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**Developing a Community of Communities:
Exploring the planning challenge of municipal restructuring in
Ontario's 'County Country'**

BY

Chris Kawalec

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

Master of City Planning

**Department of City Planning
Faculty of Architecture
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

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**DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES:
EXPLORING THE PLANNING CHALLENGE OF MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING IN
ONTARIO'S 'COUNTY COUNTRY'**

BY

CHRIS KAWALEC

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**

of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

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Abstract

Municipalities in Ontario are experiencing unprecedented levels of change as a result of the new directions instituted by the provincial government elected in 1995. Some have argued that the changes were long overdue, while others believe the changes have come too quickly with an inadequate amount of public consultation or insufficient time to adjust to new conditions. Municipalities are now faced with the task of providing and financing a significantly larger number of services with greatly reduced provincial funding and assistance. This thesis argues that municipalities, specifically those within the County system of local government, should no longer be comfortable with the governance practices that have perpetuated the uncooperative and isolationist traditions of a primarily regulatory local government. Municipalities, as a result of municipal restructuring, may have an opportunity to shift their capacity-building focus from statutorily-driven government initiatives to a new governance approach that taps into the underutilised strengths of County government, and the community resources within the varying sectors of local society. To harness these potential community-building opportunities, this thesis challenges municipal planners to expand their role within the public domain, beyond the regulation of land-use, to advocate and champion the development of a "Community of Communities" within the new municipal structure of Ontario's County Country.

By studying the conditions and recent transformation of three Ontario Counties (Frontenac, Kent, and Bruce), and applying current theories on municipal restructuring, governance reform, and community development, the idea of building municipal capacity through the creation of larger community at the County scale has been developed. By acting as an equal partner with lower-tier municipalities, community groups, individual residents, the private sector, and organizations that associated with the "old" municipalities (no longer in existence as a result of restructuring). Counties may be able to develop and nurture a community network that is more collaborative in nature, and focused on the pursuit of a community vision. The process of developing a "Community of Communities" has not been represented as a "quick-fix" to ease the growing number of stresses threatening the viability of municipalities. Instead, municipalities are being encouraged to recognize that many of the problems and issues that they face are cross-cutting in nature, and cannot be fully addressed simply through current municipal mechanisms. Municipal planners need to better utilise their skills as coordinators, facilitators, and community builders - as agent-collaborateurs if you will - to effect the necessary governance (process) changes, to capitalise on the new government (structure) situation. Furthermore, municipal planners must help meet the new viability challenges facing municipalities and meet the challenges that face municipalities as a result of the massive restructuring. By doing so, new methods of governance, such as those based on the development of a Community of Communities at the County scale, may lead municipalities into a new era of long-term viability, not only as deliverers of services but also as agents of healthy local democracy.

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I would like to sincerely thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Ian Wight. He has survived a long, and often frustrating process that has led to the completion of this thesis. His guidance and endurance have been greatly appreciated. I also thank Peter Diamant of the University of Manitoba and Dr. Richard Rounds of Brandon University for accepting the role as readers of my thesis. Their participation on my thesis committee was a generous undertaking and I am grateful for their efforts.

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1.0 Introduction

Periodic reform initiatives, targeting municipal and provincial government inter-relationships and responsibilities, are now a fairly regular occurrence in most Canadian provinces. The initiatives often turn out to be modest in their achievements, given initial intentions, because of a stand-off, and saw-off, of sorts between the provincial reformers and the municipal reformees. The provincial level is usually attempting to shape up the municipal level, as better basic services providers, while the local level resists too much reform that might erode local autonomy, and the local democracy that this underpins. This reform syndrome actually takes the spotlight off any moves to progressively reform the quality of local democracy; the latter would require a focus on local governance processes, rather than municipal and inter-governmental structures. Instead, the reform agendas are dominated by the provincial interests, especially with respect to improvements in service delivery and greater fiscal efficiencies, leaving municipalities to resist, react to and/or accommodate the provincial wishes - crowding out consideration of an entrepreneurial, pro-active, and opportunistic response by themselves.

Until recently, very little attention has been given - especially by municipalities themselves - to reforming the governance of municipalities. This contrast in reform efforts between an emphasis on government service structures, and a comparative disinterest in acknowledging the importance of improving municipal governance processes, is at the heart of this thesis. An opportunity is envisaged through a new parallel 'community of communities' development initiative, to better match the new municipal government

structures with more effective governing mechanisms and processes. The basic thesis is: what might happen if the usual top-down servicing-oriented, government structure reform was actually extended, or actively complemented, with a bottom-up, democratising governance process reform - led by the reformed municipalities themselves? It is hypothesized that the viability of the new municipalities will be distinctly enhanced by such reform, compared with less certain futures if the new municipal structures simply adapt the old governance practices.

The recent case of municipal restructuring in Ontario - especially in the mainly non-metropolitan county areas of the province - provides an opportunity to begin exploring this proposition, and in the process - to reconsider the role of municipal planners. The essentials of such a new role are conceived, in terms of progressively capitalizing on an otherwise dangerous crisis situation, as supporting a more fundamental reform initiative, by better connecting the activities of planning and governance, through attention to conscious 'new-community-building' (a traditional concern of planners) but now on the scale of a 'community of communities' to better match the new, mostly county-scaled, municipal government structures.

In the late 1990s, municipalities in the Province of Ontario have been experiencing changes unprecedented in the province's history. The Progressive Conservative provincial government, elected in June 1995, has transformed the structure of local government through a barrage of new policies aimed at fighting the provincial deficit. These policies,

which were largely recommended by the *Who Does What Advisory Committee*,¹ have indirectly forced municipalities to not only amalgamate with neighbouring municipalities but also to alter the manner by which they govern. The most significant changes include the decimation of the provincial grants system and the delegation of financing and administrative responsibility to local municipalities, for services previously controlled by the province - commonly known as “downloading”.

The provincial government has argued that these changes, which to date have mainly impacted the part of the Province under the County system of municipal government, are long overdue. The Province has perceived the fragmented municipal structure in Ontario, with its plethora of incorporated townships, towns and villages and associated councils, as wasteful, and an unnecessary bureaucratic mess that has stifled the efficiency of the public sector. While the Province has not directly stated that municipal consolidations must occur, it has indirectly forced municipalities to consolidate, or potentially be relegated to an impoverished future as an under-serviced municipality. Roughly 200 municipalities have been eliminated through consolidation,² and before the end of 1998 the total number of municipalities is expected to be below 600.³ In early 1995 there were 828 municipalities in Ontario, and 514 in that part of Ontario organized into Counties. The

¹The *Who Does What Advisory Committee*, chaired by David Crombie, was formed soon after the new government took office. Its mandate was to make recommendations on how to reorganize the relationship and responsibilities of both the provincial and municipal governments to deliver services at a lower cost to taxpayers. Portions of this report will be discussed later in the thesis.

²Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Backgrounder. December 12, 1997.

³Stanley B. Stein 1998 “The Restructuring Blitz: Changing the Face of Ontario.” The Ontario Planning Journal. 13:3 (May/June) 21-23.

political justification for these dramatic changes can certainly be challenged; however, reversing the changes does not appear likely in the foreseeable future.

The speed at which the structural changes have been implemented has been staggering. A “sink or swim” attitude has gripped municipalities in the counties of Ontario. Some municipalities got together and quickly approved new municipal structures to ensure a ‘local’ solution was adopted, while others could not successfully negotiate with neighbouring municipalities - leaving agents of the Province to decide their new structures. Along with these new boundaries, municipalities re-designed their political and administrative structures. By consolidating old departments, creating new departments, adding services, modifying policies and creating new administrative processes, a dramatic change in the way municipal government operates has been effected in many county areas of Ontario.

One of the two main objectives of this thesis is to investigate the nature of municipal restructuring in Ontario’s County Country from the perspective of challenges, and opportunities, for planners. The changes to government and municipal operations have been substantial. The consequences of such rapid and widespread change are difficult to predict in the long-term; however, short-term experiences have been significant, but vary between municipalities. The second main thesis objective is to use existing theories and ideas relating to community development and municipal governance to outline a new approach for Counties in Ontario, for use in their pursuit of ongoing viability as

restructured municipal entities. This new approach would take municipalities in new direction in terms of governance and community development. Municipal planners, it is speculated, have the opportunity, if not the professional responsibility, to play key roles in governance reform - if they are up to the new challenges. Thus, the central question being investigated is whether Counties can utilise their intrinsic strength, as enduring municipal structures, to champion a large-scale community development initiative that seeks to increase collaborative endeavours and develop partnerships with all sectors of the local society, to build the capacity and long-term viability of the larger "Community of Communities". The other related question concerns the planner's role in such an initiative; what challenges can traditional municipal planners anticipate?

1.1 A New Direction

The structure of municipal government in Ontario, and across Canada, has shifted and changed a number of times throughout history. The municipalization of rural Ontario, from its humble beginning in the 1750s as a method of organizing people and territories for military purposes, progressed in the 1840s to a system for delivering minor services such as tax collection, and overseeing roads and fences.⁴ Rural towns, villages and townships were gradually challenged to provide a wider array of services such as emergency services, homes for the aged, day-care, public housing, and public transit, to name but a few. These developed areas of rural Ontario, now commonly known as "Southern Ontario", are

⁴Engin F. Isin 1995. "Rethinking the Origins of Canadian Municipal Government." Canadian Journal of Urban Research. (June) 4:1, 73-92.

bound by the Great Lakes and the Ottawa River, and dominated by a historic two-tiered, county system of government. This area, illustrated in Figure 1, will from here on be referred to in short-form as “County Country”, and will represent the primary area of focus for this investigation (the main exclusions are those parts of Ontario which were organized into Regional Municipalities, in the late 1960s and 1970s).

Ontario’s County Country was in need of structural change. The geographic boundaries and governmental relationships, which have survived for well over a century, had to evolve in order to fulfil new legitimate responsibilities, and to overcome obstacles and pressures which they were not originally designed to manage. The new appearance of County Country, with fewer but significantly larger municipalities, is predicted to provide some financial benefits associated with economies of scale. Larger and more diverse tax bases, fewer councils and councillors, and a high quality of administrative staff are also expected to translate into more effective decision-making and a more stable municipal environment. But is structural change enough? By simply creating larger units will municipalities be able to function well, in discharging the new responsibilities placed on them by the provincial government? It could also be argued that if municipalities had been more receptive in the past to inter-municipal cooperation, and more eager to collaborate on pursuing mutual problems and interests, then consolidation on such a massive and rapid scale would not have been necessary.

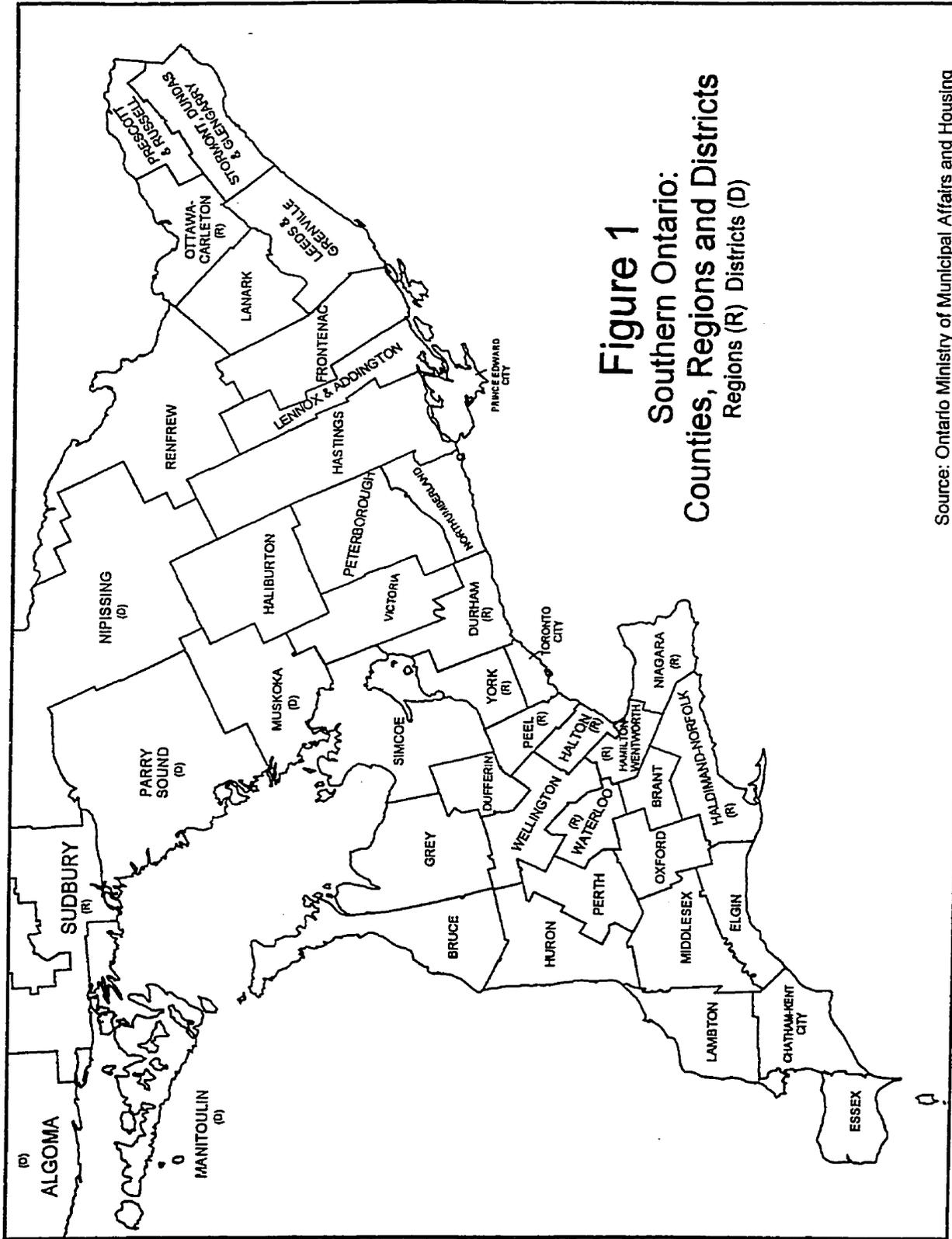


Figure 1
Southern Ontario:
Counties, Regions and Districts
 Regions (R) Districts (D)

Source: Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Throughout history, municipalities have adapted to meet new challenges and have generally provided citizens with a level of service that is adequate to meet public expectations. Until recently, public expectations of their municipal governments were disappointingly low, contributing to a disinclination toward governance innovation. For many years, rural areas have been experiencing conditions of depopulation, increasing farm size, regionalisation of services, and a declining sense of power and control in rural people.⁵ Rural areas in Ontario, and in Canada, have also been experiencing a number of trends that are contributing to a more general “rural restructuring”. A scarcity of resources, and a growing public interest and demand for increased participation in the decision-making process, are two of the main pressures that are forcing governments to look for alternative approaches to both governance and services delivery.⁶ Governments are faced with the challenge of increasing their cost-efficiency and governance-effectiveness, while maintaining or improving service levels.

In many Ontario Counties the political boundaries that separated former municipalities have now been eliminated. The historic boundaries often contributed to many of the obstacles and barriers between neighbouring municipalities. Individual municipalities within the same or neighbouring counties often competed for economic development and amenity infrastructure, to the detriment of other areas. Municipalities fought for higher

⁵Brett Fairbairn 1997 “Principles of Organizational Restructuring in Rural Organizations: Cooperatives” in Richard Rounds ed. Changing Rural Institutions: A Canadian Perspective. Brandon: The Rural Development Institute. p. 105.

⁶Shirley P. Dawe and David Hajesz 1997 “Institutional Partnerships for Rural Renewal” in Richard Rounds ed. Changing Rural Institutions: A Canadian Perspective. Brandon: The Rural Development Institute. p. 138.

property tax assessments, as well as schools, hospitals, community centres and all the benefits associated with new property development. Each local government often perpetuated an isolationist attitude, which kept them separated from neighbours and from potential partners in other sectors of the public domain. With restructuring many of the political boundaries are gone, but will attitudes change? Will the communities left behind by the elimination of their historic municipalities realize that they can no longer isolate themselves from other communities, and other sectors of society? New municipalities, it will be argued, need to look outwards not only to the citizens of their new and larger jurisdictions, but also to their neighbours, and the Counties, to avoid the errors of the past and to chart a new course of collaborative governance.

Many of the current techniques of municipal governance are in need of modification, as they are steeped in past traditions and do not necessarily respect well the basic tenets of municipal government: effective service delivery and democratic governance.⁷

Municipalities appear to need to raise their level of service to citizens in both respects. Political and municipal administrations, it will be argued, need to actively pursue new governance techniques to advance the democratic duty of municipalities to serve, convey and include the will of citizens in government. Planners, as agents of change, must also consider whether they need to step out from their land use confines, to help spearhead these changes and to embrace the challenge of moulding a new approach to local

⁷Richard C. Tindal & Susan Nobes Tindal 1995. Local Government in Canada. 4th ed. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Toronto.

governance. With a view to considering the necessary change and possibly precipitating a new era of municipal governance, this thesis explores the possible need for an accompanying 'community development' planning process, one geared to developing a "Community of Communities" within the restructured counties of Ontario's County Country.

A Community of Communities (referred to hereafter in short-form as C²) is hypothesised as an appropriate form of community development embracing a new realm of municipal governance, based on the reformed, two-tiered municipal structure of Ontario's County Country. The path leading to a C² is envisaged as being based on a process centred around collaboration and coalition-building (instead of formal bureaucratic structures that favour a top-down method of municipal corporation development). The conscious development of a C² is perceived as building strong and direct linkages between all sectors of society, in an effort to develop new county-level capacity, and to protect the new municipalities from both known and as yet undefined stresses.⁸ The County level of government is seen as the focal point of the larger "Community" while the new local municipalities, along with the communities tied to the 'old' consolidated municipalities, are seen as central to the smaller constituent "Communities". Within both levels of community are certain local stakeholders that are perceived to have previously been largely excluded from municipal affairs. The private sector, volunteer associations, non-

⁸John A. Marshall and David J.A. Douglas 1997. The Viability of Canadian Municipalities: Concepts and Measures. Toronto: Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research Press.

profit organizations, academic institutions and other community groups within the locality, are all regarded as intrinsic partners in a C² system.

In articulating a C² development process, this thesis attempts to explore the expertise of a number of relevant authorities. William Dodge and Allan Wallis have undertaken extensive research into the governance of multi-municipal regions in the United States. While the main settings for their analyses are not always completely relevant to this research, the associated methods and techniques - in the sense of new forms of governance to extend the reforms of government - are certainly applicable. Wallis' two-phase approach to regional governance employs consensus-based processes to first legitimize a regional (or community) vision and then to develop appropriate institutionalized structures for a sustained implementation of that vision.⁹ Dodge contributes ideas relating to Strategic Intercommunity Governance Networks (SIGNETS),¹⁰ which operate on the belief that inter-community governance will flourish when inter-community problem-solving and service-delivery mechanisms are intertwined to cross jurisdictions and to be of benefit to the larger community. The work of William Biddle and Alex Sim is also drawn upon when considering the development of a C². While his work was done in the 1960s, Biddle proposed the creation of Basic and Larger Nuclei as a method of community development.¹¹ The Large Nuclei represent an over-arching, coordinating body that

⁹Allan D. Wallis 1994. "Inventing Regionalism: A Two-Phase Approach." National Civic Review. (Fall-Winter) 447-468.

¹⁰William R. Dodge 1992. "Strategic Intercommunity Governance Networks: ("SIGNETS" of Economic Competitiveness in the 1990s)." National Civic Review. (Fall-Winter) 403-417.

¹¹William W. Biddle and Laureide J. Biddle 1966. The Community Development Process. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

advances a vision through, and with, the smaller, Basic Nuclei. These two levels of “community” support the creation of a C². Sim brings a technique called “Community Soundings”, which he has used in Southern Ontario settings.¹² Soundings resemble town hall meetings but go much further than simply discussing issues and voicing common concerns that exist within a locality. The objective of such Soundings is to develop a community vision that excites citizens and motivates them to take action to improve their local conditions. The community development (CD) process outlined here will be different from traditional CD initiatives that have focused on the narrow promotion of economic development or the creation of special-purpose bodies. The *development* of a C² (to be known hereafter as C²D), attempts to tailor the ideas and experiences of the authorities identified above and craft them into a new process which consciously promotes a C² in each of Ontario’s County settings. The envisaged new governance structure entails many different forms including new agreements, institutions, partnerships and collaborations. The whole process is seen as challenging municipal planners to be at the forefront of the changes, anticipating problems and capitalising on potential windfalls.

The majority of Ontario counties have undergone significant restructuring over the past three years (see Figure 2). Some counties have yet to complete their restructuring proposals while others are in a transition phase leading to their new structures. A small number of counties restructured prior to the current provincial government initiative and remain largely unchanged. This thesis is grounded in particular in the experiences of the

¹²R. Alex Sim 1988. Land and Community. Guelph: University of Guelph.

Figure 2: Municipal Restructuring in County Country

County	Number of Municipalities			Population					Number of Municipalities per 10,000 Population
	Past	Present	Change	Rural	Urban	Total			
						% Rural	%Urban	Total	
Brant-on-the-Grand (City)	7	1	-6	20,318	8,653	70	30	28,971	0.3
Bruce	31	9	-22	30,005	31,563	49	51	61,568	1.5
Dufferin	9	9	0	29,777	12,517	70	30	42,294	2.1
Elgin	16	8	-8	38,157	6,476	85	15	44,633	1.8
Essex	23	19	-4	67,377	84,818	44	56	152,195	1.2
Frontenac	16	5	-11	21,327	0	100	0	21,327	2.3
Grey	27	24	-3	42,258	19,932	68	32	62,190	3.9
Haliburton	11	11	0	13,942	0	100	0	13,942	7.9
Hastings	28	20	-8	22,216	12,452	64	36	34,668	5.8
Huron	27	27	0	38,755	19,993	66	34	58,748	4.6
Chatham-Kent (City)	23	1	-22	33,758	76,187	31	69	109,945	0.1
Lambton	21	15	-6	31,589	91,801	26	74	123,390	1.2
Lanark	17	9	-8	28,074	30,021	48	52	58,095	1.5
Leeds & Grenville	23	16	-7	54,795	7,175	88	12	61,970	2.6
Lennox & Addington	14	5	-9	28,743	6,886	81	19	35,629	1.4
Middlesex	22	19	-3	43,239	18,944	70	30	62,183	3.1
Northumberland	16	14	-2	35,411	34,094	51	49	69,505	2.0
Oxford	9	9	0	41,549	55,825	43	57	97,374	0.9
Perth	15	5	-10	24,848	11,436	68	32	36,284	1.4
Peterborough	19	10	-9	42,986	6,253	87	13	49,239	2.0
Prescott & Russell	16	9	-7	48,975	24,656	67	33	73,631	1.2
Prince Edward (City)	11	1	-10	18,762	6,284	75	25	25,046	0.4
Renfrew	36	30	-6	40,075	38,980	51	49	79,055	3.8
Simcoe	17	17	0	105,415	117,404	47	53	222,819	0.8
Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry	21	7	-14	49,105	12,695	79	21	61,800	1.1
Victoria	19	19	0	46,006	18,045	72	28	64,051	3.0
Wellington	21	8	-13	37,466	32,419	54	46	69,885	1.1
TOTALS	515	327	-188	1,034,928	785,509	57	43	1,820,437	1.8

Note 1: Some municipal configurations identified in this chart will take effect on January 1, 1999

Note 2: In a number of cases, including Chatham-Kent, Lanark, and Prince Edward, the division between urban and rural was based on pre-restructuring municipal entities. (e.g. The City of Chatham-Kent is considered an urban municipalities, however, it would be inaccurate to identify the entire population as urban.)

Sources: Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, August 20, 1998, and The Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, 1998.

Counties of Frontenac, Kent, and Bruce. The experiences of other counties are also referred to in specific circumstances; however, the three case study counties represent a sample of different restructuring approaches, settings, processes, and results. Each of these counties is also linked to the author through direct employment and/or professional relationships with each county. On occasion, this 'first-hand' experience over the past few years is used to supply background information and interpretation of each county, and of the county system of municipal government in general.

The County of Frontenac initiated its restructuring process in early 1996, soon after the Harris Conservative government was elected. The City of Kingston requested provincial intervention to resolve stalled negotiations; however, a provincially-imposed structure was averted when local cooperation prevailed. Frontenac representatives are now wondering if they have remained overly fragmented to effectively handle their newly downloaded responsibilities. Kent County did not experience similar levels of understanding between its constituent municipalities. An inability to formulate a local solution led to the provincially-imposed "solution", through the appointment of a Commission,¹³ that resulted in the consolidation of 23 municipalities into the single (tier-less) City of Chatham-Kent. Other counties then renewed their efforts to negotiate local restructuring solutions, to avoid the possibility of having a provincial Commission appointed. The County of Bruce represents a conservative restructuring effort by current standards. Thirty-one

¹³At the request of a single municipality, the Province can appoint a Commission, comprising one government official, to unilaterally resolve restructuring disputes. Commissions are discussed in further detail later in the thesis.

municipalities in Bruce have been reduced to 8, including the County as the upper-tier.

1.2 Methodology and Study Outline

The thesis was researched and conducted on three levels. The first level comprised a thorough literature review that dealt with municipal restructuring, local governance reform, and broadly-defined community development. The second level featured personal interviews with key staff in the municipalities examined - the City of Kingston, the County of Frontenac (Frontenac Management Board), the City of Chatham-Kent, and the County of Bruce. The individuals interviewed are linked to the author through both personal and professional relationships. Thirdly, the author has contributed first-hand 'participant-observer' experience through previous employment in the Planning Departments of the Counties of Kent and Bruce.¹⁴ The County of Frontenac is linked to the author through the ex-Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Frontenac who was the CAO of Kent County during the author's employment in Kent. These three research elements have been synthesised to advance a thesis supported not only by a theoretical base, but also with a forward-looking practical edge that reflects actual current circumstances and opportunities in Ontario's County Country.

This exploratory study of the planning challenge associated with municipal restructuring in Ontario's County Country is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 examines relevant theory concerning the role of municipal government in the past, present and future. This

¹⁴And in the County of Grey - a close neighbour of Bruce County.

examination highlights the terminological distinctions between municipalities, local government and communities, and their relationships within society. Throughout history the responsibilities assigned to and adopted by municipal governments have evolved; however, two elements remain central to the legitimacy of municipal government: 1) as a service provider; and 2) as a governance medium.¹⁵ These elements have been given varying levels of attention in reform initiatives. The recent Ontario experience so far seems to indicate an emphasis on the technical aspects of service delivery, with limited concern for the associated dilution of citizen involvement in local government. It is argued that this imbalance needs to be addressed, and the planning profession must assume an active role in helping to lead Ontario's County Country to a new level and quality of local governance to offset the preoccupation with servicing efficiency and decreasing government.

In Chapter 3 an outline of the Ontario setting and context of this thesis is provided. The setting for this research has been termed the 'County Country' area of Ontario. This area is predominantly rural, with a smattering of villages, towns and cities. By contrast, Ontario's 'Regional Municipality Country' encompasses the majority of Ontario's urban population (including the City of Toronto), and was redefined from the county format in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The latest round of restructuring, that started in 1995, created a new municipal structure that is quite varied, and that has dramatically changed the face of County Country. A system that once contained a standard upper-tier of

¹⁵Tindal and Tindal 1995.

counties with a lower-tier of towns, villages and townships now features an inconsistent diversity of municipal units. Small villages and townships are still common in many counties, while restructured counties may contain four or five new large municipalities - where 25 or 30 once existed. How these varying configurations of municipal government will fare, or be treated by the provincial government in the future, is not known. The larger townships and urban municipalities are expected to be stronger and better equipped to deliver and finance the greater number of services downloaded by the Province. It is conceivable that the unaltered towns, villages and townships - the ones that have so far resisted amalgamation - will acquiesce to the financial and provincial pressures in the near future. Through the maelstrom of municipal change Counties have generally emerged as a constant political and geographic structure, even though three did not survive restructuring in the form of counties (Kent, Prince Edward and Brant). County boundaries have changed in six counties (Frontenac, Hastings, Leeds and Grenville, Perth, Peterborough, and Victoria), due to annexations with separated cities; however, the two-tiered county system of government remains a standard, and in many cases has been strengthened.

The new setting outlined in Chapter 3 provides a basis for a more specific analysis of three restructuring cases in Ontario. The Counties of Frontenac, Kent and Bruce are examined in Chapter 4. The background, rationale, and results of each County's restructuring efforts are examined, with the theory of a community of communities injected as a possible basis for further governance development. Both the Province and its municipalities have

expectations of the restructuring process. The Province wants fewer but more efficient local governments; municipalities are left to “pick up the pieces”, while attempting to chart a course of viability and prosperity at the local level. How this is to be done, and by whom, are issues addressed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 examines possible futures of Ontario’s County Country. Will counties continue with old methods of governance, or will they embrace a new ethos of governance excellence - one that is built on cooperation and collaboration with all sectors of society? If they do, what role can planners play in moulding the future of municipal governance? This thesis argues that the county system and scale of government is an ideal medium for pursuing C²D. By embracing the ideas and techniques of such authors as Wallis, Dodge, Biddle and Sim, and by utilizing the strengths of a new system of county government, County Country can emerge from municipal restructuring with superior municipal entities. Furthermore, planners cannot be satisfied with some of the superficial gains of restructuring, such as fewer councils, larger municipalities, and more flexible planning regulations that should make land-use planning more effective. Planners must take a leadership role, by utilising their skills as facilitators, mediators, leaders, managers, and visionaries in guiding their restructured municipality on a new course of collaborative governance, by championing a special form of CD - the active development of a new ‘community of communities’ - to complement the new county structuring.

Chapter 6 summarizes the investigation. It provides some conclusions, but more

importantly it serves as a harbinger of potential implications for planners and the planning profession in the County Country of Ontario. Municipal restructuring has brought seemingly irreversible changes to the county system of government. Future changes will likely see more municipalities amalgamate in an effort to survive in the evolving public sector climate. How planners react to these new conditions will be vitally important to planning in Ontario; it is argued that they need to be pro-active in assuming their traditional community-building role, but on a new scale in the new context provided by the widespread municipal restructuring.

2.0 Concepts of Municipal Governance and Community

Local governments in Ontario have great challenges ahead of them in order to succeed and flourish. The policies of the provincial government, in its quest for fiscal stability, have shaken every aspect of municipal government. These changes have not occurred in a vacuum of precedents. Consolidation, amalgamation, disentanglement, centralization and downloading are common practices that Canadian provinces and municipalities employ when attempting to change the provincial-municipal relationship.

Municipalities are constitutionally under provincial jurisdiction, and must seek provincial approval for many of their activities. Furthermore, the province maintains full control over many local functions.¹⁶ Two elements are central to the legitimacy of municipal government: first, as a service provider; and second, as a vehicle for local democracy. These functions have been given varying levels of attention by municipalities and the provinces, with, more specifically, a fixation on the first element and a near abandonment of trying to fulfil the second element.¹⁷

Municipalities are legal entities, with boundaries, jurisdictions and procedures. They are often mistakenly equated with communities and assumed to possess the intrinsic qualities of communities. Communities of geography at least are similar to municipalities, in that they have a territorial basis. However, unlike a legally defined municipality, communities

¹⁶Marshall and Douglas 1997.

¹⁷Tindal & Tindal 1995.

(of geography) contain members that have developed a bond, based on a common interest, that has evolved into some form of action toward a betterment interest in terms of the shared community. It is only when these community (of geography)¹⁸ members also share a sense of citizenship in a common municipal context that some correspondence can be inferred between a community and municipality. For municipalities to become more “community-congruent”, they must take steps to realize their second element of municipal government. Emphasising the local democracy-delivering responsibility of government draws a municipality into a new realm of governance possibilities. The change in terminology from *government* to *governance* reflects “a shift in focus from formal structural arrangements to informal structures and processes for setting policy and mobilizing action.”¹⁹ While much of the research into governance techniques is aimed at urban and metropolitan contexts, the basic principles and ideas that are presented can, and will, be transplanted and applied to Ontario’s County Country - a mainly rural, non-metropolitan area.

2.1 Municipal Restructuring Terminology

One of the main objectives of this study is to examine certain aspects of municipal restructuring. Before examining methods of governance and their application to a C², the terminology associated with municipal restructuring needs to be examined.

¹⁸A “community of geography” consists of a group of people that live in a contiguous geographical area, whereas a “community of interest” also involves a group of like-minded people. - from Ian Wight 1998. Building Regional Community: Collaborative Common Place-Making on a Grand Scale. Edmonton: Parkland Institute Annual Conference.

¹⁹Allan D. Wallis 1994. “The Third Wave: Current Trends in Regional Governance.” National Civic Review (Summer-Fall) 292.

In a broad sense, municipal restructuring is a process whereby the duties, responsibilities and/or function of a municipality are altered. These alterations can take many forms and range in magnitude. The provincial government can impose changes in the municipal structure through policy and legislation, or municipalities can initiate changes on their own or in conjunction with neighbouring municipalities. The Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) defines restructuring as a situation “[w]hen a local municipality and an upper tier level government (either a County or Region) change their respective service responsibilities.”²⁰

Consolidation can involve a number of different actions at the municipal level including amalgamation, annexation, the creation of regional government, the creation of special purpose bodies and multi-jurisdictional agreements.²¹ These terms involve the changing of responsibilities, authority and geographic boundaries. *Amalgamation* is “[w]hen two or more municipalities come together and unite as a new municipality to provide services. Amalgamation involves whole municipalities coming together to form a new municipality.”²² Figure 3 illustrates the *amalgamation* of the City of Kingston with the Townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh. *Annexation* is “[w]hen one or more municipalities are reconfigured in such a way that parts of one or more municipalities are added to other

²⁰Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Making It Work: A Management Manual for Municipal Amalgamations and Restructuring (Toronto: AMCTO Press), 1992.

²¹Allan O’Brien 1993. Municipal Consolidation in Canada and Its Alternatives. Toronto: Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research Press. 4.

²²Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992.

Figure 3: Municipal Amalgamation: The Townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh, in their entirety, amalgamated with the City of Kingston in this illustration.

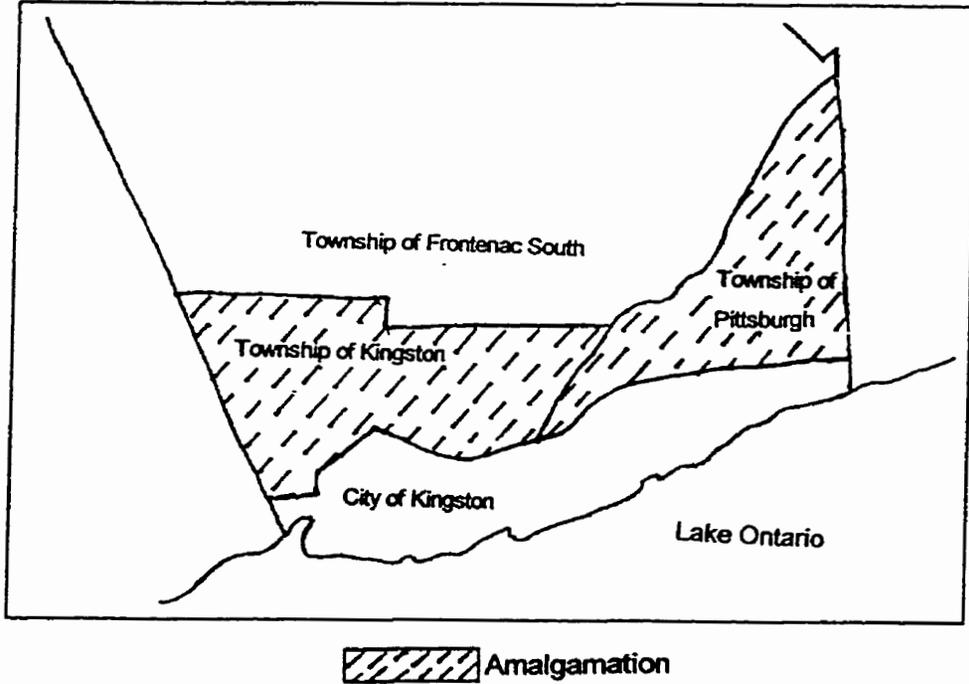
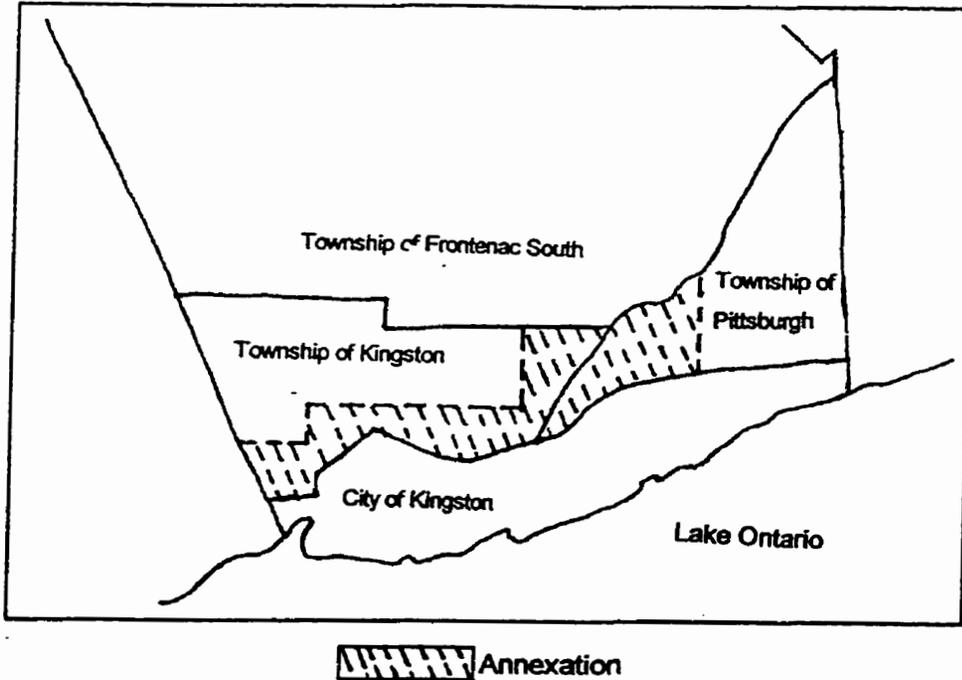


Figure 4: Municipal Annexation: Only parts of the Townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh are incorporated into the City of Kingston in this illustration.



municipalities. Annexation may occur alone or as part of amalgamation or restructuring initiatives.²³ Annexations are quite common, and often occur as a result of servicing demands and growth pressure on the fringes of urban municipalities. Figure 4 illustrates a hypothetical example of the City of Kingston annexing portions of the Townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh.

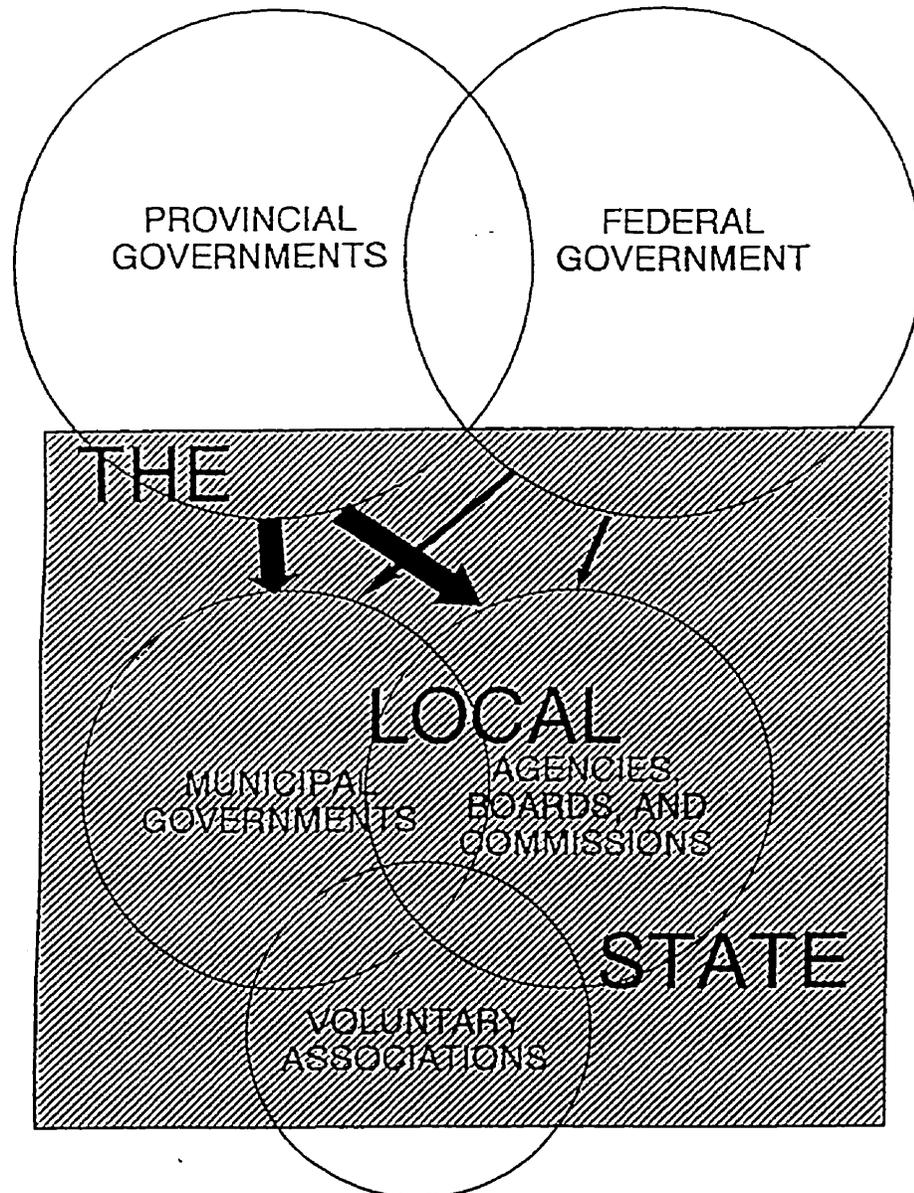
Special-purpose bodies and *multi-jurisdictional agreements* both achieve similar ends in municipal restructuring. Special-purpose bodies are organizations, created by a single municipality or a group of municipalities to carry out a limited number of “government-like” functions.²⁴ These bodies can take the form of school boards, utility commissions or police boards. Multi-jurisdictional agreements are contracts between municipalities to share the provision of certain services or expenses. Joint purchasing agreements and sharing land-fill facilities are two types of multi-jurisdictional agreement. While special-purpose bodies are within the realm of municipal government, they are more closely associated with the broader notion of the *local state*. The local state is the broad term used to describe *all* government activities within a locality (see Figure 5).

These restructuring actions can occur between lower tier municipalities, upper tier municipalities or a combination of both levels. A *tier* represents a level of government.

²³Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992.

²⁴David Siegel 1994. “The ABCs of Canadian Local Government: An Overview.” in Agencies, Board and Commissions in Canadian Local Government, eds. Dale E. Richmond and David Siegel, Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 7.

Figure 5: The Elements of the Local State



Source: Dale E. Richmond, and David Siegel. eds. 1994. Agencies, Board and Commissions in Canadian Local Government. Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada. p. 2

Cities, towns, villages and rural municipalities are recognized as lower tier municipalities. Upper tier municipalities, such as regions and counties, govern over a number of lower-tier municipalities and are charged with responsibilities better handled on a larger, regional scale. These may include services such as planning, waste management and police protection. While both regions and counties are upper-tier municipalities in Ontario, they differ in many key respects, which will be discussed later in Section 2.2

Fragmentation is a term used to describe the number of governments found within a particular jurisdiction. *Horizontal* fragmentation refers to the number of governments at a particular level, usually the lower tier, while *vertical* fragmentation refers to the frequency of upper tiers of government. Every province in Canada experiences some degree of horizontal fragmentation. Saskatchewan has the highest rate at 84 municipalities per 100,000 people while British Columbia is the lowest at 5 municipalities per 100,000 people.²⁵ Not all provinces contain a two-tiered system of municipal government, which would contribute to *vertical* fragmentation. The horizontal fragmentation statistics show Ontario to have 8 municipalities per 100,000, which is relatively low compared to other provinces. However, most of Ontario is covered by two tiers of municipal government. Add to this the provincial and federal governments, plus special-purpose bodies at each level, and Ontario emerges with a high degree of *vertical* fragmentation. This fact has changed considerably since O'Brien published his numbers in 1993. The effects of new provincial policy over the past few years have contributed to a large decrease in the

²⁵O'Brien 1993, 94.

number of municipalities in both the upper and lower tiers, bringing Ontario's horizontal fragmentation number to 6 per 100,000 people. While this may not seem significant, it represents a decrease of over 200 municipalities, which is equivalent to all the municipalities in Manitoba and three times as many as in Nova Scotia.

The terms identified above, (annexation, fragmentation, etc.), describe the physical or form characteristics of municipal structures. The terminology that follows is used to describe the general power structure that controls government decision-making.

Centralization is a process where senior levels of government possess a high degree of authority, influence and power over decisions which affect both the general population but also specific areas. An example of this is the Province of Ontario's recent decision to centralize authority of many of the responsibilities associated with the education system. The province has removed much of the decision-making authority from the school boards and individual schools in areas such as: curriculum, testing, report cards, class sizes, and funding allocation. *Decentralization* by contrast is a "situation where effective control over events in [an] area is given to residents of that area via their control through democratically elected political representatives of the machinery of local government: thus goals and objectives can be decided at the local level rather than merely being handed down from the centre."²⁶

²⁶Ray Hudson and Viggo Plum 1994. Deconcentration or Decentralization? Local Government and the Possibilities for Local Control of Local Economies, (U.B.C. Planners Paper #12), 2.

Two additional terms which describe how municipalities function are *concentration* and *deconcentration*. These terms parallel centralization and decentralization but differ in one crucial respect. Decentralization is the devolution of power *and* responsibility to a local level of government. *Deconcentration* only gives the responsibility of providing or delivering a service or function to the local level while power and decision-making control remains with the provincial, or central, authority.²⁷ An example of this is the branch offices of any provincial department or ministry, such as the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The MNR has numerous offices throughout Ontario including those within Provincial Parks. The policies that govern these parks are created centrally by the Province but implemented locally throughout Ontario.

Disentanglement, as defined by the Canadian Urban Institute, involves an “unravelling of responsibilities ... shared by governments.”²⁸ Disentanglement reduces the duplication in the provision of services among different levels of government. The Province of Ontario recently disentangled itself from the municipal grant system. At one time, the province had two general types of grant, conditional and unconditional. Unconditional grants allowed municipalities to decide how the money was used. Conditional grants dictated how municipalities must use the money (i.e. road construction). The province no longer “entangles” itself in how municipalities spend provincial grants. All grants are now of the

²⁷Peter Diamant and Amy Pike 1994. The Structure of Local Government and the Small Municipality. RDI Report Series, 1994-3. Brandon: The Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

²⁸Canadian Urban Institute 1993. Disentangling Local Government Responsibilities. Toronto: Canadian Urban Institute, 3.

unconditional variety; however, the total dollar amounts have been reduced considerably.

2.2 The Structure and Role of Municipal Government in Ontario

The Province of Ontario exhibits a variety of municipal structures. In some areas there are two tiers and in others there is only one. Lower-tier municipalities include: cities, towns, villages and townships. Upper-tier municipalities include: regions, counties and districts. Nine regional governments were created by the provincial government, in the late 1960s, mainly in the highly populated area known as the Golden Horseshoe which stretches from the Greater Toronto Area to the City of Niagara Falls (see Figure 1). Ten district governments are found in northern Ontario where populations are concentrated around major centres such as: Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Kenora and Parry Sound. In the early 1990s, there were thirty-two counties. This form of municipal government has a lower tier that consists of cities, towns and villages and rural townships. In some instances, cities are single-tier governments, separated from the county system in a manner that is not permitted in Regional Municipalities. Cities such as Windsor, Owen Sound, London and Kingston are examples of separated cities, while the Cities of Sarnia, Lindsay and Perth are lower tier municipalities within a county system.

Municipalities play a dual role in discharging their responsibilities as a component of local government. The first aspect can be defined as a functional purpose which focuses on delivering an array of services ranging from street cleaning to public transit to policing. The size and complexity of a municipality often dictates the scope and level of servicing

provided. Most small rural municipalities focus on a core group of basic services, such as roads, waste disposal and tax collection. As the size and type of municipality grows and changes so do the needs and demands of citizens. Counties, towns, villages and cities will often provide a much larger mix of services that include planning, policing, public transit, libraries, museums and recreation facilities. The second aspect of the dual role of municipalities is more intrinsic in nature and is apt to be missed. It embraces in part the idea that municipal government is “a training ground for democracy,”²⁹ recognizing it as the closest, most accessible level of government to individuals. This role connotes a more intimate relationship between a political representative and the citizenry. It allows for the democratic election of political leaders to form a decision-making council which represents, and can act on behalf of, the people of the municipality. In its truest sense, democracy can be interpreted as a condition where the people rule.³⁰ Municipal governments can potentially become a venue for people to debate, defend and define collective issues, which in turn, guides the character of municipal government towards more than a provider of services.

In Ontario, and Canada, both aspects of the dual role have not always been fully played out, in the past and the present. While municipalities have asserted their independence from the provinces in many ways, key events in history have kept them “creatures” of the

²⁹Robert L. Bish 1987. Local Government in British Columbia. Richmond, B.C.: Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, 1.

³⁰Jack Masson with Edward C. IaSage Jr. 1994. Alberta's Local Governments. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 3.

provinces. In 1840, Governor-General Sydenham made recommendations to the English Parliament that local government, and the principles of responsible government, be included as part of the Union Act, which eventually united Upper and Lower Canada. These recommendations were not adopted. In 1867, the British North America Act denied municipalities official status as an autonomous form of government, in the same manner as that accorded the federal and provincial levels.³¹ At the turn of the century municipal government took another blow to its legitimacy. A reform movement, aimed at removing corruption from local politics, called for a significant reduction in political influence and an increase in the role of appointed experts at the municipal level.³²

The pressure applied for the inclusion of municipal government in the Canadian constitution has continued. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), along with supporters of local self-government, requested during debates into the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, that municipalities be included within the constitution. In both instances their requests were denied. The FCM believes that “unless the role of municipalities in the Canadian political system is recognized, the quality of our democracy, the efficiency of our public services and the equitable treatment of taxpayers are all compromised.”³³ The FCM has moved its focus from the Canadian Constitution to the provincial legislatures. They are now asking for the provinces to pass legislation which

³¹Tindal & Tindal, 1995.

³²Tindal & Tindal, 1995.

³³Federation of Canadian Municipalities. 1997. Statement made as part of the Annual Conference.

provides formal recognition of entrenched powers at the municipal level.³⁴

The Canadian Constitution places municipalities under the authority of the provinces. Each time a province has reformed or restructured the relationship they have with municipalities, the focus has overwhelmingly been on the mix and standard of services provided at the local level. But to say this has hampered the ability of municipalities to fulfil their responsibility of providing a democratic government service would be misleading. Municipalities have the potential of increasing their capacity in this regard by placing a renewed emphasis on the democratic, or governance, elements of municipal government.

2.2.1 Governance versus Government

Historically, and presently in Ontario, governments have focused on structural changes, such as additional tiers of local government or large-scale amalgamations, in attempts to reform municipal government. While very little time has passed to observe ramifications of the changes in Ontario, past changes in Canada have not resulted in significant advances in governance quality.³⁵ This thesis argues that the structural changes that have occurred to *government* could be more successful in improving the viability of municipalities if they were accompanied by a shift in *governance* that emphasises process over structure. The work of Allan Wallis and William Dodge encapsulate a number of key issues and ideas

³⁴Federation of Canadian Municipalities. 1997.

³⁵Ian Wight 1998. "Canada's Macro-metros: Suspect Regions or Incipient Citistates?" Plan Canada. 38 No. 3 (May): 29-37.

that support consideration of this shift from government to governance.

Allan Wallis has identified four central elements which characterise the differences between governance and government. First, governance emphasises the *cross-sectoral* instead of uni-sectoral approach. By accessing the capacities of different sectors (public, private, non-profit), arrangements can be made that amount to a more effective mobilization of effort and resources. Too often, government attempts to solve cross-cutting challenges independently, with varying degrees of success. Second, the governance perspective asserts that a collaboration among sectors is far superior to simple coordination. Instead of simply knowing what other agencies are doing, arrangements develop that “mobilize the unique capacities and legitimacy of *each* sector working together to accomplish specific tasks of regional growth.” Third, the focus on government structures is replaced by *processes* that focus on developing visions and goals, building consensus, and mobilizing resources to meet objectives. And fourth, that governance, with a focus on collaborative processes, works through stakeholder *networks* instead of formal, hierarchical structures.³⁶

William Dodge, another prominent author on regional governance, has identified five trends or “change-drivers” that are raising the importance of moving from rigid government structures to flexible and collaborative governance networks. These ‘change-drivers’ are:

³⁶Wallis 1994, 292.

1. *A challenge explosion* has occurred that has overwhelmed the problem-solving abilities of local governments. The frequency of cross-cutting challenges, that warrant the attention of all sectors of society, not just the public sector, is increasing.
2. *A citizen withdrawal* is being experienced in the public realm. The public has become increasingly sceptical of governments, and trust in politicians and the democratic process has been eroded. Furthermore, public participation is often strongest during crisis situations. The public may not perceive an immediate crisis that warrants action within their municipality or community.
3. *A mismatch* has evolved between governance structures and the challenges that face local governments. The institutions of local government are no longer suited to the challenges that face society. Within Ontario, the municipal institutions have changed. These new structures, led by counties, may be able to address the new challenges.
4. The *gap between rich and poor communities* on fiscal, economic (and racial) levels is widening. These disparities are creating obstacles that make it difficult to bring people together for collaborative decision-making. This type of cooperation is most successful when each stakeholder has something to bring to the table. Contributions made by poorer communities are becoming increasingly difficult.
5. *Global competitiveness* requires governments to take action to survive in

the global economy.³⁷

While larger, regional economies have more at stake in the global economy, small towns and rural municipalities must maintain or create an economic atmosphere that is competitive and eliminate hindrances to commerce. Municipalities not only need the help of the private sector to meet public challenges, but the private sector also needs government collaboration to meet economic objectives.

Counties in Ontario have historically remained relatively independent in the delivery of services and in discharging the duties of government. Co-operation with neighbouring municipalities has usually been the last option considered by decision-makers. This closed structure of independent counties needs to change. The 'forced' amalgamations that altered County Country have removed many of the structural barriers that isolated governments, but the governance barriers must also be surmounted. The ideas put forward by Wallis and Dodge deserve the attention of county decision-makers as ways of improving local governance. Counties may be able to find new strength and enhanced municipal capacity by exploring new partnerships with new municipal neighbours and with other sectors of society.

2.3 The Concept of Community

The word "community" conjures many different images depending on how it is applied. In

³⁷William R. Dodge 1996. Regional Excellence: Governing Together to Compete Globally and Flourish Locally. Washington, DC: National League of Cities.

many instances the word is used arbitrarily to define geographic regions ranging from the smallest grouping of people in a remote location to everyone on the earth in what is known as the “global community”. Used in such contexts, the significance of community becomes almost meaningless.³⁸ It seems that the only common factor in such interpretations is that *people* are involved in the identification of the community.³⁹ Unfortunately, in these references the people are more like objects in homogeneous categorizations used to identify such matters as political jurisdictions, marketing groups, ethnicity, races or genders, instead of a grouping of citizens with commonalities which bring them together in purposeful interaction.

Recognizing that the word “community” may mean different things to different people in different circumstances makes it difficult to identify one, all-purpose definition which would satisfy everyone’s needs. This particular problem will not be tackled in this thesis; instead, the challenge here is to shape a substantive understanding of the concept of community, and the process of community development, in the context of the municipal restructuring of Ontario’s County Country. For the purposes of this research we adopt a definition of community used by David Douglas which states that a community is a “group of people with sufficient common interests to bind them together for common action.”⁴⁰ This definition provides us with a starting-point to build from, and to form a contextual

³⁸Joan Newman Kuyek 1990. Fighting for Hope: Organizing to Realize Our Dreams. Montreal: Black Rose Books. 11.

³⁹Henri Lamoureux, Robert Mayer and Jean Panet-Reymond 1989. Community Action. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

⁴⁰David J.A. Douglas 1993. Community Development: Observations and Lessons from Experience. Guelph: University of Guelph. 2.

understanding of what constitutes both a community and a “Community of Communities”.

A community consists of four basic elements: (1) public participation or involvement, (2) geography, (3) the presence of some common characteristic, other than geography, and (4) a holistic appreciation of interaction and concerns (Cary 1973; Schneekloth and Shibley 1995; Dasgupta 1996).

A cornerstone of community is the *participation* of members in the local issues that affect their lives. Cary identifies three key abilities which community members need to possess for effective participation: 1) a breadth of knowledge and a broad background which helps to identify priorities and see issues in context; 2) to learn quickly so that decisions can be made in an informed manner; and 3) the ability to act in an effective fashion.⁴¹ Public participation brings meaning and substance to the community development process. The people who are experiencing the problems and who would also benefit from change, must be involved in the action that is part of the improvement process. As a quality of community, participation does have problems to overcome, the most common and obvious being that often too few people participate, which in turn makes it difficult to determine whether the entire community’s voice is being heard. A similar result is observed with poor representation from various sectors of the community. If, for example, only the elderly participate, from a community with a wide range of age groups, then it would be

⁴¹Lee J. Cary 1970. Community Development as a Process. Columbia: University of Missouri Press. 147-148.

difficult to state, with any certainty, what the concerns and priorities of that community might be. Problems may also arise with *full* participation of a community, since creating effective lines of communication may be difficult where large groups of people are involved.

Within the context of this thesis, *geography* is a central component of community. In some applications of community and community development, establishing a physically-defined area for implementation action is not necessary. Geography, in our case, exists as a “place” or locality which can be roughly identified in spatial terms, but not necessarily limited by precise political boundaries. By identifying discernible limits to a community, demographic, statistical and historical information can be obtained about the geographic setting. Linking community to a physical locality also places a direct responsibility on the shoulders of members within the community to be involved in its development.

Geography creates a physical link between people by virtue of cohabitation in close proximity. However, a community also requires the *presence of some common characteristic, other than geography*⁴². The common characteristic can take many forms. Common interests, goals, objectives, questions or problems can all create a link between a group of people. This link is very different from the geographic link. A person can live in a neighbourhood or town and never interact or associate with fellow residents. If

⁴²Satadal Dasgupta ed. 1996. The Community in Canada: Rural and Urban. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. 7.

however, residents are mutually affected by some condition, situation, event or proposal, and they feel strongly enough to talk about it, the genesis of a real community is present. It can be argued that such a link is forged by simple geography. However, moving from a point of being passive neighbours to a potential community action-group is a significant step. This is why the presence of some common characteristic, other than geography, is needed to form a community.

To be a community, members need to possess a *holistic appreciation of interaction and concern*.⁴³ Communities do not exist as static, independent entities. A community “is holistic ... it seeks a local wholeness that includes all people, all functions”⁴⁴ and also recognizes the importance of external forces that affect everyday life at all levels. Communities can experience pressures that steer them away from a holistic view of their environment. Influences such as national and provincial incentive programs that offer resources to carry out a standard agenda - which may not reflect the priorities of the community - or by special interest groups within the community, that need public support but may ignore other goals and cause a community to narrow its vision. Senior government programs and special interest groups should not be disregarded for this reason. They are both powerful tools which can be useful to a community, that is able to maintain an appreciation of the holistic system, but still tap into such available resources (if the community can actively mediate the influences rather than be controlled by them).

⁴³Cary 1973.

⁴⁴Biddle and Biddle 1966, 74.

2.3.1 Community in a Rural Setting

Rural and urban municipalities are different in many ways. In comparison to rural municipalities, urban municipalities possess higher populations, more diversified economies, access to a larger tax base, a greater mix of services and access to a larger labour force and a greater body of professional expertise. While rural municipalities may not have the diversity found in urban areas, they do possess some unique features such as: a simpler life-style, slower pace, natural amenities, cleaner environment and the intangible simple quality of *not* being urban, all of which make them attractive to many people (but at the same time, undesirable to many committed urbanites).

The basic definition and features of a community, as described above, do not change between urban and rural settings. People, whether in the City of Ottawa or the hamlet of Holstein (100 kilometres south of Owen Sound), can change a course of action, improve an undesirable situation or help those less fortunate, by making a conscious decision to rally together with fellow community members to make their voices heard and become more involved in the decision-making processes that affects their lives. Rural areas cope with the same issues that challenge urban areas, but the issues are usually on a smaller scale. Issues such as: waste disposal, pollution, environmental protection, economic development, employment, crime, education and health and seniors care are of concern to both urban and rural communities. In rural areas, only the complexity or importance of the issues differ from urban areas.

Rural community groups face different challenges than their urban counterparts. Once, roads and drainage issues dominated the rural council agenda; now, complex and expensive issues such as waste management, economic development, emergency services, housing and providing health and social services are central to the agendas of small municipalities.⁴⁵ A much smaller population base to draw from can also hamper community efforts. A small, and sometimes dispersed, population makes it difficult to gather together a reasonable number of like-minded citizens. It is also difficult to find dedicated and knowledgeable leaders to champion community efforts. Given these obstacles, 'community groups' are more likely to form as 'special interest groups' that gain prominence due to a current event or controversial issue, such as the location of a new regional land fill or the closure of a local library or school.

Alex Sim has painted a grim picture of the state of rural life in Ontario. Sim, through research and personal experience, sees a way of life in rural Ontario being lost to technology and a lack of community connection both politically and economically.⁴⁶ Rural areas have had to contend with the increasing centralization of power at all levels of government. It may be difficult to appreciate the forces of globalization on the streets of the Village of Highgate, Ontario (a small rural settlement of 500 people located in the new City of Chatham-Kent), but the same citizens are affected by planning policies made by the City Council, by the health care policies made by the province, and by the agricultural

⁴⁵ Helen Break. 1988. Change Impacts Ontario's Small Rural Service Centres: Implications for Planning." Small Town. (May-June). 4-9.

⁴⁶Sim 1988.

policies of the federal government. New provincial policies do give municipalities more authority to conduct their 'business', however, whether this will lead to greater levels of local autonomy is not known (nor whether it will be considered to compensate for the loss of local autonomy in parts of the restructured municipalities that used to have their 'own' municipality). The effects of fewer municipalities and fewer contact-points with local government are also an unknown element of the radical reforms in Ontario's County Country. The character of rural and small town Ontario has been changing. The expansion of urban areas, the associated loss of farm-land, commuting, tourism, and the decline of agriculture in many areas has contributed to this changing character. Once, agriculture was the dominant economic activity in rural Ontario. While it still plays an important role, the farming profession has changed dramatically due to farm consolidation, sophisticated equipment and high production costs.⁴⁷ Farming has become more of a business than of a way-of-life.

2.4 The Concept of a Community of Communities (C²)

A community of communities (C²) embodies the basic features of a community, as described above, but on a macro scale. A C² represents a dual-powered community dynamic where a large macro-community is comprised of, and interacts with, a network of smaller, micro-communities. In the setting of Ontario's County Country, the macro-communities are represented by the counties while the micro-communities are the local municipalities, community groups, small businesses, non-profits, labour associations,

⁴⁷Break 1988.

corporations, and also the vestiges of the 'old' municipalities that were eliminated as a result of restructuring. In essence, a C² is the creation of a 'new' community from a collection of 'old' communities. The objective of the 'new' community is to coordinate and refocus the efforts of the 'old' communities to participate in the success of a larger community that has emerged, in part, through municipal restructuring. To accomplish such an objective, counties would be faced with the daunting task of convincing micro-communities that the county is trying to open up the public sector to new possibilities and partnerships, that include all sectors of society. This would be done not as a way of increasing County authority and power-over but in an effort to improve local government capacity and contribute to the future prosperity and success of all community groups within a new C².

County planners can play a central role in promoting and creating a C². To be involved with changing the course of municipal governance, county planners must expand their role beyond land-use planning into the realm of addressing the cross-cutting challenges that face municipalities in an increasingly complex society.⁴⁸ In doing so, planners would play an active role in forging the new linkages between the larger, macro-community and the local, micro-communities. Counties may find that by adopting a philosophy which supports and develops a C² they are better equipped to meet the emerging needs and demands of the public sector.

⁴⁸Wallis 1994.

A parallel can be made between a C² system and the situation within the Regional Districts of British Columbia. In 1965, the B.C. government created 29 Regional Districts that covered almost the entire province with an additional tier of local servicing arrangements for both incorporated municipalities and their surrounding unincorporated territories.⁴⁹ Regional districts were given one mandatory function - to develop general regional plans to control development and settlement patterns. Regional districts were also given the flexibility to perform voluntary functions that would be defined by local needs. One problem that emerged was that incorporated municipalities, through a system of weighted voting, possessed a "major voice in most regions."⁵⁰ A significant difference between regional districts and a C² is that B.C. possesses a unique population distribution that is focused within a small number of incorporated municipalities, along with almost half of the province's population being located within the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Ontario's County Country contains a large, but geographically dispersed population. A large population creates a greater need for services, both hard and soft, and would hopefully translate into more a equitable distribution of power - specifically within a community of communities setting.

2.5 Community Development Perspectives

"Community development is a social process by which human beings can become more competent to live with and gain some control over local aspects of a frustrating and changing world. It is a group method for expediting personality growth, which can occur when geographic

⁴⁹Bish 1987.

⁵⁰Bish 1987, 37.

neighbourhoods work together to serve their growing concept of the good of all. It involves cooperative study, group decisions, collective action, and joint evaluation that leads to continuing action. It calls for the utilization of all helping professions and agencies that can assist in problem solving. But personality growth through group responsibility for the local common good is the focus."⁵¹

Most approaches to community development focus on the creation or development of a single community. This thesis applies many of the basic principles of community development to the development of a C². What is different in our case is that the focus is placed on the opportunity of potentially developing a larger community entity that encompasses many smaller communities. In this light, community development will be approached from two perspectives: objectively/passively on the one hand, and subjectively/actively on the other hand. The first focuses on the creation or uncovering of new communities. A budding community may be viewed as an "object community,"⁵² in which case the needed elements of a community are available, and may already be working together, but need to be organized and placed on a common path. This perspective recognizes that "people know many things about the places in which they live, although this knowledge is often unstructured, informal and hesitant. It is not the kind of knowledge normally given a voice in professional arenas, and is therefore called a form of subjugated knowledge."⁵³ The second perspective is that of an "action community"⁵⁴

⁵¹Biddle & Biddle 1966, 78.

⁵²Warren C. Haggstrom. 1970. "The Psychological Implications of the Community Development Process." in Community Development as a Process. Lee J. Cary. ed. Columbia: University of Missouri Press. 92.

⁵³Linda H. Schneekloth, & Robert G. Shibly. 1995. Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 7.

⁵⁴Haggstrom 1970, 93.

which is organized and actively pursuing its goals and objectives. This established community is actively influencing decisions, and the direction of its affairs. In Ontario, and with the notion of C²D, the restructured counties signify the 'object community' while local community groups, organization and new municipalities comprise the potential 'action communities'.

Douglas makes an additional distinction between two "layers" of community development. The first layer, involving the "community at work", makes collective decisions on current issues as they present themselves. On this layer, the community is reacting to current events by injecting its view-point on an issue or providing its desired direction on a project. The second layer is the "community addressing longer term issues of growth, development and structural change".⁵⁵ Both of these would be considered action communities. Counties have historically fulfilled a role of providing leadership on issues that affect many municipalities but go beyond the abilities of individual municipalities. Under the newly restructured conditions, Counties may be in a position to play a more *active* role over the long-term, in channelling the efforts of not only the new lower-tier municipalities but also the efforts of groups and communities that formerly relied on old municipalities that no longer exist.

2.6 Approaches to Community Development (CD)

Community development comes in many different forms. From neighbourhood watch

⁵⁵Douglas 1993.

programs, to assisting the ill or aged, to protecting the environment, and to active involvement in local government decision-making, CD is a process that can cross many issues and solve many problems. Long et al outline six approaches to community development: (1) the community approach, (2) the information self-help approach, (3) the special-purpose, problem-solving approach, (4) the demonstration approach, (5) the experimental approach, and (6) the power-conflict approach.⁵⁶ Each approach examines the concept of community and the implementation of community development in a unique manner. Each approach will be examined in turn to highlight their unique features as methods of community development in terms of this thesis, and its particular interest in not just CD but the development of a community of communities. Certainly, more approaches may exist; however, these six approaches are broad-based and allows for variations in interpretation and application in moulding this thesis context.

2.6.1 The Community Approach⁵⁷

This approach has been acknowledged as the most widely accepted and recognized approach to community development and contains three basic features: (1) public participation, (2) community as an important concept, and (3) the holistic nature of interaction and concern. Features one and three are both core features of a community and have been explained above (Section 2.3). The second feature, community as an

⁵⁶Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh eds. 1973. Approaches to Community Development. Iowa City: The National Extension Association.

⁵⁷This approach is based on Lee J. Cary 1973. "The Community Approach" in Approaches to Community Development (eds.) Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh. Iowa City: National University Extension Association. 9-24.

'important' concept, highlights what a group of people inherently bring to a community. The focus is placed on the inter-relation of actions within the community. In Cary's words, "wherever [there is] a cluster of people with some shared interest, and [where there is] interaction among these people over time, we have the essence of community."⁵⁸

Of the three components of the community approach, the role of citizen participation is central to its effectiveness as a means of community development. For the goals, problems or direction of a community to be accurately gauged with any certainty, the people that are experiencing particular living conditions must be directly involved in the community development process. To effectively obtain information from citizens, participation must "mean open, popular and broad involvement of the people of the community in decisions that affect their lives."⁵⁹ This kind of public participation was largely absent from most of the recent restructuring endeavours in Ontario. The speed at which the restructuring process was executed relegated the public to the role of observers of government instead of active participants in a process that was making significant changes to local conditions. In building a C² the old extinguished municipalities are potentially important constituents of the new larger community. The Community Approach supports the notion of strengthening or creating ties among people with shared interests, and building communities that honour and promote the importance of the old communities while also supporting new collaboration with the larger, County community

⁵⁸Cary 1973, 13.

⁵⁹Cary 1973, 11.

context.

2.6.2 The Information Self-Help Approach (ISHA)⁶⁰

The main thrust behind the Information Self-Help Approach (ISHA) is the quantity and quality of information available to a community. This approach recognizes that people have ideas and are knowledgeable in unique and specialized ways. The ability of participants in the community development process to learn together and create new knowledge is central to the ISHA. As a process, the ISHA starts with an *exploratory* phase. This activity is characterized by a period of probing, where sessions of relatively unstructured brainstorming take place to share and flush-out ideas. This exercise may not be difficult to organize and conduct in itself. For the process to continue past the exploratory phase though, the participants must reveal genuine needs, and these by a sufficient number of people, so that the process of community development is able to progress. By satisfying these needs, the community can focus its efforts on developing a *working question*, or vision, that unifies their ideas and concerns. The working question not only organizes the discussion but funnels community effort toward the search for relevant information to help cope with its problems.⁶¹

Once the working question has been designed, the *selection of responses* needs to be

⁶⁰This approach is based on Howard Y. McClusky 1973. "The Information Self-Help Approach" in *Approaches to Community Development* (eds.) Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh. Iowa City: National University Extension Association. 25-38.

⁶¹McClusky 1973, 29.

formulated. It is important to make the distinction between “responses” and “answers”. Answers imply a degree of rigidity and finality, while responses are regarded as projects undertaken or focused directions which may eventually shed light on a working question.⁶² The responses are based on the information gathered and provided by the members of the community. The responses are moulded into *recommendations*, which leads to some form of action that improves the community.

The Information Self-Help Approach to community development was not much in evidence during restructuring process in Ontario. Input was not received from individual community members, that impacted upon the outcome of restructuring. The needs of the provincial government were the driving force that indirectly dictated the direction of restructuring. Municipalities were more concerned with formulating an acceptable restructuring proposal that would satisfy the province, not their public.

2.6.3 The Special-Purpose, Problem Solving Approach⁶³

This approach is geared toward addressing specific issues and problems within a community. The application of this approach is not tied to the scale of the community, it can be used by small rural communities, urban neighbourhoods or larger regional communities. The key element of this approach is timing. This approach is geared toward

⁶²McClusky 1973, 30.

⁶³This approach is based on Richard Thomas 1973. “The Special-Purpose, Problem-Solving Approach” in Approaches to Community Development (eds.) Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh. Iowa City: National University Extension Association. 39-50.

individual events, (and not conditions which evolve over long periods of time) which makes the timely mobilization of resources crucial. As a process of community development, the Special-Purpose, Problem-Solving Approach is divided into five key steps. The first step is *problem identification*. Members of the community mutually recognize that there is growing discontent regarding some circumstance which requires their attention. The second step involves the *mobilization of resources*. Members must initially look inward to the community for human skills, energy and imagination. If these community resources are insufficient to tackle the problem, external help must be solicited. The third step, *program planning*, requires public participation to ensure community members take ownership of the process. Participation at this point is also important because it sets the fourth step, *program activation*, into motion. The plan activates the *problem-solving* program. During the fifth step, *evaluation*, the community development process examines alternate directions and appraises each step of the process to determine whether the program is succeeding.⁶⁴

Since the provincial government in Ontario successfully compartmentalized the municipal restructuring process into a convoluted debate over financial matters, the public may have been at a loss to challenge restructuring at the local level. The speed and magnitude of the changes to provincial policies overwhelmed municipal officials, making it even more unlikely for residents to organize, in terms of the Special-Purpose, Problem-Solving Approach, and challenge the process and decisions being made to local government.

⁶⁴Thomas 1973, 42-43.

2.6.4 The Demonstration Approach ⁶⁵

The Demonstration Approach relies on the successes and failures of *other* community development endeavours, to learn lessons that can be used in a particular community. By adopting or rejecting methods tested in other communities, the demonstration approach attempts to increase the odds of success in communities which are experiencing similar circumstances or problems. Simply put, this approach involves learning by example.

The main advantage of the demonstration approach is also its main disadvantage. On one hand, a community can gain great confidence in believing their problems are defeatable because other communities have succeeded in similar circumstances. However, on the other hand, this belief in success can be an illusion. No two communities can ever be identical, nor can one community duplicate the actions and processes of another community expecting to achieve similar results. The aim of this approach is for a community to adopt the methods and techniques of community development which have proven to be successful in other communities. Ontario Counties learned by 'demonstration' in the case of Kent County and the City of Chatham, where the Province imposed a restructuring solution. The *demonstration* shock-effect of consolidating all of the municipalities in the County with the City was ample incentive for municipalities to avoid provincial intervention in local restructuring negotiations.⁶⁶

⁶⁵This approach is based on George S. Abshier 1973. "The Demonstration Approach" in Approaches to Community Development (eds.) Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh Iowa City: National University Extension Association. 51-58.

⁶⁶The restructuring conditions in Kent County and the City of Chatham will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 4.

2.6.5 The Experimental Approach⁶⁷

“The purpose of the experimental approach is to develop and refine community development theory and practice; to test and verify the efficiency of a particular community development concept or technique during a community development effort.”⁶⁸

The experimental approach is both similar to, and directly opposite to, the demonstration approach of community development. They are similar in that they are applicable in any community development circumstance because they adopt community development approaches used in other localities. They are radically different in that the demonstration approach borrows ideas and techniques from other approaches and situations, while the experimental approach - by definition - formulates hypotheses, if ‘proved’, lead to new theories.

Two critical considerations need to be understood regarding the experimental approach. First, this approach is more concerned with process than with results, therefore an adequate amount of time is necessary for the examination and evaluation of data and observations. Second, an overemphasis on process can compromise the maximization of results. This makes the experimental approach somewhat risky,⁶⁹ but it was a risk the provincial government in Ontario seems to have been willing to undertake. Restructuring, of the magnitude experienced in Ontario, has never been witnessed in Canada in recent

⁶⁷This approach is based on William McNally Evensen 1973. “The Experimental Approach” in Approaches to Community Development (eds.) Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh. Iowa City: National University Extension Association. 59-72.

⁶⁸Evensen 1973, 59.

⁶⁹Evensen 1973, 70.

times. The restructuring experience strays from this approach in that ‘process’ did not play a role while “results” were of paramount importance. The province was not interested in how municipalities formulated a restructuring proposal, but only in whether the reduction in the number of municipalities and politicians was sufficient.

2.6.6 The Power-Conflict Approach⁷⁰

Power, and its application, is the main force behind this approach. Power is the “ability, whether physical, mental, or moral, to act.”⁷¹ Community development needs these abilities to solve problems and enact social change. But how is power exercised in the community? Power is more than the ability to make decisions which control resources or influence large numbers of people. Power is obtained when people join together to identify mutual problems and set out to do something about them. Power is obtained when people develop processes to at least try and cope with their problems. Power is obtained when people are able to evaluate their activities and make adjustments for improvement. Power is obtained when people can set goals and plan for future improvements. Power is also obtained when people are able to make decisions, set priorities and possess control over the necessary resources to effect change. It is this last source of power that is easily recognized, and arguably the most important. Without utilizing the previous four sources of power to effect change, the results may be relatively

⁷⁰This approach is based on Raphael J. Salmon and George A. Tapper. 1973. “The Power-Conflict Approach” in Approaches to Community Development (eds.) Huey B. Long, Robert C. Anderson and Jon A. Blubaugh. Iowa City: National University Extension Association. 73-86.

⁷¹Saul A. Alinsky 1971. Rules for Radicals. New York: Vintage Books. 50.

meaningless to the community.⁷²

These six generic approaches to CD contain useful features that can be transferred and applied to C² in the County Country setting in Ontario. The *Community and Information Self-help* approaches both centre on member involvement, and initiating the process of CD through local resources to maintain a local direction. The *Special-Purpose, Problem Solving* approach highlights the need to identify a key aspect or concern that a community is able to identify with and defend. The *Demonstration* approach provides both hope and practical advice to citizens by reminding them that others have succeeded or at least attempted what they are embarking upon. The *Experimental* approach potentially brings the academic sector into the CD process. Universities and colleges can be included as partners in the process as a resource, while they undertake valuable action-research to further their goals. The *Power* approach highlights the necessity for organized action. As will be discussed in the next section, the capacity and legitimacy of a CD initiative is heavily determined by access to sufficient power to propel the process.

2.7 Community Development on a Higher Plane: Approaches to the Development of a Community of Communities

If Counties can grasp the potential benefits of coordinating their efforts with local municipalities, community groups and other sectors of society in collaborative efforts, they may be well-prepared to accept a shift in their approach to governance and embrace the

⁷²Salmon and Tapper 1973, 76.

notion of being in the business of helping to develop a community of communities. In this light, Counties may need to be open to different approaches and techniques in terms of both governance and community development. Counties may need to access new tools or revamp existing tools, such as Official Plans, as means of charting a new direction for both counties and local municipalities. This thesis advocates the development of a new, larger community that embodies the many smaller communities within a County setting, and embraces the notion of a C².

The development of a C² strives to create a dual-powered network of partnerships, agreements, and coalitions. The lower level, of individual communities, works within the over-arching framework of the upper or larger community. The efforts of the small communities operate independently; they have varying mandates. However, they also work in unison with the larger community, striving to achieve an overall *community vision*. Creating the network and formulating the vision is something that needs to evolve through a process that fosters trust and a willingness to share not only information but time, resources, and most importantly, power. This can be accomplished, it is argued here, through a C² Development (C²D) process that draws on the recent work of Allan Wallis, William Dodge and Alex Sim along with the earlier work of William Biddle. All are applicable to this study in forming a process geared to develop a C² within each component of Ontario's County Country.

2.7.1 Two-phase Governance Development Process

Wallis advocates a two-phase process that first develops and then implements a community vision. The objective of the first phase is to build on the ability of stakeholders to legitimize a vision.⁷³ Before a vision can be legitimized, certain features, attitudes and conditions must be gauged and organized within the community. In Wallis' first phase, a sense of the community climate is determined. For the process to start, a "strategic concern" - that strikes a chord with a large host of people within the community, needs to be identified. This strategic concern can take many forms, such as protecting a natural asset, a heritage building, open space, economic conditions, or, in our case, building a 'community' to match the new, restructured municipality that better connects with its effective constituency. The objective is to have a concern that will mobilize public participation. With popular support, the community's concerns can earn a degree of credibility and allow the process to continue with strength.

Widespread public support and sponsorship are needed early in the process. The initial realization that a strategic concern exists may have emerged among a small coalition of individuals and/or groups. If these coalitions do not possess sufficient legitimacy and/or capacity on their own to propel the process onto to next phase, partners must be courted to help launch and sustain the initiative.⁷⁴ Public sector support, or leadership, can lend significant credibility to the concern and process.

⁷³Wallis 1994, 451.

⁷⁴Wallis 1994, 453.

A *vision* must be created that gives the coalition hope for improving the current situation and solving the strategic concern. There are many ways to develop a community vision. Wallis points to “facilitated visioning” as a method of creating or revealing a vision. This technique places a strong emphasis on the views of the key stakeholders but also includes interests that extend beyond those of the sponsoring coalition: “The advantage of broad-based involvement in developing a vision is that it potentially provides a sense of ownership for participants who can, in turn, help move recommendations toward implementation.”⁷⁵ *Visioning* can also be placed within the context of municipal involvement. Having a municipality incorporate a community vision within its public sector objectives further increases the legitimacy of the community efforts.

Creating a collective vision is a major step within the first phase. To continue though, the coalition must assess its capacity to fulfil the vision. While the vision may pinpoint a real problem within a community, the coalition may not possess the capacity needed to launch the vision in motion. The coalition must examine its technical capacity to gather sufficient resources, its civic capacity to mobilize the interests in the community, and its political capacity to gather key decision-makers to back the vision. With adequate support in these areas, the coalition can formulate an action plan to move the process into the second phase.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Wallis 1994, 454.

⁷⁶Wallis 1994.

The objective of the second phase is to institutionalize the mechanisms for implementing and achieving the vision.⁷⁷ The vision, along with the community participants and action plan needs to be structured within a new or existing institution, i.e. a restructured County government, for there to be a realistic chance of the vision being realized. The structuring of the institution has two main dimensions. First, a governing body needs to be formed that can guide the “community-in-development” toward the vision, and alter the vision if necessary. This governing body can be a new municipal council or a sub-committee of the County Council. The second dimension consists of developing a means of participation, representation, and accountability capable of maintaining and strengthening the legitimacy of the community institution.⁷⁸

The leadership of the governing body must be able to build trust that supports effective collaboration. This leadership should, ideally, be a small core of individuals, with representation drawn from those sectors with the capacity necessary to fulfil the vision. While the new county and its constituent municipalities are central players, they cannot overpower other sectors. This prevents individual municipalities from falling into a self-serving localism.⁷⁹ Wallis advocates the use of a referendum to legitimize the establishment of the institution and potentially the vision. However, within a community setting in Ontario’s County Country, the new municipal structure is a more likely method of legitimizing the community vision. Wallis also identifies voluntary agreements among

⁷⁷Wallis 1994, 451.

⁷⁸Wallis 1994, 457.

⁷⁹Wallis 1994, 461.

local communities and organized interest groups as a method of legitimizing the vision.⁸⁰

2.7.2 Strategic Intercommunity Governance Networks (SIGNETS)

William Dodge's notion of Strategic Intercommunity Governance Networks (SIGNETS) has also been assessed as relevant to this thesis. Like Wallis, Dodge has focused his attention on urban region settings. While he examines the economic competitiveness of regions, the principles of community interaction are transferable to C²D. SIGNETS are based on the belief that "intercommunity governance evolves out of, or is the product of, the interactions between intercommunity problem-solving and service-delivery mechanisms."⁸¹ The problem-solving and service-delivery mechanisms, within the community, share resources, and information, and cooperate on strategies for addressing intercommunity challenges. The interaction between the mechanisms creates a network that finds strength in the collaborative partnerships and agreements that would not have formed under different governance approaches (see Figure 6). These interactions can be interpreted as collaborations *between* the new, restructured municipalities and their municipal neighbours. SIGNETS may also find application where municipal restructuring has not significantly altered the level of fragmentation. If a relatively large number of municipalities exist within a particular county, SIGNETS may be a means of addressing cross-cutting issues.

SIGNETS, as approaches to governance, can be compared to other common approaches

⁸⁰Wallis 1994.

⁸¹Dodge 1992, 409.

such as the Balkanization and Metropolitanism models. Balkanization refers to a condition where governments and agencies work independently and exhibit a “fend-for-yourself” behaviour. Cooperation between governments and agencies is strictly voluntary and occurs on a piece-meal basis. It is difficult to address cross-cutting challenges that impact multiple jurisdictions under this model (see Figure 7). Metropolitanism is the familiar hierarchy of government tiers, with responsibilities delineated between the levels. While service-delivery mechanisms exist between levels, there is a strong tendency for jurisdictional disagreements, instead of collaborative problem-solving (see Figure 8).⁸² For a community to develop or move toward applying the SIGNET model, Dodge has identified five activities that would probably have to be undertaken.

1. Identify past, present and evolving inter-community challenges and assess their probability and impact.
2. Inventory inter-community problem-solving and service-delivery mechanisms and resources and assess their strengths and shortcomings for addressing inter-community challenges.
3. Develop a mission and vision for inter-community governance.
4. Design a balanced inter-community governance strategy.
5. Implement the inter-community governance strategy and monitor and update it periodically.⁸³

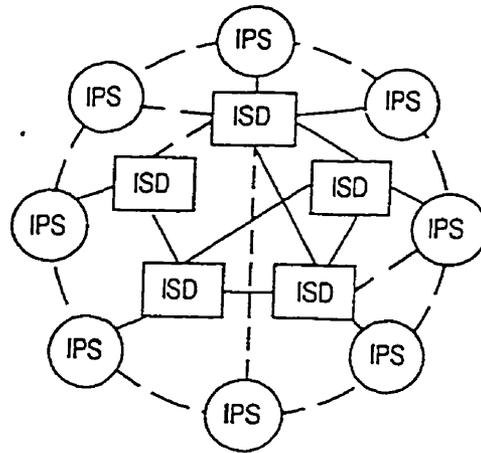
2.7.3 The Basic Nucleus and Larger Nucleus

The work of William Biddle is somewhat dated, however, a number of his ideas lend themselves to the development of a C². Biddle has identified, as part of the community development process, two scales of community which he has called the “basic nuclei” and

⁸²Dodge 1992.

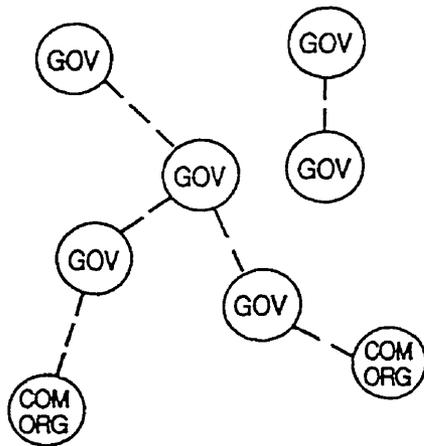
⁸³Dodge 1992, 413.

Figure 6: Strategic Intercommunity Governance Network (SIGNET)



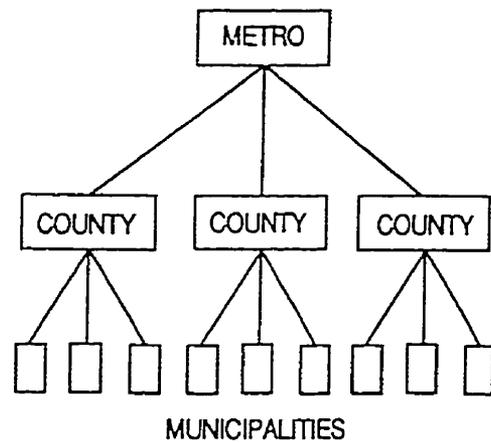
"Honeycomb Network"
 Informal and Structured Interaction of
 Intercommunity Problem-Solving (IPS)
 and Intercommunity Service-Delivery
 (ISD) Organizations

Figure 7: Balkanization



"Scattershot"
 Informal Interaction of Local
 Governments and Other Community
 Organizations

Figure 8: Metropolitanism



"Hierarchical Pyramid"
 Structured Distribution of Local
 Government Responsibilities;
 Formal/Informal Interaction With Other
 Community Organizations

Source: William R. Dodge 1992. "Strategic Intercommunity Governance Networks: ("SIGNETS" of Economic Competitiveness in the 1990s)." National Civic Review. (Fall-Winter) 406.

the “larger nucleus”.⁸⁴ While the two community scales operate independently and enjoy a certain degree of functional independence, interaction between them in a dual community dynamic is also occurs.

The *basic nucleus* is a “small group of serious-minded citizens from some locality that ... are few enough in number to come to know each other well; ... concerned enough about human problems in the area to do something to make life worth while; [and] ... conscious of standards of right and wrong.”⁸⁵ What Biddle has described is a small local community, communities that in our case may have been connected with a municipality that has been eliminated as a result of restructuring. The basic nucleus may find its beginnings through the initiative of a professional community developer or through the banding together of a small group of people interested in organized change. The important factor is that the conceptualization or “sparkplug” of the community was found locally, at the grass-roots level. The process, as outlined by Biddle, for developing the basic nucleus, flows between six major stages: exploration, organization, discussion, action, new projects and continuation.⁸⁶

At the *exploratory stage*, the small group of individuals becomes well acquainted and aware of each other’s general concerns relating to the community. At this stage they begin recruiting local citizens and organizations into the group to discuss local matters.

⁸⁴Biddle and Biddle 1966.

⁸⁵Biddle and Biddle 1966, 88- 89.

⁸⁶Biddle and Biddle 1996, 90.

After this relatively informal stage of exploration comes an *organizational stage*. Focus is placed on the objectives and structure of the group and a commitment to the group and community is made by the individuals involved. During the *discussion stage*, problems and limitations of the community become well-defined. The process builds the character of the community as well as laying the ground-work for charting the future direction of the community. The community direction is not a rigid path but is instead in the form of a guide with a number of alternatives which are evaluated and endorsed based on their advantages and disadvantages. These alternatives are boiled-down to a desired course during the *action stage*. Plans are put into action while progress is monitored, reported, analysed and evaluated. Hopefully, the efforts of the community come to fruition at this stage.

The *new projects stage* follows a process which can lead the community down several different paths. The basic nucleus can disband, or it can remain in its existing condition and repeat the process for problems of similar magnitude, or it can undergo a transformation. With experience and recognition come larger and possibly more controversial issues for the community to undertake. As part of the process, new relationships and linkages have been made with individuals and groups outside of the community. This inevitably leads to coalitions with other groups and communities. This leads the basic nucleus on to the *continuation stage* which builds permanence into the community, as well as increased responsibility among the members to be both involved in, and make decisions about, their collective futures.

Some issues and problems which influence the local community are rooted at the county, regional, provincial or federal levels - and go beyond the influence of the individual community. Recognizing these circumstances, and the need for outside help and information, a *larger nucleus* is created. The larger nucleus is an umbrella organization that serves the wider community in a different way than the basic nucleus.⁸⁷ A direct comparison can be made between the large nucleus and the restructured county governments in Ontario. The larger nucleus is a representative body of many community groups, whose actions are more pervasive than specific in nature.

Like the basic nucleus, the larger nucleus starts through the initiative of a small group of individuals, or 'communities' in our case. These "initiators" enlist the cooperation and participation of other agencies and civic groups to form the larger nucleus. The agencies are not tied to a local community but instead have realms of influence which have more expansive and overlapping geographic boundaries. While some of these organizations may not be connected in any other way except through the larger nucleus, they have an interest in the betterment of the larger community. As with any community, the larger nucleus must define its area of service.

Given the varying jurisdictions for the participants, this decision can pose difficulties. Once it is made, they can move onto a phase of undertaking research and designing a course of action. Resources should be more plentiful at the larger nucleus level because

⁸⁷Biddle and Biddle 108.

groups and organizations are also larger. The larger nucleus does not dictate the direction of the basic nuclei; instead, it is a coordinating body or information source which complements the basic nuclei while taking action on its own, broader, objectives. While the needs of the basic nuclei are important, the larger nucleus divides its attention and resources between the two levels of community. Biddle points out that the large nucleus must keep two factors in mind during the process of development: "First, because the larger nucleus is a coordinator of many contradictory voices it is seldom able to speak for a unified point of view. Second, the larger nucleus remains effective and influential only so long as it does not become identified as a source of power."⁸⁸

Biddle's ideas have some logistical limitations which may be difficult to apply in County Country. Specifically, the larger nucleus has limited power which could cripple its influence and capacity to reach its goals. If a county is to resemble a larger nucleus, its influence will need to be strong but determined through agreements with the basic nuclei, or local municipalities and community groups. The effectiveness of the larger community to address cross-cutting issues that involve multiple jurisdictions and sectors at the County level is directly affected by the support and commitment received from local communities.

2.7.4 Community Soundings

Alex Sim has been an observer of and a commentator on rural Canada, with specific focus on Ontario, for many years. He advocates a process of "ruralization" that would

⁸⁸Biddle and Biddle 125.

counterbalance the process of urbanization which has, in Sim's opinion, wrecked our small communities.⁸⁹ As part of his ruralization theme, Sim created the process of Community Soundings. Community Soundings, simply referred to by Sim as "Soundings", have two purposes. First, to facilitate a discussion among citizens to determine if there is anything sacred in their community, that the participants would be willing to defend, even at personal risk or expense.⁹⁰ If nothing comes up, the process is over. It is more likely however, that certain items will be identified as sacred and worth preserving, enhancing or changing. This leads to the second purpose, which is the creation a vision so that the community can plot a course for its own regeneration.⁹¹ Soundings can be viewed as an enhanced method of public participation but also as a scaled-down version of Wallis's two-phase governance process, with the second phase in Wallis' terms not specifically developed by Sim.

2.8 Summary

Municipalities were unable to resist the restructuring forces created by the Provincial Government of Ontario. Counties, and local municipalities were only able to create 'local' solutions that ultimately led to the formation of new municipal entities. While the counties and local municipalities had very little influence over the general direction of the reforms, the public was even more distant from the decision-making process. Restructuring

⁸⁹R. Alex Sim 1993a. The Changing Culture of Rural Ontario. Occasional Papers in Rural Extension No. 9. Guelph: Department of Rural Extension Studies, University of Guelph. 2.

⁹⁰Sim 1993a,44.

⁹¹Sim 1993a, 46.

emerged as a process largely discussed within the confines of council chambers and committee meetings. The public was aware of proceedings through the press and public meetings that generally focused on providing information and not receiving public input. The validity of the restructuring process can be debated; however, the process, for the most part, has been completed with very little opportunity for reversing the results.

County Country is an area of Ontario that is in municipal transition. Substantial changes have been made to the shape of municipalities and to the political structures that govern rural and non-metropolitan areas of the province. In most cases the restructuring process, that has involved municipal consolidations, amalgamations, and annexations, has come to an end. Many County governments are now re-establishing the old forms of governance that they were formerly comfortable with, steeped in old rules, procedures, and structures. This thesis, in advancing the idea of a consciously-developed C² places these old beliefs and practices in question.

By drawing upon the four approaches to governance and the six approaches to community development, one approach to developing a C² could emerge. This process can become a general policy framework for a County to follow, or it could be championed through a 'Community of Communities Initiative' (C²I). Such an initiative could stand on its own, independent of, but over, other County policies, or be a manifestation of a consciously-broadened County Official Plan. The C²I would become a pro-active response to the challenges that are facing the restructured municipalities of Ontario's County Country.

Municipalities in Ontario are under significant pressure to adapt and succeed in the new conditions that have resulted from the province's fiscally-driven policies. Restructuring was an inevitable step, indirectly imposed by the province; now municipalities have the opportunity to directly improve their situation, by pursuing their mission in terms of developing a C².

The longer-term ramifications of municipal restructuring remain unclear. County Country can take stock of its past, learn from it, and move onto a new plane of governance that centres on a vision supported by cross-sectoral coalitions in a new institutional arena. Change to the structure of government can occur almost overnight, as has just been proven by Ontario's provincial government. Changes in governance culture are not generally as rapid, and take time. The idea that Counties can transform themselves into matching a new C² is further developed in the following Chapters.

3.0 Ontario's "County Country"

The Province of Ontario has a diverse municipal structure that has evolved through two centuries of reform. While many studies and commissions have been focused on improving the municipal structure, the physical boundaries of most municipalities - counties especially - have not changed significantly in over 150 years. Current reforms have greatly altered the municipal structure and boundaries of lower-tier municipalities, while the county boundaries have remained relatively unchanged. Even with over 200 municipalities being dissolved, amalgamated or annexed into cities, with only a few exceptions, the new municipalities, in terms of county context, are based on historical county boundaries.

Many municipalities in the developed parts of Ontario experienced a major change in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the province created regional municipal governments in the highly populated areas around Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe. Regional governments were created mainly out of the old counties. Separated cities were brought into the regional system and many of the lower-tier municipalities such as townships and villages were amalgamated into larger towns and cities. In the 1990s, major municipal reform began with the "Social Contract" under the New Democratic Party of Premier Bob Rae. Up until this point, municipal reform was approached on a municipality-by-municipality or county-by-county basis. It was observed (in 1991) that, "The days of

large-scale centrally imposed municipal reorganization [were] clearly over.”⁹² Andrew Sancton made this statement on the presumption that provincial governments were convinced, based on supporting evidence, from research such as Sancton’s, that municipal consolidation was not an effective way to save money. The Conservative government, elected in 1995, did not share this opinion and proceeded to restructure the remaining county system of municipal government (along with a separate initiative of amalgamating the seven municipalities that made up Metropolitan Toronto, into a new “mega-city” of Toronto). The period since 1995 has been extremely volatile for all local governments in Ontario. The new structure of County Country poses many challenges, but also opens up many possibilities for a new way of operating municipal government. This chapter focuses on these changes and backgrounds some the challenges now facing Ontario’s County Country.

3.1 County Country: Past and Present

In 1849 the Baldwin Act was passed in Ontario and ushered in a structure of municipal government that is very similar to what is still in existence today - a structure based on a two-tiered municipal government with counties forming the upper tier and cities, towns, villages, and townships making up the lower tier. Over time, some municipal names have changed, boundaries have shifted, and a small number of amalgamations have occurred. The responsibilities placed at the municipal level have also increased. In one of the most

⁹²Andrew Sancton 1991. Local Government Reorganization in Canada Since 1975. Toronto: Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research Press. 40.

dramatic changes to municipal structures in Ontario, the Province, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, created large-scale upper-tier regional governments in the more densely populated areas around Toronto, Ottawa and the Golden Horseshoe (see Figure 1). The creation of regional government involved the consolidation of a number of lower-tier municipalities, the inclusion of separated towns and cities, and the elimination of many special-purpose bodies (placed under the authority of the upper-tier, regional governments). A substantial reorganization of functions was also implemented with the responsibility for welfare, parks, roads, water supply, sewage disposal, planning, and capital borrowing being vested at the regional level. These changes were organized and imposed by the provincial government. Public opposition to the rapid pace of change grew, and this contributed to the government of the day discontinuing their reform efforts, precluding the expansion of regional government into what has remained Ontario's County Country⁹³. Prior to these changes, counties were the only form of upper-tier municipal government in the province. Today, in 1998, the fiscally-based reforms of the Province have driven many municipalities within the County structure to amalgamate. With Southern Ontario containing the vast majority of the province's population, the Northern Ontario population is focused in the urban centres of Thunder Bay, Sudbury, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie. Only 20 percent of the Province is municipally incorporated but that portion accounts for 99 percent of the province's population.⁹⁴

⁹³Tindal and Tindal 1995.

⁹⁴Diamant and Pike 1994.

3.1.1 The Ontario Municipal Structure

There are 25 counties and 10 regional municipalities covering Southern Ontario, as well as one district municipality and 10 single-tier districts in the municipally-organized parts of Northern Ontario.⁹⁵ Counties, regions and district municipalities are a form of upper-tier municipality, in a two-tiered municipal system of government. Upper-tier municipalities contain member municipalities which include cities, towns, villages, and rural townships forming the lower-tier. As part of the province's recent reforms, police villages, which had qualified as lower-tier municipalities, are no longer recognized. Most counties contain a large town, or in some cases a city, that functions as the primary urban centre or "County Seat". The Town of Lindsay in Victoria County, the Town of Walkerton in Bruce County, the Town of Orangeville in Dufferin County, and the Town of Perth in Lanark County are examples of urban centres within the county system. Unlike in regional municipalities, larger cities are usually 'separated' from the county system, as single-tier municipalities. Large cities such as Mississauga, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Niagara Falls are member municipalities within their respective regional governments while cities such as Windsor, London, Barrie, and Owen Sound are separated from their neighbouring Counties. Separated cities and towns are usually larger in size, with populations generally over 15,000 (however this is not a rule under provincial legislation). Within County Country, separated municipalities account for 41% of the population while only occupying 2% of the land area. (see Figure 9).

⁹⁵Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1998. 1998 Ontario Municipal Directory. Toronto.

Figure 9: Separated Cities, Annexations, and Amalgamations in Ontario's County Country

County	(unless otherwise indicated)		Separated Municipalities		Totals	
	Population	Area*	Population	Area*	Population	Area*
Brant-on-the-Grand (City)	28,971	84,511	109,407	91,662	28	92
Bruce	61,568	394,065	61,568	394,065	100	100
Dufferin	42,294	149,019	42,294	149,019	100	100
Elgin	44,633	166,224	31,319	2,196	59	99
Essex	152,195	174,148	200,062	12,038	43	94
Frontenac	21,327	337,280	110,327	44,682	18	88
Grey	62,190	448,091	20,380	2,379	75	99
Haldimont	13,942	452,282	13,942	452,282	100	100
Hastings	34,668	554,661	43,944	2,890	30	91
Huron	58,748	340,176	58,748	340,176	100	100
Chatham-Kent (City)	109,945	248,139	109,945	248,139	100	100
Lambton	123,390	283,188	123,390	283,188	100	100
Lanark	58,095	293,887	58,095	293,887	100	100
Leeds & Grenville	61,970	336,133	20,942	2,067	67	99
			810			
			404			
Lennox & Addington	35,629	284,071	35,629	284,071	100	100
Middlesex	62,183	284,464	42,262	392,441	16	87
Northumberland	69,505	209,325	69,505	209,325	100	100
Oxford	87,374	186,510	87,374	186,510	100	100
Perth	36,284	215,321	28,002	2,533	52	98
			1,158			
Peterborough	49,239	387,979	68,748	6,378	42	98
Prescott & Russell	73,631	200,275	73,631	200,275	100	100
Prince Edward (City)	25,046	104,820	25,046	104,820	100	100
Renfrew	79,055	762,475	13,492	1,395	85	85
Simcoe	222,819	469,913	78,965	7,270	68	98
			2,817			
Stormont, Dundas & Glengary	61,800	311,899	46,802	6,345	57	98
Victoria	64,051	206,690	64,051	206,690	100	100
Wellington	69,885	259,018	92,130	6,913	43	97
Total	1,820,437	8,174,674	1,246,882	202,889	69	98

* Hectares

** Each of these municipalities either annexed or amalgamated with a County (two Counties in the case of Quinte West) municipality or municipalities which changed the size of the County or Counties involved. Six Counties changed their outer boundaries as a result of restructuring: Frontenac, Hastings, Kent, Leeds & Grenville, Perth, and Peterborough

Source: Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 1998.

It has only been through municipal restructuring that some formerly separated cities and towns have either become part of the county system or have amalgamated with counties. Urban municipalities that were once separated but are now joined with their County counterpart include Sarnia, Chatham, and the Town of Picton. This does not imply that restructuring automatically brings separated cities under the county system. Restructuring that has involved some of the larger separated cities such as Windsor, London, Kingston and Belleville led to them becoming even larger as a result, through both annexations and amalgamations. In a very rare case the separated City of Trenton amalgamated with the Village of Frankford and the Townships of Sidney and Murray to become the City of Quinte West within the County of Hastings. What makes this unique is that the Township of Murray was within the neighbouring County of Northumberland. This is the only instance in the recent round of restructuring where two counties changed their outer boundaries to contribute land and development to a separated city. The county system underwent further historic reforms in the Counties of Kent, Brant and Prince Edward. In each of these cases the member municipalities, both urban and rural, amalgamated with the separated cities and/or towns to each become single-tiered cities. The three new municipalities maintained the old county boundaries for the new municipality, but each are now effectively Cities in terms of municipal status, represented by a single council, elected through the ward system.

There are three Counties that restructured prior to the recent 1996-1998 wave: Oxford, Lambton and Simcoe. *Oxford County* restructured in the late 1980s to resemble the

regional municipal government structure with the amalgamation of a number of townships and the inclusion of the separated City of Woodstock into the County system. *Lambton County* initially restructured in 1991. The separated City of Sarnia, with a population of 70,503, amalgamated with the neighbouring Town of Clearwater and became a member municipality of Lambton County. A number of other municipalities amalgamated and the responsibilities assigned to the county and the lower-tier municipalities were altered in subtle ways. The *Simcoe County* restructuring exercise extended over a number of years and culminated with the Province imposing a solution in 1991 with the creation of the Town of New Tecumseth. The Province imposed a new structure as a result of the inability of local municipalities to find a negotiated solution. Restructuring discussions originally started because of servicing disputes between municipalities and growing development pressures placed on the area by the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The neighbouring Cities of Orillia and Barrie remained separated from the County. These three Counties have not changed their initial municipal boundaries to any great extent in response to current provincial fiscal policies. They are however, vulnerable to the new challenges that face all municipalities in Ontario.

3.1.1.1 The “Social Contract”

The New Democratic Party, led by Bob Rae and elected in 1992, introduced the “Social Contract” as a means of dealing with the provincial deficit. The goal of the Social Contract was to make municipal government more “open, accessible, responsive, accountable, and capable financially and administratively to deliver the services asked of it

by its residents and by the Province.”⁹⁶ The overriding financial goal was to reduce government spending by \$2 billion dollars annually, with the majority of this coming from municipalities.⁹⁷ The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) initially gave the Social Contract a degree of legitimacy by stating that the financial problems of the province were not due to inadequate revenue but to overspending. AMO later condemned the reforms by claiming that the Province was solving its financial problems on the backs of municipalities.⁹⁸

The reforms of the NDP in the early 1990s are important to this thesis in that a number of fiscal measures were introduced that made the more recent cuts to municipal government even more difficult to accommodate. While the NDP “encouraged” restructuring in the form of consolidation, very few annexations or amalgamations occurred. The majority of the savings were obtained through reforms that affected municipal staff directly. As a result of the Social Contract, 80% of the public sector in Ontario (which included the public service, health care, colleges and universities, schools, social services, and special-purpose bodies) had their wages frozen, 57% accepted days without pay, and 46% did not fill vacant positions.⁹⁹ The Social Contract ended in 1996, just as the newly elected Conservative government was introducing its reforms. Municipalities had exhausted their alternatives for locally-directed reform.

⁹⁶Ontario Government. 1994. Report of the Provincial-Municipal Task Force under the Municipal Sectoral Agreement, Social Contract Act. 1.

⁹⁷Association of Municipalities of Ontario. 1994. Municipalities Implement the Social Contract.

⁹⁸Association of Municipalities of Ontario. 1994.

⁹⁹Association of Municipalities of Ontario. 1994.

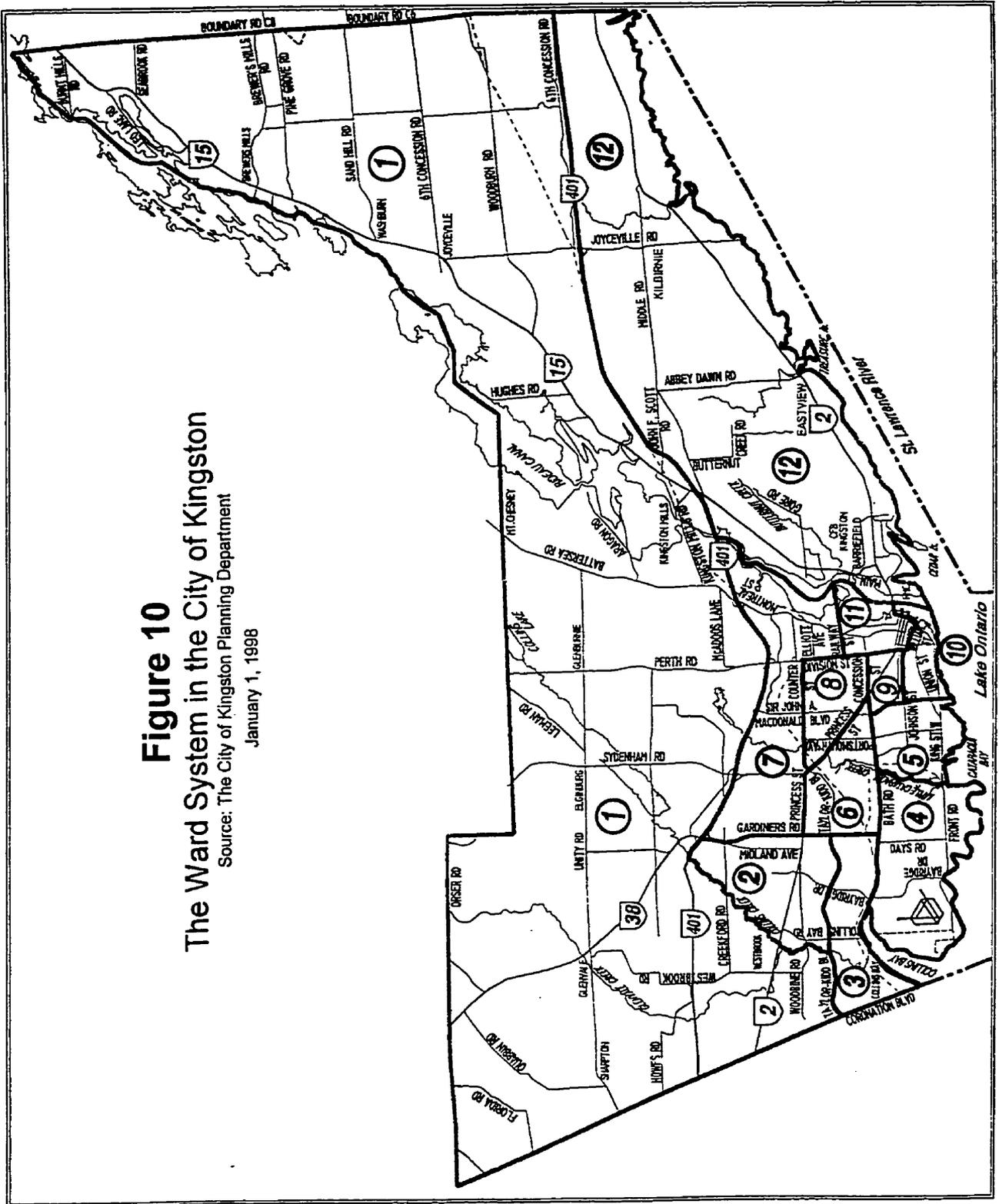
3.1.2 The Political Structure of Ontario Municipalities

Municipal councils in Ontario are formed on the basis of two electoral systems: the ward system, and the “at-large” system. The ward system has been primarily used by large cities and regional municipalities but, since restructuring, a number of rural counties have adopted this system. The area of a municipality is divided into sections, or wards, using a combination of area, population distribution, and historic boundaries that define the ward boundaries. Each ward elects one or more councillors, who then represent the area on the municipal council. For example, the newly amalgamated City of Toronto,¹⁰⁰ with a population of 2.1 million people, is divided into 28 wards with two councillors elected from each ward, yielding a 56-member council, and one mayor. Within regional municipalities, both the upper and lower tiers use the ward system. The lower-tier of towns and cities also have a ward system, which is independent of the regional system. Each municipality elects a council with the Regional Chair being selected by the Regional Council and the mayors of the lower-municipalities being elected “at-large”. The ward system in the “new” City of Kingston is illustrated in Figure 10.

The County system of government has traditionally uses an “at-large” electoral process. The lower-tier municipalities hold elections for the offices of mayor or reeve, deputy mayor or deputy reeve and three more councillors. The candidates that receive the highest

¹⁰⁰In 1997, the Cities of Toronto, Etobicoke, East York, North York, and Scarborough, the Borough of East York and the Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto amalgamated, under provincial order, to become the new City of Toronto (sometimes referred to colloquially as the ‘Mega-City’ or ‘Super-City’).

Figure 10
The Ward System in the City of Kingston
 Source: The City of Kingston Planning Department
 January 1, 1998



number of votes from the general population in each category form the municipal council. Each reeve represents their municipality on County Council. The head, or Warden, of County Council is elected by County Council. The Warden usually holds this office for a one year term. In the early 1990s many counties undertook studies of their local government structures. Limited structural changes emerged as a result of these studies, however, many county councils did become more representative based on population. Previously, each municipality received equal voting power. Under some of the new systems larger municipalities increased their representation on County Council by either having two councillors, or by having more than one vote, or both. As a result of recent restructurings some counties have moved to a ward system of elections.

3.2 The Role of Townships in the County Structure

Rural settlement patterns in southern Ontario consist of a continuous network of small hamlets, villages and towns, located at the intersection of roads, railways and rivers,¹⁰¹ in association with area-serving townships. Townships preceded counties as a local governmental structure, even though both were officially recognized for the first time in the Baldwin Act of 1849.

Townships, and the small towns and villages, have been the backbone of the county system of government, and the closest form of government to rural residents in Ontario. While the urban municipalities are the centres of commerce within counties, the townships

¹⁰¹Break 1988, 4.

are the municipal units that furnish support for the rural and agricultural interests not only within the counties but also for the province as a whole. On average, most townships, prior to 1996, were somewhere between 15,000 and 25,000 hectares in size, with populations ranging, on average, between 1,000 and 5,000 people. Since 1996, these averages have greatly increased. It has been common for several townships, towns and villages, to consolidate and become a single municipality. In virtually every case, these new municipalities were created without disturbing the perimeter boundaries of the lower-tier municipalities. There is only one case where a township was divided as a result of amalgamation (the Township of Camden in the new City of Chatham-Kent, North Kent Ward and East Kent Ward, see Figure 16), while numerous townships changed their boundaries as a result of annexations with urban municipalities (see Figure 9).

Townships, like any other form of municipal government, have been given an increasing number of responsibilities over the years. Lower tier municipalities within the county system, such as townships, are generally responsible for road construction and maintenance, waste collection and disposal, tax collection, fire services, permits, recreational services and, if they exist, water and sewers. Counties are generally responsible for social and family services, administering welfare, municipal planning and road construction and maintenance. Services that may be provided at either level, but not necessarily at all, are activities such as libraries, museums, archives, police services, tourism services, hospitals, ferries and airports. This list is certainly not exhaustive and can grow depending on the situation and location of a municipality. For example, some

municipalities have established economic development departments, while others engage in such activities when funding grants are available through the federal or provincial governments.

3.3 Changing the County System of Municipal Government

Counties have existed in Ontario for almost 150 years. As was noted earlier, a certain portion of this two-tiered county system of municipal government was reformed in the late 1960s and early 1970s to create regional governments (in most of the highly populated areas of southern Ontario). Regional governments have provincially-defined structures and clearly delineated responsibilities. By contrast, since 1995, the province has advocated a comparatively hands-off stance in recent rounds of County restructuring, leaving municipalities with the task of creating a locally-formulated restructuring solution. The provincial desire for local solutions was also accompanied by the spectre of having the Province impose a solution, through the appointment of a Commission, if local municipalities were unable to negotiate a local solution. The province could appoint a Commissioner upon the request of one local municipality that was dissatisfied with the direction of local restructuring negotiations. Furthermore, the decision of a Commissioner would be unilaterally imposed, and could not be appealed to the Province or the Ontario Municipal Board.¹⁰² According to Richard Tindal, “the commission option became the hammer held over the heads of municipalities; come up with some kind of local agreement,

¹⁰²The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is an independent, quasi-judicial administrative tribunal. Its principal purpose is to hold public hearings on appeals from decisions made by Ontario municipalities, and to provide decisions or resolutions in all proceedings.

however distasteful, or something worse will be done to you by the commission.”¹⁰³

The overall platform of the provincial government can be broadly viewed from two perspectives. On the one hand, the Province has taken the dramatic steps that it promised in its election campaign to reduce the deficit and the size of the public sector. On the other hand, the government has not entered into any public consultation regarding the changes. It has assumed that the overwhelming election victory in 1995 provided the mandate, along with a comfortable majority in the Provincial Legislature, to implement unilateral changes to virtually every aspect of province and municipal government. Ironically, the Bob Rae government was criticised, and notably abandoned by its labour supporters, for imposing the Social Contract which now pales in comparison to the Common Sense Revolution. The Rae government told the public sector that spending must be reduced. However, unlike the dictatorial style of the Harris government, Premier Rae entered into extensive consultation with the different parts of the public sector¹⁰⁴ to negotiate how the savings would be achieved. The Harris provincial government by contrast wanted to “act quickly and dramatically to implement its agenda, without significant consultation or negotiation.”¹⁰⁵ The government created financial conditions that virtually require municipalities to undertake some form of restructuring. Throughout history, municipalities have had other motives to restructure, some of which will be

¹⁰³Richard Tindal 1997. “Sex, Lies and Amalgamation?” *Municipal World*. 170. No.2 (February) 6.

¹⁰⁴Association of Municipalities of Ontario 1994.

¹⁰⁵Katherine A. Graham and Susan D. Phillips 1998. “‘Who Does What’ in Ontario: The process of provincial-municipal disentanglement.” *Canadian Public Administration*. 41 No. 2 (Summer) 180.

discussed below. However, the province has passed legislation that effectively prohibits the existence of municipalities that possess a small property tax base. Such municipalities do not possess the necessary fiscal “capacity”¹⁰⁶ to afford the changes made by the province and are therefore no longer “viable”¹⁰⁷ municipalities.

3.3.1 The Viability of Municipalities

The combination of drastically-reduced transfer payments from the province, and an increase in the number of services having to be delivered and financed at the municipal level, has made it virtually impossible for many municipalities to remain viable as local government entities. What makes a municipality viable, and able to continue operating, was the central theme of recent work by John A. Marshall and David J.A. Douglas.

According to Marshall and Douglas *municipal viability* is:

[a]n aggregate term that describes a municipality’s capacities to respond to and anticipate positive and negative stresses, and the degree to which these conditions have compromised or enhanced its abilities to carry out its fundamental roles and functions.¹⁰⁸

They continue by explaining that *capacity* “is the degree to which a municipality can absorb stresses upon the local government’s role as a service provider and/or agent of governance.”¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, that *stress* is “[a]ny external or internal factor that impacts negatively or positively on, or impedes the performance of, one of the municipality’s

¹⁰⁶Marshall and Douglas 1997.

¹⁰⁷Marshall and Douglas 1997.

¹⁰⁸Marshall and Douglas 1997.

¹⁰⁹Marshall and Douglas 1997, 23.

roles.”¹¹⁰

Marshall and Douglas identify three general categories that exert stresses on the capacity and overall viability of a municipality: finance, governance and community. Circumstances within these categories can strengthen, and exert a positive stress, or they can weaken, and exert a negative stress, on a municipality. Each category can be isolated, measured and evaluated to render an impression of a municipality’s capacity in each area. By pooling the categories and studying the municipality in its entirety, the capacity of a municipality can be appraised. Through the use of a hypothetical situation, each municipal category can be portrayed, with relevant stresses and capacity implications. In one example, a municipality adopts a policy to actively seek public consultation at every possible occasion, which in turn would affect all three categories of finance, governance and community.

Financial stress is easily quantified compared to the other two categories. In our example, the municipality would experience certain negative stresses associated with obtaining excessive public input. Monetary expenses could include: staff time, advertising cost, cost of printing information or questionnaires, the cost of analysing any data received, etc. These expenses impose a negative financial stress while it would be hoped that public consultation would lead to more effective decision-making (better governance, in tune with the community’s wishes) which in turn, could save both time and money in

¹¹⁰Marshall and Douglas 1997, vii.

the long-run and therefore transform into a positive financial stress.

The categories of *governance* and *community* are more difficult to measure but, making a distinction between positive and negative stresses is still possible. As explained earlier in Section 2.2, municipalities serve two basic functions: as a services provider and as a vehicle for local governance.¹¹¹ In a democratic society, citizens demand the opportunity to participate in the political system. By attempting to saturate the public domain with a practice of consultation, a positive stress is placed on the governance aspect of municipal government. However, if political leaders cannot make decisions without asking the viewpoint of the citizenry, the machinery of government may slow to an ineffective rate of response. An inactive or indecisive government would be viewed as a negative stress in municipal governance terms. As for the *community* category, an obvious positive stress is applied when public participation is injected into the official decision-making processes. However, if the citizens are inundated with public meetings, surveys and other mechanisms for gauging the public's attitude, apathy or a disinterest in government may emerge that would be counter-productive to the municipality's objectives.

In more general terms, the three categories can influence the viability of a municipality in many ways. Financially, long-term debts, expensive services, and high tax rates can all be viewed as negative stresses while profitable recycling programs and cost-sharing agreements are positive stresses. In terms of governance, political representativeness and

¹¹¹Tindal and Tindal 1995.

the openness and transparency of decision-making are positive stresses; while poor caliber politicians and inefficient service-delivery are negative stresses. Public participation, as mentioned above, can be a net positive stress on the community, while an aging population, declining voluntarism, the loss of a major employer or a natural disaster may be viewed as negative community stresses.¹¹²

Both negative and positive stresses can be exerted on municipalities. The negative variety - such as an expensive infrastructure or high taxes - are usually more visible, while the positive stresses - such as a quality administration - does not normally receive the appropriate recognition in society. Municipalities can offset or combat negative stresses by building capacity and increasing positive stresses.¹¹³ Some stresses are difficult to predict and municipalities must be able to react to problems and rely on their capacity to overcome difficulties. In other instances a municipality can pro-actively anticipate potential or inevitable stress and take appropriate measures to defend against the negative forms and maximize the positive forms. The thesis here is that municipalities are not only missing opportunities to increase their capacity by engaging in cooperative and collaborative efforts with other sectors of society, but their actual viability may be dependent on shifting their methods of governance. This shift in governance, especially in the context of building community, could take the form of a new “community of communities”.

¹¹²Marshall and Douglas 1997. p.48.

¹¹³Marshall and Douglas 1997.

3.3.2 Rationale for Municipal Reform

Municipal reform can be divided into four basic categories: 1) organizational reform ; 2) financial reform; 3) functional and procedural reform; 4) reform affecting the number, type and tiering of local units.¹¹⁴ Under conditions where large-scale intervention by a provincial government is not involved, municipalities themselves may initiate one or two of these types of reform in attempts to improve local government more incrementally and voluntarily. Between 1995 and 1998, municipal reform in Ontario has involved each of these four categories.

Organizational reforms alter the internal structuring of local government. These changes can include internal bodies (e.g. the role of the mayor or certain committees), the decision-making process (e.g. the legal requirements for approving planning applications), or the organizational structure (e.g. internal hierarchy).¹¹⁵ *Financial* reforms have historically resulted in the centralization of financial authority. Senior governments such as provinces remove financial control for certain responsibilities from local governments to promote either an equalization of service quality or to convey a message of fiscal responsibility.¹¹⁶ The Province of Ontario has done this with the education system. Municipalities are no longer responsible for financing certain aspects of education through property taxes, while school boards have lost some of their decision-making authority. The Province has

¹¹⁴Bruno Dente 1988. "Local Government Reform and Legitimacy" in (ed.) Bruno Dente and Francesco Kjellberg The Dynamics of Institutional Change: Local Government Reorganization in Western Democracies. New York: Sage. 178.

¹¹⁵Dente 1988.

¹¹⁶Dente 1988.

claimed that these reforms will result in an equalization of financing burden and service levels in Ontario. *Functional and procedural* reforms alter the actual services delivered at the municipal level as well as altering the relationship with the central government. These reforms are at the heart of the debate between *decentralization* versus *deconcentration*. The Ontario government has relinquished its involvement, both financially and administratively, for many services; however, legislation maintains standards-setting and overall control at the provincial level. These change both the *function* mix and operating *procedures* followed by municipalities in delivering these services.

Reform affecting the number of local units has been one of the most visible changes in Ontario. Municipalities have consolidated, and thus, decreased both horizontal and vertical fragmentation at the local level. There are many incentives and hindrances for municipalities in consolidating. Reducing the number of municipalities, by consolidations, addresses a number of problems, including regional ineffectiveness, financial and economic pressures, lack of equity, ineffective accountability and the need to reduce provincial debt burdens and budget deficit problems.¹¹⁷ Larger municipalities are expected to reap the benefits of economies of scale, more effective regional planning, and attain improved accountability through fewer politicians. By consolidating, municipalities should also experience a more equitable distribution of resources, less competition between municipalities and, in general, better inter-governmental relations.¹¹⁸ Larger municipalities

¹¹⁷O'Brien 1993.

¹¹⁸O'Brien 1993.

are also touted as being more responsive to negative stresses which, in turn, should improve the effectiveness and capacity of municipal government¹¹⁹.

Opponents of consolidation believe that eliminating municipalities: reduces local identity and autonomy, reduces accessibility to government and political leaders, and will result in high tax levels. To avoid consolidation, alternatives such as inter-municipal agreements, revenue-sharing, grant equalization, disentanglement of services, community sub-units, or a second tier of government can be considered.¹²⁰ In Ontario's case, since the Province has been the driving force behind municipal consolidation, many of these alternatives have been rendered inappropriate. Revenue-sharing and grant equalization would have been near impossible due to the drastic reductions in transfer payments. The Province believes that services will be 'disentangled' as a result of government reductions and downloading, and while the two-tier system has been retained for the most part, the trend has been toward reducing the number of lower-tier of governments. The Province has also stated that many inter-municipal agreements are, actually, a reason in support of municipal consolidation.¹²¹ The argument can certainly be made that in situations where a group or even a pair of municipalities share the benefits of numerous joint-agreements, then consolidation may be a valid action to consider. If, however, municipalities are not engaged in sharing mechanisms, the desired objectives sought through consolidation may

¹¹⁹Dente 1988.

¹²⁰O'Brien 1993.

¹²¹Ontario Municipal Affairs and Housing 1996 A Guide to Municipal Restructuring. Toronto: Government of Ontario Press.

also be attained through inter-municipal agreements.

This thesis argues that since municipalities in County Country have historically not embraced the full potential of inter-municipal agreements, and in fact in some cases have made every effort to avoid co-operation, the prospects for them entering into inter-*sectoral* agreements and collaborations, as an alternative to consolidation, are not high. However, collaboration between the new municipalities and other sectors of society can now be pursued anew, given that the political boundaries that once separated competing municipalities have now, in large part, been eliminated. A window of opportunity may have opened in the midst of crisis, to establish a new inclusive collaborative municipal culture, before new parochialisms have a chance to take root. A strategic intervention possibility is represented by the first official, or strategic, plan initiative of the new municipality.

3.3.3 Relevant Provincial Policies

Once elected in 1995, the Harris provincial government quickly initiated its much publicised “Common Sense Revolution,” which has dramatically altered both the provincial and municipal government levels in Ontario. As mentioned in Chapter 1, many of the reforms initiated by the provincial government were recommended by the *Who Does What Advisory Committee*. This Committee’s mandate was to make recommendations on how to reorganize the relationship and responsibilities, of both the provincial and

municipal governments, to facilitate the delivery of services at a lower cost to taxpayers.¹²²

Within this broad mandate the purpose of the Who Does What Advisory Committee had four key elements: 1) reduce the size and amount of government in Ontario; 2) make government “simpler” by reducing the duplication of services; 3) create fiscal policies that reduce/eliminate the deficit allowing for a thirty per cent income tax reduction; and 4) make Ontario more “competitive” in the public and private sectors by having leaner, simpler, and fiscally-responsible government.¹²³

Within the first year of the new provincial government’s term it passed many new Acts and greatly affected municipal government.¹²⁴ The most significant was the Savings and Restructuring Act (Bill 26). Bill 26 gave the Provincial Cabinet sweeping powers that included the ability to “impose restructuring on county governments, amalgamate school boards, and abolish conservation authorities, among a myriad of other powers.”¹²⁵ The Provincial Government “wanted to do more than restrain the budgets of local governments; it wanted to reshape their core business and simplify and reduce the entire public sector.”¹²⁶

¹²²Who Does What Advisory Committee 1998. Toward Implementation. Toronto: The Government of Ontario and the Association of the Municipalities of Ontario.

¹²³Graham and Phillips 1998, 177-178.

¹²⁴The following legislation was passed within the provincial government’s first year in office: Savings and Restructuring Act, Municipal Boundary Negotiations Act (Amended), Fire Protection and Prevention Act, Better Local Government Act, Development Charges Act (Amended), Fewer School Boards Act, Police Services Act (Amended), Fair Municipal Finance Act, Water and Sewage Services Improvement Act, Public Sector Transition Stability Act and the Education Quality Improvement Act.

¹²⁵Graham and Phillips 1998, 182.

¹²⁶Graham and Phillips 1998, 182.

Counties and Districts were the main targets of the legislative changes. With the exception of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto,¹²⁷ the Province decided that reforms involving regional municipalities would be put off for future legislation.¹²⁸ This decision was made even though the *Who Does What Advisory Committee* recommended that a Greater Toronto Area Service Board should be created to take the place of the four upper-tier regional municipalities around Metropolitan Toronto.¹²⁹ The new legislation, involving counties and districts, attempts to reduce or eliminate, where possible, provincial involvement in financing municipal operations. As part of the withdrawal of funding, the province also withdrew direct provincial involvement. Unfortunately, the province only deconcentrated its responsibilities, while maintaining control over policy development through the provincial ministries and legislature. The main objective was to *disentangle* responsibilities among levels of government. All aspects of municipal government changed. Health service, social services, transportation, planning, finance, emergency services, public works, education, and culture and recreation services all changed as a result of the recommendations made by the *Who Does What Advisory Committee* and subsequent legislation. The Province was making these changes under the assertion that they would be 'revenue neutral' - neither the province nor the municipalities would need to raise tax levels to finance their new responsibilities. This claim was quickly challenged by municipalities. The Province's disentanglement objectives were revealed to be

¹²⁷The seven municipalities of the Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto were consolidated by the province. This action was taken even though the *Who Does What Committee* recommended against such action and a referendum held in Metro Toronto also opposed the consolidation.

¹²⁸Association of Municipalities of Ontario Municipal Alert. December 1995.

¹²⁹Graham and Phillips 1998, 184.

‘downloading’, “resulting in windfall savings for the province, with municipalities having to pick up the difference through increased property taxes or user-fees.”¹³⁰ The downloading of responsibilities were further challenged on the basis that municipalities were being given services with costs that were rising and difficult to control, such as long-term care of the elderly in an aging population, while the Province was taking services, mainly education, which have more stable, and controllable costs.¹³¹

In a further move to enlarge the mechanisms of local government, Ontario created Consolidated Municipal Services Managers (CMSMs) to administer the provision of Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, child care, and social housing programs. CMSMs will deliver these services on a county-wide basis, ignoring the existence of separated municipalities. There can only be one CMSM per county. Therefore, municipalities that remained separated from the county-system during municipal restructuring will now have to cooperate with their neighbouring county to determine who will provide the prescribed services. Furthermore, municipalities must consolidate their services, through cost-sharing agreements, or the Province will unilaterally consolidate the services and declare who the CMSM will be.¹³² For example, the County of Simcoe and the separated Cities of Orillia and Barrie, which have traditionally been bitter enemies, were unable to decide who would become the CMSM.

¹³⁰Graham and Phillips 1998, 181.

¹³¹Graham and Phillips 1998, 191.

¹³²Ontario Government 1998. Consolidation of Municipal Services Management. Toronto: Queen’s Printer of Ontario.

The Province appointed the County of Simcoe to be the CMSM for all three municipalities; however, Barrie and Orillia do have political representation on the joint-committees that govern the affected services. CMSMs would hopefully emerge as a valuable partner within a community of communities context. Each CMSM may be in a position to provide resources connected with the “hard” services that municipalities are increasingly responsible for. Collaboration between the larger community and the CMSM can only widen the scope of the C².

A number of the changes warrant further analysis in terms of the present thesis. As part of the finance reforms, the provincial assessment system will be updated to current market values. In some areas of the province, market prices set in 1954 were being used to determine current property tax levels. While the province maintains the legislative framework for municipal finances, the administration of the assessment and tax systems is to be removed from direct provincial responsibility and placed with an existing special-purpose body (the Assessment Corporation). The changes to the tax system are currently being implemented across Ontario; however, the transfer of power to the Assessment Corporation will take place at a future date.

Unless a city, town or village had its own police force, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is responsible for law-enforcement. The OPP is currently financed through provincial revenues at no direct expense to local municipalities. Small towns and almost every township in Ontario are policed by the OPP. In the very near future, each

municipality that uses the OPP will finance this service through a provincial levy imposed on every resident in the municipality. Also, the delivery of land ambulance services will become the responsibility of municipalities to finance and administer, with the Ministry of Health maintaining the provincial policies that regulate the service. While ambulance services are also costly, delivering police services is one of the key expenses that has forced many municipalities to amalgamate into new structures.

Health and social services changes are among the most significant for both provincial and municipal governments. Counties currently finance and administer, in whole or in part, homes for the aged, child care, social housing and welfare. As part of the reforms proposed by the province, municipalities would have increased or complete responsibility for these, as well the responsibility for Ontario Works, child care, social housing and public health.¹³³

The province has also removed itself from many municipal planning functions. Counties now have the authority to process subdivision proposals and also to approve lower-tier community and comprehensive plans. In the past, the provincial government had approval authority over both these aspects of planning. In most Counties, the authority to process subdivision applications will be with the County. Many of the larger towns, villages and townships within the county system handle their own planning responsibilities. In such cases, the lower-tier municipality would receive the subdivision approval authority unless

¹³³Ontario Government 1998.

they wanted the County to process the applications. The province has retained its authority for approving Official Plans at the County level. The province has not changed the content requirements of the County Official Plan, but the county and local municipalities can mould the direction of local plans. These can be considered major changes to municipal planning as a result of restructuring. Municipal planning at the county scale will now be on a more regional basis and will have to contend with fewer political bodies in terms of consultation and consensus-building.

3.4 The Ontario Approach to Municipal Restructuring and Consolidation

Municipal restructuring in Ontario's County Country has been somewhat of a restrictive, exclusive closed process. Most municipalities and the province view restructuring as a narrow political process, meant to be handled internally by council and administration.¹³⁴ Political battles focused on preserving local identity while financial realities brought the discussion down to more technical matters and operational procedures. For a municipal restructuring proposal to be approved, a "triple majority" is required. To obtain a triple majority in the county system, a majority of municipalities must endorse the proposal, the municipalities that endorse the proposal must represent a majority of the electorates, and County Council must also approve the proposal. Obtaining a triple majority allows a restructuring proposal to be submitted for provincial approval.¹³⁵

¹³⁴Based on interviews by the author with: Wayne Jamieson, Bruce County; Ralph Pugliese, Chatham-Kent; Bob Foulds, Frontenac Management Board; and Elizabeth McGrath, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

¹³⁵Ontario Municipal Affairs and Housing 1996.

To accelerate the restructuring process, the province stream-lined the amalgamation process and removed many of the past incentives that favoured the persistence of small municipalities. Not only has the province downloaded the responsibility for many secondary Provincial Highways to municipalities, but it has also reduced or eliminated grants for local roads. In the past, small urban and rural municipalities received a subsidy of up to 80% for all road work, while larger urban municipalities could only receive 50%. By eliminating this discrepancy, small urban and rural municipalities no longer have a financial incentive to oppose amalgamation. Since road work is the largest expenditure item for most small municipalities, these downloading changes become a distinct incentive to amalgamate. A second example on the other side of the ledger involves the provision of hydro services. Urban municipalities, under provincial legislation, must purchase its hydro infrastructure from Ontario Hydro. This includes any rural areas that a municipality may annex. To ask a municipality to purchase the rural hydro infrastructure of one or more townships would be unreasonable and unattainable. Therefore, this requirement has been eliminated from provincial legislation, to ensure that it cannot be represented as a hardship mitigating against large-scale restructuring.

To assist in the restructuring of municipalities in such a short period of time, the Ontario government has published two manuals, one in 1992 and the other in 1996. The first manual, Making It Work: A Management Manual for Municipal Amalgamations and Restructuring, was a collaboration with the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) and was an initiative of the previous provincial

government. This manual was created to develop a “blueprint [and] planning guidelines to assist municipalities in preparing for the changes they [may] experience”¹³⁶ while restructuring. Only 5 amalgamations, and over 150 annexations, had occurred in the past 10 years prior to the manual’s publication in 1992.

The second manual, A Guide to Municipal Restructuring was published in 1996 to give municipalities a check-list of items and tasks that the province would require municipalities to fulfil before a restructuring proposal could be considered. The province made clear that “the key emphasis throughout a restructuring exercise should be potential financial savings and their effect on local ratepayers.”¹³⁷ The province also made numerous revisions to the Municipal Act, many of which addressed municipal restructuring. The Act was amended to include the following principles, which were recommended by the *Who Does What Advisory Committee*, and which must be addressed by municipalities when developing restructuring proposals:

- **Less government**
 - fewer municipalities
 - reduced municipal spending
 - fewer elected representatives
- **Effective Representation System**
 - accessible
 - accountable
 - representative of population served
 - size that permits efficient priority-setting
- **Best Value for Taxpayer’s Dollar**
 - efficient service delivery
 - reduced duplication and overlap

¹³⁶AMCTO and Ontario Municipal Affairs 1992, 1.

¹³⁷Ontario Municipal Affairs and Housing 1996, 2.

- ability to capture the costs and benefits of municipal services within the same jurisdiction
- clear delineation of responsibilities between local government bodies
- **Ability of Provide Municipal Services From Municipal Resources**
 - local self reliance to finance municipal services
 - ability to retain and attract highly qualified staff
- **Supportive Environment for Job Creation, Investment and Economic Growth**
 - streamlined, simplified government
 - high quality services at the lowest possible cost¹³⁸

These objectives seem idealistic by reflecting the notion of the model municipality. The provincial motives might be better interpreted as its striving for large financial reductions (in the province's debt and deficit), while having municipalities struggle, over the long-term, to fulfill the objectives of local government. The Province claims that their financial policies will precipitate the development and evolution of municipalities that satisfy the objectives listed above. Municipalities are in a position where they must find new partners, other than the province, to support their work and objectives. New collaborations with the private sector, non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, community groups, services agencies, academic institutions and other local organizations may be the keys to municipal viability.

3.5 Strengthening the County System through Restructuring

County Country had been both strengthened and weakened by restructuring. Counties have been strengthened through new partnerships with once separated cities. If municipalities are able to overcome the long-term financial burdens that have been placed

¹³⁸Ontario Municipal Affairs and Housing 1996, ii.

on them by the Province, it is safe to assert that municipalities will be in a superior position to that of three years ago. The intrinsic geographic strength of the two-tiered county system of government is evident because their outer boundaries have not been substantially altered. Also, no counties were amalgamated during this round of restructuring, making counties an enduring geographic feature in Southern Ontario. It has been the institutions that govern within these boundaries that have changed over the years, in both form and function. In the past - earlier this century- nine counties amalgamated to form four new counties. The resulting current counties include: the County of Leeds and Grenville, the County of Lennox and Addington, the County of Prescott and Russell, and the County of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

It may be somewhat misleading to state that the changes to internal county boundaries were minor alterations. County boundaries changed to allow urban municipalities to annex land. In most cases the annexors were separated cities, and included: Kingston, Peterborough, Stratford, Belleville, Trenton, Gananoque, and London.¹³⁹ These cities by their annexations assumed significant portions of the respective county's tax assessment base. It can certainly be argued that these annexations are a result of development pressures and are needed to allow separated cities to develop long-term land-use plans, but one consequence is likely to be a weakening of the subject counties, unless their loss of assessment base is commensurate with their loss of related expenditure responsibilities. It can also be argued that where separated cities have annexed "urban" land from counties,

¹³⁹The City of London annexed large portions of Middlesex County prior to 1996.

the counties will be indirectly strengthened by a strengthening of the urban centres. This new “urban” strength may be accessed more directly by counties pursuing new partnerships with their urban neighbours.

One of the disturbing outcomes of the current flurry of amalgamations is the varying and contrasting structures that have emerged. At one extreme, three counties have been eliminated, resulting in the single-tiered Cities of Chatham-Kent, Prince Edward and Brant-on-the-Grand. At the other extreme some counties, including Grey, Huron, and Renfrew have remained relatively unchanged. In the middle are the majority of counties that have maintained the two-tiered system while significantly reducing the number of lower-tier municipalities. As mentioned earlier, the Province allowed municipalities to formulate local restructuring solutions without provincial interference, unless a Commissioner was needed. The new municipal system may actually be more confusing than before Mike Harris formed the provincial government.¹⁴⁰

One of the less tangible but potentially most critical advantages that should emerge as a result of restructuring include the benefits obtainable by removing not only some internal political boundaries, but also the barriers that formerly restricted large-scale cooperation among municipalities. The new municipalities are better able to view issues on a more regional basis. Hopefully, fewer municipal councils will translate into more effective

¹⁴⁰Terrence J. Downey, and Robert J. Williams 1998. “Provincial agendas, local responses: the ‘common sense’ restructuring of Ontario’s municipal governments.” Canadian Public Administration. 41 No. 2 (Summer) p.234.

decision-making at both the new local and County levels. With fewer councils, reaching a consensus at the County level should be more easily attainable. A new consensus at the municipal level could ideally lead to new municipal ties with other sectors of society. These new partnership possibilities may be increasingly necessary with the removal of the Province as an active participant in municipal affairs. Municipalities are more vulnerable and threats to their viability are increasing with provincial downloading, even though there may be some quick financial benefits obtained through economies-of-scale. Municipalities cannot retreat into their new structures and make the same mistakes of the past, only on a larger scale; the arenas of governance and community merit equal homage to that accorded finance. A more collaborative culture could translate into development of the new structures, not so much as just governments, but as a venue for expanded/enhanced governance. And the community development challenge can be seen to involve a new scale of reference, to develop the (new) community of (old) communities to better correspond with the new structures.

4.0 Restructuring in Three Ontario Counties

Some county restructuring occurred in the late 1960s when regional municipalities were created. Reforms in the remaining counties were pursued but not with the scope which was experienced in the creation of regional government. Twenty-six counties remained intact after the regional governments were introduced. Problems with the county system were believed to include: unfair representation of municipalities on county council; an increasing number of boundary disputes; the proliferation of inter-municipal agreements; and the inability of many small municipalities to deal effectively with growth pressures.¹⁴¹ The Province promoted methods to correct these problems, including consolidation, but did not impose such changes. Many counties altered the representation on County Council to better reflect the population distribution; however, very few services were 'disentangled', and even fewer municipalities were amalgamated. By contrast, since 1995, virtually every county in Ontario has executed some form of municipal restructuring in response to the Provincial Government's fiscal policies. County Country was ill-prepared for the magnitude of the reforms to both municipal and provincial responsibilities, and also for the volatility that followed the imposition of the reforms. Reform events have waned significantly in recent months (late-1998), with the exception of education reforms,¹⁴² and municipalities are now applying themselves to the challenge of operating the new municipal structures.

¹⁴¹O'Brien 1993, 73.

¹⁴²Teachers across Ontario protested the education reforms imposed by the Province. Teachers went on strike in late 1997 and were on strike at the beginning of the 1998 school year. All Ontario teachers' unions have pledged to campaign against the Conservative Government in the next Provincial election, slated for 1999.

In the context of this thesis, a substantial opportunity appears to lie within the grasp of many restructured municipalities, one that can be realized if the challenge of reforming governance techniques is embraced. Prior to restructuring, the level of both vertical and horizontal fragmentation at the municipal level was relatively high in County Country. The attitude that prevailed within the various levels of municipal government was characterised in part by an aversion to sharing any aspects of the municipal domain with other sectors of society, including cooperation with fellow municipalities. Municipalities approached governance as a task-oriented operation based on providing services, and extinguishing problems as they arose, with the resources at their immediate disposal. Municipalities perpetuated an inward-looking behaviour and only asked for assistance in crisis situations. Restructuring created a crisis situation. Municipalities have emerged from the crisis with new structures and, it is argued here, an opportunity to enter a new era of municipal governance.

Each county in Ontario has experienced the process of restructuring differently. This thesis focuses on an examination of how restructuring has changed three counties: the County of Frontenac, the County of Kent and the County of Bruce. Each of these counties is found in different areas of Southern Ontario and each offers unique perspectives on the restructuring process. To evaluate each county, background information is first provided outlining the conditions prior to and just after restructuring. The rationale for pursuing restructuring is then considered, followed by a discussion of the emerging conditions in each county.

4.1 Restructuring in the County of Frontenac

4.1.1 Background

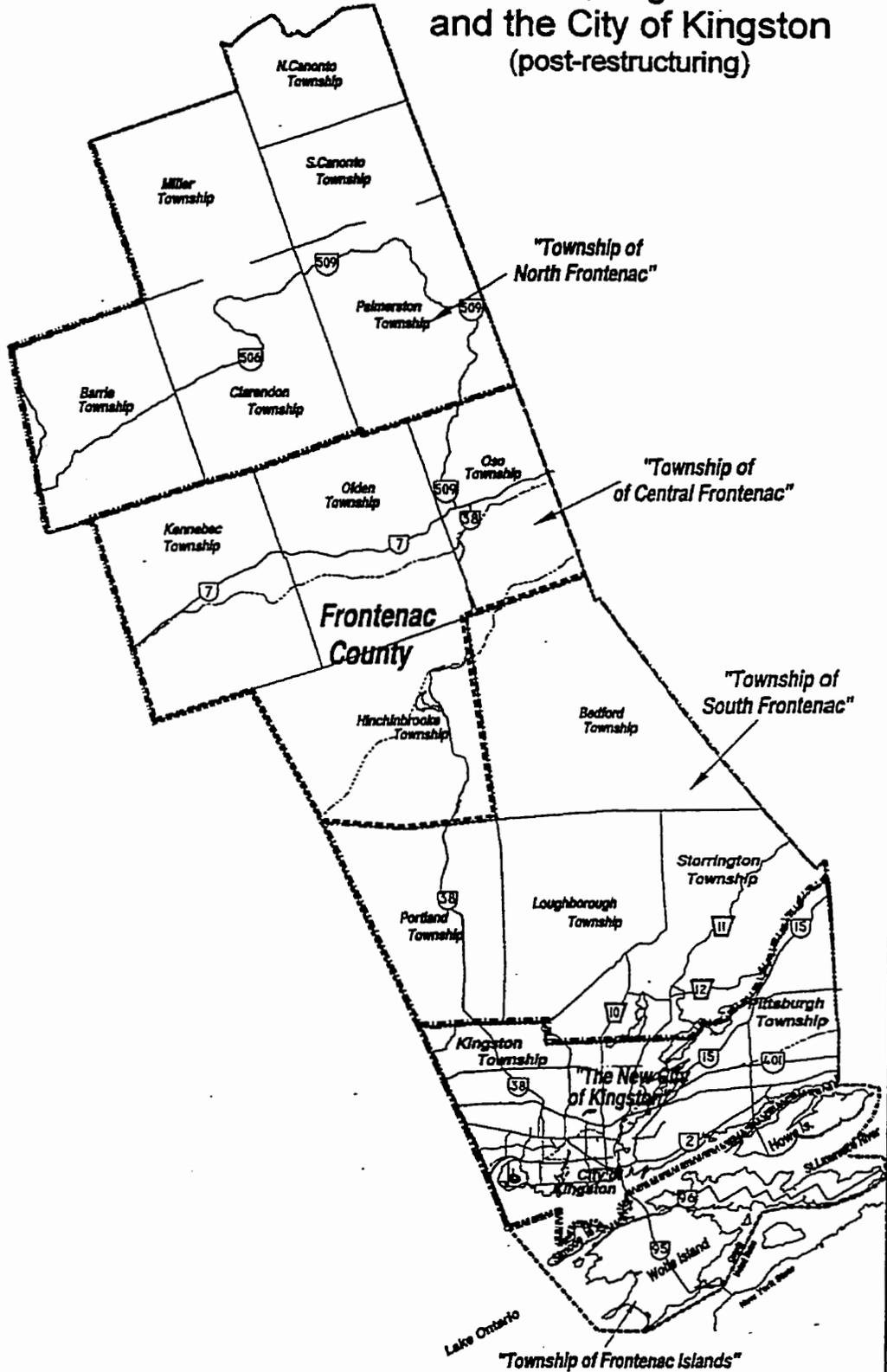
The County of Frontenac is located in eastern Ontario and borders the Counties of Lennox and Addington to the west, Renfrew to the north, Lanark - and Leeds and Grenville - to the east, and the City of Kingston and Lake Ontario to the south (see Figure 1). Prior to restructuring the County contained 15 township municipalities, two of which were islands: Howe Island and Wolfe Island (see Figures 11 and 12). Each township contained a 5-member council, with a total of 75 councillors in the County. Frontenac contained no urban municipalities; however, the separated City of Kingston acted as the urban centre for the region. Frontenac had a population of 71,913 people, with 33,595 households, and a land area of 382,000 hectares.¹⁴³ While Frontenac was a large county in area, 70 percent of its population occupied only 10 percent of its area, which was within the two townships that shared boundaries with the City of Kingston: Kingston Township and Pittsburgh Township. The remaining 90 percent of the County was sparsely populated and mainly consisted of rugged farmland and seasonal cottage areas.

After restructuring in early 1997,¹⁴⁴ the structure of both the County of Frontenac and the City of Kingston changed dramatically. The Townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh were amalgamated with the City of Kingston and the remaining 13 townships amalgamated into

¹⁴³Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs. 1998 Ontario Municipal Directory.

¹⁴⁴The legal incorporation of the new municipalities took place on January 1, 1998. The restructuring proposal was adopted on February 15, 1997 which marked the beginning of the transition period.

Figure 12
Frontenac Management Board
and the City of Kingston
 (post-restructuring)



Source: City of Kingston, Department of Planning

Figure 13: Municipal Structure of the County of Frontenac and the City of Kingston

Before Restructuring			After Restructuring January 1, 1998		
Municipality	Population	Area (hectares)	New Municipality	Population	Area (hectares)
City of Kingston	59,741	2,810	City of Kingston	11,0327	44,682
Township of Kingston	39,795	20,992			
Township of Pittsburgh	10,791	20,880			
Township of Wolfe Island	1,100	13,538	Township of Frontenac Islands	1,528	17,086
Township of Howe Island	428	3,548			
Township of Portland	4,646	21,955	Township of South Frontenac	14,292	97,539
Township of Loughborough	4,553	21,735			
Township of Storrington	4,031	23,748			
Township of Bedford	1,062	30,101			
Township of Hinchinbrooke	1,142	28,663	Township of Central Frontenac	3,965	103,855
Township of Kennebec	756	29,585			
Township of Olden	854	26,900			
Township of Oso	1,213	18,707			
Township of Barrie	711	21,629	Township of North Frontenac	1,542	11,8810
Township of Clarendon & Miller	483	43,991			
Township of Palmersont & North and South Canonto	348	53,190			
County of Frontenac	71,913	379,162	Frontenac Management Bd.	21,327	33,7290

Source: Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 1998.

4 townships¹⁴⁵ (see Figures 12 and 13). In the original proposal, only portions of the two major townships were to be annexed by Kingston. This would have provided the City with all the neighbouring urban development then outside of its boundaries as well as significant amount of rural land for future growth. However, both Township Councils voted against the division of their municipalities, resulting in a much larger amount of rural land being included in the City of Kingston. Technically, the City did not annex the two townships; instead, all three municipalities (City of Kingston, Kingston Township, and Pittsburgh Township) dissolved, and a new City of Kingston incorporated on January 1, 1998. The County of Frontenac, while maintaining the status of a county, was renamed

¹⁴⁵Kingston/Frontenac Governance Review Committee. 1996. Proposal for the Reform of Local Governance: Kingston/Frontenac.

the Frontenac Management Board (FMB). Each township is considered a separated municipality and is still governed by a 5-member council, making a total of 20 councillors in the FMB jurisdiction.¹⁴⁶ The FMB effectively replaces the County Council and is comprised of the heads of each township. The population of the FMB is 21,327 people, with 15,803 households, and an area of 337,290 hectares.¹⁴⁷

4.1.2 Rationale

The County of Frontenac was the first County in Ontario to initiate restructuring proceedings under the new provincial government regime in 1995. Municipal restructuring had been an ongoing issue in the area, led by the City of Kingston. The City wanted to annex portions of the surrounding townships because of increasing disparities in service-delivery costs and associated revenues. In particular, the Township of Kingston had been growing dramatically as a bedroom community for the City. The Township of Kingston was comparable in population to the City of Kingston (see Figure 13), however, the 'rural' residents relied heavily on City amenities. Negotiations between the City, the Townships and the County had been stalled until the new provincial government was elected. In 1995, the City requested the province to appoint a mediator to settle the dispute among the municipalities.¹⁴⁸ Fortunately, the City was persuaded to withdraw its request, under the assurances that the County and local municipalities would negotiate a

¹⁴⁶Kingston/Frontenac Governance Review Committee 1997. Proposal for the Reform of Local Governance: Kingston/Frontenac.

¹⁴⁷Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1998.

¹⁴⁸This request was made before the Province had passed legislation to create Commissions.

solution without provincial involvement. The Governance Review Committee (GRC), with political and administrative representatives from the County, local municipalities and the City, was then created to develop restructuring options for all of Frontenac and Kingston.¹⁴⁹

As part of the restructuring process, public meetings were held in each of the 15 townships and within the City of Kingston. At each meeting, citizens were informed that the current municipal structure was not an option and that some form of restructuring was ineluctable. Two most-favoured scenarios emerged from both the public meetings and from within the GRC. The first scenario would have resulted in the consolidation of the 13 townships and the County to form one large, single-tier municipality, and the two townships that neighboured the City would be annexed by Kingston. The resulting municipality would be called the "Township of Frontenac". This option was originally the preferred option; however, after further scrutiny and political debate, the second scenario, as described in Section 4.1.1, prevailed - four townships and the FMB were created.

From the public meetings, surveys and general comments received by the local governments, citizens were overwhelmingly supportive of municipal reform. The main opposition to restructuring came from current local political representatives who based their trepidation on the potential loss of their locality's identity and influence. It became

¹⁴⁹It is important to note that the County of Lennox and Addington, a neighbouring county with Frontenac, was originally part of the Governance Review Committee but soon withdrew from active participation. The County of Lennox and Addington remained as an observer to keep informed of the committee's progress.

evident that a loss of personal employment income also drove some of their resistance to restructuring.¹⁵⁰

The Frontenac Management Board

The municipal role of the County of Frontenac was greatly reduced when the Frontenac Management Board (FMB) was created. Counties in Ontario are predominantly responsible for the delivery of: County roads, municipal planning, homes for the aged, social and family services, health services, recreation and cultural services, libraries and museums. Prior to restructuring, the County had existing inter-municipal agreements to deliver the services associated with libraries, museums and social and family services with the Counties of Lennox and Addington, Hastings, and Leeds and Grenville, and the City of Kingston. These agreements were strengthened as a result of restructuring.¹⁵¹ Within the restructuring agreement, the County transferred all of its planning authority and all responsibility for County roads to the four new townships. The transfer of responsibility for County roads is significant for financial reasons. The FMB does not have the associated labour, maintenance, construction, and equipment expenses associated with this function. The shift in planning responsibilities is also an important factor on both functional and financial levels. The FMB remains able to undertake planning, or any other responsibilities, with the unanimous support of all four townships.

¹⁵⁰Robert Foulds 1998a. Chief Administrative Officer, Frontenac Management Board. Interview by author. June 5, 1998.

¹⁵¹The Transition Board of the New City of Kingston: Minister's Implementation Order. "Powers and Duties of the Frontenac Management Board" Section 6.0. 1997.

The FMB has gone to great lengths to reduce its role within the new administrative region. The 1998 budget for the FMB totalled \$11.5 million. Over one-third of the budget was dedicated to the Fairmount Home for the Aged,¹⁵² and more than one-quarter was for other social and health services. One million dollars of the budget was spent on the Ice Storm of 1998,¹⁵³ but was fully reimbursed by the Province.¹⁵⁴ The remaining portion of the budget was assigned to maintaining the FMB's service agreements with neighbouring municipalities. The FMB can be characterized as a provider of health and social services, and as an administrative body to manage the shared service arrangements. As a measure to further reduce the size and budget of the FMB, the Chief Administrative Officer also acts as the of Director of the Fairmount Home for the Aged.

As part of the restructuring agreement, the townships and the FMB strove to ensure that land-use planning would not become financially complicated. The agreement states that a 1,000 metre development buffer will be maintained around the City of Kingston boundary (which is now the two "old" townships).¹⁵⁵ The land currently within the buffer is predominantly agricultural. In turn, the City will not attempt to annex any land unless they are asked to provide municipal services to developments. Currently, no properties with the four townships possess underground infrastructure for the provision of water or sewers. Therefore, municipalities can greatly simplify their planning and servicing requirements if

¹⁵²This is the only home for the aged in Frontenac. Ironically, it is located in what used to be the Township of Kingston, but is now within the City of Kingston.

¹⁵³The Ice Storm of 1998 was a devastating natural disaster that affected a large portion of eastern Ontario. The most severe damage occurred in neighbouring areas of the Province of Quebec.

¹⁵⁴Frontenac Management Board. Budget, 1998.

¹⁵⁵Kingston/Frontenac Governance Review Committee 1997.

they refrain from approving development proposals requiring such facilities. It should be recognised that the likelihood of a residential, commercial, or industrial development locating outside of boundaries of the City is remote.

The City of Kingston

The City of Kingston received control of the land that it had been pursuing for a number of years, along with a substantial amount of rural land. This not only increased its importance as the regional centre, but it was also strengthened through new service-delivery partnerships with the FMB and neighbouring Counties. The City has utilised a ward system for elections for many years. With the inclusion of the Townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh into the City, a new ward (or 'District' as they are called in Kingston) was created, that elects two representatives to City Council. The new District is divided into West and East zones coinciding with the old township boundaries (see Figure 10). The entire council has 15 members, including a mayor and deputy mayor that are elected at-large. The City has also created a four-member board of control which is elected at large. The board of control weakens, to a certain extent, the influence of the elected City Council but "gives candidates based in the old townships an opportunity to play a city-wide role without having to win the race for mayor."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶Terrence J. Downey and Robert J. Williams 1998. "Provincial agendas, local responses: the 'common sense' restructuring of Ontario's municipal governments." Canadian Public Administration. 41 No. 2 (Summer). 227-228.

4.1.3 Results

The Frontenac Management Board

Restructuring had diametrically different effects on the County of Frontenac and the City of Kingston. The County of Frontenac was replaced by a special-purpose body, and - by definition - is now a management agency that is removed from the political process.

However, most special-purpose bodies focus on one component of services delivery such as: policing, utility supply, public transit, libraries, etc.¹⁵⁷ The FMB has maintained the legal status of a county,¹⁵⁸ but only performs a fraction of a county's responsibilities.

Similar special-purpose bodies have been formed in other Provinces. For example, in Nova Scotia the Metropolitan Authority was formed in 1962 to deliver public transit and waste management services to the City of Halifax, City of Dartmouth, County of Halifax and the Town of Bedford. The municipalities were unable to cooperate under the Authority and, in 1996, the Authority was eliminated and replaced through the consolidation of the participating municipalities by the Provincial government into the single-tier Halifax Regional Municipality.¹⁵⁹

The changes that have occurred in Frontenac have been both divisive and conjunctive. Eliminating the county and organizing the municipalities into four large townships has reinforced the isolationist tendencies that originally placed municipalities in an unviable

¹⁵⁷Siegel 1994.

¹⁵⁸The Transition Board of the New City of Kingston 1997.

¹⁵⁹Hugh Millward 1996. "Greater Halifax: Public Policy Issues in The Post-1960 Period." Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 5:1 (June) 1-17.

condition. The townships may now operate under the belief that they have the capacity to function without the assistance from the FMB, neighbouring municipalities, and other sectors of society. The FMB has defined its role as an administrative, service-oriented level of government with minimal political influence.¹⁶⁰ It remains a second-tier of local government, but with greatly-diminished capacity in comparison to other Ontario Counties.

Municipal planning has always been a minor component of local government in Frontenac. Restructuring has given the new township municipalities full planning authority,¹⁶¹ however, they only handle minor variances and adjustments while the services of planning consultants are procured to deal with larger issues such as development plans or zoning changes and amendments. The role of municipal planning outside of the City of Kingston is negligible. While the province will be downloading the responsibility of subdivision approval to the local municipalities, this function will also be managed by consultants for the Townships.

Restructuring has also concentrated municipal power and authority with the four new townships. Prior to restructuring, the municipalities were fragmented and weak. Many of the townships had populations of less than 1000 people. The County covered a large area and a small population. Financial control lay with the two large townships neighbouring

¹⁶⁰Robert Foulds 1998b. ex-Chief Administrative Officer. Frontenac Management Board. Telephone interview by author. September 8, 1998.

¹⁶¹The Transition Board of the New City of Kingston 1997.

the City. With the County removed from active control over many municipal issues, the Townships should be better able to influence and direct their affairs in a way that is characteristic of their particular locality instead of the new region/old county area.

As mentioned earlier, the County of Frontenac was the first County to restructure under the newly elected Conservative Government - a situation that proved to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, Frontenac possessed the foresight to realize the conditions for municipalities were going to change dramatically. They moved quickly to restructure and prepare themselves for the stresses that the province would impart on their viability as municipalities. Unfortunately, they underestimated the magnitude of the provincial download of services, and the cuts to transfer payments. Neither the County nor the townships expected the Province to further download the responsibility of providing such expensive services as: police, land ambulance, and large stretches of Provincial Highways. It is likely that the capacities of the four new township municipalities in Frontenac will not be great enough to accommodate the associated financial burdens that they now need to manage. The ex-Chief Administrative Officer of the County of Frontenac, and architect of the restructuring plan, predicts that the four township municipalities will consolidate into one municipality within 20 years, as a result of financial hardships associated with the much greater-than-anticipated provincial-municipal finance reforms.¹⁶²

¹⁶²Foulds. September 8, 1998.

The City of Kingston

Three notable events from the City's perspective occurred as a result of restructuring. First, the City obtained the land that it had sought for many years. Second, the City and the FMB created an Urban/Rural Liaison Committee as a mechanism for discussing issues of mutual concern and interest. Third, and most importantly to this thesis, the City created a Client Service and Community Development Department (CSCDD).

By absorbing the two significant neighbouring township municipalities, the City now has jurisdiction over the delivery of services and governance to all the truly urban settings in the area. The fringe developments that sprung up in the townships were in a sense an extension of the City, but not within the City. It was appropriate that the City acquired this land as a result of restructuring. The growing service disparities that existed between the City and the Townships, along with the animosity and mistrust, is now gone.

The Urban/Rural Liaison Committee is a positive step in maintaining a connection between the four Townships, the FMB and City of Kingston. While the Committee has not yet met (as of October 1998) its mandate, as defined by the Restructuring Proposal, states that the Committee "shall be responsible for bringing items of mutual interest to the attention of the respective councils/committees and for making recommendations for addressing such items of mutual interest."¹⁶³ Representation on the Committee is divided

¹⁶³City of Kingston and County of Frontenac 1996. Governance Review Committee Report. July 10, 1996. 20.

equally between the City and the Townships. The FMB is represented by its C.A.O. It is unclear how this committee will evolve; however, the hope is that it does more than examine service-delivery issues, and actually helps create partnerships that extend into the governance and community aspects of all municipalities.¹⁶⁴

The creation of the CSCDD is an important new direction in the evolution of the new City of Kingston. This department did not exist prior to restructuring and has two basic objectives. First, to ensure the City maintains or enhances its emphasis on customer/client service. Second, to be a resource and coordinating force for all community initiatives within the City of Kingston. This new emphasis on community-building was initiated by the City's new Chief Administrative Officer and was supported by a number of community-minded councillors.¹⁶⁵ The CSCDD is a budding example of the need for a special effort to develop the new 'community of communities' to match the new political configuration. The department's scope of influence covers the entire city and is dedicated to assisting and promoting community development. The department currently assists community groups on an individual basis, and since they are a new service within the City they have adopted a very passive approach to avoid any misconception about their desire to assist and promote (instead of control and direct) community initiatives. Their goal is to move from assisting individual groups to promoting larger projects and programs that

¹⁶⁴From interview with Robert Foulds, FMB, and Lance Thurston and Cheryl Mastantuono, City of Kingston, June 3, 1998.

¹⁶⁵Lance Thurston 1998. Commissioner of Client Services and Community Development, City of Kingston. Interview by author. June 5, 1998.

benefit the larger community. While the CSCDD is restricted to within the limits of the City, staff foresee the extension of their services into the rural areas of the FMB.¹⁶⁶ In conjunction with the City's Corporate Planning Unit, the CSCDD is expecting to create a guiding vision for not only their work, but also for the City as a whole. The objective is to define a vision that is "inclusive of all stakeholders and build[s] on the assets and capabilities that already exist in [the] community."¹⁶⁷ To further establish the City of Kingston as the lead organization, or 'community', they propose to "establish good collaborative partnerships with key contacts in stakeholder organizations, ... [which] will expedite short-term planning and form a solid base of the long-term planning process."¹⁶⁸

The Kingston/Frontenac Region

The City of Kingston is on a promising path of visioning and community involvement. In Frontenac, municipalities do not so much face a planning challenge but a challenge to the very continued existence of their new townships. The City has become a stronger municipality as a result of restructuring. The townships need to access the progressive workings of the City's community development initiatives to bolster their own activities. The size and economic base of the municipalities within Frontenac cannot sustain a full-time planner to help manage the new community-building needs. The sooner the new townships within the FMB become more involved with the City to forge new ties, possibly

¹⁶⁶Lance Thurston and Cheryl Mastantuono June 3, 1998.

¹⁶⁷City of Kingston Client Service and Community Development Department. Putting the Pieces in Place: Community Development in the New City of Kingston. November, 1997. 1.

¹⁶⁸City of Kingston Client Service and Community Development Department. November, 1997. p.3.

through the Urban/Rural Liaison Committee, the sooner the townships can increase their capacity, and enhance the viability of the entire Kingston/Frontenac region.

4.2 Restructuring in the County of Kent

4.2.1 Background

The County of Kent is located in the most southerly part of Ontario. It shares boundaries with the County of Lambton to the north, the County of Elgin to the east, the County of Essex to the west and Lake Ontario to the south (see Figure 1). Prior to restructuring, the County was comprised of 21 lower-tier municipalities: 6 towns, 5 villages and 10 townships (see Figures 14 and 15). Each municipality had a 5-member council, yielding a County with 105 municipal politicians (see Figure 13). County Council contained 36 councillors with one or two representatives from each municipality. Councillors possessed weighted voting powers ranging from 1 to 6 votes per municipality.¹⁶⁹

The County had a population of 66,288 people, 25,662 households and covered an area of 245,059 hectares.¹⁷⁰ The rural portions of the county are heavily dominated by crop farming (mostly corn, tomatoes and soya beans). Most of the urban areas in the county feature traditional downtown areas while some contain small or medium-sized industries often related to the automotive sector. The separated City of Chatham, located in the geographic centre of the County, and with a population of 43,690, is the main urban

¹⁶⁹County of Kent. 1994. Kent County Government Services Study: Final Report.

¹⁷⁰Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1998.

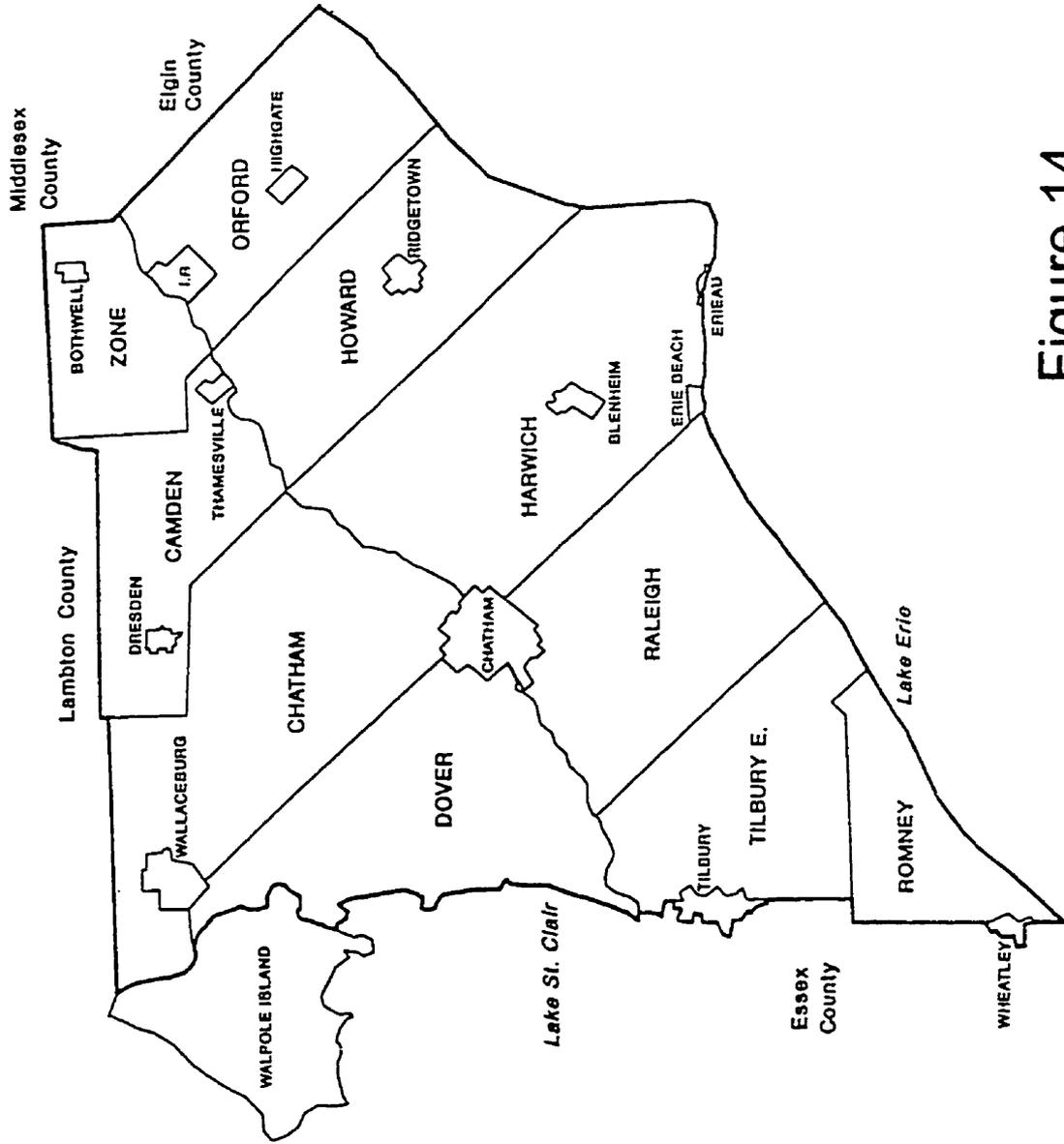


Figure 14
County of Kent and the City of Chatham
(pre-restructuring)

Source: County of Kent, Department of Planning

Figure 15: Municipal Structure of the City of Chatham-Kent

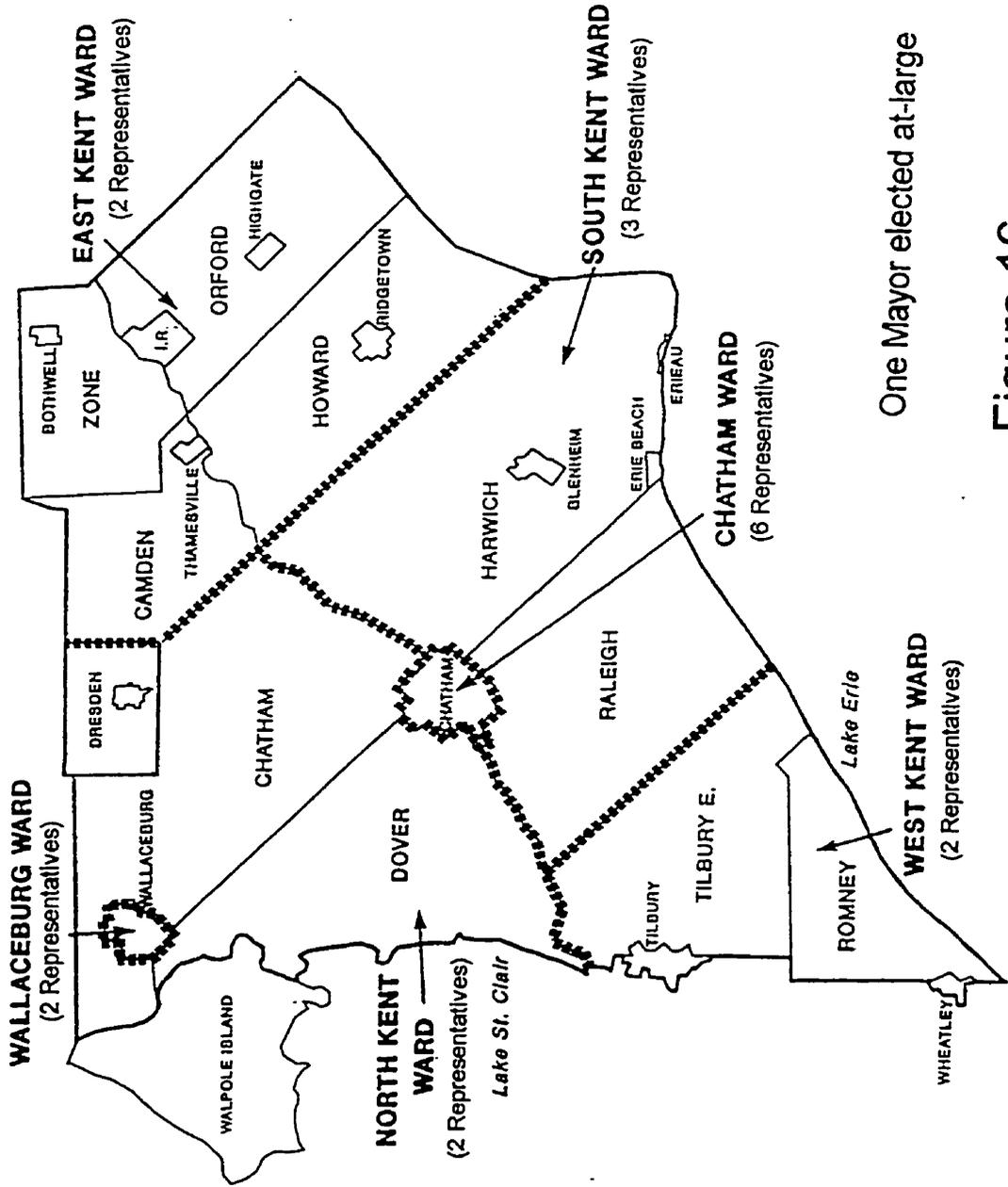
Before Restructuring			After Restructuring January 1, 1998		
Municipality	Population	Area (hectares)	Wards (not Municipalities)	Population	Area (hectares)
City of Chatham	43,690	3,080	Chatham	43,690	3,080
Town of Wallaceburg	11,860	1,068	Wallaceburg	11,860	1,068
Town of Tilbury	4,254	558	West Kent	10,939	34,817
Village of Wheatley	1,857	187			
Township of Romney	2,246	11,074			
Township of Tilbury East	2,582	22,998			
Town of Dresden	2,792	309	North Kent	13,913	69,766
Township of Dover	4,173	28,019			
Township of Chatham	6,059	35,632			
Township of Camden*	689	5,806			
Town of Blenheim	4,767	382	South Kent	17,597	69,700
Village of Erie Beach	236	28			
Village of Erieau	482	78			
Township of Raleigh	5,509	28,880			
Township of Harwich	6,603	40,332			
Town of Ridgetown	3,834	462	East Kent	12,146	69,708
Town of Bothwell	912	233			
Village of Thamesville	1,025	202			
Village of Highgate	478	241			
Township of Howard	2,249	24,738			
Township of Orford	1,283	20,831			
Township of Zone	987	11,388			
Township of Camden*	1,378	11,613			
County of Kent	66,255	245,059			

* The Township of Camden was divided between the North Kent and East Kent Wards.

Source: Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 1998.

centre for most of the (former) county. Restructuring for both the County of Kent and the City of Chatham culminated on April 28, 1997 when a provincially-appointed Commissioner consolidated the City of Chatham with all of the municipalities within the County of Kent to form the single-tiered City of Chatham-Kent.¹⁷¹ The new municipality was officially incorporated on January 1, 1998 with a population of 109,945 people,

¹⁷¹Kent County and the City of Chatham. 1997 Final Restructuring Proposal for Kent County and the City of Chatham. April 28, 1997.



One Mayor elected at-large

Figure 16
 City of Chatham-Kent
 (post-restructuring)

Source: County of Kent, Department of Planning

44,199 households and covers an area of 248,139 hectares.¹⁷² The new City has been divided into six wards and a 17-member council, plus a mayor (see Figures 15 and 16.).

4.2.2 Rationale

In 1995, five economically-strong municipalities in the County of Kent, the Townships of Raleigh and Harwich, the Town of Blenheim, and the Villages of Erie Beach and Erieau, wanted to amalgamate and secede from the County, to form a separated, single-tier city to be known as "South Kent". These intentions were made public at the same time as the Provincial government announced its own aggressive restructuring plans. "South Kent" did not wish to continue subsidising less-developed areas of the County and believed that it was financially capable of supporting itself. The County, under pressure from "South Kent", the Province, and the other 18 local municipalities initiated a research project to assemble relevant information pertaining to the "South Kent" proposal and to evaluate other municipal restructuring possibilities.

The County developed five restructuring scenarios, proposing different levels of municipal fragmentation and service-delivery configurations. The proposals were circulated to all municipalities and concerned agencies to determine their acceptance and level of support. The main interest of the restructuring report was to maximise the efficiency of service-

¹⁷²Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1998.

delivery.¹⁷³ The County also created a public focus group which comprised 22 citizens from across the County. This group had two primary functions. First, they were to comment on the Restructuring Committee recommendations and policies. Second, they were to act as a liaison with the general public. The group did not possess decision-making authority or the ability to strike-down any of the Restructuring Committee's decisions. They were to provide feed-back to the County regarding confusing or questionable policies advanced by the Restructuring Committee, which used this feed-back to clarify issues and concerns for the general public. The County also conducted 7 public forums across the county to access more input from the public.¹⁷⁴ As was the case in the Kingston/Frontenac public meetings, local politicians were the most vocal dissidents with respect to the restructuring proposals.

None of the five restructuring proposals received the necessary endorsement by local municipalities. The debate at the local and County level became extremely volatile and had deteriorated to a point where negotiations and compromise were not foreseeable. It was not until an extraordinary session of County Council that the Warden requested the Province to appoint a Commissioner.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³Ralph Pugliese 1998. Planner, City of Chatham-Kent, former Director of Planning, Kent County. Interview by author. May 27, 1998.

¹⁷⁴Pugliese May 27, 1998.

¹⁷⁵The restructuring debate in a session of Kent County Council became extremely heated, causing one councillor to suffer a severe heart-attack and die. The Warden ended the meeting and proceeded to call the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing that same day to request the appointment of a Commissioner.

The City of Chatham was absent from the County restructuring process deliberations until a Commissioner was appointed. The City believed that it was financially prepared to accommodate the services being downloaded by the Province. However, the City also knew that the Commissioner would include Chatham in the restructuring decision and if the City was to influence this decision, and protect its interests, it must become involved in the debate.¹⁷⁶

Once a Commissioner was appointed the varying objectives of the municipalities became increasingly apparent. The City of Chatham wanted to annex land from neighbouring townships and remain a separated city. The County wanted to maintain a two-tiered system and have lower-tier municipalities consolidate into four or five municipalities. The County also wanted the City of Chatham to become part of the County system, in a similar manner as the City of Sarnia had with the County of Lambton. Lower-tier municipalities wanted a range of different configurations. As mentioned above, some municipalities wanted to secede, others endorsed large-scale amalgamations, while others only wanted minor changes. Municipalities also had varying expectations of the County. Some wanted a strong county, while others wanted a service-oriented county similar to the Frontenac Management Board. The Commissioner, in five days, narrowed the options to two restructuring scenarios: 1) a two-tiered system with the County remaining the upper-tier with the lower-tier comprising four consolidated townships and the City of Chatham; and 2) consolidating all municipalities, including the City of Chatham into one, single-tier

¹⁷⁶Pugliese May 27, 1998.

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¹⁷⁶Pugliese May 27, 1998.

Commissioner ordered that the City of Chatham, the County of Kent and all member municipalities be dissolved and then re-consolidated as the City of Chatham-Kent, effective January 1, 1998.¹⁸⁰

4.2.3 Results

The restructuring process in the County of Kent and the City of Chatham set a precedent for Ontario municipalities. Not only were 23 municipalities consolidated, the action was unilaterally imposed by the Provincial Government. Politicians and municipal staff across County Country were shocked into renewing their own restructuring process efforts with increased vigour and dedication, to avoid the fate of Kent County. While most Counties wanted to avoid complete consolidation of their municipalities, the Counties of Brant and Prince Edward self-imposed structures similar the Chatham-Kent scenario. Prince Edward County, the only island county in Ontario, consolidated its 10, predominantly rural, municipalities into one city. The County of Brant consolidated its 6 municipalities into one, however, the City of Brantford remained separated from the newly created City of Brant-on-the-Grand.

The new government structure has been dominated by the City of Chatham. The City has effectively absorbed the County and the 21 municipalities into the administrative structure of the City. While the new municipality is a “city”, this action has effectively eliminated the County system of government. The structure, as it pertains to this thesis, has changed

¹⁸⁰Kent County and the City of Chatham April 28, 1997. 13.

in one key respect, the Planning and Development Department has been renamed the Strategic and Land Use Planning Department. Part of this Department's new mandate is to create a planning vision within a new Strategic Plan. The new City is in its infancy and this endeavour has not yet started (as of December 1998). The hope is that the Plan and vision go beyond land use parameters and explore the broader community development possibilities and needs.¹⁸¹ Sadly, under the old structures neither the County nor the City was actively involved in even simple community development (far less the more elaborate 'community of communities' development at the heart of this thesis). While the need for a new Strategic Plan and a "vision" have been recognised, unless City Council, or senior staff in the administration, make community development a priority, in a similar fashion as the City of Kingston, it will probably be excluded from or downplayed in the Plan.¹⁸²

All planning functions have been consolidated within the City. Since the County Administration Building was also within the City, access to planning staff and resources has never been easily available in the rural areas. Municipal Clerks would advise residents to the best of their abilities, but citizens would need to travel to Chatham, or call the County, to receive planning direction. The removal of all municipal offices has eliminated access points to local government. To compensate for this loss, the City has established five sub-offices. Three of the sub-offices, which are located within the larger urban centres and housed in the old municipal offices (Wallaceburg, Blenheim and Tilbury), have

¹⁸¹Pugliese May 27, 1998.

¹⁸²Pugliese May 27, 1998.

one full-time staff person. The other two are located in small town libraries (Bothwell and Ridgetown) and consist of a display and a drop-box. At each location, residents can pay their taxes and submit planning applications for minor variances and consent applications.

A number of important trends have emerged in the short time that the new City has existed. City Council has become focused on formulating policy instead of the day-to-day administration of the municipality.¹⁸³ (In the former circumstances, councillors would be intimately involved in how staff operated and executed the policies created in councils). It appears that Council will be focused on governance, and staff will focus on administration.

Interest groups have also started to form, predominantly within the rural areas. Citizens are grouping together to voice their opinions on issues that they believe to be important, and possibly apt to be missed in the absence of the more direct access to local government once enjoyed. Before restructuring rural residents had very convenient access to their councils. Under the new structure, where 30 councillors once were available, only two now exist. Two examples will illustrate this trend and its potential for encouraging greater community development initiatives in a restructured Chatham-Kent.

In the first example, the City had scheduled the closure of the County Library located in Town of Bothwell.¹⁸⁴ The residents in this area were strongly opposed to this decision

¹⁸³Pugliese May 27, 1998.

¹⁸⁴Bothwell was a rural municipality with a population of 900 people, now located in the Ward of East Kent (see Figure 14).

because the library building was also home to the old municipal office and a local theatre group. Without the library, the theatre group would need to find another location for their productions. No such facility could be found. A number of community-minded citizens organized a petition and made a formal deputation to City Council. The library remains open to this day, and also functions as an information sub-office of the City.

The second example involves the Kent County Federation of Agriculture. Historically, this organization had been bitterly divided between livestock farmers and cash-crop farmers. The creation of a single, policy-making municipal council, that covered all rural areas united both camps. The Federation decided to cooperate and develop city-wide agricultural policy for the new council to consider. A united approach would not have been possible under the old fragmented government structure. Prior to restructuring, the County contained a patch-work of agricultural policies that perpetuated the division in the Federation.¹⁸⁵

4.3 Restructuring in the County of Bruce

4.3.1 Background

The County of Bruce is located in the western portion of Southern Ontario. The County shares boundaries with the County of Huron to the south, the County of Grey to the east, Lake Huron to the west, and Georgian Bay to the north (see Figure 1). Prior to restructuring the County comprised 30 lower-tier municipalities: 6 towns, 8 villages, and

¹⁸⁵Pugliese May 27, 1998.

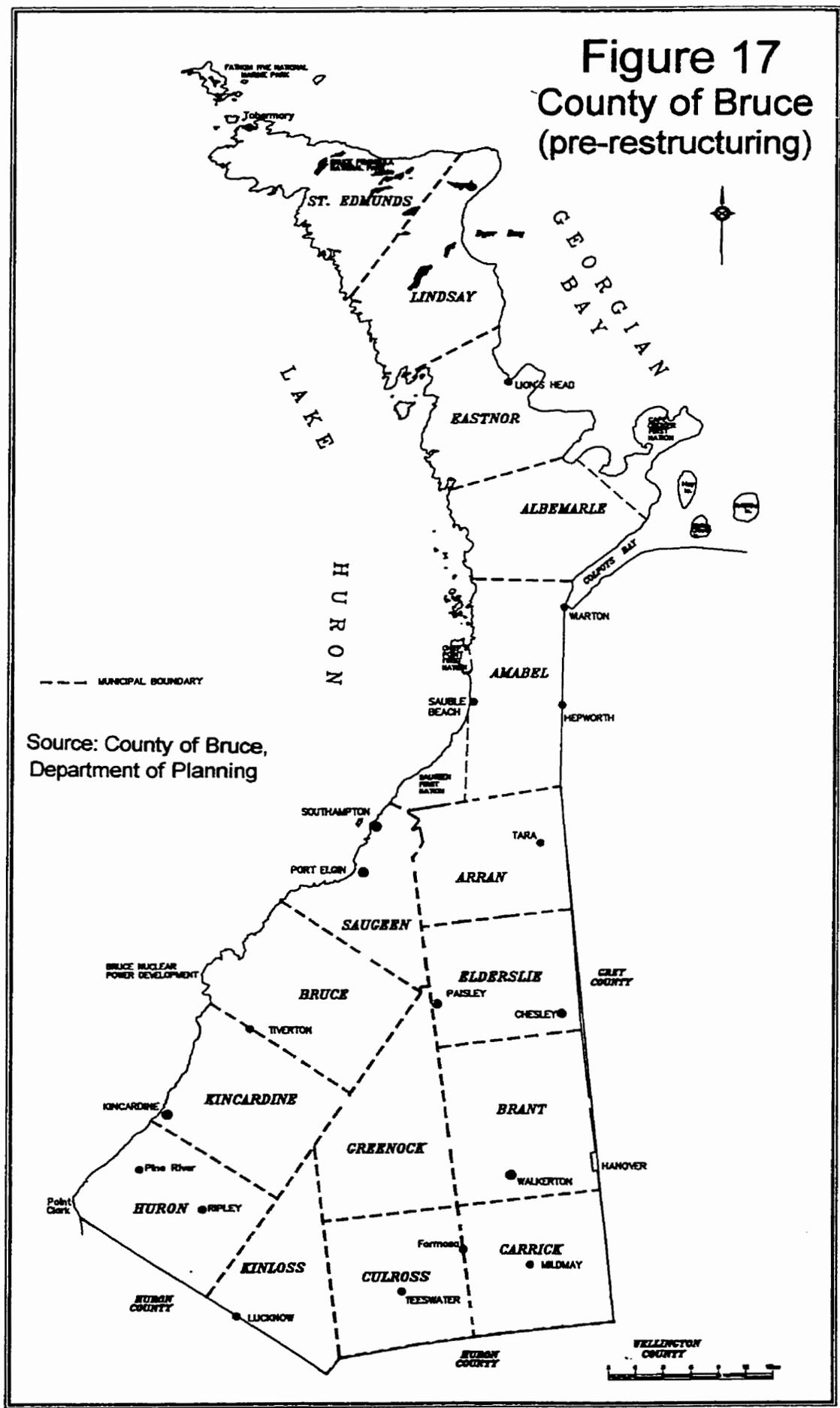
16 townships. There are no separated cities within Bruce County (see Figures 17 and 18). Each municipality possessed a 5-member council, yielding 150 local politicians in the County. The heads of each council sat on County Council. Councillors received weighted voting powers based on the number of electors they represented. The County has a population of 61,5686 people, 35,043 households, and covers an area of 394,065 hectares.¹⁸⁶ The landscape in Bruce County is dominated, in the north, by hard, rocky soil with the southern portion being more arable land. Bruce County is one of the largest producers of beef cattle in Ontario. The most dominant natural feature in the County is the Niagara Escarpment, which starts in the Hamlet of Tobermory and extends the length of the Bruce Peninsula. A large portion of the non-agricultural economy in the County lies with the tourism industry. The Province of Ontario approved the County's restructuring proposal on February 14, 1998 with an implementation date set for January 1, 1999.¹⁸⁷ Under the proposal the 30 lower-tier municipalities would amalgamate to form 8 municipalities: 6 townships and 2 towns (see Figures 18 and 19). Each "new" township has adopted a ward system of election. The "old" municipal boundaries will constitute a ward with the mayor (changed from reeve) being elected "at-large".¹⁸⁸ The County would remain unchanged as the upper-tier municipality. Even with Provincial approval, the restructuring process was far from complete - the Township of Bruce had appealed the

¹⁸⁶Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1998.

¹⁸⁷Bruce County. 1997a. Report of the Restructuring Committee. May 20, 1997

¹⁸⁸Bruce County. 1997b. Restructuring Proposal. October 21, 1997.

Figure 17
County of Bruce
 (pre-restructuring)



Source: County of Bruce,
 Department of Planning

Figure 18: Municipal Structure of the County of Bruce

Before Restructuring			After Restructuring January 1, 1999		
Municipality	Population	Area (hectares)	New Municipalities	Population	Area (hectares)
Town of Kincardine	6,277	769	*Official Name has not been Gazetted	11,334	53,274
Village of Tiverton	796	205			
Township of Kincardine	2,825	24,152			
Township of Bruce	1,436	28,148			
Village of Lucknow	1,159	197	Official Name has not been Gazetted	5,972	43,698
Township of Huron	3,640	24,193			
Township of Kinloss	1,173	19,308			
Village of Mildmay	1,069	158	Official Name has not been Gazetted	6,062	48,469
Village of Teeswater	1,027	176			
Township of Culross	1,566	23,421			
Township of Carrick	2,400	24,714			
Town of Walkerton	4,752	626	Official Name has not been Gazetted	9,589	56,402
Township of Brant	3,213	28,708			
Township of Greenock	1,624	27,068			
Town of Chesley	1,781	306	Official Name has not been Gazetted	6,421	45,867
Village of Paisley	1,040	205			
Village of Tara	857	218			
Township of Elderslie	1,147	22,584			
Township of Arran	1,596	22,554			
Town of Southampton	2,994	707	Official Name has not been Gazetted	11,387	17,011
Town of Port Elgin	6,618	616			
Township of Saugeen	1,775	15,688			
Town of Wiarton	2,214	352	Official Name has not been Gazetted	7,465	53,235
Village of Hepworth	442	280			
Township of Amabel	3,664	28,464			
Township of Albemarle	1,145	24,139			
Village of Lion's Head	517	207	Official Name has not been Gazetted	3,338	76,109
Township of Eastnor	1,362	23,144			
Township of Lindsay	486	27,063			
Township of St. Edmunds	973	25,695			
County of Bruce	61,568	39,4065	County of Bruce	61,568	39,4065

* The legal name for this new municipality will be The Town of Kincardine-Bruce-Tiverton. Each of the new municipalities have created similar compilation name, however, new names will be Gazetted with the Provincial Government in the near future.

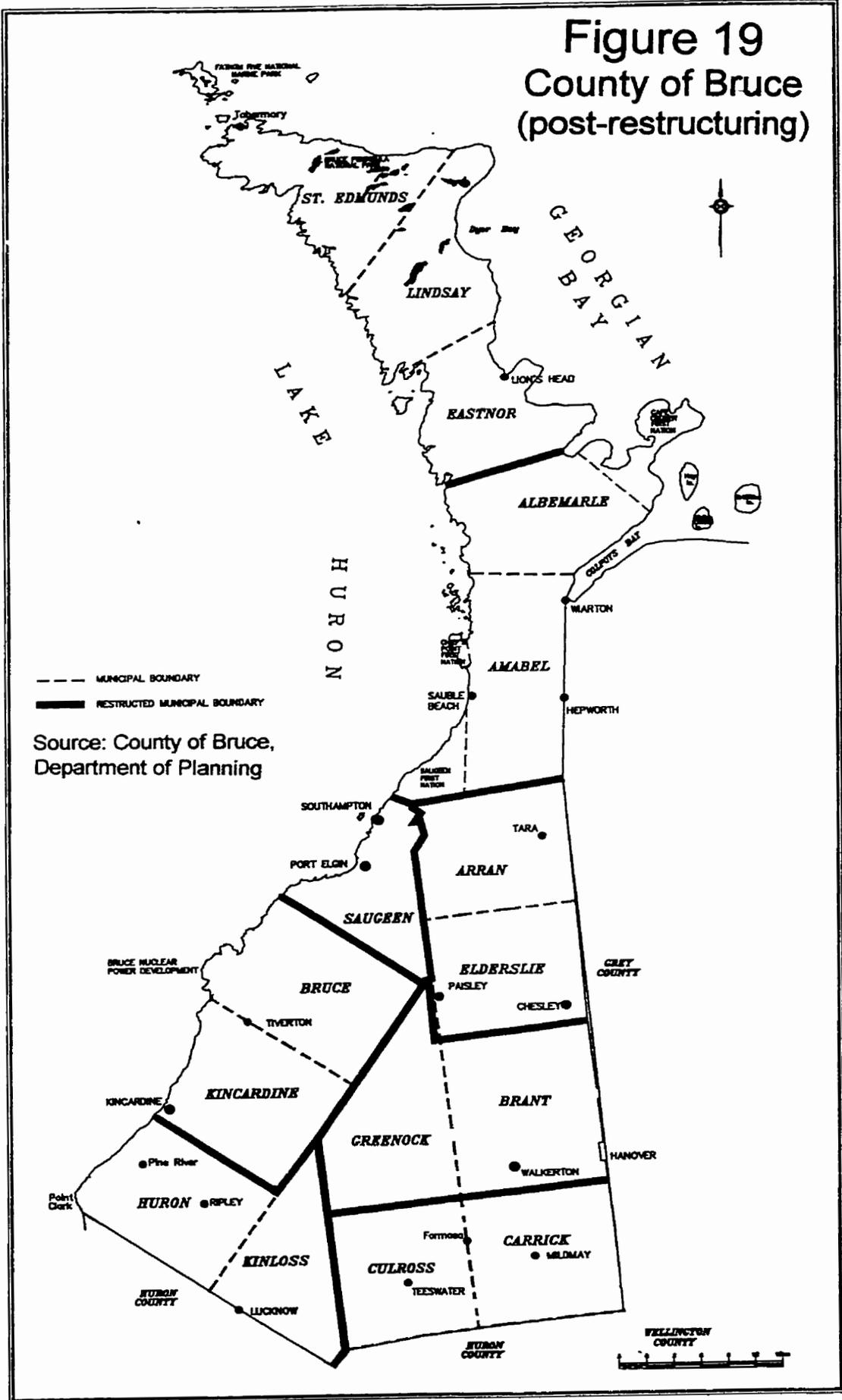
Source: Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 1998.

proposal to the Ontario Judiciary¹⁸⁹. The township did not wish to consolidate with other towns and townships. The Township never made an official statement as to the rationale

¹⁸⁹When the appeal was initiated, the Township of Bruce and the Village of Tiverton were in the process of amalgamating and in actual fact both municipalities applied to the Courts. Since then, the amalgamation has been completed and they are now one municipality.

Figure 19

County of Bruce (post-restructuring)



for its appeal of the proposal, however, all of the speculation concerning the Township's reasons centre on the municipality's tax base wealth. The Township has a population of only 1,436 people, but the property tax base contains the Ontario Hydro Bruce Nuclear Power Generating Station. The Township also boasts a multi-million dollar independent telephone company. On September 11, 1998, the court unanimously rejected the Township's appeal, thus allowing the County's restructuring plans to be implemented on January 1, 1999.

4.3.2 Rationale

Municipal restructuring has been on the political agenda in Bruce County on three occasions over the past twenty three years. In 1974 a local government study recommended that the lower-tier municipalities consolidate into either 12 or 18 municipalities while maintaining the county as a second tier. The study was not endorsed by County Council and none of its recommendations were implemented. While the report cited potential monetary savings, townships did not perceive the need to restructure.

In 1991 another restructuring study was conducted which recommended the amalgamation of lower-tier municipalities into 8 municipalities while maintaining the county as a second-tier of government.¹⁹⁰ All amalgamation recommendations were ignored. Some cost-sharing agreements were implemented but the majority of the report was disregarded.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰Bruce County 1990. Draft Report of the Bruce County Study Committee. August 1990.

¹⁹¹Harry Thede 1998. Warden, County of Bruce. Restructuring Presentation. June 2, 1998.

A central factor that scuttled the plan was the intention to divide the Township of Kincardine between two larger municipalities. The failure of both the 1974 and 1991 restructuring reports was attributed to political dissatisfaction and the unwillingness of councillors at the local level to cooperate with their neighbouring municipalities. Past disputes and lingering mistrust between councils had scuttled any cooperation between some municipalities.¹⁹²

In 1996, County Council renewed its restructuring efforts by appointing a committee to evaluate and recommend potential scenarios. Very little priority was given to restructuring until a year later when the Townships of St. Edmunds and Saugeen requested a Commissioner be appointed by the provincial government. This request coincided with the Commissioner's decision which led to the creation of the new single-tier City of Chatham-Kent. The Restructuring Committee, in one month, prepared a restructuring proposal for municipal approval to pre-empt the appointment of a Commissioner by the province. The proposal was returned to the County un-approved; it was missing many key components of a proper restructuring proposal. The province decided that it was not going to appoint a Commission if a local solution could be ratified in the near future.

The County formulated a final proposal for consolidating municipalities using three basic criteria. The new municipalities were based on population, assessment base and

¹⁹²Wayne Jamieson 1998. CAO, Bruce County. Interview by author. June 8, 1998.

community of interest. To a large extent, these criteria were met.¹⁹³ While these three criteria were important, the proposal would not have been put forward if the Restructuring Committee did not believe it would be approved. A number of the new municipalities were based on political factors and not on the three basic criteria. The proposal achieved the triple-majority required for provincial review. As mentioned earlier (in Section 4.3.1) the Township of Bruce momentarily stopped the restructuring process with an appeal to the courts. While the appeal was in process the County knew the Township would oppose the restructuring proposal, but proceeded because it knew a triple-majority was attainable. The courts unanimously rejected the Township's appeal on September 11, 1998 allowing the County's restructuring plans to be implemented on January 1, 1999.

4.3.3 Results

Restructuring in Bruce County has been a relatively passive experience compared to other Counties, with the exception of Bruce Township's legal challenge. The County followed the wave of municipal reform that the Provincial government created with its fiscal policies. Restructuring in Bruce County was driven by two key factors. First, Provincial downloading drove municipalities to pool their resources through amalgamation; a more efficient municipal scale was needed to deliver basic services. Second, the County was following the lead of many other restructuring municipalities, and the overwhelming pressures by the Provincial government, to reform their municipal structures. The removal of transfer payments and incentives for small municipalities to remain independent would

¹⁹³Michael Campbell 1998. Senior Planner, County of Bruce Interview by author, June 2, 1998.

have been enough for some small municipalities to cause a financial collapse.¹⁹⁴ Also, none of the municipalities wanted to experience the same result as Kent County. There was a strong belief that if a Commissioner was appointed that Bruce County would be divided into three or four single-tier municipalities.¹⁹⁵ Politicians were driven by fear to settle their differences without provincial intervention. Restructuring was largely a political process. A small number of local municipalities held public meetings to discuss the issues, but many municipalities, including the County, kept the issues confined to the council chambers.

The role of municipal planning in Bruce County will not be changing as a result of restructuring, at least in the short-term. The profile of planning in Bruce County has been on the decline. The County once maintained three planning offices: one covered the northern, or Bruce Peninsula, area with an office in the Town of Wiarton; a second covered the highly developed and tourism-driven coastal region, with an office in the Town of Port Elgin; and the third covered the southern portion of the County, from the main Administration Building in the Town of Walkerton. The Port Elgin office closed in 1992 and the elimination of the Wiarton office has been the subject of budgetary discussions for five years. The Wiarton office is not expected to survive more than five more years.¹⁹⁶ In 1996, one of the two Senior Planner positions was eliminated, leaving four planners to staff the department and meet the planning needs of the County. The

¹⁹⁴Jamieson June 2, 1998.

¹⁹⁵Campbell June 2, 1998.

¹⁹⁶Campbell June 2, 1998.

benefits of restructuring in the planning department will only be realized through the reduction in the number of municipalities and associated number of councils. Efficiencies will be gained through less travel time and more consistent policies over larger areas of land. Unfortunately, these benefits may be interpreted as a rationale to reduce the number of planners in the department for budgetary reasons.

The current strength of the Planning Department is found in the Tourism Division. Tourism is a key component of Bruce County's economy. The agricultural sector, particularly cattle farming, is the mainstay of the local economy, but tourism is a close second. Tourism is the County's direct link to any form of community development. The County supports many of the local tourism agencies and chambers of commerce, in promoting tourism. However, these tourism links are not with the individual municipalities, but with three tourism associations that do not follow municipal boundaries. Formal efforts to promote community development are not a County priority. Any community development initiatives would have to begin with citizens at the grass-roots level. The County believes that if citizens request municipal involvement, the responsibility to take action would lie with the lower-tier. The County would only become involved through the local municipalities. The County of Bruce sees its role as a coordinator and provider of large-scale services, and as a source of funding for local initiatives, but not as an active participant in or coordinator of community efforts.¹⁹⁷ The intent of restructuring in Bruce County was to make local municipalities more viable

¹⁹⁷Jamieson and Campbell June 2, 1998.

financially. Very little change in the style of governance is expected.

4.4 Summary

The opportunity for future governance reform seems high for the FMB, City of Kingston and the City of Chatham-Kent. Unfortunately, to a large degree, the status-quo appears to have been perpetuated in Bruce County, with very little chance of significant governance reform. In the City of Kingston and the City of Chatham-Kent there is an opportunity to create a vision for their municipalities and communities, that may place them on a path of heightened capacity and long-term viability. How they formulate the vision, and what is included, could be critical factors. The municipalities that comprise the FMB are in a more precarious condition. They have restructured in the hope that they may adequately manage the financial challenges that face them. Unfortunately, there is an increasing threat that they have not gone far enough in building their capacities. If they approach the future by attempting to meet their mandates independently, Bob Fould's prediction, of one consolidated township municipality in 20 years, may be correct.

The challenge that faces Ontario's County Country is no longer one of increasing the size of municipalities to reap the benefit of economies of scale. The challenge is to invent a capacity-building network among different sectors of society to promote not only the economic aspects of the community but also the social, cultural and environmental components of a larger (new) 'community of (old) communities'. Municipalities need to focus on formulating policies that are conducive to innovation and collaboration with

citizens, the private sector, the non-profit sector, volunteers, and the academic community. These policies would not simply outline how these sectors can be involved within the public sector, but would instead, deal with how the public sector, along with all other sectors of society, can improve the manner in which each operates to achieve their respective goals and objects. As a result, a new community of communities to match the municipal configurations would be built.

Some would argue that these collaborations can be formally institutionalized¹⁹⁸ while others may see informal institutions¹⁹⁹ as a better approach in areas without an established government structure supporting such endeavours. It is crucial to remember that Ontario's County Country is heavily influenced by the 'rurality' of its surroundings. Cities such as Chatham, Owen Sound, Peterborough, Kingston, Cornwall, Trenton and Barrie are urban centres within County Country, and are greatly influenced by their rural surroundings in a way that separates them from Cities such as Windsor, London, Ottawa and Hamilton.

¹⁹⁸Wallis, 1994.

¹⁹⁹Patsy Healey 1997. Collaborative Planning. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

5.0 The Planning Challenge Facing County Country

A key issue for contemporary societies is how to transform the machinery of formal government and politics to enable a sustainable and supportive interaction between government activities, everyday life, the business world and the biosphere.²⁰⁰

This is the challenge that faces municipal government and planners in Ontario.

Municipalities in Ontario, specifically in County Country, must ask themselves if they can prosper into the future by simply accepting the large-scale government restructuring that has occurred since mid-1995, or if this must also be accompanied by a shift in the culture of governance. Ontario counties have survived municipal structuring with varying consequences. In most cases counties have remained intact while many lower-tier municipalities have been eliminated through amalgamation or annexation. Some municipalities are uncertain about their future ability to finance the services downloaded from the Province while others are confident they have attained an economic scale that will allow them to prosper financially. The question becomes whether the re-cast counties can champion the creation of a C² within the new structure context of County Country?

Successfully developing a C² within each new county context would not be a panacea for the problems of municipal government. Instead it provides an option, and a possible approach, for improving the way government at the municipal level operates. The objective would be to help the new municipalities and counties remain viable entities, able to combat the stresses and obstacles that now face governments, while capitalizing on

²⁰⁰Healey 1997, 213.

opportunities that may have been unattainable within the former fragmented structure, where cooperation and collaboration tended to be avoided rather than embraced. The challenge that now faces local governments and municipal planners involves being able to overcome the obstacles that impeded cooperation not only between municipalities but also between government and other sectors of society. Planners need to think about taking the next step from planning *for* their particular government employer or client to planning *with* all the segments and sectors of the wider society.²⁰¹

Planners can help lead municipalities in a new direction of collaborative governance. This thesis advocates the idea of a C² to reach this objective. By fostering an environment that is conducive to a C², planners may be able to construct a ‘macro-community’ at the county level in an effort to focus or include micro-community activities in larger-scale visions and longer-term goals. Planning for long-term objectives should be placed within a policy format that gives legitimacy to both the process and goals that emerge. This thesis supports the creation of a “Community of Communities” Strategy (C²S) for such a policy endeavour. The policies with an C²S would directly support the notion of a C² and adopt a process geared to developing a macro community, drawing on the work of authors identified in earlier sections (Wallis, Dodge, Sim and Biddle) along with useful components of existing community development theories, such as those outlined in Section 2.6.

²⁰¹Wight 1998, 31.

5.1 Past Municipal Planning Practices

Municipal planning in most Ontario Counties has been dominated to date by land-use activities. When development pressures are high, planning departments are busy processing by-law amendments, land severances, minor variances, development applications and the occasional subdivision application. When development pressures are low or declining, many land-use focused County planning departments are comparatively idle. Each planning department is often different, however, some have maintained a skeletal complement of planning staff, while others have diversified the scope of planning beyond land-use change activities. The activities that remain constant among County planning departments include the processing of land-use applications along with the creation of Official Plans. In some cases, larger cities, towns and some townships will directly handle land-use planning services, instead of accessing such services through the County.

County planning departments are often hired as quasi-consultants, to deliver other planning services or conduct special projects, mainly on behalf of lower-tier municipalities. In many cases these activities take the form of developing community plans, creating a consolidated land-use by-law, assisting with public meetings, researching economic development possibilities, or traditional community development. These aspects of County planning are often only momentary diversions from land-use activities, and in many cases they actually include many aspects of land-use planning, or are driven by land-use and development agendas. The ongoing provision of effective land-use planning is

certainly a valuable service provided by counties; maintaining a high level of quality land-use planning is vitally important in County Country. This thesis is not concerned with putting the validity of county land-use planning into question; rather, the historic narrow scope and rigid structure, that may have limited realization of the fuller potential of County planning, is what is mainly being questioned.

The untapped potential can be attributed to three key factors: financial constraints, a reluctant political culture, and conservative administrative leadership. Most County planning departments obtain their financing through a combination of general taxes and revenues generated from planning services provided to lower-tier municipalities. County planning departments have also been limited by an oversimplified view of planning by political leaders, seeing it mainly in limited statutory context (land-use) terms. At a time when the stability of municipal government is in question, and when the rate of change has accelerated to levels never experienced before in County government, the likelihood of politically-driven progressive change in the breadth of planning is improbable. Expanding the function of planners beyond a technical role could also be viewed, by lower tier municipalities, as an intrusion by the County into matters that are believed to be the domain of the lower tier. A significant source of leadership within the county structure lies with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and with the Directors of each department. Political leaders rely heavily on senior staff to provide guidance and direction. Weak or conservative leadership from the CAO or Director of Planning, for example, will only ensure maintenance of the status quo, and not necessarily an expansion

of the planning function, to embrace, for example, community development planning on a 'community of communities' scale.

Expanding the planning function within the context of County restructuring is made even more difficult given the recent funding cuts imposed by the provincial government. Many municipalities have attempted, for many years, to maintain or lower taxation levels without dramatically affecting services levels. During the 1990s, departments were usually asked to reduce or freeze their budgets each year, to avoid tax increases. In recent years most County planning departments have not been looking to expand their function; instead, they have been trying to minimize the decline in their function's importance in the overall scheme of things. This trend makes the planning challenge even greater in County Country.

5.2 Expanding the County Planners' Role in Municipal Governance

If Counties can use the idea of a C² to improve and strengthen municipal viability, it will necessarily entail a development process extending over a long period of time. Building a 'macro-community' at the County level should be viewed as a 'community of communities' "under construction". Planners are currently in a position where community members have to approach them for planning advice or information regarding by-laws, land severances or other land-use issues. Planners' only form of interaction with the public often comes during public meetings, that are usually dedicated to specific land-use applications. If planners are to accept the challenge that faces municipalities they need to

pro-actively and holistically plan *with* communities. This approach would be a shift from the current conditions where planners predominantly work *for* clients, such as developers, land owners or municipalities, who need technical assistance to navigate the land-use change application approval system.

Each county has emerged from restructuring in a different form from what existed in 1995, before the provincial government brought in radical changes. Some of the commonalities, that formerly made counties comparable, have changed as a result of restructuring. The most significant changes have occurred with the lower-tier municipalities, where their numbers have decreased, while the geographic size and population of the new or remaining municipalities have grown. Some urban municipalities now contain large amounts of rural land, and some townships now contain many small urban centres. Planners can view this shift as an opportunity to build new relationships with and between municipalities. In many cases, the new boundaries and structures were hastily created, and, with only some minor exceptions, municipal boundaries were only eliminated, not radically redrawn to reflect contemporary geographic communities of interest. With the exception of a number of annexations, only one township (Camden in Kent County) was divided to equalize, in the case of Chatham-Kent, the population between two wards.²⁰² Planners can assist municipalities 'grow' into

²⁰²The Township of Camden was divided between the North Kent and East Kent Wards. Originally, all of Camden Township, including the Town of Dresden, was within the East Kent Ward. The Commissioner decided to divide the Township so the North Kent Ward would have the Town of Dresden as an urban centre. By dividing the Township, the population between the two wards was equalized and consistent with the other wards in the City.

their new domains. Municipalities also have a greater level of responsibility as a result of provincial downloading. However, this change is general across the province. Given these changes, and the fact that only some county boundaries have also changed, the basic status of counties has remained unaltered. This seeming resilience of counties makes them an ideal candidate to represent the macro-community within a C².

The underlying rationale for planners to support and encourage the development of a C² is to increase the capacity and viability of the new municipalities both at the county level and among the lower-tier. In the process of pursuing a C², not only should the new Cities or Counties benefit, but so also should the organizations and micro-communities, within each 'County' society, that participate in support of the larger, county-level, macro-community. This end would not be achieved by following a strict procedure of community development that predicts certain outcomes. Instead, planners could utilise community development techniques and governance ideas, such as those mentioned earlier (in Sections 2.6 and 2.7 by Allan Wallis, William Dodge, Alex Sim and William Biddle), that promote a more incremental dialogic process for improving the long-term viability of the community of communities they share in common.

5.3 The Community of Communities Strategy

Counties and lower-tier municipalities have been developing Official Plans (OPs), community plans, secondary plans and strategic plans for many years. OPs are the strongest planning policy document within county planning. The objective of these

statutory plans is to create general policies that guide the future direction of land-use and other aspects of municipal jurisdiction and influence. Unfortunately, OPs have evolved into policy documents that are difficult to interpret and apply. John Farrow has identified four critical faults common to many municipal official plans.

1. The plans are so comprehensive that the strategic issues are hidden within a mass of detail.
2. The policy statements are overly detailed and appear to be designed to cover all possible circumstance.
3. Policies address many issues beyond the practical or statutory authority of official plans.
4. Priorities for public investment in infrastructure are often ignored or dealt with in a vague way.²⁰³

To improve OPs, Farrow believes that new plans should have four additional qualities.

These are to:

1. Clearly communicate a community vision.
2. Provide appropriate emphasis to strategic community issues.
3. Make a clear link between public and private investment.
4. Provide for the ongoing re-affirmation of a collective community vision and of a set of related development principles, by council and the administration.²⁰⁴

These four additional needed qualities echo many of the ideas expressed by Wallis, Dodge, Sim and Biddle reviewed earlier. These features, along with qualities drawn from the six approaches to community development, are conceived here as contributing to a process that develops a C². The policies that drive the development of a C² can be couched within a County's OP, or the C² policies can stand on their own as a new strategic planning, or

²⁰³John Farrow 1998, "Less Really is More: Rethinking the Way We Plan." The Ontario Planning Journal. (May/June) 26.

²⁰⁴Farrow 1998, 26.

visioning document, in the form of an ‘Community of Communities Strategy’ (C²S). The planning guidelines within the Ontario *Planning Act* do not require municipalities to undertake any form of community development. Embarking on the development of a C²S would be a strictly local decision. Individual municipalities can solicit the services of the County to develop a ‘community plan’ for a specific locality; however, if a County decided to develop a C²S, the full support of all local municipalities would certainly be needed. A County is directly accountable to local municipalities through County Council, and without local endorsement, a C²S initiative would not make sense. The contrasting characteristics can be described as a shift between:

Official Plan Features

- statutory/legal
- structured/regulatory
- isolated/independent
- hierarchical
- jurisdictional/sectoral
- formal procedures
- narrow, land-use perspective
- political/allocative

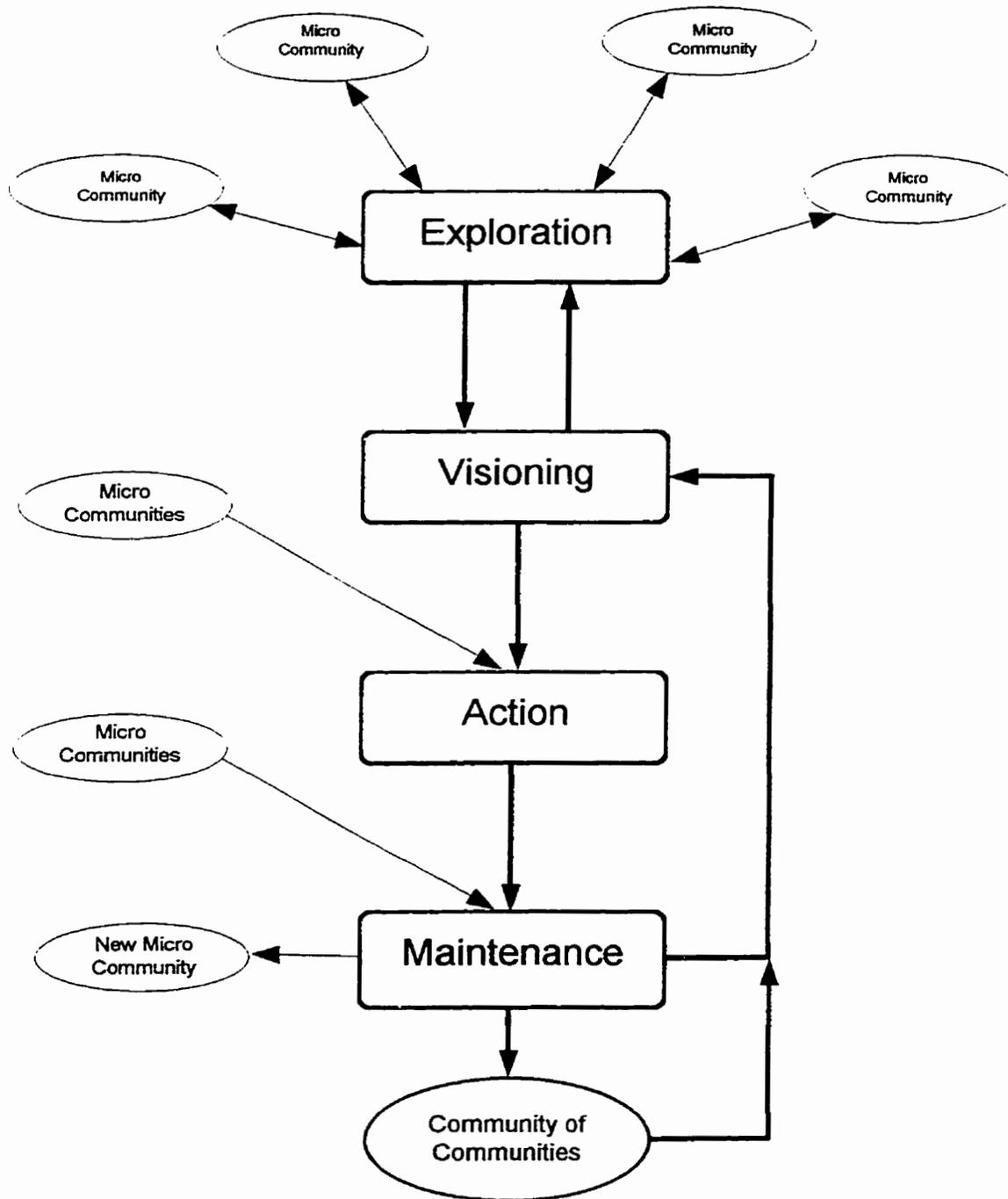
C²Strategy Features

- strategic/participatory
- flexible/community building
- interconnected/networked
- collaborative/“tier-less”
- horizontal cross-cutting
- informal process/policies/visioning
- inclusive/innovative/comprehensive
- community-driven/shared responsibilities

5.4 The Process of C²D

The process of developing a community of communities (C²D), would be conceived as the central component of a C²S initiative. Such a process is envisaged as including four stages: 1) Exploration, 2) Visioning, 3) Action, and 4) Maintenance (see Figure 20). These phases do not have time limitations. Each phase has a specific purpose that is linked to the other phases.

Figure 20: The Phases of Developing a Community of Communities



At the beginning of the C²D, the County undertakes the task of *exploring* the ‘community’ of interest in a C². This initial stage is dedicated to obtaining all forms of support that exist within the County for a county-scale community development initiative. To launch the process, support must come from political leaders and local municipalities. If members of County Council cannot envision the potential benefits and value of pursuing a well-developed C², the process cannot begin. The work undertaken by County staff is a direct function of decisions made in County Council. In this respect, the leadership potential found in senior staff, such as the CAO and Director Planning, also make them key players in obtaining political support. County Council and local municipalities usually hold the advice of senior County staff in high regard. If senior staff strongly endorses or actively promotes the development of a C², support from County Council will likely follow.

5.4.1 Exploration

Once the County has received internal support through County Council, the exploration for support outside the political and administrative confines of the County can begin. The County should look to build the support of micro-communities within the fledgling macro-community. Support for a C² can come in many forms, and from all sectors of society, including: individual citizens, community groups, business, schools, institutions, non-profit groups, etc. *How* the support is obtained is also of critical importance. The County cannot merely identify ‘what is going on’ or ‘what the issues are’; the County must adopt an inclusionary style of discussion²⁰⁵ that is sensitive to the social, economic, and cultural

²⁰⁵Healey 1997, 272.

differences in society. An *inclusionary* approach encourages people to learn about each other's concerns, problems, and possibilities²⁰⁶ and attempts to avoid alienation of any micro-communities. Each group can then bring unique perspectives, needs, resources, capabilities, objectives, and ideas. Dodge categorizes these features within his SIGNETS as "problem-solving and service-delivery mechanisms."²⁰⁷ These features can be viewed as assets that the micro-communities can bring to the C². As was the case with the Community Approach²⁰⁸ to CD, it is vitally important that broad-based participation from all sectors of society be obtained. While the County can lend significant legitimacy to the process, every additional micro-community involved in "buying into" the process strengthens the C². To obtain this participation, the County must actively work to clearly sustain, rather than 'sell', the idea of a C². Each group will contribute some asset to the macro-community but such contributions should be matched by returns or receipts, conferred by the new arrangements. Contributions and receipts are not necessarily just monetary. They could take the form of services, labour, office space, advice, equipment, or other 'assets' that are available in one micro community, which can be assistance to another.

In essence, the exploration stage of C²D creates both an inventory of the community assets that can be contributed to the process and builds relationships between the micro-community groups and the County. It is "through these relations, [that] trust and

²⁰⁶Healey 1997.

²⁰⁷Dodge 1992.

²⁰⁸Cary 1973.

knowledge are generated and circulated”²⁰⁹ to strengthen the community of communities. If the level of participation or “relation-building” within the community is not sufficient to provide an adequate level of legitimacy to the process, the County cannot continue onto the next phase. If the county were to proceed with the process, without adequate community support, and eventually create its own C²S, the legitimacy of the final product would be in question. If a vision is developed without broad-based participation, the efforts of a weak C² may not capture the true essence of the larger community. If economic or social conditions are not right, the County must either continue its search for support or postpone the initiative to a later date. It can be argued that a weak macro-community is better than no macro-community.

5.4.2 Visioning

With the proper support for the idea of a C², the County, along with the participating micro communities, can move onto the second phase, which is the creation of a C² *vision*. Collaboratively creating a collective vision is a common element in the work of Wallis, Dodge, Sim and Biddle. The vision is adopted by the macro-community after extensive input from, and consultation with, the public and the participating micro-communities. If the vision is all-encompassing, but specific enough to the issues that are important to the geographic area, including the County, a large number of micro-communities should find benefits in participating in the creation of the C². Creating and adopting a vision will not be an easy task. With participants coming from each sector of society, the number of

²⁰⁹Healey 1997, 247.

influencing factors should be large and divergent. For the different groups to *build relations*, through *inclusionary* dialogue, for the purpose of *mutual-learning*²¹⁰ and understanding, then mediation, facilitation, conflict-resolution, and consensus-building skills of municipal staff, including planners, will have to be at the forefront, to achieve a successful visioning exercise.

The vision becomes an intrinsic component of the County political culture. It is the responsibility of the County to coordinate the efforts of the micro-communities within the larger community toward achieving the vision. Many of the micro-communities will have mandates that relate, but are not identical, to the community vision. These “strategic concerns”²¹¹ within the community, as described by Wallis, are of central concern during the visioning stage. The strategy is to develop short-term goals, appealing to both the micro-communities and the macro-community, that progress the C² toward the status of an instrument or construct for fulfilling the vision. The County becomes a coordinating entity that helps link community groups that may be able to collaborate on mutual issues, that may not have been evident before the visioning exercise occurred.

The County as not simply a legal construct but as a community of communities, has now started to take shape. The County will have enlisted the support of numerous micro-communities and developed an initial C² vision that is widely endorsed. At this point the

²¹⁰Healey 1997.

²¹¹Wallis 1994.

County C² is still essentially an “object community”.²¹² To make the transition from an object community to an “action community,”²¹³ the county, in cooperation with the micro-communities, needs to formalize practical strategies for achieving the community vision. The vision is the long-term goal, but short-term objectives must be prioritised and actively pursued. These initiatives can be planned in conjunction with micro-communities as collaborative efforts, depending on the nature of the goal, or the County can undertake certain activities independently within the larger community, to pursue certain strategic targets.

5.4.3 Action

Once the County begins to initiate the plans formalised within the visioning stage, the County becomes an “action community” and has moved into the *action* phase of developing the C². The pursuit of the C² vision does not hinge on a single action, or the efforts of one community group, including the County. Prior to becoming involved with the C², micro-communities may have existed with a certain degree of independence from other institutions. This independence will still exist; however, each micro-community will now have support through the network of communities established within the C². The efforts of micro-communities are now part of the larger community vision that is supported throughout the County. The successes that each micro-community achieves both independently and collaboratively, with other community groups, represents an

²¹²Douglas 1993.

²¹³Douglas 1993.

incremental progression toward realizing the larger community vision. The hope is that by coordinating community efforts that were once isolated, the benefits are maximised and the ongoing viability of the communities is strengthened.

5.4.4 Maintenance

Once the County and the participating micro-communities initiate collaborative actions the C² will have been created. While the vision should be an attainable objective, the action phase needs to be perpetuated indefinitely. The *maintenance* phase starts soon after the action phase begins. The purpose of the maintenance phase is to ensure that the C² does not stagnate, weaken, or become irrelevant. The actions that are taken within the auspices of the C² must be evaluated and measured against the C² vision on an ongoing basis. If the community efforts stray from the vision they must be refocused by the County. If the vision is no longer applicable to the macro community, it must be revisited (Re-Visioning). This maintenance component is one of the key qualities that Farrow identified as being important to the success of future OPs. It is equally significant for what is conceived here as a C²S - a plan officially endorsed by, and applying to, both County and constituent municipalities - treating them as being on par rather than perpetuating upper-tier/lower-tier distinctions.

New micro-communities might be needed to fully achieve the C² vision. New groups may be part of the action plan developed during the vision phase, or the need may emerge as the C² is developed in pursuit of the vision. These new micro-communities could take

many forms such as: co-operatives, non-profits, and small business. These new micro-communities become new 'members' of the C², and their actions are brought within the broader vision of the macro-community. New institutions may also be formed as a continuation of the C² process in a similar fashion identified by Alan Wallis. Wallis identifies institutionalization (as discussed in Section 2.7.1) as his final stage in developing an alternative form of governance.²¹⁴

These stages are not mutually exclusive, and do not stop and start over a designated time-frame. The County must continually explore/scan the community for new participants in an effort to strengthen the C². For any of these practices to take root, a shift in the form of governance that currently dominates County Country must occur, and planners need to be at the forefront of these changes - if planning is to remain relevant in the new municipal order. Current municipal planning practices at the County level can be characterized by rules and regulations, hard infrastructures, bureaucratic formalities, political conservatism and isolation. These are features that are in direct contradiction of the ideals of a C². Counties need to enter an era of policy and process, soft 'civic' infrastructures, strategic visioning, progressive politics, collaboration and alliance-building. The shift from current practices to those that support a C² is significant, and will not be easily accomplished. Counties may need to see the process tested or demonstrated²¹⁵ in another county before they consider launching their own C²D initiative.

²¹⁴Wallis 1994.

²¹⁵In a similar fashion explained by the Demonstration Approach to community development by George Abshier and outlined in Section 2.6.4.

Furthermore, it should not be assumed that the process of developing a C² could occur without overcoming serious obstacles that may emerge between micro-community groups. Advocating an atmosphere of cooperation and coalition-building is not a guarantee for achieving such a condition. Some community groups, government agencies, or private companies may possess vested interests, divergent views, or deep seeded disagreements with prospective partners of the C² that can weaken or mire the process. Such conflicts should be expected with a diverse group of participants, however, it would be hoped that the mediation, conflict resolution, and consensus-building skills of individuals, such as planners, will propel the process past such impediments.

Official Plans in County Country exhibit most, if not all four, of the faults identified by Farrow. OPs in County Country are not documents that enable communities to participate in the planning and growth of municipalities or the County. Instead, they are restrictive and difficult to interpret. If counties were to develop a C²S in conjunction with OPs both documents would be enriched. The OP could focus on the land-use components of the municipality while the C²S would address the community development objectives of the county and communities. Counties in Ontario do not generally have a *vision* that guides the overall direction of municipal efforts. Most municipalities, including Counties, have a corporate mission statement; however, these are isolated statements that highlight the municipality's commitment to good government and a high quality of services. Such statements are not meaningless, but unfortunately they do not possess the substance or influence that can guide or even change the direction of governance. They are not the

same as a *vision*. By adopting a community vision, within a C²S, counties, municipalities, and community groups, should benefit from the interaction, cooperation and collaboration that occur between all sectors of society.

5.5 The Prospects for C²D in the Three Case Study Counties

The City of Chatham-Kent and the municipalities within Kingston/Frontenac are in an enviable position, for different reasons, to initiate governance reforms in line with developing a C². The Kingston/Frontenac area already has the beginnings of a C² initiative within the new City of Kingston. Having created the Department of Client Services and Community Development, the City of Kingston has started the *Exploration* phase of C²D. In Chatham-Kent the barriers to political cooperation, that existed when there were 23 municipalities in the County, have been largely removed through the creation of one municipality and one council. The new council possesses the authority to make decisions for the entire area, including decisions regarding the pursuit of community development and a C². The County of Bruce does not share these advantages. The Council of Bruce County seems to have decided to minimize any future changes even under conditions that are already dramatically different from where they were before restructuring.

5.5.1 Kingston/Frontenac

By creating the Department of Client Services and Community Development (DCSCD), the expanded City of Kingston has taken the first step in creating a community of communities within its jurisdiction . The new DCSCD was established as a direct result of

governance reform initiatives by the C.A.O. and a few community-minded City Councillors, after the municipal restructuring process was complete. The community development aspect of the DCSCD has the department being conceived as a coordinating body that links the efforts of various community groups within the City, in an attempt to develop collaboration on issues of mutual concern. The City and the DCSCD are committed to the creation of a "community vision"²¹⁶ In relation to the process of C²D, outlined in this thesis, the City of Kingston is within the first phase, the Exploring Phase, of building community support for community development at the City level. Currently, in late 1998, there have been no indications as to when the City will progress onto the second phase, the Visioning Phase.

The City of Kingston is not a member of the FMB, and the services of the DCSCD are not extended to the local townships. During the restructuring process the townships went to great lengths to minimize the authority and involvement of the FMB in local government. While many of the political barriers that existed before restructuring occurred have been eliminated - as a result of each new township being an amalgamation of three or four old townships - the new townships are re-enforcing old-style, isolationist governance techniques that may harm their long-term viability. The future hope will be for the City to succeed in its efforts to create a larger, macro-community within its new jurisdiction by developing and pursuing a C² vision for the City at least. If the City can successfully demonstrate the benefits of macro-community development, other municipalities in

²¹⁶City of Kingston Client Service and Community Development Department 1997, 1.

Ontario, but more importantly the FMB and its member townships, many wish to participate with Kingston in developing an even larger C², on the scale of the former County of Frontenac. For a new partnership as this to occur, between the City and the Frontenac Townships, the City would likely have to initiate the process by presenting a formal proposal to the FMB. Unless the City has proof that the efforts of the DCSCD are bearing tangible benefits, the Frontenac Townships would be sceptical about entering, or dedicating any resources to developing an even larger C². It is important to note that the desire to expand the DCSCD has come from staff and not senior administration or council. Also, the new Townships are still exploring their newly-found independence, and they are not likely to embrace, what may appear as a new layer of government when they have just freed themselves from a County government.

5.5.2 Chatham-Kent

Of the three counties examined in detail here, the council of the City of Chatham-Kent is in the most enviable position to initiate large-scale governance reforms. One of the common obstacles to past county-driven reforms, was the dissension among neighbouring municipalities and the inability to adopt policies covering the 23 member municipalities. The City of Chatham-Kent and the City of Prince Edward are the only municipalities, and ex-Counties, in all of Ontario's County Country, to possess a "boundary-free" municipal structure, represented by one council. This condition effectively eliminates the possibility of any area, or ex-municipality, from opting-out of policies designed by the council. It is assumed that council would not inflict undue hardships on any part of the municipality,

and that each ward would be treated equitably. How council proceeds and the manner in which residents respond to their new conditions will be crucial to the future climate of Chatham-Kent's governance formation. If the new council becomes fractious, or certain wards becoming beligerent to the new structure, the prospect for a C² are greatly diminished, if not eliminated.

The municipal structure in Chatham-Kent seems to have the potential of being conducive to the creation of a community of communities. Under the old City/County structure, community development was not possible due to a political and administrative culture that was far from cooperative. Utilising the benefits of a unified council and the creation of a new Strategic and Land Use Planning Department, with a mandate that includes developing a Strategic Plan, are all encouraging signs that may lead to governance and planning reforms. The new City does not have the additional hurdle of negotiating with member municipalities, as would be the case in other Counties. The question that remains is whether there are, within council, city administration or the community, any pressures, influences or "spark-plugs"²¹⁷ that will initiate a process of C²D. Council and the administration, specifically the Director of Planning, have the power to make community development and the creation of a community vision - on a C² scale - components of the new Strategic Plan. The public will have input into the Plan, but the extent to which the public can influence the direction and content of the Plan, or if they will be included as an intrinsic component of the Plan on an ongoing basis, has not been determined.

²¹⁷Biddle 1965, 90.

The most significant obstacle to the implementation of any large-scale community development, let alone C²D, will be the historic structures and culture that pervaded both the City of Chatham and the County of Kent prior to restructuring. The new council and administration are a combination of previous municipal councils and staff. In each of the old structures, community development was not pursued. Both the City and County focused their planning efforts on land-use activities and the technicalities of processing various planning applications. It is not likely that the new governance structures within the City will immediately initiate an overt community development campaign. Community development, that may potentially lead to a C², will probably only occur in the City of Chatham-Kent under two situations: 1) if the new County public persuades the local government to actively pursue community development; and/or 2) if the new City mimics community development successes that are demonstrated in another municipality, such as the City of Kingston.

5.5.3 Bruce County

The desire to introduce significant governance reforms in Bruce County does not exist at the present time within the administration or County Council. Efforts to minimize the changes to local governance would actually better characterize Bruce County's restructuring process and its foreseeable future objectives.²¹⁸ Restructuring, in itself, has been a dramatic change for the County. Opportunities to pursue county-wide community development endeavours - conceivable as possibly too much more change - will only come

²¹⁸Jamieson and Campbell June 2, 1998.

in the distant future, if at all. Only the size of County Council and the number of municipalities has changed. However, the new municipal structure should benefit the county by eliminating, to a certain extent, some of the political squabbling that isolated some former neighbouring municipalities.

Bruce County is at somewhat of a disadvantage, compared to the Counties of Kent and Frontenac. Bruce County does not possess a large urban centre, with the financial and administrative resources to undertake new initiatives, especially at a time when fiscal pressures are high. While this may be seen as a reason for pursuing a C², most of the smaller counties are not this ambitious, nor possess the leadership to initiate new endeavours. The County of Bruce, along with many other counties, could benefit from the future success of the City of Kingston's community development efforts. If Kingston is able to achieve the level of interaction and collaboration that is being proposed by the Department of Client Services and Community Development, other Counties and communities should be able to draw from their experiences to create a community of communities in their setting.

5.6 Summary

Any new role of municipal planners in the future of Ontario's County Country will emerge over the next several years. The full impact and repercussions of the Provincial Government's fiscal policies and downloading of responsibilities to municipalities have not yet been fully implemented. Some municipalities have pro-actively implemented new

programs and created new governance structures to meet the overwhelming volume of new challenges and responsibilities at the local level, as is the case in the City of Kingston - while there are still many others that are adopting a “wait and see” attitude. This approach is consistent with traditional styles of governance that attempt to resolve problems by reacting independently when stresses are applied to the viability of a municipality. Counties are in a unique position to alter their governance techniques compared to other periods in history. The political obstacles have been lowered to permit more progressive and collaborative governance. Counties at least have emerged, in 1998, strengthened in many ways, and proven as a resilient geographic scale of government. This is a scale and context that can be advantageous to the development of a C².

Planners in County Country need to realize the opportunity that has emerged as a result of restructuring. While fewer councils, larger municipalities, and more flexible planning regulation should make land-use planning more expedient and effective, these are superficial gains of restructuring that will benefit planners in terms of their past roles. Planners in the future will ideally capitalize on the new government structures by assuming a leadership role, and utilising their skills as facilitators, mediators, leaders, managers, and visionaries. Planners within the new government structures can guide their municipalities on a new course, by championing initiatives that create and reinforce the County structure as a larger community driven by a collaborative approach to local governance. This new approach would challenge planners to view community issues in a way that crosses boundaries and jurisdictions, and calls upon them to capitalize on opportunities and seek

solutions to problems on the basis of broad-based public participation, as well as multi-sectoral involvement. The future viability of Counties may depend on the ability of planners, along with politicians and administrators, to envision a new leadership role for the County structure within a form of governance that embraces the ideals of a community of communities.

6.0 Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

6.1 Summary

The Progressive Conservative government of Ontario made sweeping changes to all aspects of local and provincial government in the three short years that followed their election in mid-1995. Significant reforms to health care, education, social assistance, and housing affected every municipality in the province, with the County system of local government also having to endure major structural reforms. These reforms within Ontario's County structures have served as the context, or setting, for this thesis. As a result of the reforms, County Country is now faced with many difficult challenges to both its long and short-term futures. The main short-term challenges are centred around how municipalities will adjust their new structures to recover and emerge from the tumultuous period of reform that started in late 1995. Unfortunately, the full implications of the fiscal policies and service downloading of the Province have still to unfold. In the longer-term, municipalities, especially counties, might find some comfort in the fact that the county system of government has survived for almost 150 years, and has proven to be a resilient municipal structure in Ontario. In making new short-term civic infrastructure decisions, counties can choose to build the foundation for potentially new approaches to governance, which, in turn, could greatly influence the longer-term viability of municipalities.

The problem faced by Counties, and specifically by County planners, is how they will respond to, and/or pro-actively capitalise upon the long-term changes to municipal government caused by provincial reforms. Local municipalities in Ontario now cover

larger geographic areas, have more servicing responsibilities, with significantly less Provincial involvement or support. To meet these challenges, counties can retreat into traditional methods of government that focus on service delivery and statutory requirements, or they can broaden their methods by embracing a governance approach that centres on coalition-building and community participation. If Counties realize that a shift in traditional methods could be beneficial, the question becomes whether Counties can utilise their intrinsic strength, as enduring municipal structures, to champion a large-scale community development initiative that seeks to collaborate and develop partnerships with all sectors of the local society to build the capacity and long-term viability of the larger “Community of Communities”. If this is possible, planners, and the planning profession in Ontario’s County Country, must determine if they are able to redefine their role within the municipal structure to actively lead in meeting the challenges.

The reforms made by the Province have been viewed by many municipalities as an unfair financial downloading of services on local government. A great deal of opposition emerged from the public sector concerning the reforms; however, it is unlikely, under the current or subsequent provincial government, that any of the structural changes to County governments will be reversed, or altered in any significant manner. This thesis regards the finality of these changes as an opportunity for Counties to effectively take advantage of the provincially-imposed government restructuring to initiate an equally important governance reform initiative of their own. These governance reforms would build on the removal of many of the political and administrative barriers that have limited, and often

discouraged, collaboration between municipalities. Along with improving the relations between municipalities, the opportunity available extends to other sectors of local society. Municipalities are facing an increasing number of stresses that threaten their capacity to function, and that may directly weaken their overall viability as municipalities. Municipalities cannot be satisfied within the comfort and confines of traditional government techniques. Instead, they should embrace practices that place an emphasis on governance and the inclusion of new partners in municipal affairs.

Three Ontario Counties: Frontenac, Kent, and Bruce, have been used as case studies to illustrate the current effects of municipal reforms, the application of new Provincial policies, the varying rationales for certain actions at the municipal level, and also the possible benefits of developing a Community of Communities in each setting. To address these factors a thorough examination of literature concentrating on municipal reform, governance reform, and community development was executed. Specific attention was given to the restructuring proceeding in each of the three Counties. Municipal documentation was examined and personal interviews were conducted with key members of each municipality, including: Chief Administrative Officers, Department Heads, and Planners. To further enrich the characterization of each County, the author, as a long-time resident and planning practitioner within Ontario's County Country, has used participant-observer experience to inform the analysis and interpretation.

6.2 Conclusions

There is no conclusive evidence to date that the consolidation of municipalities effected by the restructuring will result in all the outcomes sought by the Province.²¹⁹ In many cases, short-term savings are outweighed by the prospect/near certainty of higher, long-term expenditures. It could also be argued that municipalities, if given the opportunity, could have made the necessary changes to their government structures (without provincial coercion) in order to meet the fiscal changes and funding reductions imposed by the province. This claim carries a level of credibility, given that many municipal structures in Ontario, particularly in County Country, have proven durable and serviceable since 1849, when the Baldwin Act was passed.

It is questionable however, whether local municipalities in Ontario could actually have survived the provincial agenda by utilizing alternate methods of restructuring, such as inter-municipal agreements, revenue-sharing, equalization initiatives, community sub-unit arrangements, or voluntarily strengthening the upper tier (in place of amalgamation).²²⁰

All of these alternatives were examined, and some were implemented, in the early 1990s as a response to the fiscal measures of the Social Contract under the Bob Rae NDP Provincial Government. Municipalities in Ontario have been guilty of co-operating only when crisis situations emerge - situations that individual municipalities cannot remedy independently. In most cases, the County structure has been the only form of meaningful

²¹⁹Sancton 1996.

²²⁰O'Brien 1993, 12.

interaction between local municipalities. Even with this interaction, the County level of government has been under-utilised as a broader community resource; it has mainly served as a convenience for lower-tier municipalities in the delivery of 'regional' services, and for the Province in maintaining broad-scale service policies. Where municipalities have interacted, (outside of the County structure) with other sectors, such as volunteer organizations, non-profits, or service groups, the municipality has usually been in a position of being solicited by these agencies for assistance. As for the private sector, the rural and small town municipalities of County Country rarely seek interaction with this sector, beyond the contractual delivery of services that are achieved through a tendering process (e.g., road construction, snow removal).

The Province has capitalized on the uncooperative nature of local municipalities to push forward its restructuring objectives. By creating a crisis situation through new provincial fiscal policies, municipalities were forced to cooperate in an attempt to reach local restructuring solutions. The alternative was to have the Province impose a solution through a Commission. The three sample Counties studied in detail in this thesis typify the dissension among municipalities. The results in Chatham-Kent are self-explanatory; municipalities could not agree on a solution, so the Province eliminated all of them. In Bruce County, even after a local solution was achieved, the Township of Bruce, in an effort to remain independent and have control over its substantial (nuclear power station) property tax base, took the County to court to have the agreement, which had been approved by the Province, nullified. And finally, the County of Frontenac had to convince

the City of Kingston, (which had requested Provincial intervention even before Commissions were an option) that - given the pending fiscal policy changes of the Province - local municipalities in Frontenac had indeed a renewed interest in formulating a local restructuring solution. The Province may have surmised that at least one municipality within each County would not be pleased with local options and, with the spectre of a Commission being appointed, municipalities could not stubbornly maintain a stalemate in restructuring negotiations.

The Provincial Government of Ontario believes that, through restructuring, municipalities will be stronger and better able to cope with the stresses of local government; in other words, they will become more viable. Based on the results of this thesis, it is not possible - at least yet - to uphold such provincial assertions. Municipal reforms of the magnitude that have been experienced between 1995 and 1998 have never before been encountered in Ontario's County Country, and the full results will only be determined over time. This thesis has encouraged the suggestion (and in fact would advocate) that municipalities in County Country pro-actively seek to increase their viability by their own reforms through more community-minded and collaborative activities, as outlined in the process of consciously developing a Community of Communities. By actively pursuing collaborative partnerships with all sectors of society, municipalities may be able to tap into a wealth of institutional capital resources (the least of which may be funding) that has previously gone untapped.

County planners generally played a minor role in the restructuring process. Resolving restructuring issues was predominantly addressed through political means and by senior managers. If planners were involved, it would have been via the Director of Planning, and this in a mainly administrative, information-providing capacity.²²¹ Restructuring may now have introduced a new opportunity for County planners, the planning profession, and for County Country municipalities in general. The municipal boundaries that once existed, and which previously isolated municipalities, have, to a great extent, been removed. The former petty squabbles between municipal councils have been lessened, freeing up some political capital for investment in more effective governance. Councils may also find, with the increased size of municipalities, that the complexity of governing may also increase - which in turn may lead to more council emphasis on policy formation and governance processes, and less emphasis by councillors on the day-to-day administration/supervision of the municipality. This seems to have been the case for example, in the City of Chatham-Kent.

Planners can help bring meaningful change to municipalities in County Country by pursuing broad-based public participation and multi-sectoral involvement in issues that affect the social, economic and environmental capacity of a County. Counties are in a unique position to capitalize on the outcomes of municipal restructuring in Ontario. Some

²²¹Kent County was the exception, where Ralph Pugliese, the Director of Planning, played a central role in restructuring negotiations prior to the decision of the Commission. Mr. Pugliese was the Acting C.A.O. for the County only a few months prior to the restructuring becoming a central issue at the local level. Mr. Pugliese has achieved a unique understanding of the County of Kent through his almost two decades of service as Planning Director.

Counties, such as Frontenac, Northumberland, Peterborough, and Hastings have lost some valuable property tax base to their contiguous separated cities, while others such as Lambton, Kent, and Prince Edward have created new ties between urban and rural “municipalities”. Strengthening urban centres such as Kingston, Peterborough, and Quinte West²²² should not be viewed as a necessary weakening of the County system. Rural, and small town residents often rely on larger urban centres for many of their services and amenities. Removing urban growth from the county system also removes the burden of servicing residents whose community of interest is rightfully with the urban centre. Counties need to approach larger urban municipalities with the intention of increasing their mutual interaction and cooperation, in an effort to forge a collaborative union that benefits both municipalities and society in general.

Bonding with other municipalities, in a manner similar to Dodge’s SIGNETS, is one of the central facets in the development of a C². Counties must have strong ties with their member municipalities to be able to build the larger community. If a County does not receive support from lower-tier municipalities, the legitimacy of the C²D is seriously eroded. However, public sector collaborations are only one component of a C². Counties need to *explore* the larger community possibility, to gather support for creating an interconnected, community network. The City of Kingston, through the Department of Client Services and Community Development (DCSCD), has undertaken the task of developing community support for coordinating community efforts on a City-wide basis.

²²²Previously the Town of Belleville.

The community development mandate of the DCSCD was achieved and initiated through political and administrative leadership. This leadership has led to the allocation of municipal resources for the greater benefit of local community groups, and the introduction of the City as a coordinating body for community efforts.

Both the City of Kingston and the City of Chatham-Kent intend to embark on some form of community/corporate *visioning*. Each municipality is approaching the visioning process from slightly different perspectives. Kingston intends to develop a vision that includes both community and corporate interests. The DCSCD along with the Department of Corporate Planning have been given the task of developing the vision, which, as yet, has not been initiated. The City of Chatham-Kent seems to be approaching their visioning exercise from more of a corporate, and strategic, perspective - with the possibility of community development interests playing a minor role. Without a strong commitment to conscious new community-building, the prospects for serious, large-scale community development at the City/County level are not encouraging. The City of Chatham-Kent has not reached the visioning stage of their strategic planning program at this time. The vision process in both instances would gain significant credibility and legitimacy if it involved extensive participation by not only the general public but also organized community groups, business groups such as local chambers of commerce, volunteer organizations, academic institutions, and any other groups within the municipality with an interest in the future of the larger community of communities. By creating a community vision, a municipality is placing an important focus on a key aspect of the larger community. As

the City of Kingston has shown, formalizing a community vision is not a prerequisite for initiating community *action*. The vision provides a guide for future achievements.

Attaining short-term successes can occur while the municipality is exploring the larger community for support (even if this is in the absence of a community vision).

If a municipality formally pursues the creation of a community of communities, or a similar, large-scale community development initiative, it should be set within a council-endorsed plan, such as a Community of Communities Initiative (C²I). Lessons should be learned from the errors made by many of the Official Plans (OPs) in Ontario, which have become overly detailed while encompassing an overwhelming number of municipal issues.²²³ A C²I must include the four phases of developing a C², with emphasis placed on the community vision, support and involvement of all sectors of county society, as well as a mechanism for *maintaining*, or reaffirming, the community vision.²²⁴

The future of the City of Kingston's community development activities could demonstrate the benefits and pitfalls associated with coordinating community activities at the larger, municipal level. While staff are interested in extending the activities of the Department of Client Services and Community Development to the rural areas of the Frontenac Management Board, it will be interesting to see if City leaders and/or the rural Townships perceive benefit in such partnerships. Observing the extent to which the City itself pursues

²²³Farrow 1998.

²²⁴Farrow 1998.

a community vision will also merit further investigation.

Unfortunately, the combined political and administrative cultures in the City of Chatham and the County of Kent give little reason for optimism that the new City of Chatham-Kent will initiate any form of community development initiatives. The pending Strategic Plan, while it may include a vision for the new city, will in all likelihood, deal exclusively with property development and land-use issues. It will be interesting to see how rural residents will be treated in such a large municipality, and one that is dominated by the old City of Chatham. Hopefully, rural residents will not be relegated to the status of special-interest groups, fighting City Hall in an increasingly marginalised rural 'community'.

Like many other counties in Ontario, the County of Bruce will probably continue on the same course of limited governance innovation that it has followed for many years. These Counties will hopefully observe and learn from the progress of Cities such as Kingston, Chatham-Kent and Prince-Edward, as well as Counties such as Brant, Oxford and Lambton which have made changes to not only their municipal structures but also in their approach to governance. The key for any County or City that embarks on a C²D process, will lie not only with the ability of the public sector levels to cooperate, but in the abilities of the public sector to also create new partnerships in collaboration with other sectors of society, in a genuine effort to share expertise, power and resources. Developing a community of communities is not a means for governments to subsidise or be handicapped by other members of the community, but instead a means to strive for a more prosperous

condition that benefits all partners.

6.3 Implications

The planning profession in Ontario, and specifically in County Country, needs to recognise the value of the planning domain that lies beyond issues of land-use in the realm of more community-building considerations. County Country is dealing with reforms that have not before been encountered in recent Canadian history. Planning needs to pro-actively evolve to help lead municipalities into a new era of locally-initiated government structuring and governance reform. The Provincial government has created an enormously volatile situation, with further reforms in its interests likely to follow in the future. The long-term viability of the new municipal structures is difficult to predict. With more responsibilities and less financial support, municipalities are left to fulfil their mandate through local means only. If the planning profession does not support and encourage planners to expand their role within the municipal structure, planning in Ontario's County Country will be limited to the predominantly technical aspects of land-use regulation.

Planners should look forward to the long-term ramifications of restructuring. If planners do not expand their role, municipal decision-makers may decide that, with fewer municipalities, fewer planners are needed. Planners need to accept the reforms that have changed the municipal structure, and progress the mechanisms of local government by embracing the challenge of appropriate governance reforms. Municipalities can no longer be satisfied with their introverted outlooks and planners cannot be satisfied with the

meagre planning gains delivered to date by restructuring. Planners need to realize the opportunity that has emerged as a result of restructuring, and advocate changes to current governance measures, by building communities that value the abilities and potential contributions of citizens, community groups, and the private sector. This new approach would challenge planners to view community issues in a way that crosses boundaries and jurisdictions. Municipalities, but most importantly planners, need to work and plan with communities instead of simply governing over, and planning for, residents and tax-payers.

Municipalities are currently being buoyed up to some degree through special provincial assistance,²²⁵ possibly to mitigate any short-term negative repercussions in anticipation of a 1999 provincial election.²²⁶ If the current Harris government is re-elected, it will be interesting to see if more municipalities are forced to amalgamate as a result of the full ramification of the service downloading and funding reductions. Even if a new government is elected, the long-term results of the current government restructuring will be an evolving issue. A truer measure of municipal viability should be possible in 3 or 4 years.

It is unlikely that future provincial governments will make radical changes in an attempt to return the province to pre-1995 conditions. The longer-term results of the Harris

²²⁵The Province created a \$50 million fund for municipalities to access for expenses associated with the transition period caused by restructuring.

²²⁶The Premier of Ontario recently gave the Toronto School Public Board \$600 million dollars to overcome financial hardships for the 1998/99 school year. This money effectively extinguishes some of the controversy over provincial cuts made to the education system as part of the Common Sense Revolution.

government reforms will be of significant importance in future studies of municipal reform in Ontario, and Canada. Once municipalities are asked to carry the full burden of the services downloaded by the Province, the true capacity and capability of municipalities will emerge. Some may need to raise taxes, others may sacrifice services, while others may be well-positioned to accommodate the new responsibilities and their associated costs. A future situation that results in the secession or division of newly-consolidated municipalities would be of special interest. The conditions that would cause such a reversal in current trends, and the potential for similar occurrences with other municipalities, would serve as an interesting precedent in Ontario. Any policies of future Provincial Governments that do reverse, reform, or adjust the Harris government policies will certainly merit special study, in terms of this thesis.

It is hoped that the City of Kingston is successful in its endeavours to promote a City-supported community development network through the Department of Client Services and Community Development. While the idea of municipalities being involved in the creation of a community network or the promotion of public involvement in local government are not new ideas, more attention needs to be given to the future of government in the rural, non-metropolitan areas of Ontario. The importance of urban areas as the economic engine of society cannot be trivialized or ignored; however, the delivery of strong and valued municipal government in the rural and small town areas of Ontario warrants further investigation. This need is heightened now as County Country emerges from the reforms that began in late 1995. If municipalities choose to approach

the responsibilities of local government in the same manner as prior to the recent restructuring, they may well be doomed by the increasing number of stresses that could adversely influence their capacity and overall viability. However, municipalities can also choose to positively change their course of governance, in an effort to pro-actively build capacity without relying on the property tax base or Provincial assistance - two revenue-raising resources that are, arguably, reaching their limits. Developing a Community of Communities constitutes such an approach, by accessing the untapped resources of local communities (of geography and of interest), and by harnessing the synergy of an effectively operating county-scaled community.

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