

# Collaboration Is All Well and Good, but Is It Right for Me?



# Collaboration Is All Well and Good, but Is It Right for Me?

**Cheryl Hilvert**  
Director  
ICMA Center for Management Strategies

**David Swindell**  
Associate Professor & Director  
Center for Urban Innovation  
Arizona State University

# Presenters



**Cheryl Hilvert**

**Director, ICMA Center for Management Strategies**

**Chilvert@icma.org**

**@ICMAcms**



**David Swindell**

**Associate Professor and Director,**

**Center for Urban Innovation**

**Arizona State University**

**david.swindell@asu.edu**

**@ASUUrbaninnov**

# Enhanced Research Partnership AFI/ASU/ICMA

- Shared investment into new research to identify emerging practices
- Expand testing of these approaches
- Broaden dissemination of information
- Provide technical assistance



# Our Overall Project Goal

Develop a tool to help managers and elected officials determine if and what kind of collaborative service delivery arrangements to pursue



# Today's Goals



1. Provide an overview of the first component of a tool previously tested at the TLG Conference and designed to help determine whether or not collaboration makes sense
2. Unveil the second component of the tool designed to help local governments determine which form of collaboration will lead to the greatest likelihood of success



Dilbert characters Scott Adams Inc.



Write your own at <http://dilbert.com>



# What *IS* Collaborative Service Delivery?

- Focuses on sharing costs and benefits when working *“...across boundaries with two or more organizations to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations”\**
- Why do it?
- Who’s doing it?
- What’s trending?

Arvada, CO: Worked with multiple partners to enhance economic development



\*Source: (O’Leary & Gerrard, 2013)



# What are the expected benefits?

- Monetary savings
- Economies of scale
- Strengthen collaborative relationships
- Promote regional service integration
- Access technical expertise



# What are the challenges?

- #1: Measuring
- #2: Success
- Coordination
- Clarity of goals
- Loss of community control
- Lack of (good) partners
- Employee morale
- Leadership costs
- Accountability across all partners





# **COLLABORATION**

A Friend Is Just A Stranger You Haven't Alienated Yet

# The Diagnostics

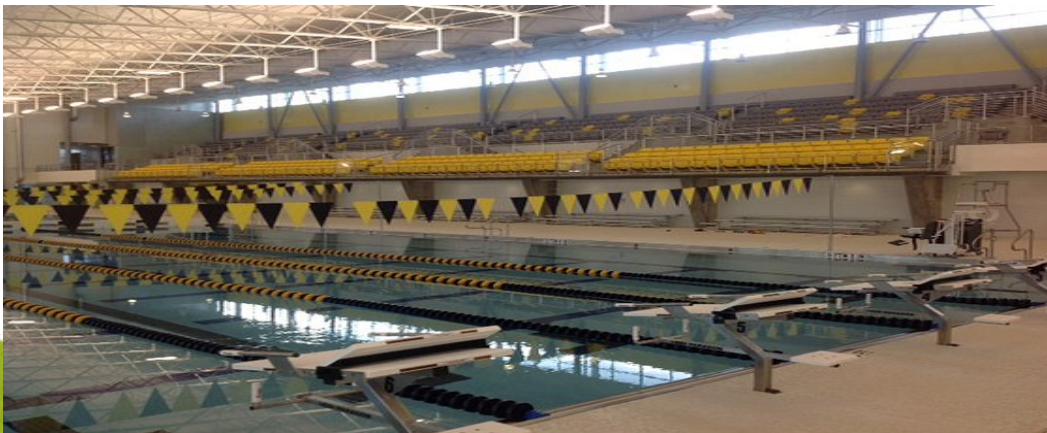
- Building the tools
- Examining collaborations
- Interviews
- Case studies
- Literature
- Final product



*Troy, MI: Public-private partnership for building inspection services*

# The Need for a Framework

- Goal: A tool to help managers and councilors determine if a collaboration makes sense
- Frame the decision as a soft cost-benefit question
- Use a tool that does not require extensive time, money, and data collection resources
- Help all parties understand the potential benefits and costs associated with collaborative service delivery arrangements
- Provide an indicator of the likelihood of success (not a right/wrong answer)
- Provide suggestions on the best form of collaborative arrangement



*Columbus, GA: Natatorium  
managed by private firm*

# Should you engage in such an arrangement?

## Consider two primary characteristics



*Sandy Springs, GA: Operated  
under contract with CH2MHill*

# Factor 1: Know Thy Service

- Importance of specificity
- Asset specificity
- Labor intensity
- Capital intensity
- Benefits targeted or diffuse
- Management competencies
- Stability in administrative team



Monterey, CA: Preserved the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio

# Factor 2: Community Context

- Council orientation/Political environment
- Possible public partners
- Possible private partners
- Possible nonprofit partners
- Fiscal/economic health
- Unions
- Citizen approval



Bayside, WI: Joint  
Communications Center  
shared by seven jurisdictions

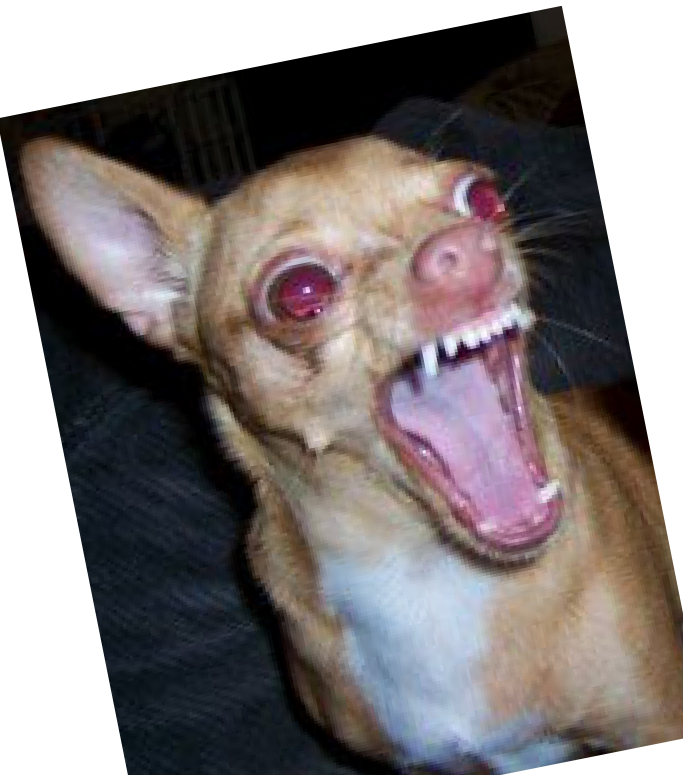




# Arizona neighborhood terrorized by feral packs of abandoned

**CHIHUAHUAS**





***We have come for your children!***



**So we have two factors:  
Type of Service and  
Community Context**

*Now what?*

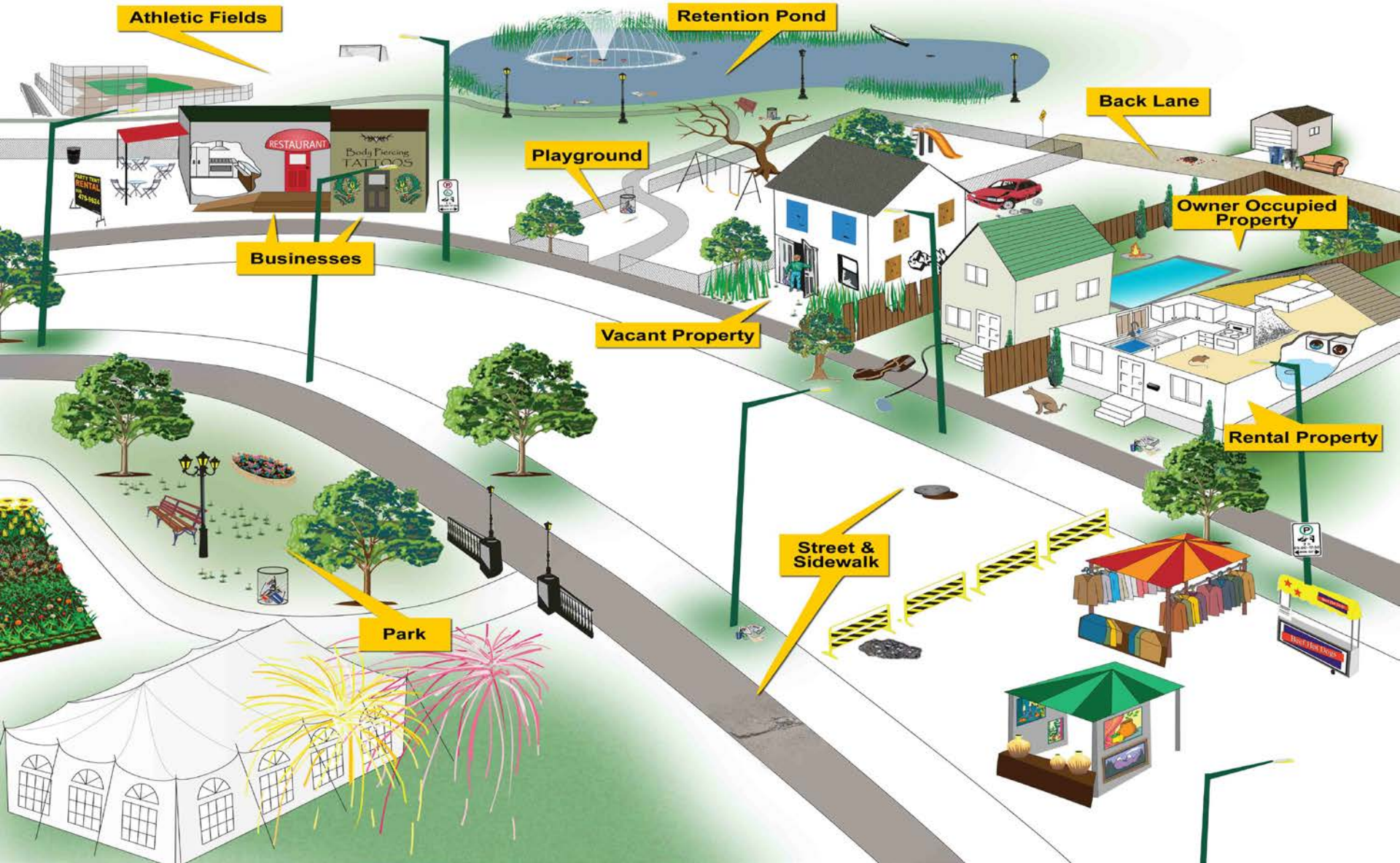


# Using the Diagnostic, Part 1

- The score sheet (available at [icma.org/strategies](http://icma.org/strategies))
- A framework for working through the question of collaboration
  - Honest appraisal of how likely a collaborative service delivery arrangement will generate benefits that exceed costs
- Qualitative discussion on each aspect
- Assign a score to each aspect
- Sum the scores



# *Start with specifying the type of service under consideration*



# Type of Service to be Delivered

**Asset Specificity**—This represents the degree to which the service requires investment in special infrastructure (e.g., water pipes, treatment plants, ditch diggers) or technical expertise (e.g., legal, environmental), which may mean a lack of competitiveness in supplier markets and the level of the community’s internal expertise or technical capacity. High asset specificity means that the investments cannot be easily adapted to produce another service. (High=1, Medium=2 , Low=3)

**Contract Specification and Monitoring**—Services that are relatively harder to specify in a contract or that are harder to monitor, or that require a higher level of performance management expertise on the part of government. (Hard=1, Medium=2, Easy=3)

**Labor Intensity**—Some services are more labor intensive than others. Labor intensive services may also be capital intensive (see below). Generally, services that are more labor intensive in their delivery are better candidates for collaborative alternatives arrangements. (Low=1, Medium=2, High=3)

**Capital Intensity**—Some services are more capital intensive than others. Capital intensive services may also be labor intensive (see previous). How diffused the benefits are from the capital investment determines the effect on the likelihood of successful collaborations. Generally, services that are more capital intensive with diffuse benefits are more amenable to collaborative approaches to their delivery. (Low=1, Medium=2, High with focused benefits=2, High with diffuse benefits=3)

# Type of Service to be Delivered

**Costs**—Overall project costs influence the likelihood of successful collaboration in terms of both driving the need for collaboration as well as limiting the pool of potential partner organizations that might be able to participate in the delivery of more expensive services. (High=1, Medium=2, Low =3)

**Management Competencies**—Communities must be sensitive to the expertise they have available on staff for managing the various stages of a collaborative arrangement from planning, structuring and executing a competitive bidding process, to negotiating and bargaining with vendors and employees, to measuring vendor performance or partner evaluation. The greater the managerial expertise on staff related to a service, the more likely a collaborative arrangement can achieve success. (Low=1, Medium=2, High=3)

**Stability in Administrative Team**—Communities should be aware of the degree of turnover in the administration and the likelihood of additional turnover in the short and long term future, as best as possible. Communities facing turnover in the higher level positions will have more difficulty establishing and maintaining the institutional knowledge and oversight necessary for successful collaborations. (High turnover=1, Medium=2, Low=3)

**Total Type of Service Score (sum of seven characteristic scores)**



***Next, discuss the community context in which we must operate that might influence the likelihood of a successful collaborative arrangement***



# Community Context

**Possible Public Partners**—Communities may have other public jurisdictions with whom they can work in terms of nearby municipalities, townships, special districts, or county government. (Few=1, Some=2, Several=3)

**Possible Private Partners**—The opportunity for partnering for delivery with private sector firms is limited to the extent that the community or region is home to enough such competent firms to support a competitive marketplace. (Few=1, Some=2, Several=3)

**Possible Nonprofit Partners**—As with private partners, the size of the local supply of nonprofits will also be driven by the type of service under consideration as well as the competence of such organizations to serve as potential collaborators in service delivery. (Few=1, Some=2, Several=3).

**Council Orientation/Political Environment**—Different kinds of services may meet different levels of support among local politicians which can raise the costs of pursuing and/or executing a collaborative arrangement. (Highly sensitive=1, Moderately sensitive=2, Non-sensitive=3)

# Community Context

**Fiscal/Economic Health**—The community’s fiscal condition may be a motivating factor in wanting to pursue alternative service delivery arrangements as a means to curbing costs. Those in better health are more likely to be successful in collaborative arrangements. But those that are in a weak fiscal position may find it more difficult to locate partners with whom to collaborate. (Poor=1, Moderate=2, Good=3)

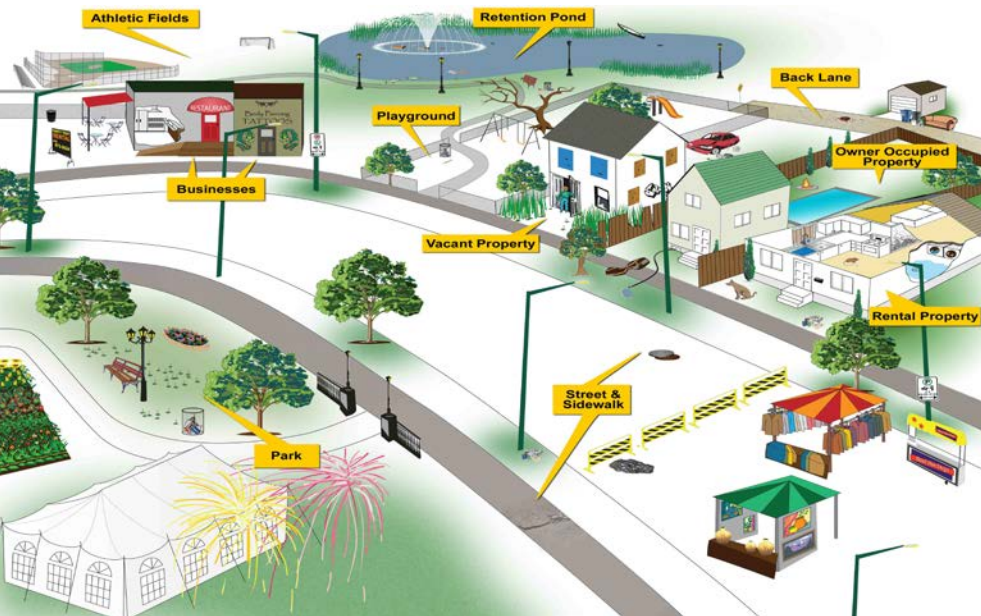
**Unions**—In many communities, there may be resistance to any collaborative alternatives that could affect public sector employment levels. (Strong=1, Moderate=2, Weak=3)

**Public Interest**—Some services are more likely to attract the attention of citizens than others. Changes to those services that receive closer scrutiny by citizens are more likely to meet resistance to changes in how the community delivers the services. (High visibility=1, Moderate=2, Low=3)

**Total Community Context Score (sum of seven characteristic scores)**

# Two Scores

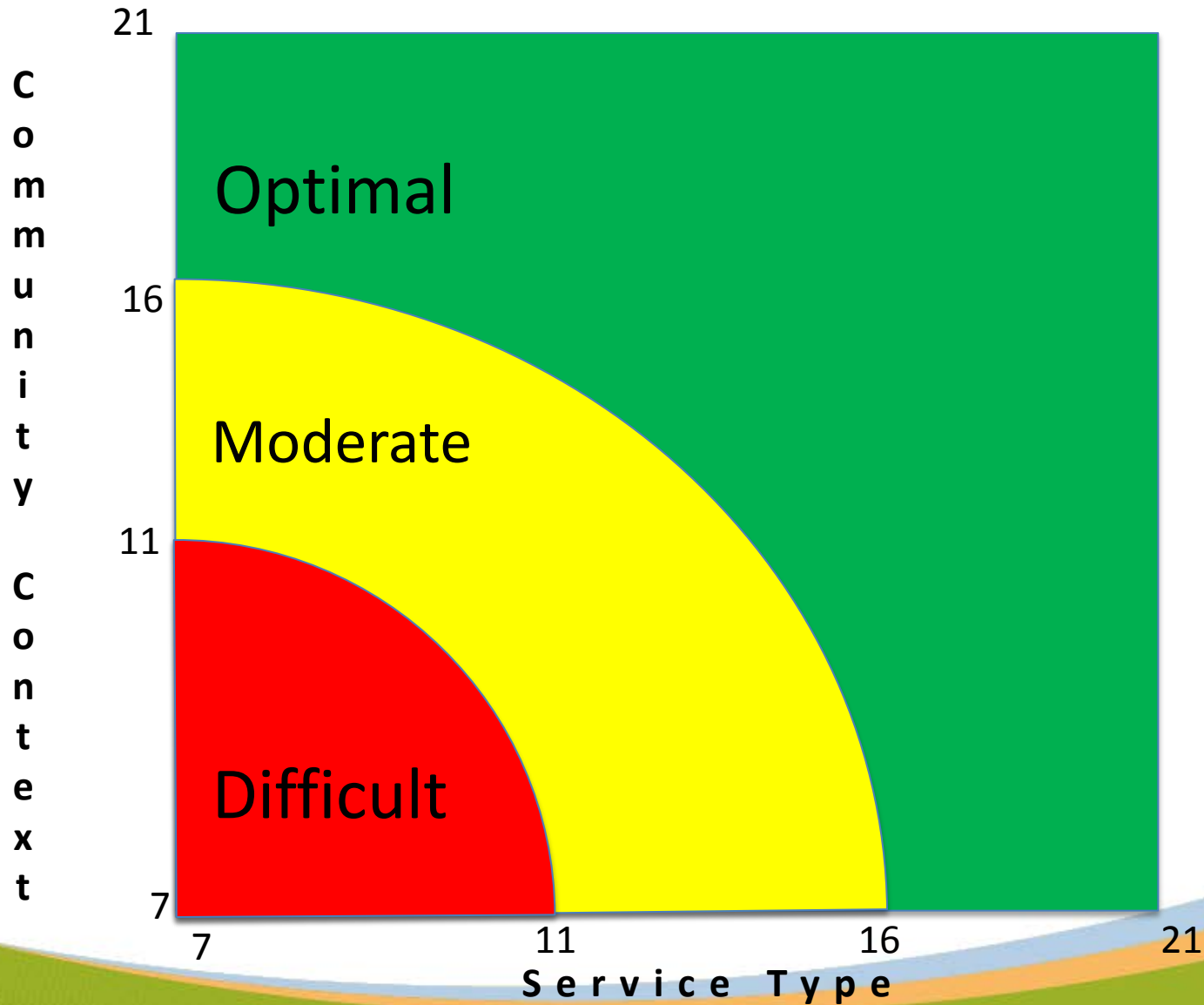
## Service Type



## Community Context



# Interpreting the Scores



***So what happens if you go through the process and your team decides that the potential benefits outweigh the potential costs?***



# The Next Step

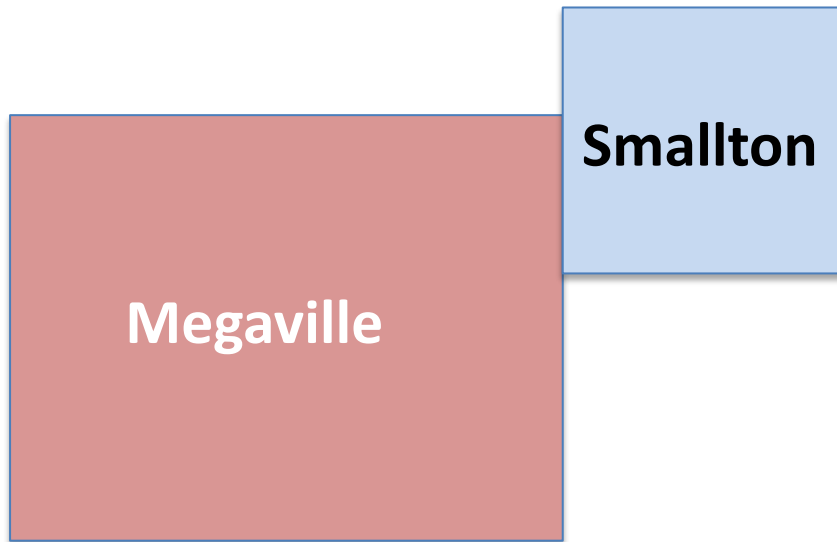
If your community does want to collaborate on the delivery of a particular service, the next question becomes which form of collaboration maximizes the likelihood of success?

There are several general options:

- Horizontal public-public partnerships
- Vertical public-public partnerships
- Consolidation/regionalization of services
- Public-private partnerships
- Public-nonprofit partnerships



# ***The Public-Public Horizontal Collaboration***

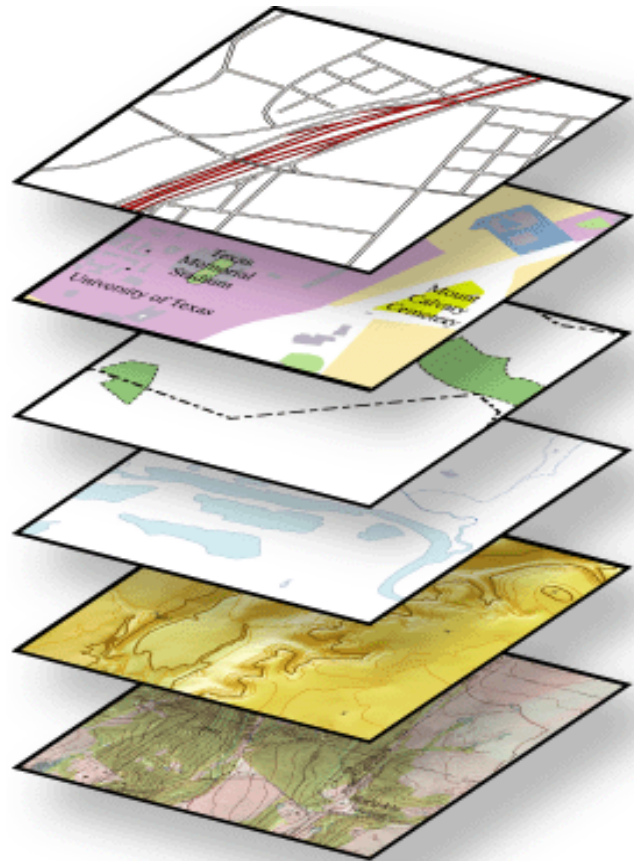




# *Westlake and Keller, Texas*



# ***The Public-Public Vertical Collaboration***



Streetlight District 28-H

Landry School District

Rodgers Library District

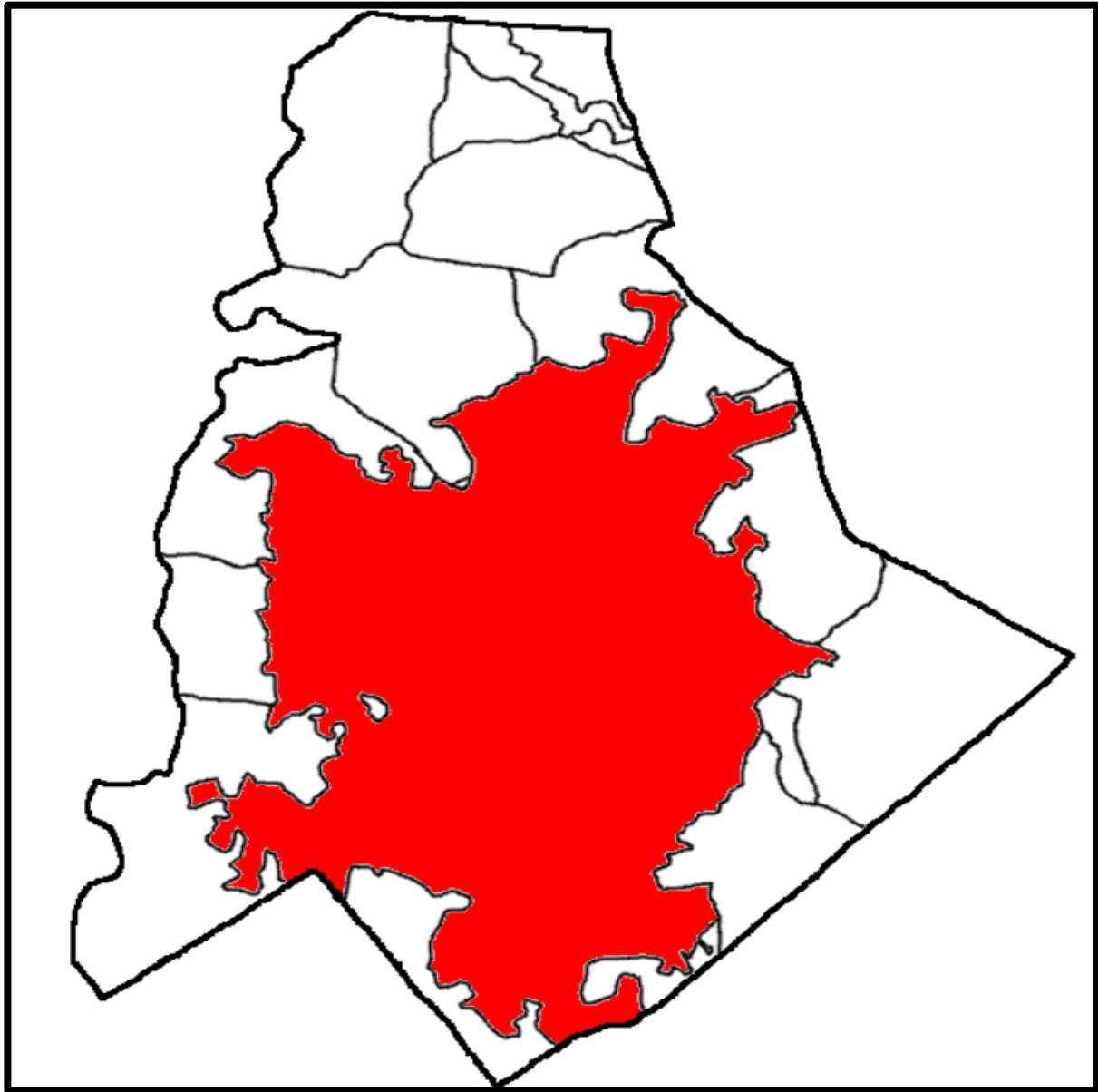
Warrenton Soil & Water District

Megaville

Green County

*City of Charlotte/  
Mecklenburg County, NC*





# ***Consolidation/Regional Collaboration***



# *Indianapolis, Indiana*

# JOIN IMPD

INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT



[JOINIMPD.INDY.GOV](http://JOINIMPD.INDY.GOV)

# ***Public-Private Collaborations***



# Centennial, Colorado





# ***Public/Non-profit Collaborations***



# Animal Control



# Washoe County, NV Regional Animal Services



# *Your Turn!*

## *Abbreviated Practice Exercises*

- Hypothetical cases
- Score sheets already completed
- 20 minutes to review your group's case
- Consider a collaborative arrangement that you think will meet your hypothetical community's needs/goals



# How to choose

- Decision driven by the characteristics from the framework
- For this abbreviated version, focus on:
  - Contract specification and monitoring
  - Labor intensity
  - Capital intensity
  - Possible public partners
  - Possible private partners
  - Possible nonprofit partners
  - Public interest
- Which collaborative form seems most appropriate and why?



**Reporting Out. . .**  
***Let us hear your thoughts!***



# In Summary

- A process to frame a discussion around whether or not your community should pursue an alternative service delivery arrangement through a collaboration with another jurisdiction or agency
- Focuses on two general characteristics found to influence the likelihood of success:
  - Type of service
  - Community characteristics
- The result is a general indication of whether you should pursue a collaborative alternative

# In Summary

- If your jurisdiction decides to move forward with a collaborative service delivery arrangement, some arrangements are better suited than others
- The framework can help identify the arrangement that will help maximize the likelihood for success
- No guarantees
- And what the framework doesn't provide?



# Additional Resources



*Center for Management Strategies*

- Guidebook
- Exercises
- Case studies
- Research literature
- Professional consultants

[http://icma.org/en/results/management\\_strategies/leading\\_practices/collaboration](http://icma.org/en/results/management_strategies/leading_practices/collaboration)

# Thank you for joining us!

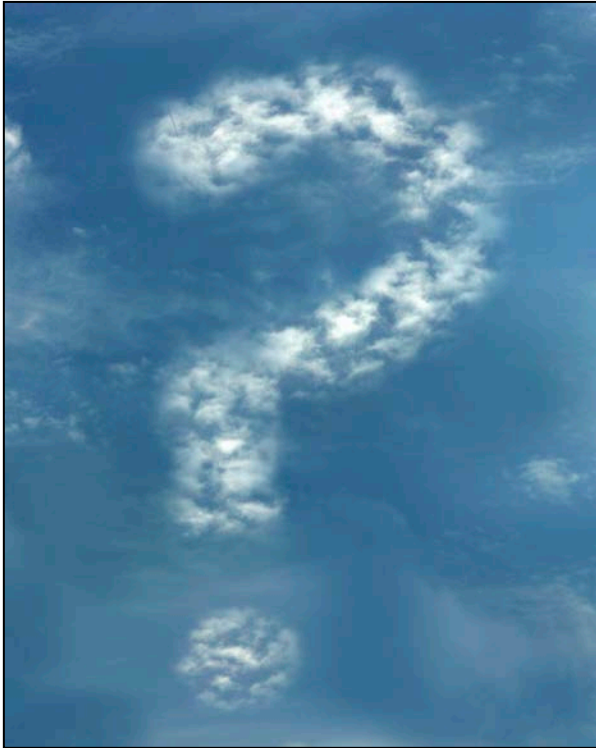
For more information on the work of the Enhanced Research Partnership of the Alliance, ASU, and ICMA, visit:

[www.icma.org/strategies](http://www.icma.org/strategies)

[urbaninnovation.asu.edu](http://urbaninnovation.asu.edu)

[www.transformgov.org](http://www.transformgov.org)

# Questions



**Cheryl Hilvert**

**Director**

**ICMA Center for Management Strategies**

**chilvert@icma.org**

**@ICMAcms**

**David Swindell**

**Associate Professor and Director,**

**Center for Urban Innovation**

**Arizona State University**

**david.swindell@asu.edu**

**@ASUUrbaninnov**



ICMA  
**100**<sup>th</sup>

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

---

**Charlotte**  
Mecklenburg County

SEPTEMBER • 14-17 • 2014

