

## **Intergovernmental Collaboration in Context Lessons From a Reading of Thirteen Case Studies**

Gerald Benjamin

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The very energetic, first-term town supervisor of the Town of Rhinebeck, one of our case study communities, came in to see me in my office at the university some weeks ago about some plans he had for joining his community in collaborative activities with the Village of Rhinebeck and the Rhinebeck School District. Steve Block has a doctorate in education. He worked for decades as an advocate for change in educational policy in another state. In his former job, Steve told me, he was easily able to find the precise information he needed. Not so for local government reform in New York, he said. He had found state agency publications, but still felt that he was reinventing the wheel. I was “the guy to see about local government,” he was told. (I demurred; “a guy to see,” I said.) “Where should I look?” he asked for practical advice about achieving change.

### **The Regionalism Movement and the New York Context**

The need Supervisor Block felt is instructive. The renewed attention to local government reform in New York State is part of a national “New Regionalism” movement, launched by David Rusk’ seminal book on *Cities Without Suburbs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1993) and now almost a decade and a half old. The movement is driven by two major forces. One is economic: the desire to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in government, and regional economic competitiveness, in the face of rising costs, and especially increased property taxes. The second is social: the desire to mitigate or remove the discriminatory effects, especially in education and housing, that result purposefully or by inadvertence from current governmental boundaries.

The regionalism movement has resulted in both a national debate and a national literature of reform. (For one summary with an applied focus see Mandelker, et al. “Alternate Models for Local Government” *State and Local Government in a Federal System*, 6<sup>th</sup>. Ed. (Newark: Lexis Nexus, 2006) Chapter 4). The debate centers less on the desirability of regional reform than on how to achieve it in a suburban and rural social, political and governmental environment in which a genuine and valuable loyalty to the idea of community is deep, and localism – characterized as “home rule” - is often entrenched in state constitutions and statutes. (For a general discussion see Gerald Benjamin and Richard Nathan. *Regionalism and Realism* (Washington D.C.: Brookings, 2001) Chapter 2.).

Local government in New York, among those states with a great array of governmental types, high numbers of local governments and extensive jurisdictional overlapping, has been a central focus of the regionalism debate. Within our state, the governance of the nation’s first consolidated metropolis, New York City, presents unique questions. Discourse about reform within the state has centered on governance in our state’s other major cities and their surrounding suburbs and in our rural areas. For these

areas, there is no shortage of writing on local government and local government reform in New York, much of it very practically focused, originating in state agencies, associations of local governments, university based research centers, independent think tanks and local or regional reform-oriented coalitions (Many of these are represented on the advisory board of the SMSI project, with their materials made available through the Albany Law School.) Apart from those done by state government, most studies are regionally focused. David Rusk himself has offered his prescriptions directly targeted on a number of specific New York regions.

<http://www.gamaliel.org/DavidRusk/DavidRuskLibrary.htm>. A particularly valuable recent general exploration of issues and needs in local governance in New York State has been prepared by the Intergovernmental Studies Program of the Rockefeller College at SUNY Albany. (*Government, Business, and Civic Leaders Talk About...Governing New York's Communities* (2005) and *Municipal Leaders Talk About...governing New York's Communities* (2007).)

In particular, Supervisor Block was right that there was a good deal of published guidance available from the state government. The Division of Local Government Services and Economic Development in the Comptroller's office has available a guide to *Intermunicipal Cooperation and Consolidation* and regularly publishes analytic studies centered on local government issues and concerns.

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/index.htm>. That office's recently published report on *Outdated Municipal Structures*, a part of the Local Government Issues in Focus series (Volume 2, No. 3, October 2006) is especially valuable for a proposed redefinition of the states governing paradigm at the local level. The Division of Local Government in the Secretary of State's Office, which of course manages the SMSI, provides the well-known *Handbook of Local Government* and a range of other publications that support local governments working together. <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/index.htm>. In 2005 the Attorney General produced *Making Government Work* a compendium summary of the law on local government cooperation and consolidation. Often these agencies have gone beyond published advice, and offered expertise, analysis and training in support of reform efforts.

New York is among the states with highly decentralized service delivery systems; most key services are delivered to citizens through local governments. For example, providing elementary and secondary education is a constitutional requirement upon state government, but is achieved almost entirely through local school districts. (*New York State Constitution*, Article XI) The State Education Department therefore has been very interested and involved in structural and organization issues at the local level.

([www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/sch\\_dist\\_org/GuideToReorganizationOfSchoolDistricts.htm](http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/sch_dist_org/GuideToReorganizationOfSchoolDistricts.htm) - 101k - 2006-01-25 ) The work of the Office of Real Property Tax Services <http://www.orps.state.ny.us/>, to cite another example, is almost entirely focused on local government, often with an important objective the encouragement of greater efficiency in local operations.

In fact, it is the rare state agency that has no involvement with localities, and no involvement in the organization and functioning of local government. This reality

suggest that direct efforts to encourage greater intergovernmental collaboration by localities be undertaken with an eye toward potential sources of reinforcement from the range of state agencies working with and through local government.

On the legislative side of state government, there has been a long-time commitment to local government reform by the New York State Commission on State-Local Relations, the Assembly and Senate Committees on Local Governments, and Joint Legislative Committee on Rural Resources. The Commission and Assembly Committee produce the valuable *Catalog of State and Federal Programs Aiding New York's Local Governments* (Most recent edition: 2005). Particular leadership has recently come from the Senate's Local Government Committee. (See *Sharing Services and Saving Tax Dollars: A Senate Report on Intermunicipal Agreements*, December, 2005)

Yet despite all these state level efforts, reform and restructuring of local government has, at best, been slow. Steve Block's felt need resonates. What else do we need to know about the process and politics of reform to achieve greater success?

### **The Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program**

Under the Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program (SMSI) the state has gone beyond providing advice. In 2005-2006 \$2.45 million in grant money was competitively awarded to twenty-two pairs or groups of cities, towns, villages, counties and school districts that sought to improve their efficiency through cooperation, consolidation or dissolution or merger. For the following year, with \$25 million appropriated, eligibility was extended to include special improvement districts, fire districts, fire alarm districts and fire protection districts, and the program was sharpened. Five categories of awards specified: 1) Shared Municipal Services; 2) Shared Highway Services 3) Local Health Insurance Shared Services; 4) Countywide Shared Services and, 5) Local Consolidations. There were 244 applications submitted, requesting over \$52.3 million; 45 Shared Municipal Services awards and 14 Shared Highway Service awards were made.

Concomitantly, the Government Law Center of the Albany Law School was contracted by the Department of State to help draw out answers from past and ongoing efforts at consolidation and collaboration, both successful and not, so as to support further success across the state. The Center selected a number of cases for study based upon consultation with the Comptroller's office, a review of the literature in the field and consideration of cases funded in the first cycle. Its aim was to provide guidance across a broad range of governmental functions and types of cooperative approaches. In selecting the cases the Center considered such factors as the number and types of communities involved; the substance of the service (e.g., highway, police); the availability of the people involved; and proximity of an associate academic institution to perform the study. A systematic effort was made to assure that those who prepared case studies gathered information that would be useful for comparative analysis.

We seek below to draw some general lessons from these thirteen selected cases, to inform both localities interested in working with each other and state agencies that seek to further collaborative efforts. In doing this it is important to remain mindful of certain limitations. The number of cases under study is very small relative to the number of collaborations that we know occur between or among New York local governments. Moreover, these cases were not selected in a manner that assures that they are representative of collaborative efforts by local governments generally across the state. Also, there may be significant differences in actions taken by localities when a substantial incentive is offered, as is the case for the SMSI program, and in the absence of such an incentive. The summary points below then must not be taken as conclusory but as tentative: they are suggestions for consideration as additional collaborations are considered as policy is made, and as guides for future study.

### **Definition of the Problem.**

*The Property Tax.* The underlying problem in all cases is the need to deliver governmental services on a limited revenue base, largely reliant on the property tax. Though they vary greatly across the state, real property taxes are generally regarded as burdensome throughout New York (with the possible exception of for private residences inside New York City.) Avoidance or limitation of increases in real property taxes while maintaining service levels is therefore a primary goal for most elected local government officials in the state. This provides a persistent motivation for seeking to reduce costs, or displace them on others (e.g. seeking state grants for infrastructure improvement).

General public concern about the property tax may, in specific circumstances, be transformed into a compelling immediate issue. With the Village of Liberty at its constitutional taxing limit, fear of bankruptcy and its consequences generated widespread public support for a study to consider either dissolution of the village, consolidation, service sharing, or merger with the Town of Liberty.

*External Factors: Growth, Grantor Conditions, Mandates.* Growth pressures may produce a requirement for new infrastructure, or enhanced service levels (Indian River School District and Town of Philadelphia). Considering or implementing intergovernmental collaboration may be a contingent requirement for obtaining external support to respond to a pressing local need. (Morrison) Alternatively external mandates might be imposing costs, or anticipated costs, that it appears might best be minimized through collaborative action. (Long Island Sound Intermunicipal Watershed Council).

*Informed Local Opinion.* In some cases (Chemung County, Broome County, Rhinebeck, Portland/ Brockton) governmental leaders conversant with the regionalism movement, or with experience in business or in the public sector outside the state, find the local government layering prevalent in New York to be contrary to common sense, and presume that it is a source of increased overhead costs that might be avoided through collaboration or consolidation. This view is reinforced by the creation of state programs, like the SMSI, that encourage consolidation and/or collaboration.

*Positive Past Experience in the Face of Crisis.* Previous successful efforts at consolidation or collaboration, sometimes motivated by a local economic crisis, might suggest the value of considering additional steps (Moriah and Port Henry).

*Very Specifically Local Conditions.* Even in areas of local service where collaboration or consolidation is traditionally difficult, specific local circumstances might enhance its prospects. For example, the close geographic proximity of town offices appears to have been a significant factor in achieving justice court consolidation in Shelby/Ridgeway.

## **The Process**

*Local Leadership.* In all cases under consideration, and as might be expected, problems in operating the government were at first defined by elected officials. For them the omnipresent concern about the property tax was a clear driver in seeking cost reduction or displacement. Leadership for collaboration in general purpose governments must come from elected officials in *all* the jurisdictions involved, usually mayors or town supervisors, or in special purpose governments from well situated appointed leaders with special legitimacy in the community (e.g. a school superintendent, or key county department head). The passive posture of the Sheriff in Saratoga County – an elected official who might well have been put off by the aroused opposition in Waterford to contracting with him for police services – was not helpful toward achieving this change.

*Linkage of Action to the Problem.* Local officials are keenly aware of program costs and resource constraints. For them a collaborative effort in a particular service area is directly connected with keeping costs and taxes under control. But the actions proposed to provide fiscal relief may not directly address taxation; they are not tax cuts, nor are they changes in assessment practices. Moreover the specific proposals in the cases under review (with the exception of the Indian River/Philadelphia and Liberty cases) were only tangentially responsive a focused demand or broadly understood need for change in the community.

*Be Ready for the "Solution Without a Problem" Argument.* This created the prospect, especially where change was proposed in areas of service directly delivered and consumed individually by citizens (e.g. police protection in Waterford) and in which, therefore, mobilization against the proposed reform was likely, that one argument made would be that governmental leaders were presenting a solution where there was not a problem. Moreover, it invited an arguments that the economies achieved were overestimated, or that they would come at an unacceptable cost in the extent and quality of service provided in the community.

*Encouraging Engagement.* This points to the essentiality of engaging the community, and creating a dynamic through which the need for change is embraced by and ideas for change are rooted in the community or communities considering collaboration or consolidation. The Rhinebeck case demonstrated a very thoughtful, developed effort at community engagement.

*Preparation and Commitment Over Time.* In this context the successful creation of the Municipal Highway Services Board in Chemung County is instructive. Under the leadership of a well established County Executive who was deeply committed to regionalism, a countywide intermunicipal council had been established, and a number of initiatives to share services were considered, or actually launched. When vacancies arose as a result of retirements in critical jobs in the county highway department, including that of a department head who was himself a barrier to change, the necessary “nemowashi” (“root binding, the Japanese idiom for widespread preparatory consultation) had already occurred.

*Create a Venue Where Collaboration is the Core Focus:* The lesson of the Chemung experience is that communities that might wish to collaborate are well advised to create a structure for consultation even if the likelihood of particular action is not immediate. In this way, a venue is available, and the groundwork is laid when the opportunity arises. The Rhinebeck collaboration -- the mayor, supervisor and school superintendent and three others (a member from each government’s board) -- meet regularly to discuss common concerns and seek shared solutions. Another example: the recently adopted Ulster County Charter mandates the creation and regular convening of a county-wide Intergovernmental Collaboration Council

*Experts.* Third-party experts are important in pursuing intergovernmental collaboration. Using them avoids the actual, perceived or potential conflict in roles that arise from the involvement of experts employed in state agencies seeking to encourage reform. In a number of the cases of the review, universities, think tanks or private consultants were dispassionate sources of information, analysis and options. In others, Liberty for example, the SMSI grant was sought specifically to employ expertise to specify potential collaborative opportunities. Properly used, consultants may disarm the argument that one or another of the officials involved in seeking change is pursuing a personal agenda (or vendetta).

The Broome County experience shows differences on the facts can stop a collaborative effort in its tracks. Just how many people will retire, and when? Just how much money will be saved, and over how much time? A key potential role of the outsider in collaboration and or consolidation efforts, and one that has been less specified, is as a neutral stipulator of the facts. The analogy is a written agreement or concession made by parties in a judicial proceeding (or by their attorneys) relating to business before the court that is made part of the court record.

But in using consultants, it is important to insist on their reporting in a manner that is not preemptive of local decision. As the Arkport CSD/Village of Arkville/ Town of Hornellsville case shows, if the third party recommends a preferred course of action but an alternative is taken, even for good reason, opponents may be benefited.

*It’s About Collaboration, Not Control.* Larger jurisdictions have the resources to lead. In rural areas, the local government with the most resources and capacity is the consolidated

school district. This is a key reason why in seeking collaborative opportunities it is essential to consider both general and special purpose governments.

The Arkville and Indian River School Districts were far bigger in size of budget and staff than the localities with which they sought to collaborate. But disparities in size and capacity may raise fears about being subordinated. As a result of its preparatory process the Chemung County government was very mindful that successful collaboration could only result if the process was neither actually or apparently controlled by the county. And most significantly, it was willing – as an act of enlightened self interest – to spend its own resources to help create and launch a collaborative structure and process for highway maintenance.

*Failure to Prepare and to Consult is Fatal.* The need for such preparation, and buy-in, however, may be a barrier to exploiting opportunities quickly when they arise. In North Alba/Lake Placid, a vacancy arose as a result of retirement at the head of the Village Highway Department. This presented an opportunity to make the elected town highway superintendent the appointed head of the village department, as well. The village, an internationally known resort area with a budget much larger than the town's, took this step without consulting the town board (a self-inflicted wound).

*Make Time Your Friend.* Failed attempts to act fast, with limited preparation, assume that time is an enemy: if you don't act fast, you will be unable to act at all. Instead, reformers must make time their friend. Use time to prepare. Plan for change over time. Mitigate potential opposition to change from those most affected – for example, public employees, or incumbent elected department heads or officials in jobs that may be targeted for elimination or combination -- by using attrition rather than firing to reach goals.

*Actions Speak: Formal Involvement of the Entire Governing Body is Symbolically Important.* Change advanced by the most visible officials in local government (e.g. the mayor, the supervisor, the superintendent of schools) is bolstered when formal action by governing boards legitimizes the change process. The Rhinebeck initiative, launched with particular leadership from the town supervisor, was formally embraced in resolutions passed by the three local governing bodies. This told the community that, notwithstanding past differences or difficulties, leaders of all the involved parties agreed in principle on the importance of collaboration.

*There Are Natural Constituencies for Change: External Support Also Legitimizes.* Collaboration is further legitimized through expressions of support by key players in the community. Chambers of Commerce and local media, for example, are usually enthusiasts of consolidation or collaboration because of what they regard as its self-evident economic logic. There is no instance reported in the cases under review of media opposition to the consideration of consolidation or collaboration.

*Be Aware of and Call upon Other Potential Beneficiaries for Support.* The positive effects of a collaborative effort may reach far beyond the jurisdictions actually entering into formal agreement. For example, regional offices of state agencies and departments of

the Jefferson County government stood to benefit significantly from the results of the proposed collaboration between the Indian River Consolidated School District and the Town of Philadelphia to build a new garage. One problem that arises from the complexity of our local government arrangements in New York is that it obscures the actual potential benefits of collaboration, the aggregate gains that may be made from change in all jurisdictions. Another is that it encourages free riding: some jurisdictions standing aside while the (political or fiscal) costs of change are incurred, and then stepping in to gain a share of the benefits.

*Pick the Low Hanging Fruit.* Again in Rhinebeck, a small but symbolically important agreement on facilities sharing without charge between the town and the school district laid the groundwork for further steps. In the Portland/Brocton case the merger of the dog control function, when the opportunity arose, provided a chance for taking a collaborative step with relatively little controversy.

*Get Started: Avoid Veto Situations.* Requiring all potential partners to sign on before a collaboration begins gives any single municipality a veto. If the most committed jurisdictions get started, others may join later. As we will see below, two party agreements are most common; multiparty action is most difficult. The creation of the Hudson River Valley Greenway, one of the most successful intergovernmental collaborative activities in the state, did not require that all potential entities sign on before the project got under way. Initial successes attracted others. The Indian River School District /Philadelphia Town collaborative effort was not blocked when the Village of Philadelphia withdrew. The Chemung County highway collaboration went forward with only four of the county's towns signed on. The county government's failure to participate did not block the effort at city/town/village collaboration to create a storm water district in Westchester.

### **Barriers and Overcoming Them:**

*Behave Ethically:* The Arkport CSD/ Village of Arkville/ Town of Hornellsville reminds us of the obvious: self-interested behavior by decision makers, or even its appearance, will likely sink collaborative efforts.

*"I Am From the State and I Am Here to Help."* State agencies encouraging cooperation and consolidation are headed by appointees of the governor, or statewide elected officials. Partisan differences between them and the local officials between or among whom they seek to encourage collaborative efforts may raise barriers. Moreover, state agencies often have conflicting roles. The State Comptroller, for example, seeks to encourage intergovernmental consolidation and collaboration but also oversees and regulates local operations. Portland/Brocton reported calling upon advice formally made available from the Comptroller's office. But Moriah/Pt. Henry reported unhappiness about the Comptroller's insistence that their collaboration be formal rather than informal. The Village and Town of Liberty report extensive informal collaboration. Ironically, fear that gains already made might have to be formalized if collaborative steps in additional areas are formally considered might end up being barriers to change.

Another example: As earlier noted, The State Attorney General formally encourages consolidation. Yet in the Lake Placid/North Elba Case, the Attorney General's office was approached for an advisory opinion, and found that simultaneous service by one person in these two offices – one appointed, one elected -- was not permissible. This suggests need for change in state law, or a different opinion from a new Attorney General.

*Referendum Requirements in State Constitution or Law:* State law requires a referendum to shift an office from elective to appointed. Further scotching the collaborate initiative in Lake Placid/North Elba, the town declined in a referendum to take this step for its Highway Superintendency.

*Non-Coterminality of Local Boundaries:* School district boundaries are not coterminous with those of general purpose governments. Village boundaries may cross county or town lines. In one of cases under consideration, the Arkport Central School District is in two counties, includes part but not all of the Town of Hornellsville and all or part of \_\_\_#\_\_\_ other towns. A collaboration with a few municipalities within a school district might be seen as undertaken without benefiting other parts of the district, but calling upon them to share costs.

*Those Potentially Disadvantaged Will Resist:* In the cases under study the most vigorous resistance came from leaders and employees who feared the loss of their jobs – and organizations that represented them (e.g. employee unions). This opposition must be anticipated, and a plan developed to address concerns and minimize the often short-term costs of change to achieve the longer-term benefits. (See the above discussion of *Make Time Your Friend*.) In particular, remember that local employees find protections in Civil Service law and collective bargaining agreements.

*Local History and Experience Counts Heavily:* Proposals for collaboration or consolidation occur in historic context; they do not arise in a vacuum. Many local leaders are long serving, and are from families that have been in their communities for generations. They know local history; many have made it. Moreover, local experience is the experience most important to them. For example, local leaders still active remember previous attempts to dissolve villages in Rhinebeck, Brocton and Lake Placid, and the effort made to fight this off.

Advocacy of collaboration entails political risks. This spring in Rhinebeck a key issue in the village elections involved assertions by Republican candidates that Democrats, led by the *town* Supervisor, were seeking to abolish the village government under the guise of advancing collaboration. Established Village residents turned out to “save” the village. (See Patricia Doxey. “Rhinebeck Village Election Stirs Dissolution Debate” *Kingston Freeman*, March 18, 2007, “Rhinebeck Mayor Re-elected, Red Hook Judge Ousted, *Kingston Freeman*, May 21, 2007).

*Respect the Community and the Idea of Community.* Moreover, as the Moriah/Port Henry Fire District consolidation case shows, governance structures whose overt purpose is to deliver public service also may be at the center of the social and cultural life of a place, at the core for many of its very identity as a community. Faced with the economy/community tradeoff, people will rarely opt for the former over the latter. That is why proponents for change are wise to clearly distinguish an idea of collaborating on delivery of a service or consolidating a single function from a threat to the continued existence of a general purpose government or school district, and – most often – to disavow the later.

### **What size and types of governments are involved in actual or proposed collaborations?**

Collaborations reported in the case studies involved all types of general purpose governments in New York State – counties, cities, towns and villages – and two types of special purpose governments – school districts and special districts. Most jurisdictions were rural villages or towns that numbered their residents in the thousands rather than the tens of thousands, though the multi-jurisdictional attempt to consolidate police services in Broome County focused on its “urban core,” and most of the twelve entities involved in creating the Long Island Sound Intermunicipal Watershed Council – the only downstate case in this sample - are decidedly urban and/or suburban. Governments whose activities are reported in the case studies range in size of population served from 200,635 in Saratoga County to 456 in the Village of Morristown. (The Village of Millport with 300 residents is a potential participant in the county-wide highway initiative in Chemung County.) Broome county spent about \$310 million in 2005; the Morristown (village) budget was \$661,621.

### **What is the substantive focus of collaboration?**

Previous research has shown that collaborations are most successfully for services consumed collectively (e.g. parks), or accessed impersonally without direct citizen contact with a government worker (e.g. highway maintenance), or those for which the government itself is the customer (e.g. equipment maintenance, specialized infrastructure). They are less frequently successfully launched for services that are directly delivered to citizens and consumed individually (e.g. police protection, education). Of the twelve cases under review, five involve shared attempts to create new infrastructure through capital investment, two concern the delivery of police services, two involve direct delivery of other services to citizens (fire protection, courts), two focus upon highway operations and management, and one involves facilities use sharing. In sum, one-third of the cases reported are in the more challenging areas for collaborative action by local government. Interestingly, all three cases in which school districts figure involve a support service – transportation, and not the direct delivery of education to children.

**How many governments are involved, and how are they situated relative to each other?**

Previous research in the downstate New York metropolitan area showed that most reported collaborations were between just two municipalities, with the difficulty of mounting intergovernmental collaborative efforts growing as the number of involved governments increased. Moreover, reported collaborations was most common where governments were layered (or nested) geographically, that is, where some of the people served by the jurisdictions seeking to collaborate were citizens (and could vote) in two or more of them. These points are confirmed from secondary assessment done for this report of close to two hundred intergovernmental collaborations in western New York reported on the website of the Regional Institute of the University of Buffalo. <http://www.regional-institute.buffalo.edu/>

*Two Layered Governments.* Generally bearing out these findings, most of the cases under review were bilateral, and involved layered jurisdictions. Seven involved actual or proposed collaboration between two jurisdictions, six of which were nested. These were most often towns and villages but one, concerning consolidating police services involved the County of Saratoga and the Town of Waterford, and another, on building a new garage, was between the Indian River School District and the Town of Philadelphia. (Other jurisdictions were named in the report of this proposed collaboration as potential beneficiaries, but were not actual parties to the agreement.) The Indian River School District/ Town of Philadelphia effort was the clearest success among these two party collaborative efforts. The Town of Portland and Village of Brocton has reported some very limited success. The Waterford/Saratoga and North Elba/Lake Placid efforts to consolidate highway departments did not succeed.

*Two Side-by-Side Governments.* Two bilateral attempts at collaboration involved side-by-side jurisdictions. The towns of Shelby and Ridgway successfully consolidated their justice courts. Interestingly, these towns were quite similar in size and character, and could therefore approach collaboration as more-or-less equal partners. The proposed consolidation of the Moriah and Port Henry Fire Districts, however, did not succeed.

*Three Layered Governments.* Another three proposed collaborations involved three nested jurisdictions: Rhinebeck's Town, Village and School District; the Town, Village and School District or Morrison; and the Arkport Central School District, the Village Arkville and the Town of Hornellsville. The first involved building or rebuilding intergovernmental relationships in the context of contentious, failed earlier efforts, and reframing the context for collective action achieved some small facilities sharing. The second, involving cooperation on maintenance and use of vehicles, was reported forestalled by delays in the state grant process. The third, which advanced the idea of collaborative construction and use of a new bus garage, failed at referendum.

*Multiple Governments.* The Broome County Metropolitan Police plan potentially involved six jurisdictions: the county itself and five "urban core" side-by-side localities

nested within it: the City of Binghamton, the Villages of Johnson City and Endicott (both in the town of Union), the Village of Port Dickinson (Town of Dickinson) and the Town of Vestal. The twelve members of the Long Island Sound Watershed Intermunicipal Council (LISWIC), the objective of which is to establish a regional special Storm Water District, include the cities of Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, and Rye, the combined town/villages of Scarsdale and Harrison, the town of Mamaroneck, and the villages of Larchmont (Town of Mamaroneck), Mamaroneck (the Towns of Mamaroneck and Rye), Pelham and Pelham Manor (both in the Town of Pelham) and Port Chester and Rye Brook (both in the Town of Rye). This later collaboration does not include the county government in Westchester, the larger jurisdiction in which all the municipalities in the LISWIC are located. Both of these multi-jurisdictional collaborations do not include all towns in which included Villages are located. Neither effort has gone beyond the planning stage.

The effort in Chemung County to create a county-wide Municipal Highway Services Board to appoint and oversee the work of a Shared Services Public Works Coordinator in encouraging intermunicipal collaboration in this area of service was the most innovative and ambitious effort reported in the case studies. An initiative of the county government, it has the potential for inclusion of all the general purpose governments in the county, but did not depend upon all of them signing on to get started. In addition to the county government, four towns and one village chose to include themselves in this effort from the outset: the towns of Horseheads, Big Flats, Elmira and Southport and the Village of Horseheads.