

# Why Separate-and-Share and Not Merge?

## Separation Solves More Problems than Merger

	Separate-and-Share	Merged
<b>Taxes</b>	<p>Town taxes now paid by Villagers can be kept, to maintain Village services and any shared services it desires.</p> <p>The new Town will support its own needs and any shared services, no Village services. The town grand list would be reduced by about 42% but would have half the population to serve.</p> <p>The Town or Village could support, to the degree it chooses, its own Library, Fire, Planning, or Rec Department and share chosen consolidated services.</p>	<p>Taxes now paid only by Villagers will be spread town-wide; TOV taxes expected to rise and Village taxes to decrease.</p> <p>Options being discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same tax rate for all from the start or</li> <li>• Same tax rate for all phased in over several years.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Village's current debt of \$313,560, will remain with Village taxpayers.</p> <p>Functions which resisted consolidation will be brute-force combined by merger.</p>
<b>Representation</b>	<p>The current boundary between the TOV and Village becomes the new boundary between them.</p> <p>Separate governing bodies will represent their respective municipalities, making decisions more closely aligned with their constituencies' local concerns. Local control, a bedrock Vermont value, is enhanced. Representation is now equal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village government becomes an independent entity, governed solely by its own board.</li> <li>• The current TOV becomes an independent entity – the new Town – with the Selectboard serving it alone.</li> </ul>	<p>The current boundary between the Village and TOV disappears, except for debt-repayment required of the Village.</p> <p>A merged government will make decisions, set budgets and create policy that affect a diverse merged town with geography ranging from densely urban to spaciouly rural.</p> <p>If the governing board continues to be elected at-large, fair representation of the entire diversity is highly unlikely.</p> <p>Lopsided representation, a long-term problem with our Selectboard elections and governance, would persist if even one seat were elected at large.</p>
<b>Access</b>	<p>Every resident would have equal access to current resources within their Village or Town and any shared / reciprocal resources that are part of consolidation.</p>	<p>Every resident would have equal access to all resources. Would this put pressure on currently Village-only services? Would dual small spaces need to be combined?</p>
<b>Identity / Character</b>	<p>Each municipality can maintain its own developmental trajectory. For example, the Village can determine how to keep its unique vibe, and the Town can determine how to keep its scenic character.</p>	<p>Merger will create a single entity.</p> <p>Will it have a single identity, and what would that identity be?</p>
<b>Cost Savings</b>	<p>Savings already achieved (\$2 million+) by cooperation show what can be done without merger. These can be sustained by extending or modifying existing consolidation agreements over time.</p> <p>Additional consolidation arrangements for cost sharing opportunities can be made, if both boards determine their benefit to constituents.</p>	<p>Staff and elected officials expect no guaranteed savings, if a merger takes place. There will be no choice in what to consolidate and what to keep separate. All will be one.</p> <p>Right-sizing services for a community of 21,000 would be a logical way to achieve savings from merger. Some services will be at risk for reduction or elimination.</p>