



By the people, for the future.

Baseline Preview: **Who Does What and What It Costs**

**Progress Report from the Commission on Local Government
Modernization**

What is Consensus?

- **19-member** commission on local government modernization; includes diverse cross-section of the county, towns, villages, city, schools, business, labor and not-for-profits
- **Co-chairs:** Neil Murphy, Catherine Richardson and Jim Walsh
- Launched in February 2014 with funding support from **NYS Senators DeFransisco and Valesky**
- Supported by **Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney** and the **County Legislature, Mayor Stephanie Miner** and the **Syracuse Common Council**, and the **Village Mayors and Town Supervisors Associations**
- The **Center for Governmental Research (CGR)** was hired as the lead consultant to the project in June 2014



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Partners



CENTERSTATE
CORPORATION FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



NYS Senator John A.
DeFrancisco



NYS Senator David J.
Valesky

Onondaga County Town Supervisors Association
Onondaga County Village Mayors Association

We Have an Opportunity

The time is now to shape a vision for more effective and efficient government in Onondaga County

- **Taxpayers** looking for more cost effective and efficient services
- **Local leadership** – elected, business, higher education - has demonstrated an extraordinary willingness to collaborate
- **Local governments** facing fiscal stress and unsustainable costs
- We have made **great progress** on a number of local initiatives and the region has been moving in the right direction
 - Shared services between Syracuse and Onondaga County (economic development, purchasing agreements)
 - Towns and Villages (regular meetings on best practices and shared services)



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Consensus: Role & Actions

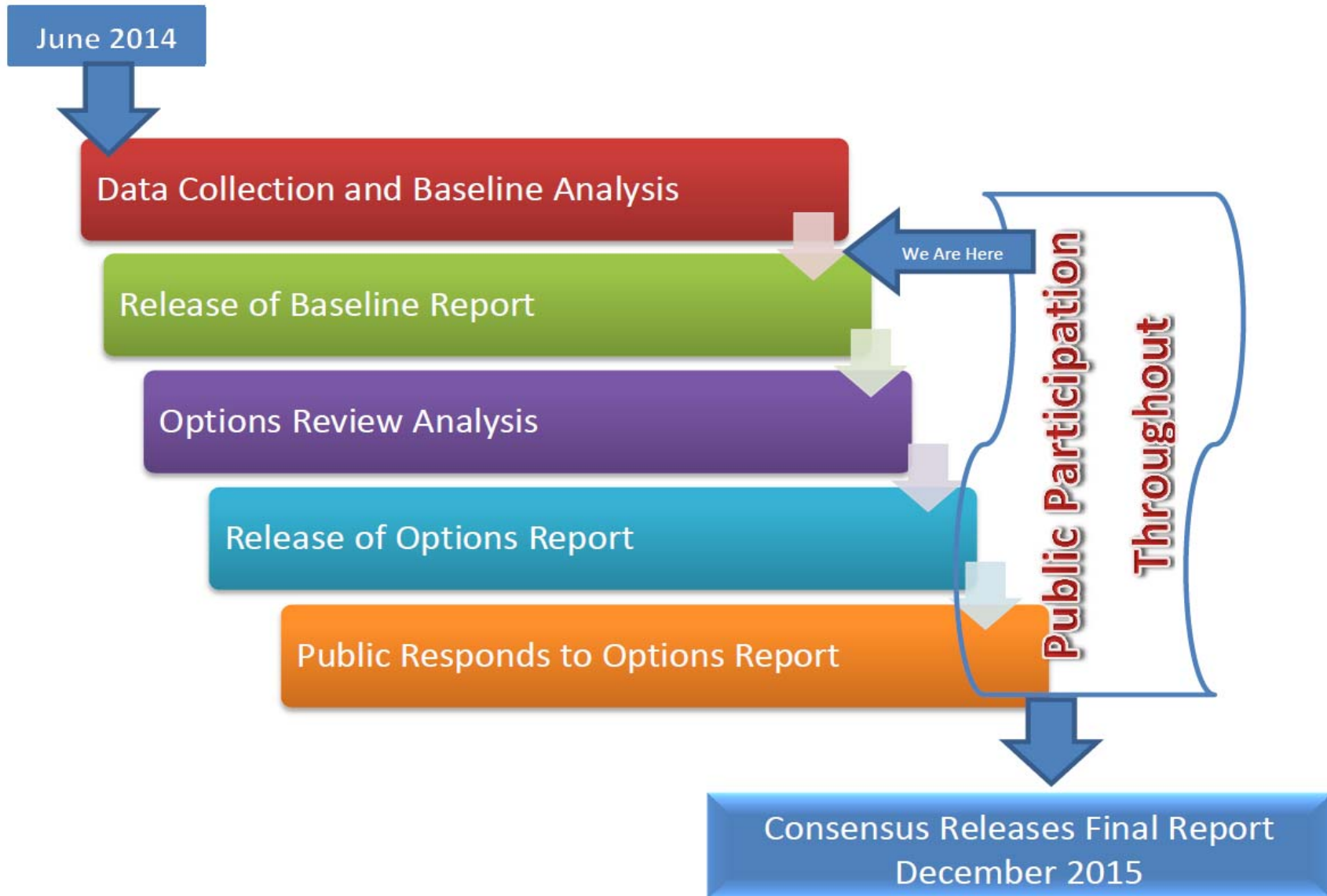
Consensus will:

- Look at **every level of service**, seek **public input**, and make specific **recommendations** to create a successful future
- Explore a **wide range of solutions** to modernize government, making it more responsive, more cost effective, and better at service delivery
- Help define how we want to be organized and governed locally, so public services continue to meet **high standards of quality** at a price that's **sustainable for the future**
- Complete its analysis and make recommendations by the end of 2015; our **communities will make the final decision** on how to move forward

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Process



Baseline Review



What it is...

- Establish a shared, factual point of departure
- Serve as a data source to draw on for options phase
- Inform the Commission and broader community of stakeholders
 - What does the local government universe look like?
 - How many? What types?
 - Who provides what service(s) and where?
 - What is spent on local government countywide?
 - What functional similarities (≠ duplication) exist?
 - How diverse are services and spending levels?

Baseline Review



What it *isn't*...

- An evaluation of effectiveness or efficiency
- A determination of what's “right” or “appropriate”
- A set of recommendations
- A justification for changing what currently exists

Baseline Review



Format

■ **Section 1: Overview**

- Who does what, and what it costs
- Number, type and structure of local government units
- Financial context for what local governments are spending, and on what

■ **Section 2: Government Profiles**

- Focus on individual local government units (General Purpose & Special Districts)
- Standard-format information on spending, services, taxes, budgets, etc.

■ **Section 3: Service Profiles**

- Focus on individual service areas
- Who provides what and where within the County

Baseline Review



Setting the Context

▀ **Advancing the dialogue, not starting it**

- ▣ Strong foundation of efforts, esp. by local governments and elected officials who have pursued collaborative solutions to shared challenges

▀ **Competitiveness remains an issue**

- ▣ Population flat to 1970, population declines not confined to the City of Syracuse, and CBP / Tax Foundation data evidencing more work to do

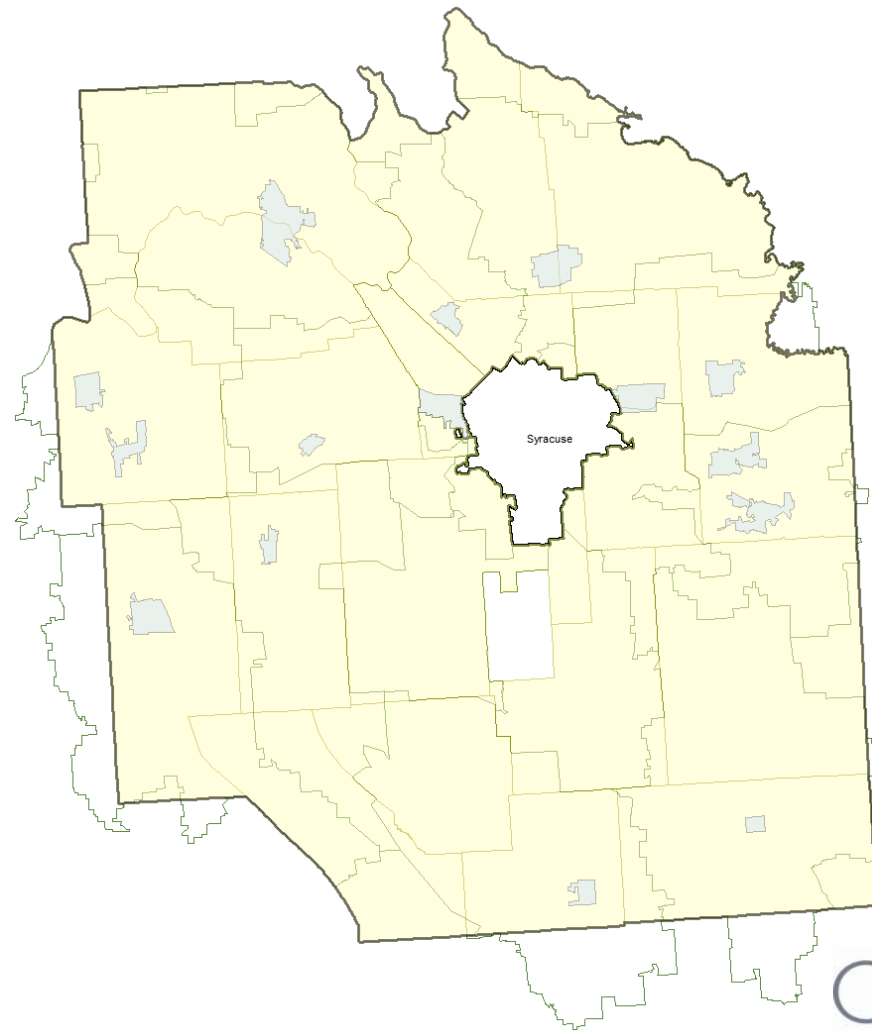
▀ **Economic connections across region**

- ▣ Recognize the interconnection of the county's component units, esp. in commuting data



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Government Layers



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Overview



Structure Basics

- **36** general purpose local governments in the county, serving ~468,000 residents
 - ▣ County (1)
 - ▣ City (1)
 - ▣ Towns (19)
 - ▣ Villages (15)
- **Every taxpayer is served by at least 2** general purpose governments
- There are **37** unique combinations of government countywide
 - ▣ County + City (n = 1)
 - ▣ County + Town Unincorporated Area (n = 19)
 - ▣ County + Town + Village (n = 17)

Baseline Review



Spending Basics

■ Local governments collectively spent **\$1.8 billion** in 2013

- Two-thirds was county government itself
- The equivalent of 6% of regional GDP

	2013	Per Capita ⁴
County	\$1.21 b	\$2,584
City	\$325.99 m	\$2,253
Towns	\$176.41 m	\$546
Villages	\$75.74 m	\$1,583
Fire Districts	\$11.66 m	n/a ⁵
Grand Total	\$1.80 b	\$3,844

Baseline Review

Spending Basics

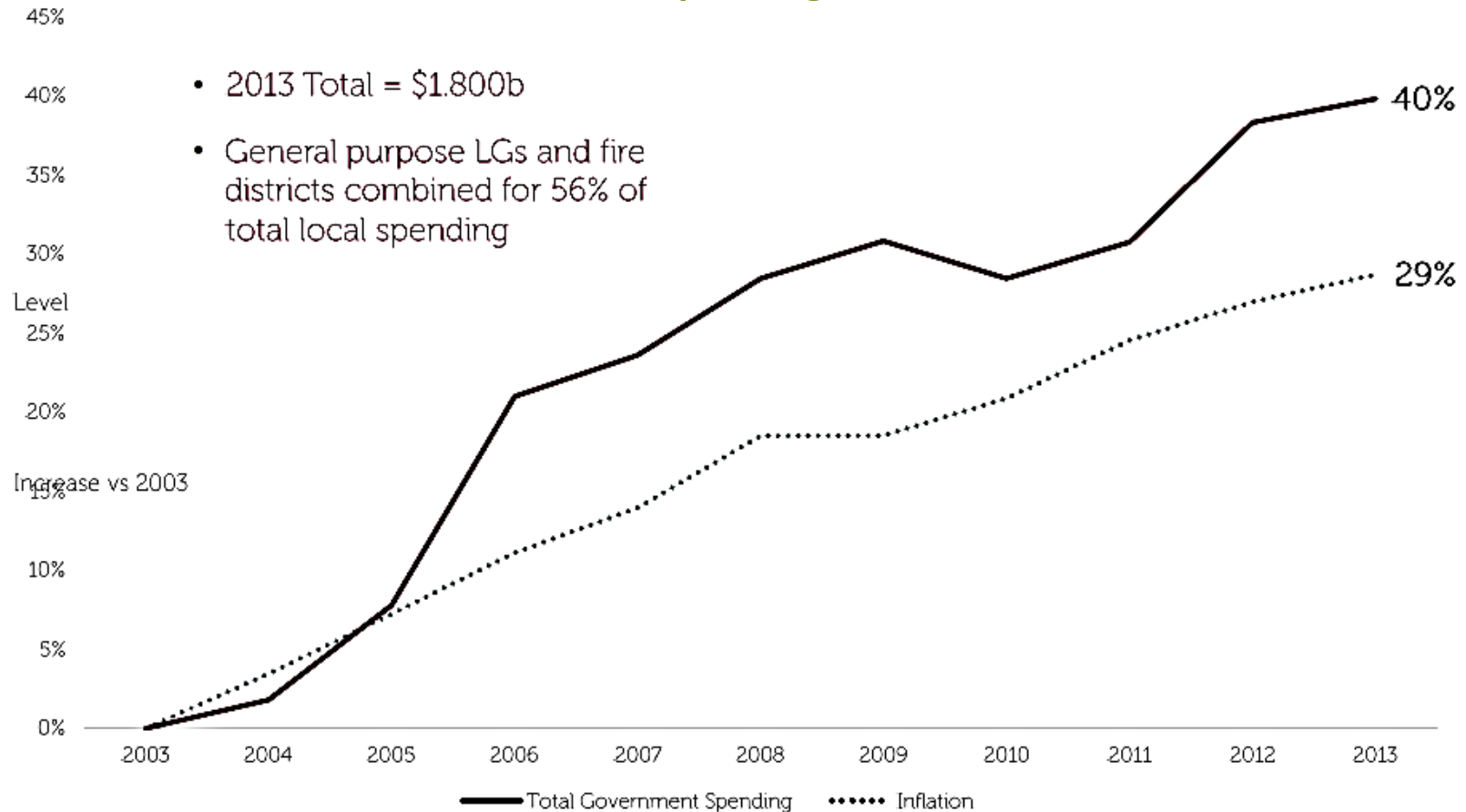
- **Total spending grew 40% over the past decade**
 - Compared to rate of inflation of 29%
 - Changes vary by level of government

	2003	2008	2013	Chg 03-13
County	\$865.57 m	\$1.10 b	\$1.21 b	+ 40%
City	\$229.48 m	\$280.64 m	\$325.99 m	+ 42%
Towns	\$127.38 m	\$170.58 m	\$176.41 m	+ 38%
Villages	\$57.69 m	\$82.20 m	\$75.74 m	+ 31%
Fire Districts	\$7.53 m	\$17.77 m	\$11.66 m	+ 55%
Grand Total	\$1.28 b	\$1.65 b	\$1.80 b	+ 40%

Baseline Review

Spending Basics: Baseline Data Collection & Analysis

Total Government Spending vs. Inflation



Baseline Review



Spending Basics

- **County: 68%** of total, equals \$2,584 per cap
- **City: 18%** of total, equals \$2,253 per cap
- **Town: 10%** of total, ranges \$255-\$948 per cap
- **Village: 4%** of total, ranges \$257-\$4457 per cap
 - Range of expenditures, per cap costs reflect local government diversity
 - Different types and levels of public service (e.g. Solvay village electric)
 - Beware the “stories” behind the numbers
 - Do not necessarily reflect higher or lower relative levels of efficiency

Overview



Tax Basics

- Property taxes account for approximately **18%** of total local government revenues
 - 10% in City, 12% in County, 27% in Village and 66% in Towns
- And each of the towns and villages on its own accounts for **1%** (or less) of the region's total local government expenditures
- But not all tax bases are created equal, so a “penny” or a tax rate “point” in the smaller jurisdictions equals less than the larger ones
 - County levy is spread on a base of \$27 billion
 - City levy is spread on a base of \$3 billion
 - Town levies spread on bases as low as \$120 million
 - Village levies spread on bases as low as \$12 million

Overview



Spending Basics

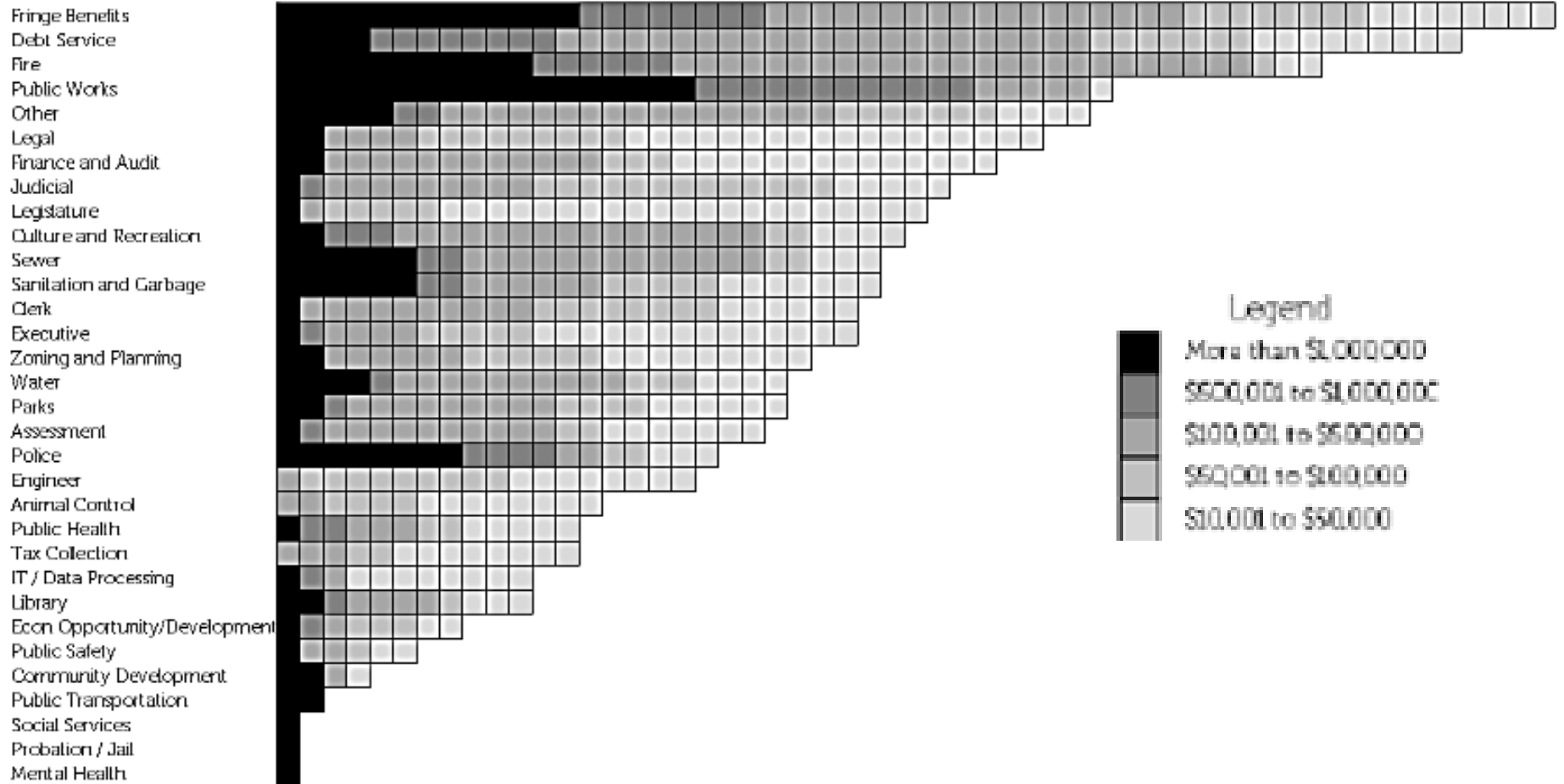
- Largest functional categories:
 - **\$267m** | Social Services (entirely centralized)
 - **\$147m** | Sewer (largely centralized)
 - **\$141m** | Public Works (entirely decentralized)
 - **\$88m** | Police (largely decentralized)
 - **\$66m** | Public Health (largely centralized)
 - **\$61m** | Fire (entirely decentralized)

- Several materially large “other” categories:
 - Employee fringe benefits
 - Miscellaneous (incl. community college and sales tax transfer)
 - Debt service

Overview



of Governments Spending \$10,000+ by Function



Gov Profiles



Format

- Standard data elements for every general purpose local government in Onondaga County
 - Location
 - Executive / Legislative structure
 - Population (and rank)
 - Land area (and rank)
 - Density (and rank)
 - HHI, Households, Home Values
 - Expenditures: 2003, 2008, 2013
 - Property tax revenue: 2013
 - C/Y budget and property tax levy
 - Workforce size
 - Equalized tax rates
 - Budget fund structure
 - Spending per capita
 - Spending per square mile
 - Fund balance

Service Profiles



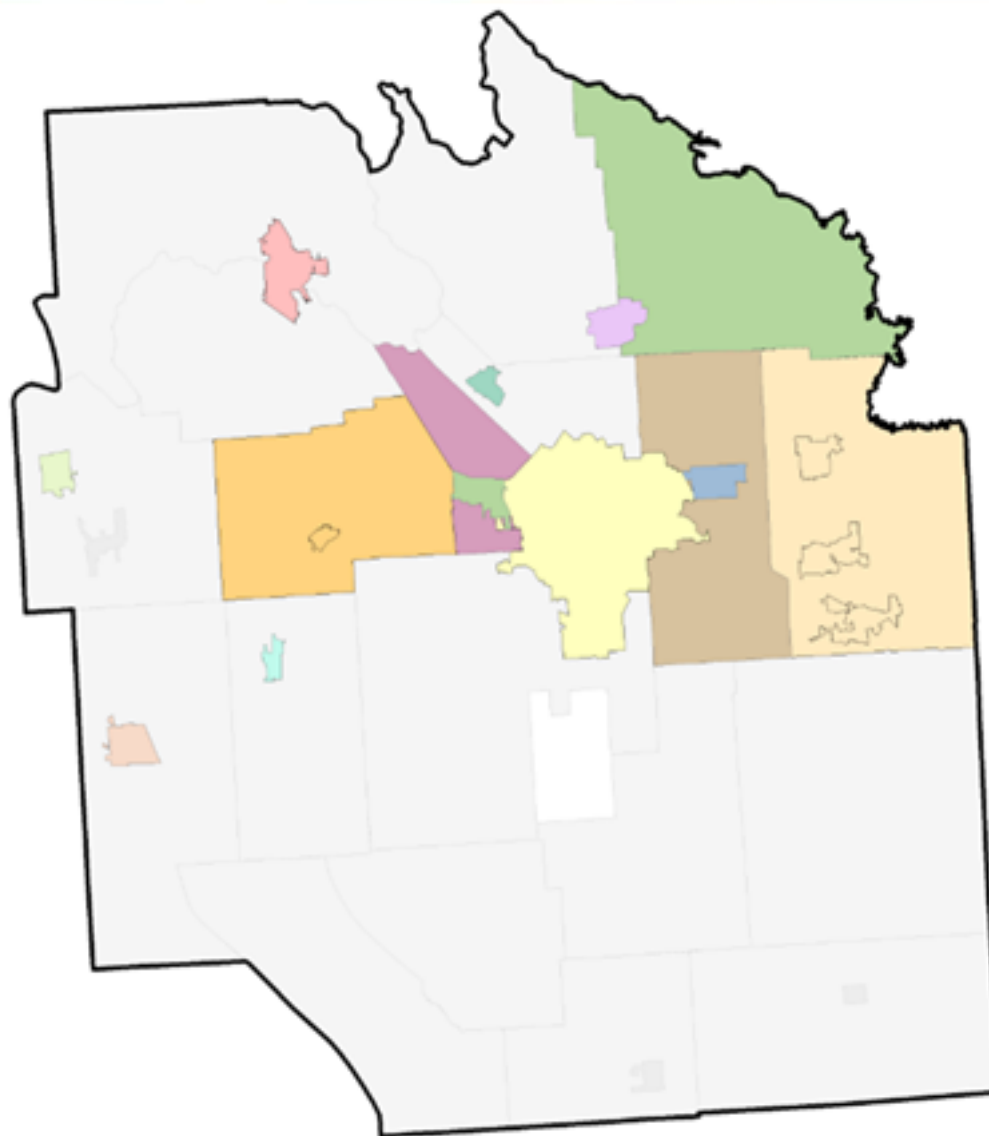
Format

- Services and service *providers* as the unit of analysis, as opposed to the governments themselves
- Overview of service area, listing of providers, presentation of service metrics and expenditures (where applicable)
 - Police
 - Public works and highways
 - Fire
 - Tax assessment
 - Justice courts
 - Water and wastewater
 - Sanitation and garbage
 - Parks
 - Libraries
 - Executive
 - Legislative
 - Clerk
 - Financial administration
 - Zoning and planning
 - "Centralized services" such as social services, public health and probation

Service Profiles



Police



Service Profiles



Police

- Local government law enforcement agencies (n/i NYSP) = 15
- County, City, 5 towns, 8 villages*
- County + 2 town agencies (Camillus and Manlius) serve multiple jurisdictions; all others serve a single jurisdiction
- County funded through regional tax base; municipal agencies funded through municipal tax base
- Local government collaboration = Mutual aid
- Recent restructurings: East Syracuse (2014), Clay (2008, 2011) and Town of Manlius (1985)

Service Profiles



Police

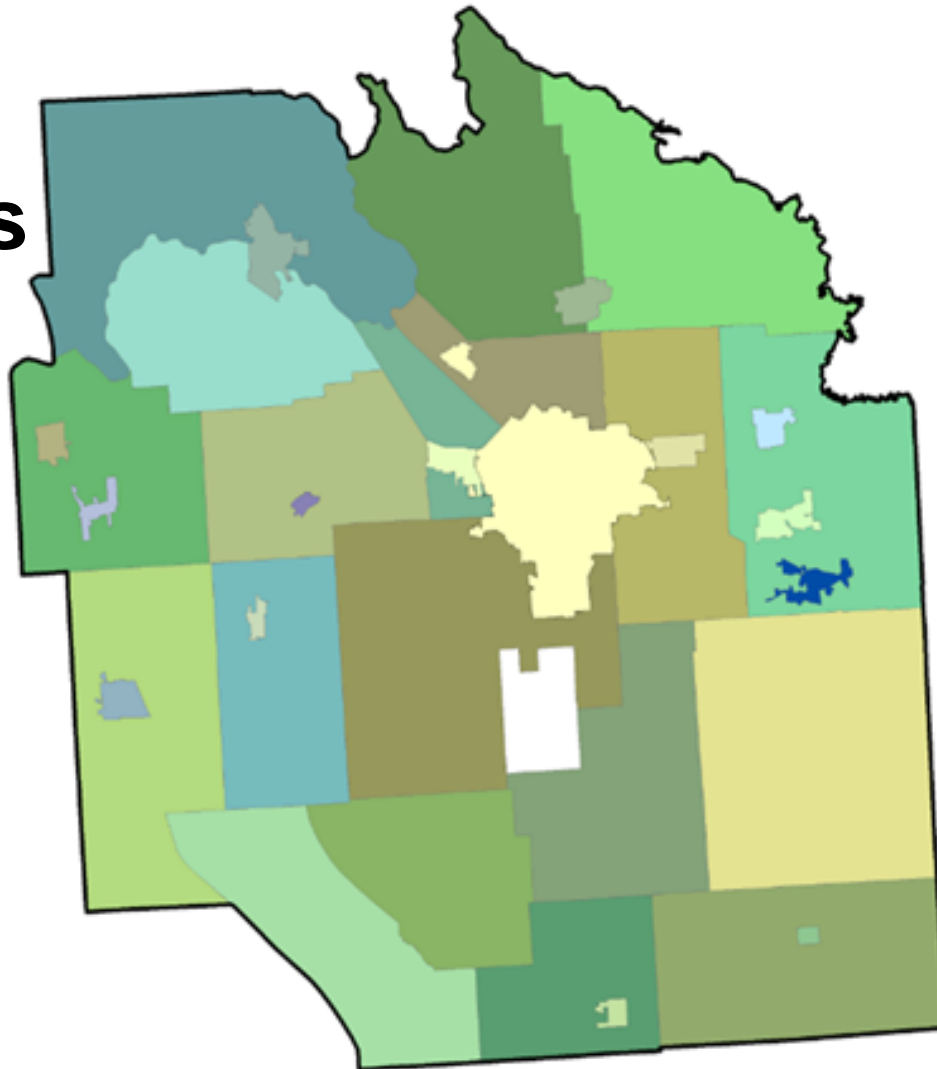
Service Providers	Service Area (mi ²)	Population (2013)	Pop Density (per mi ²)	\$ Per Cap (2013)	\$ Per Mi ² (2013)
Onondaga Co Sheriff	780.0	468,387	600	\$81	\$48,343
Manlius, Town	49.6	44,976	907	\$114	\$103,790
Cicero, Town	48.5	31,699	654	\$63	\$41,451
Camillus, Town	34.5	25,529	740	\$118	\$86,985
DeWitt, Town	33.9	25,733	759	\$208	\$157,882
Syracuse, City	26.0	144,669	5,564	\$473	\$2,630,291
Geddes, Town	9.2	16,946	1,842	\$127	\$234,282
Baldwinsville, Village	3.1	7,464	2,408	\$194	\$468,015
N. Syracuse, Village	2.0	6,916	3,458	\$191	\$659,897
E. Syracuse, Village	1.6	3,041	1,901	\$389	\$738,444
Solvay, Village	1.6	6,490	4,056	\$285	\$1,155,011
Skaneateles, Village	1.4	2,452	1,751	\$254	\$444,203
Jordan, Village	1.2	1,350	1,125	\$57	\$63,804
Liverpool, Village	0.8	2,315	2,893	\$326	\$942,992
Marcellus, Village	0.6	1,789	2,885	\$172	\$495,951

Note: Service providers are ranked according to size of service area. Onondaga County Sheriff figures reflect countywide jurisdiction, rather than only those territories in which the Sheriff is the primary responding agency. Costs per capita and per square mile include an estimate for employee benefits such as pension and health insurance.

Service Profiles



Public Works & Highways



Service Profiles



Public Works & Highways

- Local government DPW agencies (n/i NYSDOT) = **36**
- County, City, 19 towns, 15 villages
- County DOT has countywide jurisdiction; municipal agencies serve their local jurisdiction only
- County funded through regional tax base; municipal agencies funded through municipal tax base (Note: Towns and TOV)
- Local government collaboration = Extensive, often informal, county contracts for some snow / ice removal
- Service areas range from < 1 to 780 mi²; CLMs range from 1 to 794 miles; diversity of service responsibilities based on infrastructure

Service Profiles



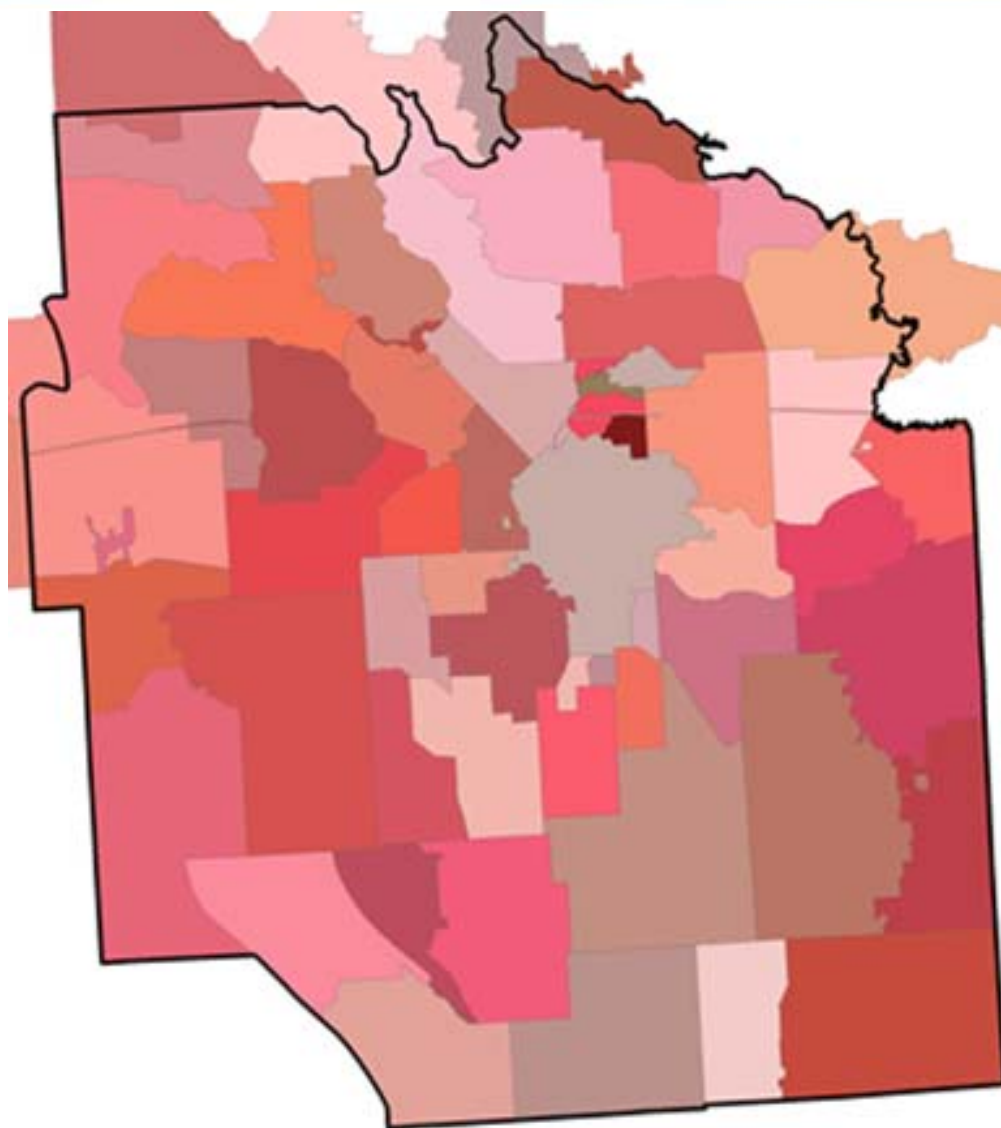
Fire

- Multiple ways in which fire protection services can be provided and funded in NYS
 - Cities and villages can provide themselves with their own agencies
 - Fire districts w/ their own separate taxing authority (20 in Onondaga County, most with their own fire departments)
 - Fire protection districts created by towns, with service provided pursuant to contract between town and service provider
- A single fire agency may serve multiple geographic areas under different legal structures (e.g. municipal agency can serve fire district and / or fire protection district under contract)

Service Profiles



Fire



Service Profiles



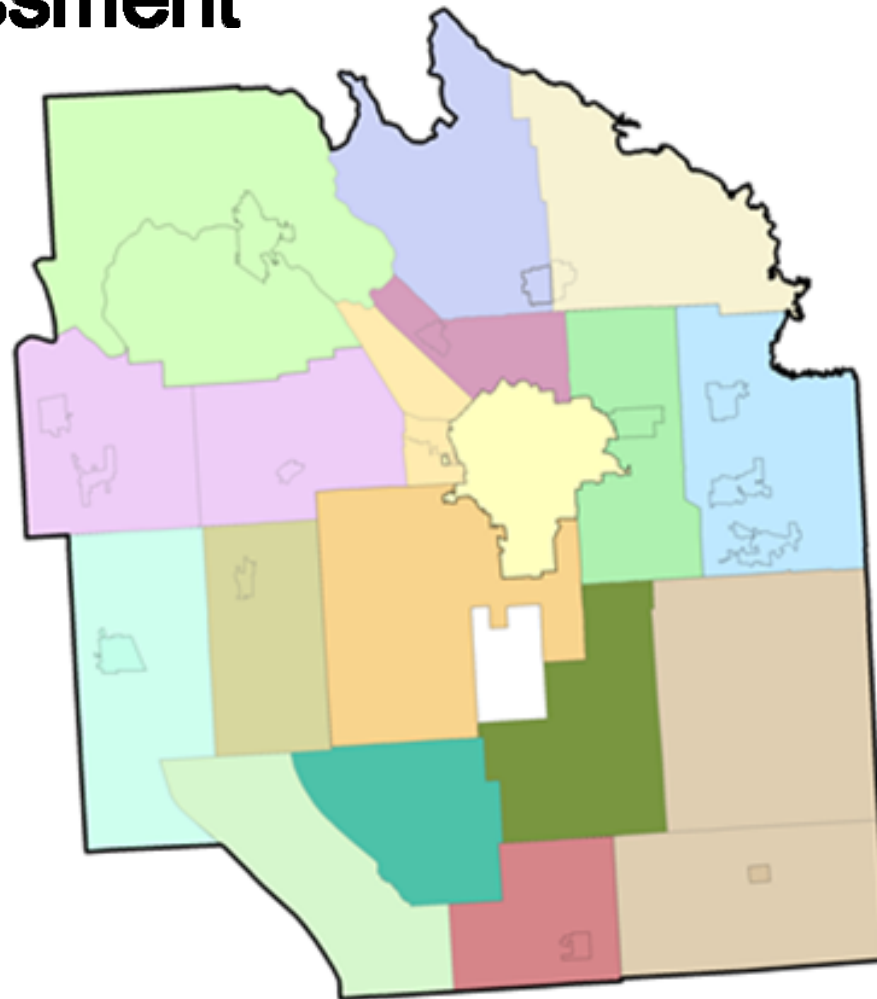
Fire

- Fire protection service providers (n/i Onondaga County) = **57**
- 28 independent companies, 10 municipal departments, 19 fire district-based agencies
- Every town is served by > 1 service provider (exc. Tully); Villages and City each served by single agencies
- Local government collaboration = Mutual aid
- Funding analysis still in process; district revenues often not broken out by geographic area, and town expenditures often not broken out by receiving agency
- Service areas range from < 1 to 28 mi²

Service Profiles



Tax Assessment



Service Profiles



Tax Assessment

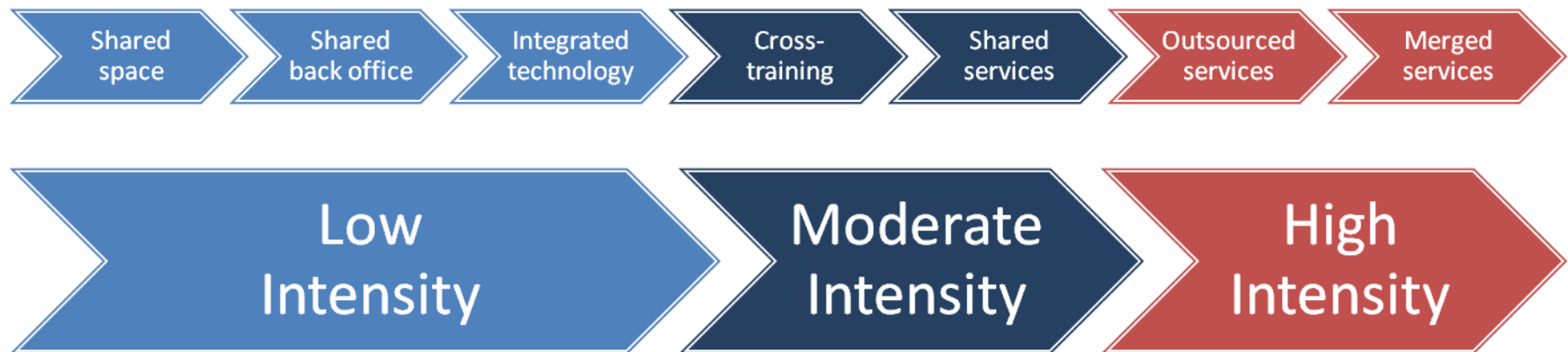
- Local government assessment units (n/i County) = **17**
- City, 13 towns, 3 town-based CAPs
- Towns provide town wide assessment; *i.e.* no village-based units
- Local government collaboration = Three CAPs established in accordance with State Real Property Tax Law §579
- Service scale ranges from 1,500 to 42,000 parcels
- Reasonably current, accurate assessments across county; most jurisdictions at 100% equalization (to it)

What's Next



- Engage the public in robust discussions of the baseline findings and the options discussions
- Evaluate “best practices” throughout the state and country to inform options for the region’s consideration
- Build a *continuum* of potential options for enhancing the cost effectiveness and competitiveness of service delivery and governance in the region
- Issue a final report with recommendations to the community by December 2015

The Range of Options



How You Can Get Involved

- Visit our website, www.consensuscny.com and sign up to help build consensus in support of modernizing the way government works for the people of Onondaga County.
- Participate throughout this process and keep an open mind about the options before us.
- Communicate with us and share your thoughts and ideas.
- Follow Consensus on social media – Facebook [consensuscny](#) and Twitter [consensuscny](#)



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