



## Essex Junction Independence Frequently Asked Questions

**Who does what? I live in the Village but I'm confused about who provides my local services: Essex Junction or Essex Town? Please tell me which government provides the services I use and depend on.**

- Street and Sidewalk Plowing and Maintenance – **Essex Junction**
- Maple Street Park and Cascade Park – **Essex Junction**
- EJRP Daycare, After School Care, Rec Programs – **Essex Junction**
- Brownell Library – **Essex Junction**
- Senior Center/Senior Bus – **Essex Junction & Essex Town**
- Police – **Essex Town**
- Fire Department – **Essex Junction**
- Water/Sewer Line and Infrastructure Maintenance – **Essex Junction**
- Wastewater treatment – **Essex Junction**
- Community Development and Planning – **Essex Junction**
- Building permits & Zoning Variances – **Essex Junction**
- Business Licenses – **Essex Junction**
- Marriage Licenses, Dog Licenses, Liquor Licenses – **Essex Town**

**Will there be any changes to the fire department? To Essex Rescue?**

Essex Rescue is an independent organization that will not be affected by separation. Currently the Town pays Essex Rescue for its services to both the Village and Town outside the Village. If separation occurs, the new City would pay Essex Rescue directly for those services.

**What will happen to the fire truck we bought jointly with the Town if we separate?**

The fire truck was purchased by Essex Junction and will remain with the Essex Junction Fire Department.

**Will the two fire departments still assist each other when needed?**

Yes, Essex Junction's mutual aid agreement with Essex Town, and other communities in Chittenden County, will continue.

*If it's not from us, it's not official.*





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### How are public spaces going to change?

All public spaces and facilities currently owned by Essex Junction and Essex Town will continue to be open to the public as they've always been.

### How are departments going to change?

No changes are anticipated for major departments such as fire departments, police, parks, public works, libraries, etc. Essex Junction will need to expand a few of its administrative services, such as finance and billing, to compensate for the loss of administrative services presently shared with Essex Town. These changes are expected to be minor.

### Would becoming a city be a phased-in process?

Part of the administrative transition from Village to City may occur over several years, which means some of the cost impacts would be phased in. But there is presently no plan to phase-in the overall tax increase in the Town.

Essex Junction's total municipal tax rate is \$0.86, which is third highest of the large communities in Chittenden County. Essex Town's tax rate, outside the Village, is \$0.54, which is the second lowest. The Tax rate is the number that's multiplied times a homeowner's property value to determine their tax bill. Although exact numbers can't be known at present, estimates show that Essex Junction and Essex Town will have approximately the same tax rate after separation if they keep their municipal operations and services running at present levels, and that their new tax rates will be close to the overall average for Chittenden County.

### How would separation affect our tax dollars? Will our taxes go up?

Present estimates show that taxes will go down in Essex Junction. This is because Essex Junction property owners and businesses will no longer be required to pay for services in Essex Town, outside of Essex Junction. Municipal taxes collected within Essex Junction will exclusively pay for Essex Junction's municipal services and costs.



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### **Besides money and taxes, what are some of the other reasons for separation?**

Essex Junction is one of Vermont's fastest growing communities, according to the 2020 U.S. census report. Much of that growth is due to Essex Junction's excellent community planning and development strategy, which envisions a compact but dynamic, diverse, pedestrian-friendly downtown surrounded by well-maintained, walkable, safe neighborhoods. The Village has achieved this success while also financially supporting growth and development in Essex Town, which has an entirely different development strategy that doesn't include the Village. An independent city government can focus its full attention on managing growth within the four square miles of Essex Junction without concern for having local resources drained away by a neighboring government.

An independent city will also have a higher degree of control over municipal regulations and taxes within Essex Junction, and will be more competitive for investment. Right now, businesses considering locating in Williston, Colchester, or Essex Town outside the Village know they'll only pay taxes to one local government; businesses locating in Essex Junction know they'll pay taxes to the Essex Town government as well as the Essex Junction government. Becoming an independent city will make Essex Junction more affordable for businesses.