

Tom Taggart
PC Candidate Colchester North

(EDITOR'S NOTE: All candidates in Colchester North were asked to complete a questionnaire unique to the Colchester North. This reply is from Tom Taggart, PC Candidate).



Tom Taggart

What topic is raised most frequently while campaigning "door to door"?
Housing, affordability, healthcare, and roads are the topics that come up most frequently as I talk to residents.

The electorate is demanding a higher rate of accountability to their concerns. Nation-wide there is a significant increase of complaints elected officials staff do not return calls promptly. Do you promise "you personally" or "a senior member of your staff" will return a call to constituent within 24 hours?
I believe my staff and I have a good track record in getting back to people upon their initial inquiry. The complexity of some inquiries can take time so as to be able to get back with answers or workable options, but we make every attempt to do it in a timely manner.

The lack of suitable affordable housing has become a major problem. Remote rural areas face even great challenges with lack of infrastructure such as: conditions of roads, cellphone, acceptable internet and government service. What will you do to ensure infrastructure to these areas is improved to levels consistent with other areas in order to retain current populations or to attract new families to the area?

I will continue to advocate for infrastructure improvements that will improve the quality of life in Colchester North, in particular, cell service and internet. Our Government recently announced \$47.3 million to start the new Cellular for Nova Scotia Program, which will expand telecommunications infrastructure and communications networks. I look forward to the completion of the high-speed internet project that Cumberland and Colchester Counties signed with Xplornet back in 2019/2020.

What is the most promising asset / resource to achieve economic growth or population growth for Colchester North?

Colchester North has many assets – a central location, 60 minutes from the Port of Halifax making ideal conditions for transport and redistribution, excellent farm land, abundant recreational opportunities etc. But I firmly believe our strongest asset is our people, their ideas and their initiative. I am continually inspired by the entrepreneurs setting up operations in exciting new fields, as well as those applying new technology in traditional areas such as agriculture and forestry.

With changes in the labour supply market, there is a visible increase in service sector employees from other countries. How extensive is "racism and bigotry" a basic and systemic problem in Colchester North? How will you help change it?

Like any other community, I expect there are some individuals who hold bigoted or racist views and promoting or exercising those views is not acceptable! But to imply that there is extensive "racism and bigotry" in Colchester North is a bit of an insult to its residents.

What steps should be taken and how will you assist in making Colchester North among the "least racist" and "most welcoming" constituency in Nova Scotia?

Further to my answer above, I believe Colchester North is a most welcoming community. Many residents, neighbourhoods, places of worship, employers, schools and social clubs are already welcoming newcomers and making them feel welcome and valued here.

In which sectors in Colchester North should government prioritize its efforts of leadership and funding assistance to achieve a high rate of economic and population growth?

We must improve our connectivity. As I mentioned earlier, had the contract with Xplornet been fulfilled, we could have attracted technology experts from around the world to move here and set up a strong home-based IT industry. After all, it is a growth industry with no negative environmental impacts. I would like to see us enable green energy production and find a role in the projected growth of the green energy revolution. Our traditional industries cannot be overlooked. Agriculture plays a significant role in the economy here. We must invest in agriculture and food security. And, as the forest industry moves toward sustainable forest management its future is bright.

ScotiaPort projects 4,600 jobs within a 20-year development period. Proponents of the project insist a new Highway 104 / 102 interchange, costing upwards of \$50-million, is essential. How hard will you work to ensure the new interchange is built as soon as possible? How soon might you be able to announce progress on the interchange?

Much has been said about development of ScotiaPort, however, I have no concrete information about it. I have asked the project leadership to share details with me and with the community, but so far, nothing has been put forward. I have asked Public Works what interaction they have had with

Code of Conduct for Municipal Officials Introduced

Municipal politicians across the province will have to abide by a new code of conduct that covers more than a dozen areas, from gifts and benefits to handling confidential information. The code for elected officials, a request from municipalities and villages, will help ensure they follow procedural standards and behave professionally and respectfully. Councils and village commissions must adopt the code of conduct by December 19, 2024, and report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

At its meeting on November 14th, Colchester Council committee recommended council approve the code of conduct.

The code, which includes more than 40 guidelines under 14 categories, was developed based on recommendations of a working group established in January 2022. The group included representatives from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia, and the Association of Nova Scotia Villages.

The working group recommended a code that is universal for all municipalities and villages, with processes for investigating complaints and imposing sanctions. The results of consultations were shared with municipalities in 2022 and 2023.

ScotiaPort with respect to an interchange. It is my understanding that there is nothing more than discussions at this point. What I hear about ScotiaPort is a very exciting and the economic potential to the Central Nova Scotia economy could be very significant. However, until I understand exactly how this project will impact the residents of the surrounding communities, I am not prepared to support it in any significant way. It must be a project that works for all!

How can you assist all three levels of government to ensure the best decisions will be made regarding expanding the "green energy" footprint and possible production of hydrogen from "wind and emptying landfills sites"?

I know very little about hydrogen from landfill sites. It sounds great if it works. However, I personally believe that green hydrogen has the potential to be a game changer for this province and most importantly for our children. I believe green hydrogen is the fuel of the future! As a result of the available wind, both onshore and offshore, Nova Scotia will see tens of billions invested in this industry over the next ten years. Our youth will no longer have to head for Alberta!!! They will remain in Nova Scotia and receive high paying quality jobs and raise families!!! This industry will change the lives of Nova Scotians!

What existing provincial government program or planned policy is least beneficial to businesses and general population in Colchester North?

I am not aware of any program or policy that will not benefit the population of Colchester North! This province will grow as one community. I will always advocate for rural Nova Scotians, that is where I live, those are the communities I represent, and that is where my passion is. If Halifax grows, we grow. If Truro grows, we grow! But the best interests of Colchester North will always be first for me. Many people are of the opinion the provincial government is directing too much attention to HRM and larger urban areas. What would you do to change the pendulum to place more emphasis on rural Nova Scotia? As I said in my last response, we are one province.

Normally MLAs are expected to "toe" the party line. If you are elected on November 26th, do you promise to place a higher priority on "constituents wishes / needs" ahead of "party policy" except in "non-confidence" situations? "Toe" the party line is a term batted around in politics. I am part of a party and rest assured, I voice my opinion at the Caucus table. Those who know me, know I am not backward about voicing my opinions concerning the best interests of Colchester North! My priority is listening to the concerns of the residents and making those concerns heard at the caucus table, as well as in interactions with government departments and agencies.

If you are elected on November 26th what actions will you immediately undertake to achieve economic growth and lifestyle enhancements for the constituency of Colchester North?

When I see opportunities to improve our communities, our lifestyle, and economic prosperity I will engage. Right now, today, I believe affordable home ownership is a high priority.

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Council Meeting
Monday, November 25 @ 6pm

Presentations Meeting
Tuesday, December 3 @ 6pm

Council Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 12 @ 6pm

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