



March 14, 2025

Possible Collaboration between Theodore Roosevelt Council and Suffolk County Council

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers

Background

In December, the leadership of the Theodore Roosevelt Council and the Suffolk County Council initiated discussions to explore opportunities for improving collaboration in operations and programs, with the goal of enhancing the program experience for youth in our communities.

As discussions continued, leadership of both Councils recognized that unifying Scouting on Long Island could provide significant community benefits.

After holding separate board meetings, both Councils agreed to conduct a formal assessment and analysis to explore ways to strengthen Scouting across this region. This comprehensive review is now underway and is expected to be completed within the next two to three months.

Once the review is complete, both boards will carefully evaluate the findings and vote on whether to move forward with any recommended actions.

These recommendations may include enhancing collaboration on specific program elements, sharing administrative resources... or potentially merging the Councils.

To maintain transparency with families, volunteers and alumni, a joint announcement detailing this initiative was shared on January 22nd. A copy of this announcement is below.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note that as this process continues, answers to some FAQs may be subject to change...from time to time, this will be updated. However, the original text will remain accessible, with new updates appearing directly after the relevant question.

The joint assessment and analysis are still in the early weeks of a two- to three-month process, meaning that few definitive answers are available at this time.

Following is an initial list of FAQs:

1. Why are Theodore Roosevelt and Suffolk County Councils considering areas of collaboration or even a possible merger?

The Councils are exploring opportunities for collaboration—or a potential merger—to address shared challenges, such as declining membership, volunteer shortages, and financial constraints—issues affecting



Scouting nationwide. The primary goal is to strengthen Scouting on Long Island by combining resources and enhancing support for local programs.

2. Will any camps or Scout shops be closed as part of increased collaboration or a possible merger?

At this stage, no decisions have been made regarding camps, service centers or Scout shops. The review process includes evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of all Scout properties. Each Council's governing board – or a newly formed combined board if a merger is recommended – will carefully examine all findings to make informed and thoughtful decisions. Additionally, data collection is underway to identify opportunities for collaboration.

3. What types of collaboration areas are being reviewed?

The review focuses on key areas, including program development, financial stability, and operational efficiency.

It examines program-related aspects such as advancement, activities, training, and camping, along with financial factors like operating costs, fundraising, endowments, financial trends, potential efficiencies, and capital maintenance. Membership processes and growth opportunities are also being evaluated, as well as legal and risk considerations, including insurance and compliance.

Additionally, both Councils are working to streamline administrative and office functions by improving efficiency and adopting best practices. The goal is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of both Councils' operations to support well-informed and strategic decision-making.

4. How might increased collaboration or a possible merger affect local volunteers?

Volunteers will gain access to more training opportunities, enhanced digital communication tools and simplified administrative processes. These improvements will enable them to dedicate more time to delivering high-quality programs for Scouts.

5. How could this collaboration, or even a merger, help with declining membership?

A unified message across Long Island would strengthen Scouting's brand, making it more visible and appealing to families and simplify recruitment and retention efforts, ultimately supporting membership growth.

6. How would increased collaboration or a merger benefit Scouts directly?

Scouts would benefit from expanded programs with a wider range of activities, events, and resources.

These enhancements could also strengthen community partnerships, improve volunteer support and attract increased funding from local businesses, ultimately enriching the Scouting experience.

Managing a larger geographic area presents challenges for training and meetings, making it essential to explore technological solutions. As digital tools continue to advance, all organizations are increasingly using technology to enhance communication, improve collaboration and streamline operations.



Virtual meetings, online training sessions and digital workspaces now play a crucial role in maintaining efficiency and connectivity. These tools enable teams to work together seamlessly, regardless of location, optimizing resources while providing greater flexibility and accessibility to meet evolving needs.

7. If there is a merger, what will happen to the staff and leadership of both Councils?

Both Councils operate efficiently, and this study is not intended to reduce staff. Instead, the focus is on finding ways to better utilize staff to support local units and Scouts more effectively while fostering growth.

If a merger takes place, a new board and executive committee will be formed, with representation from both Councils. Some members from the existing boards would likely be invited to join the new leadership team.

The steering committee, made up of volunteers from both Councils, will evaluate organizational structures and make decisions that best support the future of Scouting on Long Island.

8. Will a possible merger make Scouting more expensive for families?

Collaboration or a potential merger should help optimize resources and keep operating costs stable or lower, rather than increasing them. Improving operational efficiency could also help reduce program expenses.

Since both Councils provide similar programs, there may be opportunities to align program offerings and fees where appropriate. Each of these factors will be carefully assessed during the evaluation process.

9. If there is a merger, would Scouting be unique in providing unified services across Long Island? Are there other organizations that serve Long Island as a whole rather than by county?

Many organizations serving Nassau and Suffolk Counties demonstrate successful regional collaboration on Long Island.

Examples include the Rockville Centre Roman Catholic Diocese, Long Island Power Authority, United Way of Long Island, Long Island Business Network, Long Island Community Foundation, Island Harvest Food Bank, Long Island Cares, Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, Long Island Volunteer Center, Long Island Association, Long Island Rail Road, Newsday, and Channel 12, among others.

10. If there is ultimately a merger, will local traditions and events be maintained?

A key goal of any collaboration or a potential merger is to honor and preserve the unique traditions and cultural heritage of both Councils while introducing new and improved programs. Local events will continue to be an integral part of the Scouting experience, and every effort will be made to uphold longstanding traditions whenever possible.

11. Could a merger improve fundraising and donor engagement?

A unified Council would significantly strengthen fundraising efforts across Long Island, making it more attractive for businesses, community leaders and major organizations to invest in Scouting and see the direct impact of their contributions.



By creating a more cohesive structure, the Council would enhance visibility, attract larger sponsorships and forge stronger partnerships with corporate and community stakeholders. This strategic alignment could drive greater financial support, expand available resources and elevate programs that benefit Scouts and local initiatives. Additionally, a unified Council would offer clearer and compelling opportunities for new board members from the business and community sectors, fostering increased participation, leadership and long-term engagement.

12. Who will make the decision on a possible merger if it goes that far?

Several committees – made up of volunteers from both councils – are currently studying different aspects of collaboration and will present a comprehensive, multi-part report to both boards.

After the assessment and analysis are complete, the boards of both Councils will review findings and vote on whether to proceed with increased collaboration or a merger.

If both boards approve a merger, it will be presented to each Council's voting Members at Large for final approval. Additionally, approval from National Scouting America and New York State regulatory authorities will be required before the merger can proceed. This process is expected to take several additional months following the board vote.

13. What happens if a merger is not recommended or approved?

If the analysis does not lead to a merger recommendation – or if the merger is not approved – both Councils will continue to operate independently.

Regardless of the outcome, the insights gained from this evaluation will be used to identify and pursue new opportunities for collaboration, ensuring a stronger Scouting presence on Long Island.

14. How can families, volunteers, and alumni provide input?

Regular updates will be shared throughout the process, and opportunities for feedback will be provided. Additionally, both Councils' leadership plan to host in-person fireside chats in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties to engage with volunteers and families. For those unable to attend in person, a Zoom or Teams meeting will be scheduled to ensure everyone has a chance to participate.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact our Council Commissioners:

Matt Bollerman, Suffolk County Council Commissioner, Matt_bollerman@yahoo.com

or

Mike Williams, Theodore Roosevelt Council Commissioner, Michaelw1406@optonline.net

To submit a question or provide input that may be considered in future FAQ updates, please contact:
longislandquestions@scouting.org

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