



Considering Amalgamation

Presentation of Phase 1 Consultation Results

March 3, 2025

Agenda

1. Presentation of Phase 1 Engagement Results
2. Discussion of Next Steps and Approach for Reporting Back to Community



Purpose of Engagement Process

- Collect initial questions, concerns, and feedback on potential impacts.
- Facilitate deeper discussions to explore community values and perspectives.
- Inform Council decisions through engagement results.



Engagement Process

Phase 1:

Collect initial opinions on amalgamation and identify questions residents have about amalgamation.

- Activities: Community Conversation and Survey
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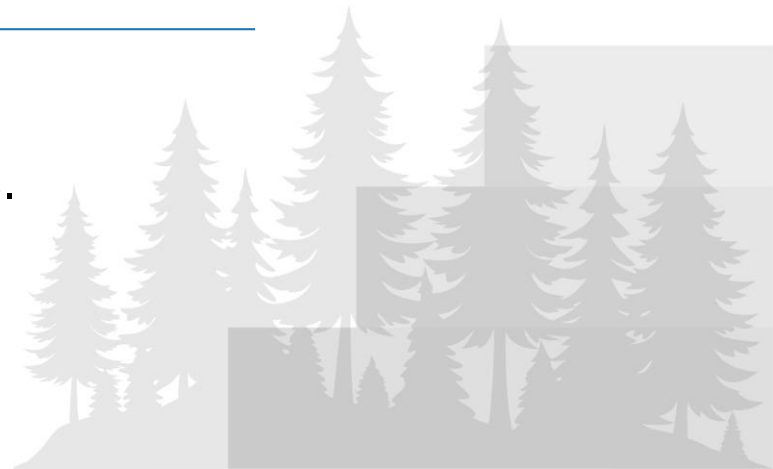
Phase 2:

Respond to community questions and explore further community perspectives on amalgamation.

- Activities: Community Conversation and Survey
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Report Back:

Summary of feedback provided to Councils.



Phase 1 Activities

Survey

- Online
- December 20, 2024 to February 1, 2025

Community Conversation

- In person
- January 25 2025

Questions aimed at hearing:

- What are your initial thoughts about amalgamation?
- What benefits to you foresee?
- What concerns do you have?
- How do you think amalgamation may/may not impact community identity?
- What questions to do you have?



Who We Heard From

180 people attended the in-person community event

282 people completed the survey

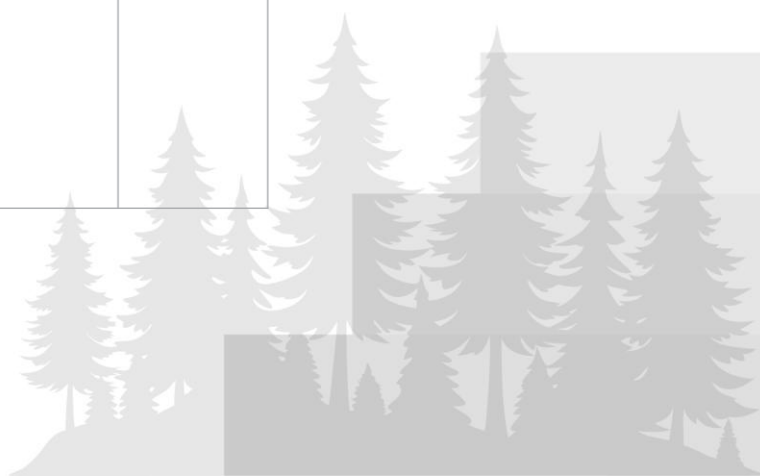
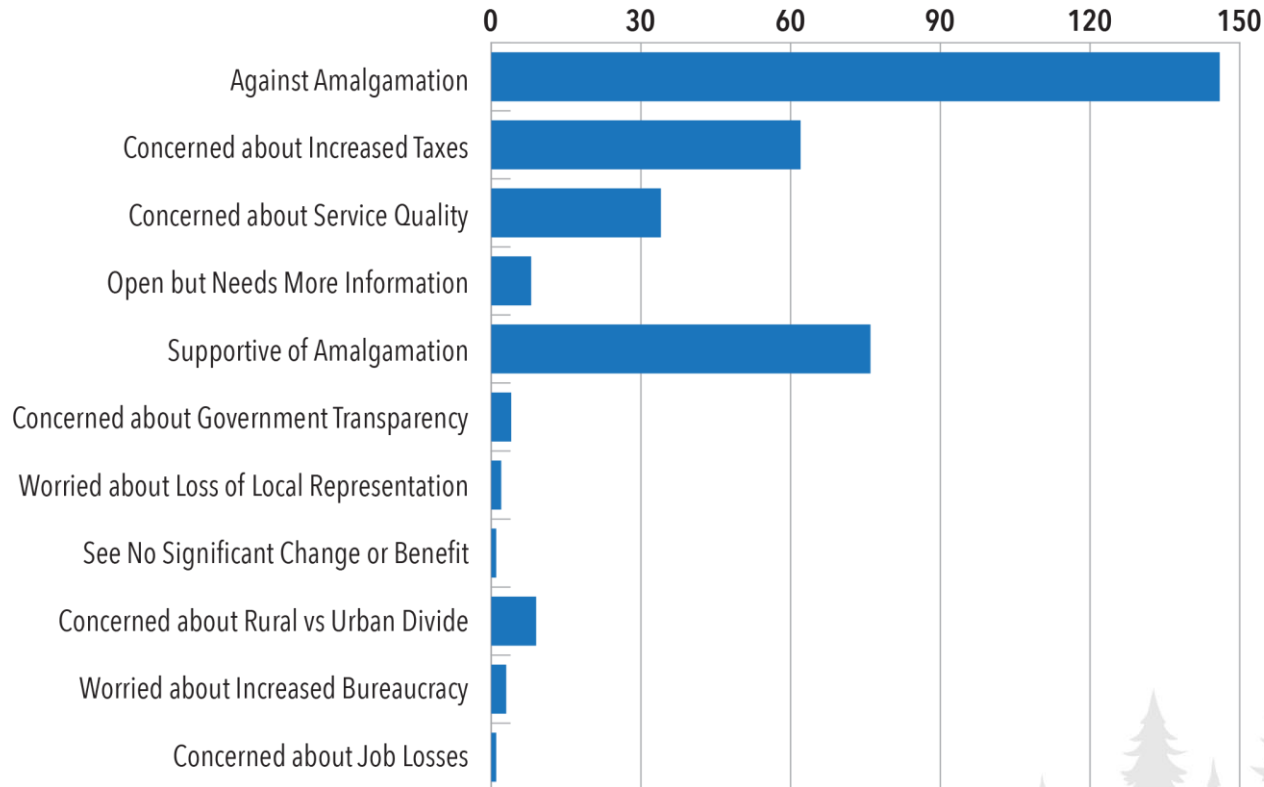


What We Heard



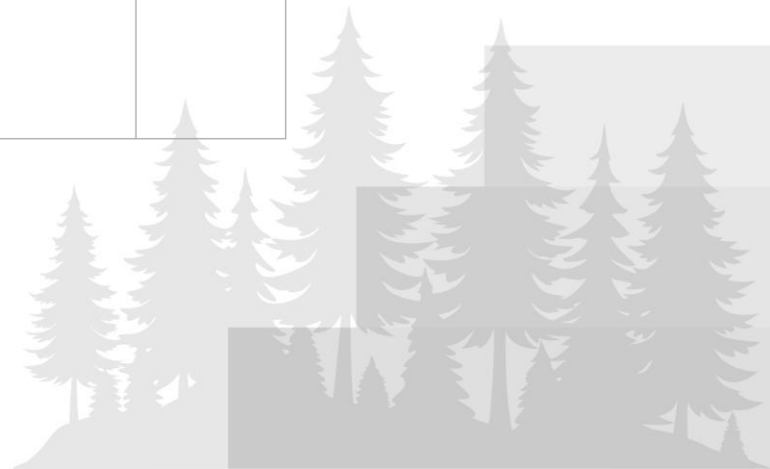
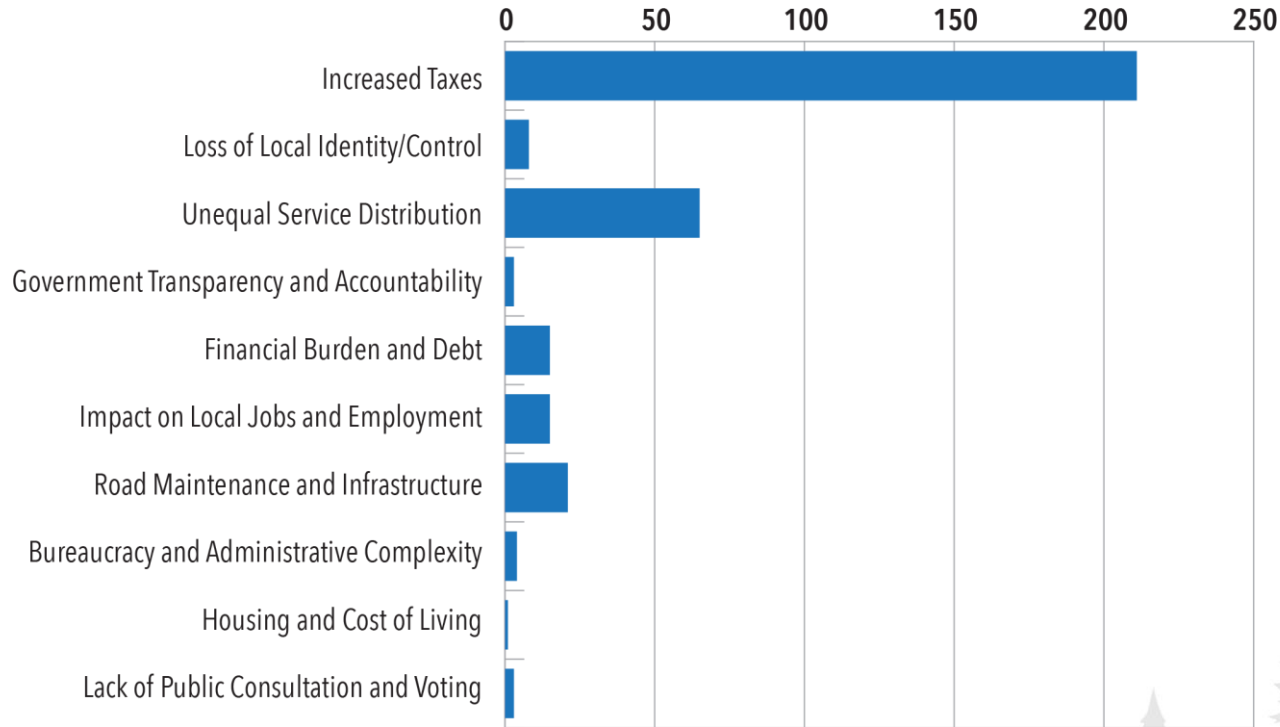
What We Heard – Survey

What are your initial thoughts on amalgamation? (n=276)



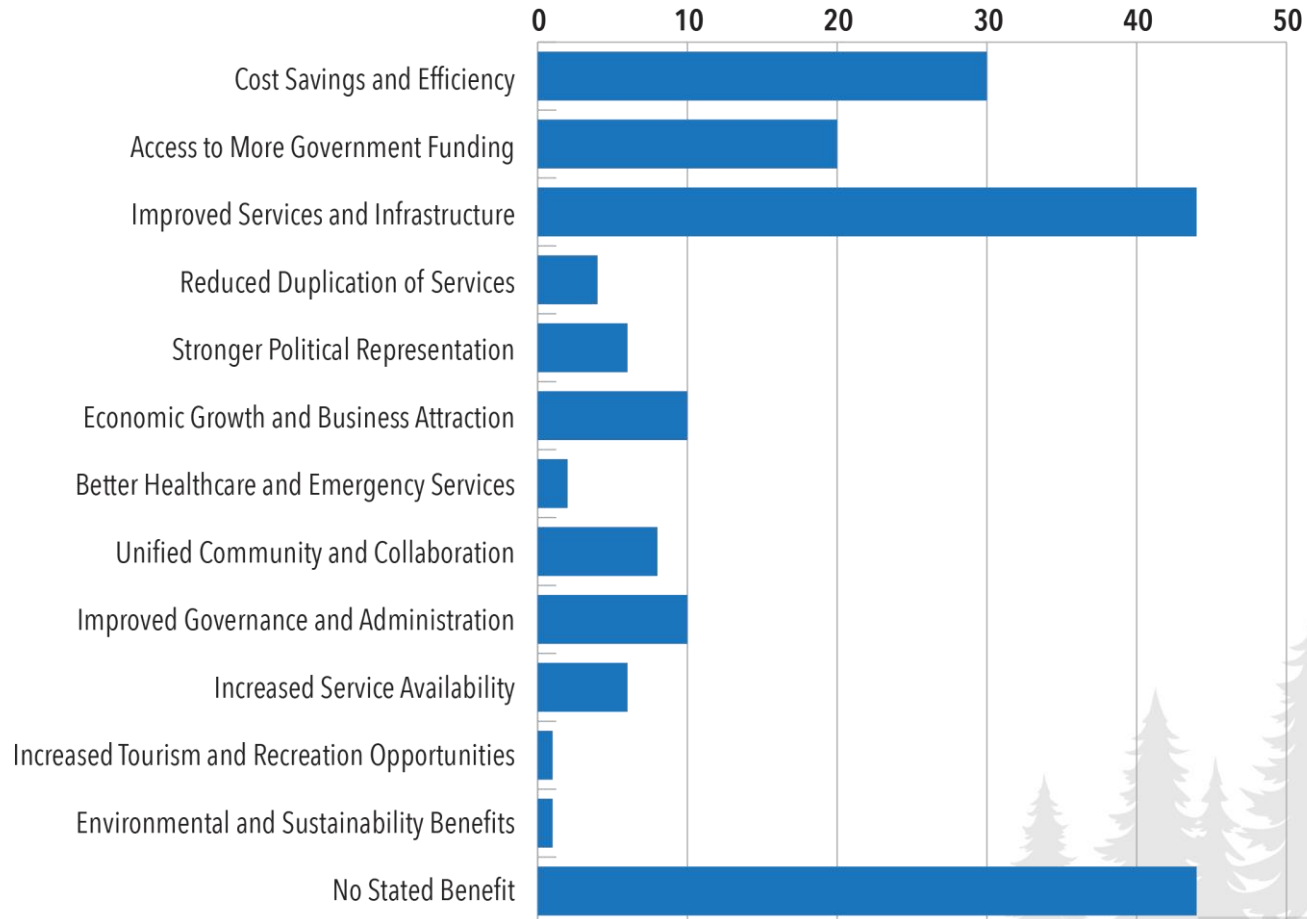
What We Heard – Survey

What concerns or reservations do you have about amalgamation? (n=255)



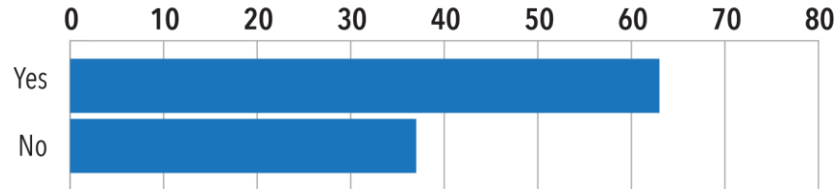
What We Heard – Survey

What benefits do you foresee with amalgamation? (n=169)



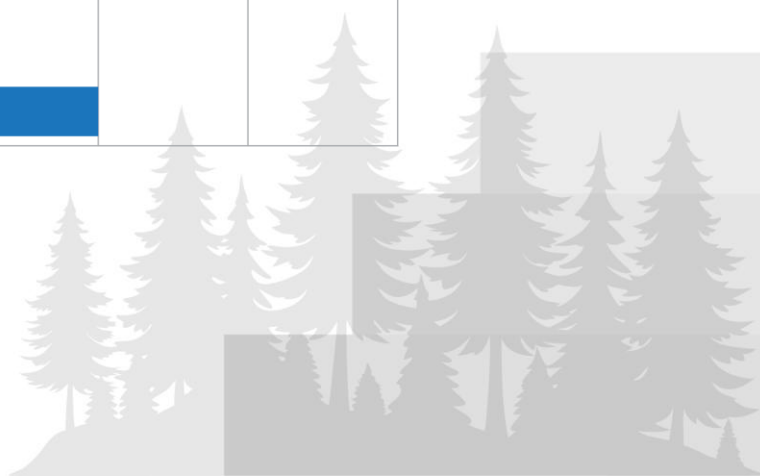
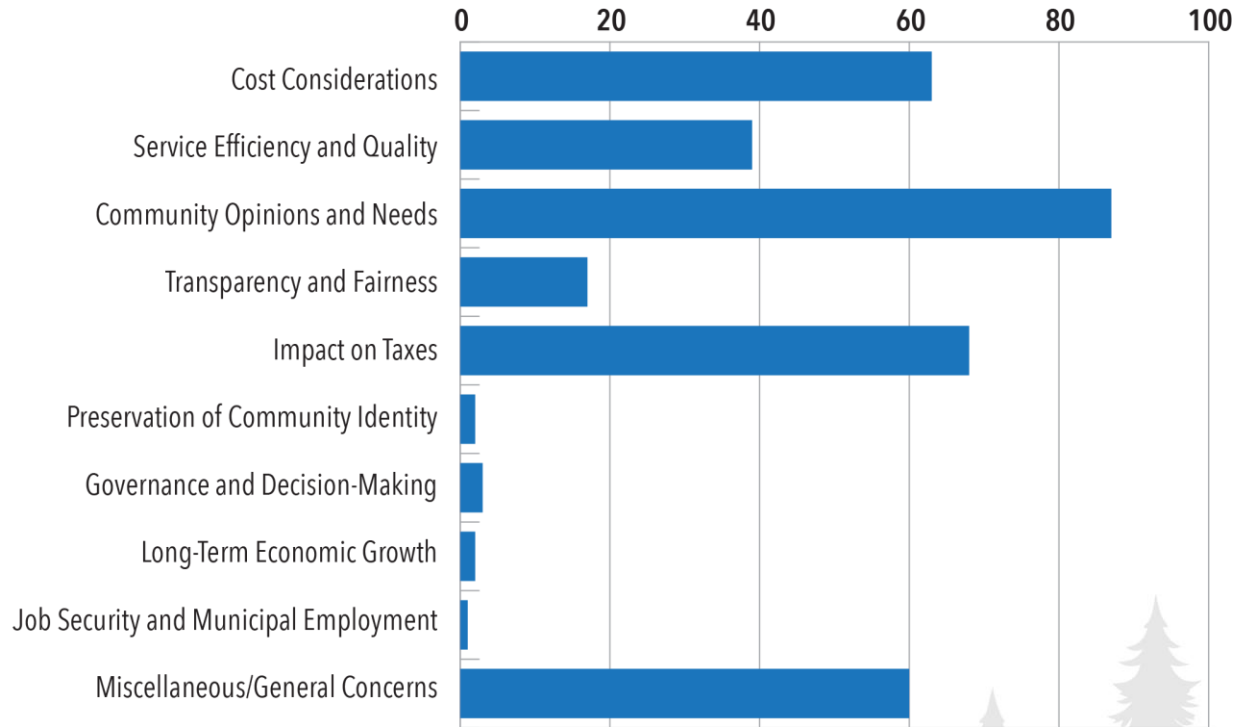
What We Heard – Survey

Do you feel amalgamation will have an impact on community identity? (n=267)



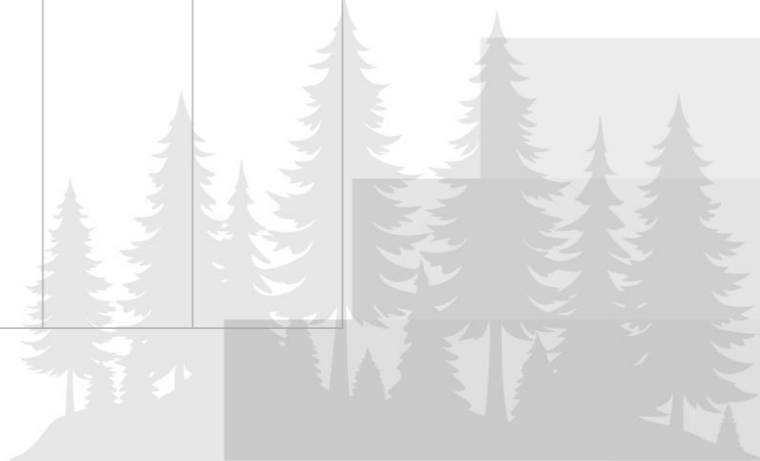
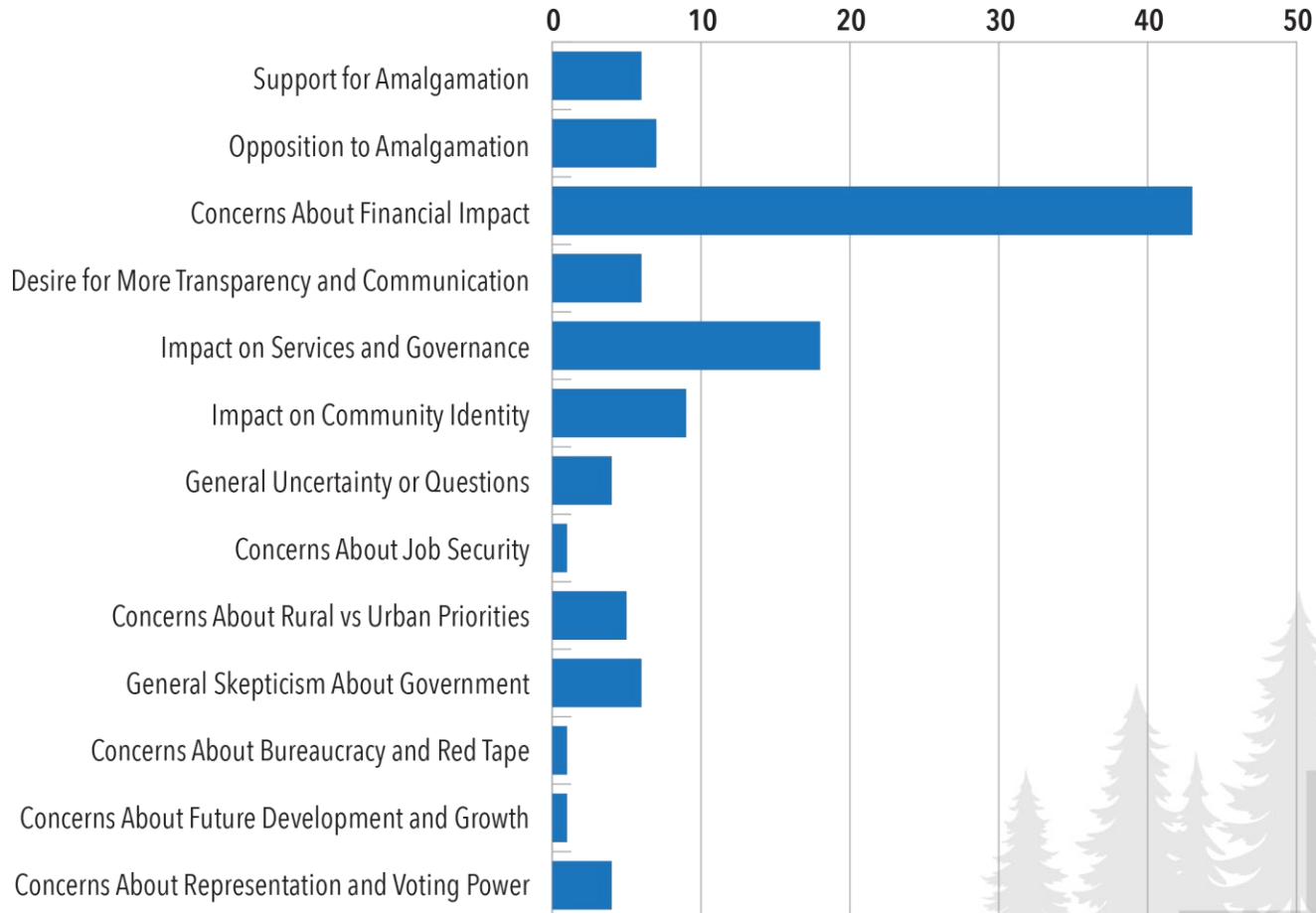
What We Heard – Survey

What do you think should be the key considerations for Council when deciding on amalgamation? (n=251)



What We Heard – Survey

Within other concerns, most respondents expressed general dissatisfaction with the process. (n=145)



Key Messages

Strong Concerns and Opposition

- A significant portion of residents are opposed to amalgamation.
- Concerns center on potential tax increases, with many residents fearing that amalgamation will result in higher municipal costs without improvements to services.
- Many participants question whether amalgamation will lead to job losses, reduced services, or diminished representation at the municipal level.
- Loss of local identity and governance is a recurring concern, with residents fearing that a larger municipality will dilute their community's unique character.



Key Messages

Demand for Clear and Transparent Information

- Residents are seeking detailed, data-driven justifications for amalgamation, particularly regarding financial impacts, service delivery, and governance structures.
- There is a desire for examples of successful and unsuccessful amalgamations, with an interest in case studies or examples from similar rural municipalities.
- Many expressed dissatisfaction with the consultation process, feeling that questions were not being answered adequately or that engagement lacked open discussion opportunities.



Key Messages

Potential Benefits Acknowledged by Some

- A smaller number of residents believe that amalgamation could streamline services, improve efficiency, and lead to cost savings over time.
- Some view amalgamation as an opportunity to strengthen the municipalities' ability to attract funding, infrastructure projects, and business investment.
- A few participants pointed out that a unified municipality could help resolve longstanding service-sharing disputes and improve inter-municipal cooperation.



Key Messages

Service and Infrastructure Considerations

- Residents are concerned about how services such as road maintenance, emergency response, and waste management will be distributed fairly across the newly amalgamated municipality.
- There is uncertainty about the future of municipal buildings, such as town offices, garages, and fire halls, with questions about potential consolidation or sale of assets.
- Participants raised concerns about whether existing infrastructure, particularly water and sewage systems in Sundridge, can support growth under an amalgamated model.



Key Messages

Financial and Governance Implications

- Many respondents worry about the financial implications of amalgamation, including how debts and assets from each municipality will be managed.
- There is strong resistance to the reduction in council representation, with concerns that fewer elected officials will lead to weaker local advocacy and decision-making.
- Some residents question whether government grants for municipalities will be reduced once three municipalities merge into one.



Key Messages

Community Identity and Engagement

- Concerns were raised about the potential loss of small-town identity, especially among Strong and Joly residents.
- Some feel that their municipality will lose its voice within a larger governance structure.
- Many residents emphasized the need for continued engagement and transparent decision-making before any decisions are made.



Key Questions

Rationale & Potential Benefits of Amalgamation

1. Why is amalgamation being considered in the first place?
2. What are the expected benefits of amalgamation for each of the three municipalities?
3. Will amalgamation lead to lower costs for residents? If so, how?
4. Will there be better access to (senior level) government funding and grants as an amalgamated municipality?
5. How will businesses, job opportunities, and economic growth be impacted by amalgamation?
6. Are there specific examples of successful amalgamations in Ontario that we can learn from?



Key Questions

Financial & Tax Implications

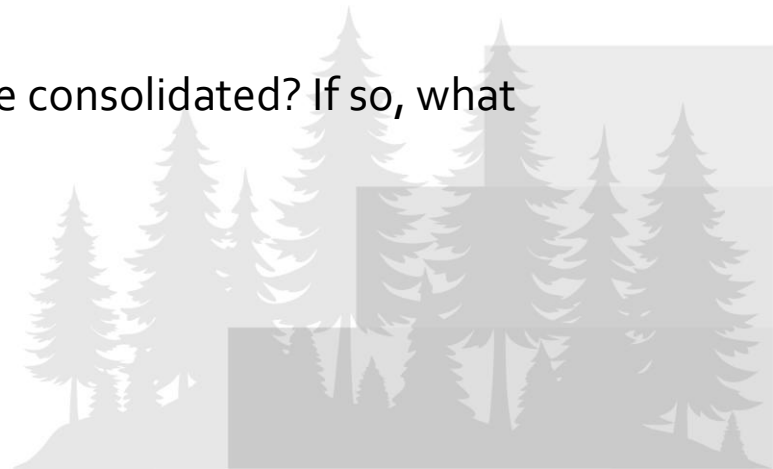
7. Will amalgamation increase my property taxes? If so, by how much?
8. How will municipal debt and assets be distributed among the three municipalities?
9. Will there be any cost savings from amalgamation? If so, where will these savings come from?
10. What has been spent on the amalgamation study so far, and how much will the process cost moving forward?
11. Will there be financial assistance from the provincial or federal government to support amalgamation?



Key Questions

Governance & Representation

12. How will council representation be structured in an amalgamated municipality?
13. Will residents have a vote or say in whether amalgamation happens?
14. What role does the province play in approving or rejecting amalgamation?
15. How will decision-making be balanced to ensure all three municipalities have fair representation?
16. Will existing municipal offices and services be consolidated? If so, what changes can we expect?



Key Questions

Service Delivery & Infrastructure

17. How will road maintenance, waste collection, and emergency services be impacted by amalgamation?
18. Will fire services, policing, and ambulance response times change under an amalgamated model?
19. Will water, sewer, and other utility costs be affected by amalgamation?
20. Will existing municipal staff lose their jobs as a result of amalgamation?
21. Will services improve, decline, or stay the same?



Key Questions

Community Identity & Quality of Life

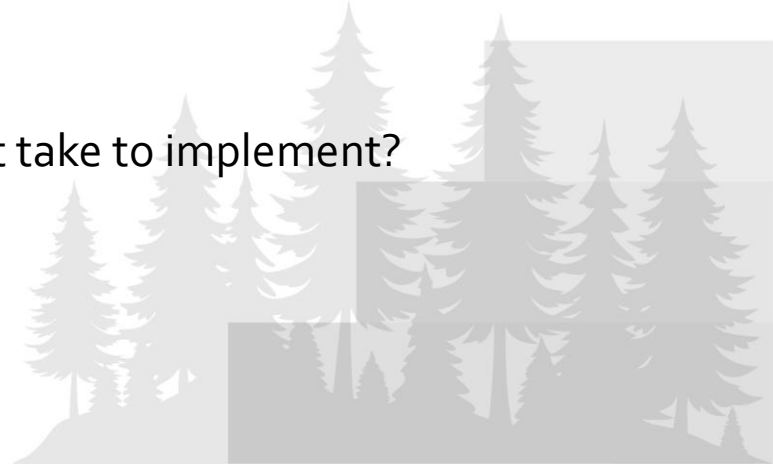
22. Will Strong and Joly lose their individual identities, or will new names be introduced?
23. How will amalgamation impact rural areas differently than the Village of Sundridge?
24. Will there be changes to local zoning and development regulations?
25. Will amalgamation attract more businesses or investment to the region?
26. How will this affect seasonal property owners?



Key Questions

Next Steps & Decision-Making

27. What are the next steps in the amalgamation process, and when will a final decision be made?
28. Will there be more opportunities for public consultation before a decision is made?
29. What happens if the community overwhelmingly opposes amalgamation?
30. Are there alternatives to full amalgamation, such as increased shared services?
31. If amalgamation is approved, how long will it take to implement?



Thank You! Next Steps...

Your Questions

Reporting Back

Phase 2 Engagement Approach

