

## Why Consolidation is the Worst Option

I am not a mayor, but I am a Princeton resident and taxpayer who has read all three Consolidation Committee reports and the state's DCA report on the two municipalities' merger.

In contrast to the mayors' claims, which I take point by point, what Princeton will get after consolidation is:

***A government accountable to the majority who live a driving lifestyle.*** Boro voters are outvoted 2-1 by Township voters. People who depend on walking, biking, and public transit for their livelihood will lose representation. The Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood will have its voting influence cut nearly in half, even after houses on Birch and Leigh are included in the new municipality.

***Decreased services.*** There will be a reduction of 20% in the number of patrol officers on the street. We will have reduced leaf pickup and large-item collection, and less immediate snow removal in the Boro.

***Bigger and more costly administration.*** A larger government will have more overhead, more employees in middle management (be more expensive!) and be less responsive to citizens than two smaller ones.

***Fewer police to manage emergencies*** Not only will we have fewer patrol officers on the streets at all times---the recommended cut is from the current 10 officers on patrol to 8 officers---, but also dispatch will also be reduced to 2 communications officers.

***Higher taxes.*** See financial analysis on [www.preserveprincetonborough.wordpress.com](http://www.preserveprincetonborough.wordpress.com).

***Bulging budgets due to bigger government.*** Our elected officials believe they will have \$3.16M to spend after consolidation reduces administrative staff and police. But those reductions are unlikely to happen. Even if they do, increased revenue will only be \$1.98M because Township trash collection will be added to the municipal budget. See <http://vimeo.com/29739878>, 1.54 - 1.60 (hr.min) for elected official confusion over how much will be available to "spend".

***Weak negotiating power with the university.*** One-stop shopping for university development projects.

***Disempowered walking neighborhoods*** because suburban concerns dominate our politics. No guaranteed Boro representation on Council, or Zoning, Planning, School or Recreation Boards.

***Planning for the new future government conducted by unelected Commissioners and transition team.*** Why was the road map for a downsized municipal government made by a majority of unelected officials? What public hearings were held on the recommended staff cuts and the organization of the new municipal government? Why is a consultant remaking our government?

*No time to plan for the future or to provide service* in the midst of the large cost and turmoil of restructuring departments and harmonizing procedures necessary for administration, police (require SOPs and standards for evidence room and policing), public works, zoning, building inspection, engineering, and finance. Who will do this work in the midst of recommended Commission layoffs? The turmoil will result in an immediate decline in services.

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