

**ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE
REPORT # 13**

**TOWN AND VILLAGE GOVERNMENTS:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR COST-EFFECTIVE CHANGES**

Approved and Issued

by

**The Board of Directors
Onondaga Citizens League**

August 12, 1992

**Onondaga Citizens League, Inc.
c/o University College
610 E. Fayette St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13244-6020
Phone: (315) 443-3291**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Times are tough for many people, organizations and institutions. Town and village governments are among those suffering from reduced income and demands for better services. The resulting budget crisis for local governments has created a mushrooming demand for more cost-effective operations and services.

In this report, the Onondaga Citizens League reviews the need for and the recent history of local efforts to contain costs through cooperation, coordination and consolidation. The report offers several general recommendations for increasing this cost-effectiveness of public service operations and specific recommendations regarding several service areas--public works, police, fire, parks and recreation, property assessment, administrative services and courts.

* Recognizing that most residents value highly the relatively greater access provided by town and village governments, the League recommends that direct, visible service functions be maintained at the local level. However, substantial savings can be made by centralizing control over administrative and support services which do not directly impact citizens.

* There are many cooperative arrangements already in effect. These should be expanded in terms of service areas and should be formalized in writing, not just through friendships. In general, towns and villages should aim for delivering services through single jurisdictions, joint departments or multi-department cooperation.

* Only town supervisors and councilors, village mayors and trustees and justices should be elected. In other positions, trained and qualified professionals should be hired on qualifications, not elected.

* Through "plain language" tax bills, uniform and readable budget reports and other reforms, citizens should be adequately informed as to service costs so they decide about proposals for sharing or consolidation.

* In the most expensive service area, public works, village departments should be merged with their town departments. Through the county-wide inventory of equipment, duplication of equipment and facilities should be avoided.

* Assess the real need for municipal police departments and consolidate where possible, such as merging village with town departments.

* For fire services, reduce the number of departments and explore the potential of a county-wide department. Set up a needs

assessment authority to approve equipment expenditures.

* In the area of assessment, towns should assume that responsibility for villages. The ultimate objective should be county-wide, full-value assessment.

* In the broad area of administrative services, towns and villages should share professional staff wherever possible, utilize technical and support services through the county and coordinate purchasing (including schools) through the county.

* * *

To implement the recommendations in this report and to continue planning for increased cost-effectiveness in the delivery of public services throughout this county, the Citizens League urges the formalization and strengthening of the Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium. Already in existence as an informal group of county, city, town and village officials, the Consortium has the potential to become the major instrument for cost-effective reforms in local government services.

All towns and villages, with the county and city, should agree to join and support the Consortium for an initial two-year period. To be effective, the Consortium needs staff dedicated to that organization. A percentage of sales tax revenue should be allocated to support the Consortium. The Executive Committee of the Consortium should issue semi-annual written reports on goals, accomplishments and problems.

The Consortium should develop inventories, identify opportunities for sharing and consolidating, develop prototypes for agreements on sharing equipment and personnel, assist in developing better budget reports and tax bills and in many ways improve communication and understanding in regard to local government operations and costs.

The Citizens League requests that the Executive Committee of the Consortium convene a meeting of all elected town and village officials to discuss implementation of this report's recommendations regarding the Consortium. All towns and villages should be represented. The meeting should be conducted by the end of 1992.

PREFACE

In 1978, several members of the Thursday Morning Roundtable at Syracuse University's University College explored the need for, and the feasibility of, establishing a broad-based citizen organization to study and make recommendations on long-range problems facing Onondaga County. The idea for the citizens group was inspired by the successful 25-year history of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Citizens League, which has been responsible for initiating many of the progressive developments in that metropolitan area.

After much discussion, 21 people, who were active in the community and interested in the concept, were convened by University College Dean Lee Smith, to serve as an advisory board and to develop plans for an Onondaga Citizens League. They established guidelines for members, prepared and adopted by-laws, and oversaw the operations of the Citizens League in its early months.

The Onondaga Citizens League was incorporated in 1980 and received non-profit, tax-exempt status in 1981. The League's purpose is to encourage citizen education and involvement in public issues and problems. Members study all aspects of selected public issues. They review the facts, make considered judgments on approaches, alternatives and solutions, and develop recommendations to present to the community. The organization's objective is to forestall the development of problems into major crises. The League's mission is to encourage and provide civic education for local residents, not to promote specific legislation or function as a lobbying group.

The Onondaga Citizens League with a current membership of more than 200, is open to all residents in Onondaga County. While some choose to join in order to study a specific topic, others join and renew their membership annually because they support the principle of citizen education and involvement. In its 14-year history, the Citizens League has issued 13 reports.

Reports of the Onondaga Citizens League:

<u>Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment</u>	June, 1979
<u>Young People in Trouble: Can Our Services Be Organized and Delivered More Effectively?</u>	May, 1980
<u>The County Legislature: Its Function, Size and Structure</u>	August, 1981
<u>Declining School Enrollments: Opportunities for Cooperative Adaptations?</u>	July, 1982

<u>Onondaga County Public Works Infrastructure: Status, Funding and Responsibilities</u>	July, 1983
<u>Police Services in Onondaga County: A Review and Recommendations</u>	August, 1984
<u>The City and County Charters: Time for Revision?</u>	July, 1985
<u>Blueprints for the Future: Recommendations for the Syracuse Area in the Year 2000</u>	July, 1987
<u>The Role of the Food Industry in the Economy of Onondaga County</u>	July, 1988
<u>Poverty and Its Social Costs: Are There Long-Term Solutions?</u>	October, 1989
<u>Syracuse Area Workforce of the Future: How Do We Prepare?</u>	June, 1990
<u>Schools That Work: Models in Education That Can Be Used in Onondaga County</u>	September, 1991
<u>Town and Village Governments: Opportunities for Cost- Effective Changes</u>	September, 1992

APPRECIATION

In our community, as in many others, the dedication and active participation of volunteers is an essential ingredient in all civic enterprises. This is especially the case in regard to the work of the Onondaga Citizens League. The League is comprised of volunteers. Officers, board members, committee chairpersons and committee members give freely much of their time and thought to planning and carrying out the work of the League.

This particular study on town and village governments involved more volunteers than previous efforts. About 100 persons worked on this project, including advisors, study committee members, speakers, and consultants. Most of these are identified in the appendix. Those who deserve special thanks are the members of the study committee. These individuals spent many hours during six months, listening to experts on some phase of the study topic, probing issues, reading documents and debating recommendations.

The League is especially appreciative of the contributions made by the leaders of this project. Carol Dwyer, Tom Letham and Helen Zych spent countless hours in addition to study committee sessions reviewing progress, planning strategy and future sessions, and obtaining speakers or consultants.

As noted in the report, Jeffrey Stonecash, Professor of Political Science at SU, was responsible for designing and administering the public opinion poll used to discover attitudes and opinions concerning local government operations and services. He also helped plan the entire study. The League is grateful for all of his assistance.

The OCL Board of Directors appreciates very much the work of its assistant director and general writer, Laurel Saiz, who wrote this report. Also deserving special thanks is Patrick Mannion, vice president of OCL and executive vice president of Unity Mutual Life Insurance Company, who arranged for the binding of this report.

As it has for 14 years, University College of Syracuse University provided staff support, office and meeting facilities, telephone, mailing and other forms of assistance as a community service to implement the work of the Onondaga Citizens League.

I. Introduction

In its 14 years of existence, the Onondaga Citizens League has consistently striven to learn more about problems affecting the greater Syracuse community and to inform and educate the public about possible solutions. At the core of the majority of studies undertaken by the Citizens League has been an important goal: finding ways to improve the delivery of public services to the residents of Onondaga County. In past studies, the League has focused on such specific service areas as property assessment, youth services, public works, police services, education and job training. In all these studies, it was apparent that greater steps could be taken to improve government services. The recommendations of all these studies indicated that key to this improvement was improved communication and cooperation among government entities.

Recent trends in government include cutbacks in state and federal aid, rising local taxes and economic problems caused by the recession. These economic and budgetary issues have sparked an intensified interest in government services and the cost of government on the part of the media and taxpayers. Clearly, the issue of cost efficiency in government continues to be of paramount interest.

Following its long history of scrutiny into public issues, the Onondaga Citizens League's Board of Directors voted in May of 1991 to study the cost efficiency of local governments in Onondaga County. The board approved the specific topic, "Town and Village Governments: Opportunities for Cost Effective Changes." The City of Syracuse was excluded from the purview of the study, because of its size and the fact that it operates under a different legal framework than do the towns and villages. Likewise, school districts were excluded, because they present a different--though no less significant--set of issues.

Three board members, who are all dedicated community workers, were designated as chairpeople: Carol Dwyer, Tom Letham and Helen Zych. A steering committee, made up of 14 individuals prominent in the public and private sectors, further developed the direction of the study during the summer and fall of 1991. Fifty people joined the actual study committee. The study committee membership included government officials, representatives of not-for-profit agencies, businessmen and women, and interested citizens. The members were residents of towns and villages in all parts of Onondaga County, as well as the City of Syracuse. Attendance at the weekly meetings averaged 30 to 40. The study sessions began Dec. 5, 1991 and continued through the summer of 1992.

Forty-two speakers made presentations during the seven-month long inquiry. These speakers included eight village officials, 12 town supervisors or department heads, six county officials, a state program head and a representative of a statewide organization.

Panel presentations with expert speakers were conducted in specific service areas: public works, police, fire services, parks and recreation, and town and village courts. A number of speakers dealt with the management and administrative aspects of their service areas, while assessment was discussed by various elected officials. In addition, the study committee heard from public and private officials from other communities in New York State, who discussed innovative and unusual efforts that might be tried locally.

This year, as in several previous years, the topic for the annual Syracuse University Community Leadership Conference at Minnowbrook was based on the current OCL study. For two days, 70 leaders from the public and private sectors gathered to discuss "Town and Village Governments in Onondaga County: Opportunities for Cost-Effective Changes." The relevance of the League's study topic was evident in the caliber of speakers who made presentations at Minnowbrook. New York State Lieutenant Governor Stan Lundine began the conference with a keynote address focusing on the importance of achieving change in service delivery. Fifteen other speakers, representing state, town and village governments and the private sector, continued to discuss barriers to change, the pros and cons of consolidation, coordination and cooperation, and other topics. Some of these speakers also took part in the regular study sessions. The information gathered at Minnowbrook was invaluable to the continuing work of the OCL study committee.

For three nights in February, 1992, 40 members of the Citizens League conducted a telephone survey of citizens attitudes about government among town and village residents in Onondaga County. The survey was written, administered and analyzed by Syracuse University Professor Jeffrey M. Stonecash. A professor of political science in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and an expert in political polling, Stonecash utilized a random sample of 1,130 registered voters generated by the Onondaga County Board of Elections. Of these, 388 were actually contacted and given the 16-question survey, which took approximately 15 minutes. The results of this survey make up some of the findings of this report. However, the Citizens League wishes to emphasize that the survey was one tool used, not the basis for the entire report. The survey was done before the recent stories in the media about consolidation of government services and without benefit of a broader public education program on local government issues. The survey, thus, does not constitute the sole reasoning behind the recommendations in this report.

The telephone survey does reflect an evolution in thinking that did occur on the part of study committee members themselves during the intensive process of presentations, review sessions and analysis. The study started with the major goal of achieving cost efficiency--how government services can be differently administered to provide greater savings. As the study progressed, it became clear that cost efficiency was coupled in the public mind with no

less significant issues--that of receptivity and responsiveness of local government. Information presented by speakers, the survey results from town and village and residents, and group discussions among study committee members indicated that access and community identity were also important issues to be considered. This awareness has played a vital part in the formulation of this report.

The Onondaga Citizens League started out by wanting to know how various government services are delivered and how much these services cost. The study committee wanted to discover what is being done in the community to improve service delivery and what ideas can be brought in from other communities. Now, an equally important stage must take place. A major goal of this report and its recommendations is to make the citizens of Onondaga County more aware of the cost of various levels of government and the costs of individual services, including public works, police, fire, recreation, courts and administrative functions. In this report, the League suggests a mechanism for providing people with more facts about their local governments and the way towns and villages are strongly affected by the county, state and federal levels, as well. The ultimate goal of this study is to help citizens make better informed decisions about the services performed by their town and village governments.

II. Background and History

A. Onondaga County has a rich diversity in its Villages and Towns

The 19 towns and 15 villages in Onondaga County differ widely in character, population and financial base. Some towns, such as Clay, Dewitt and Salina, are largely developed with housing subdivisions, shopping areas and other commercial properties. Others, such as Fabius, Marcellus and Skaneateles are predominately rural farmland, with small, distinctive villages. Still others, such as Pompey, are predominately rural and lack a single identifiable center. The "inner ring" of suburban towns, such as Dewitt and Geddes, have older housing developments and have experienced a decline in population in the last two decades, while the more northern towns, such as Lysander, Clay and Cicero have had great increases in population. (See Table One) More recently, the Towns of Pompey and Onondaga have been experiencing pockets of new housing development. The towns in Onondaga County represent a broad range of terrain, as well, with predominately flat land in the northern part of the county and rolling hills and valleys in the south.

The villages range in size from North Syracuse, Solvay and Baldwinsville, which each have more than 6,000 residents, to villages like Camillus, Elbridge, Jordan and Tully, each with about 1,000 residents. The villages differ widely in character, as well. For example, Liverpool, with a population of 2,624, has a convergence of several main arteries, which serve as a major conduit for 70,000 commuters each day. Several villages, such as Fayetteville, North Syracuse and Manlius, have a bustling commercial center, while others, such as Jordan, Marcellus and Minoa, are not major sources of business activity. Another village, Fabius, with just 310 people, is set amidst dairy farms in the southeastern corner of the county, and is far removed from commuter and business traffic. Two villages--Baldwinsville and North Syracuse--are situated within two townships, and thus deal with two different town boards.

B. Onondaga County's Towns and Villages Reflect a Long History of Providing Services

Local government in New York State is based on a system that was set up, literally, about 200 years ago, when the land was surveyed and given as part of land grants to Revolutionary War veterans. According to the Local Government Restructuring Project of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, town and county boundaries were drawn and those units of government created "for the most part for convenience and more expeditious state administration." By contrast, "villages and cities are corporations organized by the voluntary action of local inhabitants and limited by statute or charter."

TABLE ONE: TOWN POPULATIONS IN ONONDAGA COUNTY			
<u>Source: City of Syracuse Office of Research and 1990 Census</u>			
Town	1980	1990	% Change 1980- 1990
Camillus*	24,333	23,625	-2.9%
Cicero*	23,689	25,560	+7.9%
Clay*	52,838	59,749	+13.0%
Dewitt*	26,869	25,148	-6.4%
Elbridge	5,885	6,192	+5.2%
Fabius	1,811	1,760	-2.8%
Geddes*	18,528	17,677	-4.6%
LaFayette	4,488	5,105	+13.7%
Lysander*	13,897	16,346	+17.6%
Manlius*	28,489	30,656	+7.6%
Marcellus	6,180	6,465	+4.6%
Onondaga*	17,824	18,396	+3.2%
Otisco	2,112	2,255	+6.8%
Pompey	4,492	5,317	+18.3%
Salina*	37,400	35,145	-6.0%
Skaneateles	7,795	7,526	-3.4%
Spafford	1,596	1,675	+4.9%
Tully	2,409	2,378	-1.3%
Van Buren*	12,585	13,367	+6.2%

Note: * denotes First Class Town; the remainder are Second Class Towns under NYS Law.

As the clusters of population grew in Onondaga County and other Upstate counties, residents incorporated themselves for a practical reason: the need for the provision of services, such as sidewalks, sewers, water and, later, lighting. Such was the population growth in Onondaga County that by 1850, all 15 current villages in Onondaga County had been incorporated. Onondaga County's villages have thus been residential centers and service providers for 150 years. (See Table Two)

As population grew in Onondaga County, particularly with the suburban growth following World War II, more and more people began living outside the city and in non-incorporated parts of townships.

TABLE TWO: VILLAGE POPULATIONS IN ONONDAGA COUNTY			
Source: City of Syracuse Office of Research and 1990 Census			
Village	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990
Baldwinsville	6,446	6,592	+2.3%
Camillus	1,298	1,150	-11.4%
East Syracuse	3,412	3,343	-2.0%
Elbridge	1,099	1,219	+11.0%
Fabius	367	310	-16.0%
Fayetteville	4,709	4,248	-10.0%
Jordan	1,371	1,325	-3.4%
Liverpool	2,849	2,624	-7.9%
Manlius	5,241	4,764	-9.1%
Marcellus	1,870	1,840	-1.6%
Minoa	3,640	3,745	+2.9%
North Syracuse	5,875	7,363	+25.3%
Skaneateles	2,789	2,724	-2.3%
Solvay	7,140	6,717	-5.9%
Tully	1,049	911	-13.2%

Towns were increasingly called upon to provide services for these residents who did not live in the incorporated villages. Townships began to offer (often in addition to the villages) such services as public works, parks and recreation, and public safety.

According to the Rockefeller Institute, "over time, distinctions have blurred and counties and towns have taken on many functions traditionally performed by cities and villages. State law now includes counties and towns within the category of 'municipal corporations' and gives them home rule powers." Town law, enacted by the New York State Legislature and in the New York State Constitution, stipulates that "first class" towns have populations of more than 10,000 and "second class" towns have populations of

less than 10,000. Some differences between first and second class towns concern which officials are elected and which are appointed.

Later, as the population in the state increased further and became more dispersed, suburban law was passed by state government and special benefit districts were created by local initiative. Special benefit districts are simple taxing units, not governing bodies. They are designed to provide a funding mechanism for service provision in unincorporated, but populated areas, particularly housing subdivisions. There is a wide range in the number of special benefit districts to provide water, sewage, and other services in Onondaga County's towns. For example, the Town of Clay has about 18,000 housing units and almost 500 special benefit districts. Cicero has 9,000 residential properties and 210 special benefit districts. Manlius has close to 12,000 residential properties and 75 special districts. Other towns, such as Otisco, Tully and Fabius, have less than 1,000 housing units and just one or two special benefit districts each.

Local governments also utilize fire districts and fire protection districts, as well as village fire departments, as mechanisms for the provision of fire protection services. Currently, there are 23 fire departments that are part of fire districts, 13 village departments, 15 private not-for-profit corporations, five fire departments located outside of Onondaga County that protect part of the county and one sovereign nation fire department, located on the Onondaga Nation.

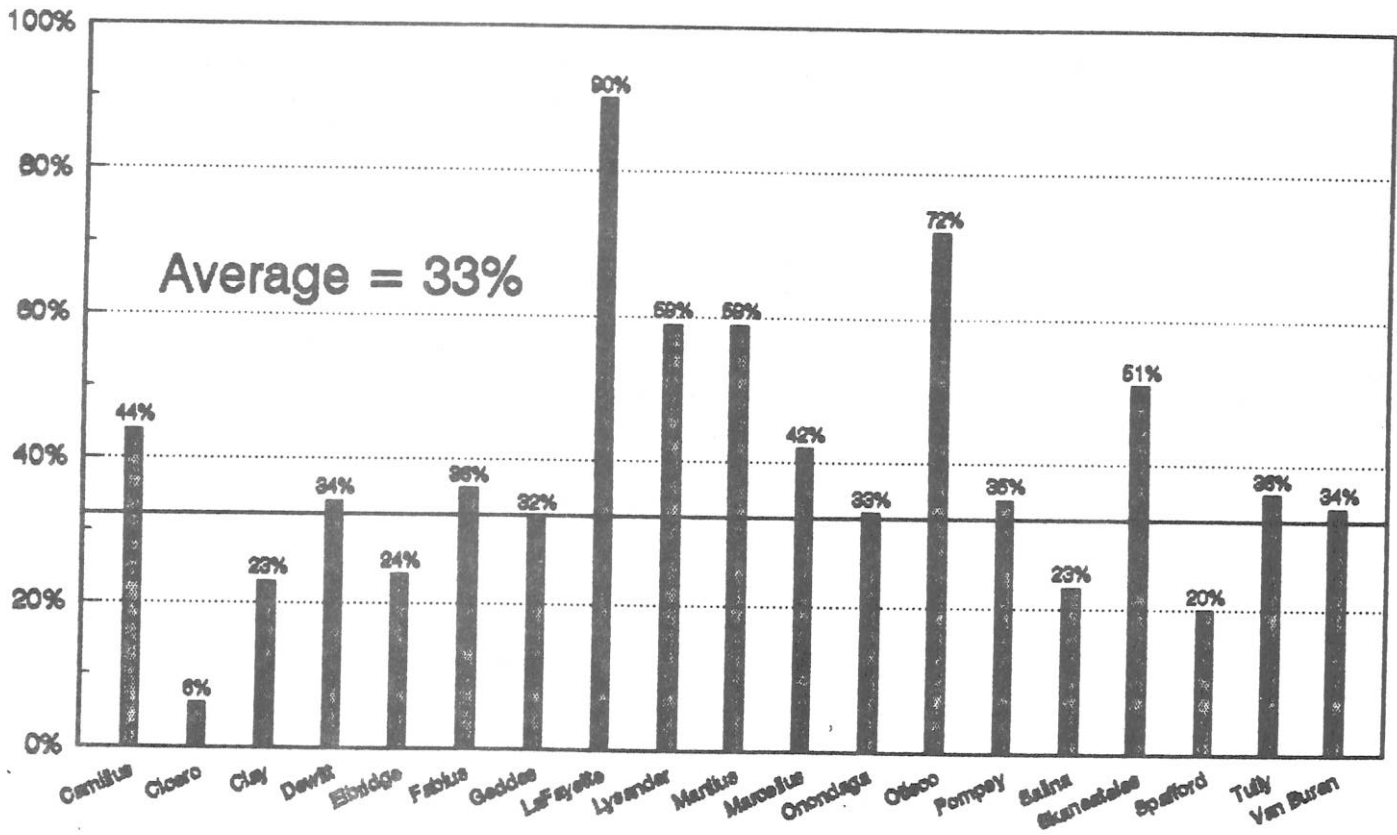
Thus, today, town and village governments in Onondaga County have a substantial government infrastructure in place for delivery of a variety of public services: assessment, police and fire protection, garbage removal, snow plowing and road repair, sewage, water, and various recreation programs.

The following pages include charts that show total expenditures of town and village governments on a per capita basis, including school taxes. The appendix includes a table from the New York State Comptroller's Office, which provides information on total town and village expenditures for fiscal year 1990.

Towns in Onondaga County

	Total Spending 1985	Total Spending 1990	% Increase
Camillus	6,500,000	9,380,000	44 %
Cicero	5,300,000	5,600,000	6 %
Clay	9,800,000	12,100,000	23 %
Dewitt	10,800,000	14,600,000	34 %
Elbridge	1,000,000	1,240,000	24 %
Fabius	287,000	389,000	36 %
Geddes	3,800,000	5,000,000	32 %
LaFayette	707,000	1,340,000	80 %
Lysander	1,700,000	2,700,000	59 %
Manlius	4,700,000	7,470,000	59 %
Marcellus	732,000	1,040,000	42 %
Onondaga	3,500,000	4,660,000	33 %
Otisco	313,000	539,000	72 %
Pompey	814,000	1,100,000	35 %
Salina	8,100,000	10,000,000	23 %
Skaneateles	1,380,000	2,090,000	51 %
Spafford	358,000	427,000	20 %
Tully	390,000	518,000	33 %
Van Buren	2,290,000	3,060,000	34 %
Town totals	62,558,000	83,250,000	33 %

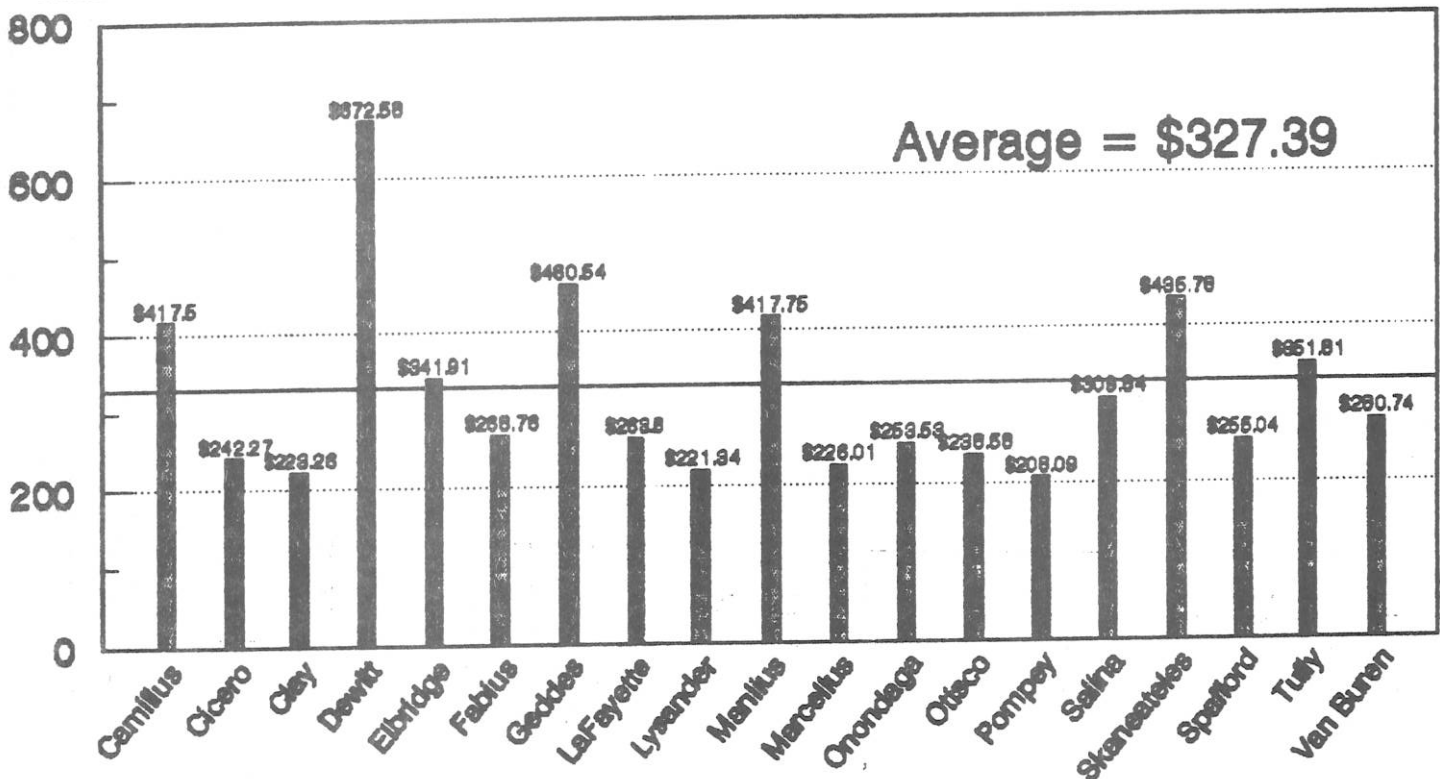
**Total Spending Increases
1985 - 1990**
Source: NYS Comptroller's Office



Towns in Onondaga County

Camillus	\$ 417.50
Cicero	\$ 242.27
Clay	\$ 223.26
Dewitt	\$ 672.58
Elbridge	\$ 341.91
Fabius	\$ 268.76
Geddes	\$ 480.54
LaFayette	\$ 263.80
Lysander	\$ 221.34
Manlius	\$ 417.75
Marcellus	\$ 226.01
Onondaga	\$ 253.53
Otisco	\$ 238.58
Pompey	\$ 208.09
Salina	\$ 309.84
Skaneateles	\$ 435.78
Spafford	\$ 255.04
Tully	\$ 351.81
Van Buren	\$ 280.74

Total Spending Per Person - 1990
(not including Village population)



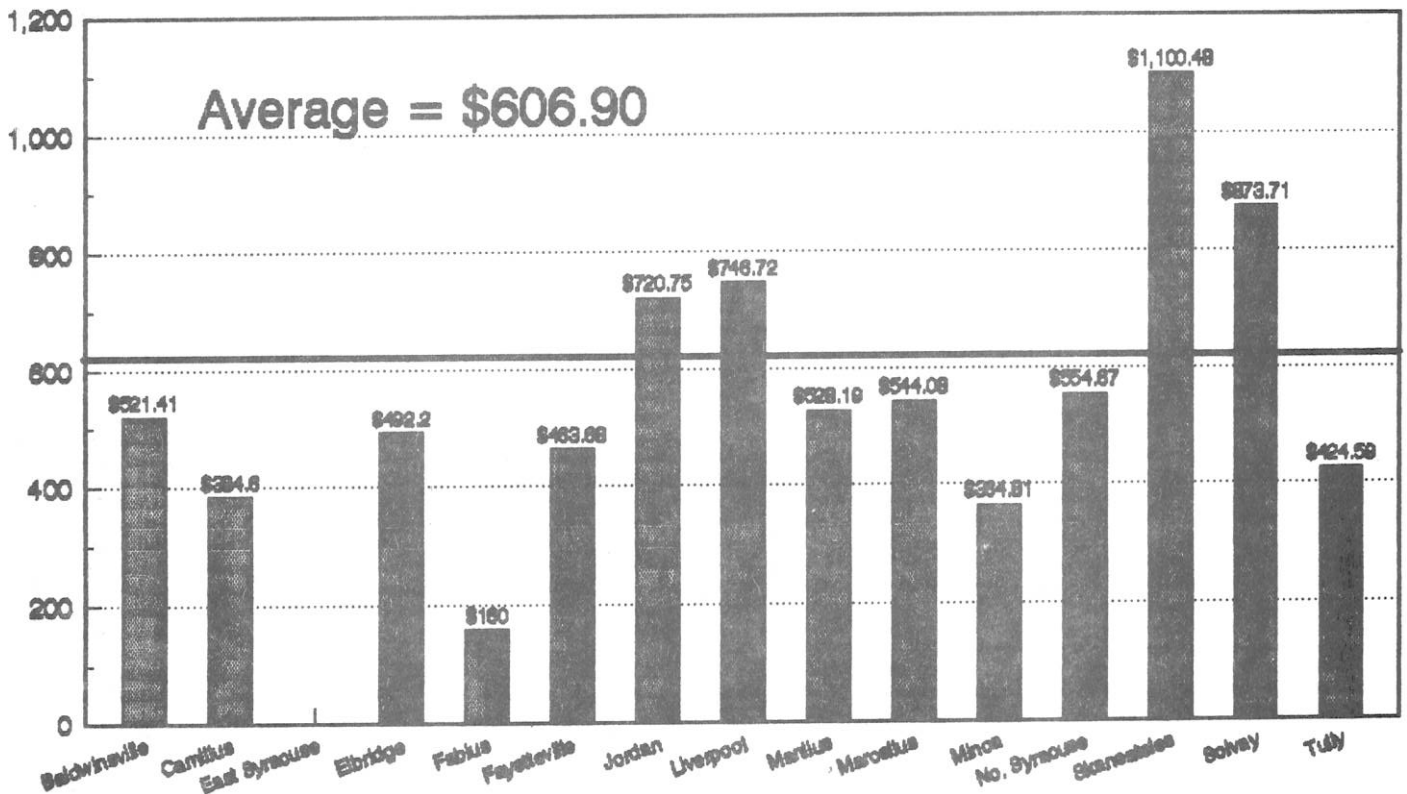
(Information derived from Special Report on Municipal Affairs)
NYS Office of the Comptroller - released December 1991

Villages in Onondaga County

Baldwinsville	\$ 521.41
Camillus	\$ 384.60
East Syracuse	xxxxxxxx
Elbridge	\$ 492.20
Fabius	\$ 160.00
Fayetteville	\$ 463.68
Jordan	\$ 720.75
Liverpool	\$ 746.72
Manlius	\$ 528.19
Marcellus	\$ 544.08
Minoa	\$ 384.81
No. Syracuse	\$ 554.67
Skaneateles	\$1,100.48
Solvay	\$ 873.71
Tully	\$ 424.59

Total Spending Per Person - 1990

xxxxxxxx - Village did not submit annual fiscal report for 1990



(Information derived from Special Report on Municipal Affairs)
 NYS Office of the Comptroller - released December 1991

III. Findings

General Findings:

A. Towns and villages, like other levels of government, are experiencing worsening fiscal problems.

David Osborne, author with Ted Gaebler of Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector, writes: "As the '90s dawned, every government in America seemed to hit the wall at once. State governments struggled to close their largest deficits in history--totalling well over \$30 billion. This unprecedented, ongoing fiscal crisis has created a sudden urgency to do more with less. Politicians who three years ago paid no attention to management issues are now desperate for ways to save money without eliminating vital services."

New York State government, like other states, has suffered the virtual elimination of federal revenue sharing funds and experienced its own severe budget crises. The result has been a drastic cut in state aid to local governments and a shift in the burden of financing programs from the federal and state levels to counties, towns and villages.

The New York State Association of Towns is critical of the shift of cost from federal and state levels down to local governments. The association has reported that "towns experienced a 68 percent reduction in revenue sharing in fiscal year 1991, forcing local governments to shoulder an unfair and disproportionate share of the state's fiscal problems." Towns received more than \$131 million in revenue sharing as recently as state fiscal year 1989-90. Last year, that amount had fallen to \$35 million.

The magnitude of these declining revenue sources is evident in local statistics. State aid to Onondaga County has been cut by \$25.8 million over the last 10 years. According to Onondaga County's 1992 Budget Briefing Report, The 1992-93 state budget will result in a \$5.9 million state aid loss to Onondaga County's 1992 budget. These reductions adversely impact the county's property tax, which increased approximately four percent in each of the last three years, and it significantly impairs the county's ability to continue to provide necessary services and programs for its residents. The county made \$17.5 million in staff and programmatic cuts the 1992 budget in order to offset the decline in revenue sources.

Public budgets are particularly dependent on the ups and downs of the economy. Increased unemployment during a recession means higher public assistance and Medicaid costs, yet lower sales taxes. In the last year and a half, sales tax revenues have increased by only \$40,000, even given the factor of inflation. This year's

county budget predicted sales tax growth of \$3.5 million and this is extremely unlikely. At the same time, people are not promptly paying their local property taxes, but are instead using any extra money to pay off consumer debt, according to the Budget Briefing Report.

All of this means that local towns and villages are faced with declining funds and the continued demand for services. The result has been an unprecedented burden on the local property taxpayer. New York State has made significant reductions in state income tax, and is now ranked 20th in the country in terms of state tax burden. However, New York State has the number one local property tax burden in the United States--more than twice the national average. Studies by the national Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) have shown that people think that local property tax is the most regressive and the most unfair tax.

B. Town and village governments deal with many state statutes, regulations and mandates.

Speakers before the OCL study committee were virtually unanimous in their criticism of the myriad state laws, regulations and mandates under which local governments operate. While local governments were perceived to be accessible and personal, the state government was conveyed as cumbersome, complex and insensitive.

Local governments are subject to the state constitution, state statutes and state regulations. There are 20 laws or statutes dealing with local governments, stipulating their structure, powers and operating procedures. Senate Majority Leader Ralph Marino has reported in the media that the state imposes more than 2,600 costly and burdensome mandates on local governments, which account for 70 to 75 percent of the cost of county budgets. Mandates may be constitutional in nature, or they may emanate from the judiciary, statutes or the executive branch, in the form of administrative regulations from the various departments, such as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Department of Transportation, the Department of Health and others.

Marilyn Higgins Rohde, who as senior vice president of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, clearly communicates the attitudes of the business sector, was highly critical of the complexity of state government. There are 60 state agencies or boards, whose regulations impact heavily on local businesses and local governments. The New York State Cable Television Commission, she points out, is larger than the Federal Communications Commission. There are state agencies dealing with seemingly arcane matters, such as the Upholstery and Bedding Advisory Board and a state office to determine the necessity of escalators in public buildings.

Town supervisors, village mayors and other local government

officials were similarly critical of state regulations that adversely impact local governments and cause local costs to increase. A common complaint was the state directive for road salt to be covered by a shed or similar structure, which will be a requirement within the next five years. Salt sheds can cost \$80,000 and more, depending on size.

A topical issue in Onondaga County--that of landfills and solid waste disposal--is of paramount interest in many other local governments in New York State. Kevin Crawford, counsel to the New York State Association of Towns, cited the inflexibility and costliness of DEC mandates to close landfills. It takes \$100,000 an acre to close a landfill. Since an average landfill size is 20 acres, a typical closing cost will run \$2-4 million. It will cost just as much for a small, rural town to close a landfill, as it will for the larger, more wealthy towns. Crawford noted, for example, that 13 towns in Franklin County of less than 1,000 people have to close a total of 17 landfills. Unless financial assistance is forthcoming under the Superfund and other programs, tax bills for residents will double in just one year.

Burdensome state mandates cited by local officials include a requirement to have only trained paramedics in specially-equipped vehicles transport heart attack patients, which places a heavy onus on local fire departments in terms of the sophisticated training required. Another town supervisor spoke of the "12 inches thick of regulations drawn up in Albany" that his code enforcement officers have to decipher and deal with on a daily basis.

The much-discussed "mandate relief" takes several desired forms. One, obviously, is elimination of unnecessary requirements and restrictions from Albany. Another solution is to provide funding for mandated programs. New York State Lt. Gov. Stan Lundine concurred with this concept at this year's Community Leadership Conference. "Those that make the mandates should have to pay the cost of the mandates and have the accountability," Lundine said.

Local government officials also ask for more flexibility in the way regulations are administered. The New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources stresses in its report, The Structure, Functions and Financing of Local Government: Adapting to Modern Challenges: "Yet, greater use of shared services, and reduction of state paperwork, are suggestions often heard from both metropolitan and rural officials. Voices have also been unanimous in their cry for state and federal mandate relief. Local government officials seek empowerment, or at least a removal of disincentives so that they can pursue home-grown remedies to tackle problems."

Also needed is increased education and awareness about what are and are not, in fact, mandates. Often the wording of the statute is that the local government may provide a particular

service. It is important to know the source of the mandate, because that dictates how a local government can initiate change.

Adding to the complexity of state agencies and departments is the fact that New York State has a plethora of local governments, as well. New York State's general purpose local governments consist of 62 cities, 932 towns, 557 villages and 62 counties. This many-layered approach to government is, in part, due to the fact that this government structure is a hybrid of other governmental forms. Lt. Gov. Lundine notes: "States in New England are based on the township system, while states to the south, such as Virginia, are based on a county system. New York State, for whatever reason, adopted both--a county and town approach. We've been somewhat saddled with this ever since."

When one considers the multitude of special benefit districts to fund public services, New York State actually has more than 10,000 governmental bodies or taxing units. These include school districts, fire districts, lighting districts and others. One Long Island community even has a special benefit district to fund escalators providing access to ramps at a railroad station.

People who grapple with public issues recognize that these many layers of government, along with the bureaucracy of New York State's government, add to "red tape" and the overall slowness of government to resolve problems.

C. Town and village governments have much duplication of equipment, but have no centralized assessment of needs or uniformity in terms of equipment and services.

Many local government services in Onondaga County are provided in a patchwork array--with multiple levels of government providing a service in one area and just one level providing that service in another area. Tables Three and Four in the Background and History section of this report demonstrate this inconsistency in local services. Some towns and their villages may have departments providing the same services, while other villages rely on the town. In many cases, these various levels of government have fully-staffed departments and programs and a full complement of equipment without coordination with other governments regarding service levels or programs of efficiency.

For example, trash removal services differ widely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The Town of Camillus has contracted for trash removal to be done by a private company. In other towns, such as Onondaga, homeowners contract separately with trash haulers. This leaves a situation where one or more different haulers are picking up each day during the week in a given locality. There are 36 private haulers now in operation in Onondaga County, and permits have been issued to 76 haulers. The Villages of Camillus, East Syracuse, Fayetteville, Manlius and Solway provide

their own trash pickup, according to the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency.

Law enforcement and fire protection are two other services that are not provided in a uniform fashion. For example, Manlius has a town police force with no village forces. The Town of Dewitt has a town police force and contains a village, East Syracuse, with a police department. Other towns, such as Onondaga, utilize the county sheriff's department, while still other governments, such as the Village of Elbridge, rely on a state police satellite station. There is no consistency in the way fire services are provided. Fifty-seven different fire departments provide services to the residents of the county in an array of village fire departments, fire district and fire protection districts. Service levels vary in public works, as well. For example, the Village of Liverpool plows the snow off all village sidewalks in the winter, a service which is not provided elsewhere in the county.

Having many different government entities providing services means that equipment and personnel must be on hand whenever service is needed. There is an inventory of fire equipment in the County Fire Coordinator's office, yet this does not appear to be utilized by local fire departments to plan equipment purchases and capital expenditures. The Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium has begun an effort to inventory highway equipment and arrange sharing and rentals between governments. Generally, however, little thought appears to be given to how intergovernmental cooperation can reduce local personnel and the amount of local equipment. This lack of coordination is extended to the county's expenditures, as well. An obvious example is the fact that a county highway garage is situated right next to a Marcellus highway garage, when a single, larger garage might have sufficed.

D. Town and village governments are perceived to be the most receptive levels of government.

Local elected officials who spoke before the Citizens League espoused the belief that town and village governments are the most receptive and responsive levels of government. The findings from the Citizens League telephone survey of town and village residents indicate the same consensus: people feel the most accessible level of government is the one closest to them.

Town supervisors, village mayors and other local officials, while critical of some areas of government structure and service delivery, were uniform in their praise of local government accessibility. Dale Sweetland, supervisor of the Town of Fabius, for example, stated, "Small government often acts more effectively and responsively than large government." Former Cicero Town Supervisor Roy Mallette noted, "Local government is the only government where people can come and talk to somebody in a hurry." Ed Hallenbeck, Van Buren Supervisor, agreed, saying, "Local

government is the last grass roots that we have." Vince Palerino, village administrator for Manlius, noted the loyalty that town and village residents feel for their community-based services: "When residents can say, 'Bill's the policeman who gets my cat, Fluffy, out of the tree,' they fight to keep the services."

A national study done by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations also shows the loyalty people have for their local governments. This study asked people which level of government was the most responsive and which provided the best services for the cost engendered. When asked which level of government provides the most for the money spent, 31 percent said local government and 22 percent said state government. When asked which level spends most wisely, 35 percent said local government, 14 percent said state government and just 12 percent said the federal level.

These opinions were supported by the results of a telephone survey of 388 town and village residents in Onondaga County, conducted February 25 to 27, 1992, by the Onondaga Citizens League. The survey, written, administered and analyzed by Syracuse University Professor Jeffrey M. Stonecash, was designed to reveal citizens attitudes about local government services. In the 15-minute-long telephone survey, registered voters, who were residents of towns and villages in Onondaga County, were presented with options phrased in language reflecting the way people often discuss local government issues. The goal was to ensure that those surveyed understood the questions as clearly as possible and felt free to pick either alternative with any given question.

For example, when asked if they felt local governments were an "unnecessary, extra layer" or "valuable to have," **more than 74 percent surveyed said they felt their town and villages were valuable.**

When asked how well various levels of government were doing, **those surveyed rated the levels of government closest to them the most highly.** The residents were asked to specify if the county, their town and their village (for village residents) were doing a good, fair or poor job. Villages ranked the highest, with more than 48 percent of village residents saying that level of government was doing a "good job." Close to 42 percent of those surveyed indicated the towns were doing a good job. Ranking substantially behind villages and towns in residents' minds was county government, with 26.5 percent of the respondents indicating it was doing a good job.

Significantly, **close to 83 percent of those contacted said they realized that having the layers of village and town government means an additional cost to them as taxpayers.** When asked if they would accept additional costs to maintain their local governments, the number--while still a majority--decreased to 54 percent.

The importance of the concept of accessibility among town and village residents in Onondaga County cannot be discounted. Those contacted during the telephone poll were given two alternatives. One was consolidating town and village governments with county government in order to create more efficiency and lower the cost of government. The other choice was to maintain town and village governments and continued access to local officials. Close to 44 percent of those surveyed indicated they would prefer to continue their local governments and maintain access, while 38.5 percent indicated they would favor consolidation as a means to achieve efficiency.

The survey showed that people who believe local governments are valuable want to continue them, while people who felt they are costly favored consolidation. More than 88 percent of respondents who felt that local governments were valuable believed that they should be maintained in order to continue accessibility at a local level. Among those who thought that the cost of local government is higher due to the presence of town and village governments, there is relatively strong agreement--67.1 percent--that local governments should be consolidated with the county.

The importance of accessibility was evident elsewhere in the study. More than 80 percent contacted said they felt "citizens get better representation of local concerns through town and villages." More than 78 percent believed "The response to local problems is better because local administrators know local problems better than county officials." There was also a strong feeling, however, that local officials tend to "bicker among themselves too much" and that "problems take too long to be resolved."

Note: The complete survey is included in the appendix of this report.

E. Town and village residents favor increased cooperation among governments regarding service delivery.

The results of the telephone survey of town and village residents conducted by the Onondaga Citizens League indicated that accessibility is an important factor to consider when gauging citizen opinion about local governments. It was clear, however, that residents were concerned about the rising cost of government services. The survey results indicate a high degree of willingness to accept more cooperation among municipalities in service delivery, in order to achieve greater efficiency.

More than 80 percent of those surveyed indicated they would like to see intergovernmental cooperation in the delivery of fire, police and parks services, as well as with road maintenance and snow removal. More than 77 percent favored cooperation with sewer services, while 78.7 percent would like to see governments cooperate in providing water services.

Residents were not as strongly in favor of intermunicipal collaboration in property assessment and zoning, areas where cooperation has traditionally been met with the greatest resistance. About 46 percent indicated they would favor cooperation with zoning and 48.3 percent said they would favor cooperation in the area of property assessment. These are areas where local residents clearly want to maintain control at the town and village levels.

F. Some town and village governments are taking part in various efforts at cooperation and innovation.

During the six months of research by the Onondaga Citizens League, study committee members became aware of some fine efforts already underway in the area of intergovernmental cooperation and innovation in the delivery of local government services. Some of these efforts are in the form of organizations, such as the New York State Blue Ribbon Commission on Local Government Consolidation and the Broome County Partnership Council, which are offering guidance and serving as catalysts for change for local governments. Another local organization, the Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium, is serving as a forum for enhanced communication among the county's local elected officials, while a countywide parks and recreation association serves as a conduit between the county and town and village parks departments.

Other efforts highlighted here are in the form of "mutual aid"--informal, unwritten agreements to conduct a particular project, provide a special service or engage in bulk purchasing. Several examples of cost-saving efforts among local governments in Onondaga County were brought to the attention of the Citizens League. Lastly, the League studied two approaches being tried in village and town governments in other areas of the state. These are offered as examples of innovation, not necessarily as prescriptions to be followed exactly in Onondaga County.

*** New York State Blue Ribbon Commission on Local Government Consolidation**

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission includes state and local officials and representatives of statewide organizations, labor and the private sector. Charged by Governor Mario Cuomo to find ways to encourage consolidation and to remove impediments to cooperation, the commission began in the fall of 1990 and presented preliminary results in the spring of 1991.

The commission concluded that there are a number of opportunities for cooperative action, often with no changes in state law. Such activities are contingent on the support of local officials and taxpayers. The recommendations of the interim report of the commission include:

1) There should be changes in state legislation to improve procedures for different types of government to cooperate, consolidate or merge.

2) State aid formulas should not penalize such actions.

3) State law should be changed to allow separate entities to provide a service cooperatively even if they individually don't have the authority to provide that service.

4) The development of regional consortia on a voluntary basis, not to be viewed as another layer of government.

5) The state should provide technical assistance on legal and financial ramifications of cooperation and consolidation.

6) The Municipal Cost Effectiveness Grant Program should be utilized to encourage cooperation and consolidation. (This, however, has been dropped from the state budget the last several years.)

7) There should be a review of state agencies, looking at rules and barriers to cooperative activities.

8) Regional operations of state departments need to be realigned. For example, a local entity should not have to report to two separate offices of the same state agency.

The commission is to be convened for one more year before issuing its final report, which is expected to contain specific, workable ideas for localities.

*** Broome County Partnership Council**

The county executive of Broome County convened a small study committee in December of 1989. This evolved into the Broome County Partnership Council, which involved 150 people in 10 different committees--assessment, criminal justice, government consolidation, emergency services, libraries, parks and recreation, purchasing, public works, schools and solid waste. One-third of the committee membership were "experts" (such as assessors on the assessment committee), while a third were elected officials and the remaining third, citizens. The committees reported back to the council and a final report was prepared, which recommended that a Council of

Governments be formed to share information, provide a forum for ideas and discuss consolidation and other plans. The Partnership Council recommended that the Broome County Legislature consider changing the method of distributing sales tax revenues in order to create a fund for promoting consolidation of municipal services. Other recommendations of the Broome County Partnership Council included the establishment of a community-wide capital budgeting process and the suggestion that schools should also engage in the process of intermunicipal cooperation.

The efforts of the Partnership Council sparked some initial changes. For example, the Binghamton Pops and Symphony have joined their offices, saving money for each. A consortium of purchasing officials from all of the municipalities has been meeting for a year, documenting successes and savings. They have been able to save \$125,000 in copier paper by joining forces. Now in any contract for copier paper in Broome County, the price offered also has to be offered to any school district and municipality. A public works clearinghouse, run through the Broome County Department of Public Works, has been formed and is providing access to specs, engineering plans and information about equipment. The county and towns have also transferred responsibility for maintenance of certain roads and bridges to achieve maximum efficiency. Two library branches have also consolidated.

Most significantly, a Council of Governments has been formed and will engage in long-range regional planning, an annual review of capital budgets and other activities directly relating to the Partnership Council's recommendations. Members include the chief elected officer of the City of Binghamton and each town and village; the county executive; chair of the legislature and one at-large member from the legislature. Associate members are representatives from the school districts, Broome-Tioga BOCES and the Partnership 2000. The council is funded through direct support from the county and it is planned that it will eventually be funded through membership.

The short terms goals of the Council of Governments by-laws are: "expanding cooperation among taxing entities and resolving duplication of services, pertaining to both municipalities and school districts; improving communication among municipalities and between municipalities and county government; conducting annual review of all municipal capital budgets; and effecting county-wide consolidation of services."

* Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium

In December of 1987, County Executive Nick Pirro and Syracuse Mayor Young invited all town and village officials to a meeting to discuss common concerns. This group became the Consortium, which is made up of village mayors, town supervisors and the presidents of the town supervisors and village mayors associations. Monthly

meetings continue to be held. At this point, the Consortium is informal, has voluntary membership and relies on staff support from the county Department of Management and Budget and the city Office of Research. To date, it has focused on information sharing and has not yet become involved with coordinating decision making regarding cooperation and consolidation among member municipalities.

One Consortium effort geared at saving money and avoiding duplication has been an inventory of all equipment owned by the town and village departments of public works. In a survey conducted by the Consortium in the fall of 1990 with the help of Bill Weaver, president of the highway superintendent's association, towns and villages were asked which equipment they were planning to buy or rent and which they would be willing to share with another municipality. There are a number of pieces of equipment used on a scheduled basis that can be shared. A sewer vac, for instance, costs \$130,000 and need not be purchased by many towns and villages.

*** Consolidated Police Department--The Town of Manlius**

The Town of Manlius and its three villages--Fayetteville, Minoa and Manlius, began to look at consolidating its police forces in late 1983 and early 1984. The town, with more than 30,000 residents, had been experiencing an increasing demand for police services and a changing social structure. Each village--within six miles of each other--had a fully constituted, staffed police force and each had its own chief. Historically, the villages had established police departments because the concentrations of people called for it; the rural farm lands really did not require a police force. When population was added due to suburban growth, the sheriff's department and state troopers provided patrols and the village departments extended police service beyond their boundaries.

Manlius Town Supervisor Richard Lowenberg believed the three village departments could be consolidated and he called the three mayors together. Manlius Village Mayor Angelo Albanese said officials from all the municipalities came to the meetings with the intent "to agree to agree." Excellent working relationships between the governments helped ease the transition to a single town police department. They looked at the cost of police services for the departments and the need to continue at least the same level of service. In addition, there was a demand for increasingly sophisticated services that the small departments did not have the resources to maintain.

Lowenberg and Albanese have detailed specific savings accrued by town and village residents. In 1985, the Manlius village budget for police was \$330,000 with a \$6.95 per thousand tax rate. The next year--the year after consolidation--the rate went down to \$5.25--a \$1.70 per thousand savings. The town tax did not go up, in

part because of reduced overhead and administrative costs and because the dispatch function was transferred to Onondaga County. "There was an absolute savings in taxes," Lowenberg notes.

Long-term savings have also resulted from the consolidation. Town and village officials estimate that if the departments had remained separate and costs had continued at a comparable rate, the price for these various police departments today would have been as much as \$2.8 to \$3 million. Because of savings in administrative overhead and economies of scale, the cost for the consolidated department budget this year is \$1.8 million, Lowenberg stated.

*** Intermunicipal Cooperation--Marcellus**

Marcellus Mayor Martin Sennett cited a cooperative effort between his village, the Towns of Marcellus, Onondaga, Spafford and Onondaga County. During the summer of 1991, the highway departments of these municipalities worked together to build a 1,500-foot access road to the village sewer plant. This road was completed in just four days and saved the Village of Marcellus a substantial sum. The village and town of Marcellus have also jointly purchased a chipper, which has meant that each municipality did not expend \$12,000 for the same piece of equipment.

*** Intermunicipal Cooperation--Skaneateles**

This year, the Town of Skaneateles will save taxpayers \$4,000 by appointing a full-time recreation director, instead of the town and village departments hiring three part-time directors. In addition, the town and village of Skaneateles have signed off on a written agreement to share equipment, beginning Jan. 1, 1993.

*** Studying Consolidation--Van Buren, Lysander and Baldwinsville**

Beginning in January 1992, two elected officials from each of the Towns of Van Buren and Lysander and the Village of Baldwinsville have been meeting to determine if there are any potential areas for consolidation between those entities. The group, called the Municipal Cooperation Committee, holds periodic meetings and is looking at ways to improve programs, achieve better coordination and realize greater economies.

*** Studying Interdepartmental Cooperation--Onondaga**

Ron Ryan, fire marshal for the Town of Onondaga and a fire inspector, described an internal study on consolidation now underway in the Town of Onondaga. The town has eight fire protection districts, which provide fire protection for 20,000 residents within 58 square miles. Onondaga is similar to many other towns in that each fire department is a completely independent entity. The current study will be examining ways of combining

be done; town and village courts should remain intact. Under the New York State Constitution, local town courts are the only courts which cannot be eliminated by legislative action. All other courts--village, city, county, family, supreme, and surrogates--have no such protection. While village courts can be eliminated by a village resolution, town courts can only be eliminated by a town-wide referendum. Speakers before the study committee noted that this reflects the importance of local courts in the minds of the founders of state government. Craig Kerr, a local attorney and magistrate for the Town of Onondaga, said, "Town and village courts are at the very center of where people are living. Access to these courts is still available to all of us."

IV. General Conclusions

A. This is an optimum time for making changes in the way local government services are delivered.

Citizens, government leaders, the media and numerous organizations have been calling for ways to reduce the tax burden, while maintaining quality services. Perhaps never before have the topics of "consolidation" and "cooperation" been so widely discussed and given such priority.

This report has already highlighted the statewide initiative inherent in the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Consolidation of Local Governments. The state appears to be committed to helping local government become more efficient, as witnessed by the Blue Ribbon Commission and comments made by New York State Lt. Gov. Stan Lundine at this year's Community Leadership Conference at Minnowbrook.

"Now is the time for change--for reorganizing and restructuring," Lundine said, noting that state efforts in restructuring and economic development are striving to "paint a new landscape" in how government operates.

New York's emphasis on consolidation and cooperation is also apparent in the Statewide Study Committee on School District Organization, announced in February by New York State Education Commissioner Thomas Sobol. This study is tackling how school districts can share administrative and instructional services with each other and with local and county governments and is determining how many school districts can be reorganized or consolidated.

The 1992 legislative program of the New York State Association of Towns clearly demonstrates the urgency town officials feel regarding intermunicipal cooperation. Resolution Number 9 of the Association's legislative proposals calls upon the state to "remove any statutory barriers hindering voluntary cooperation and the sharing of services by two or more entities and to provide meaningful incentives designed to encourage intermunicipal cooperation."

This Onondaga Citizens League study on town and village government was not the only effort on the local level. Researchers for the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs this spring studied the issues of efficiency and intergovernmental cooperation in tax collection and assessment for the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's Legislative Committee has an on-going interest in local government efficiencies.

Lastly, the continuing editorial support for consolidation and other cost-saving measures from the Syracuse Newspapers shows that the time is ripe for making changes. One editorial in The Herald-

services and avoiding duplication.

*** Cooperative Purchasing--The City of Syracuse**

On April 27, 1992, officials of the City of Syracuse announced they were opening access to its purchasing system to all towns and villages in Onondaga County. All purchasing information is now being shared, including information on low bidders, items available and state contracts. Access to this information can be obtained by other municipal purchasing officers through the telephone or personal computer hook-up.

*** Cooperative Purchasing--Camillus**

Tom Kehoskie, director of parks and recreation for the Town of Camillus, has been a leader in promoting intermunicipal cooperation in the western part of Onondaga County. Five years ago, Kehoskie started purchasing field marker paint cooperatively with the Towns of Skaneateles, Onondaga and Cicero and the West Genesee School District. The price, at that time, was \$12 a gallon, if bought independently. Now--even with inflation--the joint price is \$6 a gallon. The paint is delivered to one site and each participant is required to be there on time to help unload and pick up the paint. Athletic field conditioner and other supplies are also bought cooperatively, demonstrating the savings that can accrue from bulk purchasing.

*** Dissolution of a Village--Ticonderoga**

Residents of the Village of Ticonderoga voted in March of this year to dissolve the village. Ticonderoga Mayor Michael Diskin said it was the largest village ever to vote to do so in New York State. The village population of 2,700 has declined by 25 percent over the last 30 years, reflecting general population declines in the North Country. Over the past 30 years, village services have slowly been moved over to the town, which has 5,100 residents. For example, a park, public beach, and police department were turned over to the town. Village fire services were turned over to a fire district. The village had continued to operate the sewer and water services.

Much preparation went into planning for the vote on dissolution. Informational meetings were held, extensive research was conducted and a citizens group was formed. A consolidation plan was jointly developed by the village and town and addressed such issues as what to do with the buildings and property, the municipal debt, and the water and sewer departments. The plan demonstrated the potential savings through dissolution. For example, a village resident would pay \$860.56 in property taxes for 1991-92 for a home assessed at \$50,000. The resident of a comparable house in the town would only be paying \$420. Under consolidation, the town tax would increase slightly to \$482.70, while people who lived in the former village would experience a tax savings of about \$300.

Diskin noted that a common public reaction to the plan has been that people were eager to see a cost savings and favored less government. One area where a savings is expected to be realized is in the highway department, where a lot of duplication of equipment will be eliminated, he told the OCL study committee.

*** Studying Town Consolidation--Newark Valley**

Tioga County formed a committee a year and a half ago, composed of the village mayors, town supervisors and the chairman of the County Legislature, to look at cost-saving measures and consolidation. Robert Moulton, Newark Valley Town Supervisor, headed a subcommittee studying the prospect of total consolidation of local governments, while other committees looked at service areas. Some changes have already been made, based on the work of these committees. For example, all towns and villages have consolidated medical insurance and will realize an annual savings of \$200,000. Two villages are consolidating their police departments with the Sheriff's Department. The municipalities are also looking at consolidating liability insurance and coverage for workmen's compensation.

Moulton has presented a proposal to retain the towns, while scaling down town government and creating a district encompassing more than one town to provide services. He developed a hypothetical model using neighboring towns, comparing their budgets and services and determining where services could be consolidated. Under the district approach, he estimates that \$333,000 could be saved the first year. For example, instead of having four highway superintendents, only one would be needed. The number of code enforcement officers, justices and other staff could be reduced and excess equipment sold to realize additional savings. This proposal has been sent to the NYS Department of State for review and will be studied by residents of Newark Valley and neighboring towns.

Specific Service Area Findings:

A. Public Works

Local officials indicated that road maintenance is the biggest ticket item in town and village budgets. While public works includes sewer and water services, the largest expense is that of highway construction, maintenance and snow plowing. There are 803 miles of county roads and 99 county bridges, 1,109 miles of town roads and 169 of village streets in Onondaga County. The Onondaga County Department of Transportation has a Division of Highways with four shops located in the county. In 1992, the county highway budget totalled \$25.6 million, which was 12.6 percent of the county budget. In 1990, town highway budgets totaled \$22 million out of a total of \$83.6 million for all town budgets. Villages spent \$5 million in the same category out of total budget figure of \$27.6 million. Highway costs are a much higher percentage of town and village budgets, since they do not have the larger, mandated expenses of such entitlement programs as Medicaid, Public Assistance, Home Relief and foster care, which make up the largest portion of the county budget.

B. Police

In Onondaga County, six towns (Camillus, Cicero, Clay, Dewitt, Geddes and Manlius) and eight villages (Baldwinsville, East Syracuse, Jordan, Liverpool, Marcellus, North Syracuse, Solvay and Skaneateles) have police departments. The Onondaga County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement throughout the county and the New York State Police also provides countywide services with substations in LaFayette, Radisson, Cicero and Elbridge. The cost for these police services and the City of Syracuse's police department totals \$43,508,233, according to a survey conducted in 1992 by the Onondaga County Chiefs of Police Association.

These law enforcement agencies have a strong record in consolidated services, shared services and cooperative efforts. The most dramatic of all the consolidated services is the 911 Emergency Communications System, a centralized, high-tech communications and dispatch system joining together all police, fire and rescue entities in Onondaga County. Other centralized efforts include the Onondaga Mobile Radio District, the Criminal, History, Arrest, Incident and Reporting System (CHAIRS) and the Onondaga Law Enforcement Information System. Centralized training is conducted by the Central New York Regional Academy for Police Training, the Onondaga Police Academy and the Public Safety Training Institute.

Shared services are varied and include the Onondaga Major Felony Unit, the federal, state and local Drug Enforcement Task Force and the National Guard Counter Drug Support Program for local police. Town and village departments have standardized forms, enabling them to engage in bulk purchasing. Cooperative efforts

include the STOP/DWI Program, the Onondaga County Investigators Association and the City-County Youth Bureau Young Officers Forum, among others.

However, as County Executive Nicholas Pirro has pointed out, there is continued "taxpayer insistence on re-evaluating the need for every municipality to have its own police force" and "taxpayer resistance to any increase in taxes in the absence of government looking for ways to cut expenditures." Each year, Pirro noted, the various police departments in Onondaga County struggle with "rapidly rising demands for services and shrinking financial services." Pirro established a panel in May called the County of Onondaga Police Services Task Force or COPS. This task force is currently reviewing the way in which the county, city, towns and villages deliver law enforcement services. The Onondaga Citizens League hopes that the initiative of this task force, coupled with the commencement of E911, will stimulate additional opportunities for cost-effectiveness in law enforcement.

C. Fire

There are 57 separate fire departments in Onondaga County, including three outside the county that contract for services inside the county, and five volunteer ambulance corps. The departments can take the form of: village fire departments, which are funded directly by taxes and answerable to the village trustees; fire districts, which are municipal corporations set up by a town with the power to impose taxation; and fire protection districts, governed by a board of five fire commissioners elected by residents of the district. Fire protection districts can contract with a village, a fire district or with a private, not-for-profit company for service. These various departments can be funded solely by taxes or by a combination of taxes and fund-raising.

A number of efforts in centralization have occurred in the area of fire services, particularly in communications and dispatch. A centralized fire control center was first established in the county in 1957 and has been significantly upgraded to the Emergency 911 system, which was expected to be in place by this summer. Even before 911 was instituted, a person could call a single number from anywhere in the county and fire and emergency services would be dispatched, although the City of Syracuse had its own number.

Other coordinated efforts include fire investigation, a hazardous materials response team, a nationally-certified training course and a program to rehabilitate juvenile arsonists. All of these programs are run cooperatively with the county and local fire departments and other appropriate agencies, such as the City-County Youth Bureau in reference to the program for juveniles.

A problem in the area of fire services is that no centralized

assessment of needs is undertaken in terms of equipment purchasing. The Onondaga County Fire Coordinator's office has an inventory of fire equipment in the county, but this is not used as a management tool for planning purchases by individual departments. Speakers before the study committee stressed that much "keeping up with the Jones'" occurs between local departments, and results in the purchase of unneeded and often expensive equipment. Speakers cited examples of fire departments going before town boards to request a new piece of equipment, not because the old piece has worn out, but simply because it is not quite "state of the art." One speaker noted: "Fire services are steeped in tradition, they are up to date in technology, but not in management practices. Each department has to be willing to give up a little power."

A related problem is that with the plethora of small, local departments (as many as nine in one town) there is no uniform standard in equipment, such as hose size. Departments will have to agree on uniform standards in order for bulk purchasing to occur. Fire departments in the eastern part of the county have standardized hose size and electrical and watertight connections.

D. Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Coordinating Council (PARCC) of Onondaga County was established in 1978, in part to help coordinate activities and avoid competition for clientele, as well as duplication of services. PARCC established basic guidelines delineating which level of government should be providing each service. These guidelines were adopted by the County Legislature and every town and village board in the county. The guidelines read, in part:

All parks and recreation departments shall use the Onondaga County Parks and Recreation Council as an essential mechanism for identifying present and future needs, coordinating future plans and activities, developing cooperative undertakings, and sharing ideas and information that improve the delivery of leisure services.

Shortly after its founding, PARCC undertook a countywide recreation inventory and needs assessment, which helped reveal ways to avoid duplication of services and better utilize existing facilities. For example, at the time, the Towns of Lysander and Van Buren were considering building municipal outdoor swimming pools within a half a mile of each other. Plans for one swimming pool were then jointly considered and since then the towns have undertaken many mutually-cooperative recreational programs. The coordinating activities of PARCC also helped avert a softball field crisis around the same time. The Onondaga County Legislature was considering funding the construction of new softball facilities, because of a publicized shortage of softball fields. The inventory

and assessment by PARCC demonstrated that there was, in fact, an excess number of fields. Some fields were being inappropriately used and school district fields were underutilized. Some fields required just simple maintenance and repairs and several school districts were encouraged to open their fields to softball teams. These steps avoided a large financial outlay by the county for unnecessary recreational facilities.

E. Assessment

According to the Onondaga County Department of Finance's Real Property Tax Services division, five towns in the county are assessing their property at full value. These towns are Fabius, Lysander, Manlius, Pompey and Tully. The villages of Fabius and Tully are also assessed at full value. Since Baldwinsville is situated partly in Lysander and partly in the Town of Van Buren, not all of this village is under full-value assessment. The Town of LaFayette is planning to institute full-value assessment when it does a complete revaluation next year, according to the county's Real Property Tax Services division.

Contrary to common perception, it is not a state mandate to assess at full value. A 1975 court case, *Hellerstein vs. Assessor, Town of Islip*, set a precedent for requiring full-value assessment. However, in 1977 the New York State Legislature amended tax law, which now requires local governments to assess at a uniform percentage of value. This means that while localities can pick what equalization rate they utilize, all properties within a given locality must be assessed using the same rate. The State Board of Equalization and Assessment every year establishes an equalization rate for all towns and villages in the state, but local governments can choose any ratio of assessment they want, as long as the same rate is applied throughout the municipality. This and related information is discussed in the Citizens League's first report, Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment: Recommendations for Onondaga County."

Researchers for the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs this spring studied the issues of tax collection and assessment for the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. According to the resulting report, Consolidation of Town, City and County Government Functions: Tax Collection and Assessment in Onondaga County, many factors would have to be taken into consideration when contemplating consolidation of these services in order to achieve possible efficiencies and economies of scale. These factors include local control, current assessment methods, attitudes of elected and appointed officials and payment and collection methods. The importance of local control was also clearly evident in the findings of the Citizens League survey of town and village residents.

F. Administrative Services

A study by the Local Government Restructuring Project of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government has shown that more than 80 percent of local government units in New York State have entered into at least one municipal cooperation agreement. However, the "overwhelming majority of these agreements involve only two municipalities and one service." Administrative services that could be coordinated between localities or provided on a centralized basis include data processing, competitive bidding and purchasing, legal and other technical assistance, such as engineering or landscape architecture, planning and other areas.

Local officials cited numerous barriers to increased cooperation in administrative services and other program areas. Some officials were wary about engaging in agreements because officials in other localities may not have reciprocated in the past. Others feared scheduled delivery of services in their own jurisdiction would be interrupted. Others cited political considerations, when two municipalities are led by different political parties, or when a town supervisor and highway superintendent represent different parties.

Another problem that exacerbates difficulties in intermunicipal cooperation is that fiscal years vary for different levels of government. The federal fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 31. New York State's fiscal year is April 1 to March 31. The fiscal year for Onondaga County, the City of Syracuse and the towns is the calendar year, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. The fiscal year for villages is June 1 to May 31, with the exception of Baldwinsville's, which runs from March 1 to Feb. 28. School district budgets run from July 1 to June 31, with the exception of the Syracuse City School District, which is included in the city budget. Having these varied fiscal years may make it difficult for localities to try to jointly write grants for state or federal funds or engage in bidding and bulk purchasing. One official noted that because of the disparity in state and local budgets, he had to rely on a state contract from the next state fiscal year. This meant a \$10,000 increase in the price of a truck from one state contract to the next.

Onondaga County has made many efforts to centralize and consolidate services. Obvious examples are the county Health Department, social services, Burnet Park Zoo, Onondaga County Public Library and MacArthur Stadium. There are successes in joint city-county operations, such as the Youth Bureau and the Commission on the Aging. Kathryn Ruscitto, Onondaga County Administrator for Human Services, said the county is increasingly urging departments that provide similar or related services to work in "clusters." A "cluster" approach utilizes interdepartmental cooperation for the sharing of support services, such as payroll, computer processing and planning. Because of the continuing cutback in state and

federal aid, the county is scrutinizing financial and administrative services that might be open for cost-saving innovations.

G. Courts

There are 56 town and village justices, of which 37 are town magistrates. The towns and villages have the preliminary jurisdiction for felonies and have total jurisdiction (through jury verdict) for misdemeanors and violations. The jurisdiction of town and village courts is identical to that of city court, but unlike city court, which is full-time, town and village judges work part-time and must be available 24 hours a day. Town and village justices are also called if a judge in a neighboring jurisdiction is not available. An arraignment for a felony can take place at any time of the day or night. Several town magistrates who made presentations before the Citizens League, spoke about conducting arraignments, often past 11 p.m., on the majority of nights during any given month. Other magistrates in less-populated, more rural towns, are not as busy.

Local town and village judges are making many efforts at improving communication between jurisdictions. The Onondaga County Magistrates Association meets once a month and the Onondaga County Bar Association has a Local Court Subcommittee. The Onondaga County Criminal Justice Advisory Board has a Local Court Subcommittee, which meets once a month. This advisory board is made up of representatives of the city police, sheriff's department, local police departments, probation, magistrates, budget officials and others, who keep in regular contact with each other. One local magistrate serves as a liaison with the New York State Police and Sheriff's departments. Another local judge serves as an officer on the board of the New York State Magistrates Association, whose membership includes representatives of 2,000 town and village courts.

The local Magistrates Association has a technology committee, which is studying ways of improving communications between all levels of courts in Onondaga County. One area of concern is that resources available to individual justices varies greatly. Rural towns, such as Otisco or Spafford, have very small budgets. The Town of Geddes has limited resources, because of budget constraints due to the Allied closing. Meanwhile the Town of Dewitt, the sixth largest court in the state, has a large computerized operation with three full-time clerks.

A review of the law enforcement system several years ago included studying the possibility of consolidating the local courts. This followed the recommendation of a Sheriff's Department official that there be outlying district courts, rather than courts in all the towns and villages. The unanimous opinion of the subcommittee studying this idea was that consolidation should not

Journal pointed out that: "...much of this duplication has been decades in the making. Some of it might even have made sense at one time. But now it has become a destructive pattern, When dollars available for all government services are dwindling, overlapping services eat away at the money available for priorities..."

A different Herald-Journal editorial stressed that: "Taxpayers cannot afford--in this era of diminishing public resources--to maintain the current patchwork of county, city, town and village police forces. At the same time, they cannot afford to have fewer officers on the street, protecting lives and property; criminals don't take a holiday in difficult fiscal times... Economies of scale must be realized; redundant efforts must be eliminated."

Another editorial in The Post-Standard, focusing on police service specifically and intergovernmental cooperation in general, said: "As many as four police agencies--village, town, county and state--may have at least nominal responsibility for the same area... Onondaga County of the '90s is, for all intents and purposes, one community--not a collection of towns and villages."

Clearly the media concern, citizen interest and statewide support exist. It is an optimum time to tackle what author David Osborne calls the voter paradox. He writes that "voters oppose most tax increases, but they also oppose many service cuts. "Voters don't want more government...but they don't want less government either." The efforts currently underway, coupled with the recommendations offered in these pages, can provide an answer to the need for responsive, high-quality government services at the most cost-effective levels of funding.

B. Geographical factors and not just jurisdictional lines must be considered when implementing efficiencies.

The OCL study committee was pleased to see examples of local governments in Onondaga County working to improve service delivery, without strictly considering jurisdictional lines. Instances of this kind include unofficial agreements between Salina and Clay regarding fire protection. During the day, when there are fewer volunteers available, the Moyers Corners Fire Department, situated in the Town of Clay, will cross into Salina when needed. At night, Moyers Corners does not provide service in Salina, since fire departments tend to be more fully staffed at that time. The Town of Pompey Highway Department cooperates with the Village of Cazenovia in Madison County regarding roads that cross town and county lines. Pompey also plows a three-quarter mile stretch of road in a subdivision in the Town of Manlius, which is more accessible to Pompey's plows due to the layout and terrain. In addition, the county has contracts with numerous outlying towns regarding the plowing of county roads, saving county workers many miles of travel. There are probably other examples of cooperative service delivery that did not come to the attention of the Citizens League.

The Citizens League also heard stories of plows being lifted when drivers come to the boundary of their municipality, or even raising their plows when traveling on roads that are not theirs to get to another area of their town or village.

Fire officials who spoke before the study committee stressed that often in the past fire equipment has been dispatched based on political subdivisions, and not proximity. This has meant that jurisdictions--not cost efficiency--has been the priority. The E911 computer-aided dispatch system, due to go on line this September, is designed to alleviate this situation and dispatch the rescue vehicle, fire truck or police car that is closest.

Other services still tend to be delivered along town and village boundaries and whatever boundary-crossing there is seems to be due to word-of-mouth agreements. Some elected officials believe people are reluctant to engage in cross-boundary cooperation, because of the fear it will increase the taxes in their own town or village. These officials cited continuing concerns about liability when personnel, vehicles or equipment are utilized in other jurisdictions. Citizen education must be undertaken to ensure that residents recognize the importance of cost-efficiency, as opposed to turf issues. The continuing question of the liability of municipalities in cooperative, intergovernmental agreements must be resolved.

C. The way money is distributed causes either incentives or disincentives to cooperation and consolidation.

The Citizens League recognizes that in any discussion of opportunities for cost-effectiveness in local government, one must recognize that there is limited revenue availability--eventually all revenue streams come out of the same pocket, the taxpayer. However, how these funds are distributed creates either incentives or disincentives to cooperation and consolidation.

The state provides funding to local governments through state aid and grants. Clearly, once the state begins to fund a program, a locality is not compelled to refuse the money and eliminate the program. Once the money begins to flow, issues such as turf, constituencies and power bases come into play. With large amounts of money being allocated in small amounts to numerous localities, there is little incentive to jeopardize this funding by changing local management practices.

This situation is also true with sales tax practices in Onondaga County, involving the 3 percent county sales tax. According to the Budget Briefing Report, the county government gives 66 percent of all the county sales tax revenue to the towns and villages. This is done in accordance with an agreement worked out by the County Legislature in 1990. Since sales tax totaled close to \$46 million in 1991, this represents a large stream of

money provided to localities. Most of the towns take their sales tax distribution as a credit against the county property tax levy. Other towns opt to take their sales tax in cash to help offset their costs and decrease their town and village taxes. As a result, some towns, such as Salina and Camillus, impose no town property tax on town residents. (Camillus does impose a town tax on the residents of the village.) Other counties in New York State, such as Suffolk, Nassau, Rockland and Westchester, keep all of the sales tax generated. Dutchess County keeps 90 percent, Orange County keeps 83 percent and Albany County keeps 60 percent. In Erie County the figure is 35 percent and 25 percent in Monroe.

However, if county taxes decreased, city, town and village taxes would proportionately increase, unless there was a change in the distribution of services. However, the manner in which sales tax is disbursed could be changed in a way that would encourage towns and villages to cooperate and avoid duplication at the local level.

Similarly, any effort at consolidation or cooperation must consider who will pay for the service and who will receive the savings from the innovative program or consolidation. Onondaga County Commissioner of Finance Michael J. Sullivan points out: "When looking at efficiencies and cost-saving measures, one has to remember that whoever is going to do the service should get the money to do so. Who is going to pay for it?" Hard questions have to be answered, such as what happens to the savings and where the money is going to come from if the service is transferred to another jurisdiction.

Some government programs receive no local property tax dollars, such as economic development and job training. Because these have a state or federal funding stream, directors of programs may not have an incentive to engage in local cooperation and consolidation. However, the current economic situation is causing severe problems for all areas of government and these funding streams may not be secure. Efficiencies are likely to be examined by all programs and government entities.

D. Many supposed barriers to change are misconceptions without any basis in law.

The report, Intermunicipal Cooperation: A Survey of Local Governments by the New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources states that "one of the most common misconceptions about intermunicipal agreements is that there are many legal barriers to their enactment." Speakers before the Citizens League cited state "prohibitions" against engaging in a number of cost-saving measures. For example, one misconception was that the state has to grant approval in order for local lighting districts to consolidate. Another fallacy was that state law does not allow joint ownership of equipment. A common refrain seemed to be, "We'd

like to do that, but the state won't let us."

The Office of the State Comptroller points out that General Municipal Law allows the joint performance, or the performance by one government for another on a cooperative or contractual basis, of any function or power which each of the municipal corporations or districts has the power to provide separately. The comptroller has authorized cooperative agreements between various combinations of counties, cities, towns, villages and school districts in such service areas as data processing, sewer construction, self-insurance, legal services, payroll, investments, police, landfill, recreation, training, purchasing, promotions, highway maintenance, snow plowing and others. The comptroller's office provides information on agreements which are not permitted. These state prohibitions against local action are few and narrowly targeted. For example, county governments are prohibited to have fire departments. Counties cannot enforce town ordinances or any agreement that would interfere with competitive bidding practices. The New York State Office of Local Government Assistance, while experiencing recent staff cutbacks, continues to answer questions about intergovernmental agreements.

Another common refrain among local government officials in Onondaga County was that county government unfairly passed unwarranted costs down to localities and that the county was inefficient and insensitive to local needs. One local department head, commenting about county officials, said, "They don't listen to the people in the trenches, doing the work day after day." The current hostility expressed by these local officials has to be addressed and any misconceptions about the county's role corrected. Better communication is needed, not only between the county and towns and villages, but also between the local, state and federal levels, as well.

Citizen education will go a long way toward erasing these misconceptions about cooperative agreements and easing the ill feelings about the county government. Citizen education can also be useful in informing people about how they can take action to try to change state mandates that do impede local government operations. Lt. Gov. Stan Lundine noted at Minnowbrook, "We have to create a climate of community opinion conducive to change. It is possible to convince people they can have identity, without unnecessary duplication of services in adjacent communities. Turf reasons are not an excuse for not making accomplishments."

V. Recommendations

- A. Functions that are the most visible and closest to people should be kept at the local level; supportive management and administrative functions should be centralized whenever possible.**

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) has stressed that economies of scale can be realized without full-scale consolidation by distinguishing the difference between "provision" and "production" of services. In its 1987 report, The Organization of Local Public Economies, ACIR concluded that local governments be considered as provision units, which can contract with either private entities or other governments to produce the services they need. "Efficiency can be achieved without sacrificing consumer choice and local independence," ACIR states.

Town and village governments operate under home rule, the state law that allows local governments much decision-making power in how they carry out their duties. The Citizens League believes that efficiencies in town and village government and intergovernmental cooperation can be achieved without jeopardizing local autonomy. There is a distinction between service provider and service producer, particularly as it relates to visible and more supportive services. Services that are visible and which residents come to depend on for quick response time and accessibility can continue to be delivered on a local level. The means to provide these services might very well be an innovative and cost-saving agreement with a private contractor or another municipality or through a joint effort. Local control can still be maintained, in order to safeguard service quality.

Less visible functions such as accounting, payroll, data processing and those that people generally consider paperwork can be provided on a joint, regional or centralized basis without impairing the public's perception of local government accessibility. The professional services so important to local governments, such as by auditors, attorneys, engineers and others, can likewise be considered services not readily visible to the public eye that can be done jointly with another government or on a pooled basis with several governments. This would likely ensure savings, while providing localities with high-quality professional and technical assistance. These do not require a new layer of bureaucracy, but do require people to communicate and cooperate with other levels of government.

- B. Only town supervisors and town councilors, village mayors and trustees, and justices should be elected.**

Under state municipal law, certain local officials are elected, while others are appointed. For example, town clerks, town

highway superintendents and the receiver of taxes are all elected. Under town law, assessors are appointed, but may be elected in second class towns. (See the Background and History section of this report). In villages, only the mayor and trustees are elected.

The situation with having some positions elected and others appointed appears problematic. While having elected highway superintendents, clerks, tax receivers and assessors might ensure accountability to the voters, other problems can arise. Officials who spoke before the Citizens League cited instances when a highway superintendent or other official might be of a different political party than the town supervisor. Or the town supervisor might have strong personal differences with the highway superintendent or others, leading to a lack of cooperation or, in the worst cases, a loss of quality in service delivery.

Rather than continuing to elect these staff positions, towns should strive to hire trained professionals, with the necessary credentials to meet the job description. Uniform minimum standards for these positions should be established, to ensure that the positions are filled by people with the appropriate technical skills to carry out the job.

The Citizens League believes that the policy of a town or village should be established by the elected officials, while the actual day-to-day operations of the government should be carried out by trained and qualified professionals who are not looking to run for re-election. Such a change in a town--from elected to appointed positions--can be made through local referendum.

C. Cooperative efforts already in place should be expanded in the area of purchasing supplies, equipment and services.

This report has highlighted successful models in intermunicipal cooperation already taking place in towns and villages in Onondaga County. The Citizens League encourages these endeavors to continue and other municipalities to follow their example. While the League applauds the informal, mutual aid efforts underway at the present time, it recognizes that these word-of-mouth agreements often depend on individual personalities and friendships between officials of different municipalities. Local governments should be encouraged to work out formal, written agreements to ensure that these ventures continue regardless of who is in office. The specifics of these formal agreements would also serve to protect municipalities from liability, so often cited by elected officials as an impediment to sharing equipment or personnel with neighboring towns and villages.

D. Towns and villages should work to deliver services through single, encompassing jurisdictions, joint departments or via multi-town/village cooperation.

The Citizens League recognizes that when people most often hear the term consolidation they think of the dissolution of a government entity, such as a village or town, or the complete consolidation of governments--metropolitan government. In fact, consolidation can take many forms. Efforts at consolidation and cooperation can extend from simple word-of-mouth arrangements or more formalized intermunicipal agreements to jointly-administered or consolidated departments. The Citizens League would like to stress that consolidation is not necessarily the abolition of any particular entity, but very likely can mean the consolidation of departments or services. What was evident to the study committee is that a jurisdiction does not have to be eliminated in order to eliminate duplication.

The Citizens League does encourage municipalities to look at all avenues for saving money and improving services. For example, in a township with one or more incorporated villages, one jurisdiction could be responsible for performing a specific service. Two or more departments could jointly run a program or provide a service within the town and its villages. Multi-community cooperation could also be achieved between two or more towns or a combination of towns and villages. This could include, but not be limited to public works and highways, parks and recreation, police and fire protection. In addition, local governments should make efforts to work with school districts regarding cost efficiencies and examine other options, such as sub-contracting or privatization.

The true test of the success of local government might very well be if it can find the optimal middle ground between cost efficiency and accessibility. Any solution that erodes residents' sense of identity or feeling of local control probably would not be wise or popular. **Key to finding this balance is letting citizens know how much a service costs and letting them determine how much they are willing to pay for this service, devising innovative and cooperative methods of delivery.** Later in this report, the Citizens League recommends a structure to help local government officials and residents make better informed decisions about what form these efforts should take.

Recommendations for Specific Service Areas:

A. Public Works

* Merge village departments with their town departments to achieve savings in buildings, equipment and administration and to achieve economies of scale in operations. A potential area for cooperative action is in the construction of salt sheds serving joint jurisdictions.

* Examine the feasibility of having geographically-aligned towns merge services with their neighbors.

* Promote public meetings designed to provide information regarding the merger of village departments with their towns and departmental mergers between neighboring towns.

* Eliminate duplication of highway barns of the county, towns and villages being located within close proximity of each other.

* Develop and formalize all arrangements of shared equipment and services. These written agreements between towns and villages may be costly up front, due to legalities and paperwork, but they will likely save money and ease relationships in years and decades to come.

* Utilize the county-wide inventory of equipment, which has been undertaken by the Onondaga Municipal Consortium, as a tool to ensure that no unnecessary equipment is purchased, when it can be borrowed or leased from an adjoining or nearby municipality.

B. Police

* Support the efforts of the County of Onondaga Police Services (COPS) Task Force as it reviews the delivery of police services and analyzes the efficiency and effectiveness of those services by various levels of government.

* Utilize every opportunity for increased cooperation and efficiency made possible by the new E911 communication system.

* Assess the need for municipal police departments and, if deemed necessary, consolidate wherever possible. The first step should be the elimination of village police departments by consolidating them with their town police departments.

* Institute an on-going, coordinated county-wide qualification and retraining program.

* Establish guidelines for standardization in equipment and weapons.

* Improve communication and cooperation in the area of

investigations to prevent a duplication of efforts and inefficiency.

C. Fire

* Establish a task force for fire services, similar to the County of Onondaga Police Services (COPS) Task Force. A goal of this task force should be, initially, to reduce the number of fire departments in Onondaga County and study the potential for a county-wide fire department.

* Establish a needs assessment authority to approve all equipment expenditures by individual fire departments. This authority would utilize the county-wide inventory of fire equipment, available from the County Fire Coordinator's office, as a management tool. This inventory bank must be part of a coordinated, county-wide effort in planning and purchasing, involving all municipal fire departments, fire districts and fire protection districts, geared toward avoiding the purchase of unnecessary equipment.

* Make the budgets of all existing fire departments public.

* Continue a county-wide nationally-certified training course, in light of the lack of resources available to most communities.

* Standardize hose sizes and other pieces of equipment, enabling fire departments to share equipment and make purchases at reduced prices.

D. Parks and Recreation

* Continue the activities of the Parks and Recreation Coordinating Council of Onondaga County, in light of its excellent record in coordinating capital investments and long-range planning.

* Continue and enlarge cooperative purchasing and planning efforts, as is evident in the Town of Camillus and other localities. Wherever possible, these efforts should be formalized, written agreements.

E. Assessment

* Have towns assume responsibility for assessment for their villages. Neighboring towns should begin to share assessment functions. The county should assume the mechanical, supportive tasks in regards to assessment.

* Institute county-wide, full-value assessment.

The Onondaga Citizens League has already researched the issue of full-value assessment in Onondaga County. In fact, this topic

was the very first studied by the League in 1978. OCL's Report #1, Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment: Recommendations for Onondaga County, pointed out "the absolute necessity for local taxing units in this state to institute a state-approved system of assessing real estate property at 100 percent value." The report cited some meaningful reasons for this move, including the fact that "full-value assessment 'opens up the system.' Assessments are easier for citizens to understand, make realistic comparisons and take greater interest in the process." Full-value throughout the county would give citizens greater access to information.

F. Administrative Services

* Share professional staff among villages and towns when the size of the municipality does not justify having its own full-time management staff.

* Conduct capital improvement planning in all localities using a coordinated, countywide approach, focusing on cost-effectiveness and other management issues.

* Utilize technical and support services, which should be provided by the county, to increase local efficiencies. This should include, but not be limited to, computer access to information and networking. The county's data processing capabilities should be utilized in all areas where it is feasible, with the towns and villages contracting with the county. The goal should be to move supportive, administrative operations to the county level.

* Conduct all purchasing in a coordinated fashion, with the long term goal of having the county become the centralized purchasing entity for all towns and villages, particularly for all capital equipment and insurance.

* Provide incentives to encourage local governments to undertake sharing and consolidation.

* Encourage school districts to engage in cooperative purchasing with municipalities.

* Promote and become members of the state-wide reciprocal insurance program, being organized by the State Association of Towns, for protection against liability claims.

G. Courts

* Continue efforts of the Onondaga County Criminal Justice Advisory Board, particularly in the area of cooperative and long-range planning and working with related community agencies.

* Continue the local liaisons with the New York State Police, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department and municipal law

enforcement agencies.

* Provide financial support for town and village magistrates to have access to computers and modern communications equipment. This does not mean that every locality should be purchasing state-of-the-art computers, modems and facsimile machines. Conveniently located sites with necessary electronic communication can increase efficiencies in the local criminal justice system.

Note: The criminal justice system in Onondaga County will be the focus of the Onondaga Citizens League's 1992-93 study.

VI. Recommended Mechanism for Implementation

Local government officials will be playing an important role in future years in determining ways to provide quality services more cost effectively. The Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium is an organization, already in place, which can serve a central role in enhancing communication between government officials and facilitating major improvements in service delivery. The Onondaga Citizens League believes that formalizing the status of the Consortium and providing it with more resources will be a wise investment in the future of local government, with potential results in cost savings and improved service delivery. Therefore, it is recommended that:

A. Broaden the membership of the Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium:

- * All towns and villages, together with the county and the City of Syracuse, should agree to commit to the Consortium for an initial two-year period.
- * Participation of department heads should be increased and participation in the Consortium extended to fire district officials. The Consortium should explore the involvement of school districts.

B. Strengthen and formalize the Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium through the establishment of funding:

- * A percentage of the sales tax revenue should be dedicated to the support of the Consortium.
- * The executive committee of the Consortium should issue a semi-annual, written report of goals, accomplishments and problems.
- * Periodic management audits should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the Consortium's efforts.

C. Establish a Fund for Innovation through the Consortium:

- * This fund would be designed to defray start-up costs of efforts at consolidation or cooperation. The incentives provided by this fund could take the form of interest-free revolving loans or one-time grants. Consortium staff should also be involved in grant writing to obtain additional funding sources for cooperative ventures.

D. Facilitate cooperation and consolidation among local governments through the Consortium:

- * The Consortium should identify opportunities for sharing and

providing support, serving as a clearinghouse to disseminate information and provide technical assistance for cooperative and innovative approaches in service delivery.

- * The Consortium should ensure that current inventories of, public works, police, fire and other kinds of equipment be maintained and used as a management tool for capital expenditures and planning. The Consortium should also play a central role in helping coordinate the sharing and scheduling of equipment.
- * Members of the Consortium should be surveyed to ascertain which mandates are the most onerous. A committee should be formed to determine those that have the most significant impact on the municipalities and a factual, written report should be prepared, containing supporting documentation regarding the burden. That information should be presented to those organizations, such as the Association of Towns, which are empowered to lobby for reform. The Consortium could also work with those representative municipal organizations to encourage the state to reevaluate the distribution of state aid so that it would provide an incentive for consolidation and cooperation.
- * The Consortium should develop a prototype, written agreement for the sharing of equipment and personnel between municipalities, which can be used as a model to develop formalized, local agreements.

E. Clarify local government issues through Consortium action:

- * The Consortium should be at the forefront of helping municipalities develop "plain language" tax bills to enable residents to determine the actual costs of various services provided by governments.
- * The Consortium should assist municipalities in establishing a budget reporting system that is both uniform and readable. This would help with general citizen understanding of the budget process. Uniformity would allow municipalities to work with each other in cost effective ways.
- * The Consortium should assist each municipality in preparing a programmatic overview of their services, on a standard form, so that duplicated services and programs can be identified. Citizens and elected officials could then assess the relative costs and merits of redundant programs and decide if they should be continued.
- * The Consortium should be on the forefront of facilitating

the move to full-value assessment in all of Onondaga County.

- * The Consortium should develop a proposal to make Onondaga County a demonstration project for New York State in the area of consolidation and cooperation. Included should be a plan to have all governing bodies operate on the calendar year for the purpose of fiscal planning.

These recommendations for implementation are consistent with the stated purpose and goals of the Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium. The Consortium's membership has adopted a statement that reads, in part, "We representatives of county, city, town and village governments in Onondaga County recognize that far more issues and needs bind us together as a single community than divide us into separate communities." The stated goals of the Consortium at the present time are:

- * To promote a closer and more sympathetic relationship between and among all our communities.
- * To improve the exchange of ideas and experiences so that we may accomplish the greatest possible economy of operation and efficiency of administration.
- * To encourage discussion at an early stage of emerging public issues that are likely to require inter-governmental cooperation.
- * To maximize available federal, state and local resources through joint studies, projects and programs whenever such collaborative effort is feasible.
- * To secure for our communities and their residents a fair and equitable share of federal and state funding and benefits.
- * To propose, review, support or oppose legislative or administrative action by the state or federal governments which affect our communities and the constituents we share with our representatives in state and federal government.

When the enhanced Consortium is up and running, opportunities for additional cooperative ventures can be further explored. An area with great potential in this regard is intergovernmental cooperation with school districts. In addition, subcommittees, focus groups or task forces of Consortium members could be convened in particular service areas whenever pertinent, drawing on the

expertise of the membership.

In conclusion, the Citizens League also believes that the Consortium--and all government leaders and organizations--should not ignore the need for continued citizen education and involvement. Residents should be informed and capable of choosing services that they recognize as cost efficient. It is crucial to provide adequate information about service levels and costs in a uniform manner, allowing residents to learn about the kinds of services being performed and at what cost in their own and other communities. County Executive Nicholas Pirro's discussion this spring on clearly itemized tax bills is a step in this direction.

The goal of these recommendations is to allow the people of Onondaga County to make informed decisions about public services, while maintaining that sense of local control, identity and accessibility so desired by local residents.

A CALL TO ACTION

The Citizens League strongly recommends that the executive committee of the Onondaga Intermunicipal Consortium call a meeting of all elected town and village officials to discuss implementation of this report's recommendations relative to the Consortium.

The Citizens League challenges all elected officials, included those who have not previously participated in the Consortium, to attend this meeting. This meeting should be conducted by the end of 1992.

Each village and town board is urged to pass a resolution in support of strengthening and formalizing the Consortium, as described in these recommendations.

V. Appendices**A. Chairpeople**

Carol Dwyer
Tom Letham
Helen Zych

B. Steering Committee Members

Helen Anderson
Patrick Benz
Linda Dombrow
Darlene Kerr
John Kramer
George Mango
Jim Murphy
E. Clyde Ohl
Eleanor Shopiro
Elaine Walter
Burt Weidenkopf

C. Study Committee Members

John A. Angyal
Helen Anderson
Patrick Benz
Rose Bernthal
Janet Besse
John Cameron
Dick Carbery
Ginny Carmoody
Max Casper
John Cecil Jr.
Fonda Chronis
Susan Dailey
Kelly Davis
Linda Dombrow
Kay O. Ellis
John Farnham
Bill Fletcher
Michael P. Freedman
Rietta Gantter
Suzanne Good
Tom Greenwood
Pamela Kirwin Heintz
Joan Johnson
John Kramer
Elaine Lytel
Donald J. MacLaughlin

Sarah Stuart McIlvain
George Mango
Patrick Mannion
Stephen W. Martin
Tore Mita
Toby Nadel
Clyde Ohl
George Oliver
Bill Pavlus
Marilyn Pinsky
Clarence A. Rycraft
Margaret Sawmiller
Jonnie Shopiro
Jim and Janet Starr
Eleanor Steinholtz
Eleanor Tyler
Ed VanDerWater
Elaine Walter
Burt Weidenkopf
Judith West
Gary White
Wilson Worman

D. Presentations (Listed Alphabetically)

Angelo Albanese
Manlius Mayor
1 Elmbrook Drive
Manlius, N.Y. 13104
Feb. 26, 1992

Patrick Babcock
Superintendent of Public Works
Village of Liverpool
Oswego Road
Liverpool, N.Y. 13088
Feb. 19, 1992

Patrick Benz, Coordinator
State and Federal Aid
Onondaga County
Civic Center
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
Feb. 22, 1992
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Ron Brach
Executive Director
New York State Legislative
Committee on Rural Resources
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

William Campagnoni
Solvay Mayor
1100 Woods Road
Solvay, N.Y. 13209
March 25, 1992

Leo Capria
Chief of Police
Manlius Police Department
1 Elmbrook Drive
Manlius, N.Y. 13104
March 4, 1992

Richard W. Clark
Elbridge Mayor
210 W. Main St.
Elbridge, N.Y. 13060
Feb. 5, 1992

Donald F. Colon
1st District Legislator
Onondaga County Legislature
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Kevin Crawford, Executive
Director
NYS Association of Towns
146 State St.
Albany, N.Y. 12207
April 1, 1992, and
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Jim Cummings
Otisco Town Supervisor
Box 313
RD #1
Tully, N.Y. 13159
Jan. 29, 1992

James DeLapp,
Chief of Police
Town of Dewitt
P.O. Box 159
4400 Butternut Drive
Dewitt, N.Y. 13214
March 4, 1992

Patrick DiDomenico
Clay Town Super.
Clay Town Hall
4483 Route 31
Clay, N.Y. 13041
Jan. 8, 1992

Michael Diskin, Mayor
Village of Ticonderoga
P.O. Box 270
Ticonderoga, N.Y. 12883
May 13, 1992

Linda Dombrow, Director
Office of Research
City of Syracuse
City Hall,
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
Jan. 22, 1992
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Dorothy Dooren
Legislative Associate
New York State Senate
Legislative Committee on
Rural Resources
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

John Ferris,
Geddes Town Attorney
1000 Woods Road
Solvay, N.Y. 13209
March 25, 1992

Kevin Gilligan
11th District County Legislator
Onondaga County Legislature
Onondaga County Courthouse
Montgomery St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
April 15, 1992

John Gosson,
Geddes Town Deputy Supervisor
1000 Woods Road
Solvay, N.Y. 13209
March 25, 1992

Michael Hanuszcak
8th District County Legislator
Onondaga County Legislature
Onondaga County Courthouse
Montgomery St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
April 15, 1992

Merry Harris, Operations
Manager
Broome County Partnership 2000
c/o Broome County Office Bldg.
P.O. Box 1766
Binghamton, N.Y. 13902-1766
Jan. 15, 1992

James A. Hotchkiss, Mayor
Village of North Syracuse
Village Hall
600 S. Bay St.
North Syracuse, NY. 13203
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Al Hoxy
Town Supervisor
Onondaga Town Hall
4801 W. Seneca Tnpk.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13215
Jan. 8, 1992

Tom Kehoskie,
Director of Parks and
Recreation
Town of Camillus
4600 W. Genesee St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13219
March 18, 1992

Bruce Kenan
Skaneateles Village Planning
Board
26 Fennell St.
Skaneateles, N.Y. 13152
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

J. Craig Kerr
Onondaga Town Justice
Onondaga Town Hall
4801 W. Seneca Tnpk.
April 29, 1992

John Kramer, Executive Director
Cornell Cooperative Extension
W. Genesee St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
Dec. 4, 1992

Suzanne LaLonde, Director of
Recycling
Onondaga County Resource
Recovery Agency
100 Elwood Davis Road
North Syracuse, N.Y. 13212
Dec. 11th, 1991

James Lannon, Mayor
Village of Fayetteville
425 E. Genesee St.
Fayetteville, N.Y. 13066
Feb. 26, 1992

Robert E. Leamer, General
Counsel
United Health Services
35-37 Harrison St.
Johnson City, N.Y. 13790
Jan. 15, 1992

Richard Lowenberg, Supervisor
Town of Manlius
Manlius Town Hall
301 Brooklea Drive
Fayetteville, N.Y. 13066
Feb. 26, 1992

Stan Lundine
New York State Lt. Governor
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Gary MacLachlan
County Parks Commissioner
Onondaga County Parks and
Recreation Offices
Onondaga Lake Parkway
Liverpool, N.Y. 13088
March 18, 1992

Roy A. Mallette
Cicero Town Super.
c/o Cicero Town Hall
8236 S. Main St.
Cicero, N.Y. 13039
Jan. 8, 1992

Charles Major
Former Skaneateles Town
Supervisor
Town Hall
24 Jordan St.
Skaneateles, N.Y. 13152

Donald McLaughlin, Council
Town of Clay
Town Hall
4483 Route 31
Clay, N.Y. 13041
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Robert Moulton
Supervisor
Town of Newark Valley
109 Whig St.
Newark Valley, N.Y. 13811
May 13, 1992

E. Clyde Ohl
Supervisor
Camillus Town Offices
4600 W. Genesee St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13219
Jan. 8, 1992
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

John Paladino
Highway Superintendent
Town of Pompey
Pompey Center, N.Y. 13138
Feb. 19, 1992

Vince Palerino,
Village Administrator
Village of Manlius
1 Elmbrook Drive
Manlius, N.Y. 13104
March 18, 1992

Tim Paul, Police Administrator
Baldwinsville Police Department
16 W. Genesee St.
Baldwinsville, N.Y. 13027
March 4, 1992

William J. Peverly
Chief of Police
East Syracuse Police Department
204 N. Center St.
East Syracuse, N.Y. 13057
March 4, 1992

David Pilliod, Director
Office for Local Government
Services, Department of State
162 Washington Ave.
Albany, N.Y. 12231
April 1, 1992
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

John Rapp
Superintendent of Public Works
Village of Manlius
Manlius, N.Y. 13104
Feb. 19, 1992

Marilyn Higgins-Rohde
Senior Vice President
Greater Syracuse Chamber of
Commerce
572 S. Salina St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
Minnowbrook Leadership
Conference
May 18-19, 1992

Albert R. Sahn
Liverpool Mayor
500 Hickory St.
Liverpool, N.Y. 13088
Feb. 5, 1992

Bill Sanford, Chairman
Onondaga County Legislature
Onondaga County Courthouse
Montgomery St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13202
April 15, 1992

Martin J. Sennett
Marcellus Mayor
6 Slocombe Ave.
Marcellus, N.Y. 13108
Feb. 5, 1992

Dale A. Sweetland
Fabius Town Supervisor
Town Hall
Main St.
Fabius, N.Y. 13063
Jan. 29, 1992

Frank Valletta
Pompey Town Supervisor
6830 Frank Long Road
Jamesville, N.Y. 13978
Jan. 29, 1992

William Walsh
Geddes Town Justice
1000 Woods Road
Solvay, N.Y. 13209
April 29, 1992

Towns	Population	Land Area (in sq miles)	Full Value (in millions)	Debt Service	Gen. Govt.	Police	Fire	Public Safety	Health	Transportation	Economic Asst	Recreation	Public Works
				Principal	Oper	Equip	Oper	Equip	Oper	Equip	Oper	Equip	Oper
				Interest	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap
Cannabus	23,625	34.1	658	562.5	201.3	1234.1	212.0	773.6	46.5	477.9	0.0	42.6	0.3
Cicero	25,560	48.5	624	659.9	488.8	800.3	33.4	243.1	21.3	526.2	0.0	42.6	0.3
Clay	59,749	48.0	1,367	1,335.7	892.7	1,228.0	292.5	1,102.7	43.1	1,338.4	0.0	126.0	0.0
Dewitt	26,148	33.9	1,284	465.8	371.6	1,230.6	213.2	1,730.8	92.6	532.4	0.0	56.5	0.2
Elbridge	6,192	37.6	139	26.0	2.8	251.0	12.0	1.5	0.0	137.3	0.0	6.2	0.0
Fabius	1,760	46.6	62	6.0	1.6	94.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0
Geddes	17,677	9.2	520	205.0	79.9	943.4	49.2	775.9	8.1	209.3	0.0	75.0	0.0
Lafayette	5,106	39.2	127	44.0	29.6	256.1	27.3	0.0	0.0	164.3	0.0	12.9	0.0
Lysander	15,346	61.9	444	0.0	1.0	656.6	26.5	4.6	0.0	48.3	0.0	60.6	0.0
Marcellus	30,656	49.6	153	240.0	110.7	1,193.8	0.0	1,727.7	159.0	813.3	0.0	91.5	0.0
Oranodaga	6,465	32.6	153	14.0	20.4	235.4	90.5	14.5	0.0	1,142.1	0.0	103.1	0.0
Onondaga	18,366	67.7	514	363.1	338.2	709.0	62.3	14.5	0.0	1,142.1	0.0	7.8	0.0
Ontario	2,255	29.6	65	26.5	6.7	111.1	3.1	0.0	0.0	106.8	0.0	6.8	0.0
Pompey	5,317	66.4	158	85.0	8.7	205.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	357.8	0.0	22.6	0.0
Salina	35,145	13.8	896	509.0	324.1	2,446.2	35.3	28.6	0.0	509.0	0.0	146.1	1.2
Skaneateles	7,526	42.7	304	6.0	0.9	374.0	7.7	56.5	0.0	84.1	0.0	4.7	0.0
Spartford	2,376	32.8	73	22.8	3.1	81.4	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0
Tully	2,376	25.9	94	24.0	6.0	156.4	5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Van Buren	13,367	35.6	274	65.4	63.2	687.5	16.4	13.4	0.0	304.2	0.0	33.9	0.0
Town Totals	304,342	746.1	\$8,747	4660.7	2936.1	12,774.2	2996.4	6474.2	370.6	6396.7	0.0	972.6	45.9
	people	sq miles	billion	billions	billions	billions	billions	billions	billions	billions	billions	billions	billions

Villages	Assessed Value	Equal. Rate	Debt Service	Gen. Govt.	Police	Fire	Public Safety	Health	Transportation	Economic Asst	Recreation	Public Works
			Principal	Oper	Equip	Oper	Equip	Oper	Equip	Oper	Equip	Oper
			Interest	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap	Cap
Baldwinsville	6,591	3.1	148.7	9.78	210.7	94.4	538.0	0.0	61.81	0.5	119.5	267.1
Cannabus	1,160	0.4	181.9	9.13	4.0	1.3	113.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	67.3	0.0
East Syracuse	3,343	1.6	128.7	14.74	x	x	50.8	x	x	0.0	57.1	31.0
Elbridge	1,219	0.4	264.8	11.24	88.0	50.8	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5
Fabius	310	1.0	40.2	6.24	0.0	0.0	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fayetteville	4,248	1.7	161.866	136.78	150.0	93.1	500.7	18.1	0.0	0.0	148.9	44.1
Jordan	1,325	0.8	21.6	11.24	49.2	100.7	99.1	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.7
Liverpool	2,624	1.7	77.86	11.30	78.1	29.9	308.8	78.8	50.6	19.8	252.4	90.2
Marcellus	4,764	0.6	29.01	7.92	22.4	10.2	68.3	2.9	0.0	0.0	87.6	230.6
Marlborough	1,840	1.2	821.58	136.78	194.4	76.5	555.7	209.2	0.0	0.0	121.9	34.7
Minoa	3,745	2.0	129.61	16.1	315.2	202.5	486.5	23.7	5.4	121.9	34.7	36.5
No. Syracuse	7,363	1.3	320.27	31.89	187.0	161.8	252.8	2.7	275.8	69.4	36.5	225.2
Skaneateles	2,724	1.6	130.72	10.63	33.1	212.8	636.0	2.0	736.8	14.1	116.4	21.7
Tully	911	0.6	226.3	14.22	21.9	20.3	87.8	0.4	5.2	0.2	50.8	6.3
Village Totals	48,874	19	\$21,036	n/a	1,463	1,177	3,826	937	2,868	43	1,432	877
Town Totals	304,342	746	\$8,747	billions	4,661	2,936	12,774	2,998	6,474	371	6,397	0

x - village failed to file FY 1990 annual fiscal report
|a| - non-assessing village located in two towns

8.62

E. Compilation of Town and Village Expenditures for Fiscal Year Ended 1990

Note: From the Special Report on Municipal Affairs for local fiscal years ended in 1990, Office of the State Comptroller

F. Survey of Town and Village Residents

1. How many years have you lived in Onondaga County?

2. I would like to get your general impressions about how well some local governments are doing handling their responsibilities. Do you think county government is doing a good job, a fair job, a poor job, or do you not have enough information to form a judgement about this?

County 26.5% Good 50.4% Fair 7.8% Poor 15.3% No Opinion

What about your own town government? Is it doing a good, fair, or poor job, or do you have no judgment?

Town 41.8% Good 35.4% Fair 11.7% Poor 11.2% No Opinion

Do you live in a village? If so, what about the job it is doing?

Village 48.1% Good 26.9% Fair 6.5% Poor 18.5% No Opinion

3. Some people think town and village governments are an unnecessary, extra layer of government. Others think town and village officials are valuable because they are in touch with local problems and they give citizens someone to contact about local problems. Do you think towns and villages are an unnecessary extra layer of government, do you think they are valuable to have, or do you have no opinion?

18.7% Extra Layer 74.4% Valuable 6.9% No opinion

4. Do you think that the existence of these town and village governments makes the overall cost of local government in Onondaga County higher, or do you have no opinion?

82.8% Yes 9.2% No 7.9% No opinion

5. Is having town and village governments important enough to you that you accept any additional costs they might create, are they not important enough to justify their costs, or do you have no opinion about this?

53.9% Important enough 25.5% Not important 20.5% No opinion

6. In this county we elect county, town and village officials. I would like to read you some of the consequences people suggest result from all these officials. Could you indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
a. Citizens get better representation of local concerns through towns and villages.	80.3	9.7	10.0
b. Government costs more than it should.	82.8	9.2	7.9
c. Local officials bicker among themselves too much and make it hard to get much done.	59.9	25.9	14.2
d. The response to local problems is better because local administrators know local problems better than county officials.	78.1	14.8	7.1
e. Local officials worry about keeping their jobs and not finding efficient ways to handle local needs.	33.4	48.5	18.0
f. Problems take too long to be resolved.	66.5	21.4	12.0

7. As a general issue, which do you regard as more responsive to your concerns: county officials or town and village officials. Or do you regard them as equally responsive to your concerns?

13.2% County 39.6% Town and Village 46.2% Equally 1.1% No opinion

8. Many people advocate more cooperation among local governments in delivering services. I would like to read you several service areas. Could you indicate if you would accept or be opposed to having your local governments cooperate with other governments to provide these services. Or, do you have no opinion?

	Accept	Oppose	No Opinion
Fire	83.0	13.3	3.7
Police	87.0	9.8	3.2
Parks	80.9	12.0	7.2
Road Maintenance	80.1	15.9	4.0
Snow Removal	80.4	17.2	2.4
Zoning	45.6	40.8	13.5
Water Services	78.7	12.2	9.0
Sewer Services	77.1	11.7	11.2
Property Assessment	48.3	39.2	12.5

9. County government raises money by imposing a 3 percent sales tax within the county. The county then distributes part of that money to towns and villages. This allows towns and villages to impose limited or no town and village property taxes. The county then imposes higher county property taxes to make up for the money it transfers to local governments.

a. Do you think the county should continue to support town and village governments with sales tax revenue, should it stop this practice, or do you have no opinion?

48.8% Continue 20.4% Stop 30.8% No opinion

b. Do you think the county should require towns and villages to cooperate more on services if they are to continue receiving their sales tax revenue, or do you have no opinion?

71.8% Yes 10.9% No 17.0% No opinion

10. Some people have urged that villages be consolidated with their town governments. Do you agree or disagree with that proposal, or do you have no opinion?

51.9% Agree 22.5% Disagree 25.7% No opinion

11. I would like to get your response to the following alternatives: If you had a choice of consolidation of town and village governments with the county to create more efficiency and lower costs or a choice of maintaining town and village governments so you have your own local government and more access to local officials, which would you choose. Or do you have no choice on this question?

38.5% Efficiency 43.9% Access 17.7% No choice

12. If towns and villages were consolidated with the county, what impact do you think it would have on services in your area? Do you think services would improve, stay the same, decline, or do you have no opinion?

20.0% Improve 29.3% Stay the Same 34.9% Decline 15.7% No opinion

Questions 13 to 16 dealt with demographic information. Of the 388 people who answered the survey, 49.3 % were males and 50.7% were females. In terms of party preference, 43.6 were Republicans, 28.9% were Independents and 22.1% were Democrats. In terms of age, 9.5% were between the ages of 18 and 29; 42.2% were between the ages of 30 and 44; 25.7% were between the ages of 45 and 59; and 22.6% were over 55.

G. Bibliography

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