

Suffolk County Shared Services Plan Table of Contents

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I. History of Shared Services in Suffolk County

Suffolk County has a long history of shared services among municipalities. Often, these initiatives have been memorialized in contracts known as Inter-municipal agreements.

Inter-municipal sharing and cooperation has been a touchstone in many communities here by virtue of the unique aspects of Suffolk County. There have been times, during and following emergencies, where municipalities have joined together to share resources in order to protect lives and recover more quickly from disaster.

Here are some examples:

- During the 1940s and 1950s, several school districts in Suffolk County agreed to share the services of a school psychologist. According to a Dec. 2, 1956 story in *The New York Times*, “Individually these schools could not afford and did not need a full-time psychologist. However, by banding together they were able to hire (a psychologist) and offer their students a service available in the larger schools nearer to New York City.”
- In 1961, various public libraries in Suffolk County began collaboration under the Suffolk Cooperative Library System. Since, dozens of public libraries have shared books and resources among each other to better serve their patrons.
- As a matter of routine, towns and villages have on numerous occasions shared responsibility for maintaining highways and streets.
- In the early 1960s, police departments in the five towns in the western half of Suffolk County consolidated into one police district to better serve and protect the public. The SCPD currently shares resources with the five town police departments in the eastern half of Suffolk County, including detectives and technical proficiency.
- More recently, towns and villages have shared services, resources and capabilities to address damages in the wake of natural disasters, such as Superstorm Sandy.
- Most shared services throughout the county’s history have been far less dramatic, borne of practicalities faced by our towns, villages and Suffolk County government, and enacted to simply provide better services to residents and make Suffolk County a better place to live.

II. Shared Services as a Function of the County Charter

The County Executive has stated that the county will pursue, in the coming year, a review of and possible revisions to the county charter.

This effort will include charter and code revisions to facilitate and institutionalize the shared service framework to the extent that the county executive and the county legislature deem such appropriate.

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III. Samples of Current County Shared Service Efforts

The inventory of shared services in which county departments are engaged include, but is not limited to:

- **Emergency Management** The Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services has facilitated, and maintains: The Suffolk County Hazard Mitigation Plan, The Suffolk County Debris Management Plan, and the County Emergency Management Plan. These plans have been developed with all towns and villages in Suffolk County, in addition to the Shinnecock and Unkechaug tribal nations.
- **Human Services/Senior Services** The Suffolk County Executive's Office of Community Services, as well as the Office for the Aging, maintain inter-municipal agreements with all towns and several villages. The Office of Community Services provides pass-through funding for Youth Services programs to municipalities in Suffolk County; the Office for the Aging, through its agreements with all 10 towns, provides no-cost leases of vehicles for senior transportation, pass-through funding for nutrition programs, minor home repairs, as well as providing direct case management.
- **Highway Maintenance** The Suffolk County Department of Public Works (SCDPW) maintains agreements with multiple municipalities throughout the county with respect to highway maintenance. In some instances, SCDPW provides maintenance for municipalities; in others, the municipalities provide highway services for SCDPW.
- **Economic Development and Planning** The Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning (EDP) provides pass-through funding of Community Development Block Grants to nine out of the 10 towns in Suffolk County. It also acts as a resource on planning issues for partner municipalities.
- **Suffolk County Police Department** The Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) provides assistance, as needed, to the five East End town police departments, as well as to a number of village police departments situated in towns in the Police District. In addition, SCPD provides detective services to the police departments in the East End towns.
- **The Suffolk County Real Property Tax Agency** The agency currently has GIS License Agreements with about two dozen municipal partners, as well as non-government entities.
- **200 Total Inter-municipal Agreements** with towns and villages.

IV. Samples of Local Municipal Efforts

- **The Town of Smithtown** In 2014, New York State provided the Town of Smithtown with more than \$300,000 in grants under its Local Government Efficiency Shared Services program in conjunction with the creation of a regional shared fuel facility. This facility is shared with villages in the town, and the town continues to make outreach to public school districts within the town to take part in this program.
- **The Town of Brookhaven** In 2017, the Town of Brookhaven began a pilot program to take over the tax billing services for the Village of Bellport, which is located within the town. Under this pilot program, the Town mails property tax bills to residents of Bellport, and accepts payment for the village thereby eliminating “back office” costs for the village associated with this task.
- **The Village of Sag Harbor** The Village of Sag Harbor maintains shared services agreements with two towns, two villages and Suffolk County. With Town of East Hampton, it maintains an agreement for fire and ambulance protection, street lighting and animal control; with the Village of East Hampton it has agreements for as well as police, fire and ambulance dispatching, animal control, street lighting and cooperative purchasing; with the Town of Southampton, Sag Harbor has agreements on shared computer services, assessing and electrical inspection services; with the Village of North Haven it maintains a Harbor Master Agreement.

The final draft will include additional examples of past and present inter-municipal sharing of services.

School Districts Under the statute, public school districts are not required to participate in the county-wide shared services initiative. Upon initiation of the plan’s development in Suffolk County, all public school districts were invited to participate and several school districts took part in varying degrees. Eastern Suffolk BOCES in particular, hosted a highly informative meeting with the team.

Many school districts provided examples of shared services initiatives in which they already participate, including:

- **The South Country School District** This district maintains agreements with the William Floyd School District including shared bus agreements to transport students to private schools; as well as other agreements for purchasing, energy management and health insurance;
- **The Sachem Central School District** The district is part of the BOCES cooperative bidding program, and “piggybacks” on Suffolk County purchasing;
- **The Hampton Bays Union Free School District** The district shares a Life Skills program with special education students from East Quogue and Oyster Ponds school districts.

- **The Deer Park Union Free School District** The district has a contract with the Town of Babylon for carting.
- **Eastern Suffolk BOCES** provides shared services to 51 school districts across an area nearly 1,000 square miles.

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V. Suffolk County Shared Services Process

To enact an open, productive and inclusive process required under the statute, representatives of Suffolk County and its towns and villages met on numerous occasions over the past 100 days.

The initial meeting of panel members was conducted in two parts, at two locations, on May 15 in Riverhead and May 17 in Hauppauge, to accommodate the geographic needs of panel members.

a. Subcommittees

To fully explore the potential, new shared service opportunities between municipalities in Suffolk County as identified under the statute, officials from participating municipalities agreed to partake in four different subcommittees.

These subcommittees were designed to explore not just potential new shared service programs, but also to resolve outstanding issues of codifying these agreements between municipalities, as well as certifying savings as required under the law.

A total of four subcommittees were formed:

1. The **Programming Subcommittee** was tasked with reviewing the catalog of existing shared services between municipalities, as well as exploring other potential areas for new programs or expansion of existing programs.
2. The **Technology Subcommittee** was formed to examine process and formulation of an online, shared services portal. It was agreed that this portal would be conceived to facilitate: communications between municipalities; allow the public a view of existing, ongoing and projected efforts; descriptions, offering and acceptance of services; availability of equipment and goods between municipalities.

This portal would also provide a business analytics capability that would allow analysis of shared series opportunities, costs and tracking of performance relative to actual projects and services. The portal (SuffolkShare), from a performance monitoring perspective, would build upon the existing Suffolk County “STAT” and Business Intelligence platforms by providing the ability to define, monitor and track progress of key performance indicators (KPI’s) over multi period timeframes. Tracking standardized KPI’s will allow each municipality to understand all shared service operations with relevant and current data that describes how well the services are performing relative to expectations. This analysis will allow modifications of operations and programs to ensure that taxpayers are getting the maximum benefit of shared service arrangements relative to strategic, mission-driven indicators. It will also enable a certification function comprised of an auditing process that will identify and quantify savings achieved by the use of the shared services program.

In short the portal will facilitate open communication – including real-time group and partner-to-partner chat (MuniChat) - throughout Suffolk County, support a framework to discuss and monitor performance and set the stage for a continuous improvement process whereby municipalities will uncover and understand better the ways in which service provision can be improved.

3. The **Legal Subcommittee** was formed to determine the format of a series of standard Inter-municipal agreements that would constitute various and required legal agreements between providers.

4. The **Finance Subcommittee** was formed to provide a framework under which municipalities could determine and certify existing cost structures and savings achieved through the establishment of Shared services programs.

b. Community Meetings

By statute, the CEO of each county was required to conduct no fewer than three public hearings following submission of the plan to the County legislative body. However, to further facilitate discussion of shared services prior to submission of the plan, four preplan community meetings were held during the month of July.

On July 10, meetings were conducted in the towns of East Hampton and Southampton. On July 11, a community meeting was held in the Town of Babylon. The last meeting was conducted in the town of Huntington on July 18. Many of the public meetings held throughout July were also broadcast on local public access stations. The three required public hearings will be held in towns other than where the public meetings were held.

In aggregate, these community meetings included attendance from a combination of both local municipal officials and members of the public. During the meeting in East Hampton, for example, two residents provided public comments stating that they wished a Shared Services Initiative would include school districts—as school taxes make up approximately 70 percent of property tax bills on Long Island.

In general, municipal officials that presented their thoughts and suggestions at these meetings stated that they believed in the basic mission of the shared services statute: to create more efficiency across governments and provide property taxpayer relief.

c. Email Communication & Online Surveys

At the outset of this process, The county executive staff SSI working group created a shared service email address, communicated with representatives of all 10 towns and 33 villages – informing them of the process and seeking information from each municipality on existing or prior shared services each had enacted.

d. Rockland County

On July 20, representatives from Suffolk County met with representatives of Rockland County to discuss shared services issues and in particular cooperative purchasing as engaged by Rockland and its adjacent counties. In particular, Rockland participates in a purchasing cooperative with six counties.

It may be productive to explore entry into this type of cooperative in the future.

e. Public Hearings

In compliance with the statute, public hearings will be scheduled in late August and early September.

f. Collective Bargaining Units

The statute directs: “In the development of the county-wide shared services property tax savings plan, the chief executive officer of the county shall regularly consult with, and take recommendations from, all the representatives of the shared services panel, as well as with and from the representative of each collective bargaining unit of the county and the cities, towns, and villages as well as from the representative of each collective bargaining unit of any participating school district, board of cooperative educational services and special improvement district.”

The Suffolk County Executive’s Office thus conducted discussions with officers of the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), which represents employees of multiple town and village governments within the county, as well as the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees (SCAME), which represents the largest group of Suffolk County government employees. The Suffolk County SSI plan will include language to be added to intermunicipal and collective bargaining agreements that are satisfactory to the respective collective bargaining units.

g. Suffolk County Village Officials Association and East End Officials

The SSI director met with the President of the Suffolk County Village Officials Association along with SCVOA board members and staff to discuss the plan and concerns of the SCVOA.

Additionally, the SSI director and county executive staff conducted presentations to the East End Chambers of Commerce Association and the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association.

VI. SuffolkShare - Suffolk County's 10 Point SSI Plan

- a. **Virtual Municipal Service Store.** A web portal that shall serve as a virtual store where a menu of municipal services and assets will be available to participating municipalities interested in acquiring services offered.
- b. **Inter-Municipal Services.** An assortment of services and assets will be offered to and from participating municipalities. Services will include: the use of specialty equipment and vehicles (graffiti trucks, water trucks, sweepers, bucket trucks, salt brine equipment, etc.); use of traditional and alternative fueling stations; pump out boat and other marina related services; road and parking lot resurfacing; grant writing; truck washing; recycling, sign shop services, language translation, surveying, mapping, website development, GIS services, professional training, MWBE certification, and much, much more.
- c. **Inter-Municipal Agreement.** An all-encompassing Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) authorizing municipal participation in this program and access to the web portal as well as templates for additional intermunicipal agreements for the use and procurement of various services and equipment.
4. **Certification Audit Process.** A certification function comprised of an auditing process that will identify and quantify savings achieved by the use of the shared services program.
5. **Data Analysis.** A Data Analysis feature similar to a Customer Management System (CMS) that will measure use, performance, and savings. In essence, the CMS will provide a business analytics capability that would allow analysis of shared series opportunities, costs and tracking of performance relative to actual projects and services. The portal (SuffolkShare), from a performance monitoring perspective, would build upon the existing Suffolk County "STAT" and Business Intelligence platforms by providing the ability to define, monitor and track progress of key performance indicators (KPI's) over multi period timeframes. Tracking standardized KPI's will allow each municipality to understand all shared service operations with relevant and current data that describes how well the services are performing relative to expectations. This analysis will allow modifications of operations and programs to ensure that taxpayers are getting the maximum benefit of shared service arrangements relative to strategic, mission-driven indicators.
6. **MuniChat.** A virtual intermunicipal chat room for municipal representatives to engage one another individually or collectively to acquire information, share information, brainstorm, and highlight success stories.
7. **Shared Services Newsletter.** A virtual newsletter that will feature successful shared service ideas while providing insight into how to utilize the web portal, virtual municipal store, and all of the features of Suffolk Share.
8. **Intra-County Projects Program.**
 - a. Senior Services
 - i. Develop a comprehensive umbrella senior citizen program that builds upon the multiple intermunicipal agreements for senior citizen programming and funding that presently exist today.

- ii. Include and augment access to health care, social worker support services, transportation to medical visits, visiting nurse services, food and nutrition programs, handyman assistance, physical fitness and social programming, etc.
- b. Youth Services
 - i. Develop a comprehensive umbrella youth services program that builds upon the multiple intermunicipal agreements for youth programming and funding that presently exist today.
 - ii. Include and augment access to anti-gang and anti-drug programming, recreational opportunities, education and training services, transportation assistance, etc.
- c. Recycling Services
 - i. Expand municipal recycling efforts through the use of municipal recycling centers in towns that host such facilities.
 - ii. Partner with schools to create comprehensive school recycling program consistent with recycling obligations under state law.
- d. Procurement Consortium
 - i. Purchasing cooperative would allow municipal partners to purchase larger quantities when combined thus creating more bargaining power when entering into annual agreements for purchases of goods, equipment and/or services.
 - 1. Best Value. Municipal partners may create a Best Value framework for the purchasing group. A Best Value award allows a municipality to optimize quality, cost and efficiency, and is quantifiable when possible. In this case, costs are distinguished from price. These costs can include life-cycle costs, disruption costs, workforce costs, etc., and embody price. To facilitate this framework, municipal partners may be required to enact Best Value local laws to authorize this activity.
 - 2. Joint Purchasing Subcommittee. To manage and direct the purchasing group, it may be necessary to create a Joint Purchasing Subcommittee to make procurement decisions and policies.
- e. Water
 - i. Increased partnership with water authority and districts.
 - ii. Engage in waterway maintenance and nitrogen removal projects.
- f. Emergency Management
 - i. Expand upon intermunicipal coordination relating to emergency management.
 - ii. Coordinate intermunicipal acquisition and maintenance of emergency equipment.
- g. Healthcare Consortium
 - i. Explore cost-sharing relating to municipal health benefits.
- h. Other

9. Inter-County Project Program

- a. Health Department Services
 - i. Share resources and information through expanded agreements with neighboring counties
 - ii. Combine purchasing and procurement efforts to achieve savings through economies of scale.
- b. County Jail and Adolescent Offender Services
 - i. Create working committee with neighboring county jails to find efficiencies and purchasing and operations.
 - ii. Utilize or share assets with neighboring county jail.
 - iii. Work with neighboring counties in implementation of the Raise the Age law.
- c. Emergency Management
 - i. Work with neighboring counties in regard do emergency management efforts.
 - ii. Share resources through intermunicipal agreements with neighboring counties.
- d. Other

10. Office of Intermunicipal Coordination. An assignment of personnel to handle intermunicipal activity and communications (achieved through the reassignment of current positions) who will administer Suffolk Share while coordinating monthly subcommittee meetings similar to those initiated as part of the Shared Service Working Group as set forth below:

- a. Legal
- b. Auditing and Control
- c. Tech and Data
- d. Program Offerings and Development

To facilitate creation of the portal, Suffolk County Department of Information Technology (SCDOIT) applied for a New York State Local Government Efficiency grant. All of Suffolk County's 10 towns have provided letters of support endorsing SCDOIT's grant application.

VII. Services Offered by Towns, Villages and The County

Initial SuffolkShare web portal offerings

Municipality providing services	Service/Equipment Available
Village of Ocean Beach	Water Excess Services
Town of Southampton	Responsive website development for smart phones, tablets, computers (aid in the development of County-wide or Town applications geared toward the mobile environment)
Town of Southampton	GIS Services (digitizing spatial data, map creation, reporting, analysis, etc.)
Town of Shelter Island	Pump-out boat services
Town of Riverhead	Cooperative purchase or piggyback for FLYTT pumps, chemicals, light duty truck (4'-6' beds)
Town of Riverhead	Scavenger waste acceptance (Riverhead scavenger waste plan can accept waste at times when Bergen Point is at or near capacity)
Town of Riverhead	Cooperative purchase or piggyback for police uniforms, flares, first aid kits, form tickets
Town of Riverhead	Cooperative service for crime scene clean up and motor vehicle records access services
Town of Riverhead	Joint Municipal Community Improvement Projects (utilization of municipally owned, vacant properties by other municipalities)
Town of Riverhead	Town gas pumps
Town of Riverhead	Automotive repair (including heavy duty fork light/hoists for nearly all required truck repair)
Town of Riverhead	Cooperative purchase or piggyback for salt and brine
Town of Riverhead	Snow blower (5,000 tons per hour)
Town of Riverhead	16 yard sander
Town of Riverhead	Roll-off truck 30 yards with dumpster
Town of Riverhead	Skid steer with 3/4 yard bucket
Town of Riverhead	Bull dozer with 2/5 yard bucket
Town of Riverhead	Payloader with 3 yard bucket

Town of Riverhead	Cooperative purchase or piggyback for pesticides, commercial grade mowers, items relate to the Town's annual asphalt/construction procurement contract
Town of Riverhead	Cooperative purchase or piggyback of generator maintenance services, water meter system and water billing system
Town of Islip	Tree removal/trimming
Town of Islip	Sign shop services (sign production)
Town of Islip	Pump-out boat services
Town of Islip	Graffiti removal truck and related equipment
Town of Islip	Access to Town fueling stations
Town of East Hampton	Sign shop services (sign production)
Town of East Hampton	Expansion of fuel facility (<i>Sag Harbor Village and East Hampton School District ONLY</i>)
Town of East Hampton	Cooperative food bidding
Town of Brookhaven	Single Stream Recycling
Town of Brookhaven	Outlook 365 Cloud Services
Town of Brookhaven	Fueling Stations
Town of Brookhaven	Assessment services (including the acquisition and analysis of sales data for all residential and commercial properties in each Village for use in developing the annual NYS equalization rates and assessment ratios, and the completion of annual assessment state reports to be forwarded to the Office of Real Property Services Division of the NYS Dept. of Taxation and Finance)
Town of Brookhaven	Tax collection services (including the development of a custom tax collection and payment processing user portal, as well as the issuance of tax bills, the receipt of payments and the depositing of funds on behalf of Villages)
Town of Brookhaven	Truck wash facility (to be located at the Town's Central Highway Facility on Old Town Road, Coram)
Town of Brookhaven	Disposal of Street Sweepings
Suffolk County Water Authority	Water testing

Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services	Medical products purchasing
Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services	Distance learning for certain first responders
Suffolk County Department of Public Works	Mail services
Suffolk County Department of Public Works	Fuel purchasing services
Suffolk County Department of Public Works	Asphalt and soft purchases
Suffolk County Department of Information Technology	Website development
Suffolk County Department of Information Technology	GIS Services
Suffolk County Department of Information Technology	Disaster recovery
Suffolk County Department of Information Technology	Desktop/help desk
Suffolk County Department of Information Technology	Data centers
Suffolk County Department of Health Services	Food services education app
Suffolk County Department of Health Services	Drilling services
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Transportation planning
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Surveying services
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Suffolk County Planning Federation training
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	SEQRA Training
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Renewable energy consulting
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	National Development Council Economic Development Finance Advising
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Master planning
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Map preparation and printing
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Environmental Site Assessments
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Economic Impact Analyses (project specific)
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development & Planning	Congress for New Urbanism training

Planning
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development &
Planning
Suffolk County Dept. of Economic Development &
Planning
Suffolk County Community Services
Suffolk County Community Services

Suffolk County Police Department
Suffolk County Police Department

Appraisal services

Access to pre-qualified planning consultants

MWBE certification

Language accessibility programs

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software sharing
911 Dispatch Services

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VIII. Estimated Savings Analysis

The savings estimate in this draft plan is based on proposed new programs that have emerged and continue to become available through this process. Below are examples of how savings will be identified.

The Town of East Hampton

- Joint purchase of emergency radio equipment for the Town, Village of East Hampton and Village of Sag Harbor (in addition to fire districts), which will produce a savings of approximately \$2.3 million.
- A potential bus facility and fuel agreement between the Town of East Hampton, Village of East Hampton and Sag Harbor Union Free School district, which will produce a savings of approximately \$400,000.

The Town of Brookhaven

- Tax Collection services for villages within the Town of Brookhaven, which will amount to first-year savings of approximately \$106,000.
- Consolidation of Assessment Services for villages within the Town of Brookhaven, which will amount to first-year savings of approximately \$52,000.
- Use of the Town's Asphalt Contract by villages within the Town of Brookhaven, which will amount to first-year savings of \$440,000.
- Town-wide LED conversion of approximately 40,000 streetlights, which will amount to first-year savings of approximately \$1.4 million.
- Construction of two truck-wash facilities, to be used by other municipalities, for first-year shared savings valued at approximately \$230,000.
- Construction of a new Record Storage Center and digitization of vital records into an Electronic Content Management System, for first-year savings of approximately \$800,000.
- The total of first-year savings of these projects initiated by Town of Brookhaven is approximately \$3 million.

Suffolk County

Suffolk County intends to participate in the shared purchasing cooperative under SuffolkShare. Using methodologies developed by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, it is estimated that municipal partners in Suffolk County will attain two-year savings in procurement costs of approximately \$27 million.

In total, this draft plan has identified in excess of \$37 million in two-year savings under the shared services initiative required by statute. It is anticipated that this number will be adjusted prior to the full panel vote which is required by Sept. 15, and that the savings total produced by shared services programs in the final plan

will thus increase beyond this draft. All required appendices will be prepared per the requirements of the law including: total participating entity property taxes; total anticipated savings; anticipated savings as a percentage of property taxes; anticipated savings to the taxpayer; anticipated cost/savings to the average homeowner; anticipated costs/savings to the average business.

Note: The New York State Department of State has indicated in answers to questions on the topic that it will provide an application and methodologies under which municipalities may apply for statutory matching funds. The applications and methodologies were not yet available at submission of this plan to the Suffolk County Legislature.

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