

Consolidation Implementation Plan Towns of Clifton and Fine

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Prepared for:

Town of Clifton and Town of Fine Efficiency/Consolidation Study Committee

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the Consolidation Implementation Plan for the Town of Clifton and the Town of Fine that was developed by the Clifton-Fine Efficiency/Consolidation Study Committee. The Plan is the culmination of an eighteen month study that the Towns undertook to determine the impacts of consolidation on tax rates and service delivery. The purpose of this Consolidation Implementation Plan is to summarize the actions that will take place to move forward with Town Consolidation and to provide details on how services, presently provided by the two Towns, will continue after consolidation. The details of how these services will continue after consolidation are explained in the Alternatives Report. This Plan will be submitted to the Clifton and Fine Town boards for adoption at their August 2016 board meetings. If the Consolidation Implementation Plan is approved by the Town boards, the Towns will put forth a proposition to vote on whether or not to consolidate. If the proposition is approved by a majority of voters in each of the two Towns, then the Towns of Clifton and Fine will consolidate, effective January 1, 2020 at 12:00 a.m.

This report is being funded by and prepared in accordance with the New York State Department of State (DOS) Work Plan requirements, as outlined in Contract No. T00001GG with the Town of Clifton. The Department of State provides funding of up to \$50,000 (90% grant, 10% municipal share) per community for activities associated with the implementation of consolidation. This Consolidation Implementation Plan identifies items that are recommended for completion prior to, or in conjunction with, consolidation and the estimated costs of completion.

The following sections of the Consolidation Plan follow the requirements outlined in the Government Reorganization and Citizen Empowerment Act (NYS Department of State, 3/21/10).

2. ELEMENTS OF PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION AGREEMENT

A) NAME OF EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO BE CONSOLIDATED

The Town of Clifton and the Town of Fine would consolidate into one town.

B) NAME OF PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The name of the new proposed consolidated town will be “Clifton-Fine”.

C) RIGHTS, DUTIES & OBLIGATION OF PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED TOWN

There will be no change to the rights, duties, and obligations of the consolidated local government entity. The proposed consolidated Town of Clifton-Fine shall assume the rights, duties and obligations of the former Towns of Clifton and Fine. These duties shall include contracting with existing special districts for fire, water and sewer services.

Any contracts specific to either town will be amended to be an agreement with the new town.

D) TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES

The Town of Clifton and the Town of Fine are adjacent to each other. The two towns are located in St. Lawrence County and within the Adirondack Park. The combined Town would retain the same boundaries of the two Towns. See Figure 1 for a map showing the Town boundaries lines.

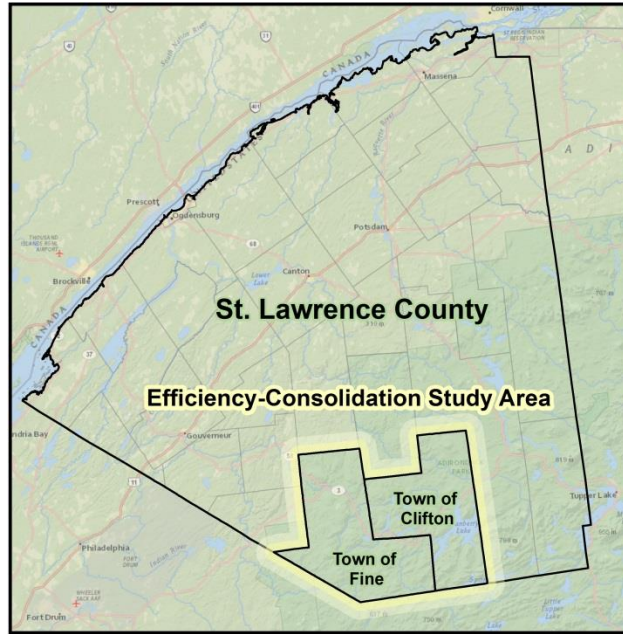


Figure 1 - Town of Clifton and Town of Fine Location and Boundaries

E) TYPE AND/OR CLASS OF THE NEW CONSOLIDATED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The new Town of Clifton-Fine will be a town of the second class. New York State towns are classified as either first or second class towns based on population (see NYS Town Law, Section 10, for exceptions). Towns of the second class have populations less than 10,000.

F) GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION OF PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED TOWN

The organization will be consistent with NYS Town Law, NYS General Municipal Law, the Constitution of the State of New York, and will comply with all rules, regulations and laws of the State of New York. The consolidated Town will organize its government in the same manner as each of the current Towns. The tables below outline the positions and the number of employees. (FT = full time; PT = part time)

Table 1 - Elected Officials

Elected Position	# of Employees
Supervisor	1 PT
Legislative Board Member	4 PT
Clerk	1 FT
Town Justice	1 PT
Highway Superintendent	1 FT

Table 2 - Appointed Officials and Public Employees

Appointed Position	# of Employees
Assistant Town Clerk	1 PT
Assessor	1 PT
Board of Assessment Review	3 PT
Bookkeeper	1 FT, 1 PT
Code Enforcement	1 PT
Court Clerk	1 PT
Attorney	1 PT
Historian	1 PT
Buildings	1 PT
Community Action Coordinator	1 PT
Dog Control	1 PT
Insect Control	2 PT
Highway Employees	11 FT

Town officials will be elected during the general election held prior to consolidation (i.e., November 11, 2019) and will take office on January 1, 2020. The new Town Board will appoint staff to fill other positions at their organization meeting that will be held on January 1, 2020.

G) FISCAL ESTIMATE OF THE COSTS OF AND SAVINGS REALIZED FROM CONSOLIDATION

If the two towns were to consolidate, there would be significant savings achieved from the reduction of wages, benefits, and contractual expenses. The Alternatives Report defines the recommendations for implementation of the consolidated Town and provides a detailed breakdown of savings.

Savings would be achieved in wages and benefits with the reduction of paid elected Town officials and appointed employees. The total annual wages and benefit savings resulting from consolidation are estimated to be \$161,086.

The total annual contractual savings resulting from consolidation are estimated to be \$21,997. These savings are primarily associated with the consolidation of software systems, expenses related to staff travel and training, and municipal association dues and fees.

The Department of State provides grant funding to municipalities for activities associated with consolidation. According to DOS, the two towns could each have expenses totaling \$55,555, for a total of \$111,110 in consolidation activity costs. DOS would pay up to \$50,000 to each municipality, for a total grant of \$100,000. The following items have been identified for inclusion in Town Consolidation Implementation Grants. These items will not impact Town tax rates as they will be paid for with NYS Department of State grant funds:

- 1) Comprehensive Plan: The Towns do not have a Comprehensive Plan. The estimated cost to develop a Comprehensive Plan is \$10,000.
- 2) IT Integration: The estimated cost to integrate the Town computers, software, printers and other technology is \$10,000.
- 3) Records Management: The Towns would like to consolidate their records. The estimated cost to complete a records management inventory and records consolidation project is \$15,000.
- 4) Local Law Revisions: The estimated cost to complete a detailed review of these laws and to develop new or amended Town laws is \$10,000.

- 5) Asset Management Plan: The Towns would like to develop comprehensive asset management plans for the water, sewer and other Town-owned infrastructure. These plans would include a detailed asset inventory, asset life, recommended preventive maintenance tasks and frequencies of maintenance, and recommendations for annual contribution to replacement reserves. The estimated cost to complete asset management plans for the Town’s infrastructure is \$10,000.
- 6) Building modifications to new combined Town Offices and Clifton Community Center: With the relocation of offices from the Clifton Community Center to the Town of Fine municipal offices and the repurposing of space at the Clifton Community Center, building modifications will be required. A detailed assessment will need to be completed to determine the scope of the improvements and to secure additional funding to complete the upgrades. The remaining project budget of \$56,110 will be used for engineering to complete building improvements, and other related building improvement expenses.

The table below summarizes items to be considered for implementation grants:

Table 3 – Clifton-Fine Implementation Grant Activities & Budget

Clifton-Fine Implementation Grant Activities	Clifton	Fine
Comprehensive Plan	\$5,000	\$5,000
IT Integration	\$5,000	\$5,000
Records Management:	\$7,500	\$7,500
Local Law Review	\$5,000	\$5,000
Asset Management Plan	\$5,000	\$5,000
Building Modifications	\$28,055	\$28,055
Totals	\$55,555	\$55,555

Additionally, the Towns will need to conduct a revaluation of real property prior to consolidation to reconcile differences in assessments that currently exist in the two Towns. There is potential grant funding available to cover the costs of the revaluation, which is estimated to be \$200,000. Funding may be available from the Local Government Efficiency Program or the Municipal Restructuring Fund.

H) EACH TOWN'S ASSETS

- 1) Upon consolidation, title to real property presently owned by the individual Towns will be transferred to the new Town. Town property consists of the following parcels:

Table 4 – Town of Clifton-Owned Real Property			
Parcel ID	Property Class	Full Market Value¹	Use
203.082-2-1	822 - Water Supply	\$70,652	Newton Falls Water District
204.000-1-1.3	720 - Mine/Quarry	\$21,196	Clifton, Gravel Pit
205.071-1-31	311 - Residential Vacant Land	\$5,000	Clifton, Vacant
205.071-1-32	311 - Residential Vacant Land	\$4,130	Clifton, Vacant
205.071-1-9	652 - Government Buildings	\$200,978	Clifton, Library and Community Center
205.071-2-17	560 - Improved Beach	\$166,304	Clifton, Beach
214.026-2-1	651 - Highway Garage	\$200,435	Clifton, Hwy Garage
214.026-5-37	311 - Residential Vacant Land	\$2,283	Clifton, Vacant
214.026-6-14	822 - Water Supply	\$81,522	Newton Falls Water District
224.000-2-10	682 - Recreational Facility	\$34,130	Clifton, Golf Course
224.000-2-9	323 - Vacant Rural	\$6,304	Clifton, Golf Course
224.031-2-3	822 - Water Supply	\$40,761	Clifton, Woodhaven Water District
Town of Fine-Owned Real Property			
202.000-2-49	311 - Residential Vacant Land	\$3,704	Fine, Cemetery
202.000-3-4.1	852 - Landfill	\$1,358	Fine, Former Landfill
202.029-2-23	652 - Government Buildings	\$190,247	Fine, Town Hall
202.040-2-2	720 - Mine/Quarry	\$7,037	Fine, Gravel Pit
203.000-1-4	910 - Private Forest	\$14,691	Fine, Griffin Memorial Forest
213.000-2-44	695 - Cemetery	\$3,704	Fine, Cemetery
213.000-3-21	720 - Mine/Quarry	\$4,691	Fine, Gravel Pit
213.000-5-3	720 - Mine/Quarry	\$13,827	Fine, Gravel Pit
213.051-1-8	311 - Residential Vacant Land	\$15,062	Fine, Park
213.067-1-1	651 - Highway Garage	\$876,543	Fine, Highway Garage
224.000-1-5	682 - Recreation Facility	\$1,840,494	Clifton & Fine, Arena and Golf Course
224.021-1-5	652 - Government Buildings	\$260,123	Fine, Municipal Building

¹ Full Market Value is computed by dividing the assessed value by the equalization rates for the respective towns (i.e., 92% for the Town of Clifton and 81% for the Town of Fine).

224.030-1-2	682 - Recreation Facility	\$81,852	Fine, Save our Schoolhouse
224.030-2-21	822 - Water Supply	\$31,481	Fine, Water Supply
224.030-2-23	652 - Government Buildings	\$414,938	Fine, Community Center
225.072-1-16	314 - Rural Vacant <10 acres	\$988	Fine, Vacant
225.072-8-2	682 - Recreation Facility	\$4,321	Fine, Park
225.072-8-3	853 - Sewage	\$125,926	Fine, Wastewater Treatment Plant
225.072-8-4	853 - Sewage	\$6,296	Fine, Wastewater Treatment Plant

2) Personal property and other fixed assets owned by the individual Towns at the time of consolidation will become the property of the new Town. Personal property includes vehicles, equipment, office furniture, computers, and any other item commonly considered to be personal property.

I) EACH TOWN'S LIABILITIES AND INDEBTEDNESS

If the Towns were to consolidate, excess fund balances would be used toward capital improvements related to general and highway fund expenditures, or to pay down general or highway fund debt within the respective towns. In that way, the fund balances would be used to benefit the tax payers that contributed those funds through prior year tax collections.

The two Towns have very little debt on their General Fund or Highway. As of January 1, 2016, Fine owes \$180,000 for their Highway barn and the debt will be paid off in 2018 (the debt shows up in the General Fund, not Highway). Clifton owes \$305,562 for Highway expenditures that will be paid off in 2020. Both Towns also have debt related to sewer, but these debts are paid for by the customers in those special districts, not out of real property taxes.

Table 5 – Town of Clifton & Fine Indebtedness

	Clifton	Fine
General Fund	\$0	\$180,000
Highway	\$305,562	\$0
Water	\$0	\$0

Sewer	\$710,000	\$182,300
Total	\$1,015,562	\$362,300

J) TERMS FOR DISPOSITION OF EXISTING ASSETS, LIABILITIES & INDEBTEDNESS

The two Towns, if consolidated, do not plan to dispose of any existing Town-owned property or buildings. The new Town would assume ownership of the existing real property in each town. The Highway Departments would initially retain all of their current equipment, since they will be staffing and working out of the two existing Highway garages, but would evaluate the inventory to find any pieces of equipment that were redundant and could be eliminated.

K) TERMS FOR THE COMMON ADMINISTRATION AND UNIFORM ENFORCEMENT OF LOCAL LAWS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, ETC.

The Towns of Clifton and Fine completed an extensive review of their local laws and compared them to see which laws differ and how. If the Towns were to consolidate, the Town Board would appoint a Local Law Review committee which would work with the Town attorneys to draft a set of comparable local laws for the new combined Town that would take effect immediately after consolidation occurred. These local laws would be applied uniformly across the new consolidated Town, unless the law is specifically written to only apply to a certain district or area. Additionally, the two Towns currently have several Inter-municipal Agreements (IMAs) that define the terms for the jointly owned and operated services in the Towns, including the Clifton-Fine Arena, Community Center, Golf Course, Youth Commission, and Smart Growth Program. These IMAs would be eliminated in the new consolidated Town.

L) EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION

Town consolidation would be effective on January 1, 2020 at 12:00 a.m.

M) TIME AND PLACE(S) FOR PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be held on September 7, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at the Clifton-Fine School in the Town of Fine.

N) ANY OTHER MATTER DESIRABLE OR NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT CONSOLIDATION

The Towns shall remain separate and distinct entities until January 1, 2020 at 12:00 a.m. Further, the Plan for the Consolidation of the Towns of Clifton and Fine shall not be implemented unless this plan is approved by Resolution of the Town Board of the Town of Clifton and the Town Board of the Town of Fine.