

HAVE A VOICE IN OUR FUTURE



IN THE WHOLE WORLD, THERE IS ONLY ONE
ESSEX JUNCTION

VOTE ON THE CHARTER FOR THE CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION

www.essexjunction.org/independence

VOTING INFORMATION

BY MAIL:

Ballots will be mailed to all active registered voters in the Village of Essex Junction and are expected to arrive in mailboxes by October 13

IN PERSON:

Tuesday, November 2, 2021, @ Essex High School, 2 Educational Drive, 7a.m.-7p.m.

REGISTER TO VOTE

<https://olvr.vermont.gov/>

NEED VOTING ASSISTANCE:

Contact the Clerk's Office

Visit: 81 Main St, M-F 7:30am-4:30pm

Call: 802-879-0413, option 6

Email: clerk@essex.org



PUBLIC HEARING:

Tuesday, October 12, 6:30p.m.

In person:

2 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452

Online:

www.essexjunction.org/independence_

CONTACT INFORMATION



www.essexjunction.org



878-6951



trustees@essexjunction.org



[@essexjunctionvt](https://www.facebook.com/essexjunctionvt)



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In-person Voting happens on Tuesday, November 2, 2021
at Essex High School, 2 Educational Drive from 7 am to 7 pm

"I believe this vote is the most important vote in our recent history. Our separation or merge discussion has been ongoing for decades. Let's put it to rest by having a high voter turnout. I urge everyone to take a moment - do your research, ask questions, then vote. And make sure your friends and neighbors vote."

-- Representative Lori Houghton

VOTE ON THE CHARTER FOR THE CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION

WHAT ARE WE VOTING ON?

Whether or not to adopt a new municipal charter that would transform the Village into an independent city, and no longer be a part of the Town of Essex.

BALLOT QUESTION:

"Article 1: Shall the Village of Essex Junction adopt the proposed Charter for the City of Essex Junction, Vermont dated September 14, 2021"

WHERE CAN I FIND A COPY OF THE CHARTER?

Physical copy: 81 Main Street, 7:30a.m.-4:30p.m., M-F
E-copy: www.essexjunction.org/proposed-charter

WHY ARE WE VOTING ON THIS?

Since 1958 there have been many votes about merging with or separating from the Town of Essex. In both March and April this year, nearly 80% of Villagers voted in favor of merging with the Town and both times nearly 70% of Town outside the Village folks voted against merging. In April, more than 75% of Villagers voted "yes" to a non-binding article asking the Trustees to pursue independence by November if the merger vote failed. The merger vote failed and the Trustees are now presenting an independent City of Essex Junction Charter to Village voters.

WHAT'S STAYING THE SAME?

- Essex Junction maintains its identity
- Continue to enjoy high-quality municipal services
- 5-member governing board
 - Elected at-large
 - 3-year terms
 - President & Vice president elected by board
 - No mayor
 - Trustees at time when Charter takes effect will become City Councilors
- Annual budget presented to voters
 - Voted by Australian ballot
- Maintain quality of life we appreciate

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT?

- Full control of Essex Junction's future
- Our tax dollars will stay and be invested in the city only
- Equal municipality; like other Chittenden County cities and towns
- Planning boards shift from Planning Commission & Zoning Board to Development Review Board & Planning Commission

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS TO GET HERE?

3/2/21 - Vote to merge Village & Town fails by 19 votes
4/13/21 - Vote to merge Village & Town fails by 25 votes
4/13/21 - Advisory article on preparing a plan for separation if merger fails passes with 76% in favor
Starting 4/27/21 - Trustees dedicate first 60-90 minutes of each meeting to work sessions on independence
9/14/21 - Trustees approve Charter for City of Essex Junction
9/28/21 - First public hearing on Charter
10/12/21 - Second public hearing on Charter
11/2/21 - Vote on Charter for City of Essex Junction

**ESSEX JUNCTION
INDEPENDENCE**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IF THE VOTE PASSES?

Nov '21 - Charter approved by Village voters
Jan '22 - Essex Junction legislators introduce bill in VT House of Representatives
Jan – May '22 - Bill taken up and considered by several House & Senate committees
Jan – May '22 - Bill voted on by full House & Senate; signed by Governor
Jul '22 - City is formed
Jul '22 - Jun '23 - Transition year; City hires leadership & prepares for full operations; 2 Lincoln renovations; IT infrastructure put in place
Jul '23 - City is fully operational at 2 Lincoln Street

Note: the legislature can change the timeline and/or the bill could fail somewhere along the way, which would change these projections.

WHAT ARE GOING TO BE THE FINANCIAL IMPACTS?

Note: The information below is an estimation of the budget and tax rates for the current fiscal year (FY2022), had the City of Essex Junction been fully formed and functioning. An actual future budget will be developed by the City Manager, approved by the City Council, and approved by the voters at Annual Meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS SUMMARY

- Village is financially well positioned to become the City of Essex Junction
- Residents can expect the same high level/quality of municipal services and pay less in taxes
- Cost savings will be realized by no longer paying for mirror departments in the Town

FINANCIALS OF TRANSFORMING FROM VILLAGE TO CITY

Taxes on \$300,000 (assessed value) home:	↓ \$195
Tax rate change from .8952 to .8303:	↓ 7.25%
Taxes for municipal operations:	↓ \$514,199
Overall property taxes:	↓ \$738,934
General Fund spending on government:	↓ \$811,337

FY2022 MUNICIPAL TAX IMPACTS

Village home assessed value:	Tax decrease if Village becomes City:
\$250,000	\$(162)
\$300,000	\$(195)
\$350,000	\$(227)
\$400,000	\$(259)
\$450,000	\$(292)

For more financial related information, please visit:
www.essexjunction.org/citybudget

MOST SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS

Budget savings in 12 out of 19 cost centers.

Cost savings are from:

- No longer paying for mirror services in Town
- Departments, employees, and services in the Village already exist
- Not contributing to the Town Capital Fund

Department	\$ Savings
Public Works	\$(327,906)
Recreation	\$(251,817)
Fire	\$(250,958)
Town Capital Reserve Fund	\$(224,419)
Library	\$(180,364)
Community Development	\$(171,710)

MOST SIGNIFICANT COST INCREASES

Budget increases in 5 out of 19 costs centers.

Cost increases are from:

- Paying for police services with Town per capita (48%) vs. grand list (42%)
- Paying for police indirect administrative costs
- Continuing Green Mountain Transit; paying for 81% of current bus service hours that are in the City
- Creating City finance, assessing, and senior services departments; currently Town departments

Department	\$ Increase
Police	\$412,073
County Regional	\$99,041
Finance	\$86,139
Assessing	\$56,855
Senior Activities	\$34,558

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE POLICE?

The Trustees and Selectboard have agreed for the City to contract police services through the Town of Essex. The same police building and employees will continue to provide dispatch, law enforcement, animal control, and community justice services for the Town and City. Police related revenues and expenses are being shared on a per capita basis.

DO WE HAVE THE MEANS/ASSETS TO BE A CITY?

Yes. The Village has been operating since 1893. We have water and sewer, streets, parks, sidewalks, employees, an employee association, a municipal charter, and a municipal plan.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO HIRE?

In converting from a Village to a City, we need to hire three new employees: City Manager, Assistant City Manager/HR Director, and Assistant City Clerk. The new city will have approximately 60 full-time employees.

WHY DO WE HAVE TO BECOME A CITY?

We are currently an incorporated Village within the Town of Essex. While we are a municipality and have the same governing powers as cities and towns, a village is a distinct place within a parent town or city. In order for us to be independent, our only option is to separate from the Town of Essex and become a City. We will be the 4th largest city and 8th largest community in Vermont.

HOW WILL THE CITY CONTINUE TO GROW ITS GRAND LIST?

By no longer being a part of the Town, all taxes paid by Village residents and businesses will be invested in Essex Junction only. We can focus on our economic development, downtown revitalization, and reduce the tax burden for all property owners.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE SENIOR CENTER?

The Senior Center will continue to operate at 2 Lincoln Street.

**For more frequently asked questions and facts,
visit: www.ourvillageourvoices.org/the-facts**

"This vote will impact property taxes, how taxes are spent, the focus of staff and board members, and more for generations. I ask you to please learn more by visiting the Village of Essex Junction's website or asking any of us Village Trustees, and then vote."

-- Village President Andrew Brown