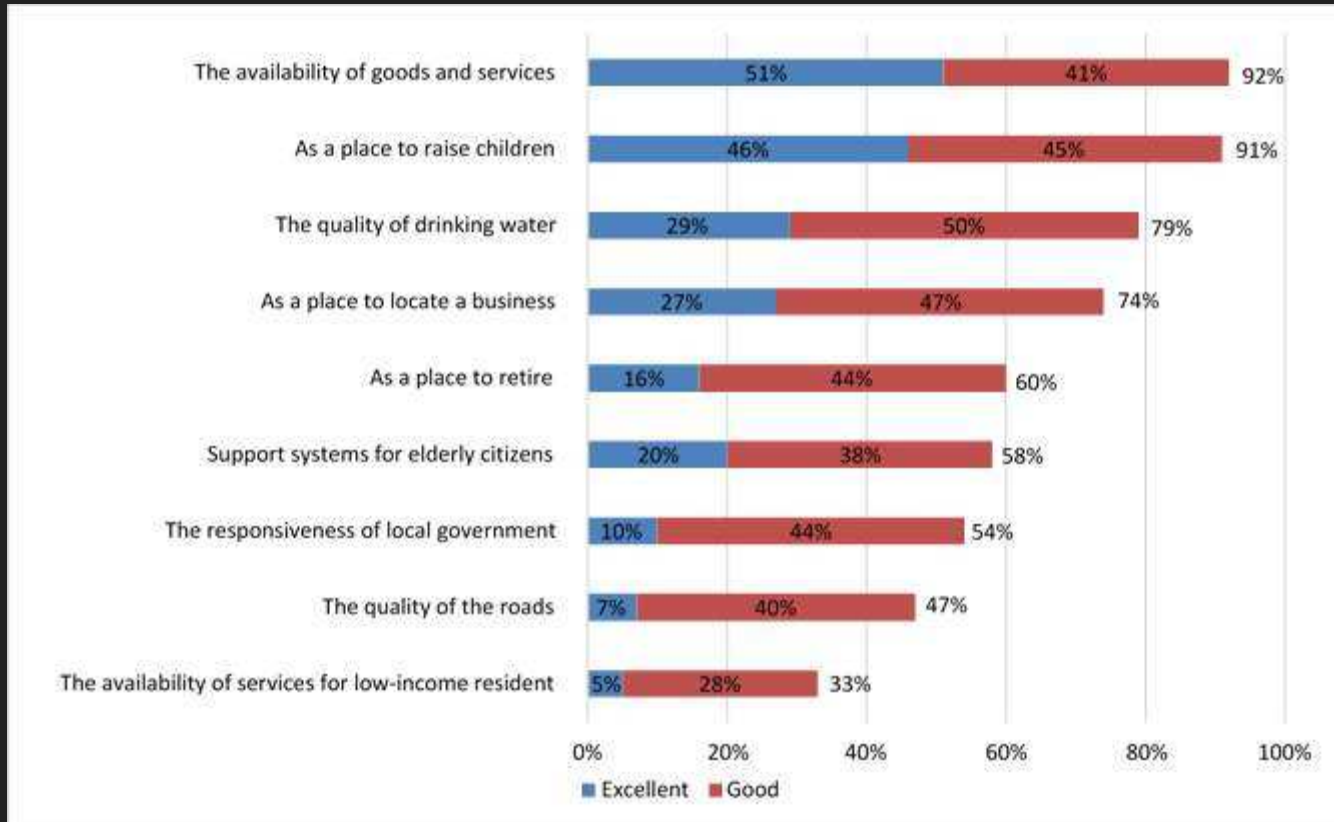
Completely/Somewhat  
Descriptive

Excellent 36%  
Good 34%

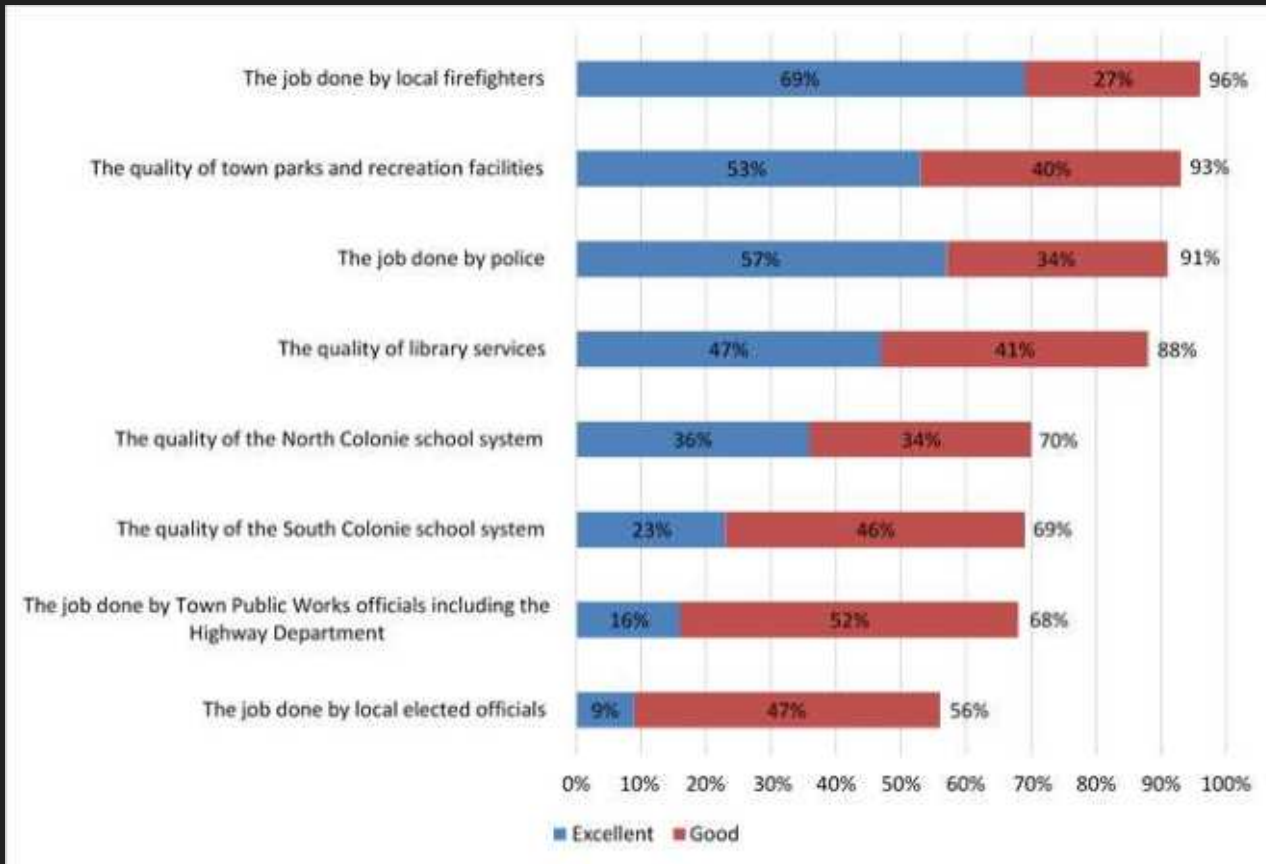
Excellent 23%  
Good 46%



# Ranking of Services:

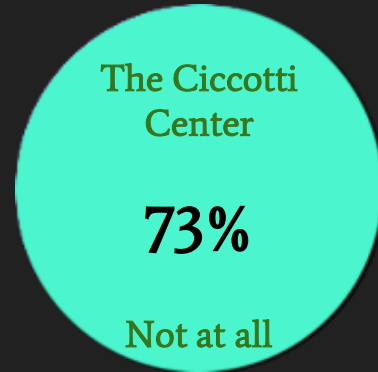
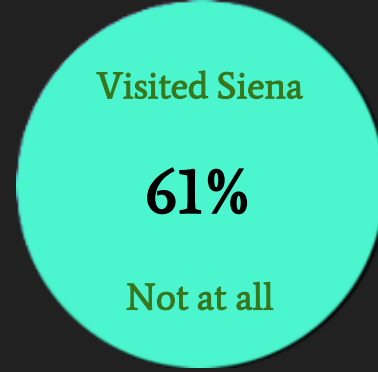
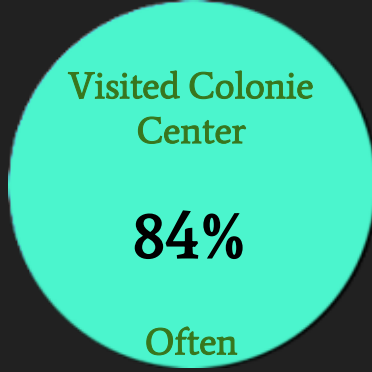
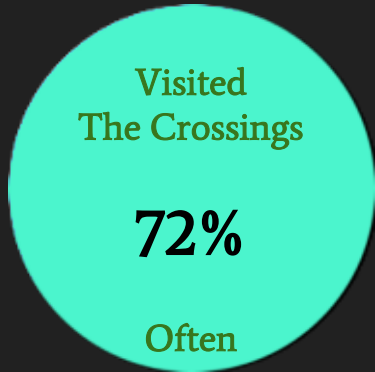
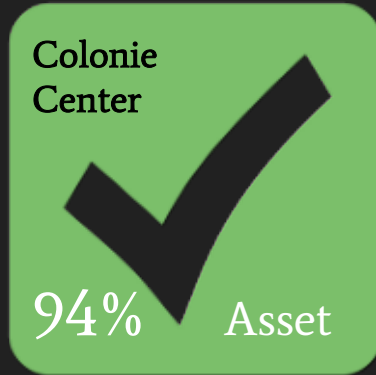


# Ranking of Institutions:



# Asset / Usage

In the past 12 months:

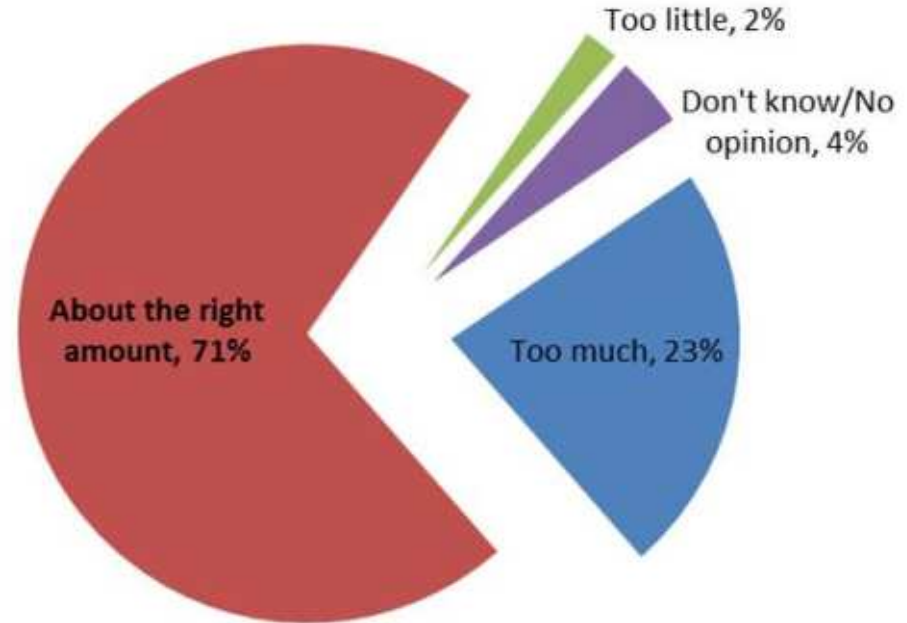


# Taxes:

71% of Residents feel that they pay the right amount in town taxes

“I think that the tax base is very favorable and I’d like to see it stay that way.” -Colonie Resident

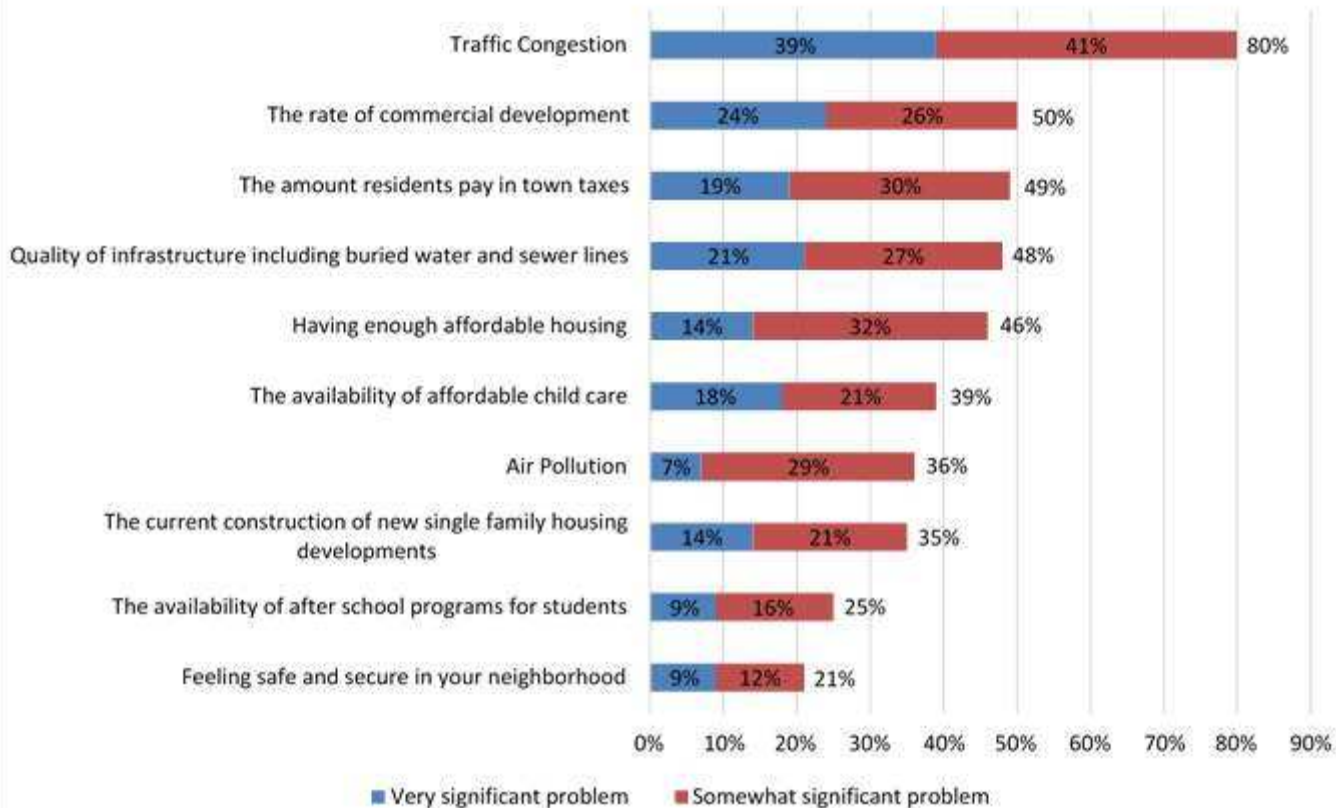
As a resident of Colonie, would you say the amount you pay in town taxes is too much, about the right amount, or too little given the services you receive as a Colonie resident?





# Problems to Consider:

How significant a problem is each of the following?



Which do you think is the MOST important problem for the  
Colonie Town Supervisor Paula Mahan to address first?

The quality of  
infrastructure  
including buried  
water and sewer lines

27%

Traffic  
Congestion

22%

The amount  
residents pay in  
town taxes

15%

The rate of  
commercial  
development

13%

# Areas to Grow: Infrastructure



“Roads in Colonie are a big issue; specifically [regarding] a water problem. One section of my road is completely covered in ice; every year it is filled in and washed away. You basically cannot drive there. Even with nice weather, the road is still horrible, really hard on cars. Is there a way that they can figure out where the needs are without the residents directly having to advocate for it? Roads are done in newer, nicer, developed areas, but there is a disconnect between where the work is done and where the actual needs are.”

53% say the quality of roads is poor

27% say infrastructure is the MOST important problem to address first

# Areas to Grow: Traffic Congestion



39% - Very Significant

41% - Somewhat Significant

“They could improve the traffic system... They could do this by setting back some of the commercial space so that it’s not so close together.”

# Town Affordability and Access to Child Care

“It is becoming harder and harder to afford to live in Colonie”

51% say this is descriptive



39% say availability of affordable child care is a very or somewhat significant problem





# Suggestions by Residents:

-Add Sidewalks



*"I would add more sidewalks and make it feel more inviting to walk around my neighborhood."*

*-SRI employee*

*"Sidewalks bring people together. They allow kids to get to different places safely... If there are more sidewalks that would be great."*

*-Real Estate Agent*

# Library Results :



Now thinking about the Town of Colonie Library services, would you support or oppose a plan in which they close the current location, sell the building, and replace it with 3 smaller, regional libraries in different areas of Colonie that operate within the existing budget?

Support  
30%

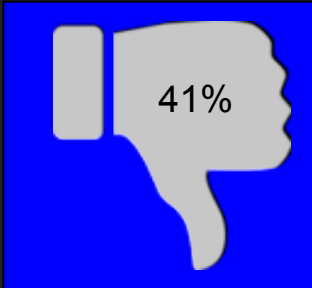
Oppose  
65%





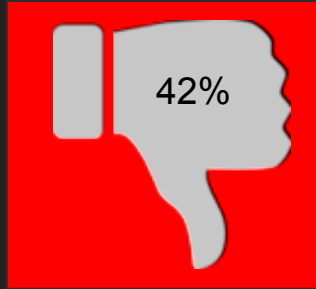
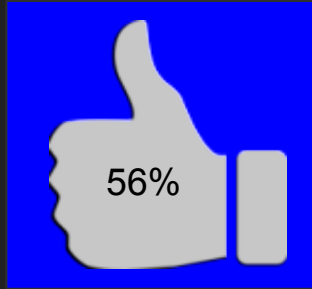
# Local Government:

Responsiveness of Local Government:



When asked how often they attended a public meeting, 66% said not at all.

Job done by Elected Officials:



# Summary & Recommendations:

Overall, Colonie seems to be on the right track, and most of the residents are highly satisfied.

- Good family environment
- Feeling of safety/security (strong FD and PD)
- Location and accessibility
- Taxes

A few things to consider improving:

- Infrastructure (highest demand)
- Traffic congestion
- Affordability

**SURVEY**

## Life in Colonie is fine despite roundabouts

By Tim O'Brien

*Colonie*

Colonie residents say they pay the right amount of taxes, enjoy the town's amenities and are satisfied with the schools.

But they don't want to see more roundabouts, don't want the library closed and satellite branches opened and are deeply split over the pace of development.

Those are the results of a survey on the quality of life in the Capital Region's largest suburb done by the students at Siena College through the Siena Research Institute.

A 13-student class called Community-Based Research designed and executed the survey after first meeting with town officials and interviewing people at locations around

Please see **SURVEY A6** ►

**THANK YOU!**