



NEW PALTZ CONSOLIDATION: FIRE PROTECTION

This document explains what would happen with fire protection services if the Town and Village of New Paltz consolidate, and why residents should expect no changes to how those services are delivered.

Critical Context: How Fire Protection is Currently Handled

The Village of New Paltz receives its fire protection through a relationship with New Paltz Fire Department, Inc., a non-profit fire company. The Village government currently owns the trucks, equipment, and firehouse facility located on the fire company's land on North Putt Corners Road. The New Paltz Fire Department provides firefighters.

The Town outside of Village (TOV) provides and pays for fire protection through a Fire Protection District and an agreement with New Paltz Fire Department. In New York State, towns cannot *directly* operate fire departments. Instead, a town can establish a Fire Protection District. A Fire Protection District is an administrative unit of the town – not a separate government. The Town Board creates the district, sets its budget, and contracts with a fire company to deliver services within its boundaries. Residents within the district pay for fire protection through their property taxes.¹ This is precisely what the Town of New Paltz does.

The annual operating cost of New Paltz Fire Department is currently shared between the Village and the Town based on the proportional share of the previous year's calls.

What Will Happen with Fire Protection if the Town and Village Consolidate?

In short: Nothing from a delivery perspective will change. The same firefighters from New Paltz Fire Department will respond to calls, the same equipment and firehouse will be used.

Prior to consolidation, the Town will create a second Fire Protection District that covers the current Village boundaries. Upon consolidation, because the Village will no longer exist, the Town would take ownership of the trucks, equipment, and the firehouse. Both of the New Paltz Fire Protection Districts – which are governed by the Town Board – would be contracted with the New Paltz Fire Department to provide fire protection services. Costs will continue to be shared on a proportional basis.

After consolidation, the plan is for the TOV Fire Protection District and the Village Fire Protection District to be merged into a single town-wide Fire Protection District. At that point, fire protection costs will be shared town-wide.

A Point of Clarification: Fire Protection Districts v. Fire Districts

Fire Protection Districts are sometimes confused with *Fire Districts*. Unlike Fire Protection Districts, Fire Districts are separate local governments with their own elected boards and authority to levy taxes independent of the town. Fire Protection Districts are administrative units of a town that are managed by the town government and contract with a village or fire company to provide fire protection services. Under the proposed consolidation, New Paltz will continue with *Fire Protection Districts*, not *Fire Districts*.

¹ See NYS Town Law Article 11 §170