



A Path To Success

Princeton's Consolidation:
A Template To Consider
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Why Is this Important?

- The consolidation of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township is the first major consolidation in the state of New Jersey in almost a century.
- The transition process has uncovered additional savings and we now stand to exceed our initial savings projections in year one by at least 40%. A municipal tax *decrease* is slated for this year's municipal budget.
- At full implementation in 3 years, the consolidation of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township is on track to yield \$4 million in annual savings to the combined municipality.



But, we have a history...

“There is always a sadness in the passing of an era. The old days of the rural Princeton Township and the Borough were good ones which all who knew them remember with pride and affection and the record of which new residents respect. But a nostalgic wish for the past does not bring it back; nor does it make the institutions of the past adequate to the present.”

- **1952, The Consolidation Report of The League of Women Voters of the Princeton Community**



Princeton's History: Consolidation

- 1952 report/1953 Commission – The commission recommended consolidation and it was voted down in both the Borough and Township.
- 1965 – The joint committee formed during this time expressed merits in consolidating but concluded that it would not be practical due to divergent equalized tax rates.
- 1973-1976 – This committee formed and conducted its work with fits and starts due to expected changes in state legislation. It concluded with a recommendation to consolidate, but it was held off as the legislature passed the Municipal Consolidation Act in 1978.
- 1979 – Another commission was formed under the auspices of the Municipal Consolidation Act. They recommended consolidation and it went to voter referendum. It passed in the Township and failed by 33 votes in the Borough.
- 1996 – Another commission was formed and it recommended consolidation. It was voted down in the Borough by a greater margin than the 1979 vote.



How would this time be different?

There were common themes in the previous failed attempts over the last 5 decades:

1. There was a fairly consistent recommendation to consolidate - not only cost savings, but efficiencies in governance and service delivery.
2. Equalization Effects (i.e. potentially divergent tax rates) can be an impediment.
3. The commissions were not integrated with representation from the governing bodies – allowing public officials to skirt the question or undercut the process.
4. No independent consultant was utilized to remove the emotional tensions and provide an objective, data-focused analysis.



...And A New Law in NJ

The Local Option Municipal Consolidation Act (2007) was passed with an eye on the previous failed attempts in the Princetons and provided more flexible ways to consolidate. Some areas of the act to highlight are:

- Apportionment of Debt
- Creation of Advisory Planning Districts
- Creation of Service Districts
- Keep Ordinances In Place (with a 5-year review period)
- Flexible Creation of the Study Commission



Learn From The Past & Position For Success

- Developed a proposal to study consolidation or shared services (police and public works) – Broad Support
- Structured the Commission to have membership from both citizens and elected officials from both municipalities
- Added an independent consultant to remove some of the emotion from the study process
- Conducted the Study under the Local Option Act to allow for additional flexibility (if needed)



Establishing The Commission

- Integration of elected officials and citizen representatives
- Clear Standard Operating Procedure
- Use of Subcommittees to streamline workload and adhere to ambitious timeline
- Transparency
- Initial and Ongoing Public Outreach



Our Study Process

- **Clear Pathway to Completion**
 - Baseline Report (January 2011)
 - Options Report (March)
 - Recommendations (May)
 - Transition Costs Submitte to the State (June)
 - Final Report (June)
 - Approval and Resolution by both governing bodies (July)
 - Vote -- November 8, 2011



The Great Intangible

FEAR!

Fear stops studies before they begin and they derail study efforts if not addressed throughout the study process.




Fear Is an Obstacle

For elected officials and residents!

**BIG BROTHER ALWAYS HAS HIS REASONS,
AND BIG BROTHER IS NEVER SATISFIED.**

DON'T LET BIG BROTHER GET ANY BIGGER



VOTE **NO ON CONSOLIDATION!**

paid for by POHB, 18 Cleveland Lane, Princeton, NJ



Fear

Yes, This is Real

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, AMBITIOUS PUBLIC
OFFICIALS HAVE ALWAYS FAVORED
CONSOLIDATION



SO IF YOU'RE STILL WONDERING WHICH WAY TO VOTE,
JUST ASK ANY CZECHS, POLES, LITHUANIANS, KOREANS,
OR KUWAITIS WHOM YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW WHAT
CONSOLIDATION HAS DONE FOR THEM.)

DON'T ADD PRINCETON BORO TO THE LIST



Fear: 2011

This Time Was No Different

VOTE!!

**or Wednesday morning
we may find ourselves**

CONSOLIDATED

Paid for by FDRR, 12 Charlton Street, Princeton, NJ.



Courage & Transparency Trumps Fear

- Establish a clear, transparent process
- Conduct initial and ongoing outreach
- Use your consultant to help remove the emotions from the study process
- Establish an issue-based campaign for the referendum vote



Summary

The Princeton Model

- Understand Your Community
- Establish A Study Commission with Clear Procedures
- Make Your Process Clear and Transparent
- Engage The Public Proactively
- Have a Credible, Thorough Study Process
- Have a Factual Issue-Driven Campaign



CourageToConnect NJ – Princeton: A Path To Success

QUESTIONS?