



**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION TRUSTEE  
TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

2 Lincoln Street  
Essex Junction, VT 05452

**Tuesday, August 27, 2019**  
**7:15 PM** (or immediately following  
Village Trustees Meeting)

E-mail: [manager@essex.org](mailto:manager@essex.org)

[www.essexjunction.org](http://www.essexjunction.org)

[www.essex.org](http://www.essex.org)

Phone: (802) 878-1341

*The Selectboard and Trustees meet together to discuss and act on joint business. Each board votes separately on action items.*

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [7:15 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **APPROVE AGENDA**
4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
  - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
  - a. Approval of control panel replacement for West Street and Susie Wilson Road pump stations—Jim Jutras
  - b. Update from Governance Subcommittee
  - c. Approve elevator speech about potential merger
  - d. Approve revised joint meeting schedule—Sarah Macy
6. **CONSENT ITEMS**
  - a. Approve use of infographic about merger
7. **READING FILE**
  - a. Board Member Comments
  - b. Water quality impacts at Indian Brook Reservoir
  - c. Memo from Greg Duggan and Tammy Getchell re: Update on changes at 2 Lincoln Street office
  - d. Email and attachments from Delia Makhetha re: Colchester Exit 16 DDI Project
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
  - a. An executive session is not anticipated
9. **ADJOURN**

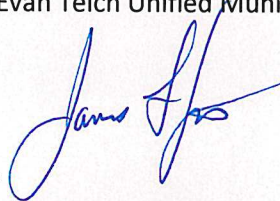
*Members of the public are encouraged to speak during the Public to Be Heard agenda item, during a Public Hearing, or, when recognized by the Chair or President, during consideration of a specific agenda item. The public will not be permitted to participate when a motion is being discussed except when specifically requested by the Chair or President. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings, like all programs and activities of the Village of Essex Junction and the Town of Essex, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the Unified Manager's office at 878-1341.*

Certification: \_\_\_\_\_ 08/23/2019



# **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Essex Junction Trustees, Essex Selectboard via Evan Teich Unified Municipal Manager  
FROM: James Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent  
cc: Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager  
Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director  
Rick Jones, Public Works Superintendent  
Aaron Martin, Utilities Director/Town Engineer  
DATE: August 21, 2019  
SUBJECT: West St and Susie Wilson Road Pump Station Control panel replacement



## **Issue**

The issue is whether to waive purchasing policy bid requirement and allow staff to proceed with direct manufacture of two custom control panels using Pratt and Smith Electric. Both the Town and Village use Pratt and Smith for control work. Pratt and Smith also builds UL listed control panels.

## **Discussion**

The Susie Wilson Road and West Street sewage pump station controls are over 20 years old and scheduled for replacement. Both the Susie Wilson Road and West St Extension pump stations are critical locations for reliable, safe and effectively pumping sewage to the Cascade St treatment facility. The sewage flows are consistently high and with limited emergency storage of sewage in the collection system. Corrosion as a result of salt spray from the adjacent roadway has led to degradation of the control cabinets and components.

Under the 1975 Essex and Essex Jct. Two Party "Agreement on Sewage Collection System", the Town users pay 100% of the costs for capital, operation and maintenance of Susie Wilson Road pump station and 75% of West St costs. The balance of West St (25%) is paid for by the Village users. The control panel replacement is in the approved Village FYE 2020 Sanitation Capital Budget. It is also approved in Town capital and equipment replacement funds. It has been confirmed with both parties that there are sufficient funds for this project.

The control panels for both installations will be custom. To develop a specification for bidding is a costly and time consuming process that could add up to 20% to the purchase price with direct and indirect costs. We propose use of Pratt and Smith as a select vendor who is familiar with the details of both installations. This will help to ensure that we get the most reliable control components, variable speed motor drives as well as other installation details. This will also ensure control installations that are consistent with the other pump station in the system.

## **Cost**

The total estimate for work is \$68,500 including installation. A general cost breakdown by service area: Town \$59,000, Village \$9,000. There may be some variability in pricing as we may supply and/or reuse some of the controller parts or spare parts for consistency with the pump station remote monitoring equipment we use. As noted above, Dennis has confirmed the money is planned for this work.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended by Staff that the Boards waive the bid process and allow staff to proceed with purchase and installation of the Susie Wilson Road and West St Extension pump station custom control panels with Pratt and Smith Electric.

**Memorandum**

**To:** Board of Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager  
**Cc:** Governance Subcommittee; Ann Janda, Project Manager  
**From:** Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager GSD  
**Re:** Update from Governance Subcommittee  
**Date:** August 23, 2019

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**Issue**

The issue is to update the Trustees on work being done by the Governance Subcommittee.

**Discussion**

KSV, the firm hired to do market research about potential governance change in Essex, completed its work with focus groups the week of August 12. Fifty-one people participated in the focus groups. KSV presented the results to the Governance Subcommittee on August 22. The presentation is attached.

The Governance Subcommittee will begin working with KSV to develop the third and final component of KSV's work: a quantitative survey about governance change. The Selectboard and Trustees may wish to give the Subcommittee members input on what to include in the quantitative survey, based on the results of the focus groups and the first survey.

The Governance Subcommittee meets again September 5 to review and potentially approve the quantitative survey. The survey is scheduled to launch later in September.

In addition to the work on the focus groups and survey, the Governance Subcommittee has approved a draft elevator speech for approval by the Selectboard and Trustees (a separate agenda item for August 27) and approved updates to FAQs to post on [www.GreaterEssex2020.org](http://www.GreaterEssex2020.org). The new and updated FAQs are attached.

**Cost**

N/a

**Recommendation**

This memo is for informational and discussion purposes.

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### *Why are we doing this now?*

To understand why merger talks are happening now, we need to look several years into the past. In an effort to improve services across the entire Essex community, the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction have, since 2013, consolidated some of the municipal services that were historically provided by both governments. As an additional benefit, these consolidations have reduced the amount of taxes the municipalities need to raise – a combined savings of more than \$2.1 million since 2013.

To continue consolidation efforts, the Town of Essex Selectboard and the Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees have met jointly for the past few years. Joint meetings in the last several months have been about preparing for a dialogue with the Greater Essex community regarding our consolidation efforts going forward. In June 2018 both boards created a joint Governance Subcommittee tasked with researching potential new governance structures. In December, after researching and vetting over a dozen possibilities, the subcommittee recommended looking at three governance frameworks: one government with one tax rate; one government with special taxing districts; and the status quo with a Town government, a Village government, and different tax rates. The governance framework options also include models for at-large representation, or representation by wards. Residents will have an opportunity to weigh in on the options through surveys and focus groups during the summer of 2019 and then later through other outreach efforts.

Each year that passes is another year where the cost to merge in the future goes up. It is in part because of this reality that the Selectboard and the Trustees are now exploring the concept of merging the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction.

### *What are the Town Selectboard and Village Trustees doing to gather input from residents on the question of merger?*

Before proposing a governance structure and a merger plan, the Town Selectboard and Village Trustees want as much public input as possible about the concept of merger and about specific frameworks for a merged government. A marketing firm, KSV, was hired to do market research and gather input from residents. Here is that schedule:

- A qualitative survey – July 2-15, 2019. [Here is the July 18 report on the survey results.](#)
- Six focus groups – Aug. 13-15, 2019. [Here is the Aug. 22 report on the focus group results.](#)
- Final quantitative survey – Sept. 17-Oct. 4, 2019, with a report Oct. 17, 2019



The focus groups and quantitative survey are looking into three governance frameworks that the Selectboard and Trustees want to explore in more detail: one government with one tax rate; one government with special taxing districts; and the status quo with a Town government, a Village government, and different tax rates. The governance framework options also include models for at-large representation, or representation by wards. If one of the new governance options is chosen by both boards following the focus groups and surveys, a new charter for a unified community would be drafted and possibly presented at the 2020 annual meetings in March (Town Meeting) and April (Village Meeting).

- More public input would be sought over the summer of 2020.
- A potential new charter for a unified community would be brought to voters for consideration in November 2020, following public hearings in Oct. 2020.



# August 2019 Essex Resident Listening Sessions Findings

*August 22, 2019*





# Contents

**Recap of Objectives & Methodology**

**Key Findings**

**Takeaways & Recommendations**

**Next Steps**

**Appendix – Participant Characteristics**



# Executive Summary







## Research Objectives

Gather resident feedback on proposed municipal governance and representation options, including potential issues, perceived benefits, and recommended improvements to each option

Determine whether revisions should be made to any of the options before gathering additional feedback

Use feedback to inform the development of a survey that will be deployed to residents



# Research Methodology

## Prior to the Listening Sessions: Screening Survey with Essex Residents

Prospective Listening Session participants were required to complete a short screening survey in order to qualify them for the group discussions – past Selectboard/Board of Trustees members and those not comfortable with audio recordings of the groups were screened out

We captured demographic/geographic information in order to get a good mix of respondents, including half from the Village and half from the Town outside the Village (TOV)

Of 146 responses to the screener, 87 were complete and qualified responses

KSV selected and confirmed 58 participants based on respondent availability while achieving balance in the groups between geographies, voting districts, and demographics

**The screening survey was in field from July 22 – August 10**



# Research Methodology

## Listening Sessions

51 residents of Essex participated in focus group-style Listening Sessions

There were six groups total:

- (2) An even mix of Village/Town outside the Village residents
- (2) Village residents only
- (2) Town outside the Village residents only, with a mix from the 8-1 and 8-3 voting districts

KSV moderated each 90-minute session – there were no Town of Essex nor Village of Essex Junction government officials present during the discussions

**The Listening Sessions were held the evenings of August 13 – 15, 2019 at the Essex Police Department, Brownell Library, and the Town of Essex Fire Department on Sand Hill Rd.**

# Research Methodology

## Listening Sessions - Stimuli

Each participant was given a packet of information:

- Map of Essex community with borders highlighted showing the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction within the town borders
- Description of current municipal structure with representation and voting information
- FAQ content from [GreaterEssex2020.org](http://GreaterEssex2020.org)
- Current list of shared and separate services
- Tax rates for FY2020 for both Town outside the Village and the Village of Essex Junction
- Proposed conceptual merger options for consideration – two single-municipality options, status quo, and three representation models for a single governing body





# Key Findings





## *Leading Up to a Potential Merger* **Why now?**

Some participants were curious what brought merger talks back up after it was voted down in 2007

This was a question brought up in all groups – mixed groups, Village-only groups, and TOV-only groups

Some felt as though 2020 is too early to bring this to a vote, while others said we've been talking about this for decades so let's get it over with



*"My perception was we were slowly working towards this. We merged the manager position or the finance office, and we did steps along the way, and it seemed like that was working well as kind of a slow burn towards something. All of a sudden it feels like somebody's hit the gas, and I'm not quite sure why or where that's coming from."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"Where is the drive to keep merging? After we all voted no, it's like watching a bunch of kids that are told they can't eat a cookie, and the cookie sits on the table and they grab a little bite. We said, 'No, don't eat the cookie,' but they grab a little piece. And they grab another little piece, and sooner or later that whole cookie is going to be gone, and they're going to say, 'Well, you let us eat the cookie.'"*

**TOV resident (8-3)**



## *Leading Up to a Potential Merger*

# **A merger has already started with some benefits observed, but also some resentment**



Residents recognize that the consolidation of services has felt like a merger in the making

Some referenced the savings through consolidation as a benefit, which was provided in the educational packet

Residents – mostly TOV residents – expressed concern that consolidation has happened without public vote or input

*“When you look at the list of services, there’s not much left that’s separated at this point.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“Everything that can be done without this big vote is being done. As far as I can see it’s being done well. The things that are saving money may be saving money by not spending, but we’re still saving and benefitting from it. Now the good stuff is in our pockets. Now they’re saying, ‘I have some hard stuff, will you please go for it.’”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“I’m sorry, but they did merge a lot of things without our voting input. I’m very concerned about that. It seems very sketchy to me.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**



## *Leading Up to a Potential Merger*

# Town outside the Village residents concerned about lack of representation in process

Before even thinking about representation after a potential merger, some TOV residents express concern about representation during merger talks

The 3-to-2 makeup of the Selectboard “favoring” the Village came up in the TOV groups, and combined with the 5-member Village Board of Trustees gave the perception of imbalance

It was noted that in years past, the Selectboard has been made up of mostly TOV residents

*“The school merger is a much better example of how this should be done. The Village, the Town, and Westford all have equal voices in the process leading up to that merger. There is nobody representing only the Town outside the Village concerns. You’re opening yourself up to the criticism and concern about whether or not the process was fair.”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*“I think the bigger issue is the fact that we’re talking about a merger when [the makeup of the Selectboard and Board of Trustees] is so lopsided.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“There have been several others that have suggested there needs to be some kind of independent board outside of the Selectboard to sit down and negotiate with the Trustees.”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**





## *Leading Up to a Potential Merger*

# Present a clear vision and potential benefits

To understand “why now,” all residents, regardless of location, wanted to get a sense of the vision and big picture benefits associated with a merger

Residents didn’t feel equipped themselves to say what the perceived benefits are – they’re leaning on the municipal government officers to outline the vision

Some residents noted – and appreciated – that savings haven’t been promised with merger

*“The problem I have is no one has presented a ‘wow’ moment. If somebody could say, ‘If we merge, we’re going to see this benefit as a community.’ There is none that I could see or that anyone can eloquently explain to me, so we’re just spending money after money...”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“I need to hear ‘this is our vision for the community of Essex, this is where we want it to go.’ I’m confident the details will work out. I don’t need to see the nitty-gritty, but I need to understand the path and the manner where this is taking us.”*

**Village resident**

*“I think what we’re missing is the sales pitch for the benefit. I don’t need a projection of that or ‘here is to-the-penny of how much your taxes are going down.’”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**



## *Leading Up to a Potential Merger* **Need to have the right amount of detail**

Participants recognize there are many unanswered questions, specifically around tax impacts and service quality

They recognize it could be easy to get lost in the details, that's why they need just enough information to evaluate whether a proposal would result in a net benefit

There were also questions around the voting process that they say haven't been made clear – Would Village residents get to vote twice? Would this be subject to a re-vote like last time?

*“Most people aren’t going online and reading the minutes. Too much information gets completely ignored. What people want to see is an idea of cost and services. What are we getting? What are we paying? What’s changing for us?”*

**Village resident**

*“I think the question is ‘how is this going to affect my tax rate?’ That’s the bottom line. And I’m not sure if that question has been answered.”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*“We don’t need to get at each other over all the little things. What we’re trying to do is see if this can work.”*

**Village resident**

*“I want to see what’s going to be improved. What’s going to go down. What’s going to go up in cost. What’s going to improve in quality. What’s going to go down in cost. What’s going to go down in quality.”*

**Village resident**



## *Leading Up to a Potential Merger* **Communicate early, often, and objectively**

There is a recognition that the vision for merger needs to be shared with all residents to give them enough time to form an opinion

While most in our groups have been in Essex since the last vote, many recognize that there are new residents that need to be brought up to speed on how the municipalities are governed

TOV residents in rural areas feel that many in their location are unaware that merger talks have started up again

It was mentioned that communication shouldn't feel one-sided in favor of a merger rather it should be educational, not promotional, and present the pros and cons

*"When people bring up the merger, it's so polarizing. Whether you are either for or against it most people don't even know anything about it."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"We don't bump elbows, like folks in the Village do."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"Are they going to make sure they notify everyone properly? I know a lot of people don't get those notifications."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"[Last time] it was basically 'buy a car. We're not going to tell you what kind, what the engine is, what the gas mileage is. But buy it.'"*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

## Concepts Evaluated in Groups: Potential Municipal Governance Models

Option 1: Unified Charter	Option 2: Unified Charter with Special Tax District(s)	Option 3: Status Quo*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction charters dissolved</li> <li>One municipality with a new charter and one elected governing body</li> <li>One tax rate for the entire municipality (the transition plan may require temporary tax districts until the rate is equalized)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction charters dissolved</li> <li>One municipality with a new charter and one elected governing body.</li> <li>Different tax rates based on perpetual Tax District(s) for certain services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with two charters for Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction</li> <li>Two municipalities, two charters with two elected governing bodies</li> <li>Two tax rates with some shared services and some separate services, uncombined and budgeted separately*</li> </ul>



## Concepts Evaluated in Groups

# Potential Municipal Governance Models

*\*Status Quo (Option 3) Services Status*

Shared Services	Separate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manager's Office</li><li>• Police Department</li><li>• Clerk's Office</li><li>• Finance Department</li><li>• Senior Center</li><li>• Public Works Department</li><li>• Human Resources Department</li><li>• Information Technology Department</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fire Departments</li><li>• Libraries</li><li>• Parks and Recreation Departments</li><li>• Community Development Departments</li><li>• Capital Planning</li><li>• Elected and Appointed Officials</li></ul>



## Governance Models

# Status quo is not a true option

Though participants weren't willing to accept just any proposed merger option, they mostly also weren't in favor of keeping Status Quo

It was seen as a non-option considering the perception that consolidation was already taking place

We heard residents express desire to just pick a merger option over Status Quo to avoid these discussions creeping up every few years

*"If we do Status Quo we'll be back here in 10 years"*

**Village resident**

*"I could see supporting a merger to get this damn issue off the table once and for all."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"[If we stick with Status Quo] are they going to continue guerrilla merging things?"*

**Village resident**

*"I'm against Status Quo because I want us to focus on the actual important things in the community. What's stopped us from accomplishing stuff is we always say, 'Well, we don't know what it would look like in a couple years.' Can we just figure out what we're going to look like so we can start figuring out what we need?"*

**Village resident**



## Governance Models

# Separation was brought up, but most were not in favor

We can count on one hand the number of people that brought up separation for consideration

Separation was discussed in both TOV-only and Village-only groups

Ultimately, many conceded the communities have gone so far with consolidation of services that undoing of that consolidation would be costly



*“Essex Junction will have total responsibility of their future and the Town of Essex will have responsibility of their future.”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*“You don’t have an option to just hold the Village hostage because you have the majority of the vote. You either have to choose between merging or you can choose to [separate]. One way or the other, I want it resolved.”*

**Village resident**

*“We have fought so many separation battles I don’t even want to hear the word. At this point, we’ve merged so much that I think we’re beyond where that is an option.”*

**Village resident**



## *Governance Option 1: One Municipality, Equal Tax Rate* **Receptiveness to tax equalization was largely divided between Village and TOV**



Village residents support tax equalization and believe it's key to feeling "unified"

TOV residents are more divided – though most don't like the idea of taxes going up, many would feel better about tax equalization if representation were guaranteed to be equal

*"Until there is tax equity, I don't believe that we'll ever really be able to come together."*

**Village resident**

*"It's silly to have two municipalities but on the same token, don't raise my tax."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"If there's a little more honesty, clarity, and transparency around if you merge and get to tax equity, and odds are some people's taxes are going up and some are going down, I'm not necessarily opposed to that. The amounts aren't huge. But I'd want to know 'why?'"*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"If it's done right and people are allowed to speak, I think there will be more people in the Town more supportive of [tax equalization] than we realize. I know a lot of people in the Town."*

**Village resident**



## *Governance Option 1: One Municipality, Equal Tax Rate* **With a tax increase, the expectation is equal access to high quality services for all**

Most assumed a tax increase for TOV residents, rather than meeting in the middle or a decrease of the Village municipal tax rate to Town levels

An increase was seen as maintaining the quality of services while providing equal access to all residents

TOV residents would want more service in the form of new amenities, sidewalks, plowing, and more street signs for safety purposes

*"I want equity throughout services. If my child can't go to Maple Street Park, I want to know that if they end up at Sand Hill Park, which maybe has a daycare, which looks like it may be the same style, that it has the same quality to it."*

**Village resident**

*"My expectations would be that good services would be offered to everybody in a wider town."*

**Village resident**

*"I want sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of Old Stage Road, so all bicyclists, joggers, and walkers can be safe."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"I would expect equal access to all services. The rec dept., the library. I'd now be a resident of everything."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"Essex is Essex. That's the way it should be. No different."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**



## *Governance Option 1: One Municipality, Equal Tax Rate*

# Rural TOV residents want others to know they still have high costs despite their lower tax rate

When considering one tax rate and the prospect of paying for unused services, rural residents of the Town bring up the fact that they personally foot the bill for services like water and septic systems and those add up over time

*"I don't have sidewalks. I don't have fire hydrants. I don't have city water. I don't have street lights. If my well goes bad, nobody pays for it. My septic system went bad. Nobody from the village helped pay for my new septic system. My driveway washes out. I foot the bill for that. That's why I live out where I live, because I would never expect to have to pay for those because I plan on footing the bill for those on my own. To think that sometime in the future, I'm going to paying for sidewalks that I'm never going to use and amenities that frankly I never wanted in the first place, it's a little abrasive to me."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"I look at the big, big, big costs that I've had to maintain my acres outside of the village. It's very, very expensive. I paid at least \$25,000 for water since 1997. Our well went dry while I was having our first kid, so I remember. There are very, very expensive costs to living in the country. We knew that going in. I don't expect people to pay that for me. That was by choice."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**



## *Governance Option 1: One Municipality, Equal Tax Rate* **With a tax increase, TOV residents would want more say in development**

A trade-off TOV residents can envision with paying a higher tax rate than they currently do is being able to have more say or perhaps guarantee development doesn't disrupt their community

One respondent also mentioned being able to have more say in Village development, seeing it as part of the Town in which she lives

*"I would want to keep the Town "the Town" if I'm going to pay extra. Maybe I'll do it. But I don't want the Village to control the Town."*

**TOV resident (Not sure of district)**

*"The only reason I live where I do is to have the surroundings that I have. They're being encroached on very quickly and I'm being told what I can and can't do by the Selectboard more and more often on my own property."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"My question has been with all the development going on in the Village is 'do we have representation?' As a person outside the Village line, I'm appalled. That's the middle of my town, and I have no say in what's happening inside the Village because I live 50 feet outside of it."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**





## *Governance Option 1: One Municipality, Equal Tax Rate* **A gradual step up to equalization, but don't stretch it out for too long**

Though Village residents would ideally go for immediate tax equalization, they recognize that the Town couldn't absorb a big hit upfront if there is to be acceptance of tax equalization

3-5 years was seen by most Village and TOV residents as an acceptable range

Though tax equalization could occur over time, it is imperative for TOV residents that the new governance structure/representation model be put in place immediately

*"Tax equity absolutely, but I'm also empathetic of the people in the Town [outside the Village]."*

**Village resident**

*"Five [years] would be the most that would make sense. \$800 of tax equity spread over a five-year period, that's enough time to find another option [if it's distressing you]. Ten years sounds like typical drawn out government stuff."*

**Village resident**

*"Be upfront with how much it will be total, but say 'we're going to do it over five years.'"*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"I'd be more in favor of ripping off the Band-Aid."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**





## *Governance Option 2: One Municipality, Tax Districts*

# **“What is a Special Tax District?”**

Many residents had lots of questions about Special Tax Districts, notably:

- What are they?
- Are they the same as what we have now – different tax rates between Village and TOV?
- Who decides what these Tax Districts are and will they be known prior to a vote for merger?

At face value, many were confused and not in favor of Special Tax Districts

*“What I really need to know is not what the district is going to be but how much the tax is going to be.”*

**Village resident**

*“How does a Special Tax District get governed? I want information about how people are either elected, appointed, or hired to run a Special Tax District.”*

**Village resident**

*“I’m in favor of one government. Special Tax Districts makes it more complicated than it needs to be.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“From what I’ve heard, they have quite an ability to raise taxes when they want to and it can be a real problem.”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**



## *Governance Option 2: One Municipality, Tax Districts* **Special Tax Districts perpetuate the divide**

There was a perception that Special Tax Districts would preserve the division between Village and Town and wouldn't help the community move toward one municipality with shared services and equal access

*"In my mind it divides us even more. I understand why [it's being proposed] because people are getting different services."*

**Village resident**

*"Not a better option unless I understood that it was dissolvable. The word 'perpetual' makes it a problem. It negates the idea of a united municipality."*

**Village resident**

*"I really don't like [Special Tax Districts]. If we're going to merger we should merge and all get the best out of it."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"Philosophically in a community where we all live together, I don't understand the desire to make these special districts that only certain people use. We're all in this together. We all live here together."*

**Village resident**

*"I'm hoping we can get rid of the 'we're paying more' and the 'us vs. them' mentality."*

**Village resident**



## *Governance Option 2: One Municipality, Tax Districts* **Special Tax Districts could actually be a good compromise**



Some did see benefit in Special Tax Districts as a way to appease parts of the community that don't want to pay for unused services or would want exclusive access to services

*"I think [Special Tax Districts] is the best go. You're basically merging everything that needs to be merged, but at the same time you're still giving people what they want...the difference in taxes."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"How do you alleviate some of those concerns from the folks that are really against the idea of merger? Did you identify those services that are non-negotiable? That this [service] has to only be for the Town, this has to be only for the Village. A big benefit of Special Tax Districts is you could provide those services to either or both of the two communities if folks are dead set against the merger."*

**Village resident**

*"The only reason I see to use these Special Tax Districts is to protect 8-3 because they're normally the vocal group in the community that doesn't use those services."*

**Village resident**



## *Representation*

# Representation is the heart of the issue for Town outside the Village residents



Ensuring they have someone to represent the concerns of their community is central to any discussion around merger for TOV residents

Both leading up to a vote and in a proposed merged municipality, they're sensitive to the representation structure

*"I'm less concerned about how we pay for things and how we share that with the understanding that you might need something I don't and I might need something that you don't. I'm much more concerned about representation. Because I actually do think the needs across different neighborhoods, even in my own community are different if I live in one of the new high rises going up versus if I live on a dirt road."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"[Representation] is the main reason I wanted to come tonight."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

## Concepts Evaluated in Groups:

# Potential Representation Options for a Governance Structure with One Elected Governing Body

At Large Elections Only	Two (or more) Voting Wards Only**	Combination of Two (or more) Voting Wards** and At Large Elections
Anyone residing anywhere in the entire community could run for election to the governing body.	<p>The elected governing body would have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• half its members residing in the town outside the village and</li> <li>• half its members residing in the village</li> </ul> <p><i>**Borders may change over time based on population</i></p>	<p>The elected governing body would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• members residing in the town outside the village</li> <li>• members residing in the village</li> <li>• members residing anywhere in the entire community</li> </ul> <p><i>**Borders may change over time based on population</i></p>



## *Representation Option 1: At Large*

# At large eliminates division, but there's the risk of lopsidedness

Those in favor of a model with at large representatives say it would do the most in moving toward a unified municipality and eliminate borders – both real or artificial

Others like an at large model because they don't believe there are enough qualified people to run with a ward-style structure

Those against an at large model feel that it would run the risk of favoring the more densely populated Village

*"This is only based on four years of living here, but if we're going to do something I think it should really be going as one unit, not anything with separate districts and making it more complex than it is."*

**Village resident**

*"I like to be able to look at what the person is bringing to the table and voting for them regardless of whether on Pearl Street in Essex Junction or whether they live on Brigham Hill Road. For what they're going to bring in terms of their years of experience and their thoughtfulness."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*"The Town is very concerned about being represented so if it's at large and all the members end up from the Village, that will not be good."*

**Village resident**

*"When the population was more Town-heavy, it tended to dominate the Selectboard. Now the Village seems more mobilized, and they're dominating."*

**TOV resident (8-3)**



## *Representation Option 2: Two or More Voting Wards*

# There was more consensus among TOV and Village residents in favor of wards

Those in favor of ward-based representation liked that it gave TOV residents the representation they want and overall results in a sense that hyper-local concerns – no matter where in the community – are more likely to be heard

The biggest concern raised with wards is ensuring there are enough quality candidates to fill seats, though some thought this structure could actually encourage people to run

Another concern was the question of who decides what are the wards and when would that be decided – before a merger vote?

*“I wholeheartedly believe we should be one community. At the same time, I don’t think every facet of our community has the same needs. I like the idea of multiple wards.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“I don’t want to see anybody left out and I’d like to see wards drawing a geographical equal population and let it take us where it takes us. At that point, I would trust the people to work out the taxing issues fairly as long as there were enough people representing everybody.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“I like the idea of representatives that you know who to go to for a response. I’ve definitely had experiences writing to one, two, five board members and none of them reply.”*

**Village resident**





## *Representation Option 2: Two or More Voting Wards* **More than two wards preferred – and not just “Village” and “Town Outside the Village”**

Most groups advocated for or asked about the possibility of a ward-based governing body with more than two wards

It was perceived that with two wards and saying half from TOV and half from the Village would perpetuate a divide and “us vs. them” mentality

A few noted that TOV should even be split with equal representation from the more suburban 8-1 district and more rural 8-3 district

Others advocated for even more wards that were more neighborhood based as a way to keep representation even more local

*“I like using the three districts, because it sorts us pretty evenly in the sense of the differences in the community. I think if we only focus on [Village and Town outside the Village as a whole], we are going to cause problems in 8-3 because it is a different part of our community and I think we keep forgetting that.”*  
**Village resident**

*“[Ideal representation] is not on here. We have three districts and having equal representation across all districts.”*  
**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“I would advocate for as many as 10. Maybe even more. It’s local government. It should be as close to the constituents that are represented as possible.”*  
**TOV resident (8-3)**





## *Representation Option 3: Combination of At Large and Wards* **A combo of at large and wards can offer a balanced approach, but some thought it was too much**

Those in favor of a combo like that it offers guaranteed representation with the option of voting for someone who would represent the whole community

One of the TOV only groups gravitated toward it as a favorite option for that reason

Some saw it as a step approach to a fully at large model after a few years

Those against it felt like it was overkill

*"I came in thinking probably district-based, ward-based voting was the best solution but I like the arguments for people who are elected to represent the whole and the broader perspective."*

**TOV resident (8-1)**

*"I do like that option because I feel like I can, in that case you can vote for the best person for the job which may be me in another district."*

**Village resident**

*"The problem I see with the at-large combination with the wards is why would anybody want to run at large when they have to campaign over such a large area? Knock a lot more doors than if I'm just doing the town or the town outside the village."*

**Village resident**



## *Representation*

# A mayor could bring vision and would be held accountable

Two groups – one Village-only group and one TOV-only group – brought up the idea of having a mayor

An argument for a mayor position is that she or he would develop a platform and vision that voters would get choose in an election while also holding that person accountable

A mayor could also represent a tie-breaking vote should a ward-style representation model result in an even number of representatives

*“The mayor would help us develop a united community and be an inspirational figure.”*

**Village resident**

*“It's more accountable. They're able to be approached in public with questions and not just poo poo a concern I have over the phone.”*

**Village resident**



## *Identity*

# Village residents are willing to cede naming priority to Town of Essex in a merged community

Though our conversations didn't allow much time to discuss the identity of a merged community, it was brought up

Most recognized the potential of derailing the discussion if the Essex Junction name were forced upon the entire community

Village residents believed the Essex Junction name would live on unofficially regardless

*"I am not going to go feuding about the situation for 20 years and say, 'I want tax equity, I want tax equity.' Then, 'I want my name on the package too.' Now, if I'm going to get tax equity I'm perfectly happy to go as one community called 'Town of Essex.'"*

**Village resident**

*"Essex Junction will always be called the Junction. The Village isn't going to lose its identity. It will still be the Village, whether it is a governmental thing or not."*

**Village resident**



## Culture

# “Us vs. Them” isn’t a day-to-day sentiment, only when loudest voices stir the pot



While residents recognize different concerns and cultural differences by jurisdiction, overall they don’t perceive there to be an “us vs. them” mentality that resides in the community

Perceived divisiveness can come as a result of a vocal minority on either side of the merger issue

Many talked about the multi-cultural aspects that come as a result of Essex containing urban, suburban, and rural areas within its borders as a strength and a highlight of the community

*“I’m an outsider, I’ve only been here 13 years. I don’t see, I don’t get, I don’t understand the cultural differences, or I don’t get that there is a difference.”*

**TOV resident (8-3)**

*“I do [see the ‘Us vs. Them’ mentality], but only with respect to small vocal minority of the Town outside the Village. Day-to-day talking to my friends in and outside of the Village, no I don’t see it.”*

**Village resident**

*“I honestly believe that there isn’t. It’s just perpetuated by some people. There’s a large percentage of this town who do not understand the divide or feel it.”*

**Village resident**

*“In terms of identity, we’re stronger together. If we’re able to build a true sense of community where we can bring all of our different perspectives openly to the table, it builds a stronger community. Maybe there are different identities, and that is where our strength comes from.”*

**TOV resident (8-1)**



# Takeaways & Recommendations





## Takeaways

Participants in the Listening Sessions, for the most part, were a well-informed crowd. Many regularly attend annual meetings and occasionally Selectboard/Trustee meetings. They referenced specific op-eds in the *Reporter* and at least one wrote an op-ed recently.

Given the time commitment required to participate, it wasn't completely unexpected participants were "above average" on knowledge and engagement in local government matters. The audience skewed toward older ages and those that have lived in the community since before the previous merger vote.

## Action Items

- The final survey should be cognizant of the fact that many don't have much time to share their opinion or may not feel equipped – position the survey as 10-15 minutes to share your thoughts on the future of Essex, no matter how long you've lived here or how much you've engaged with local government
- Explore paid social media ads targeting younger and newer residents in order to bring more of their voices into the conversation



## Takeaways

Many of the groups began with residents asking, “Why are we talking about merger now?”

In addition, they lean on the current municipal governments to present the vision, benefits, and just enough detail to let them properly evaluate the proposition without getting too overwhelmed.

## Action Items

- Articulate a clear vision of what a merged community looks like, including a key benefit or a few key benefits all residents will be able to enjoy – but make sure all communication is educational and objective, not promotional
- Be upfront that the November 2020 election is likely to be one in which there will be a high turnout, resulting in an ideal opportunity for the majority of Essex residents to cast their vote on a possible merger
- Keep sharing the timeline leading up to a possible vote, including key milestones such as planned public meetings/workshops and when outreach will take place
- Use the survey to understand how often and in which channels resident want communication



## Takeaways

There was no clear cut favorite among the Municipal Governance concepts nor the Representation Options, but there was receptiveness within each group. Pros and cons were noted for each option, and in some cases, suggestions were made to revise or improve upon an option, such as expanding the ward concept into three or more wards to ensure local concerns are represented.

Regarding timing of tax equalization, most agreed that should that move forward, a 3-5 year timeline would be acceptable.

## Action Items

- Use the survey as a way to quantify how a larger pool of residents feel about the identified pros and cons of each concept – for example, what percent of residents are concerned that a ward-style representation model wouldn't be supported with enough quality local candidates
- Ask survey respondents to identify their favorite combination of Municipal Governance + Representation Option while also asking which ones they'd vote for, even if it wasn't their preferred option
- Consider including options that were suggested by the groups but not listed in the material for evaluation – neighborhood wards (at least 3 wards), an option with a mayor, and separation





## Takeaways

Some residents had a hard time evaluating concepts at this level without much detail, particularly in regard to Special Tax Districts.

People wanted a better sense of the benefits or trade-offs with each approach.

They wanted to know whether Special Tax Districts will be defined along with the vote or after.

## Action Items

- For the purposes of the survey and in order to help residents feel they have what they need to evaluate options, add some additional detail, context or examples that help explain the conceptual options – don't include so much that it feels overwhelming
- Be transparent when you do not have a detail people may be curious about, such as prospective tax rates – state a reason why that information is not included or can't be calculated
- Include a simple definition of Special Tax Districts, some examples, and answer the questions of when they can be created, how they're voted on, and how they're managed



## *Takeaways*

Not only are TOV residents concerned about equal representation within a merged government, they are concerned about equal representation in the process leading up to a potential merger vote

## *Action Items*

- Be transparent in communications and public meetings about about the make-up of the joint Governance Subcommittee working on this
- When possible, ensure that input for potential merger options – both public input and government official input – is considerate of the needs of all parts of Essex
- Emphasize that all residents of Essex will have the opportunity to respond to our survey and ultimately all residents of Essex will have equal say in whether a merger passes



## Next Steps

First draft of next resident survey – Thursday, August 29

Meet to discuss survey draft – Thursday, September 5

Launch resident survey – Wednesday, September 18

Presentation of survey results – Thursday, October 17



# Thank You





# Appendix: Participant Characteristics





# Participant Characteristics

## Location

- **25** Town outside the Village
- **26** Village of Essex Junction

## Voting District

- **14** registered in 8-1
- **24** registered in 8-2
- **11** registered in 8-3
- **2** registered, not sure of district

## Gender

- **32** Female
- **19** Male

## Age

- **4** 25-34
- **11** 35-44
- **9** 45-54
- **10** 55-64
- **4** 75+

## Have Children Under 18

- **19** Yes
- **32** No

## Years Lived in Essex

- **3** Less than five
- **2** 5-9 years
- **5** 10-14 years
- **7** 15-19 years
- **11** 20-24 years
- **23** 25+ years

## Merger Discussion Familiarity

- **6** Extremely familiar
- **16** Very familiar
- **23** Moderately familiar
- **5** Slightly familiar
- **1** Not at all familiar

**Total participants: 51**

**Memorandum**

**To:** Board of Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager  
**Cc:** Governance Subcommittee; Ann Janda, Project Manager  
**From:** Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager *GSD*  
**Re:** "Why merge" elevator speech about potential merger  
**Date:** August 23, 2019

---

**Issue**

The issue is whether the Trustees/Selectboard will approve an elevator speech about potential merger of the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction.

**Discussion**

The Selectboard and Trustees tasked the Governance Subcommittee with creating a "why unify" elevator speech, to be approved by both boards. The Subcommittee approved a draft elevator speech on August 22 for review and approval by the full boards:

"The Village Board of Trustees and Town Selectboard believe we will be stronger together as one united community. We can work as one to plan for the future, attract and retain a vibrant business community, protect our natural resources, restore and enhance our infrastructure, improve our services, overcome the challenges we face, and establish ourselves as Vermont's premier livable community.

"For those reasons, we are exploring a merger of the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction. We are still figuring out how to best provide representation to the entire Essex community while taxing everyone equitably for our municipal services. We ask all our residents and businesses to give us feedback on what they seek in a merged community, so that we can develop a governance plan for a vote in November 2020."

**Cost**

N/a

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Trustees/Selectboard approve the elevator speech about potential merger of the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction, with any edits.

## Memorandum

**To:** Board of Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager  
**Cc:** Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager  
**From:** Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Sarah Macy, Assistant Manager/Finance Director  
**Re:** Revising Selectboard and Trustee meeting schedule for 2019-2020 *SD*  
**Date:** August 23, 2019

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### Issue

The issue is whether the Trustees and Selectboard will approve a revised meeting schedule for 2019-2020.

### Discussion

In April, the Trustees and Selectboard moved from meeting individually twice a month and jointly once every two months, to adding a joint meeting to two individual meetings each month as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Monday = Selectboard (7 p.m.) & Joint boards (7:45 p.m.)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday = Trustees (6:30 p.m.)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday = Selectboard (7 p.m.)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday = Trustees (6:30 p.m.) & Joint boards (7:15 p.m.)

While the move to more frequent meetings has helped increase timely decision making and continuity of discussion, the increased number of meetings, including the sub-committee on Governance, has been a fatiguing and logistical challenge for all involved and may not be sustainable.

In an effort to acknowledge that we continue to have an increasing amount of issues to deal with on a joint basis as well as a primary focus of the November 2020 vote over the next 14 months and the meeting fatigue felt by all, staff proposes the following for the boards' consideration: **Reduce the total number of meetings per month from four to two by holding only joint board meetings.** Based on feedback from board members, staff suggests meeting on the second Monday and fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings would begin at 7 p.m. and alternate locations between 81 Main St. and 2 Lincoln St. Due to upcoming commitments and to give board members enough time to plan their schedules, staff suggests the new schedule take effect in November.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday = Joint boards (7 p.m.) [Suggested location: 81 Main Street]
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday = Joint boards (7 p.m.) [Suggested location: 2 Lincoln Street]
- Executive sessions can be called for 6:30 pm or held after business has concluded
- For discussion: the first 30-45 minutes could be for home court government business and then joint business thereafter, followed by business for the other board

A potential schedule for September 2019 – March 2020 is attached.

There is always the option to warn a special meeting of either of the two boards for before or after the joint meetings, or on an off day or week if necessary. Meeting jointly as we move toward a November 2020 vote on governance allows each board to become familiar and up to speed on all issues affecting the other board and entire community. If a November 2020 vote creates one



governing body that body will already be well on its way to being aligned, working together, and deliberating together on the issues facing the community.

With regard to required number of meetings, the Town of Essex Charter states in Section 117-204. Meetings “(a) As soon as possible after the election of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, the Board of Selectmen shall fix the time and place of its regular meetings and such meetings shall be held at least once a month.”

The Village of Essex Junction Charter states in Section 2.08. Procedure. “(a) Meetings. The Trustees shall meet regularly at least once in every month at such times and places as the Trustees may prescribe by rule.”

### **Cost**

Savings: recording secretary’s time and production of meeting minutes.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Trustees/Selectboard amend the regular meeting schedule to meet twice a month on the second Monday and fourth Tuesday of the month beginning in November for the remainder of the 2019-2020 year.

## **Proposed meeting schedule: September 2019 – March 2020**

Thursday, Sept. 5 – Gov Sub  
Monday, Sept. 9 – SB & Trustees  
Tuesday, Sept. 10 – Trustees  
Sept \_\_ - SB (special for Firearms)  
Monday, Sept. 23 – SB  
Tuesday, Sept. 24 – Trustees & SB

Monday, Oct. 7 – SB & Trustees  
Tuesday, Oct. 8 – Trustees  
Thursday, Oct. 17 – Gov Sub  
Monday, Oct. 28 – SB  
Tuesday, Oct. 29 – Trustees & SB

Monday, Nov. 11 – SB & Trustees (Veteran's Day; could do Monday, Nov. 4 or Tuesday, Nov. 12)  
Tuesday, Nov. 26 – Trustees & SB

Wednesday, Dec. 4 – Trustee budget day  
Monday, Dec. 9 – SB & Trustees  
Tuesday, Dec. 24 – Trustees & SB (Christmas Eve; could do Tuesday, Dec. 17 or Monday, Dec. 23)

Monday, Jan. 13 – SB & Trustees  
Tuesday, Jan. 28 – Trustees & SB  
*\*\* January will require special budget meetings*

Monday, Feb. 10 – SB & Trustees  
Tuesday, Feb. 25 – Trustees & SB

Monday, March 2 – Town Meeting  
Monday, March 9 – SB & Trustees  
Tuesday, March 24 – Trustees & SB

## **Memorandum**

**To:** Selectboard and Trustees; Evan Teich, Unified Manager

**CC:** Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager

**From:** Ann Janda, Project Manager

**Re:** Use of Merger Infographic on [www.greateressex2020.org](http://www.greateressex2020.org) and in print

**Date:** August 27, 2019

### **Issue**

The issue is using the merger infographic, "Greater Essex 2020: Answering your questions about the November 2020 merger vote," on [www.greateressex2020.org](http://www.greateressex2020.org) and in print.

### **Discussion**

At its August 5 Selectboard meeting and August 13 Trustee meeting both boards approved the merger infographic, "Greater Essex 2020: Answering your questions about the November 2020 merger vote," for use in the Focus Groups with edits. However, the edits were not completed in time for use with any of the Focus Groups. Now, with all edits complete, staff would like to post the infographic on [www.greateressex2020.org](http://www.greateressex2020.org) and use in print as handouts.

### **Cost**

NA

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Selectboard/Trustees authorize the use of the infographic, "Greater Essex 2020: Answering your questions about the November 2020 merger vote," on [www.greateressex2020.org](http://www.greateressex2020.org) and in print as a hand out.



# GREATER ESSEX 2020

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS  
about the NOVEMBER 2020 MERGER VOTE

## FIRST THING'S FIRST: WHAT ARE WE VOTING ON?

The Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction are currently **two municipalities** with **two separate charters**, sharing some municipal services under contract. Town and Village residents are all residents of the Town -- Village residents are residents of both.



The **Town of Essex Selectboard** and the **Village of Essex Junction Board of Trustees** are exploring a potential merger of the governance of the two municipalities under a single charter to form a single government entity.

Following extensive research, collaboration, and a robust public engagement process, the community will vote on **November 3, 2020** on whether to proceed.

## WHY MERGE?

The short answer: To better serve greater Essex.

A **Governance Subcommittee** -- consisting of two members from each governing board -- was established in 2018 and has been extensively researching various governance models.

Additionally, a lot of work has already been done to inform this conversation, including **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**, **RESIDENT SURVEYS**, **LEGAL GUIDANCE** and **FOUNDATIONAL WORK**.

## KEY BENEFITS INCLUDE:



Streamlined services



More convenient customer service



Better economic development & financial planning



More efficient organization structure



Reducing the # of times residents vote



Integrated community planning

## KEY CHALLENGES:

There are still a number of issues to resolve leading up to a community decision, including:



Taxation



Governing board structure & elections



Community identity

## CURRENTLY:

The Town and Village function **TOGETHER** in many ways:



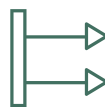
Manager's Office (One Unified Manager)  
Police Department  
Clerk's Office  
Finance Department  
Essex Area Senior Center  
Public Works Department



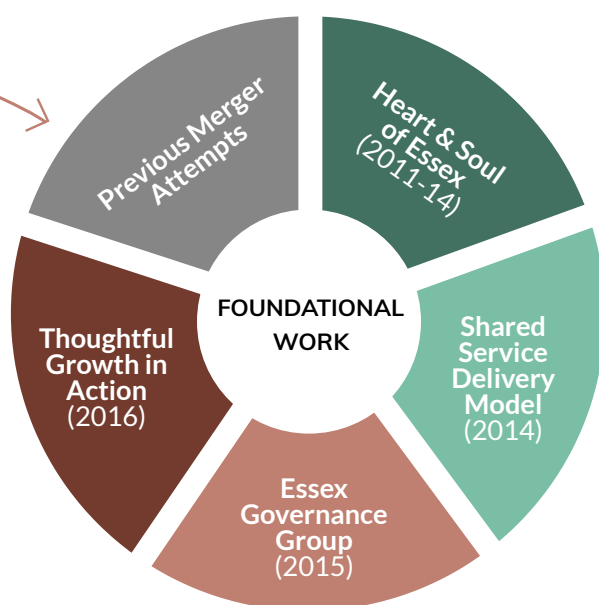
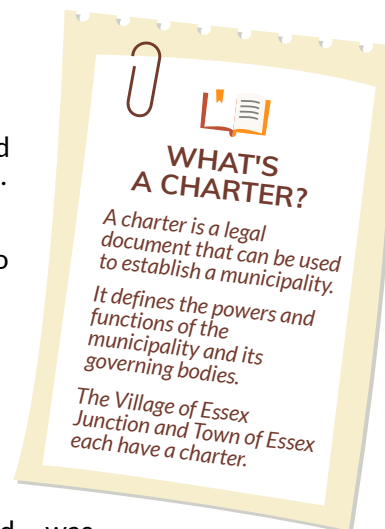
These departments and services are paid for by all members of the Essex community.

Consolidations have saved more than \$2.5 million combined from fiscal years 2014-2020.

The Town and Village still budget **SEPARATELY** for these services:



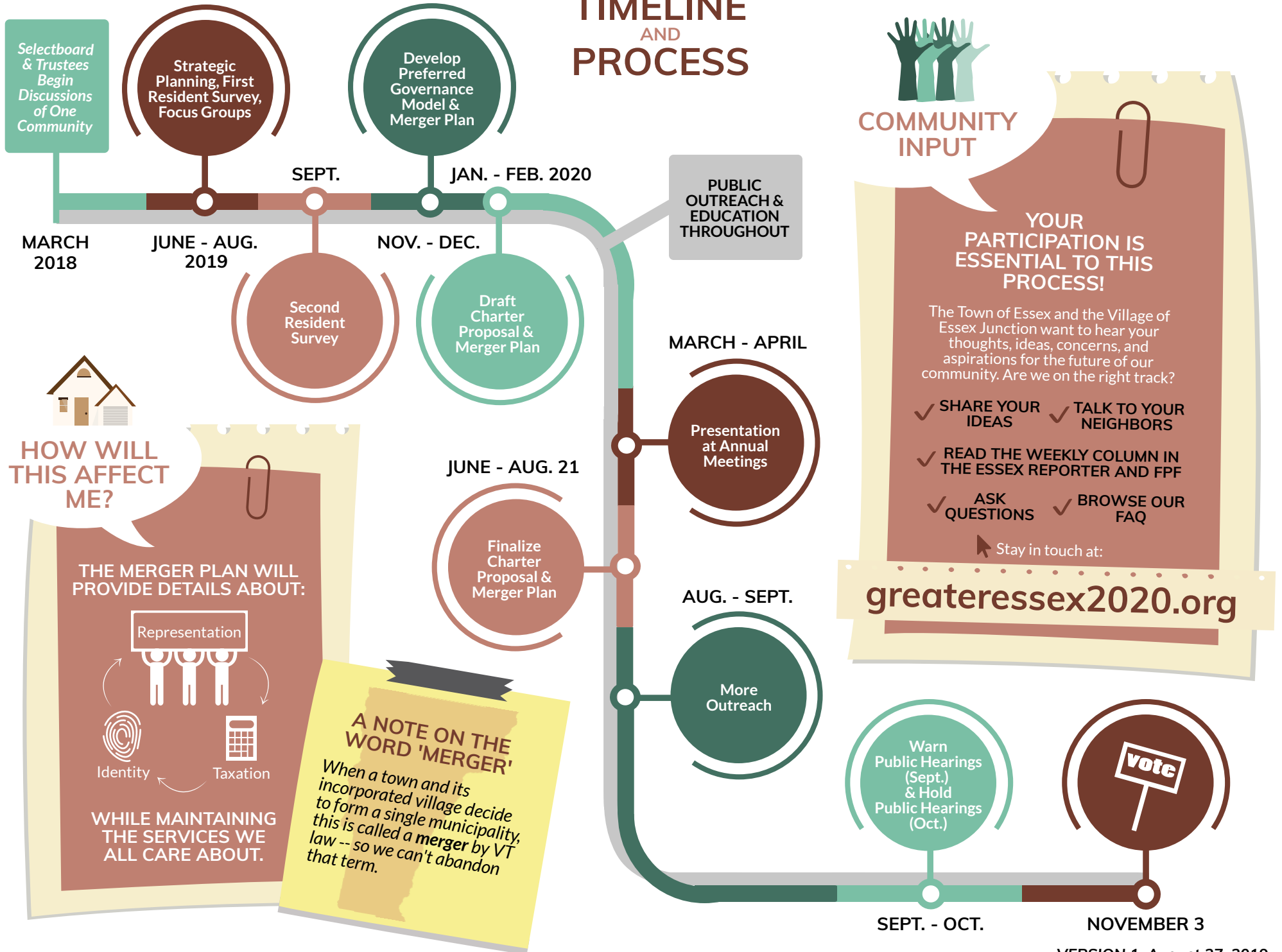
Fire Department  
Libraries  
Community Development  
Parks and Recreation  
Capital Planning  
Elected & Appointed Boards



WHAT'S NEXT?



# TIMELINE AND PROCESS



## Memorandum

**To:** Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager  
**From:** Ally Vile, Parks & Recreation Director; Jim Jutras, Water Quality Superintendent; Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager *GSD*  
**Re:** Water quality and health issues at Indian Brook Reservoir  
**Date:** August 20, 2019

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### Issue

The issue is informing the Trustees and Selectboard about water quality and health issues at Indian Brook Reservoir.

### Discussion

Board members had asked about water quality issues that may occur at Indian Brook, such as the relationship between e. coli, dog feces, cyanobacteria blooms.

*From Parks & Recreation Director Ally Vile:*

E.coli and cyanobacteria are not related.

E.coli is mainly caused by animal waste. Naturally - beavers are a large contributor to this in bodies of water but I can't give you a scientific fact related to Indian Brook. We are looking at getting a sample up near a cove that beavers have become more common to test this theory. The sample locations we do take from are areas where non-motorized boats and swimmers enter, but also is a popular spot for dog owners not to re-leash their dogs and pick up after them. The sample locations are down-stream from where the beavers have been and they do not have dams in this area but it points more directly to feces that maybe non-habiting animals who come into Indian Brook create at the park.

One day in early August I heard that there were piles of dog poop near the water's edge around the boat launch area.

In regards to cyanobacteria, my understanding (without a degree in it), is that there is always blue/gree algae in the water but weather is a factor as to when it blooms. We can only submit a sample if we have visually seen it in the water to confirm the status; the department of health does not test water for cyanobacteria "just because".

*From Water Quality Superintendent Jim Jutras:*

Ally is spot on. E. Coli is from the lower digestive track of mammals such as beavers, dogs, agricultural runoff (livestock), leaking or failed septic systems, etc. As she stated, a likely source is the pet waste and beavers compounded by the dry weather and less exchange of the water in the Indian Brook Reservoir. The only way to tell for absolute confirmation is genetic testing, which has been done in the area but I don't think it necessary for this recurring event. My guess is that off leash dog activity is not helping the E.Coli levels at this time of year. Please see a couple of fact sheets immediately below (also attached).

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-14.pdf>

[https://www.uvm.edu/~empact/water/e\\_coli.php3](https://www.uvm.edu/~empact/water/e_coli.php3)

Regarding the algae, this has nothing to do with the E Coli matter except note that the excess nutrients (and potential E Coli sources) can provide the catalyst for an algal bloom. I was in a meeting in early August where Lori Fischer of the Lake Champlain Committee spent quite a while going over the misinformation surrounding algae versus cyanobacterial issues. The Health Department may not do cyanobacteria testing/verification but the ANR Ponds section has scientists who do. If you want me to look into this more, please let me know.

**Cost**

N/A

**Recommendation**

This memo is for informational purposes.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet

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29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

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WD-BB-14

2019

## Bacteria in Surface Waters

### What are Coliform Bacteria?

Coliform bacteria are a large assemblage of various species of bacteria that are linked together because of the ease of culturing as a single group. They include both fecal and non-fecal coliform bacterial sources. Fecal coliforms are bacteria that are found naturally in the intestines of warm-blooded animals. Fecal coliforms are sometimes pathogenic, as many are disease-causing species, though non-pathogenic species may be present too. The presence of fecal coliform bacteria may indicate contamination of the waterbody by human and/or animal fecal material.

### What is *Escherichia coli*?

*Escherichia coli*, commonly called *E. coli*, is one of the most common species of fecal coliform bacteria. It is a normal component of the large intestines in humans and other warm-blooded animals, and it's found in human sewage in high numbers. *E. coli* is used as an indicator organism for fecal contamination because it is easily cultured. If sewage is present in water, pathogenic or disease-causing organisms may also be present.

### What are Enterococci?

Enterococci are another type of fecal bacteria which are a subgroup of the fecal streptococcus group. Enterococci have the ability to survive in saltwater and therefore are the chosen indicator organism for coastal beaches and shellfish harvesting areas.

### Why do we measure bacteria?

Typhoid and cholera epidemics in the mid-19th century led to the discovery that certain gastro-intestinal diseases of humans are transmitted via water. The disease-causing organisms leave the infected individual via the feces, which can become discharged into surface waters. These water-borne diseases include typhoid, cholera, enteric fevers, and bacterial dysentery. It is not feasible, however, to test waters for each possible type of disease-causing bacterium. Fecal indicator bacteria (e.g., *E. coli* and Enterococci) are used to indicate, on a statistical basis, the likelihood of contracting a disease by consuming or recreating in such waters.



## **What level of *E. coli* is acceptable?**

The acceptable level of *E. coli* is determined by risk analysis based on statistics to protect human health. Drinking water should have no *E. coli* after treatment. *E. coli* levels at designated swimming beaches should not exceed 88 per 100 milliliter (mL) in any one sample, or exceed a three-sample geometric mean average over a 60-day period of 47/100 mL. Recreational waters that are not designated beaches should not have more than 406 *E. coli*/100 mL in any one sample, or more than 126/100 mL in a 60-day, three-sample geometric mean average. Occasional higher numbers are not unusual, particularly after storm events and where urban or agricultural runoff occurs. These levels are generally not considered unsafe unless investigation indicates the source to be sewage.

## **What level of Enterococci is acceptable?**

Enterococci levels at designated saltwater, coastal beaches should not exceed 104 per 100 milliliter (mL) in any one sample, or exceed a three-sample geometric mean average over a 60-day period of 35/100 mL. Generally, the water quality at New Hampshire's coastal beaches is very good; however, there are occasions when the Enterococci levels go above the acceptable limit.

## **Can I drink my lake water?**

Because *E. coli* are present in all warm-blooded animals, including ducks, geese, beaver and seagulls, it is highly unlikely that any lake will have zero *E. coli* without treatment. Even with no *E. coli*, lake water is still not safe to be used directly as a source of drinking water. Without adequate treatment there can be no guarantee concerning the safety of the water.

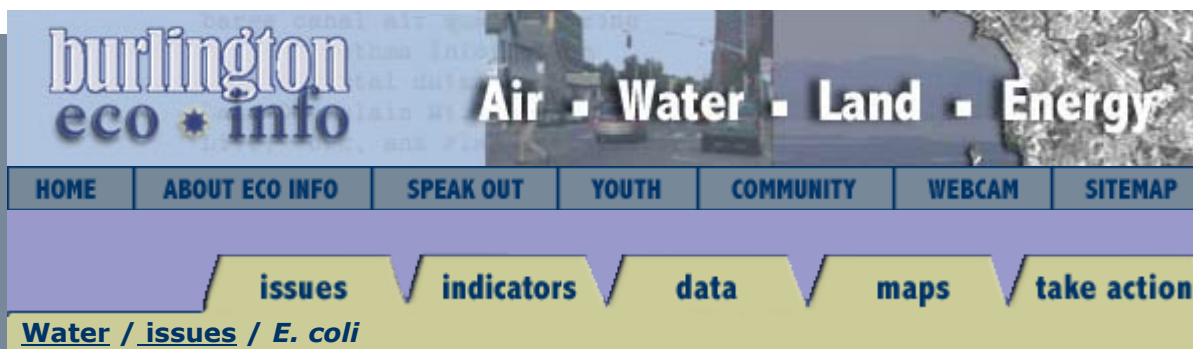
## **Does *E. coli* cause swimmer's itch or swimmer's ear infections?**

No. Swimmer's itch is caused by contact with a parasite whose life cycle depends on the presence of snails and waterfowl (often ducks); it is not associated with fecal bacteria. There are a number of illnesses, particularly related to the eyes, ears, nose and throat, which may use water as the medium of transmission but in which the disease-causing organism does not necessarily pass through the feces of the infected individual. Refer to the fact sheet on swimmer's itch, [WD-BB-2](#).











## **Sources of Fecal Bacteria to Surface Waters:**

Possible sources of fecal contamination include wastewater treatment plants, failing septic systems, domestic and wild animal waste, and stormwater runoff. For additional information on how to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff, please refer to the following NHDES fact sheets:

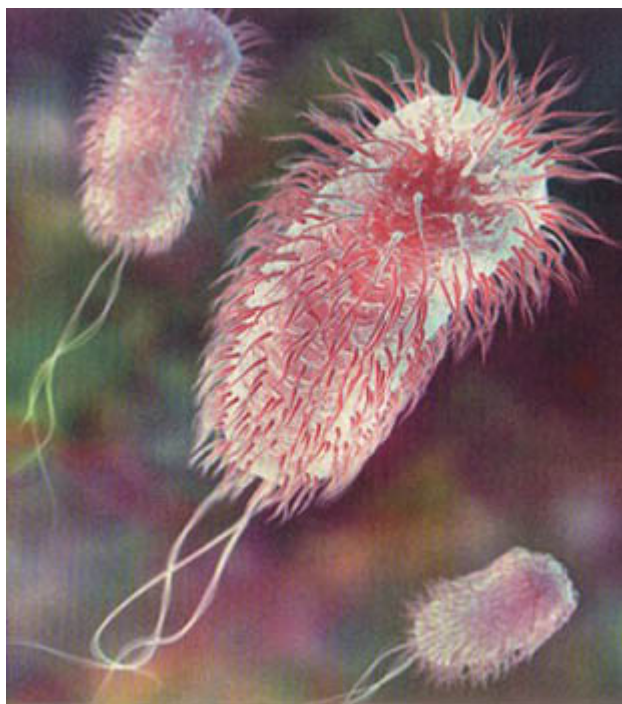
- Low Impact Development and Stormwater Management (WD-WMB-17)  
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wmb/documents/wmb-17.pdf>
- Lake Protection Tips Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes (WD-BB-9)  
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-9.pdf>
- Care and Maintenance of Your Septic System (WD-SSB-2)  
<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/ssb/documents/ssb-2.pdf>



### What do you want to know about *E. coli* and beach closings?

-  [What do the numbers mean?](#)
-  [What is \*E. coli\*?](#)
-  [Where does \*E. coli\* come from?](#)
-  [What can I do to reduce \*E. coli\* in Lake Champlain?](#)
-  [How were these guidelines developed?](#)
-  [Who monitors \*E. coli\*?](#)
-  [How is \*E. coli\* measured?](#)
-  [Is our water safe?](#)
-  [Can we improve \*E. coli\* monitoring?](#)
-  [Data archives](#)

## *E. coli*: Cause of beach closings



By far the most common reason for beach closings is *E. coli*. *E. coli* is found in animal feces and makes its way into our lakes and ponds through rainwater runoff. People who ingest *E. coli* or related bacteria by swallowing water can experience stomach cramps and diarrhea. Many public swimming areas are monitored for *E. coli*, and beaches are closed if the number of *E. coli* colonies is too high. To learn more about *E. coli*, follow the links on the left side of this page.

# Memorandum

**To:** Village Trustees, Town Selectboard, Evan Teich, Unified Manager, Staff  
**From:** Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager; Tammy Getchell, Assistant to the Manager  
**Re:** Update on changes at 2 Lincoln Street office  
**Date:** August 23, 2019

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GSD  
mg

## Issue

To alleviate multiple customer service, coverage, and safety issues at the Village Office at 2 Lincoln Street, a few changes have been made to address these concerns.

## Discussion

Recognizing that the Village Office is no longer a full-service office and that a large number of the customers requesting assistance must contact staff located at 81 Main Street, a few measures have been put into place to direct customers in the right direction.

- Phones
  - calling in to 878-6944 or 878-6945 rings to a phone tree, where callers can dial 2 to connect to Community Development/Zoning or dial 3 to report problems or connect with Public Works (voicemail).
  - Customers can dial 878-6950 to speak with Community Development/Zoning directly.
  - Calling in to 878-6951 bypasses the phone tree and rings directly to communications/management staff (Tammy Getchell, Ann Janda, Darby Mayville and the Unified Manager's shared office at 2 Lincoln).
- A drop box for tax bills and water/sewer payments is set up on the counter and outside. Anyone requesting specific account information or a receipt will need to go to 81 Main Street.
- If there are 2+ people in the office, there will be coverage. If less, whoever is there or leaves last will close the door until 2+ people are back. The door has signage explaining coverage, and directing payments to the outdoor drop box.

## Cost

None.

## Recommendation

This memo is for informational purposes only.

## Gregory Duggan

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**From:** Makhetha, Delia A. <Delia.Makhetha@wsp.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 15, 2019 11:57 AM  
**To:** Gregory Duggan; Evan Teich; Tammy Getchell  
**Cc:** Savage, Megan L.; Dally, Annabelle  
**Subject:** RE: Colchester Exit 16 DDI project  
**Attachments:** 190306 Exit 16 DDI Brochure\_FINAL.pdf; DDI Insert\_Final.pdf; 190304 DDI Fact Sheet.pdf

CAUTION: EXTERNAL MAIL. DO NOT CLICK ON LINKS OR OPEN ATTACHMENTS YOU DO NOT TRUST

Hi Greg,

I have attached the Exit 16 DDI brochure, insert and fact sheet. We have all of these on our website along with an educational video and a driving simulation of the DDI interchange, which may help people better understand how the interchange operates and anticipate the changes to come. Here is a link to the online document library:

<http://www.exit16ddi.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/library/>.

In the future, if the boards decide they would like a meeting to learn more about the project, please feel free to reach out, and we can coordinate a presentation.

Best,  
Delia

**Delia Makhetha**

Public Involvement Specialist



Direct: 603-263-8881

Mobile: 603-851-8561

Email: [delia.makhetha@wsp.com](mailto:delia.makhetha@wsp.com)

WSP USA

[wsp.com](http://wsp.com)

---

**From:** Gregory Duggan [mailto:gduggan@ESSEX.ORG]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2019 4:55 PM  
**To:** Makhetha, Delia A. <Delia.Makhetha@wsp.com>; Evan Teich <eteich@essex.org>; Tammy Getchell <tgetchell@essexjunction.org>  
**Cc:** Savage, Megan L. <Megan.Savage@wsp.com>; Dally, Annabelle <Annabelle.Dally@wsp.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Colchester Exit 16 DDI project

Hi Delia,

I would be happy to take informational materials and share them with the Essex Selectboard and Essex Junction Trustees. I don't see a need at this point to have a presentation for the boards.

Best,  
Greg

Greg Duggan, Deputy Manager  
Town of Essex, 81 Main St.  
Village of Essex Junction, 2 Lincoln St.  
Essex Junction, VT 05452  
802-878-1341  
[gduggan@essex.org](mailto:gduggan@essex.org)

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**From:** Makhetha, Delia A. <[Delia.Makhetha@wsp.com](mailto:Delia.Makhetha@wsp.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2019 4:30 PM  
**To:** Evan Teich <[eteich@essex.org](mailto:eteich@essex.org)>; Gregory Duggan <[gduggan@ESSEX.ORG](mailto:gduggan@ESSEX.ORG)>; Tammy Getchell <[tgetchell@essexjunction.org](mailto:tgetchell@essexjunction.org)>  
**Cc:** Savage, Megan L. <[Megan.Savage@wsp.com](mailto:Megan.Savage@wsp.com)>; Dally, Annabelle <[Annabelle.Dally@wsp.com](mailto:Annabelle.Dally@wsp.com)>  
**Subject:** Colchester Exit 16 DDI project

CAUTION: EXTERNAL MAIL. DO NOT CLICK ON LINKS OR OPEN ATTACHMENTS YOU DO NOT TRUST

Hello,

I am a public information consultant working with the Vermont Agency of Transportation on the Colchester Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) project. This project will improve the roadway along the US Routes 2/7 corridor, in the vicinity of I-89 Exit 16, to enhance mobility and safety. Here a link to the Exit 16 DDI website for more information about the project: <http://www.exit16ddi.vtransprojects.vermont.gov/>

Since the Exit 16 DDI roadway configuration will be the first of its kind in Vermont, we are sharing information and educational materials about the project with local communities. I am reaching out to see if we can share project materials with the Town of Essex and offer a presentation about the Exit 16 DDI project. Please let me know if the town is interested in materials and a meeting.

I look forward to discussing this further; please feel free to call or email. Thank you, and have a great afternoon!

Best,  
Delia

**Delia Makhetha**  
Public Involvement Specialist



Direct: 603-263-8881  
Mobile: 603-851-8561  
Email: [delia.makhetha@wsp.com](mailto:delia.makhetha@wsp.com)

WSP USA  
[wsp.com](http://wsp.com)

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*The current interchange at Exit 16 is a grade separated tight diamond interchange with I-89 crossing over US Routes 2/7 via two bridges. The existing interchange yields frequent traffic congestion, lengthy delays, and significant queuing during peak hours. These existing conditions are a safety concern with a high number of incidents, collisions, and a lack of accommodations for non-motorized travel.*

## PROJECT MILESTONES

**Preliminary Plans**  
September 28, 2012

**Permitting**  
November 28, 2016

**Right of Way Clear**  
Summer 2019

**Bid Advertisement**  
Early Winter 2020

**Contract Award**  
Late Winter 2020

**Target Construction Schedule**

**Begin Work**  
Spring 2020

**Complete Work**  
Spring 2022



# Exit 16 DDI

Diverging Diamond Interchange

## PROJECT LOCATION:

US Routes 2/7 in Colchester from Winooski town line north 1.05 miles to Sunderland Woods Road.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is improving the roadway along the US Routes 2/7 corridor, in the vicinity of I-89 Exit 16, to enhance mobility and safety in Colchester, Vermont. The core of the project is to reconfigure the existing tight diamond interchange to a **Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)** at I-89 Exit 16.



Additional improvements include:

- Adding turn lanes at the Mountain View Drive, Hercules Drive and Rathe Road intersections.
- Construction of dedicated pedestrian and shared pedestrian/bicycle facilities such as sidewalks and shared-use paths.
- Modernizing traffic signals at South Park Drive, I-89 Exit 16, Mountain View Drive, Hercules Drive, Rathe Road, and at Tigan Street in Winooski City.



**WHAT IS A DDI?**

A **Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)** is an innovative, modern interchange design that can relieve traffic congestion and improve safety for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

In a DDI, traffic crosses to the left side of the roadway allowing for ease of access to the interstate by eliminating difficult left turns. With traffic diverted to the left side of the roadway, vehicles making a left onto the interstate entrance ramps do not have to cross oncoming traffic, creating fewer conflict points. The reduction of conflict points reduces potential user collisions, thus improving safety and vehicle throughput. With left turn movements operating freely within the DDI, the traffic signals no longer require dedicated left turn phasing, improving overall traffic operations at the interchange. Additional benefits include reducing driver discomfort, fuel consumption, and lost time. Raised islands within the interchange create short crossing distances, which increase overall safety for non-motorized users such as pedestrians and bicyclists.

**PROJECT COST:**

The project is estimated to cost approximately \$10 million.

In addition to the safety and operational benefits of the DDI, the construction of a DDI is cost effective. The DDI can be constructed utilizing the existing bridge structures eliminating the need to modify or replace them, reducing construction costs. The construction schedule of a DDI is much shorter than the construction of more common interchanges not only reducing overall cost, but also impacts to the traveling public.

**CONSTRUCTION:**

Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2020 and be completed over the course of two full construction seasons, ending in Spring 2022. The first year of construction will consist mainly of utility relocation, ledge removal, and drainage work with the bulk of the roadway construction including the installation of the DDI, the addition of the turning lanes, and the implementation of the pedestrian and bicycle accommodations taking place the following construction season.

During construction, weekly Construction Updates will be distributed to notify the public of construction activities and travel conditions for the following week. Project Updates and Traffic Alerts will be issued on an as needed basis throughout the life of the project. Sign-up to receive project updates on our website: [www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](http://www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov).

**Contractor:** TBD

**VTrans Project Manager:** Michael LaCroix

**VTrans Resident Engineer:** TBD

**Project Outreach Coordinator:** Annabelle Dally

**CONTACT US**

For more information on Exit 16 DDI Project visit  
[www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](http://www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov)  
 Email us [info@Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](mailto:info@Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov)  
 or call our 24-hour project hotline  
 1-802-595-4399



Facebook: @VtransOnTheRoad

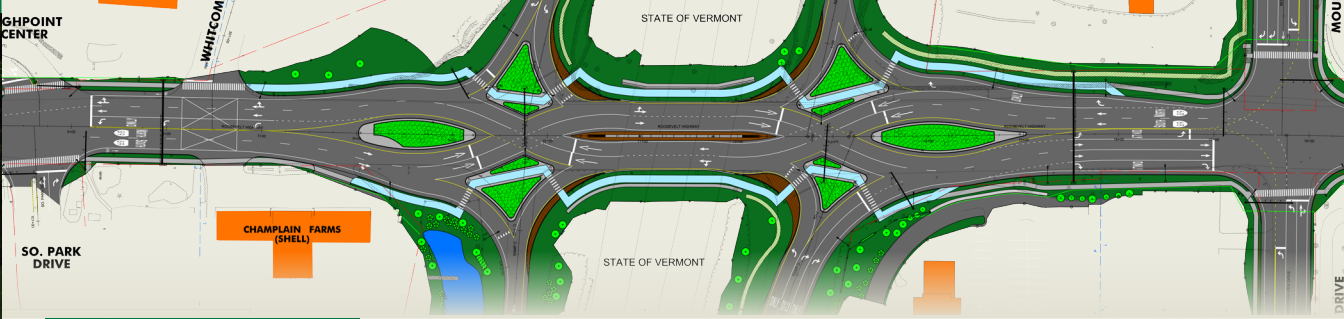
Twitter: @AOTVermont

Instagram: @AOTVermont

YouTube: VTransTV

Flickr: VTrans





**STAY INFORMED**

**ONLINE RESOURCES**

[www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](http://www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov)  
[www.vtrans.vermont.gov](http://www.vtrans.vermont.gov)

**WEEKLY UPDATES**

During construction, weekly Construction Updates will be distributed to notify the public of construction activities and travel conditions for the following week. Project Updates and Traffic Alerts will be issued on an as needed basis throughout the life of the project. Sign-up to receive project updates on our website.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Follow VTrans social media accounts for updates on this and other projects around Vermont.

**Twitter:** @AOTVermont  
**Facebook:** @VTransontheroad  
**Instagram:** @AOTVermont  
**YouTube:** VTrans TV

**CONTACT US**

For more information on Exit 16 DDI Project visit  
[www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](http://www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov)  
 Email us [info@Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](mailto:info@Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov)  
 or call our 24-hour project hotline  
 1-802-595-4399



# Exit 16 DDI

Diverging Diamond Interchange



[www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov](http://www.Exit16DDI.vtransprojects.vermont.gov)

## PROJECT MILESTONES

### PRELIMINARY PLANS

September 28, 2012

### PERMITTING

November 28, 2016

### RIGHT OF WAY CLEAR

Q4 2019

### BID ADVERTISEMENT

Q1 2020

### CONTRACT AWARD

Q2 2020

### TARGET CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Q2 2020 - Q3 2022

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is improving the roadway along the US Routes 2/7 corridor, in the vicinity of I-89 Exit 16, to enhance mobility and safety in Colchester, Vermont. The project area extends from the Colchester-Winooski town line north for approximately 1 mile to just beyond the intersection of Sunderland Woods Road at US Routes 2/7. The core of the project is to reconfigure the existing tight diamond interchange at I-89 Exit 16 to a diverging diamond interchange (DDI). Other improvements include:

- Adding turn lanes at the Mountain View Drive, Hercules Drive and Rathe Road intersections
- Constructing dedicated pedestrian and shared pedestrian/bicycle facilities.
- Modernizing traffic signals at South Park Drive, I-89 Exit 16, Mountain View Drive, Hercules Drive, Rathe Road and at Tigan Street in Winooski City.

The current interchange at Exit 16 is a grade separated tight diamond interchange with Interstate 89 crossing over US Routes 2/7 via two bridges. The existing interchange yields frequent traffic congestion, lengthy delays, and significant queuing during peak hours. These existing conditions are a safety concern with a high number of incidents, collisions and a lack of accommodations for non-motorized travel.

The project is estimated to cost approximately \$10 million and is scheduled to be advertised for contractor bid in early 2020 with contract award in Winter 2020. Construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2020 and be completed over the course of two full construction seasons, ending in Spring 2022. The first year of construction will consist of utility relocation, ledge removal, and drainage work with the bulk of the roadway construction including the installation of the DDI, the addition of the turning lanes, and the implementation of the pedestrian and bicycle accommodations taking place the following construction season.

Prior to and throughout construction, educational materials will be provided at the Town offices and distributed at local community events in the greater Colchester area to prepare the traveling public for changes in traffic patterns resulting from the construction of the DDI. Educational materials can be found on the project website.

VTrans' comprehensive communications and public outreach program will keep the public informed throughout the life of the project, and beyond, as drivers learn to navigate the new interchange.







## IMPROVED LEFT HAND MOVEMENTS

In a DDI, traffic crosses to the left side of the roadway allowing for ease of access to the interstate by eliminating difficult left turns. With traffic diverted to the left side of the roadway, vehicles making a left onto the interstate entrance ramps do not have to cross oncoming traffic, creating fewer conflict points. The reduction of conflict points reduces potential user collisions, thus improving safety and vehicle throughput.

With left turn movements operating freely within the DDI, the traffic signals no longer require dedicated left turn phasing, improving overall traffic operations at the interchange. Additional benefits include reducing driver discomfort, fuel consumption and lost time.



## COST BENEFITS

In addition to the safety and operational benefits of the DDI, the construction is cost effective. The DDI can be constructed utilizing the existing I-89 bridge structures, eliminating the need to modify or replace them, therefore reducing potential construction costs.

The construction duration of a DDI is much shorter than that of more common interchanges, not only reducing overall cost, but also impacts to the traveling public.

The total cost of Exit 16 DDI Project is \$10 million. This includes construction of the DDI at I-89 Exit 16 and enhancements to five other intersections along US Routes 2/7.



## NON-MOTORIZED TRAVEL AND SAFETY

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities such as sidewalks and shared-use paths along US Routes 2/7 will be constructed within the project area.

Raised islands within the interchange create short crossing distances, which increase overall safety for non-motorized users such as pedestrians and bicyclists. The DDI's channelizing raised islands reduce significantly the number of wrong-way entrances onto the interstate.

To facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movements during construction of the DDI, a temporary path will be constructed early to minimize non-motorized and vehicular conflicts.



## CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

During 2020, activities will consist of utility relocation, ledge removal, and drainage work. During 2021, the roadwork and construction of the DDI will begin. Lane closures and other impacts to traffic should be expected throughout the duration of construction.

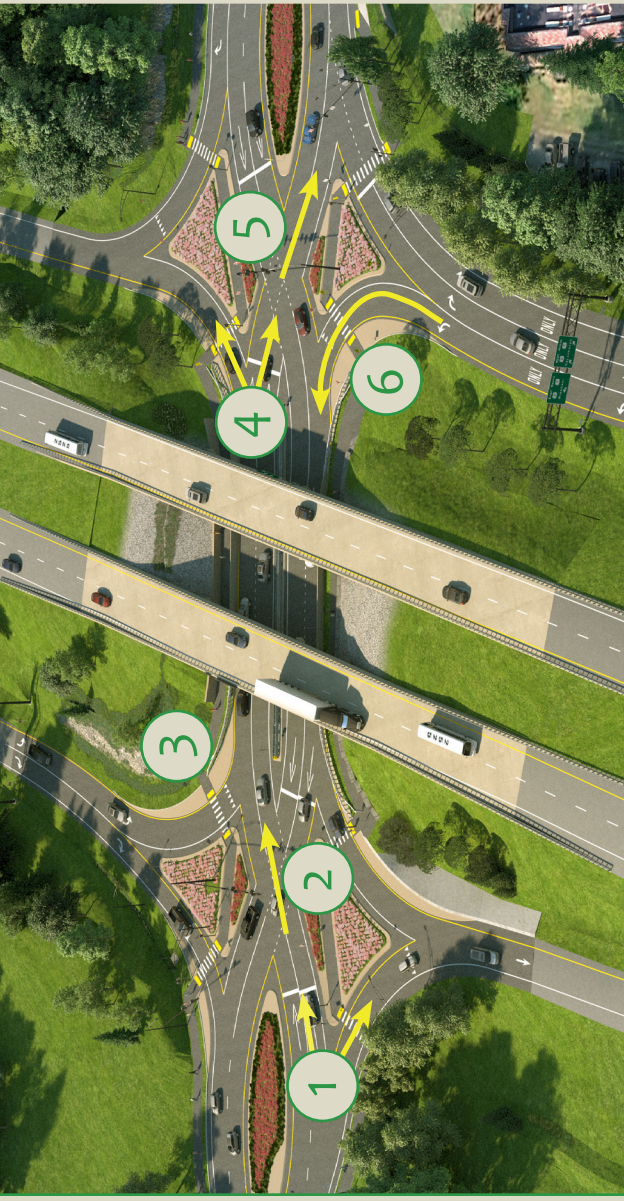
Motorists should be aware that short term I-89 ramp closures may be required depending on the construction activity. No detours are anticipated.

Most of the construction will occur during nighttime hours between 7PM – 6AM. Some construction activity outside of the roadway will be allowed during the day. Attention should be paid throughout the project limits at all times of day.





# HOW TO NAVIGATE A DDI



**1. Drivers approaching the DDI can decide to enter I-89 or stay on US Routes 2/7.**

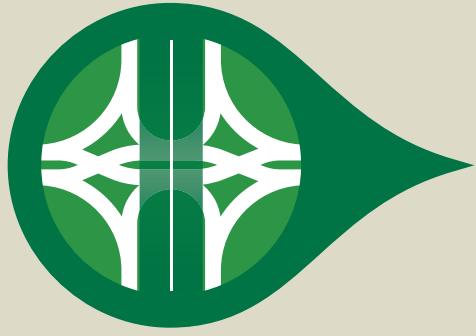
**2. Drivers on US Route 2/7 cross to the left side of the road at the first traffic signal.**

**3. Pedestrians and bicyclists use shared paths and cross safely at crosswalks.**

**4. Drivers again decide to enter I-89 or stay on US Routes 2/7.**

**5. Drivers on US Route 2/7 cross back to the right side of the road at the second traffic signal.**

**6. Drivers exiting I-89 stay to the left when turning left. U-turns to re-enter I-89 are easy for drivers as they stay on the left.**



# Exit 16 DD

Diverging Diamond Interchange