



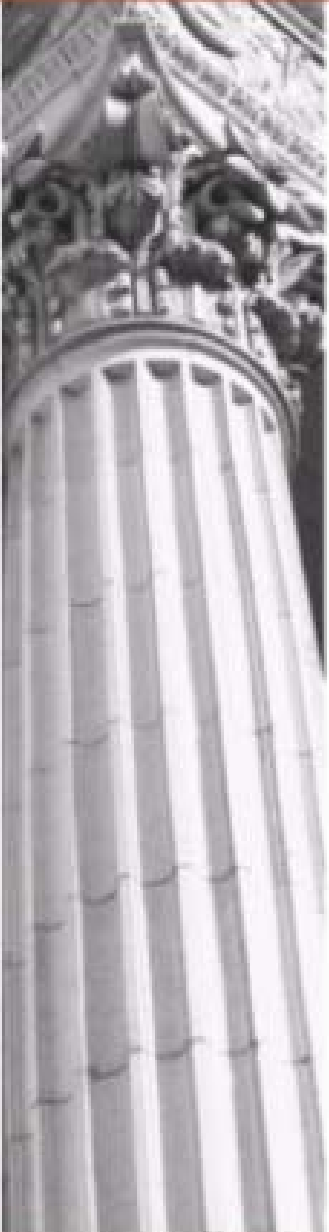
Streamlining Service Delivery in Kent County

Findings and Lessons

Michigan Municipal Treasurers
Advanced Institute
May 19, 2010

Eric Lupher

www.crcmich.org / elupher@crcmich.org





Citizens Research Council of Michigan

- **Founded in 1916**
- **Statewide**
- **Nonpartisan**
- **Private not-for-profit**
- **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

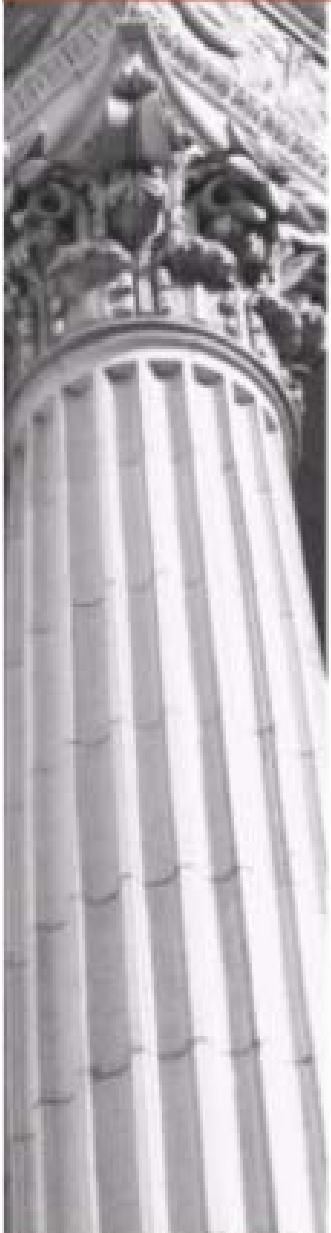
- Study looked at the interaction and joint service provision between and among
 - Kent County
 - City of Grand Rapids
 - 5 suburban cities of East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Kentwood, Walker, Wyoming
- Purpose was to establish existing patterns of collaboration and recommend new opportunities

www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt357.html



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



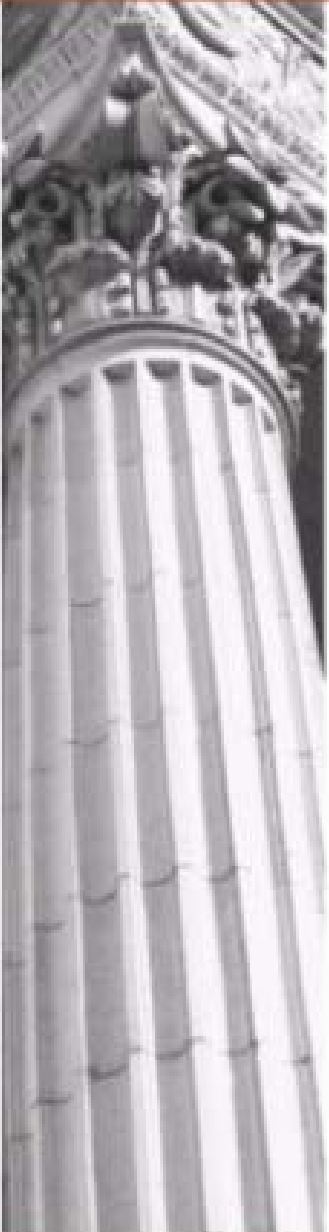
Is this obtainable?

- 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

Approaches to Consolidation

www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2008/rpt354.html

Catalog of Collaboration Laws

www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2007/rpt346.pdf

Survey of Service Provision

www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/catalog.html

Grand Blanc consolidation

www.crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2005/rpt339.pdf

www.crcmich.org

**Providing Independent, Nonpartisan
Public Policy Research Since 1916**



CITIZENS RESEARCH COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN



The Citizens Research Council of Michigan is supported by gifts and grants of all sizes coming from many different donors including:

- **Foundations**
- **Businesses**
- **Organizations**
- **Individual Citizens like you**

We hope you will consider supporting CRC. For more information or to donate, contact us at:

**Citizens Research Council of Michigan
38777 Six Mile Road
Livonia, MI 48152**

**(734) 542-8001
www.crcmich.org**