

REPORT OF OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**Borough of Princeton and Township of Princeton
Joint Consolidation / Shared Services Study Commission
June 2011**

Approved June 22, 2011

Commission Members

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The Commission issues this document as its final report and recommendations, in accordance with the requirements of New Jersey law governing the municipal consolidation process. The Commission makes the following primary recommendations:

1. The Borough of Princeton and Township of Princeton should be consolidated into a single municipality, to be called “Princeton.”
2. The referendum on consolidation should occur in November 2011.
3. If consolidation is approved by voters,
 - a. The consolidated municipality would be governed by the Borough form of government, with a directly elected mayor, six (6) member council elected at-large and partisan elections with staggered terms;
 - b. The election of new officers would occur in November 2012, with the installation of those officers occurring on January 1, 2013;
 - c. The consolidated municipality would assume responsibility for existing debt of both municipalities;
 - d. All real and personal property of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township would be transferred to the consolidated municipality;
 - e. The consolidated municipality would implement departmental and facility reorganizations as recommended herein, and by doing so, at full implementation intend to generate \$3.1 million in annual savings, as compared to the combined Borough and Township 2011 budgets;
 - f. A transition team would be appointed in January 2012 by the governing bodies to facilitate implementation of the recommendations contained herein;
 - g. The consolidated municipality would retain both the Township Municipal Building and Borough Hall, enabling the future governing body to make a decision regarding repurposing and/or resale, with the Township Municipal Building becoming the primary center of municipal government;
 - h. The consolidated municipality would retain boundary lines of the former Borough and Township to continue local ordinances that existed prior to consolidation, consistent with the provisions of NJSA 40A:65-26;
 - i. The consolidated municipality would extend municipal solid waste collection to cover its entirety; and
 - j. The governing bodies would, during the transition year, develop a framework for implementation of advisory planning districts in the consolidated municipality.

SAMPLE BALLOT QUESTION:

Shall the Borough of Princeton and Township of Princeton be consolidated into a single municipality to be known as Princeton, and governed under the Borough form of government, with a separately elected Mayor and six (6) member Council to be elected at large with partisan elections and staggered terms of office?

For consolidation Against consolidation

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT:

A vote FOR CONSOLIDATION will join the Borough of Princeton and the Township of Princeton to create one new municipality. The consolidated Princeton will be governed by a Mayor and six (6) Council members. All financial, physical and other assets and liabilities of both current municipalities will be assumed by the newly consolidated municipality. The newly consolidated municipality will be responsible for providing all municipal services to the residents of Princeton. A vote AGAINST CONSOLIDATION will retain the current separate municipalities of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township.

RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE

I. Form of Government

The Commission recommends adoption of the Borough form of government.

Rationale: *The Municipal Consolidation Subcommittee considered the forms of government available to the newly consolidated municipality should the citizens of both Princetons vote by referendum in favor of consolidation. The eight forms of government that could be considered under New Jersey statutes are:*

- *Borough*
- *Township*
- *Optional Municipal Charter Law (OMCL) Council-Manager (different than the 1923 version)*
- *OMCL Mayor-Council*
- *OMCL Mayor-Council Administrator*
- *Commission*
- *Municipal Manager*
- *Special Charter*

At the outset the Subcommittee focused on the criteria that the members believed to be of primary importance in the selection of the form of government. These are:

1. *A directly elected mayor*
2. *Access to the professional staff by all of the elected officials.*

Applying the directly elected mayor screen to the eight possible forms of government led to the discarding of the following forms of government from further consideration as the mayor in these three forms of government is not directly elected, but is elected by the members of the governing body:

Forms of Government Discarded Because Mayor Is Not Directly Elected

- *Township*
- *Commission*
- *Municipal Manager*

Applying the second screen, access to the professional staff by all of the elected officials, led the Subcommittee to discard the three OMCL forms of government, as under these three forms of government the members of the Council are prohibited by NJ Administrative Code from contact with the professional staff. In these forms of government, only the mayor or the administrator is permitted contact with the professional staff. The inability of the elected officials to interface directly with the professional staff is a concept that is foreign to the Princeton community, as both the Borough and the Township forms of government allow the Borough Council and Township Committee members to

interface directly with the professional staff as Commissioners, function as liaisons to departments, advisory committees and commissions.

The OMCL Council-Manager and OMCL Mayor-Council forms permit the use of wards, and all three OMCL forms permit the use of initiatives and referendums. In order to clarify the use of wards, the Subcommittee met with a member of the Mercer County Board of Elections. As a result of this meeting, it was determined that, if a ward form of government was recommended by the Commission, that recommendation must appear in the referendum. However, the boundaries of the wards will not be drawn until after the passage of the referendum by the electorate, and will not be drawn by the consolidated municipality but by a Ward Commission created by the Mercer County Board of Elections. It was explained that the Ward Commission would hold public meetings and seek public input on the boundaries of the wards, and that the Consolidation Commission would have standing as a member of the public to suggest ward boundaries; however, the final decision on the ward boundaries would be made by the Ward Commission. The ward system is mostly used in larger municipalities. For example, it was pointed out that Trenton is the only municipality in Mercer County that uses wards. After further consideration, the Subcommittee concluded that a recommendation for the use of wards in the consolidated Princeton community without the ability to specify the ward boundaries to the electorate was tantamount to putting an inadequately defined question on the form of government before the electorate, and the three ward forms of government were removed from further consideration.

Forms of Government Discarded Because Council members Are Not Permitted Contact With Professional Staff

- *OMCL Mayor-Council Form*
- *OMCL Council-Manager Form*
- *OMCL Mayor-Council-Administrator*

The Subcommittee also considered the possibility of requesting a Special Charter form of government that could combine the desirable features of an elected mayor, access to the professional staff by elected council members along with the possibility of wards, initiative and recall. The Subcommittee did not reach consensus on the desirability of wards, initiative and recall. Those supporting a ward form of government suggested that wards might generate neighborhood cohesiveness and a sense on the part of the ward residents that they are “closer” to their elected official. Those opposing wards suggested that they would be divisive to the consolidated community and that officials elected from a ward might tend to see issues on the basis of impact on their ward as opposed to impact on the entire community. Neither did the Subcommittee reach a consensus on the desirability of initiatives and recall. Those in favor cited the opportunity for greater citizen participation, while those opposed cited the State of California as an example of how initiatives and recalls can disrupt the operations of the government.

However, the Subcommittee found that the most significant disadvantage of the Special Charter form of government was that it would be necessary for the Commission to place a request for the Special Charter form of government on the referendum. Only after the referendum was approved by the citizens of both municipalities could the Commission request legislative action by the NJ Assembly and Senate on the desired parameters of the Special Charter. This led to the Subcommittee discarding the Special Charter form for two reasons. Firstly, the citizens of the Borough and the Township would be asked to approve consolidation assuming a Special Charter form of government, when the legal status of that Special Charter form of government would not yet have been clearly resolved. A second concern was that other issues in the legislature might lead to delays in action on the request.

As a result of the review of the eight forms of government considered as possible for the consolidated municipality, the Subcommittee voted unanimously that the Borough form of government be recommended to the Commission.

The recommendation for the Borough form of government was subsequently unanimously adopted by the Commission.

II. Debt

The Commission recommends combining the Borough and Township's pre-existing debt.

Rationale: *In the event the Commission determines to recommend consolidation of the Borough and Township, the State of New Jersey's Municipal Consolidation Act (NJSA 40:43-66.50) requires that the Commission's report recommending consolidation set forth a plan for handling pre-consolidation debts of both municipalities. Generally speaking, the Commission had two basic options for handling pre-consolidation debt of the Borough and Township. First, all pre-consolidation debt of the Borough and Township could be combined and then spread over all taxpayers in the consolidated municipality regardless of location within the consolidated community. Under this approach, a single uniform tax rate would be applied to all taxpayers, and the debt obligations would be met in shared fashion. Second, the concept of "debt districts" could be used to pay down pre-consolidation debts until they are fully retired. Under this approach, the Borough and Township's pre-consolidation debt would be apportioned within the consolidated community, such that taxpayers in the former Borough would pay off the Borough's pre-consolidation debt, and taxpayers in the former Township would pay off the Township's pre-consolidation debt. Thus, a different tax rate would apply to property owners depending on whether their taxable property is located in the area of the former Borough or the former Township.*

The Finance Subcommittee reviewed the debt options in detail, and found that the current debt burden and principal/interest costs over the next five years were nearly identical in the Borough and Township. As a result, combining pre-consolidation debt would have only a minimal impact on property taxpayers (i.e.

no more than \$10 per year), and would avoid the need to maintain separate tax rates within the consolidated community. With this in mind, the Commission unanimously adopted the recommendation to combine pre-consolidation debt of the Borough and Township.

III. Departmental and Facility Recommendations

(NB: The “models” referenced herein are consistent with those contained in the Commission’s report, *Consolidation Options and Impact for Princeton, NJ, May 2011*)

- A. Governing Body: The Commission’s recommendation of the Borough form of government would result in the reduction of five elected positions, leaving a mayor and a six-member governing body. The Commission recommends the elected positions in a consolidated municipality be compensated at the level currently paid in the Borough for its mayor and governing body. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$61,000.

***Rationale:** The size and composition of the governing body flows from the recommendation of the Commission for the consolidated municipality to use the Borough form of government. NJ State administrative code specifies that the governing body in the Borough form of government shall consist of a directly elected mayor serving a four-year term, and six directly elected council members serving staggered three year terms.*

- B. Administrator: The Commission recommends adoption of Model 2, with the net reduction of 1.0 full-time equivalent position. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$206,000.

***Rationale:** The recommendation for a single Administrator is based on the model of operation in use in both the Borough and Township. In this mode of operation all department heads report to the Administrator who serves as the chief executive officer for the municipality. The Administrator draws on the Office of the Clerk and other staff functions for support as needed.*

- C. Clerk: The Commission recommends adoption of Model 3, with the net reduction of 2.0 full-time equivalent positions. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$199,000.

***Rationale:** The recommendation for a Municipal Clerk, Deputy Clerk and support staff is based on a combination of the models currently in use in the Borough and the Township.*

- D. Finance and Tax Collection: The Commission recommends adoption of Model 3, with the net reduction of 2.0 full-time equivalent positions. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$217,000.

Rationale: *The recommendation to have one CFO, one Assistant CFO and full current support staff is based upon the management and staffing models currently in use in both municipalities.*

- E. **Engineering:** The Commission recommends adoption of Model 2, with the net reduction of 1.0 full-time equivalent position. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$177,000. (See also Item “P” below, regarding integration of Engineering, Public Works, Sewer Operating and Recreation Maintenance functions.)

Rationale: *The recommendation is based on the level of staffing currently used in both municipalities, and the recognition that a merged department could be effectively run by one “chief” engineer. The full support staff-load is retained to handle combined workload. This merged structure would also allow the Engineering Department to be integrated within the cross-departmental restructuring referenced in the Public Works section of this report.*

- F. **Court:** The Commission recommends adoption of Model 3, with the net reduction of 1.0 full-time equivalent position. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$79,000.

Rationale: *The recommendation for one Court Administrator and one part-time Deputy Administrator is based on the level of staffing currently used in both municipalities.*

- G. **Construction:** The Commission recommends adoption of Model 1, with no net reduction in personnel. Any savings attributable to the merger of this function would be passed onto applicants in the form of a revised fee schedule.

Rationale: *The recommendation to retain the combined level of staffing now in use in both municipalities with appropriate adjustment of titles to remove duplicative positions is based on the fact that this office is a fee based service. Any savings from consolidation can be passed on to applicants through a revised fee schedule, and does not flow through to property taxpayers.*

- H. **Affordable Housing:** The Commission recommends the continuation of a single full-time Affordable Housing Coordinator, supplemented by contracted services for marketing and processing of applicant qualifications.

Rationale: *The recommended staffing for the Affordable Housing Office represents a combination of how the Borough and the Township currently operate this function. The recommended staffing is one Coordinator to manage the municipal affordable housing function. The Coordinator will employ contractual services to market the affordable housing and to qualify applicants. The Commission recommends that the Affordable Housing Coordinator will serve as a single, initial point of contact for individuals seeking guidance on affordable housing opportunities for purchase or rent. If the municipality does not have its own program applicable to an individual's needs, the Coordinator will provide information and direct the individual to the appropriate resource(s).*

- I. Emergency Management: The Commission recommends the continuation of a single full-time Emergency Management Coordinator reporting to the Administrator, providing a single point for the planning and coordination of all emergency response services.

***Rationale:** The Borough currently has a Director of Emergency Management. The Emergency Management function in the Township is embedded in the Township Police Department. For several years it has been realized that emergencies do not respect geographic or political boundaries and municipal consolidation provides the opportunity for a single point of coordination of emergency services for the Princeton municipality. Based on the model in use in the Borough and in many other communities, the Commission believes that an Emergency Management Coordinator, reporting to the Administrator, provides for the most effective way of delivering services in the event of an emergency.*

- J. Fire Inspection: The Commission makes no formal staffing recommendation for Fire Inspection, except to note that the program should continue to be designed in such a way that the fee schedule covers the full costs of providing the service. Any associated savings would be passed onto applicants in the form of a revised fee schedule.

***Rationale:** The Office of Fire Inspection is in the process of being consolidated between the two municipalities. Fire Inspection is a fee based service. Any savings realized by consolidation can be passed on to owners of the properties that are inspected.*

- K. Tax Assessment: The Commission recommends adoption of Model 2, with the net reduction of a 0.5 full-time equivalent position. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$17,000.

***Rationale:** The Tax Assessor is currently shared between the two municipalities but is in the process of being consolidated as a shared service. The reduction of one part-time Assistant Assessor will provide for staffing that is consistent with the level of staffing currently provided by each individual municipality and should be sufficient to handle the number of property tax files in the consolidated municipality.*

- L. Zoning and Historic Preservation: The Commission recommends adoption of Model 1 initially, transitioning to Model 2 over the first two years. Although the model produces operational efficiencies – allowing certain staff positions to return to other primary functions – there are no associated recurring annual savings.

***Rationale:** Staffing of one full-time Zoning and Historic Preservation Official and a Deputy, clerical staff. Additional part-time staff that now supports Zoning and Historic Preservation would be re-allocated to their “home” departments.*

- M. Information Technology: The Commission recommends the continuation of a single full-time Director of Information Technology, with the utilization of outside vendor support as necessary.

Rationale: *The Township model of a full-time Director of Information Technology is superior in terms of providing timely response to IT problems when compared to the model of outsourcing all IT functions.*

- N. **Police (Organizational):** The Commission recommends a combined Princeton Police Department of fifty-one (51) sworn personnel. The Commission recommends this implementation be staged over time, such that after a period of initial consolidation to ensure that there is not a lapse in police services, and while others are working to merge police resources, the governing body should move aggressively to implement the target recommendation of 51 sworn personnel as soon as reasonably and safely as possible. This may take as much as three years, but could occur sooner. The exact timing should be determined by the progress of the consolidation and direction coming from the governing body. At full implementation, this will result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$2.1 million.

In the event municipal consolidation is not approved, the Commission recommends the governing bodies of the Borough and Township pursue police as a jointly-provided shared service.

Rationale: *Both municipal police departments in Princeton are similar in many ways: they each have 30 sworn police officers; they have similar resources, technology, and capabilities; they interact with, support, and are supported by the Princeton University Department of Public Safety; they know the local territory; they each provide emergency dispatch services; and their calls-for-service volumes are nearly identical. Most importantly, they are both highly regarded for the quality of police services they provide to the community. Substantial contributions have been made by both departments to the safety and quality of life experienced by all Princetonians.*

The differences between them are relatively minor; the Borough police responsibility is commensurate with that of a higher density urban/commercial environment, plus they respond to more incidents on the University campus. The Township police activity is suburban in nature and it includes larger patrol areas. However, each police department can, and routinely does, support and backup the other department demonstrating their knowledge and capability to respond in each other's territories.

A major distinction between police departments and other general government municipal departments is the fact that they play an integral role in the larger criminal justice process and the national law enforcement network. Accordingly, they are the "first" of the first responders to mobilize when an emergency occurs or when a threat enters into our town. Another differentiator is that the police departments must adhere to a dual line of accountability – one path is up to the Mercer County prosecutor for law enforcement authority and compliance, and the other path is to their respective local governing bodies for policy direction and police service delivery.

From a cost perspective, police services represent the department with the single-largest component of each municipality's respective budget. This is primarily because the police department is the only municipal department that is staffed on a 24 x 7 x 365 basis. Nearly 90% of this cost comes from salaries and benefits alone. The combined cost of police services for both the Township and Borough, including emergency dispatch, is approximately \$8M/year.

For these reasons, which span commonalities, differences, uniqueness, and costs, the process followed for analyzing consolidation of the police departments required a broader spectrum of discussion, participation, and considerations than was done for other general government municipal departments.

Early in the consolidation analysis process, the Commission established a goal to ensure that any changes to the structure of the police departments must result in "as good or better police services without disruption of service." In pursuit of this goal, the police subcommittee established broad participation with both police chiefs at the onset, and included their sworn command and technical teams in the form of a Police Task Force. The purpose of the Police Task Force was two-fold – first it was to inform the subcommittee on current police services, structures, operations and challenges, and second, to contribute their police knowledge and experience in the form of ideas, requirements, and potential organizational models that could be considered in the development of a new consolidated police force.

A rather lengthy process ensued that included the discussion and analysis of the following: calls-for service data; historical crime reports; law enforcement interactions with Princeton University and surrounding institutions; technical infrastructures; and the development and review of several consolidated police organizational models. Many of the police organizational models were created and submitted individually by each police department so that the subcommittee could understand their viewpoints and perspectives, in addition to CGR's.

Consolidation essentially means the transformation of two individual police departments into one using selected elements from each police organization. Given the fact that both departments must provide non-stop police service to the community before, during, and after transformation, the painstaking work that needs to be performed to merge the departments must be done transparently and in a manner that does not disrupt the delivery of effective police services.

After a thorough analysis of all of these issues and situations, the Commission has determined that a carefully planned transitional approach is required to adhere to our goal of "as good or better police services without disruption of service" during and after consolidation.

After an initial period of detailed transition planning, the first major step is to combine the departments into a new successor department called The Princeton Police Department, with the Borough Police and Township Police departments

becoming predecessor agencies. This will allow for the careful disposition of existing cases and investigations post-consolidation, and it will allow for a period of time to merge, phase-out, re-locate, and optimize operations.

Initially, the police subcommittee recommends that the future governing body take steps to implement Police Model 2, as set forth in the “Consolidation Options and Impacts for Princeton, NJ” report beginning on page 39. Model 2, a “headcount neutral” model initially developed by the Township PD for the subcommittee’s consideration, preserves current employee rank within a consolidated department. The new police force will include the full contingent of 60 total sworn officers, with a more cost-effective administrative command level, thereby ensuring a strong patrol presence with the added benefit of increased community and traffic enforcement services previously trimmed due to budget cuts. This approach also ensures adequate supervisory levels for normal police operations, while at the same time, devoting significant effort to various tasks associated with combining two separate police environments into one efficient and cost effective operation under one roof.

During this timeframe, steps will also be taken to standardize on various police technologies for consistency and to enhance the existing Township dispatch center for conversion into a consolidated dispatch center. A consolidated dispatch center will provide better 9-1-1 dispatch services to the community through improved staffing coverage, reduced call transfer, centralized dispatch planning and management, and consistent telecommunications and radio communications infrastructures.

*The Commission is confident that the new police department can be systematically scaled back to Models 3 and 4, resulting in a target police force of 51 total police officers through the on-going process of deployment optimization and attrition over a two to three-year period. This will result in a forecasted annual cost savings of \$2.1M, including cost savings attributed to civilian support levels. These cost savings do not include the \$79,000 in savings described above in section F for court administration. **Note: For a detailed organizational chart depicting the fully-implemented consolidated police department, refer to the Options Report, p 44.***

The service and cost benefits attributable to the creation of a consolidated police department could continue to exist even if full municipal consolidation is not approved by the governing bodies or the voters. A single, consolidated police department may still be implemented and delivered to the Borough and Township as a shared service. However, both police departments have highlighted the importance of establishing an effective governance structure from the onset to prevent the situation where the police chief is reporting to two masters. The police subcommittee has recommended that both governing bodies explore the full legal and operational ramifications associated with the creation of a “Police Authority” as a potential governance structure -- one that is financially fair to both municipalities and could meet reporting and policy guidance needs.

- O. Police (Facilities): The Commission recommends that a combined Princeton Police Department, including the emergency dispatch operations, be housed in the Township Municipal Building.

Rationale: *The Police Task Force and Subcommittee reviewed current facilities and provided an assessment of both police department buildings for their capacity to house a larger police contingent. Areas of particular interest were locker room storage, property/evidence room storage, administrative and investigative office space, and outdoor parking. This assessment also included an assessment of the technical infrastructure and dispatch console furniture that would be required for consolidated emergency dispatch.*

The existing Borough facility is very tight for office and storage space, has no excess capacity, is quite outdated, and is in need of a major upgrade of their technical infrastructure. For these reasons, the Borough facility was quickly ruled out as a potential location for a combined police department.

Fortunately, the Township Municipal facility was built within the last ten years and was specifically designed to include the various operational and technical functions required of a police department. It currently has the additional space within its floor plan to absorb a larger police force with associated equipment and storage requirements. One reason for this is that it was designed during a time when the Township police department had a larger number of police officers. Also, since the police department is a 24 x 7 operation, with most of the department devoted to patrol, not all of the police personnel are on duty and in the building at the same time.

While modifications to the existing Township facility space will need to occur, primarily in the areas of property/evidence storage, locker rooms, office furniture, and dispatch area, the existing floor plan of the Township building can be modified and/or rearranged to support the combined police force. For these reasons, the Township Municipal building has been selected to house the combined Princeton Police Department. In addition, the existing Township dispatch area and technology should be enhanced accordingly to absorb the additional call-for-service workload and staffing level.

- P. Public Works (Organizational): The Commission recommends Model 4, an integrated model that links Engineering, Public Works, Recreation Maintenance and Sewer Operating functions into a unified department. This would result in recurring annual savings of approximately \$442,000.

Rationale: *The Public Works Subcommittee began its study of the public works services in the Borough and Township by touring the facilities used by each DPW and the Princeton Sewer Operating Committee - these are the Valley Road and John Street facilities in the Township, the Harrison Street facility in the Borough, and the River Road facility used by PSOC. We were accompanied by the two DPW Superintendents; the Manager/Engineer of the PSOC/ acting Borough*

Engineer; and the Township Engineer, along with representatives of CGR. The tour was followed by a meeting between all of these individuals and other members of the DPW staffs who gave us a description of the work each department does and how it is organized. As we began our analysis, we were informed by the data assembled by CGR and numerous discussions CGR conducted with Engineering, PSOC and DPW staff. As we focused on specific recommendations subcommittee members met to discuss discrete issues with the Superintendents, the PSOC Manager/Engineer, the newly-hired Borough Engineer and the Township Engineer on multiple occasions. In addition, subcommittee members and CGR had several meetings and discussions with staff of the Joint Recreation Department and members of the subcommittee met with members of the Recreation Management Committee.

The ultimate subcommittee recommendation that a consolidated Princeton adopt Model 4 was informed by input from the Community Engagement Subcommittee's work with the citizens of the two communities. With respect to Public Works, the uniform sentiment was that existing levels of service should not be reduced. Residents and the business community are pleased with the specific services provided and with the responsiveness of the existing public works departments. The subcommittee heard, however, many suggestions that greater efficiencies could be achieved if the departments operated as one, particularly with respect to snow plowing and repaving projects on roads that span the municipal boundaries.

We found that in both municipalities the engineering department has an oversight role with respect to public works operations and the operations of the joint Sewer Operating Committee. Both DPWs and the PSOC cooperate, and even share some facilities. Each department assists the others when asked. This cooperation extends to the maintenance functions performed by the joint Recreation Department - currently, Recreation maintenance staff assist DPW with snow removal. Nevertheless, both Recreation and DPW staff mentioned the inefficiency generated by the current division of park maintenance functions - Recreation now maintains the active recreation portions of parks, while DPW maintains the remaining acreage.

An analysis of the work performed by each DPW revealed some differences and many similarities - in the Borough, the downtown has specific needs that differ from those in the residential areas further from the center; in the Township, the road network is greater and occupies a larger proportion of DPW resources. It was apparent that this dichotomy would continue in a consolidated community, and therefore any merged organization must be structured to address these differing priorities.

The recommended model brings related functions together in an integrated department. A single Chief Engineer has overall supervision of engineering, public works and sewer operating departments. Public Works is headed by a single superintendent who is assisted by two assistant superintendents - one devoted to the downtown who oversees all downtown maintenance activity as well

*as parking operations - and one devoted to roads and parks. The current recreation maintenance functions are incorporated within public works under a foreman for grounds and open space, so that both active and passive park maintenance can be coordinated. This integrated model, illustrated at page 56 of the Options Report, will allow for increased flexibility for allocation of staff on an operational basis across different divisions. With increased cross-training, greater resources can be brought to bear on specific tasks as needs change over the course of the year. It is also expected that the additional resources and expertise of the integrated organization will allow more tasks to be performed "in-house," resulting in savings on tasks the municipalities currently must contract out. We note that of the \$442,000 in estimated annual savings, \$160,000 derives from the elimination of a contract for certain PSOC inspections - this savings will be realized in a reduction of PSOC fees, rather than in a reduction of property tax revenue. **Note: For a detailed organizational chart depicting the fully-implemented consolidated public works department, refer to the Options Report, p 56.***

During the transition year of 2012, the subcommittee recommends that the municipalities form a joint task force comprising managerial staff from both engineering departments, both public works departments, recreation, and the sewer operating committee in order to work out the details of the new organizational structure and to determine how a unified department will address specific needs, for example, insuring that there is adequate depth of staff trained to perform specialized functions, such as pool maintenance or pump station maintenance; and to put a process in place to insure that time-sensitive work requirements are promptly addressed.

Public Works (Facilities): *The Subcommittee further recommends that the future governing body (or bodies) take steps to implement Facilities Model 4, as set forth in the Options Report at page 62. The model sets forth a staged approach to housing merged Public Works operations. Initially, current Public Works, Sewer Operating Committee and Recreation facilities would continue to be relied upon, although steps would be taken to begin transitioning out of both Valley Road and John Street. River Road would assume additional Public Works operations and storage over time, with Harrison Street being retained as a light-use facility focused primarily on servicing the Downtown area. These steps will assist in merging the currently dispersed operations into a cohesive and functional whole, and are necessary to address long-recognized deficiencies in the public works facilities of both Borough and Township.*

As currently constituted, Township Public Works administration is based in a trailer located at the Valley Road site, while Borough administration is at Harrison Street. Also at Valley Road is an outmoded and undersized structure used to perform maintenance on township vehicles, though the bays are too small to accommodate larger equipment. Valley Road also has diesel and gasoline fueling facilities and a limited amount of paved area used for vehicle storage. The Borough's Harrison Road site contains a larger building used for administration,

some equipment storage and vehicle maintenance; it is in better condition than the Valley Road building, and provides a facility for the Borough DPW to wash vehicles. There is limited outdoor space for vehicle storage. In deference to neighboring residences, Borough police vehicles are fueled at a site on the Princeton University campus at an average cost in 2010 of 9.7% more than Township gasoline costs. The Township's John Street site houses salt and sand storage domes which are used by both DPWs, the PSOC and the Regional School District. This site also houses a trailer used for workers lockers and provides open air parking for DPW vehicles. In common with Harrison Street, this site adjoins a residential area as well as a school and park. PSOC operates from River Road, where a large tract of municipally owned land adjoins the Stony Brook Millstone Sewerage Treatment facility. The structures available to PSOC are also seriously outdated.

Both municipal governing bodies have acknowledged the need for improved public works facilities for well over a decade, and in 2009 jointly commissioned a study by USA Architects of a combined facility located at River Road. Unfortunately, the cost of the proposed designs (between \$26 and \$35 million, depending on the options selected) was prohibitive, and neither municipality has been able to move forward to address the need for improved facilities. Accordingly, the subcommittee asked Borough and Township Engineering and Public Works staff to reexamine the USA report and determine if there is a way to address the most pressing facility needs at a more modest cost. Their analysis estimates that the cost of a less ambitious program to develop only the key elements necessary could be accomplished in phases over a five year period at a total cost of \$11 million (including cost escalation in future years and contingency costs). The first element of this would be construction of an unheated storage building to enable indoor storage of public works equipment. Indoor storage will substantially extend the useful life of this costly equipment, which now sits outside in all weather conditions.

The determination of how to resolve the public works facilities needs of the Princetons (or Princeton, in the event of consolidation) must be made by future governing bodies (or body), and are outside the term or scope of this Commission. Nevertheless, the subcommittee's report would be incomplete if we failed to bring this facet of our study to the attention of the community, as it will have to be addressed as we go forward, whether or not voters choose to consolidate the two municipalities.

- Q. **General Facilities:** The Commission recommends retention of both the Township Municipal Building and Borough Hall, enabling the future governing body to make a decision regarding repurposing and/or resale. The Township Municipal Building would become the primary center of municipal government.

Rationale: *The Princeton Township municipal building is larger and more modern than Princeton Borough Hall. For these reasons it is recommended that the Township building will become the center of municipal government. However,*

it is recommended that both municipal buildings be retained as it will be necessary to house some municipal functions in the current Borough Hall. After consolidation is realized, it is possible that there may be surplus space in municipal facilities. The governing body of the consolidated municipality will then be in a position to make any necessary decisions regarding the repurposing or disposition of any surplus space.

- R. Codes and Ordinances: Exercising authority provided under NJSA 40A:65-26, the Commission recommends the boundary lines of the former Borough and Township to continue local ordinances that existed prior to consolidation, with the need for any differences being reviewed by the governing body at least every five years, per the following statutory language in NJSA 40A:65-26: “*The need for any such differentiation shall be reviewed by the governing body at least every five years and shall only be continued upon the affirmative vote of the full membership of the governing body, and if such continuance fails, the governing body shall then adopt uniform policies for the entire area.*”

Rationale: *The recommendation is based on the recognition that, in certain cases, the Borough and Township currently have different codes/ordinances. These codes and ordinances reflect the particular needs/desires of certain areas of both municipalities. Under the Local Option Municipal Consolidation law, flexibility is provided to retain those codes/ordinances in the event of consolidation. The Commission endorses that option. Further, the Commission encourages the governing body of a consolidated Princeton to comply with the statutory review requirements sooner than the five-year timeframe.*

- S. Solid Waste Collection: The Commission recommends the extension of municipal solid waste collection to the entire consolidated municipality.

Rationale: *The recommendation is based on the Commission’s desire to provide for a consistent level of solid waste collection service throughout the entirety of a consolidated Princeton. The financial impact of this recommendation has been fully accounted for in the Commission’s analysis.*

- T. Advisory Planning Districts: The Commission recommends that during the transition year (*i.e.* between an affirmative referendum for consolidation and installation of the new elected officers), the governing bodies develop a framework for implementation of advisory planning districts in the consolidated municipality.

Rationale: *One central concern about consolidation is the prospect that some residents of either the Borough or Township have expressed concern that they might find that their voice in, or control and influence over, the decision-making process is diminished in a consolidated municipality. Of particular concern is that government representatives, who live in one of the former municipalities will not fully appreciate the concerns, or advocate for the priorities, of residents in the other former municipality. The issue is especially acute when it involves land use projects that raise the prospect of altering the character of neighborhoods.*

The Local Option Municipal Consolidation (LOMC) law seeks to offer a remedy to the prospective loss of voice, control or influence by providing for the creation of advisory planning districts. Under the LOMC, found at NJSA 40A:65-26(b)(4), consolidation study may consider

the use of advisory planning districts, comprised of residents living in the former territories of each former municipality, to provide advice to the planning board and the zoning board of adjustment on applications and master plan changes affecting those areas.

In order to enhance neighborhood safeguards in a consolidated Princeton, the Commission suggests the possible use of local ordinances to create advisory planning districts with greater structural flexibility than that provided by the LOMC, which does not permit neighborhoods that transcend municipal boundaries to form such districts.

Based on the discussion with members of the Commission, staff from Princeton Borough, Princeton Township and the Regional Planning Board, as well as community members, advisory planning districts should review major site plans and use variance applications for development projects within the boundaries of the advisory planning district. While a more expansive role for advisory planning districts has been considered – to include, for example, review of all variance and site plan applications – the general consensus of those consulted indicates that such powers would be over-inclusive, and unnecessarily burden applicants and staff. Moreover, the concern has been raised that the creation of advisory planning districts should not become a new, overly burdensome layer of bureaucracy.

In addition to making recommendations for changes to the Master Plan, as those changes relate to the district (a power specifically provided by the LOMC), it is recommended that advisory planning districts be empowered with the responsibility to review and make recommendations for improvements and amendments to zoning ordinances applicable to the district.

The teeth of advisory planning districts should include the LOMC's requirement that "official boards shall be required to respond, at a public meeting, to each suggestion made by an advisory planning district." NJSA 40A:65-26(b)(4). Under this provision, comments made by advisory planning districts regarding development applications require not only a review, but also an articulation of the zoning or planning board responses to the comments – thus ensuring that such comments are considered. In the zoning board of adjustment context, for example, responses to recommendations, questions, and concerns raised by advisory planning districts can be included in the Findings of Fact required for applications made before the zoning board.

As a practical matter, the requirement that zoning and planning boards respond to comments from advisory planning districts may encourage developers to affirmatively seek the cooperation and input from advisory planning district residents as part of their development projects. The growing trend of developers seeking to accommodate resident concerns as part of the review conducted by the Borough's Historic Preservation Review Committee and the Township's Historic Preservation Commission for applications related to the respective municipal historic districts, before developers appear before the zoning or planning boards, is evidence that requiring such review works.