

# north shore news

## Come together

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If you think amalgamating local governments will save money, think again, a Fraser Institute study concludes.

The study's applicability for the city and district of North Vancouver, however, is widely open for debate. The Ontario-based review involved unwilling municipalities with little in common being forced together with almost no time to study how it could be done effectively.

The common assumption here is that the city would have the most to lose if its taxpayers suddenly had to take on the cost of servicing the sprawling district. That's an assumption we'd like to see challenged with a fresh look into the matter.

But the questions we need to be asking shouldn't just include dollars and cents. There are two separate rats' nests of bylaws, planning policies, accounting methods, public processes and administrative hoops to jump through that could be harmonized for the benefit of residents, businesses, non-profits, senior levels of government and First Nations - basically everyone.

Are the city and district really such radically different places? It's true, the city's residents skew younger, live in smaller homes and have a lower income, but that's true of all downtowns and the city effectively is North Vancouver's downtown.

The 1907-split never should have happened to begin with. Think of the modern day equivalent of the Lonsdale corridor and waterfront industries hiving themselves off to save a few bucks.

The reward for amalgamating the two North Vancouvers might not be magically lower tax bills but rather a restoration of our collective sanity.

And you can't put a price on sanity.

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