

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
TOWN OF NORTH ELBA – TRANSPORTATION (HIGHWAY SERVICES)

Community Profiles

The Town of North Elba and the Village of Lake Placid are located in Essex County in the North Country region of New York State. The Town is average in size and in the proportion of revenues obtained from federal and state aid. The Village is slightly smaller than average and obtains significantly lower than average revenues from federal and state aid, perhaps owing to its status as a popular, year-round resort community.

2005	Town of North Elba	NYS Town Average	Village of Lake Placid	NYS Village Average
Population	8,661	9,326	2,638	3,385
Revenue from State and Federal Aid	15.2%	14.2%	2.1%	10.1%

Background

The Town of North Elba and the Village of Lake Placid have enjoyed a close working relationship for a number of years. The Town and Village currently share the cost of fire protection, building department staff, assessor's office, and have developed a joint land use code overseen by a joint review board. The Village mayor developed a Shared Services Memorandum of Understanding following his election to office in 2006, outlining some of the potential areas on which to focus cooperative efforts and where costs might be equalized for Town and Village residents. One area of focus noted in the Memorandum of Understanding was the possible consolidation of the town and village highway departments. The Memorandum of Understanding, however, did not include any specifics about procedure, including timelines, responsibilities of each board or the expectations that would have to be met to reach agreement on any consolidation.

Outcome

Prior to the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding and the shared services analysis, the Village board of trustees appointed the current Town highway superintendent to head the Village highway department on a part-time, interim basis. According to the Attorney General, a joint position is incompatible with holding elected office. Accordingly, Town officials put a referendum on the ballot seeking to change the town highway post from an elected to an appointed position. Debate on the referendum, however, did not focus on the fact that this change was a necessary step in consolidating the two highway departments and residents voted overwhelmingly against the referendum, deciding to keep the town post as an elected position and ending, for the time being, any plans to combine the two departments.