

# The Challenge of Local Partnerships

Report of the  
Governor's Task Force  
on Local Partnerships

July, 1992



Melvin R. Primas, Jr., *Co-Chair*

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STATE OF NEW JERSEY

July, 1992

The Honorable Jim Florio  
Governor - State of New Jersey  
State House  
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Governor Florio:

In October 1991 you established the Task Force on Local Partnerships and charged us with "finding ways to reduce local government costs by pooling resources and sharing services." Your charge recognizes the primacy of local initiatives in dealing with local issues and avoids state intrusion into valid local concerns.

You also asked us to recommend an appropriate state role in supporting local efforts to assure the most effective use of scarce resources in an increasingly interdependent fiscal environment. This direction recognizes that governments at all levels must join forces to ensure the continued vitality and viability of public services in the state.

The Task Force findings confirm your perceptions. We concluded that local partnerships are important and effective responses to recent, recession-driven budgetary concerns and are essential long term policies for dealing with area-wide service issues linked to major changes in the state's economy and inter-governmental fiscal structure.

We believe that the following approach, recommended in our report, will enhance the opportunities and reduce the obstacles to local partnerships in New Jersey:

- Strengthening the state-local and interlocal process of identifying and acting on area-wide service opportunities;
  - Providing financial incentives to encourage interlocal and area-wide activities;
  - Developing a long term policy for reassigning certain service functions to counties and other regional entities.
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We recommend that the following actions be taken to advance local partnerships in the state:

1. Establish by Executive Order a network of state agencies which routinely work with local government on various service issues.
2. Provide, via this network, an expanded range of technical assistance to communities, relating to fiscal, administrative and functional aspects of joint services.
3. Provide financial incentives to local governments for initiating joint service agreements, including:
  - Funds for study and implementation grants to local governments, authorized in the Interlocal Services Aid Act, and requested by the Department of Community Affairs for FY'93 and a higher level for the following year;
  - Incentive bonuses for interlocal and regional services in existing state aid programs.
4. Initiate pilot and demonstration studies in representative functions and regions of the state in order to test the efficacy of, and develop models for, implementing interlocal and regional service arrangements.
5. Accord the highest priority to a special examination, under the leadership of the Attorney General, of interlocal services in the law enforcement function.
6. Strengthen the regional and interlocal role of county government.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Task Force.

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Respectfully submitted by the members of the Governors Task Force on Local Partnerships.

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THE  
CHALLENGE  
OF  
LOCAL  
PARTNERSHIPS

Report of the  
Governor's Task Force  
on Local Partnerships

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## Report of the Governor's Local Partnership Task Force Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

*" We have always had the spirit of working together, of meeting challenges with teamwork."*

*Governor Jim Florio*

The challenge cited by Governor Florio is to relieve fiscal pressures which strain the level and quality of local government services in New Jersey. The more immediate causes of the current stress can be traced to the escalation of costs during the decade of the 80's, when the annual growth of county and municipal budgets was averaging more than twice the rate of inflation. Costs mandated on local governments increased at even higher rates — two and a half times for corrections and penal institutions; a four-fold increase for county courts. The costs of solid waste disposal tripled and fringe benefits in county and municipal budgets quadrupled during the last decade.

The nation-wide recession compounds local service problems. A slowdown in the growth of the local property tax base, still the principal support for local services, deprives local governments of revenues needed to sustain current levels of service. Moreover, in many communities the more immediate, recession-driven budgetary problems are exacerbating the long term service dilemma—scores of small communities have long outgrown their capacity to meet local service needs from local revenue sources.

For most communities the projected impact of rising service costs and a relatively stable local public employment are raising concerns about the future affordability and productivity of their local public work force.

In response to these immediate and long-term concerns, the Task Force on Local Partnerships was charged by Governor Florio with "Finding ways for New Jersey's Local Governments to ease the property tax burden by pooling resources and sharing services." Governor Florio's Executive Order stressed both cost savings and improving efficiency in the provision of local government services through voluntary joint service agreements.

The Task force found widespread support for these goals among the state's municipalities and counties. There is growing acceptance of local partnerships as a means of coping with the realities of limited resources, as opportunities to address problems jointly and as a way to improve the delivery of local services through interlocal agreements.

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The Task Force study included several specific objectives cited in Governor Florio's Executive Order, designed to identify opportunities and impediments to local partnerships in the state:

- a. Our review of the statutes specifically dealing with interlocal agreements revealed no major obstacles. New Jersey's laws not only authorize but also promote joint services, by offering financial incentives for their study and implementation. However, statutes governing Civil Service, pensions and arbitration can in specific cases deter interlocal service consolidation, but should be addressed in a different context.
- b. We examined legislation in neighboring states for possible application in New Jersey. For the most part the laws of these states which authorize interlocal agreements are similar to ours. Even where different regional options are available, the differences in powers, structures and functional responsibilities of local governments in other states complicate the full adaptation of these options in New Jersey and underscore the need to develop interlocal and regional models responding to our specific requirements.
- c. We reviewed the experience of New Jersey's local governments in providing joint services as an indicator of future prospects. Hundreds of current joint service agreements in a score of local service functions throughout the state attest to the soundness of local partnership strategies. Cost savings and more efficient use of resources have been documented in many instances and many communities have expressed their interest in exploring additional joint service opportunities.

Based on their success record, various forms of local partnerships merit wider use by New Jersey's local governments and further application in a number of local service functions.

- d. A review of barriers, other than legal, to shared local services revealed skepticism about cost savings, political inertia or disinterest, and resistance by service providers to any consideration of alternative service delivery options. These institutional rigidities of our fragmented local government system are the most formidable obstacles to expansion of local partnerships in the state. Overcoming these obstacles requires joint action at the state and local levels.

There is a need for practical demonstration of the benefits of joint services and ways to deal with the more intractable problems associated with interlocal ventures. A series of pilot programs, conducted in representative operational settings, can clarify contentious issues and allay concerns regarding cost savings, administrative efficiency and political loss of control.

- e. We reviewed the appropriate roles of state agencies and local governments in responding to short and long term service-related issues. State Government has a vital interest in the success of local partnerships. The state should support local efforts to expand joint service activities by providing financial incentives and technical assistance and by streamlining the state-local administrative process as it relates to area-wide concerns.

The state can help communities to help themselves but voluntary local partnerships can only succeed where local leadership takes the initiative in addressing common service problems. Counties should play a leading role by serving as convenors for interlocal activities and as conduits for state local interaction.

- f. Joint service agreements are building blocks of larger service structures in the state. It is in the interest of the state and local governments to pursue a long term policy of reassigning fiscal or administrative responsibilities for certain service functions to counties, other appropriate regional entities or state government. Such policies are especially applicable in the areas of health, welfare, environmental control and the judiciary.

The Task Force concluded that:

*Local Partnerships work! The opportunities offered by local partnerships outweigh the difficulties of overcoming impediments. We recommend that the following actions be taken to strengthen local partnerships in the state:*

1. Establish by Executive Order a network of state agencies which routinely work with local governments on various service issues;
2. Provide, via this network, an expanded range of technical assistance to communities, relating to fiscal, administrative and functional aspects of joint services.
3. Provide financial incentives to local governments for initiating joint service agreements, including:
  - Funds for study and implementation grants to local governments, authorized in the Interlocal Services Aid Act, and requested by the Department of Community Affairs for FY'93 and a higher level for the following year;
  - Incentive bonuses for interlocal and regional services in existing state aid programs.

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4. Initiate pilot and demonstration studies in representative functions and regions of the state in order to test the efficacy of, and develop models for, implementing interlocal and regional service arrangements.

These pilot studies could include, among others, several ideas recommended to the Task Force by service providers and other local and state officials:

- Creating an interlocal public works service district;
  - Consolidating multiple services on Long Beach Island;
  - Developing a county wide fire emergency dispatching system in Essex County;
  - Administering the environmental permit process through a County Environmental Health Agency;
  - Developing the mechanics of voluntary mergers of existing municipal agencies into county agencies, e.g. in the health and welfare areas; and
  - Examining the applicability of the Lakewood Plan in a New Jersey setting (municipalities contracting with a county to purchase services they require).
5. Accord the highest priority to a special examination of interlocal services in the law enforcement function, which is subject to different pension and arbitration statutes, lines of accountability and interrelationships within the criminal justice system. Conduct such study under the aegis of the state network, under the leadership of the Attorney General and with the participation of municipal and county law enforcement agencies.
6. Strengthen the regional and interlocal role of county government by:

- Requiring state agencies to utilize counties, where appropriate, as the administrative base for regional programs and to channel the funding for such programs through county agencies.
- Assisting counties in establishing and maintaining county forums for exchange of information on interlocal problems and opportunities.
- Assigning high priority to demonstration studies of county based joint services.

These conclusions and recommendations are further detailed in the final section and in the Appendix of the Task Force Report.

## PERSONS TESTIFYING AT TASK FORCE HEARINGS

### Testimony at Task Force Hearing - February 25, 1992

- \*William P. Schuber - *County Executive, Bergen County*
- Thomas D'Alessio - *County Executive, Essex County*
- Norman Robertson - *Freeholder Director, Passaic County*
- Patrick O'Connor - *Director, Inter Governmental Affairs, Office of County Executive, Hudson County*
- Fred Dressel - *Mayor of Moonachie (Bergen County), and Executive Director Meadowlands Mayors Committee*
- Angelo Checci - *City Manager, Garfield (Bergen County)*
- Henry Ross - *Deputy Manager, Teaneck (Bergen County)*
- \* Robert Ceberio - *Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission*
- Ken Reuter - *Representing Mayor of Secaucus (Hudson County)*
- \*\* Leonard Kaiser - *Mayor, North Arlington, Assistant to Bergen County Executive*
- \*\* Robert Janiszewski - *County Executive, Hudson County*

### Testimony at Task Force Hearing - March 18, 1992

- Beatrice Cerkez - *Mayor, Deptford (Gloucester County)*
- Ray Milligan - *Chief of Police, Deptford (Gloucester County)*
- Joe Smith - *Business Administrator, Monroe Township (Gloucester County)*
- \* Marlene Asselta - *President, Southern N.J. Development Council*
- Vicky Snyder - *Administrator's Office, Gloucester (Gloucester County)*
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- Assemblymen Paul Kramer - *Hamilton Township (Mercer County) Finance Director*
- Jack Trafford - *Executive Director, N.J. League of Municipalities*
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## REPORT OF THE GOVERNOR'S LOCAL PARTNERSHIP TASK FORCE

The Governor's Task Force on Local Partnerships was created in October 1991 and charged with "Finding ways for New Jersey's Local Governments to ease the property tax burden by pooling resources and sharing services." Governor Florio's Executive Order stressed both cost savings and improving efficiency in the provision of local government services through voluntary joint service agreements. Specifically the Task Force objectives include:

- a. Reviewing existing statutes dealing with interlocal services agreements.
- b. Reviewing current examples of shared local services.
- c. Exploring any existing barriers to shared local services.
- d. Researching legislation in other states which might serve as models for sharing local services.
- e. Making recommendations for regulatory changes, legislation or administrative actions.

The Task Force's findings are based on scores of contacts with local officials and state agency staffs, public comments at hearings and conferences, various studies, surveys and other data gathered in the course of our study. The insights, advice and information provided to the Task Force reflect both the concerns, shared throughout the state, in maintaining and improving the quality of local services and the willingness of individuals and organizations to explore local partnership opportunities.

### The Climate for Local Partnerships

The Task Force study was conducted against a backdrop of fiscal stress at all levels of government. The nation-wide economic recession is having a severe impact on the state and its localities as revenue growth slows down and budgets are strained. In many localities the initial, sustainable reductions in spending and other belt tightening measures have given way to serious consideration of cutbacks in the level and range of local services. Possible layoffs of employees and curtailment of local programs are reported in all parts of the state.

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The continuing fiscal crisis has also forced local governments to examine alternative ways of providing public services. Among these are privatization, regional purchasing and insurance pools, interlocal merger of departments and various contractual agreements. In most cases these responses are intended to produce immediate or short term savings to the respective communities that may help "weather the storm." The Task Force considered the cost-savings potential of local partnerships as its immediate objective and is recommending steps to encourage and facilitate such efforts in New Jersey.

Beyond the cost-saving aspects the Task Force also addressed other issues associated with joint service provision:

- Can local partnerships contribute to more efficient and effective services even if short term cost savings are not realized?
- Do local partnerships provide the means for assuring that the quality of present services can be maintained even if the prospects for significant local resources do not improve in the near term?

A number of structural issues also emerged in the course of the Task Force study. For the most part these are related to historical development patterns rather than fiscal problems associated with cyclical economic trends.

- What role should local partnerships play in the changing inter-governmental environment in New Jersey?
- In what way do local partnerships relate to other policies designed to deal with future service demands in the state?

The Task Force has identified several governmental functions where the responsibility for service delivery should be realigned from the municipal to an area-wide, county or regional level.

The Task Force also reviewed the pivotal role of state government in promoting and facilitating local partnerships in the State. There are a number of local services that are linked in one way or another to functions of state government—financial aid, area-wide environmental programs and the administration of health and welfare, among others. Moreover, the impact of change in Federal-State fiscal relations is being felt at the local level, as well, as state governments seek to adapt their local aid programs to the new realities of public sector scarcities. State agencies are therefore in a position to encourage local governments to explore their mutual interests in developing soundly structured and well managed area-wide service delivery systems. The Task Force recommends several ways for strengthening the ability of state agencies to assist our communities in pursuing joint service objectives.

### **A Framework for Examining Joint Services**

The need for local partnerships in New Jersey should be viewed from two perspectives: first, as a response to current economic and fiscal conditions and the changing state-local fiscal relationship; and second, as a long term strategy to improve the quality and efficiency of public services in our fragmented and diverse local government system.

This report addresses the following aspects of joint service provision in New Jersey:

- a. The setting for joint services —the search for area-wide responses to local service problems;
- b. Overall fiscal dimensions — conditions that shape the need for local partnerships;
- c. The legal base — how statutes and regulations promote or impede interlocal activities;
- d. Perceptions of local partnerships— how various parties of interest view the prospects of entering into joint service agreements; and,
- e. Functional characteristics — service specific issues that promote or impede interlocal activities.

It should be noted, however, that these are linked, often overlapping issues — enabling legislation does not guarantee political acceptance and higher costs are not the only consideration defining community values and self perception. The framework, however, is useful in organizing the Task Force's research and the conclusion and recommendations of the report.

*The Task Force concluded that joint service agreements are essential local options for dealing with area-wide problems and complement other regional service strategies in New Jersey's complex metropolitan environment.*

## THE SETTING FOR LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

*The search for local partnerships in New Jersey takes place in an economically interdependent regional environment and a fragmented political landscape.*

New Jersey's 567 municipalities, 21 counties, 611 school districts and numerous authorities and special districts provide many and diverse local services to the state's 7.7 million people. In a state as small and densely populated as New Jersey, the result of fragmentation of services and service providers has led to duplication, inefficiency, and a waste of scarce resources.

Recognition of the conflict between the regional service demands of the state's economy and its fragmented local government system has resulted over the years in major shifts of service responsibilities to the regional and state level. The state, for example, plays a dominant role in the management of transportation and environmental infrastructure and in funding most aspects of social welfare and correctional institutions. The role of counties has grown in solid waste disposal, administration of health and welfare services and supporting the state's judiciary (a carryover from New Jersey's colonial traditions) and other aspects of the criminal justice system. The county's areawide role acknowledges the need to reduce fiscal and service disparities among its municipalities.

As indicated in Table I, communities have entered into many forms of regional or interlocal pacts over the years. Miscellaneous regional authorities and special districts were created to deal with sewerage, water supply, pollution control and other 'spillover' problems. While these entities depend primarily on user fees rather than local property taxes, and are not directly accountable to the voters, they are nonetheless regional service providers.

The predominance of municipal governments continues in the area of police, fire, most aspects of public works, assessment and collection of taxes and the land use and development process. But municipal governments have long recognized their interdependence in dealing with problems of growth, mobility, or new technologies. New Jersey has a long history of interlocal activities — at the municipal level there are scores of joint services arrangements in virtually every major function of local government. These include: cost sharing of service activities; contracted services; joint purchasing and pricing; county and regional commissions; an occasional merger of departments and other reciprocal, ad hoc and standby agreements.

**TABLE I**

**REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN NEW JERSEY**

*Multi-Municipal*

School Districts 18A:13-2	76	19 are K-12 with 43 municipalities 49 are 7 to 9 - 12 with 211 municipalities 8 are K-6 to 8 with 19 municipalities
Regional Sewerage Authorities 40:14A-1	18	With 120 municipalities
Regional Municipal Courts 2A:8-1	15	With 44 municipalities
Regional Health Commissions 26:3-83	6	With 44 municipalities
Joint Library Commissions 40:54:29.1	6	With 12 municipalities
Joint Meetings - Sewer 40:63-68	3	With 16 Municipalities
Joint Meetings - Flood Control 40:14-16	3	With 16 municipalities
Water Commissions 40-62:108	2	With 6 municipalities
Planning Commissions 40:55D-77	2	With 6 municipalities
Regional Utilities Authorities 40:14B-1	2	With 4 municipalities
Regional Solid Waste Management 40:66A-32	1	With 6 municipalities
<i>Multi-County</i>		
Soil Conservation 40:24-17.5	4	With 9 counties
County Colleges 18A:64A-8	1	With 2 counties

Interlocal Services Act is found at 40:8A-1.

The general Joint Meeting statute is found at 40:48B-1.

Source: N.J. County and Municipal Government Study Commission; November 1991. Augmented by information from NJ DCA

### **Opportunities for Local Partnerships**

The search for joint service opportunities is linked to the historical pattern of municipal incorporation in New Jersey and the subsequent impact of development in the state's metropolitan regions.

A glance at a map of the state's political subdivisions will quickly indicate where opportunities for local partnerships exist. New Jersey's entire area of 7,500 square miles is incorporated in 567 municipalities—a pattern which has remained largely unchanged in the past half century. Although these communities differ in size, population, stage of development and fiscal resources, there are several obvious candidates for local service partnerships:

### **Small Communities**

The historical pattern of incorporation, formation of new units of local governments, which accommodated the growing population and industrial development of the 19th century, also resulted in the fragmentation of the state into many small units of government. The permissive legislation of that period allowed the creation of nearly 200 boroughs, typically small in land area and often in population as well. These municipalities are located principally along the shore and the major commuter roads in the northeastern and Delaware Valley counties and include so-called "Hole and Doughnut" communities (municipalities entirely surrounded by others) throughout the state.

Of the state's 567 municipalities:\*

- 110 municipalities have populations of less than 5,000 and an area of less than two square miles;
- 65 municipalities have less than 5,000 people in less than one square mile;
- 205 municipalities have populations of less than 5,000;
- 42 municipalities in the four coastal counties share 125 miles of shoreline;
- 70 municipalities share Bergen County's 234 sq. miles;
- 28 municipalities of Camden County's 37 municipalities are clustered on 48 sq. miles, just over one fifth of Camden County's area;
- 72 municipalities are "Hole and Doughnut" communities.

\* Source: Population: U.S. Census 1990. Area: Division of Local Government Services Annual Report, 1989

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Long Beach Island is divided into nine parts — four separate parts of Long Beach Township and five other municipalities.

A six mile drive along the top of the Palisades will cross six municipal boundaries in Hudson County and a 12 mile drive along the seashore will cut across 14 municipalities in Monmouth county.

Many of these municipalities often form a larger "community of interest" with one or more adjacent municipalities and are thus the most suitable partners in joint service arrangements. If for no other reason their size and proximity suggest that economies of scale are likely to be present in public services provided by such municipalities.

The concept of "community of interest" is not confined to municipalities of small area, or population, or both; communities regardless of type can use joint service agreements to their advantage.

#### **Contiguous Urban Communities**

In our urban counties there are scores of municipalities which have expanded outward from their old centers and simply merged with one another. But although in demographic or socio-economic terms these communities can no longer be differentiated, their local services are still provided by many separate municipal agencies with nearly identical functions. Such municipalities would appear to be good candidates for local service partnerships, but in practice, cooperation has been mostly on an ad hoc basis and in the more peripheral areas of municipal government.

#### **Suburban Communities**

The development of suburbia in the post-war decades created an ever increasing demand for local services. Initially, the expanding tax base in these municipalities was able to support the need for new schools, police services, streets and recreational facilities. But when development slows, and can no longer support the rising costs of services, communities often consider, among other options, the possibility of cost sharing through joint services with neighboring municipalities in the same bind. Suburban communities in New Jersey have joined in providing many types of services, as discussed in the next section.

### **Rural Communities**

Technology and mobility have brought the state's rural communities out of their relative isolation and involved them in many statewide and regional concerns. The services these communities provide may differ in scale, but not in scope, from those of their more developed neighbors. Joint service opportunities are therefore present as alternatives to establishing separate but often understaffed service agencies.

As suggested by this overview, the majority of the state's municipalities could potentially benefit from various types of intermunicipal service arrangements. Moreover, when a municipality does not fit neatly into any of the foregoing types, as is the case with some of our major cities, for example, county governments can and often do play an important interlocal role and one which is likely to grow.

### **County Government in Local Partnerships**

In some respects New Jersey counties share the same characteristics and corresponding service requirements with their municipal counterparts—small, medium and large; urban, suburban and rural. But counties differ from municipalities in several important aspects:

First, most counties encompass various types of municipalities whose residents' service requirements differ widely. The county fiscal process is the equalizing mechanism which mitigates the service disparities among these municipalities;

Second is the counties' continuing role as agents of state government in providing mandated services, a role that impinges on their ability to expand their partnerships with municipal governments.

Third, counties are providing regional services in a number of functional areas, some of which, such as solid waste disposal, were formerly in the municipal domain and others, such as health and welfare services, which have gradually shifted from municipalities to counties.

In addition to their discrete regional roles, counties have entered into various joint service agreements which complement intermunicipal service arrangements in several functional areas. (See Section III)

County government has gained acceptance as a local partner, but its full potential is yet to be tapped. However, the intergovernmental fiscal environment is changing rapidly, forcing local governments to consider alternative service modes. In this context county government offers a viable option for providing area-wide and interlocal services.

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### **Intra-municipal Joint Services**

Duplication of services is not only an intermunicipal feature, it occurs frequently *within* the boundaries of a single municipality:

- **Municipal Governments and school districts function as separate governmental entities and frequently do not share resources or enter into common pooling arrangements;**
- **There are many municipalities with multiple fire districts in one community — Cherry Hill Township has six for a population of 69,000, Hamilton Township in Mercer County has nine fire districts serving a population of 86,000. Each fire district has a separate governing board, tax rate, capital facilities and equipment, resulting in a redundant administrative system which is not fully mitigated by operational coordination among the districts.**

***Joint service arrangements between local general purpose governments and school districts, local and regional authorities and special districts offer opportunities for cost saving, reducing duplication and improving efficiency.***

## CURRENT INTERLOCAL SERVICES

Cooperation in the provision of local services has been increasing steadily both in number and type of service.

Recognition of the benefits of cooperation paralleled the growing demand for new or expanded services in our communities. The scope of current joint action responds to the pressures of growing mobility, new technological developments and the changing perceptions of our communities' responsibilities to deal with environmental and social problems which can no longer be addressed within their boundaries.

The most recent survey of interlocal services in the state was conducted by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in October 1991. Eight of the state's 21 counties and 317 municipalities (55.9%) responded to the survey, with a rate of response higher in rural areas. While the DCA survey does not account for all interlocal activities in the state, it does define the types and relative frequency of current joint service agreements. Anecdotal information from other sources suggests similar patterns of interlocal activities throughout the state.

In terms of general functions the responses to the survey can be grouped as follows:

**Table 2**

### Areas of Joint Services by Function

Health (incl. EMS, Animal Control)	146 *
Public Safety (police, fire & dispatching)	101
Public Works (inc. recycling, solid waste, equipment, fuel)	74
Courts & Corrections	28
Data Processing (including printing)	25
Community Development (construction, code enforcement)	21
Libraries	18
Parks & Recreation	10
Miscellaneous Other (inc. staff sharing transportation, senior citizen & disabled services)	17
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>440</b>

\*The extent of Joint Health Services is actually greater than reflected in the DCA Survey. The N.J. Department of Health indicates that all but 61 of the states municipalities are being served by county health departments, regional commissions, or interlocal agreements.

Source: *Directory of Interlocal Services, N.J. Department of Community Affairs, October 1991*

Some of the respondents also indicated varying degrees of interest in other joint service opportunities, principally because of their cost saving potential (63.9%) and upgrading the level of service (20.75%).

#### Purchasing and Insurance Pools

Two other types of interlocal activities prevalent in New Jersey are Joint Purchasing and Pricing Systems and Joint Insurance Funds. In both cases participation in these pooling arrangements is widespread:

#### Cooperative Purchasing Systems

659 municipalities, counties and other public entities are members in 33 active cooperative purchasing systems.

**Table: 3a**

#### Membership in Cooperative Purchasing Systems February 1992

Municipalities	291
Counties	8
Boards of Education	326
All others (districts, authorities)	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>659</b>

**Table: 3b**

#### Frequency of Commodities Purchased (by Cooperative Purchasing Systems, Major Categories)

Road Materials & Contracts	92
Petroleum Products	59
School Supplies	33
Building Supplies	30
Office Supplies and data processing	26
Chemicals, lawn	21
Automotive	12
Consumer	11
Public Safety Equipment, Uniforms	10
Other public works & Recreation	9
Janitorial	9
Health Supplies & Services	7
Other	5

Source: N.J. Department of Community Affairs, February 1992

Although there is no comprehensive information of savings through joint purchasing systems, a survey of purchases conducted by the Cape May Purchasing Cooperative indicates savings ranging from 30% to over 50% for miscellaneous janitorial supplies and traffic paint. The City of Hackensack purchases fuel for its vehicles at a savings of 50% through the Bergen County Cooperative Purchasing System.

#### Joint Insurance Funds

284 communities are members of 15 Joint Insurance Funds (JIF) and most of these and some other communities are also members to Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Funds. These numbers are likely to grow as additional types of coverage are added to those presently available.

90% of the members of Joint Insurance Funds purchase automobile, workers compensation, general liability and property coverage. Two health benefit programs will be in effect shortly with a third to be established by mid-year.

Members of Joint Insurance Funds realize, at a minimum, first year savings of 10% - 15% over the prevailing cost of insurance in the highly competitive market place of the current recession.

**Table 4**

#### Membership in Joint Insurance Funds

	No. of Members
Atlantic County	26
Bergen County	33
Burlington County	10
Camden County Municipal	23
Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland Municipal	9
Mercer County Municipal	14
Middlesex County Municipal	18
Monmouth Municipal	31
Morris Municipal	26
New Jersey Utilities Authorities	23
North Jersey Intergovernmental	19
Ocean County Municipal	29
Professional Municipal Management	4
South Bergen Municipal	15
Suburban Essex	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>
State-wide excess liability	71
Municipal excess liability	229

Source: N.J. Department of Community Affairs, February 1992

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### **Other Interlocal Activities**

The level of interest in joint or regionalized services has been growing steadily. In addition to many respondents to DCA's survey who were currently or had previously considered joint service arrangements, there are other 'hot spots' of interlocal activities reported throughout the state:

- In Gloucester County, seven municipalities are discussing ways to share services.
- Residents of six municipalities on Long Beach Island responded affirmatively to a survey by the Long Beach Island Taxpayers Association on the interest in exploring consolidation or joint service options. Funds to initiate a formal study are now being sought.
- The county executives of Bergen and Hudson counties have been meeting with their municipalities on a regular basis to discuss joint service efforts ranging from a unified approach to compliance with underground storage tank regulations to police consolidation and housing issues.
- The merger of police departments is being studied in Union Beach and Keyport (Monmouth) and discussed by the Mendhams, Dover, Wharton and Mine Hill (Morris); the Princetons (Mercer) and Deptford / Wenonah (Gloucester).
- Joint Insurance Funds for health coverage are being established in Bergen and Ocean/Monmouth counties.
- Fifteen municipalities in Middlesex County are considering joint capital bonding and leasing programs.
- The five municipality Association of Townships of Cape May has been discussing interlocal service programs.
- Millburn, South Orange and Maplewood in Essex County are studying a joint fire service.

County-Municipal and intercounty joint service agreements include:

- . Joint alcohol and drug task force
- . Environmental crimes task force
- . Joint recycling and composting
- . Consumer affairs office
- . Low and moderate income housing assistance program
- . Emergency dispatching
- . Data processing services for miscellaneous revenue systems
- . Data processing for various aspects of the criminal justice system
- . Construction code enforcement
- . Cross-acceptance related to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan
- . Public works activities - centralized storage and fuel depots

*Many of these activities have been reported only recently, during the course of the Task Force study, demonstrating the need to improve our ability to compile and share information on the scope of interlocal efforts among the state's communities.*

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## FISCAL ISSUES

*"It all comes down to dollars and cents." Predictably, the rising costs of local services were cited by many local officials as the main reason for their interest in joint service partnerships. The DCA survey indicated that nearly two thirds of respondents who were considering a joint service arrangement were doing so because of potential cost savings.*

The search for economies and cost-effectiveness in local services is a product of several converging trends and recent developments:

- The explosive rise in the cost of services in the last decade;
- The recession and slowdown in the growth of the local property tax base, which is still the principal source of support for local services;
- The CAP law which limits local spending but does not apply to certain mandated costs and arbitration rulings; and,
- The damping effects of the recession on state aid programs to local governments.

Uncertainty about the pace and rate of future economic recovery, stated to the Task Force on several occasions, suggests that joint service and regionalization strategies should not be viewed only as short term measures for dealing with cyclical economic changes, but also as steps in an ongoing process of adjusting to changes in the state's economy, workforce and public sector responsibilities.

As stated by Marlene Asselta, President of the Southern New Jersey Development Council at a Task Force hearing:

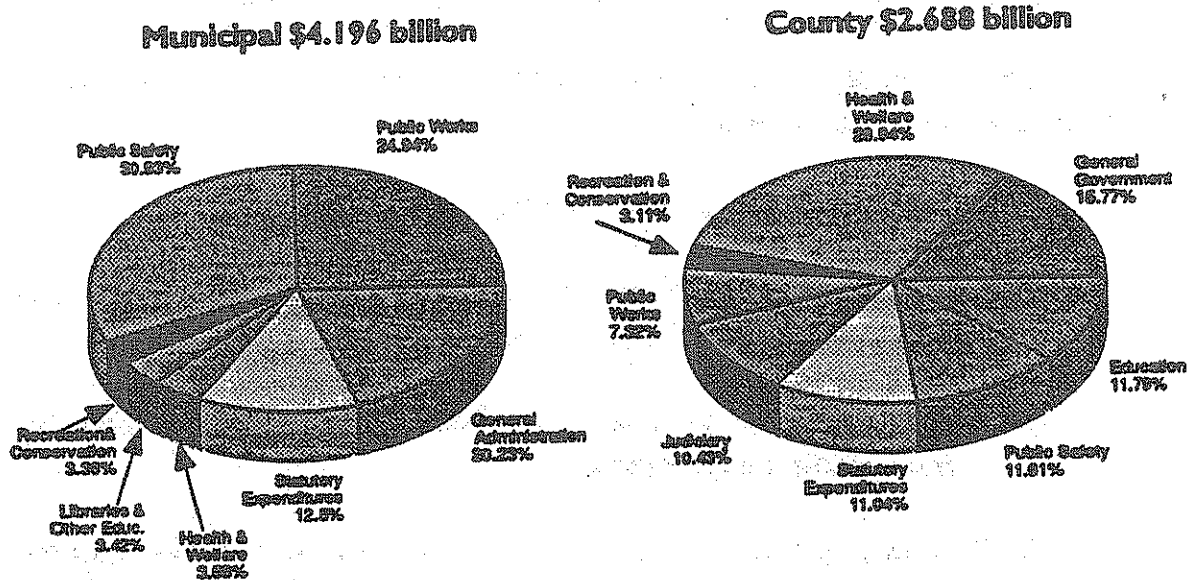
*"Regionalization, however, is a way to add flexibility to this otherwise rigid system... as in business, the goal of a government unit is not to be big or small. The goal is to deliver services to residents in the most efficient manner."*

### **An Overview of Local Services in New Jersey**

Municipal and county governments spent nearly \$6.9 billion for local services in 1989, or approximately \$900 per capita. The municipal share of the total was 61% and the county share was 39%. As can be seen from Chart 1 the distribution of these expenditures among service categories differed significantly:

**CHART I**

**Percent of Municipal and County Expenditures by Category 1989**



\*Source: N.J. Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services Annual Report 1989.

Public safety and public works consume a higher share of municipal expenditures while health and welfare and education (county colleges and vocational schools) account for a higher share of county expenditures.

Between 1980 and 1989 the expenditures for all county and municipal functions increased at an average annual rate of 12.93% and 12.83%, respectively (including expenditures of state and federal aid funds; see Table 5). The total tax levies for county and municipal purposes, a more accurate reflection of the local cost of services, increased at average annual rates 14.3% and 17.9%, respectively.

The Implicit Price Deflator (IPD) for State and Local Governments' Purchase of Goods and Services is an indicator of inflation in this component of the public sector, and is used in New Jersey to establish the local CAP limits. During the same period (1980 - 1989) the IPD increased at an average annual rate of 5.84%.<sup>\*</sup> Thus, local government expenditures were running at over twice the CAP rate during the 80's.

\*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistic Administration, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government's 1959-1991.

Increases in local government expenditures exceeding inflation are attributable to several causes, including:

- Costs which are beyond the control of local governments such as solid waste disposal, which increased at an average annual rate of 27.8%;
- Mandated costs have been rising at a disproportionate rate, e.g. annual increases of 34% for county courts and 16.8% for correctional institutions;
- The costs of new services required to serve the expanding economic development in the 80's; and,
- Generous wage and benefit contracts whether negotiated or arbitrated.

*Fringe benefits in municipal and county budgets, including the burgeoning cost of health programs, quadrupled during the 80's for average annual growth rates of 33.7%.*

**TABLE 5**

**Average Annual Percent Change in Expenditures Selected Functions 1980-89**

<b>Total Municipal Expenditures</b>	<b>12.8%</b>
Fringe Benefits	34.9
Public Safety	10.1
Fire	7.6
Police	10.7
Public Works	14.8
Garbage & Trash Disposal	27.8
All Other	11.8
Recreation & Conservation	13.1
Municipal Courts	18.6
<b>Total County Expenditures</b>	<b>12.9</b>
Fringe Benefits	33.7
County Police	35.8
County Courts	34.8
Corrections	16.8
Prosecutors Office	15.7
Recreation & Conservation	9.0
Public Works	6.0

*Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, Annual Reports 1980-1989  
Summary of County and Municipal Data Sheets*

### Local Government Employment Trends

The cost of local government services has increased sharply throughout the last decade, but local employment has remained relatively stable. The number of county and municipal employees in functions other than education increased by only 3.1% as defined by the Bureau of Census and showed an actual decrease as reported by the United States Department of Labor.\*

The principal changes in local government employment during the 80's were in: corrections, up 35%; recreation, up 18%; police, up 10% and general administration, up 6%. Privatization and other shifts of functions may account for the decline in employees in public works, fire services and hospitals.

*The overall stability of local government employment and rising cost of local services pose problems of affordability and productivity of the public work force in future years. The public work force is maturing, increasingly tenured and more likely to stay longer on the job. More local employees are in managerial positions and wages and the benefits are higher in general.*

The Mayor of Emerson and the Manager of Garfield, both in Bergen County, state that the salaries of police officers in their communities, projected at recent growth rates, could exceed \$100,000 by the end of the decade.\*\* While the projected costs may not be as high in other service areas, or other counties, the general trends are similar throughout the state.

Joint service implications: It would be naive to suggest that joint service strategies will singly address the service-cost problems of local governments. However, information and testimony presented to the Task Force indicate that, where implemented, joint service programs did result in cost savings, cost avoidance and greater efficiency.

Most of the joint service programs, however, do not involve large scale staff mergers and focus instead on materiel and capital activities. Joint programs involving personnel tend to be in new functions, e.g. in environmental control; small scale or "peripheral" activities, such as a joint office of Consumer Affairs; or state regulated programs, such as health and welfare.

But the principal cause of rising service costs is related to personnel-intensive programs, where joint service efforts must confront the concerns of local service providers over job security and tenure rights and their established status in the community. Implementation of joint services in these areas — police, fire and public works for example — evolves more slowly and depends in great measure on the continuing impact of the economic recession and cost revenue squeeze.

\*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Public Employment in 1980, 1990*. U.S. Department of Labor Statistics and N.J. Department on Labor Annual Report on Employment Hours and Earnings, 1980, 1990.

\*\*Source: Bergen County Record 9/27/91; Task Force Hearing 2/25/92.

Cost sharing in the personnel-intensive functions will undoubtedly become a more attractive option if, as projected by several economic analysts, the economy continues its lackluster performance in the 90's, and local governments are forced to reduce their workforce either by attrition or through layoffs.

*The Task Force recommends that communities continue to explore local partnership opportunities in all local functions, but address first those services where there has been demonstrable success or where fewer obstacles to implementation are present.*

## THE LEGAL BASE FOR INTERLOCAL SERVICES

The need for joint service policies in New Jersey was recognized 75 years ago in the preface to the Home Rule Act of 1917 and restated on many occasions since its enactment:

“ Some system must be devised for the formulation of a district or districts which will have power to undertake such activities as are common to all municipalities of the district, leaving only those activities which are local in their nature to be undertaken by a single municipality. It may, in the near future, be considered a wise policy in this State to grant to the counties certain powers which are now only vested in municipalities. We do not consider this a violation of the principle of home rule when the powers transferred relate to the matters which are really of county-wide interest.”

Statutes were enacted subsequently which allowed municipalities to join in providing specific services. These laws resulted in regional and interlocal structures in sewerage, libraries, municipal courts and other services shown previously in Table 1.

In 1970 the County and Municipal Government Study Commission recommended the enactment of comprehensive legislation authorizing local governments to provide jointly any service which a unit of local government was authorized to provide individually. The Interlocal Services Act, (N.J.S.A. 40:8A) enacted in 1973, is the basis for most joint service agreements during the last two decades. However, special legislation was deemed necessary for joint insurance activities and for joint pricing and purchasing systems in general.

The Local Health Services Act (N.J.S.A. 26:A) extends to municipalities four options to provide health services: via county health departments, regional commissions, intermunicipal contract or by maintaining a municipal health agency. Interlocal planning boards are functioning subject to the Municipal Land Use Law (PL 1975 c 291) and various other laws define the operational scope of other interlocal services.

While these statutes enable municipalities and counties to enter into joint service agreements they do not address a number of administrative and coordination problems, particularly at the state level, where some local government functions, notably local fiscal affairs, are under the jurisdiction of DCA's Division of Local Government Services, while other functions are regulated by, or respond to other state agencies. These issues, however, do not require statutory amendments as much as the streamlining of regulatory and policy actions at the state level and are discussed elsewhere in this report.

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Civil Service regulations have, on occasion, deterred municipalities from merging departments. N.J.S.A.(11A:9-8) requires that "When the functions of two or more political subdivisions are consolidated and any one of the political subdivisions shall be operating under this title" (i.e. the Civil Service system) "at the time of such consolidation, the other political subdivision or subdivisions shall be deemed to have adopted this title with regards to the combined functions."

While these provisions may impede departmental mergers, their repeal is not warranted. These regulations are not unreasonable, in light of the generally sound basis of the merit system and should not be viewed as onerous by the non-Civil Service municipality. Moreover, the limited application of this provision in the state and the complex and potentially costly process of repeal suggest that other approaches to joint services should be explored in such instances. *The Task Force suggests, however, that in the context of a broader study of the state's merit system it would be appropriate to address the limitation imposed by these provisions, as well.*

**The CAP Law:** Joint services are exempt from the provisions of the Local Expenditure Limitations (CAP) Law. Until recently, however, only the municipality providing the service was exempt while the receiving municipality was not. A recent ruling by the Attorney General extends the exemption to both, when the Local Finance Board determines that such expenditures are 'extraordinary.'

**Financial Incentives:** The Interlocal Services Act removed all limitation on joint activities of local governments. Companion legislation, the Interlocal Services Aid Act (N.J.S.A. 40:8B), recognized the importance of financial incentives in promoting interlocal activities in the state. As subsequently amended, the Act provides: 1) full state funding of feasibility studies of joint services; and 2) four year grants for implementation of joint services.

The implementation grants provide 10% of total program costs for a new joint service and "all extraordinary administrative and operating costs of joint projects in a previously existing service."

#### **Interlocal Cooperative Legislation in Other States**

The Pennsylvania Cooperation Law (1972 P.L. 762 No 180, 53 P.S. 481) resembles New Jersey's Interlocal Services Act in empowering units of local government to cooperate "in the exercise of their respective governmental functions, powers or responsibilities." The Pennsylvania statute differs from New Jersey's law by offering an option to residents of any municipality to utilize the initiative and referendum process for entering into joint service agreements. In New Jersey the right of binding initiative is available only to

Faulkner Act and Walsh Act (N.J.S.A. 40: 69A-184 40:74-9) municipalities, although an advisory referendum is open to all municipalities.

Authorization to enter into joint service agreements is available in many other states. While the powers and responsibilities of local governments may differ from state to state and hence limit the applicability of statutes or experience in New Jersey, the list of activities covered in interlocal agreements in New York and Pennsylvania parallels those in effect in New Jersey.

*The Task Force concluded that New Jersey's statutes generally satisfy all the requirements for voluntary joint service provision in the state. Legislation has been proposed that would require municipalities to initiate a process which would lead to a formal assessment of joint services with neighboring municipalities. The Task Force feels that such a mandate would undermine the willingness of municipalities to cooperate.*

As an alternative to a legislatively mandated process the Task Force recommends that the Division of Local Government Services include in its annual budget process provisions for a report by local governments on joint service opportunities considered in the past year and prospects for the next one or two years. This procedure, which is consistent with other aspects of the local budget process, would promote an ongoing local self-assessment of joint service opportunities and provide information on the extent and type of emerging interlocal activities in the state.

## PERCEPTIONS OF INTERLOCAL SERVICES - THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

The success of a local partnership is often linked to its perceived impact on various community interests. Sometimes labeled 'political', these concerns were expressed to the Task Force in hearings and interviews by elected officials, managers, hands-on service providers and taxpayers groups. Their attitudes are as much a factor in a community's decision to explore interlocal service arrangements as any financial or administrative consideration.

The major stated reasons for opposing joint services include:

**Home Rule:** The most frequently cited objections to a joint service proposal among respondents to the DCA survey was the erosion of Home Rule. Other non-specific objections were that the process was "too political" and general "citizen objections." Together, these ill-defined responses account for nearly half the opposition to joint service initiatives. In contrast, lack of interest in joint services for reasons of cost, complexity or operational effectiveness account for only one-third of all responses.

The reluctance of communities to enter into interlocal agreements reflects in part the perception of differences among neighboring communities. A service partnership in a homogeneous setting is more likely than, for example, a joint service agreement between an older urban community and its developing suburban neighbor.

**"Winners and Losers":** A previous study of interlocal services in New Jersey<sup>4</sup> cited differences in financial resources among neighboring communities as a major deterrent to joint service agreements, followed by factors such as 'social level' and 'stage of development.' These attitudes, confirmed in the Task Force study, reflect the concern that a joint service arrangement, especially involving a departmental merger, is likely to be more advantageous for one of the partners. In a hypothetical scenario, one community assumes a disproportionate share of the service costs; extraneous circumstances change the cost basis for the partnership; and dissolving the arrangement becomes awkward.

**Service Provider Concerns:** The possibilities of job losses resulting from joint service agreements were cited as a major concern of service providers — department heads and employee organizations in several local government functions. Local partnerships, alternatively referred to as regionalization, in personnel-intensive functions are perceived as

<sup>4</sup> County and Municipal Government Study Commission, *Joint Services-A Local Response To Area Wide Problems*, 1970 p. 36.

"just another cutback strategy," contributing along with privatization, attrition and outright layoffs to a further reduction in a community's workforce. The fear of job loss is intensified by the tight job market of the current recession.

The opposition to regionalization is not exclusively recession-driven but also relates to the vested institutional interest of the local public workforce. Established departments with tenured, unionized members in high visibility functions are likely to view joint services and especially merger proposals as a threat to their status. This is evident from the meager number of consolidations or even joint use of staff resources in personnel-intensive functions.

In the context of *voluntary* local partnerships, any significant expansion of joint services involving staff mergers is likely to require local financial incentives or other inducements which may exceed the communities' resources and reduce the cost-effectiveness of the partnership.

#### County and State Roles in Local Partnerships

"If its going to happen anywhere, its going to happen in Bergen County."

William "Pat" Schuber,  
Bergen County Executive

"The barriers between municipalities are higher than those between the county and municipal governments."

Robert Janiszewski,  
Hudson County Executive

County governments' role in providing regional services has been growing steadily in the past two decades. This growth is a result of several factors, including:

- The county's ability to respond to needs which transcend municipal boundaries, e.g. in dealing with solid waste problems;
- New environmental functions linked to federal and state laws and regulations;
- Expansion of health and welfare service needs which are often under state and federal oversight; and,
- The demands of the criminal justice system, especially in corrections, the prosecutive and judiciary functions.

The most important factor in the emergence of counties is the willingness of county political leaders to assume a greater leadership role in responding to the area-wide needs of their residents and constituent municipalities. Increasingly county government is playing a leading role *in inter-local affairs*, as distinguished from the regional responsibilities which fall under its jurisdiction. This role is both as convenor and participant in interlocal activities within and across county boundaries. County governments join municipalities as members in purchasing and insurance pools, provide health services to nearly three-fifths of the state's municipalities and represent municipal interests in housing, planning, and code enforcement. The county executives of Bergen, Hudson, Mercer and Atlantic counties are meeting with municipal officials on a regular basis to explore interlocal issues.

County government is not uniformly accepted as a local partner in every part of the state or in every service function. Statements made to the Task Force indicate a continuing wariness of county intrusion into municipal affairs and a preference for inter-municipal rather than county-based "regionalization" of services. This perspective is especially accentuated in the law enforcement area.

In the short term the best opportunity for enhancing county - municipal partnerships lies in developing a continuing process for exploring issues and exchanging information on interlocal services. The experience gained in the cross - acceptance process of the State Planning Act could be applied to other services, as well.

*The Task Force found a general consensus that an appropriate county role in such interlocal process would be that of: a) convenor—initiating and facilitating the interlocal dialogue; b) conduit—providing information on new developments and changes involving county and municipal functions; and c) an alternate service provider for new or specialized services.*

### State Role

The state role in local partnerships was one of the major issues which emerged in the course of the Task Force study. The more critical observations reflect:

- 1) The need for policy and administrative consistency among state agencies in dealing with interlocal services (and for that matter, with local concerns in general).
- 2) The need for more administrative latitude in developing interlocal approaches. *Informal* agreements between local governments are preferable in many instances because they avoid paperwork and a prolonged review and approval process associated with formal, state approved projects.

- 3) In a more specific vein, the need to deal with escalating costs of law enforcement resulting from arbitration rulings which remove incentives to economize or consider joint service alternatives.
- 4) The need to enact legislation which would cap, or preferably remove, state mandates, particularly those relating to the criminal justice system at the county level. Several county officials, mostly in urban areas linked the counties' inability to expand interlocal services to the constraints imposed by the escalating costs of corrections and the judicial functions. Removal or stabilizations of these mandated costs would contribute to strengthening the counties' roles in other regional or interlocal service areas.

There was a general agreement at the local level that in the short term the most appropriate state role in enhancing voluntary non-coercive local partnerships should be that of a facilitator. State agencies could best assist local governments to expand their interlocal efforts by:

- Expediting the responses to state-local and interlocal problems;
- Disseminating information on interlocal issues;
- Developing guidelines for exploring and initiating joint services and developing models for application in various local settings; and,
- Providing financial assistance for locally generated feasibility studies and subsequent start-up or transition costs.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Local Partnerships are essential strategies in dealing with long and short term service issues confronting local governments in New Jersey. Joint service agreements are the basic and initial local response to area-wide problems and complement regional and state service strategies in our complex metropolitan environment.*

### Joint services:

- Offer opportunities to realize savings and reduce or avoid cost increases;
- Are a proven approach for dealing with spillover, or common problems;
- Are a way to provide services where they do not presently exist;
- Are one of the means to assure that the quality and efficiency of services continue when local governments must reduce their work force; and,
- Are ways for maintaining the control over local services at the local level.

*The need for local partnerships results from the confluence of the state's static and fragmented local government structure, and the dynamics of regional economic development patterns.*

The New Jersey local government landscape offers many opportunities for cost sharing through joint services. Our communities are all interdependent in one way or another and would potentially find benefit in various types of joint service arrangements.

*Local governments in New Jersey have a long history of formal and informal cooperation in providing local services.*

Interest in joint services, which waxes and wanes with the state of the economy and its impact on the local budget, is currently on an upswing. There are hundreds of reported joint service arrangements throughout the state and indications of a far greater instance of unreported or informal cooperation. There is also a widespread and expressed willingness to explore joint service opportunities.

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*Long term changes in intergovernmental fiscal relations, and a growing scarcity of local resources, exacerbated by the current recession, have intensified the search for cost-saving opportunities at the local level. Cost sharing among local governments is thus a reasonable and often necessary step in dealing with local fiscal problems.*

During the last decade expenditures and local tax rates for municipal and county functions increased at twice the rate of inflation, while the local government work force remained essentially stable. These trends carry serious implications for the quality and affordability of local government services in the coming years.

Personnel intensive functions account for most of the increase in local costs and taxes, driven in part by mandated expansion, arbitration rulings and other dynamics of the criminal justice system; by the explosive growth rate of fringe benefits; and by steadily rising salaries, in general.

*Voluntary interlocal cost-sharing policies respond to these trends only to a limited extent. The issues of mandates and police arbitration rulings require legislative remedies beyond the scope of the Task Force study.*

Sharing of staff resources is a viable option in certain aspects of police, public works, health, general administration and other services, but non-personnel activities are especially amenable to cost sharing initiatives and can be addressed in a relatively short time frame. These include: pooling arrangements in insurance, purchase of commodities and services, and joint use of capital facilities; computer, record keeping and data services; dispatching for police, fire and emergency medical service; sharing of equipment used in various public works functions; recreation programs, recycling activities and specialized transportation programs. Savings have been realized and documented in many of these service activities.

*New Jersey's statutes contain no major obstacles to interlocal cooperation, but differences in Civil Service status and pension systems can impede mergers (consolidation) of departments.*

The Interlocal Services Act permits local governments to provide jointly any service which any unit is authorized to provide individually. New Jersey's statutes actually promote local partnerships by providing financial incentives for feasibility studies of interlocal services and for certain transition costs when a joint service agreement is implemented. Appropriations for such assistance have been provided sporadically since the mid 1970's via the Interlocal Services Aid Act, but no funds are currently available.

Civil Service provisions requiring a non-Civil Service municipality to adopt the Civil Service System if it wishes to merge a department with that of a municipality which is in the Civil Service system could be viewed as deterrents to mergers. However, in light of the infrequent occurrence of such situations, the complicated process of dissolving a community's Civil Service status and related pension issues, amending or repealing these provisions is not warranted unless undertaken in the context of a broader review of the state's Civil Service System.

*In light of their strained budgets, many communities are not able to allocate funds for the formal evaluation of mergers and other joint service proposals. State government can and should assist local governments in pursuing these opportunities, by providing various types of incentives.*

There is a need for leadership in establishing and maintaining a dialogue among local governments on interlocal issues, in general, and particularly on joint service provision. County governments can play an important role in fostering interlocal activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The process of strengthening local partnerships is incremental and diverse, involving potentially a wide range of joint activities in a score of service areas provided by hundreds of communities in the state. The process requires the development of a dialogue among local governments and between local governments and the state.

"State government should help local governments to help themselves." To achieve this objective the state must strengthen its capacity and develop a process for dealing with interlocal and area-wide issues.

*The Task Force recommends that the following actions be taken to reinvigorate the interlocal process in the state. These short term actions build on demonstrated success which warrants expansion to other communities or service aspects. Interlocal cooperation in these areas requires leadership, outreach, improved information and technical assistance and streamlining of the state-local administrative process.*

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- Establish by Executive Order a network of state agencies which routinely work with local government on various service issues. Such network (or "working group") would pull together the authority, personnel and expertise in various functional areas for the purpose of:
    - a) Responding to and following up more quickly on local joint service initiatives;
    - b) Developing outreach capabilities for identifying joint service opportunities and calling such to the attention of local officials;
    - c) Creating a data base consisting of fiscal, economic, operational and other relevant data to be shared with local governments and to provide a basis for evaluating joint service opportunities;
    - d) Compiling and maintaining an inventory of case studies on local partnerships which would serve as a basis for comparing the experience of localities in various joint service arrangements in New Jersey and other states; and,
    - e) Providing other "clearinghouse" and reference services.
  
  - *The Department of Community Affairs should be designated as the lead agency in such network/working group.*

The Departments of Law and Public Safety, Environmental Protection and Energy, Health (and possibly Transportation and Personnel) should be members to the network. Other agencies involved less frequently in interlocal issues, e.g. Department of Insurance and Department of Human Services, could join as needs dictate.

Include as part of the annual budget process, a report by local governments to the Division of Local Government services on joint service opportunities considered in the past year and prospects for the following two years.

- *Extend technical assistance to localities, via the network/working group or other arrangements.*
  - a) Involve the state's colleges and universities, each of which has a regional identity and familiarity with local conditions, in initial exploration of joint service opportunities;

- b) Develop guidelines for study and implementation of joint services — a “how to do it” manual which would take communities through an informal process of evaluating service alternatives and specific components of each service area.
  - c) Develop models for benefit - cost analysis of various local partnership and privatization options. These should be oriented to more complex issues, such as law enforcement and larger scale (county or regional) issues such as infrastructure and social welfare programs.
- Develop and promote county-based forums for discussions of interlocal problems and opportunities.
- a) Develop a structure for *follow-up and continuity* on potential interlocal actions suggested in such forums (or via other contacts). Most counties maintain an office of intergovernmental affairs, or similar function, which could provide the vehicles for such activities;
  - b) Create opportunities for regular participation in joint service initiatives by management and staffs of various local government functions; and,
  - c) Widen the role of state-wide local government organizations (e.g. the New Jersey Association of Counties and the New Jersey League of Municipalities) in county-local activities. Conduct or sponsor *jointly* seminars and workshops on interlocal services.

*The Task Force recommends the following financial actions to facilitate joint services in the state by providing financial assistance for feasibility studies, transition and start-up costs; incorporating incentives for regional action into state-aid programs; exempting interlocal services from the CAP Law; and developing in conjunction with academia, a basis for testing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of interlocal or regional service options.*

- Provide a stable source of funding for local partnership initiatives.
- a) The legislature should approve the FY 1993 appropriations requested by the Department of Community Affairs, to support *current levels of interlocal activities in the state*. These appropriations should provide funding for the Interlocal Services Aid Act and some discretionary grants for other current and pressing area-wide issues, which extend beyond the current provisions of the Act. The discretionary funds would permit experimentation and testing of the implementation provisions of the Act, especially transition and start up costs of major interlocal projects.

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b) A higher level of funding should be provided in the FY 94 budget. Funding at a \$2 million level would support the expansion of joint service efforts in the state, to include, in addition to the current scope of eligible interlocal activities:

- Pilot projects in representative functions and regions of the state which would test the efficacy of joint service proposals;
- The development of innovative techniques for dealing with financial and personnel issues impeding interlocal ventures;
- Broadening the technical assistance to local governments. This could be done by channelling private sector, academic and public sector expertise, through the network, to specific areas of need; and,
- Supporting general network activities.

c) The Department of Community Affairs should review its guidelines and procedures for administering the Interlocal Service Aid Act to permit more flexibility and local latitude in both the feasibility study and implementation phase of the Act.

■ Provide incentives for interlocal activities in existing state aid programs to local governments.

- a) Programs such as the Supplemental State Aid Program for local law enforcement distribute funds on a formula basis to municipalities which meet minimum staffing standards. Under this formula some municipalities receive only a few hundred dollars. These funds should be targeted for more effective use in selected interlocal activities;
- b) Reexamine all state aid programs to determine the applicability of interlocal approaches; and,
- c) Where appropriate, include 'bonus' provisions in all state aid and grant-in-aid programs for joint or regional services (or where counties assume responsibility for local services). Enact legislation where needed to implement such provisions.

*The Task Force recommends the following structural changes as a long term agenda for realigning local and regional fiscal and service responsibilities, especially between municipalities and counties.*

In the course of our work it became apparent that a number of local services have gradually gravitated to the county or regional level. These include health, welfare, environmental services, some aspects of the criminal justice system, libraries and others. Local partnerships in these areas should be viewed as a stage in the process of realigning county-local service responsibilities.

The county's role as a middle level of government, providing both substate regional services and area-wide local services, has been long recognized in New Jersey's legislation and administrative policies. But the county's ability to fulfill its regional potential is limited by various mandates, not all of which are consistent with its status as a local government.

Especially constraining is the state's continuing dependence on county budgets and their underlying property tax base to support most of the cost of state's Superior Court system.

*The Task Force endorses current efforts to address this long standing issue—full state assumption of the courts costs. Proposals to cap or equalize the counties' judiciary costs should be enacted only as interim measures.*

State assumption of court costs would, in part, ease the property tax burden and in part strengthen the counties' regional service roles, including, among others, the areas summarized below.

#### **General Assistance**

*The Task Force recommends the ongoing process of absorbing all the remaining municipal General Assistance agencies into county-based welfare/social service agencies or departments.*

There is some indication that the state's larger municipalities which contain 80% - 90% of the clients, will favor such policy, as will most of the smaller communities, which have few or no clients. This leaves about 100 middle sized municipalities, which serve the rest of the General Assistance caseload, to be phased out or incorporated into a county-wide system.

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### Health Services

Similarly, local health services are organized in county health departments, regional health commissions, or contracted between two or more municipalities. There are, however, 55 municipalities which still maintain municipal health departments and a number of the contractual arrangements do not meet desirable standards. State aid for local health services has been instrumental in creating service units which serve a minimum population base, but a 50% reduction in state aid has decreased the leverage of Department of Health to promote additional regionalization.

*The Task Force recommends that incremental steps be taken towards the county and commission options for providing local health services. The minimum population required for eligibility to receive state health aid funds should be raised from 25,000 to 50,000. (See Appendix Page A-9)*

### Environmental Health

Counties have an important and growing role in environmental health and pollution control activities. While this role is an extension of state responsibilities for environmental protection, it clearly reflects the regional role that counties can play, both as agents of state government and in supporting municipal governments in meeting certain mandates.

*The Task Force recommends strengthening the county's environmental role and urges the three counties which have not yet created a County Environmental Health Agency (Mercer, Morris, Essex) to do so. Counties should be able to retain a larger share of the revenues realized from the local environmental control process. (See Appendix Page A-13)*

### Law Enforcement

As noted previously, most interlocal actions can be taken under existing legislation authorizing joint service agreements and service consolidation. The exceptions relate to the local police function, which is subject to different lines of accountability within the community and interrelationships within the criminal justice system. A separate pension system and arbitration provisions available to local police further complicate consolidation and interlocal law enforcement efforts, in general. These factors and other structural issues warrant special study, extending beyond the scope of this Report.

*The Task Force recommends that a study of interlocal issues in law enforcement be conducted under the aegis of the state network recommended above, under the leadership of the Attorney General and with participation of municipal and county law enforcement agencies and other relevant agencies.*

There are certain aspects of the law enforcement function in which interlocal cooperation occurs more frequently — emergency dispatching, computerized record keeping and others. The general recommendations of this Report are applicable to these services. (See Appendix A-1 — Local Police Services — for further description of interlocal issues in law enforcement.)

#### Service Specific Issues

The Task Force examined local partnerships in terms of our communities' general attitudes towards joint service opportunities. But these attitudes are often modified by the dynamics of individual functions, which vary greatly from one service area to another and even among activities within service functions.

The most intractable barriers to interlocal agreements are those associated with a community's quality of life: its land use planning and development process, access to local police services and the upkeep of major public infrastructure. Greater receptivity to interlocal cooperation is apparent: in recent or emerging services; in those subject to state regulations or mandates; and in services which lack visibility or a strong resident constituency.

The Task Force review of major issues associated with regional and interlocal service provision in selected local government functions identified issues which are: a) systemic, reflecting the intergovernmental aspects of the function, especially the areas cited above; b) pooling arrangements, such as Joint Purchasing Systems and Joint Insurance funds, reflecting primarily cost-saving considerations with little or no impact on vested interests in the community; and, c) traditionally local services in which interlocal ventures may require changes in staffing or operational procedures. These include local police, fire, public works, planning, code enforcement and general administration.

Although we do not recommend specific actions for each of these functions, we suggest that these issues be addressed, case-by-case, or studied *a priori* under the auspices of the network proposed in this Report. Appendix A contains further details on these service functions.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Background Materials on Selected Interlocal Services**

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## LOCAL POLICE SERVICES

Law enforcement in New Jersey is a composite of municipal, county and state agencies. The municipal level is predominant in the system with nearly 500 police departments of varying size and scope of activities. County law enforcement is divided between the prosecutor's and sheriff's offices with county police (in four counties) and county park police (in three counties) playing a lesser role. The state police provide basic services in rural areas, in addition to their other, essentially non-local functions.

To some extent law enforcement has become 'regionalized' at the county level. The Prosecutor, as the county's chief law enforcement official, takes charge of investigating major crimes after the initial local police report is received. These major incidents amount to about 10% of all reported crimes. The remaining 90% tend to be more localized incidents and are usually handled by the municipal police department. The sheriff's office and state police are also part of the regional law enforcement tier.

Technological advances in computerization and telecommunication have led to improved coordination in law enforcement and emergency services. However, in terms of its basic features, the state's law enforcement structure has remained essentially unchanged even in the face of increasing crime and other demands of urban and developing communities.

At the local level, the search for areawide responses in law enforcement has been going on for over two decades. There has been movement towards joint services, especially in some aspects of police activities — communications and training, for example — but patrolling, and other core activities of the police department, are still carried out almost exclusively by individual municipalities. Of all municipal functions it has proven most resistant to change.

Law enforcement is also the costliest of the municipal functions and some communities have begun to question its affordability. Projected at recent growth rates a patrolman's salary in some Bergen County municipalities could exceed \$100,000 annually by the year 2000. Mounting costs are driven by generous pension and other fringe benefits and by arbitration rulings and may ultimately provide some inducement for joint service provision.

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The catalyst for change in attitudes towards interlocal services may result from: local concerns about the adequacy of police in developing communities; changes in the level of state police services in rural areas; the escalating costs of maintaining police departments in small established communities; or interest in sharing the cost of a special service with a neighboring municipality or a county agency.

Four general types of municipal police departments might be used for purposes of identifying opportunities for joint services:

- 1) Municipalities with departments of sufficient size and capacity to provide a full range of basic and support services;
- 2) Smaller established departments with ability to provide a basic level of service but having limited or no capacity to provide support activities, related equipment and capital facilities or respond to increase in demands for police services.
- 3) Departments with fewer officers than necessary to provide three shift coverage. (There are 80 - 100 municipal police departments with fewer than ten police officers, considered a minimum necessary for such coverage). The State police augment local services in many of these municipalities.
- 4) Rural municipalities (77) with no police departments which primarily rely on the state police for patrolling and attendant services.

The foregoing review of the fragmented and uneven law enforcement structure in the state suggests the need to:

- a) Develop basic standards of service;
- b) Improve the effectiveness of the two-tiered local and area-wide system; and
- c) Identify the specific services which could be shared with municipalities or counties in various settings.

### Standards

At the heart of the adequacy issue is the development of standards. If we accept the premise that every individual in New Jersey is entitled to reasonable access to law enforcement services round the clock, then the appropriately sized agencies could be structured to meet this goal. Such standards could result in establishing interlocal agencies in areas where services do not currently exist. Expansion of existing but inadequate coverage could also be accomplished by joint action of neighboring communities.

In its 1976 report "Aspects of Law Enforcement in New Jersey," the County and Municipal Government Study Commission called for "the development of minimum standards for law enforcement services and the establishment of a two tier system, integrating local and area wide agencies..." The report suggested that the standards should:

- "Define a logical scale of organization for law enforcement services in various jurisdictions;
- define law enforcement which should be available within each jurisdiction; and,
- set guidelines for attaining such capacities."

These linked objectives — appropriate standards and a local-area wide service system remain valid at present but are even more urgent as service demands continue to grow and the negative fiscal conditions are prolonged.

The full accessibility principle (a kind of T&E for law enforcement) is not widely accepted in N.J. In fact, it is likely to be rejected as a mandate unless it evolves from the bottom up. A committee of police chiefs is currently working with the Department of Law and Public Safety to develop standard operating procedures for local police departments, but these voluntary guidelines will not address the structural and resource issues required to meet optimal, or even minimal, service objectives.

The scope of the committee's work should be expanded to include the development of service standards and prototypes of police departments in various settings in the state.

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### Interlocal and areawide options

Conceptually, area-wide and joint service options for local police departments in N.J. would include: 1) a county police department which would provide a full range of services to all or some municipalities in the county; 2) a county police department which would provide selected special services to all or some municipalities in the county; 3) new intermunicipal departments, encompassing clusters of municipalities; 4) merger of existing departments; 5) joint service agreements for all or some aspects of police services; and, 6) continued coverage by the State Police.

In practice, the first option is probably not applicable in New Jersey, although at least one police chief has stated (as quoted in the Bergen Record) that the time has come to consider a county police department, serving as an alternative to municipal departments, or augmenting their services. The county police departments which are prevalent in southern and western states, provide basic police services to largely unincorporated communities. These departments continued to serve as local departments even when the once rural counties became suburbanized.

The pattern of incorporation in other states is also different. Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, has a population of over 700,000, somewhat lower than that of Bergen County, N.J. However, in Montgomery County there are only three incorporated communities, enabling the provision of police services by the county police department to all other areas of the county. This pattern contrasts with Bergen's 70 municipalities which encompass the entire area of the county, all but one of which have established police departments. Hence the replacement of local departments with a county-wide agency does not appear feasible.

The second option, that of a county agency providing an array of special services to all or most departments, could be developed in New Jersey but would probably require a statutory redefinition of the sheriff's responsibilities. In fact, in some counties the sheriff's office is currently serving in this capacity and could be expanded to absorb many police activities presently performed by municipal personnel, especially those which do not require sworn staff (e.g., dispatchers, records bureau maintenance, fingerprinting and photography, property and warrant control). The transportation of prisoners from municipal to county correctional facilities, a current but unevenly performed function of the sheriff, would be placed under this option exclusively at the county level, resulting in time and cost savings to the municipal departments.

For this option to become viable would require the resolution of some intra-county institutional issues. There are county police and county park police agencies in seven counties. The latter's function is essentially the patrol of parks and other undeveloped areas; the former provide various backup services and patrol of some county roads. Consolidating the functions of these agencies with other county or municipal departments has been discussed periodically as a means to eliminate redundancy, improve the efficiency of county level law enforcement and permit a single county agency to perform the functions noted above.

Option 3, providing for the creation of new interlocal agencies in clusters of municipalities would be suitable to N.J.'s rural areas which either have no municipal police departments or fall below a reasonable standard of adequacy. Some of these communities rely exclusively on state police. Rather than establish a separate agency in each municipality, or incrementally expand an existing department, several communities could form a single area-wide department. The absence, or low level of vested interest in many rural areas should facilitate the attainment of this option. The respective roles of the state police and county agencies in such new departments would be determined on a case-by-case basis. In terms of this option, the experience of area-wide law enforcement in other states is potentially applicable in New Jersey. For example, in the northern part of York County, Pa., eight municipalities with a combined population of 40,000 and an area of 122 sq. miles have formed a regional police department and nine other interlocal departments exist in the state, mostly in rural areas. Their experience would be instructive in N.J.'s less developed areas.

Option 4 - Mergers of municipal police departments, usually involving only two municipalities, is an option presently available in the state. Although the feasibility of consolidation was studied by a least 20 localities, to date none have been implemented in the state. A recent effort, by Bridgewater and Somerville, to merge their police departments failed because of opposition by various interests. Technical impediments related to different pension systems and civil service status are impeding consolidation of the Union Beach/Keyport (Monmouth County) Police Departments. Nevertheless, current fiscal conditions are prompting renewed interest in this option. Discussions of merging police departments were also cited in Mendham Township and Borough (Morris County), Princeton Township and Borough (Mercer County) and Deptford/Wenonah (Gloucester County), and would be sensible for all 'hole and doughnut' municipalities.

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Option 5 - Contract services — is also presently in effect in New Jersey. Purchase of service contract for all services (in effect a contractual merger of departments) is in effect between Howell Township and Farmingdale Borough (Monmouth County) and a few other localities. Several communities are examining the feasibility of total or partial joint service agreements.

Option 6 — The continued role of the State Police in local law enforcement.

To the extent that municipalities are not *obligated* to provide local police services, the State Police are likely to continue in that capacity in rural communities and to augment understaffed departments in other municipalities. However, this arrangement cannot be viewed as a local service option for several reasons: a) The State Police are not accountable to local authorities; b) municipalities receiving free State Police services are likely to have different fiscal concerns than those with established departments; and, c) in terms of the range and type of service, the State Police cannot (and perhaps should not) function as a local police department.

Where state police services are withdrawn (as for example when a community reaches a stage in its development which requires a local police department) other local partnership options offer suitable alternatives.

#### Selected Support Services

Beyond the politically sensitive issue of interlocal agreements for across-the-board services, including police patrol, there are more limited possibilities of shared services in the area of communications. Dispatching is being done on an interlocal basis in several areas and the extension of the E911 network is pursued on a county-wide basis in 4 counties and on an intermunicipal basis in several other locations. However, in other places an interlocal 911 is still being resisted.

The information on the extent of interlocal police service is anecdotal. There should be a central office where such data is compiled and updated, not only for police but for other interlocal services as well.

Other areas cited as amenable to interlocal cost sharing are: Records and Identification (Salem County, for example provides computer services to all of its municipalities); equipment sharing; investigation of local violations and offenses (i.e. other than those under the jurisdiction of the prosecutor); warrants; recruitment; planning and research; crime prevention; and uniform reporting procedures. (See final pages of Appendix A-1.) In the aggregate, sharing in the cost of these support activities would result in modest savings to municipalities and provide for more efficient use of resources.

A suggestion was made that dispatching, among other activities which need not be performed by sworn personnel, be civilianized. This would free the time of police officers, some of whom may be sergeants and lieutenants, to perform police duties which require their training and qualifications. Civilianizing support activities would also allow municipalities to share the costs interlocally. Such action would probably encounter less opposition from sworn staff who may view other interlocal actions in terms of potential threats to advancement or even possible layoffs.

### Conclusions

- It is apparent that some municipalities have reached the point where the fiscal squeeze (i.e. rising service costs, spending limits and scarcity of revenues) provides sufficient motivation to explore various options for interlocal police services.
- The development of interlocal approaches in the law enforcement area is a lengthy educational process requiring the dissemination of information and practical experimentation at the grass-roots level.
- The most immediate opportunities for developing interlocal police departments are in those municipalities: which currently have no departments; which have understaffed departments; or which have exceeded the maximum population limits for state police coverage.
- There is a need to examine the applicability of various models and develop indices of service efficiencies under different area-wide scenarios.
- The State could assist in promoting such approaches by developing the appropriate models and extending technical assistance when an interest in such ventures is expressed.
- There is a need for further examination of different Civil Service and pension provisions (as well as the regional impact of municipal arbitration rulings) which impede joint service agreements.
- The Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Law and Public Safety, should be given the necessary staff resources to extend, assistance to localities seeking to enter into joint service agreements and other objectives noted below.

- A state-local Criminal Justice Task Force should be created specifically to develop standards for area wide services (or, in the alternative, the present committee working to develop standard operating procedures would widen its responsibilities to develop such standards). It is suggested that such standards be linked to the various models suggested above and made available for use on a voluntary basis by local police agencies.
  
- Financial incentives to communities interested in joint service ventures should be limited to one-time grants to cover: start-up or transition costs in pilot projects; demonstration projects testing new interlocal techniques; educational and data dissemination efforts, and possibly, "adoption grants" — a bonus for implementing an area-wide model.
  
- The development of standards should also address the issue of county-local relationships and clarify the assignment of responsibilities at the county level.

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## LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

### Legal Framework and Statutory Base

Local health services are increasingly being provided at an inter-local and regional scale. This pattern emerged since the enactment of the *Local Health Services Act* (P.L.1975,c.329) which requires that every municipality in New Jersey provide the local health services specified by the Department of Health (DoH). Municipalities may provide these services through four administrative options set forth in the enabling act. Under the provisions of the *Local Health Services Act*, municipalities may:

- Establish their own local health department.
- Contract with another municipal health department for local health services.
- Join with other municipalities to form a regional health commission.
- Provide these services through a county health department.

Currently there are 118 local health departments in New Jersey. Of these, 55 are individual municipal health departments, 38 contracting arrangements, 6 regional health commissions, and 14 county health departments. Together, they provide health services to all 567 municipalities throughout the State. The attached table illustrates the utilization of these various options in each county.

Because the *Local Health Services Act* of 1975 mandated that each local health department be administered by a full-time state-licensed health officer, the Act has also served as the catalyst for the formation of regional health departments and the establishment of inter-local service agreements throughout New Jersey. In 1974, there were 291 local health departments in the state. By 1980, six years after the passage of the *Local Health Services Act*, there were only 120 local health departments in the state, all of which were staffed by full-time health professionals. This is a clear example of where a minimum service or staffing requirement that is established in a state enabling act has driven a move to regionalization of local service provision.

It is important to note that local health departments in New Jersey also serve as local environmental protection entities under the provisions of the *County Environmental Health Act* (P.L. 1977,c.443). In fact, a majority of the state's local health departments often undertake more local environmental activities than provide public health services. A more detailed discussion of the environmental activities of local health departments is provided in Appendix A-3, discussing county environmental health services.

An area-wide approach to the delivery of public health services would result in:

- An Efficient Use of Administrative Resources and Equipment
- More Effective Planning and Coordination Among Departments
- Ready Availability of Technical Support and Specialized Staff for all Departments
- Better Allocation of Resources among Jurisdictions

Finally, it would be useful to more fully examine the experience of health agencies operating under each of the four options. Such an analysis would provide a better understanding of the economies of scale, scope of services, and the quality, efficiency and responsiveness of the service provided by the local health departments established under each option.

**Types of Local Health Departments by County, October 1991**

	Municipal	Contract	Prov.	Recip.	Regional Comm.	County	Total
Atl	1					22	23
Ber	9	11	(4)	(7)	24	26	70
Bur						40	40
Cam						37	37
Cap						16	16
Cum	1					13	14
Ess	8	14	(5)	(9)		24	22
Glo							24
Hud	5	7	(2)	(5)			12
Hun						26	26
Mer	5	5	(2)	(3)	3		13
Mid	5	1	(1)		1	18	25
Mon	4	15	(4)	(11)	14	20	53
Mor	10	29	(6)	(23)			39
Oce		6	(1)	(5)		27	33
Pas	5	11	(2)	(9)			16
Sal						15	15
Som	4	12	(3)	(9)	5		21
Sus	2	3	(1)	(2)		19	24
Uni	2	19	(6)	(13)			21
War						23	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>(37)</b>	<b>(96)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>567</b>

Source: Local Health Development Services, N. J. Department of Health

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# COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

A status report on the County Environmental Health Act\*

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STATUTORY BASE

The County Environmental Health Act, (P.L. 1977, c. 443; N.J.S.A. 26:3A2-21 et seq.) formalized the cooperative efforts between local health agencies and the Department of Environmental Protection and Energy (DEPE). Recognizing the regional nature of pollution, the act called for the development of a county-wide work program to identify the nature and extent of the environmental problems within a county and the resources available to address those problems. The plan must be implemented by county, regional and/or municipal health agencies certified by the commissioner. These local health agencies carry out a wide range of environmental activities including complaint investigations, inspections, enforcement, monitoring and sample collection, emergency response, remedial oversight of cleanups and public information and education.

The original act was revised in 1991 (P.L. 1991, c. 99) to expand county environmental authority to include radiation, pesticides, right to know and the protection of workers and the public from hazardous substances and toxic catastrophes. To date, 17 counties have approved work programs, with one plan pending (Somerset) and varying degrees of interest and progress in the other three (Essex, Morris, Mercer).

## EXISTING STATUS

In general, CEHA has been effective in the development and provision of environmental protection services on a regional basis. In addition, there are some particularly good examples of the delivery of effective and efficient services by CEHA certified agencies in the areas of emergency response, monitoring and laboratory support, and geographic information systems (GIS).

Properly trained and equipped CEHA emergency response personnel are usually among the first responders at an incident providing environmental assessment and technical assistance to public safety personnel, as well as preliminary abatement measures to minimize any environmental damage from discharges to land or water. These early intervention and prevention actions help avoid later, more costly remedial steps.

\*Background material for this section provided by Thomas Pluta, formerly Manager, Office of Local Environmental Management, DEPE

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The success of the Coastal Cooperative Monitoring Program (CCMP) is due in large part to the shared responsibilities between the DEPE and the local health agencies which provide both field personnel to collect water samples and laboratory support to analyze the samples. Cost savings from this program include reduced travel time of state personnel to collect and bring samples to Trenton; more timely analysis of samples, an important factor where beach closings, the protection of public health and the losses to the local economy may be involved.

Geographic Information Systems in use in several counties are good examples of cooperation between the health and planning departments and the DEPE. Data sharing and exchange agreements not only avoid costly duplication of effort, but ensure that state and local agencies have access to use and management decisions. The computer based GIS saves time and allows various alternatives to be evaluated more quickly and efficiently.

Based on these examples, it appears that the success of the County Environmental Health Act can be attributed in part to the clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the state and county in the delivery of environmental health services. Within this framework, the counties provide timely local and comprehensive field monitoring services, while the state provides technical support and resources which cannot be provided cost effectively at the local or county level. Such an arrangement facilitates planning and coordination of service delivery which can be used as a model for regional approaches in other functional areas.

#### **FUNDING**

Both matching and non-matching grants to certified local health agencies are provided for under the original act and its 1991 amendments. Matching grants up to 50% of the cost of a program may be awarded, as well as 100% non-matching grants for new or expanding programs. Matching grants of more than \$2.2 million were awarded in 1991, ranging from \$90,000 to \$227,000. The 1991 amendments also added several additional funding sources, including:

- Dedication of penalties to the health department;
- Increased penalties based on the use of state penalty schedules; and
- Authority to charge fees for services.

It is estimated that there is a five to one return on investment to the State on grants made in connection with CEHA. Under the current provisions of the act, the county writes a citation and sends it to the state. The state then enforces the citation and keeps the fine. The state returns to the counties all revenues that were received in excess of the amount which it anticipated receiving in fines and budgeted for at the beginning of the fiscal year. As an example, if the state anticipated receiving \$3 million in fines, and actually received \$6 million, the state returns the excess to the counties after first deducting the amount of grant monies which had been originally appropriated to the counties. A small amount of these funds are also distributed to local environmental commissions.

### EMERGING ISSUES

Given the increased number and stringency of environmental laws the added federal emphasis on small sources and the enhanced environmental awareness of both local health and non-health agencies (prosecutor, emergency management, utility authorities), there are a number of emerging issues which merit further consideration and study. These include:

- Clarifying the roles under existing statutory delegations;
- Determining areas where additional delegations can be made to local health agencies;
- Evaluating local enforcement alternatives to reduce the burden on state administrative and civil court systems handling environmental cases;
- Equitable sharing of state fees with local agencies which carry out state mandated programs; and
- Expanding training and continuing education opportunities for the government, public, and private sectors.

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental health services which are provided under the provision of the County Environmental Health Act constitute is one functional area where public service delivery is undertaken effectively and efficiently at the regional level. In part, CEHA's success can be attributed to the well-defined roles of the DEPE and county health departments which facilitate and promotes effective coordination between the state and county in this area. In fact, with a modest investment of state funds through matching and non-matching grants, the state has received a significant return, on its investment (as much as five to one) on its investment through the receipt of fines collected by counties.

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Given its success, the state should continue to strengthen and promote the counties' capacity to undertake environmental services through CEHA. Since most county health departments are active in and provide joint staffing for both public health and environmental health services, a strengthening of the counties' environmental health role may lead, tangentially to a strengthening of its public health services.

One way the state may help to strengthen the counties' environmental services role may be through a modification of the current funding structure. Specifically, the pass-through to the state of fines collected by counties could be changed to allow counties to keep all or an increased portion of the fines that they collect above the amount necessary to reimburse the state for its annual appropriation.

Before implementing such an approach, however, we would have to ensure the adequate funding of those services, such as lab support and enforcement services, that are currently provided by the state in the cooperative arrangements discussed earlier. These concerns may be reduced through the promotion of inter-regional service delivery and support services between CEHA counties. Such county to county cooperative arrangements could be utilized as a way to share more sophisticated services such as GIS systems and lab facilities.

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## PUBLIC WORKS

The local public works function encompasses a variety of activities related to development and maintenance of infrastructure, as indicated below:<sup>\*</sup>

### Public Works Functions

Roads  
Water Treatment  
Parks/Recreation  
Building/Grounds  
Recycling  
Shade Tree Maintenance  
Sewage Collection and treatment  
Traffic Signal and Sign Maintenance  
Non-Road Municipal Equipment  
Maintenance & Repair  
Solid Waste Collection  
Parking Meter Installation  
& Management  
Parking Meter Collection Program  
Engineering Department Support Program  
Site Plan Review & Inspection  
Tax Map Maintenance Program

### Roadway Services (Other than pavement maintenance)

Traffic Safety  
Street Sweeping  
Leaf Collection  
Sewer System Operating &  
Maintenance  
Sign Maintenance  
Sign Production  
Storm Drain Opening  
Street Striping Program  
Snow & Ice Removal  
Sidewalk & Curb Improvement

Local governments perform the public work function using either their own work force or a private contractor. In the latter case opportunities for interlocal cooperation are primarily found in: assembling a number of projects for a joint bidding process; joint development of specifications for acquisition of equipment, and purchase of supplies or services through a cooperative pricing system.

However, most municipalities and all counties maintain a public work department and interlocal cooperation among such agencies has been a long standing tradition. The most frequently cited joint activity is the lending of equipment and operating personnel, usually

<sup>\*</sup> Sources: Adapted from RTAP Data Base Questionnaire, Rutgers Road Technology Transfer Center

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done informally, "on a handshake". Issues cited in regards to this practice include: 1) liability for personnel injury or damage to loaned equipment; quid pro quo for the lending locality; availability of back up equipment in the event of a breakdown; and the concurrent need for the same equipment since many activities, e.g. snow removal or leaf collection and disposal, are seasonal.

Another reported problem stems from the required certification of public work managers (CPWM) by 1995. Small communities consider the scale of their public works activities insufficient to warrant the cost and efforts of complying with the requirement.\* However, since certification is a state wide mandate, a small community can achieve economy of scale via an interlocal agreement to employ a Certified Public Works Manager who would serve several other communities.

An emerging opportunity for joint services relates to current and prospective environmental requirements. Wastewater treatment costs are projected to increase substantially in the next few years and municipalities, large and small, will have to absorb much of the cost.\*\* Hence, regional and interlocal arrangements for sharing the cost of compliance can soften the impact. Similar concerns arise in regards to: public wells; solid waste and recycling; air pollution; noise and other problems, all of which are amenable to enforcement on an interlocal basis.

A more immediate need for area wide actions relates to legislation mandating removal or remediation of underground storage tanks (UST). In Bergen County 27 municipalities have approved a county-sponsored program for UST remediation. (see statements provided for Task Force Hearing February 25, 1992). Cost considerations are prompting other communities to explore interlocal options.

Cooperation in storing materials was cited on several occasions as an opportunity for cost saving and more efficient use of facilities. In Somerset County, the state Department of Transportation, Bridgewater Township and the Bridgewater - Raritan Regional Board of Education are jointly utilizing a regional storage facility. There is wide-spread cooperation

\* "Our Public Works Work Fine, N.J. Towns Say", *Atlantic City Press* June 5, 1992 P. A-1

\*\* Scott Weiner, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection and Energy. "D.E.P.E. study forecasts high municipal costs", *New Jersey Municipalities*, January, 1992, P. 6

in composting and disposal of grass, leaves and other vegetation and an increase in the frequency of: Training and safety programs; joint fuel depots; and countywide or interlocal auctions of equipment and other commodities.

In summary, extensive cooperation is taking place in the public works function but there are additional opportunities for joint services which should be exploited, especially as related to: environmental requirements; acquisition and scheduling the use of specialized equipment and operators; standardization of equipment and training; and the development of reciprocal programs among counties, municipalities and special districts and authorities.

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## FIRE SERVICES\*

Budgetary restrictions, decreases in volunteerism, decrease in fire incidents, increases in hazardous material incidents, technological advances in specialized areas such as E.M.S., heavy rescue, etc. have all combined to make the delivery of essential fire department services more expensive and difficult for local municipalities to bear alone. Since these services are essential and should be delivered in a professional manner, it is time to give serious consideration to the consolidation or regionalization of the various delivery systems or services.

*Minimum standards are needed for various aspects of area wide fire services including:*

- a) **MANNING** - Establishing a minimum level of manpower for each of the various types of emergency response apparatus such as pumper, ladder, quint, rescue and other commonly used special pieces.
- b) **TRAINING** - Establishing a minimum level of training for all personnel, including officer training, and minimum level of training for specialized equipment, activities, or special service(s).
- c) **EQUIPMENT** - Establishing a listing of the minimum equipment that would be required to be carried on each of the various types of companies for the level of service that piece is to deliver.
- d) **DISTRIBUTION OF COMPANIES** - Establishing minimum standards for the location of firehouses and apparatus based on the make-up of the consolidated region such as rural, suburban, moderate density urban, high density urban, heavy industry, etc.

*\*Adapted from: "Fire Service 2000 Conference, Regionalization Consolidation Workshop" Preliminary Report, February 24, 1992. The Final Report is expected in the Fall of 1992.*

- There is need for model scenerios or plans which fire department planners could reference when they are seriously considering regionalizing some or all of the essential services.
- Financial incentives are desirable to facilitate study and implementation of regional fire services.

### Issues in Regionalization

**Manning** - Most companies are presently inadequately manned — career departments because of budget shortfalls and volunteer departments because of the difficulty in recruitment of people who are willing to devote the time and effort required to become trained volunteers. Generally, the public's right to protection is best served by having 15 persons in 3 companies of 5 each, than by 5 companies of 3 each.

**APPARATUS** - There is much more apparatus in service than is actually needed to provide an adequate level of protection for many geographical regions. There is an excessive amount of taxpayer dollars going to purchase specialized pieces that are duplicated in adjacent jurisdictions. While there is a need for some specialized apparatus, there does not presently exist a good system to ensure that unnecessary duplication will not occur - even in regions that have good mutual aid agreements.

**FIRE-STATIONS** - Savings could also be made by reducing the number of fire stations needed and the concurrent maintenance costs. As modern apparatus becomes larger and heavier, they tend to outgrow the station house and more money is needed to either enlarge or construct new quarters. The method of accomplishing a decrease in apparatus, equipment and stations requires comprehensive study addressing this and aspects of regionalization-consolidation.

A vision objective for the year 2000 indicates that better protection at lesser cost could be achieved by providing broader based services, standardizing communications, training, equipment, fire prevention, fire investigation, etc. through the elimination of jurisdiction boundaries in some geographical areas.

Decisions to consolidate might be best implemented in steps: First, communications (including central dispatch) and then the specialized services such as hazardous materials, mobile air supply, heavy rescue, fire investigation, etc. These activities would require the establishment of a county district or county authority which would ultimately be responsible for the delivery of all fire department services including suppression.

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## CODE ENFORCEMENT AND REGIONALIZATION\*

Though code enforcement is a term that can be applied to a wide variety of local government activities, this short paper will concentrate on a specifically housing-related application:- the Uniform Construction Code (UCC).

### UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE

(a) *Staffing:* The UCC was enacted in 1976 in part as a means of unifying the multitude of standards then being applied to home building across the State by New Jersey's municipalities. As set up, the State promulgated the UCC standards to be applied uniformly thereafter and the municipalities were to enforce these standards through plan review of applications for building permits and inspections of work undertaken.

One of the most salient facts about the 15 years that the UCC has been in operation is the ability of local code enforcement offices to cope with the ups and downs of building demand cycles. Although such cycles correspond roughly equally with the ups and downs in the economy generally, these agencies find that they lack the staff they need in 'good' years. This is so, either because developers compete for the qualified staff and can offer better remuneration or the method used in municipal budgeting for anticipating staff needs cannot allow a municipality to mobilize fast enough to staff the code enforcement office in advance of a sudden spurt in building demand. Likewise, in the 'bad' years, municipalities cannot often afford the staff obtained in the 'good' years as demand slackens. The last five years (1986-1991) are a good example of this swing in the building cycle.

The State Commission on County and Municipal Government, in a report entitled *State and Local Government Codes: Strategies for Local Enforcement*, described the results of a 1988 survey of municipal building officials across the State. Specifically, the survey attempted to gauge how adequately the current system enabled local code enforcement services to be provided. Indeed, the Commission's research showed that job turnover mirrored building demand - up in 'good' years, down in 'bad'. What was striking, also, was the unequal distribution of sub-code officials engaged in local code enforcement. Plumbing and electrical officials were very hard to find and, often, private agencies have contracted to perform these function on behalf of municipalities.

\*Source: *County and Municipal Government Study Commission; Seth Benjamin, Senior Research Specialist.*

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Moreover, what masked the dearth of licensed officials was the widespread practice in New Jersey, in which an individual official might provide services in several municipalities on a part-time basis. Thus, an official might well be splitting his time among anywhere from two to ten or more municipalities. This situation is not unusual even today, especially in the northern counties.

Currently, then, there are four ways local code enforcement services are provided. First, as was intended by the statute, the municipality may cope with all the applications submitted for both plan review and inspection, because it has a complete, fully qualified staff that covers all the sub-codes enforced in the UCC. The next option appears to be where a municipality has some qualified staff but not a sufficient number for it to cover all the services to be provided on its own. As a result, the construction code official, co-ordinator of the local enforcement effort, may well contract informally with officials, who work for other municipalities, to work part-time in his office as well, in order that he may fill his requirement for qualified staff. Thirdly, the plan review and inspection activities of the municipality in one or more specific sub-code areas are undertaken by a private 'third party' agency, which contracts with the municipality to allocate some of its employees to provide the service that the municipality needs. This option is similar to the vast number of consultant contracts in other areas of municipal government, wherein the municipality engages private professionals. Finally, the county provides the entire service to a municipality, entering into an inter-local agreement with the municipality for the assessment of the cost of providing the service. The employees providing the service are county officials.

There is a fifth option - one which occurs as a result of municipal inaction. A municipality can decide not to provide the service at all, in which case the State must take up the local obligation. Also, an applicant can use the State directly for any individual application, where a municipality does not have the qualified staff.<sup>1</sup> In 1988, the State acted as the construction official in 37 municipalities.

With regard to the regionalizing the provision of services, there has been one success story. Where the county has provided code enforcement services, there has been less uncertainty in the ability of local government to provide effective and efficient code enforcement, particularly in considering the dramatic changes in building demand that the State has witnessed over the past ten years.

<sup>1</sup> There are some types of applications that cannot be reviewed or inspected locally and must come to the State for review, inspection and enforcement.

Ocean County is, at the moment, the only county that provides UCC services on behalf of its constituent municipalities.<sup>2</sup> The Commission's research indicates that the County has not suffered from the ups and downs of the building cycles. Moreover, it has found that arranging inter-local agreements between the County and its municipalities is easier than among municipalities themselves, as they revolve around cost only and not allocating the resources of the affected municipalities.

The State should: 1) consider incentive programs to encourage the structuring of inter-local code enforcement agencies; and 2) encourage local units to rely on inter-local, regional and county level agreements for the provision of specialized code enforcement plan review services where these are necessary and appropriate. In particular, rapidly growing rural counties like Burlington, Atlantic and Sussex should be encouraged to provide code enforcement services to their municipalities. This may be particularly beneficial in southern counties where there is a tradition of county-provided services on behalf of their respective municipalities in other areas of municipal government.

*(b) Prior Approvals:* A second area of concern that was uncovered by the Commission's research revolved around the applicant's need to obtain 'prior approvals' before the construction official would issue a building permit. These prior approvals are the result of other agencies' statutory power to regulate some aspect of the development process. They may be issued by such diverse agencies as the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission, the county planning board, the county soil conservation district, the State Department of Environmental Protection and Energy or, even, another municipal agency such as the municipal utilities authority.

It is in this area that, for the applicant at least, most confusion and delay occur. For a municipality, therefore, it is essential for the construction code official to co-ordinate its activities with other non-municipal agencies, as well as within the municipality, in order to ensure efficient and timely responses to application for development.

The County and Municipal Government Study Commission suggested that a uniform 'checklist' be devised, so that the application process be standardized throughout the State. Even so, such a checklist could easily be adapted to allow for the requirements of individual municipalities.

<sup>2</sup> It provides services for one municipality in Burlington County as well. Sussex County had provided plumbing sub-code services for several of its municipalities but, it is believed, the County has declined to provide the service since 1991 for budget reasons.

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**A state supportive role in interlocal code enforcement\***

Creation of interlocal agencies to perform code enforcement activities at the municipal level has been permitted by law since the passage of the Interlocal Services Act in 1973. Several agencies have in fact been established, some of which survive to this day.

But, given the increasingly complex nature of code enforcement technology it is reasonable to expect many more local governments would have taken advantage of the provisions of the Act to establish combined agencies. The ability of a larger, more comprehensively organized agency to more successfully develop and maintain greater technical expertise would seem to be self-evident.

It is likely that this has not taken place for two reasons: The difficulty of establishing an agency (primarily a problem of transition); and the perception that the cyclical and sometimes localized nature of development pressures will result in an uneven load on the agency (i.e. - one of the constituent municipalities will receive more of the combined agencies' attention).

It was suggested to the Task Force that a quasi-independent building safety agency be established in but not of the Department of Community Affairs, which will have sufficient resources and flexibility to provide real and tangible support to local governments seeking to create interlocal code enforcement agencies. Of great importance is the establishment of a funding mechanism which provides for the operation of this agency at no cost to the taxpayer and with no increase in either State or local budgets. There is sufficient general merit (in addition to the support of interlocal agencies) in creating a state building safety agency to draw support from the construction and development industries in New Jersey, and thus gain support for the idea of interlocal code enforcement at the local level.

*Source: "New Jersey Division of Codes and Standards"*

## PLANNING AND LAND USE\*

While land use planning activities have shifted over the years from a purely local exercise to a more regional and statewide planning context, land use planning and development review in New Jersey still remains primarily a local municipal responsibility, with limited statutory authority for the exercise of inter-local planning activities.

Under the current provision of the Municipal Land Use Law,\*\* municipalities may adopt ordinances to establish a regional planning board, regional board of adjustment, or the appointment of a joint building official, joint zoning officer, or other officials responsible for the performance of any administrative duties undertaken in connection with planning and land use regulation. In contrast, the current provisions of the county planning enabling act does not specifically authorize two counties to undertake jointly any of the county planning powers that are provided under the provisions of that act.

At the present time, only two regional planning boards have been established in New Jersey. The Princeton Regional Planning Board is responsible for comprehensive planning and development review in the Princetons, while the Lake Hopatcong Regional Planning Board has more limited development review powers in its four constituent municipalities. While only a handful of municipalities have engaged in regional planning activities under the provisions of the M.L.U.L., there are a number of land use issues, including planning and zoning activities and the review and approval of development proposals along municipal and county boundaries, which have inter-municipal and inter-county impacts.

Throughout the state, there are numerous examples of development proposals which are located on parcels which either straddle or abut the boundaries of two or more municipalities. These developments can often have significant impacts which cut across municipal boundaries, including drainage, traffic, and environmental impacts. In addition, there are a number of important design issues, such as pedestrian linkages, the location and intensity of specific land use types, and road linkages and other infrastructure concerns. These are also important factors which should be carefully considered in the review of development proposals which are located along municipal boundaries.

\* Prepared by Stanley Slachetka, P.P.

\*\* The specific provisions for the joint exercise of planning and land use control powers are set forth in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-77 through 88 of the M.L.U.L.

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Unless the municipalities that are impacted by such development proposals have established a regional planning or zoning board, they must review these proposals individually. Although there are no provisions in either the M.L.U.L. or the county planning enabling statute which explicitly authorizes a cooperative effort between county and local planning boards in the review of these proposals, a number of towns have undertaken joint planning and development review on a voluntary and ad-hoc basis.

In addition to ensuring consistent and compatible land use planning and zoning approaches along municipal boundaries, inter-local planning and development review agreements would result in significant savings and efficiencies to both municipalities and developers. Such agreements would: reduce the time for development review; ensure compatible and physically integrated development across municipal boundaries; provide increased savings on infrastructure investments by public agencies and private developers; and provide opportunities for the sharing of professional consultants and services and which would reduce administrative and professional costs.

Another vehicle for improving inter-jurisdictional planning is the cross-acceptance process of the State Planning Act. At present this process is essentially vertical, that is, municipalities compare and reconcile their plans with the state plan. On occasion the county acts as the conduit for the process, representing municipal interests in the state-local deliberations, but it is not clear whether the process addresses the differences *between* municipal plans. The recently adopted State Development and Redevelopment Plan can thus provide a springboard for inter-local planning, as well. This process, however, does not obviate the need for inter-local agreements which would enable municipalities to respond effectively to inter-municipal planning and land use development issues, without requiring a full-scale and permanent integration of all the land use and development review functions of the municipalities.

## COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

Cooperative Purchasing in N.J. is authorized by an amendment to the Public Contracts Law (NJSA 40A:11-10) and is regulated by NJAC 5:30-17.1.

Cooperative purchasing is an alternative to the conventional bidding process. Instead of one local unit of government going out to bid for a particular item, two or more units — municipalities, counties or school boards join together to purchase items in bulk quantities, resulting in demonstrable savings.

There are currently 33 active cooperative purchasing systems registered with the Division of Local Government Services. These systems comprise 659 county, municipal, school board and other governmental agencies. They jointly purchase everything from copying paper to fuel oil.

Cooperative Purchasing Systems may include municipalities, counties, boards of education, or municipal utilities authorities. The Local Public Contracts Law serves as the basis for purchasing practices.

There are two types of Cooperative Purchasing Systems — Joint Purchasing and Cooperative Pricing:

### **Joint Purchasing**

Two or more local governmental entities enter into a contractual agreement that one of them will serve as the purchasing agent or Lead Agency for the other.

*The Lead Agency:* prepares the specifications; advertises and received bids; executes a contract with the lowest responsible bidder; places the orders, and pays for items and /or services rendered.

Such a system requires participants to agree in advance: on their needs so they can be specified in the contract to be awarded; that the contractual relationship which follows is between the Vendor and the Lead Agency; and that the participating governments pay the Lead Agency an agreed upon administrative fee (the fee is optional, but it is likely that the Lead Agency will request it) and the cost of the items purchased. The participating members do not pay the contractor!

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At present there is only one joint purchasing system registered with the Division of Local Government Services. Cooperative pricing systems represent the predominant form of cooperative purchasing.

### Cooperative Pricing Systems

The significant difference between joint purchasing and cooperative pricing is that with cooperative pricing separate contracts or purchase orders are executed between each participating government agency and vendor.

One of the governmental agencies acts as the lead agency and may request an administrative fee for performing its function, but the fee is optional. Some systems rotate the lead agency function on a yearly basis. The Lead Agency prepares the specifications, advertises and receives bids and selects the lowest responsible bidder. However, it is up to each participating governmental unit to award its own contract with the selected vendor. The lead agency is essentially providing the availability of prices for the specified items. The designation of a lead agency centralizes the tasks leading to the establishment a supply contract. The lead agency does not have a contractual responsibility to the vendor except for those items which it orders for its own needs.

Prices and the exact nature and quality of the items provided cannot deviate from what was described in the specifications and awarded in the contract.

Only those members who have submitted estimates to the lead agency prior to the advertisements for bids may participate in the contract. Subsequent members must wait for the next contract. The lead agency submits to the Division of Local Government Services a copy of the CP-2001 form accompanied with: a list of the participating entities; copies of resolutions or ordinances authorizing the agreement; and copies of the executed agreement with the members. The Division reviews the information submitted and acts upon a request for approval within 45 days of the receipt of the request for certification. Approval is good for a period of five years.

The principal issues in cooperative purchasing systems are

- 1) Adding governmental entities to the system
- 2) Clarifying the *intra*-municipal procedures, i.e. between the school board and municipal government which are accountable to different state agencies and subject to several nearly identical statutes;
- 3) Expanding the role of counties as a Lead Agency for their communities (and possibly the similar role of the state).

Sources: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Cooperative Purchasing in New Jersey: A Guide For Local Officials.  
Nelson Silver, Division of Local Government Services

## JOINT INSURANCE FUNDS

Nearly 50% of New Jersey's municipalities participate in one or more Joint Insurance Funds (JIF's). There are 15 operating municipal joint insurance funds providing insurance coverage for 280 municipalities. As it has developed in New Jersey, local insurance pooling provides coverage in several ways: the participant retains a portion of claims responsibility (the first \$500 to \$25,000 of the loss), participates in a county-level Joint Insurance Fund for coverage of losses up to \$2,000,000, and also participates in a state-wide excess level fund which provides coverage up to \$5,000,000 (\$10,000,000 if optional coverage is purchased).

The Statutes authorized Joint Insurance Funds to provide coverage for Workers' Compensation, General Liability, Auto Liability and Property. A recent amendment to the statutes broadened this to include public employee health coverage. The first application of this amendment is now being developed and is likely to include some current JIF's which will broaden their current coverage by the addition of health benefit coverage and the establishment of new funds, specifically for the provision of employee health benefits.

The experience thus far with Joint Insurance Funds demonstrates several ways to save money:

1. The cost of the insurance coverage is generally much less than that of commercial coverage. Members of Joint Insurance Funds save from 10%-15% on the cost of insurance purchased in the commercial market.
2. The use of self-insurance and funded retentions based on actuarial advice provides for the prompt payment of claims. If claims are less than anticipated, the funds retain this money to either reduce future claims assessments or to return it to participants as distribution of surplus. Since their inception, the several Joint Insurance Funds have returned over \$7.25 million in surplus distribution to their members.
3. The Joint Insurance Funds place great emphasis on safety programs to reduce the frequency and severity of losses. Fund participants have reported improvements in their loss experience.

Source: John Rasimowicz, Manager, Regionalization and Special Projects Unit, DCA

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4. Participation in a Joint Insurance Fund provides greater stability of insurance costs than the purchase of commercial coverage. The problems of affordability and availability are lessened through the funds.
  5. State regulation of municipal Joint Insurance Funds by both the Department of Insurance and the Department of Community Affairs provides security and additional assurance that the funds are properly administered.

Thus, the principal opportunity for local partnership is linked to:

- a) Expanding the participation by local governmental entities in joint insurance funds;
- b) Promoting the availability of employee health benefit coverage for current and prospective members of the funds; and
- c) Exploring cost implications and other ramifications of insurance coverage for environmental damage liabilities.

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## JOINT MUNICIPAL COURTS

Joint Municipal Courts are authorized by statute (N.J.S.A. 2A: 8-1). At present there are 16 operating courts encompassing 43 municipalities, mostly in rural areas.

### JOINT MUNICIPAL COURTS (by County)

#### ATLANTIC

- (1) Weymouth  
Estelle Manor & Corbin City

#### BURLINGTON

- (2) Washington/Bass River
- (3) New Hanover/Wrightstown

#### CAPE MAY

- (4) Cape May Point & West Cape May

#### HUNTERDON

- (5) Milford Joint Courts  
(Frenchtown, Milford, Alexandria & Holland)
- (6) East Amwell & Delaware Township
- (7) North Hunterdon  
(Califon, Glen Gardner, Lebanon Township, Clinton Township, Town of Clinton, Franklin, Tewsbury)
- (8) Bethlehem/Bloomsbury/Hampton

#### SALEM

- (9) Lower Alloways Creek & Elsinboro

#### SOMERSET

- (10) Peapack & Gladstone

#### SUSSEX

- (11) Frankford & Lafayette
- (12) Franklin & Hamburg
- (13) Hampton & Stillwater
- (14) Andover (Boro), Green & Fredon

#### WARREN

- (15) Central Warren,  
Judge: Joseph W. Steinhardt  
(Franklin & Washington)  
Municipal Court
- (16) Hope/Hardwick

\* Source: Administrative Office of the Courts, 11-6-91

The obstacles to Joint Municipal Courts are generally similar to those identified in other local functions. In addition, two other related reasons were cited as possibly impeding the creation of more Joint Municipal Courts:

1. The position of municipal judge is considered a "political plum", usually awarded to a member of the incumbent party. Municipalities may be reluctant to share such positions with a neighboring community.
2. The Governor has the authority to appoint judges to Joint Municipal Courts; some municipalities may consider this as an unwarranted intrusion into local affairs.

Consideration should be given to an amendment to the statutes which would return the appointment power to the municipalities, to be negotiated within a specified period. Failure to agree on an appointment could then be resolved by: 1) dissolving the joint service agreement and reverting to a municipal format; or, 2) requesting a third party to resolve the impasse.

## **APPENDIX B**

- **Executive Order 43**
  - **Selected Sources**
  - **Statements and Testimony  
at Task Force Hearings**
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*State of New Jersey  
Executive Department*

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 43

WHEREAS, property taxes doubled from 1980 to 1989; and

WHEREAS, the 1991 property tax relief program decreased or stabilized property taxes in most municipalities; and

WHEREAS, local governments still face pressure on their budgets; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous opportunities for cost savings by sharing local government services; and

WHEREAS, there exists an urgent need to improve efficiency in the providing of local government services in order that these services may continue without interruption or elimination; and

WHEREAS, inter-local service agreements will serve to improve efficiency so as to ensure the continued vitality and viability of certain local government services;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JAMES J. FLORIO, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby established the Governor's Task Force on Local Partnerships (hereinafter referred to as the Task Force) to identify ways in which more inter-local service agreements can occur in New Jersey to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of certain local government services. The Task Force should consider services delivered by municipalities, counties, and regional authorities.
2. The Task Force shall consist of the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs; a member of the Governor's staff; a representative of the League of Municipalities; a representative of the New Jersey Association of Counties; representatives from the private sector; and representatives from the academic community.

3. The responsibilities, functions, and objectives of the Task Force shall include:
  - a. Reviewing existing statutes dealing with inter-local service agreements.
  - b. Reviewing current examples of shared local services.
  - c. Exploring any existing barriers to shared local services.
  - d. Researching legislation in other states which might serve as models for sharing local services.
  - e. Making recommendations for regulatory changes, legislation, or administrative actions.
4. The Governor shall appoint an executive director who will report to the Task Force and shall have access to the necessary staff in state government to complete his assignment.
5. The Task Force is authorized to call upon any department, office, division or agency of this State to supply it with data and any other information, personnel or assistance it deems necessary to discharge its duties under this Order. Each department, office, division or agency of this State is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate with the Task Force and furnish it with such information, personnel and assistance as is necessary to accomplish the purpose of this Order. The Attorney General shall act as legal counsel to the Task Force.
6. The Task Force shall periodically report to the Governor and shall submit its final report no later than June 30, 1991.
7. This Order shall take effect immediately.

*GIVEN*, under my hand and seal this 12 day of October in the Year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and ninety one, and of the Independence of the United States, the two hundred and sixteenth.

  
GOVERNOR

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**Statements and Testimony  
at Task Force Hearings**

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**COUNTY OF BERGEN  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Administration Building • Court Plaza South • 21 Main Street • Hackensack, N.J. 07601-7000  
(201) 646-2534

**William P. Schuber**  
*County Executive*

**Leonard R. Kaiser**  
*Assistant to County Executive  
Municipal and Labor Relations*

MATERIALS PROVIDED  
FOR  
HEARING OF THE  
GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE  
ON  
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS  
FEBRUARY 25, 1992

A great number of initiatives were introduced as a result of the efforts of various municipal officials and the members of the Interlocal Government Relations Committee.

A questionnaire was prepared and mailed county-wide to our seventy municipalities, the answers to which served as the basis for three regional meetings that were held during January in various municipal locations. These meetings were held on January 16 in Ridgewood, January 23 in Ridgefield Park and January 30 in Rutherford. A county-wide meeting jointly sponsored by County Executive Schuber, The Bergen County Mayors Association and the Board of Freeholders was held on June 1, 1991. As a result of the input received from the many municipal officials that participated in these meetings, various areas of concerns were identified.

Included as the implementation of County-wide 9-1-1, the requirement to remediate underground storage tanks, the spiraling costs of providing health insurance, and police regionalization. Also, many mayors expressed an interest in establishing a Bergen County League of Municipalities.

In an attempt to address the needs of our municipalities, implementation of studies were undertaken regarding health benefits insurance and underground storage tank remediation. Because of our budget concerns, a pause was requested in the implementation of County-wide 9-1-1 and a plan redevelopment effort was started.

It was decided that the exploration of establishing a Bergen County League of Municipalities would be jointly addressed by the Bergen County Mayors Association and the Office of the County Executive.

Detailed reports covering the above subjects will be contained in the pages to follow.

It is important to note that in addition to the above outlined subjects, day to day responsibilities have included various and sundry municipal requests concerning street paving, signalization of intersections, rock salt supplies, joint purchasing initiatives, County Planning Board inquiries and the serving as hearing officer for a number of contested contract awards.



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William P. Schuber  
County Executive

Leonard R. Kaiser  
Assistant to County Executive  
Municipal and Labor Relations

January 15, 1992

TO: Member Municipalities South Bergen JIF  
FROM: Leonard R. Kaiser  
Assistant to County Executive

RE: UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS

As you are aware both the Federal and State Governments have enacted legislation which requires that underground storage tanks be insured for losses that result from leakage. It has become obvious that in the long run it will become more economical to remove UST's than to take the steps necessary to guarantee the insurability of those tanks.

Several months ago representatives of the four South Bergen JIF communities, the Boroughs of Moonachie, Wood-Ridge, Bogota and North Arlington, approached the County of Bergen to determine the possibilities of initiating a regionalized approach to removing UST's.

The concept basically is that the County will provide consulting services to various municipalities of the South Bergen JIF on a cost effective basis.

In addition, these communities will be able to access tank removal firms through a bid, led by the County. This would result in additional savings.

Following are a series of documents that outline the program and include a cost analysis. However, it is the basic intent of the County of Bergen to offer the core consulting services at a cost of \$3,300 per tank, per year for a three(3) year period.

Hopefully, upon reviewing the enclosed documents you will be convinced the approach is both reasonable and cost effective.

LRK/bk

COUNTY SPONSORED UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK REMEDIATION PROGRAM

During the course of our regional meetings, one of the major concerns expressed by the municipal representatives was compliance with State, County and Federal legislation regarding underground storage tanks. Failure to comply would subject the municipalities to serious liability claims if they failed to prevent polluting the environment.

On May 1, 1991 the initial meeting was held with the representatives of various South Bergen municipalities to explore the possibility of entering into an interlocal services agreement with Bergen County to address the mandates of underground storage tank remediation with the Bergen County Health Department acting as the lead agency.

The prospect of this undertaking required extensive research by Anthony DeCandia, Assistant County Counsel; Mark Guarino, Director Bergen County Department of Health and Steve Tiffinger, Environmental Specialist of the Bergen County Health Department. Upon completion of the necessary inquiries, the following proposal was presented to the interested municipalities.

"The County is proposing to assist participating municipalities with all aspects of registration compliance. Working with a municipally designated person, the County Environmental Division - Environmental Specialist and technician will inventory, survey and assess the tanks as a basis for registration. Based on municipal storage plans, the county will lead and coordinate all required activities necessary for tank closure, upgrade and management. The county staff directly organizing and overseeing all tank removals, including closure planning, on-site inspection of all excavating sampling and communications with DEP. In cases where a leak is discovered, the county will coordinate and oversee the work of environmental investigation/remediation consultants in accordance with DEP requirements. All sampling, analysis, consulting and rank

removal/contracting will be available through Central Purchase Agreement arranged by the county."

The program will have a time frame of three years per tank and is based upon a realistic appraisal of work load requirements and cost.

The county's goal is to take the lead in coordination and delivery of services with the intention of realizing economy, quality and continuity. In fact, the county is in an excellent position to provide the necessary expertise to our municipalities, while providing meaningful cost savings.

Our estimate is that we can properly provide management to 100 tanks per year. In that regard and since the main motivation for this program is to minimize potential liability exposure, the initial participants will include the members of the South Bergen Municipal Joint Insurance Fund and will be offered to other interested municipalities through the county thereafter.

We will be meeting with various municipal risk managers on January 7, 1992 and will be making a presentation on January 15, 1992 to municipal representatives. After these two meetings are held, it is our intention to begin signing up interested municipalities from January 16, 1992 through March 1, 1992 with a target implementation date of June 1, 1992. Of course, obtaining the necessary ordinances and resolutions from the participating municipalities may cause some delays. We are most hopeful that we will be in the ground (so to speak) no later than Earth Day 1992.

No better example of "State Mandate", "State No Pay", exists than the required implementation of County-Wide 9-1-1. While it is extremely difficult to argue against having available a method to provide the best emergency response system possible, the associated costs could prove to be prohibitive. By way of background, in January 1989 the State of New Jersey enacted legislation commonly referred to as the State-Wide 9-1-1 Enhanced Telephone System Act.

The 9-1-1 Act provides that each county appoint a County 9-1-1 Coordinator to integrate the various aspects of planning design and implementation. A one time grant of \$25,000 was provided for this purpose. The municipalities of the county were advised of the requirements under the law and the process of establishing a Master Street Address Guide was undertaken. The next step was the selection of the Public Safety Answering Point for the County. The selected approach in 1990 was to establish a centralized public safety answering point for Bergen County. This approach would require the hiring of 29 dispatchers and the purchase of the necessary equipment. At this time the State was offering \$500,000; one time grant for the implementation of the plan.

After implementation, the costs associated with personnel are the responsibility of the operating agency. The State would pay for costs associated with telephone lines and computer equipment. Quite intensive training is also required for the dispatchers or operators.

Due to the budget constraints of 1991 faced by the county, it was decided that we should rethink the establishment of a centralized public safety answering point and attempt to formulate a new plan based upon regionalization. It should also be noted that the original date for implementation has been changed to Spring of 1993 and therefore, there is more time to study a possible new approach.

POLICE REGIONALIZATION STUDY COMMISSION

Acting upon the recommendation of his transition committee, County Executive Schuber formed a committee to explore the possibility of regionalizing police services.

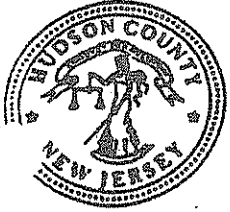
With Bergen County Prosecutor John J. Fahy acting as Chairman, the first meeting of the committee consisting of Sheriff Jack Terhune and various mayors, police chiefs, PBA representatives, elected officials and other municipal officials and interested citizens was held on September 26, 1991.

It is the intention of the County Executive that this committee act as the catalyst for meaningful dialogue by those interested in voluntarily participating in exploring the potential for a regional approach to providing police services.

The committee will:

1. Examine the existing MacNamara Report on Bergen County Law Enforcement.
2. Explore an approach to cost effective delivery of essential services.
3. Discuss the future structure of law enforcement in Bergen County.
4. Examine the success or lack thereof of Nassau and Suffolk counties in New York.

The ultimate goal of this committee is to establish and recommend how the County can assist interested municipalities in cooperative efforts.



**ROBERT C. JANISZEWSKI**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**COUNTY OF HUDSON  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
BRENNAN COURT HOUSE  
583 NEWARK AVENUE**

**JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY 07306**

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**HUDSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE ROBERT C. JANISZEWSKI'S TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS.**

Good evening. I am representing Hudson County Executive Robert C. Janiszewski this evening. My name is Patrick O'Connor and I am the Hudson County Director of Intergovernmental Relations.

The Hudson County Executive has been a long time advocate of local government partnerships. During the last year he has held meetings with the Bergen and Essex County Executive's to discuss ideas and programs designed to provide efficient and economic local government services.

The County Executive has also pursued local partnerships within Hudson County. He has recently established an Executive Council comprised of the 12 mayors within the County. The Council will be the meeting place to exchange ideas to develop local government partnerships.

The Governor's Task Force on Local Partnerships can assist Hudson County's local governments by identifying impediments to local partnerships and provide solutions to solve potential problems. The Task Force can assist local governments through the maze of state regulations, and provide the necessary incentives for local governments to work together to provide the most efficient and economical services to their residents.

If I can be of any further assistance to the Task Force, please do not hesitate to contact me.




## HACKENSACK MEADOWLANDS DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

One DeKorte Park Plaza • Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071

Administrative Offices: (201) 460-1700 Telephone: (201) 460-8300

Fax: (201) 460-1722



MELVIN R. PRIMAS, JR.  
Chairman

ANTHONY SCARDINO, JR.  
Executive Director

On behalf of HMDC Chairman Randy Primas, our Commissioners and Executive Director Scardino, I would like to welcome you to the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission and in particular to our Environment Center.

I would like to focus my comments tonight on two levels of interlocal partnerships which the Commission is presently exploring. The first is a regional cooperative approach to address some of the critical issues facing solid waste management in the Northeast area of New Jersey.

Specifically, the HMDC is embarking on developing plans for a regional yard vegetative compost facility, a non-processible landfill and a household hazardous transfer facility. The impetus behind this initiative was the Governor's Solid Waste Task Force Report which recommended that we should plan and implement solid waste facilities on a regional basis for economic and practical purposes. Regarding the Yard Vegetation Compost Facility, the Commission will be making available a compost operation that will take leaves, grass, brush, tree branches and tree stumps. We anticipate that the facility will be in operation by September 1992 with a capacity of 70,000 cubic yards per year and will be operated by a private firm. The HMDC will be looking to the Counties of Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Passaic and their municipalities to enter into agreements with the Commission for use of this facility. It should be noted, for example, that there are municipalities in the region that are sending grass clippings out of state at a cost of \$42 per ton. It is anticipated that the Commission's facility fee would be almost half of that charge. I am pleased to note that one county mentioned has approached the HMDC to discuss the possibility of joint venturing this composting operation with another site so that we could double the capacity indicated above.

The HMDC believes that the non-processible landfill lends itself as a multi-faceted benefit not only to the Hackensack Meadowlands District, but again to the large segment of the population in northern New Jersey. What is a non-processible landfill? It is a landfill that will receive those materials which cannot be burned at an incinerator and/or which cannot be recycled. It will not include ash from any incinerator and any household waste. The Commission anticipates that the disposal

-2-

fee for the site will be approximately \$75 per ton, which is substantially lower than what counties in the area are paying to ship this material out of state. At the same time, the Commission has proposed that a portion of this disposal fee be set aside to provide environmental remediation for other landfills in the District which are either owned by a municipality which cannot afford the closure and post closure costs or were privately owned and abandoned. This facility, which we hope will be opened within two years, will accept waste from four to five counties.

The benefits of this proposal would mean lower disposal costs to the taxpayers in the region, a long term plan for solid waste management in as much as we believe the potential site has a 15 year life capacity and provides environmental remediation funds to clean up old landfill sites. I must underscore another benefit: If the region in and around the Hackensack Meadowlands District moves forward in redevelopment initiatives within the next few years, we must provide a relatively low cost in state solution to the disposal of that debris. It will be in the not too distant future when we will no longer be able to ship bricks to Virginia, Indiana or Ohio. We call on our neighboring county solid waste districts to assist and cooperate with the HMDC in facilitating this multi-county regional plan.

Lastly, on the regional level, each year counties in the area have conducted a household hazardous waste clean up program for a few days each year which collects old paint, pesticides and cleaners. The costs for these programs comes into the hundreds of thousands of dollars because of transportation, special labor intensive handling and insurance. To take on this extremely difficult collection process, the Commission is studying the feasibility of creating a Household Hazardous Waste Facility that would eliminate some logistical concerns for the counties and at the same time drop the considerable costs involved. This should facilitate more collection efforts by the counties.

The second level of the Commission's efforts in interlocal partnership deals with the fourteen municipalities of the Hackensack Meadowlands District. In line with the Governor's call for regional cooperation the HMDC, along with the Hackensack Meadowlands Municipal Committee (HMMC), formed a task force which began a study regarding the collection, management and marketing of recyclables. The task force developed a questionnaire regarding pertinent data needed to determine the feasibility of this project such as items recycled, tonnages, contract duration and obviously whether the municipalities would be interested in a cooperative. I am pleased to report that all 14 municipalities responded to the survey with 13 or the 14 indicating that they have an interest in the cooperative.

-3-

What the survey indicated was a total of 27,303 tons of recyclables could be brought to the market as a single source provider. At the present time, we are exploring what the 27,303 tons could represent as a financial return to the cooperative.

The study is also presenting the task force with some technical difficulties as it related to different collection methods such as source separated or co-mingled, length of existing contracts for collection, and site selection for a materials handling facility.

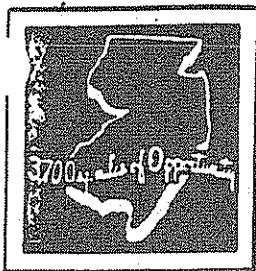
We believe, however, that we will be able to provide recommendations to the HMMC within the next several months. I would like to note that the HMDC is providing technical assistance and manpower to this study. It will be the fourteen communities that will act on the recommendation. We view ourselves as the technical advisors to this process.

Again, in cooperation with the HMMC, the Commission is also looking at the potential of a computer Geographic Information System (GIS) that would be available to all the municipalities in the District. At the present time, the Commission is completing an Environmental Impact Statement for the Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. EPA as it relates to our future Master Plan revisions. The end result of this process will mean a "one stop shop" for federal permitting so that developers and municipalities alike will not be delayed years in the process.

As a result of this initiative, the GIS will give the HMDC tremendous mapping and data capacities which could be utilized by our municipalities. At present, we are looking at the costs involved in "coding" the upland portions of the 14 municipalities in order to give them full range capacity for data gathering and mapping for their entire town. The benefits in terms of mapping for property delineations, zoning, water and sewer lines, utilities, etc., are immeasurable.

In conclusion, the HMDC has become very sensitive to the increasing costs of government at every level. We believe that we have given you some insight on how we are trying to assist the counties in this region with some economical and practical solutions to some outstanding solid waste issues.

Lastly, we believe that the fourteen communities of the Hackensack Meadowlands District will provide for an interesting case study as it relates to the recycling and computer initiative.



**Southern  
New Jersey  
Development  
Council**

Fries Mill Pavilion, 1201 Fries Mill Rd., Turnersville, NJ 08012 • (609) 728-5700

**TESTIMONY OF  
MARLENE Z. ASSELTA, PRESIDENT  
SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
BEFORE THE GOVERNOR'S LOCAL PARTNERSHIP TASK FORCE**

**MARCH 18, 1992**

**GLASSBORO STATE COLLEGE**

SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

STATEMENT ON REGIONALIZATION

MARCH 18, 1992

GLASSBORO STATE COLLEGE

As many of you know, the Southern New Jersey Development Council represents both private businesses and local governments in the eight southern counties. This mixture of public and private participation gives the development council a unique point of view.

We all know that private companies go through a continual process of growing and shrinking in order to try to find the optimal size at which to compete in the marketplace. Sometimes companies consolidate in order to achieve economies of scale and develop structured decision-making processes. Other times companies decentralize in order to make them more responsive to local markets and to encourage bold thinking at all levels.

While this process is sometimes confusing, it is generally healthy. It's healthy because the overall goal of the company is not to be large or small; the goal is to be profitable.

Governments have little experience in this field. Boundary lines separating one municipality from another and one county from another are fixed. Often these boundaries are based on decisions that were made generations ago and may have very little meaning to modern society.

Regionalization, however, is a way to add flexibility to this otherwise rigid system. Remember, as in business, the goal of a

governmental unit is not to be big or small. The goal is to deliver services to residents in the most efficient manner.

Shoppers in a grocery store don't care where the orange came from, the care about the quality and the cost. Residents in a housing development don't particularly care who picks up their trash, but they do want it done efficiently and cost-effectively.

Regionalization is a way for governments to do what businesses do -- to consolidate or decentralize depending on market demand.

In recent years it has become increasingly clear that local governments must have the ability to work together on common problems. I would like to quote to you from the development council's 1992 business/legislative agenda:

"Air and water pollution know no geographical boundaries, transportation cuts across governmental lines and workers from many areas share in the benefits of a successful business."

In other words, it simply makes no sense for rigid governmental borders to stand in the way of solving problems.

The Southern New Jersey Development Council recommends the following:

- First, that organizations of elected officials, such as the South Jersey Freeholders Association and the mayors associations actively discuss issues where cooperation is vital.

- Second, that the state support these efforts through technical information and idea-sharing. This is not an area where the state needs to set strict policies and then punish those who do not comply. Instead, this is an area where the state can plant

ideas and see if they flourish.

Here is a concrete example:

Suppose the state police developed an implementation plan for communities to share police protection. It would be a frank discussion about cost, legal considerations, scheduling and problem areas. This would not be mandatory, it would simply be a model for municipalities to study and modify to meet their own needs.

Let's face it, most local elected officials are part-time volunteers who do not have the expertise to develop these plans on their own. They may see the need --to provide services at a lower cost -- but they don't know how to get there. But with a state police model to guide them, these officials could make reasonable decisions that might save the taxpayers money.

Police protection is only one area.

Surely DEPE could develop models for regional trash collection, DOT could develop models for regionalization of road repair projects and treasury could develop models for joint tax assessment.

• Third, let's not have every municipality investing in computer hardware and software to do essentially the same tasks.

I mentioned tax assessment a moment ago. Could a group of towns contract with the county government or with a private company to handle tax assessment on a regional basis? One computer and one operator might be able to for half-a-dozen towns the same job that each municipality is now struggling to do itself.

Regionalization is a difficult issue. No one wants the state

ordering them to give up local control. The key, therefore, is not to order, but to suggest.

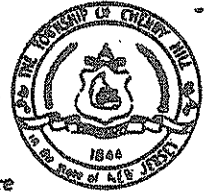
Regionalization will work only if the push comes from the bottom up, only if the citizens themselves see the advantage. Towns cannot be dragged into this process, they must march in willingly.

Organizations like the Southern New Jersey Development Council play an important role in this process. We keep these ideas alive and we bring business and government together in a constructive forum.

We support a regionalized approach to many problems and we think there are many things the state can do -- without stepping on anyone's Home Rule -- to bring it about.

Thank you.

# Cherry Hill

SUSAN BASS LEVIN  
MAYOR

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December 31, 1991

Mr. Gene Schneider  
Staff Director  
Local Partnership Task Force  
Department of Community Affairs  
101 S. Broad Street, CN 800  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Gene,

As you suggested, I thought I would share with you some of my observations on the success of our Cherry Hill Municipal/School/Library/Fire Liaison Committee. However, there are many members of the Committee who are much more knowledgeable about this than myself. I would be glad to ask them for additional comments if you would find it helpful. This program started approximately 2 years ago, working with 6 Fire Districts, 1 Library District, 1 School District and the Municipality.

The Committee meets for lunch every other month. I have enclosed minutes from the last year's meetings. Typically, 20 people or so attend each meeting. Everyone takes a turn hosting, and lunch is provided at their place of business. The agenda is prepared one month in advance by a steering committee consisting of approximately 4 individuals, one from each of the various entities that are part of the Committee. The steering committee develops the agenda based on unresolved issues or updates from previous meetings, as well as introducing a new topic each meeting.

*Council Meetings are held at 8:00 PM on the 2nd and 4th Monday each month.*

Fax: (609) 488-7893

Page Two

The Committee has had both tangible and intangible successes. The Cherry Hill Free Library has saved considerably for the last 3 years by joining the school district's heating oil bid package. This has saved approximately 25% of previous costs. Money has been saved through the Township purchase of snow removal sand in bulk and storing it at the Township facility and selling it at cost to the school district. Also, a cooperative pricing agreement has been developed from these meetings and has been approved by the Department of Community Affairs. Currently, the Township Purchasing Agent, Mrs. Betty Folly, is the lead purchasing agent for the Cooperative Pricing Agreement. She is looking into purchasing light bulbs, trash bags, and xerox paper. The cooperative pricing agreement will realize cost savings as the lead time required for sending items out to bid becomes synchronized. Also, the cooperative pricing agreement has only been in effect for a few months and has not been sufficient lead time for developing bids for bulk items that may be needed in the next couple of months. Rather the time horizon needs to be 6-8 months in advance. However, while not quantifiable, I believe the discussion about purchases has already saved dollars, as each entity has learned of prices and successful approaches the others has experienced.

The information exchanged at the meeting has also been very cost effective, though difficult to quantify. For example, the discussion of underground storage tanks, has contributed to each entities efforts in addressing the problem in a timely and cost-effective manner. Learning through each others efforts and sharing information on deadlines and costs requirements has avoided potentially significant future costs due to environmental or other problems associated with the failure to address other problems.

The library benefited last meeting from learning of the school district's successful efforts in preventing building vandalism through better exterior lighting. This discussion involved details such as location and even the type of lights that are the best a deterrent. The Fire District has been able to better address the planning needed to avoid congestion caused by the extensive NJDOT reconstruction of the major state highway that bisects Town. Also, these updates have addressed the school district needs for bus route planning. The Township and school district successfully implemented a plastic drop off recycling program at the high schools.

Also, risk management issues have been discussed in terms of options for self-insurance and other coverage, as well as ways to reduce and improve your insurance record. Again, this translates into cost savings, which are difficult to quantify.

Page Three

Another benefit has been the reduction of overlap. At meetings items such as the weather service used to predict winter storms are discussed, with the School District and Township each contracting separate services, but sharing forecast information in order to best predict snow storms. Recreation and other types of programming are discussed in advance to avoid conflicting dates whenever possible.

Finally, residential concerns are addressed at these meetings. For example, residential parking near the high school saw both the school district and police department working together.

As you can see, I think the meetings have been very successful. The participants have been wonderfully cooperative in my year and a half on the committee. I think everyone has benefitted from a better understanding of what their counterparts are doing. And in fact, I truly believe the Cherry Hill taxpayer has been a real winner through this program.

I hope you find this helpful. Please feel free to let me know if I can be of any further assistance to you.

I wish you the best in your efforts.

Sincerely,



RICHARD F. CALLAHAN  
ADMINISTRATOR OF OPERATIONS

RFC/jmp

cc: Mayor Levin  
Council President Steve Barbell



# Atlantic County

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DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

HELEN W. WALSH  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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Testimony by  
HELEN W. WALSH  
Atlantic County Administrator

to the  
LOCAL PARTNERSHIP TASK FORCE

March 18, 1992

I BELIEVE THE STATE IS WISE TO BRING FOCUS ON WAYS IN WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN REDUCE THE COST OF SERVICE DELIVERY BY POOLING RESOURCES. THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT ATLANTIC COUNTY HAS BEEN AGGRESSIVELY ADDRESSING OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS.

WHEN I RECEIVED THE INVITATION FROM COMMISSIONER PRIMAS TO TAKE PART IN THIS PUBLIC HEARING, I THOUGHT THAT I COULD BEST CONTRIBUTE TO THIS EFFORT BY TELLING YOU ABOUT ATLANTIC COUNTY'S EXPERIENCES. FIRST I WANT TO ADDRESS A FACTOR THAT THE TASK FORCE WOULD BE WISE TO KEEP UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THESE DISCUSSIONS - THE TRADITION IN NEW JERSEY OF MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL OVER LOCAL EXPENDITURES.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WILL FIND MUCH SENTIMENT FOR MOVING AWAY FROM NEW JERSEY'S "HOME RULE" TRADITION. BUT MANY OF THOSE WHO WOULD FIGHT TO THE DEATH TO MAINTAIN STRONG LOCAL CONTROL RECOGNIZE THAT WHILE IT OFFERS THE ADVANTAGE OF PERMITTING CITIZENS TO DETERMINE HOW THEIR COMMUNITY SHOULD OPERATE, IT ALSO LENDS ITSELF TO WASTE AND DUPLICATION OF EFFORT.

WE HAVE RECOGNIZED THE FINE LINE THAT SEPARATES THESE TWO CAMPS, AND I BELIEVE OUR EFFORTS TO DATE HAVE SUCCEEDED BECAUSE WE HAVE KEPT ALL ASPECTS OF THE ISSUE IN PERSPECTIVE.

ATLANTIC COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE REGIONAL COOPERATION, I BELIEVE, HAVE NOT MET WITH RESISTANCE BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS.

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY CLEARLY IS IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC HEALTH. FOLLOWING THE PASSAGE OF THE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACT, ATLANTIC COUNTY GAINED SUPPORT FROM ALL OF ITS MUNICIPALITIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ATLANTIC CITY, TO FORM A COUNTY DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH. IN THE ENSUING TEN YEARS, THAT DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH HAS EXPANDED INTO EVERY NEW AREA REQUIRED UNDER THE STATE'S



ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS, INCLUDING A COMPREHENSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM.

WHEN INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPALITIES EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS AS THEY HAVE OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, IN ATLANTIC COUNTY PARTICULARLY WITH REFERENCE TO WATER POLLUTION, OUR PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION IS THERE TO PROVIDE THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO WORK WITH HOME OWNERS TO CUT THROUGH SOME OF THE BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE AND TO ASSIST IN A TECHNICAL AS WELL AS SERVICE CAPACITY. IT IS CLEAR THAT NO INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPALITY WOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE ON-BOARD THE KIND OF PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE THAT WE HAVE IN A CENTRALIZED COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT..

BUILDING UPON OUR REGIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT, WE WERE ABLE UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO CREATE THE FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES TASK FORCE IN THE STATE AS A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN THE PROSECUTOR, THE SHERIFF AND THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT. THIS TASK FORCE HAS BEEN AN AGGRESSIVE AGENCY IN INVESTIGATING AND PROSECUTING ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES, SPECIFICALLY THOSE RELATED TO ILLEGAL DUMPING, AND USING FINES COLLECTED FROM ILLEGAL DUMPERS TO CLEAN UP DUMP SITES IN A HALF DOZEN MUNICIPALITIES.

ALSO IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL AREA, ANOTHER STRONG EXAMPLE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IS OUR COUNTY-WIDE RECYCLING PROGRAM, FEATURING CURB-SIDE PICK UP IN EVERY COMMUNITY. WHEN THE COUNTY'S SOLID WASTE PLAN WAS AMENDED TO INCLUDE THE RECYCLING PLAN, IT WAS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT THIS BE DONE ON A REGIONAL BASIS. ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES AT THE TIME HAD THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPAL RECYCLING PROGRAMS, THEY WERE INCORPORATED INTO THE REGIONAL PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE COUNTY.

THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN DRAMATIC IN TERMS OF IMPROVED PARTICIPATION AND COLLECTION RATES, AS WELL AS THE ABILITY OF THE COUNTY-WIDE SOLID WASTE PROGRAM TO INVEST IN THE KINDS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMS AND MARKETING AND PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORTS WHICH ARE SO CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS.

MOST THE REGIONAL EFFORTS WE HAVE LOOKED INTO SO FAR HAVE BEEN PRESENTED IN TWO FORMATS - ONE IN WHICH A GROUP OF MUNICIPALITIES CAN BAND TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOAL, WITH LITTLE OR NO COUNTY INVOLVEMENT, AND ONE IN WHICH THE COUNTY PLAYS A LEAD ROLE. IT IS UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT WILL PARTICIPATE IN A REGIONAL OR SUB-REGIONAL EFFORT.

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, FOLLOWING A SUMMIT ON REGIONAL COOPERATION WITH MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS, COUNTY EXECUTIVE DICK SQUIRES PROPOSED THAT ATLANTIC COUNTY BUILD AND OPERATE A REGIONAL ANIMAL SHELTER. THE IMPETUS FOR THIS PROJECT WAS THE RECOGNITION THAT MOST COMMUNITIES WERE NOT ADEQUATELY MEETING THE NEED FOR ANIMAL CONTROL. ALTHOUGH ANIMAL CONTROL AND SHELTERING IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN NEW JERSEY, IT MADE LITTLE SENSE TO SEE NUMEROUS SHELTERS BUILT WHEN ONE FACILITY IN A GEOGRAPHICALLY CENTRALIZED LOCATION COULD MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES.

IN ORDER FOR A REGIONAL PROJECT LIKE THIS TO WORK, HOWEVER, THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE INSISTED THAT A LARGE MAJORITY OF MUNICIPALITIES SIGN OFF ON THE COUNTY'S PARTICIPATION. WE WERE CONCERNED THAT WITHOUT MOST OR ALL COMMUNITIES JOINING, THE COST TO THOSE THAT DID PARTICIPATE WOULD BE UNREASONABLY HIGH. WE SOUGHT AND RECEIVED THE ENDORSEMENT OF 18 OUT OF 23 MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND THEN PUT TOGETHER A TASK FORCE WITH LOCAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LOCATING, BUILDING AND OPERATING THE SHELTER.

THERE IS ONE AREA WHERE WE ARE RELUCTANT TO TAKE ON A MUNICIPAL RESPONSIBILITY - ANIMAL CONTROL. ALTHOUGH WE WILL BUILD AND MANAGE THE SHELTER, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANIMAL PICK-UP WILL REMAIN WITH THE MUNICIPALITY. THIS IS IN RECOGNITION THAT THE DEMAND FOR ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICE CAN VARY GREATLY FROM ONE COMMUNITY TO ANOTHER. WHILE ATLANTIC CITY MAY REQUIRE SEVERAL FULL-TIME ANIMAL CONTROL EMPLOYEES, A NUMBER OF OUR SMALLER AND RURAL COMMUNITIES MAY FIND IT MORE EFFECTIVE AND COST EFFICIENT TO SHARE THE SERVICES OF A SINGLE EMPLOYEE OR CONTRACTOR.

IN THE LAST YEAR AND A HALF WE HAVE ESTABLISHED BOTH COOPERATIVE PURCHASING AND JOINT PURCHASING PROGRAMS WITH MUNICIPALITIES. I DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THESE BECAUSE JOINT PURCHASING INVOLVES THE COUNTY BUYING A COMMODITY AND MAKING IT AVAILABLE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. COOPERATIVE PURCHASING INVOLVES GETTING A BID OR QUOTE FOR A COMMODITY FOR OUR USE, AND REQUIRING THAT THE LOW-BID FIRM MAKE AN ITEM AVAILABLE FOR DIRECT PURCHASE BY MUNICIPALITIES AT THE SAME PRICE WE GET.

PURCHASES WHICH WE HAVE MADE IN RECENT MONTHS INCLUDE ROCK SALT (FIVE MUNICIPALITIES JOINED US) HEATING OIL (THREE COMMUNITIES) AND GASOLINE (SEVEN COMMUNITIES - SIX THROUGH COOPERATIVE PURCHASING, ONE WHICH FUELS ITS VEHICLES AT OUR GAS PUMPS AND PAYS THE COUNTY ACCORDING TO GALLONS USED.)

IN ADDITION TO SAVING MONEY FOR TOWNS THAT JOIN WITH THE COUNTY, THE PROGRAM HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE IN SOME CASES FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO SAVE MONEY ON THEIR OWN WITHOUT TAKING PART. AS CONTRACTORS LEARN THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN SAVE MONEY THROUGH THE COUNTY'S EFFORTS, THEY TEND TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE IN THEIR BIDS TO THE INDIVIDUAL MUNICIPALITIES.

COMING UP SHORTLY, WE EXPECT TO INCLUDE SEVERAL MUNICIPALITIES IN OUR PURCHASE OF MISCELLANEOUS JANITORIAL AND LUMBER SUPPLIES.

IN THE AREA OF SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION PROMOTED BY THE COUNTY, I CAN CITE TWO SEPARATE EXAMPLES. ONE IS OUR ALLIANCE AGAINST DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, WHICH IN THE R-F-P FOR PROPOSALS FROM MUNICIPAL ALLIANCES OFFERED INCENTIVES TO THOSE MUNICIPALITIES WHICH BANDED TOGETHER IN A REGIONAL EFFORT TO DEVELOP DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION PROGRAMS. THIS RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER RATHER THAN COMPETING FOR LIMITED FUNDS.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION IS OUR ENHANCED 9-1-1 EFFORT. WE OFFERED THE MUNICIPALITIES THE OPTION OF PURSUING A COUNTYWIDE REGIONAL 9-1-1 PROGRAM OR PURSUING IT ON A SUB-REGIONAL BASIS. THE MUNICIPALITIES CHOSE THE LATTER AND, DURING THE COURSE OF THE LAST YEAR, HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH JOINT ARRANGEMENTS TO PROVIDE A 9-1-1 SERVICE.

WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS WE ARE PLANNING OUR SECOND SUMMIT ON REGIONAL COOPERATION, AN EFFORT CO-SPONSORED BY THE ATLANTIC COUNTY LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES. IT IS OUR INTENTION TO STRUCTURE THIS MEETING AS WE DID OUR FIRST SUMMIT TWO YEARS AGO.

WE WILL BRING MUNICIPAL LEADERS TOGETHER TO DISCUSS AREAS WHERE THEY BELIEVE REGIONAL COOPERATION WILL IMPROVE SERVICE OR REDUCE COSTS. TOGETHER, WE WILL IDENTIFY A SMALL NUMBER OF ISSUES THAT REPRESENT THE CONSENSUS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES INVOLVED AND FORM A WORKING GROUP TO PURSUE EACH OF THESE ISSUES.

THE TASK FORCE WILL BE STAFFED BY COUNTY PERSONNEL AND, PENDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE, WE ARE PREPARED TO MOVE FORWARD IN IMPLEMENTING THESE ADDITIONAL SUB-REGIONAL PROGRAMS.

AMONG THE ITEMS WHICH OUR MUNICIPALITIES HAVE INDICATED A DESIRE TO DISCUSS ARE THE OPERATION OF THE MUNICIPAL COURTS, JOINT INSURANCE PROGRAMS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS CONCERNING UNDERGROUND TANKS, VEHICULAR FLEET REQUIREMENTS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES,

I BELIEVE THE TASK FORCE IS ADDRESSING AN ISSUE THAT HOLDS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR HOLDING DOWN THE COST TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF DOING BUSINESS. BUT, AGAIN, I URGE YOU TO KEEP IN MIND THE STRONG TRADITION OF HOME RULE AND THE RELUCTANCE TO GIVE UP LOCAL CONTROL AS YOU FORMULATE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR.

I ALSO URGE YOU TO GIVE VERY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE COSTS INVOLVED WITH INITIATIVES SUCH AS WE ARE DISCUSSING HERE. WHILE MANY OF THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS WE HAVE INITIATED OR WILL CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE WILL SAVE MONEY FOR OUR MUNICIPALITIES, IN MANY CASES THEY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL SPENDING BY THE COUNTY.

THE LIMITATIONS PLACED ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY NEW JERSEY'S CAP LAW POSE A VERY IMPOSING ROADBLOCK TO FURTHERING THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL COOPERATION. I PROPOSE THAT THE TASK FORCE PROPOSE TO THE GOVERNOR THAT LEGISLATION BE WRITTEN PROVIDING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THE ABILITY TO PLACE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH REGIONAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OUTSIDE THE CAP RESTRICTIONS.

THIS WOULD PROVIDE A MEANINGFUL INCENTIVE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHICH MAY BE IN FAVOR OF SUCH COST-SAVING EFFORTS BUT CANNOT SEE THEIR WAY CLEAR TO COMMITTING TO ADDING TO THEIR CAP-LIMITED SPENDING. I CAN THINK OF NO INCENTIVE THAT WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN ENCOURAGING REGIONAL COOPERATION EFFORTS. AND I BELIEVE THAT WITHOUT OFFERING SUCH INCENTIVE, THE TASK FORCE MAY BE WASTING ITS TIME.



Robert D. Prunetti  
County Executive

# COUNTY OF MERCER

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

McDADE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

P.O. BOX 8068

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP TASK FORCE

by

**ROBERT D. PRUNETTI**  
**MERCER COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

April 7, 1992

[Faint, mostly illegible text of the testimony transcript follows]

Mr. Chairman and Members of the task force, thank you for this opportunity to come before you today and share whatever insight and experience I might have in the area of regionalization and consolidation of local government services. Truly, this is a concept whose time has come and I applaud your efforts to tackle what at times can be a thorny and contentious issue.

Since assuming office in January of this year, I have made regionalization and inter-local coordination a priority of my administration. During the months immediately following my election as County Executive the Inter-Municipal Relations Subcommittee of our transition team met to devise innovative methods to promote county/municipal coordination, improve cost effectiveness and deliver better services. Among the many initiatives recommended by the subcommittee was the creation of an Inter-Municipal Forum comprised of the mayors of Mercer's 13 municipalities and myself. This forum, which recently had its inaugural session, is scheduled to meet on a monthly basis to discuss areas of mutual concern and provide a framework for greater cooperation at the departmental and division level as well. Already, county and municipal recreation directors as well as the county counsel and the 13 municipal attorneys have met and anticipate a regular schedule of meetings in the future. I can't tell you how many mayors and local officials have said to me in recent months how happy and relieved they are that county and

municipal government finally have in place a formal mechanism for communication let alone plans for cooperative endeavors in the future.

In its interim report, the Inter-local Municipal Relations Subcommittee recommended the following initiatives. I should note that I have endorsed each of these proposals and fully anticipate their implementation in the near future.

1. Joint Insurance Ventures - With the rising cost of health insurance consuming more and more of our budgets, I feel it is both wise and timely to explore the possibility of a collective health plan among municipalities and the county government.

2. Joint Purchasing - Although precedent already exists for some limited joint purchasing efforts, a comprehensive and systematic process is currently being devised. As a way of exchanging ideas and keeping municipalities informed of available county services, regular forums between purchasing agents are planned to take place on a bimonthly basis.

3. Telecommunication - This is an area with great potential for cost savings. Mercer County is now exploring the possibility of contracting jointly with municipalities for long distance telephone service.

4. County Data Bank - Central to any comprehensive approach to inter-municipal cooperation and regionalization is a free and efficient exchange of information. In keeping with this fundamental precept, we are examining the possibility of using currently underutilized computer equipment in the library system to provide local governments with information regarding services that may be available to them from the county and other municipalities. Not only will this furnish information as to the various services county government can provide, but it will also enable towns to market their services and surplus equipment to one another.

5. County Road Improvements Schedule - Under this plan, the county, with the cooperation of municipal officials, would issue an annual road improvement schedule. Although such a schedule is subject to changes in weather conditions, it allows local officials to have a ballpark estimate with which to consider the timing of future road projects. This will help to prevent the kind of gridlock and congestions that often results when several projects occur simultaneously and without coordination.

6. Equipment Sharing - Although a loose and informal agreement has been in place for several years, the time has come to initiate an organized and systematic means for equipment exchange. Regular rosters will be issued listing available county and municipally owned heavy equipment and a

schedule for when it might be available for use by local governments. We have found that in Mercer County that "lending" personnel to operate the equipment is both safer and more efficient. This eliminates the danger or at least the accusations of equipment damage and abuse.

I have shared with you just a few of the options available to county and local government as we struggle to keep our budgets balanced, our coffers full and our accountability high. These aren't complicated ideas or grand schemes. Rather they are common sense approaches to responsible and voluntary regionalization efforts. County government, like state government must refrain from imposing its will in a top down fashion that seeks to control rather than efficiently manage. As a county official, I must constantly be aware not only of municipal attachments to the concept of home rule but also the essential truth that those who are the closest to the delivery of essential services are often the most qualified and efficient one's to manage those services. It is in this spirit, that I am taking the opportunity to urge this task force to press our state representatives to bring a halt to the ever rising costs to county government, of maintaining the bloated superior court system. Clearly, a 5% cap on state court spending is one way of seeking to impose sanity and discipline on the process. As judges pursue their generous wish lists and issue court order after court order, more and more of the county's

discretionary spending disappears into a judicial black hole. Yet, county officials, are powerless to subdue the momentum of this one way express train toward fiscal stagnation. I ask you today, as I have asked the relevant senate and assembly committee's in previous testimony; if the state won't or can't fund the courts and the constitutional officers, than let those in county government run them. We already pay the bills, supply the personnel and heat the offices. We have the hands-on expertise and front line perspective to efficiently manage the State of New Jersey's mandated bureaucracy. I know that in Mercer County we have demonstrated that county government can and will make the tough decisions and execute the deep budget cuts. Give us the tools and we will get the job done!

The time to reexamine traditional notions of government and the relationship between its various levels is truly at hand. If we have learned anything over the past two years it is that the people demand innovation, economy and efficiency. I don't know necessarily if people want more government or less government. What I do know, however, is that they demand better government. I believe the proposals I have put forward answer that call. I implore you to help me meet the challenge.

**BOROUGH OF FAIR HAVEN**  
748 River Road



New Jersey 07704

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • MUNICIPAL BUILDING • 747-0241

April 10, 1992

Mr. Melvin R. Primas, Jr.  
Commissioner  
Department of Community Affairs  
CN 800  
Trenton, N.J. 08625-0800

Dear Commissioner Primas:

I appreciate the opportunity to have spoken before the Local Partnership Task Force on Tuesday. As I had stated to Mr. Schneider before attending the meeting I don't see that there is a real hindrance by the state to stop local municipalities from working with each other to save money and/or to improve service to the public. That, I believe, is a matter of economics, education of the public, cooperation, trust, and effort on the local level. I don't believe that it is something that should be mandated, nor do I believe that, in general, "regionalization" will always save tax dollars. I believe that in many cases the larger the entity the more costly and less efficient the enterprise may be. As I stated on Tuesday, the further the control is from the people the more likely the service is to be less cost effective, less efficient and more frustrating for the public.

Before I decided to campaign for Mayor, I took a course at Rutgers University on municipal finance. One of the professors for the course said that many times there is a tendency for public officials to think that they are suddenly endowed with great wisdom as soon as they are elected or appointed. I must admit that he was right. I continually have to remind myself of that as I work to control the cost of local government. I must constantly fight my own ego and not only listen to what the people are saying but also to seek to know what they are not saying. As I watch many of our state and federal officials continue to make decisions without the input of the people, instead they seem to listen to special interest groups. I become very concerned about our system. I also believe that people must lower their expectations of what our government should be doing. As a society we have come to think that the government, be it local, county, state or federal should solve all problems. Many times we don't consider the cost of those solutions or the freedom that we relinquish in abdicating our own responsibility. I believe that we, as elected and appointed officials, must work to lower those expectations and help people to work together to solve their own problems.

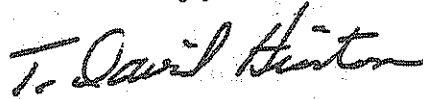
I certainly commend you and the other members of the Task Force for seeking information from a broad spectrum of people at your hearings. However, as I listened on Tuesday to some of the other speakers I'm afraid that my concerns expressed above were being offered as solutions.

In my opinion, the best recommendations for the Task Force to the governor is for the state to: 1) Act as a clearing house of ideas of what various towns and counties have tried and why the ideas work or don't work. 2) Be a facilitator in developing a difficult situation between two governmental entities. An example may be combining two police departments. (I believe that the best way in which to accomplish that is for one department to be completely dissolved.) 3) Mitigate the cap law problems that may arise in certain cases as was discussed on Tuesday. I don't believe that state grants are the answer because of the bureaucracy created to administer the program.

I am sorry that I could not stay for the complete meeting on Tuesday. I would liked to have had more time for discussion to learn what your Task Force has determined and what your thinking is at this time in your study.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to have met with your committee.

Sincerely,



T. David Hinton  
Mayor of Fair Haven

TDH:ldp

APRIL 7, 1992 PUBLIC HEARING  
GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON INTERLOCAL SERVICES,  
COMMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE RECORD

GOOD MORNING

MY NAME IS SAM DELUCA AND I AM COUNCIL PRESIDENT OF THE TOWNSHIP OF NORTH BRUNSWICK IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY TO PRESENT TESTIMONY ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT. I COMMEND THE GOVERNOR FOR HAVING THE VISION TO CREATE THIS TASK FORCE AND YOU FOR TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO TRANSFORM ITS GOALS INTO ACTIONS.

AS WE ALL KNOW, THERE ARE MANY GRADATIONS BETWEEN ABSOLUTE HOME RULE, IN WHICH EACH OF NEW JERSEY'S 567 MUNICIPALITIES WOULD PROVIDE ALL OF THEIR OWN SERVICES, AND TOTAL ABANDONMENT OF HOME RULE, IN WHICH ALL SERVICES WOULD BE PROVIDED IN SOME COLLECTIVE MANNER.

WHAT IS FASCINATING - AND CHALLENGING - ABOUT THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE IS THAT IT IS NOT MAKING THE JUDGMENT ABOUT WHICH OF THESE EXTREMES IS "RIGHT" OR "WRONG". INSTEAD, YOU ARE ASKING EACH OF US TO REVIEW THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF SERVICE DELIVERY - IN A VOLUNTARY, NON-COERCIVE ENVIRONMENT - AND TO DECIDE WHAT IS BEST FOR EACH OF US. SOME SERVICES LEND THEMSELVES TO INCREASED EFFICIENCIES AND EFFECTIVENESS WHEN DELIVERED JOINTLY; OTHERS MAY NEED TO BE KEPT "CLOSER TO HOME".

TO THIS END, ON SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH OUR MAYOR, PAUL J. MATAcera, CONVENED A CONFERENCE OF ALL MAYORS, COUNCIL PERSONS, ADMINISTRATORS AND SELECTED DEPARTMENT HEADS

FROM EACH OF OUR COUNTY'S 25 MUNICIPALITIES. GOVERNOR FLORIO AND DCA COMMISSIONER RANDY PRIMAS ADDRESSED THESE ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS WHO THEN PARTICIPATED IN A PUBLIC POLICY FORUM AND OPERATIONAL ROUNDTABLE. MANY MEMBERS OF YOUR TASK FORCE WERE PANELISTS OR MODERATORS ON THAT DAY.

FOLLOWING THE SESSION WE BROKE INTO THREE GROUPS TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE SHARING WITHIN THE COUNTY AND TO EXPLORE HOW WE MIGHT EXPAND THIS CONCEPT FURTHER. I HAVE ATTACHED TO MY TESTIMONY AN INVENTORY PREVIOUSLY GATHERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND A SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS FROM OUR CONFERENCE.

I WILL NOT TAKE UP YOUR TIME BY READING THROUGH THESE LISTS. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE IS THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY SHARING SERVICES VERY SUCCESSFULLY. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WE CAN DO MORE. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THERE AREN'T BARRIERS, OR ENOUGH INCENTIVES TO TAKE THIS TO THE NEXT LEVEL. THERE ARE! BUT UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF LEADERS SUCH AS OUR MAYOR AND COUNCIL WE ARE IDENTIFYING THE HURDLES AND WORKING TO OVERCOME THEM.

WE TRUST THAT THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABORS WILL ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO GO FORWARD BY CREATING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD IN WHICH EACH MEMBER IN ANY INTERMUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP GAINS. IF THIS BECOMES A WIN/LOSE COMPETITION NO ONE WILL RISK PARTICIPATION AND THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE STATUS QUO WILL BE PERPETUATED.

WE AS A STATE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD THAT AND OUR TAXPAYERS WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE IT!

CONFERENCE OF INTERLOCAL SERVICE  
SHARING IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
MAYOR PAUL MATACERA

FINDINGS FROM 3/28/92 WORKSHOPS

SERVICES NOW SHARED:

Public Works & Safety

Dispatching  
Leaf Composting  
Fuel Facilities  
Response Teams  
(i.e., Hazmat)  
Sewerage  
Water

Human Services

Animal Control  
County Health Dept.  
County Prisoner Transport &  
Holding  
Intercommunity Athletic  
Leagues  
Special Services School  
District  
Vocational Education

Administration

Cooperative Purchasing  
Agreement for  
Composting bags

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SHARED SERVICES

Desire for Autonomy; Home Rule in Home Town;  
Difficulty letting go of power  
Preferential treatment of host community  
Geographic considerations  
Market dictates (i.e., shared tax assessors)  
Poor Administration  
Competition Rule  
Insurance liabilities  
County v. local  
Tailoring to local needs

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS OF SHARED SERVICES

Flexibility  
Compromise  
Cooperation  
Local involvement of elected and appointed officials  
Neutral Party