



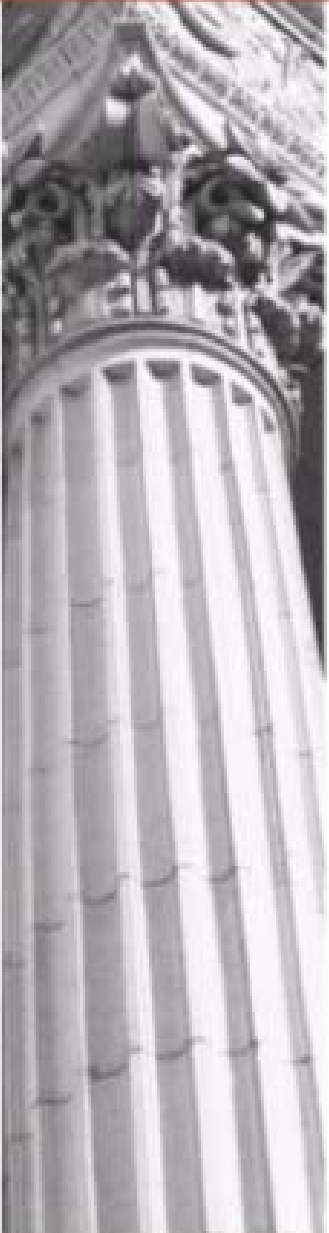
# Streamlining Service Delivery in Kent County

Findings and Lessons

Michigan Municipal Treasurers  
Advanced Institute  
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- **Promotes sound policy for state and local governments through factual research**
- **Relies on charitable contributions from Michigan foundations, businesses, organizations, and individuals**



## My Involvement with IGC

- Consolidation study for Grand Blanc city and township (2005)
- Survey of local government service provision methods (2005)
- Catalog of Collaboration Laws (2007)
- *Approaches to Consolidating Local Government Service* (2008)
- *Streamlining Functions and Services of Kent County and Metropolitan Grand Rapids Cities* (2009)
- Next projects
  - Countywide service analysis (Lenawee)
  - Village/Township consolidation study (Onkama)
  - Joint purchasing/procurement (???)



## What is “Collaboration”?

- Functional consolidation
- Special authorities
- Mutual/Automatic Aid
- Contracting
- Resource sharing
- Joint purchasing
- Joint planning



## Kent County and 6 Cities

- Study looked at the interaction and joint service provision between and among
  - Kent County
  - City of Grand Rapids
  - 5 suburban cities of East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker, Wyoming
- Purpose was to establish existing patterns of collaboration and recommend new opportunities

[www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt357.html](http://www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt357.html)



## Existing Collaboration

- Survey of units established collaboration between at least 2 units in 131 service areas
- Varying levels of formality
- Some involve all units
- Others particular to couple of cities
- Some involved Kent County and Grand Rapids as seat of county government



## Recommendations

- Public Safety – build off extensive existing collaboration for seamless police and fire throughout region
- Expand Role of County – Intranet, data repository, financial services, etc.
- City/School District Collaboration – building/grounds, fleet maintenance, parks & rec, etc.
- Regional Assets – airport & zoo



## Why Collaborate/Consolidate Services?

- Avoid duplication of services
- Benefit from economies of scale
- Provide higher level of services
- Provide services that could not be justified for any individual government
  - Consolidating existing services
  - Starting new services
- Coordinate policies across jurisdictions (reduce negative spillover)
- Spread financing responsibility and risk





## The Grand Rapids Metro Experience

- Avoid duplication of services
  - Animal control/shelter
  - Police/fire fighter training
  - HazMat planning & response
  - Signs/signals on roads and bridges
  - Coordinate CDBG program



## The Grand Rapids Metro Experience

- Benefit from economies of scale
  - Incinerator
  - Transit
  - Libraries
  - Water and sewer
  - Central dispatch for public safety
  - Animal control/shelter



## The Grand Rapids Metro Experience

- Benefit from skilled employees
  - Police special teams
  - Emergency/Disaster response planning
  - GIS
  - Economic development
  - Restaurant inspection



## The Grand Rapids Metro Experience

- Benefit from economies in purchasing
  - Elections equipment
  - Police and Fire equipment
  - Water/sewerage treatment chemicals
  - Joint fueling
  - Many others



## The Grand Rapids Metro Experience

- Regional problems/Avoid spillover
  - Police special teams (drugs, cold case, auto theft, fraud, etc.)
  - Transit
  - Parks
  - Economic development
  - Water/sewer treatment & distribution



## How is so much collaboration possible?

- **TRUST**
- Every unit enters as willing partners
- Ongoing, open communications
- Commonly agreed to service levels
- Established expectations
- Success breeds success
- Strong leadership



## How is so much collaboration possible?

- Find participants that fit the shared services
  - not a “one-size fits all” approach
- Regional philosophy/outlook
- Abandon “us vs. them” mentality
- Understanding that economic development in any one jurisdiction helps the whole region collectively



## The Grand Rapids Metro Experience

- Now greater emphasis on achieving savings
  - Reduce necessary staffing levels
  - Optimally located facilities
  - Spare services from complete elimination
  - Achieve greater economies of scale





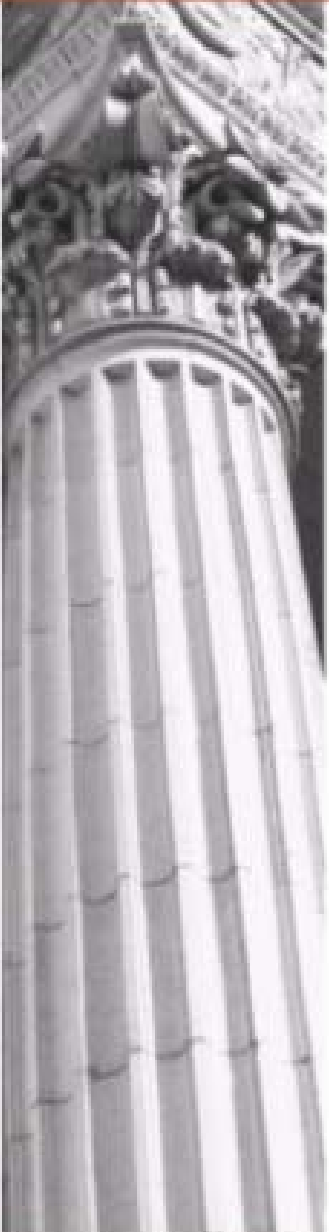
## Is this obtainable?

- Several state laws make it difficult to merge existing services
- Employee protection provisions in:
  - Urban Cooperation Act
  - Intergovernmental Transfer of Functions and Responsibilities Act
  - Metropolitan Transportation Authorities Act
  - Conditional Land Transfer Act
  - Emergency Service Authorities Act
  - Metropolitan Councils Act



## Other laws that make it difficult to merge existing services

- PERA (must “confer in good faith with respect to wages, hours, and *other terms and conditions of employment...*”)
- Act 312 (if you don’t confer then you arbitrate)
- Recall provisions in Election Law
- Minimum police/fire staffing levels in city charters
- Difficulty of sharing tax base through General Property Tax Act



## CRC Publications are available at:

Kent County study

[www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt357.html](http://www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt357.html)

Approaches to Consolidation

[www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2008/rpt354.html](http://www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2008/rpt354.html)

Catalog of Collaboration Laws

[www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2007/rpt346.pdf](http://www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2007/rpt346.pdf)

Survey of Service Provision

[www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/catalog.html](http://www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/catalog.html)

Grand Blanc consolidation

[www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/rpt339.pdf](http://www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/rpt339.pdf)

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