

## Regionalist Paper No. 8

### The Spectrum of Regional Structures: What are Our Options?

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#### Preface

Regionalism is not a new concept. It represents a natural progression in the basic structure of government that stems from the need to manage government functions more efficiently and effectively. This need stems from the pressures of population and economic growth, and from the need to do more for more people in an increasingly complex and expensive world. The resulting fiscal pressures mandate searching for economies of scale and better services from professional, region-wide management of those government functions that are no longer within the capacity of any one government to handle.

London regionalized in 1897 and created a new working relationship with its surrounding parishes. New York City created its metropolitan government and system of boroughs in 1898. In the 1920s, Paris created its structure of 'les arrondissements', their metropolitan way of doing things. Toronto regionalized in the mid-1950s, the Twin Cities and Nashville in the early 1970s, Louisville in the 1990s, and many more.

In this paper, we will discuss both process (How has regionalism been achieved?) and end results (What kinds of regional governance structures have been created?). Our purpose is not to promote the triumph of one process or one final regional structure over another; rather it is to promote reflection, and, if warranted, new initiatives. Whether by design or the result of inaction, every metropolitan region adopts a composite structure and character that defines its whole. This is true worldwide.

This is not an easy subject, nor an easy task: “Whoso desireth to discourse in a proper manner concerning corporated towns and communities must take in a great variety of matter and should be allowed a great deal of time and preparation ... The subject is extensive and difficult”<sup>1</sup>. This is fair warning. Before viewing the catalogue of processes or the list of possible end results, let us first put this subject into some context:

There is no cook book solution. Wherever regionalism has been entertained, the outcome has always been tailored to the communities, its citizens, its unique character, its traditions, and its economy. For these matters, one size does not fit all; no two end results are alike, anywhere.

Indeed, within any of the structural models listed below, differing sets of public policies will yield hugely different results, including either success or failure, neither uncommon. To list the set of policies on which such results may turn is not practical; they are too numerous, and they vary with region. They may include public policies on roads versus rail, or both; how narrowly or broadly the authority of a metropolitan entity is defined; whether metropolitan leaders are elected or appointed; the permitting of or reigning in of sprawl; how revenue and expenses are shared if at all, and so many others.

Within the spectrum below, there are literally hundreds of possible sub-options which are reflected in the many regional solutions that have been adopted throughout the United States. The list of regional management models that follows will be but a guide.

In the end, the ultimate measures of success will depend upon the leadership provided and on the range and merit of the government policies they adopt. However, the process of building a regional structure of governance and the validity of its design and its relationships with other government entities, are also extremely critical. The process will need an in depth and professional effort to get there, one involving much investment, broad public and stakeholder involvement, and much wisdom. Rest assured; quick fixes will make things worse. Underwhelming the effort (one of the leading causes

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Madox, British Historiographer, 1726 , *The Law of Government Operations*, Rhyne, p.1

of failure) will be misleading and costly. Drawing on lessons learned and building a sound regional structure, one with the assured capacity and authority necessary to govern over its assigned tasks, is hard work, yet essential.

## **I. Process for Attaining Regional Governance**

The processes used to create broader metropolitan mechanisms of governance have varied over the past century. As an overview, we list these processes in rough chronological order as being Annexation, Consolidation, and Federation. Other terms such as Two-Tier governments, Contemporary Regionalism, and New Regionalism have also been used to describe process.

For most of the past century, when urban centers or metro areas needed to grow in order to remain abreast of population and economic growth pressures, they followed one of two different paths, (1) annexation of surrounding areas, or (2) consolidation of adjacent government structures, usually a city and county merger. Except in the rarest of situations, annexation and consolidation no longer occur in the United States<sup>2</sup>, either because the strength of suburban and rural areas has grown, and they object to sharing their wealth, or because inner city governments fear losing their (sometimes, newly found) authorities, or for any number of other reasons.

Annexation: The annexation process was especially in vogue from 1900 through 1980. This remains on the books as a legal and viable process in most states<sup>3</sup>. Phoenix and Albuquerque regionalized in the 1980s using this process. They are the two most recent major examples of achieving a metropolitan government structure by annexation.

Consolidation: At some point in time, varying around the country, when a center city's surrounding areas (the suburbs) attained their own strength and pride, annexation ceased to be an acceptable process. This opened the door for the process of consolidation, the pooling of fortunes by more or less urban and suburban equals, or the clear, sometimes crisis-driven, need to provide more services with less overhead, or for myriad other reasons. The consolidation process was especially in vogue from the 1960s to the late 1980s. As a process it, too, remains on the books<sup>4</sup> as a viable procedure in

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<sup>2</sup> In Canada, the annexation and consolidation processes continue to be used. New methods of regionalism are also used in Canada. In this paper, we will mention selected examples of Canadian regionalism, by whatever process, that have useful lessons learned for Hampton Roads.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia legislation permits Annexation, however, a moratorium was established in 1987 preventing its usage until the year 2010, and then, pending review. See the Code of Virginia § 15.2 - 3201.

<sup>4</sup> The Code of Virginia, § 15.2-3501, Authority to consolidate counties, cities or towns: Any two or more adjoining like units of local government are hereby authorized to consolidate into a single consolidated like

most, if not all, states. Consolidation is the merging of any two or more adjacent city or county governments, or any combination thereof, although most consolidations involved cities and counties. Louisville in 1995 and Halifax in 1996<sup>5</sup> are the two most recent major examples of regionalism achieved by consolidation of which we are aware. Following twenty years of effort, Louisville merged their center city and neighboring county governments, a remarkable story, one worth Hampton Roads study because of the modern way in which both community leaders and the public were engaged. The new Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) government was the consolidation result of merging three city governments (Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford). This is another case very much worth Hampton Roads study because of so many issues that they have in common with us—national level Navy homeport, a major ports and rails region, coastal tourism, much history, and fiscal stresses which were the prime motivator for change.

Federation: Federation (our term), represents a work in progress. It represents, perhaps, the newest process answer for regionalism that is emerging (and apparently fitting) for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Federation accepts that annexation and consolidation are no longer practical, and it acknowledges the deep American yearn for government-close-to-the-people. It retains the structure of multiple city, county, and town governments while concurrently creating a formal and legal government system for metropolitan management.

Federation means two-tier, or for regionalism, it means having two levels of governance. For the moment, this means little—the metro tier could be strong or weak, or have broad or limited authority, or be state-established and legally empowered, or not. The term partial consolidation, instead of federation, has also been used when describing this model to indicate that some (a partial number) of government functions—not government units—are consolidated into a limited-function, metro body. The terms—federation and partial consolidation—are interchangeable; we will continue using the federation term in this paper.

From his research, Anthony Downs suggests that “The most powerful form of metropolitan area governance would be the “pure” metropolitan government .... A

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unit of local government. And, the Virginia Constitution, Article VII, Section 2, Para (2): The General Assembly may also provide by special act for the organization, government, and powers of any county, city, town, or **regional government**, including such powers of legislation, taxation, and assessment as the General Assembly may determine, but no such special act shall be adopted which provides for the extension or contraction of boundaries of any county, city, or town.

<sup>5</sup> Visit the HRM website, <http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/Region/region.html>, for information about why and how they regionalized.

second possible form of governance ... would be a regional government with limited functions”<sup>6</sup>

Myron Orfield, one of the nation’s leading and most quoted authors on matters of local government, explains that “Most critics of regional governance argue that it would violate the principle of local autonomy and unnecessarily add another layer of government. However, effective, efficient regional governance strikes a balance that allows local control over issues best addressed by smaller local governments (such as public safety, licensing, street maintenance, garbage collection, and purely local land-use or zoning issues), while promoting cooperation among local governments on larger issues affecting the entire region (such as highway and sewer investments, affordable housing, transit, land-use planning, air and water quality, and economic development)”<sup>7</sup>.

Other writers share these views. This federation or partial consolidation process with its two-tier end result comes in many shapes and forms. In our view, it describes well what is in vogue and most fitting for today’s early 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

In an earlier Regionalist Paper<sup>8</sup>, we introduced the concept of Contemporary Regionalism, a new-day, federated model of regionalism with three ascending levels of maturity. In brief, these were:

- Contemporary regionalism, phase-one: Create a number of state-empowered, regional governments (political subdivisions, for example, Regional Authorities), each responsible for an individual government function, while retaining the region’s several city and county governments.
- Contemporary regionalism, phase-two: Create a Regional Services Oversight Board or other organization that would coordinate the efforts of the several Regional Authorities, cited above, that are operating in the metropolitan area, while retaining the region’s several city and county governments.
- Contemporary regionalism, phase-three: Create a state-empowered, Metropolitan Council or Commission, responsible for a limited number of the larger-scale government functions, while retaining the region’s several city and county governments.

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<sup>6</sup> Anthony Downs, “*New Visions for Metropolitan America*”, (Lincoln Institute for Land Policy for the Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1994), p. 162

<sup>7</sup> Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitcs: The New Suburban Reality*, (The Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2002), p. 148-149

<sup>8</sup> See Regionalist Paper No. 3, *Contemporary Regionalism and Hampton Roads: Where We Stand in the Process, and What Might Be Next*

From these descriptions, Hampton Roads, like many other metro areas, has a federated structure of regionalism (phase-one above). On the local tier, we have retained our sixteen city and county governments. On the metro tier, we have several regional government organizations—Regional Authorities, Districts, and Commissions<sup>9</sup>—that are state-established and legally empowered as political subdivisions, responsible for individual government functions at the regional level. Together, they constitute a loosely knit, yet important, second (metro) tier of regional governance.

Whether and when Hampton Roads moves further in the progression to a Regional Services Oversight Board, or to a Metropolitan Council, is the general subject of the full set of regionalist papers. We do argue that when the time is right, we should do so and control the process, rather than delay and possibly be pushed in that direction later by crisis-driven and rushed initiatives.

New Regionalism: In literature on the subject of local and regional governance, the term new regionalism has been used in two different contexts.

First, some claim that voluntary cooperation is the ‘new regionalism’ and the process to pursue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For them, networking solves all. More often, however, other writers equally attest to the merits of voluntary cooperation, and then they strongly caution practitioners about the hard core limits of voluntary governance. They conclude it will not generate the regional citizenship, the stable planning, or the regional calculations necessary to develop a region strong enough in the global economy to elevate average wages and quality-of-life measures.

Second, the term ‘New Regionalism’<sup>10</sup> has also been used in the case where “regional revenue sharing”<sup>11</sup> has been included in whatever kind of regional government structure is in place. The Twin Cities Metro organization has institutionalized regional revenue sharing as a core management instrument, designed to reduce the damaging, beggar-thy-neighbor competition that sometimes occurs between neighboring communities. The concept of regional revenue sharing is truly new, and it may or may not have national applicability, but for our readers, here is the term, and it is definitely worth further study.

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<sup>9</sup> See Regionalist Paper No. 2, *The Regional Structure: The History of Regional Cooperation in Hampton Roads*, and Ibid, Regionalist Paper No. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Eggleston in the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities e-newsletter, August 27, 2002, quoting Old Dominion University professor, Roger Richman used the term “New Regionalism” to portray the marriage of regional management and regional funding.

<sup>11</sup> See Regionalist Paper No. 12, *Revenue Sharing as a Component of Regionalism: What are the Issues?* for a detailed discussion of state, local, and regional revenue sharing programs.

### Other process drivers—Voluntary Regional Cooperation, and Federal Incentives:

Voluntary Cooperation. Throughout the nationwide efforts to achieve regional efficiencies and regional competitive strength, and especially when progress was slow, informal cooperation methods of every variety were used to keep the wheels of government moving. Voluntary cooperation is a method of regionalizing little things in hundreds of instances. This is not a small enterprise. It has provided a mountain of experience in thinking and acting in a cooperative way, sometimes coordinating the efforts of just two or three communities, but often coordinating region-wide efforts as well.

Federal Incentives. In the mid-1960s, the federal government<sup>12</sup> began to tap into this nascent inter-local level of cooperation with numerous grant award opportunities that required joint grant proposals for cooperative projects (single city proposals were not accepted), and some that required a joint organization be formed (with finance and contracting authority) to manage the project and allocate the awarded funds (not to be allocated or managed by a single city or county). This trend of federal incentives for regional projects continues and is accelerating. With its military relationships, Hampton Roads has an historic healthy liaison with the department of defense, but less of a day-to-day working relationship with other federal departments, just the opposite of most other metropolitan areas. This needs additional attention; important opportunities for regional collaboration do exist with the federal departments of home land security, transportation, housing and others.

## **II. The Spectrum of Regional Governance Structures**

Designing, and describing regional governance structures, is as much art as it is science. Any one sequential list of options depends on one's entering arguments, but still, it is hoped you will see the variety of organizational possibilities below in an understandable way.

First, a brief outline of organizational possibilities:

- The absence of regional governance organizations

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<sup>12</sup> See Regionalist Paper No. 8, *Federal Support for Regionalism: Understanding Trends and Available Resources* for a discussion of the history of federal support for regionalism, the incentives that are currently available, and the promising trends of federal objectives.

- The presence of only non-government regional organizations
  - Single tier government organizations
  - Coordinated government organizations
  - Two-tier (federated) regional government organizations
1. The absence of regional structure: These are regions with modest or no regional governance structures in place. This model ranges from extremely fragmented metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and Pittsburg with over 100 independent municipal governments down to more typical, but still challenging metropolitan areas composed of some 15 to 25 distinct towns, cities or counties. Most often, and due to sheer need, voluntary forms of inter-city cooperation on selected regional matters fill the void in these cases. Numerous examples of regional coordination measures exist ranging from the strictly informal, to cost-saving working level agreements and shared contracts between city departments, to the more important, but still informal, Mayors and Chairs level of dialogue. Within this model there are also the examples of cities that have tried, but so far failed, to create regional governance structures such as Memphis, Hartford, and Newark.
  2. Non-government regional organizations: This model refers to regions where public-private organizations are the primary drivers of regional coordination. Non-government organizations in many metro areas have been enormously successful. Most often, they have focused on economic development, but they have also provided substantial encouragement and support for other community matters throughout the region as well.

In a drive to promote Austin as a national and global level high tech metropolis, the Greater Austin Consortium involved outlying towns, the local university, and business leaders in a series of focused plans to attract business in the computer industry. Their successful story is addressed in several books—they recaptured a prime IBM contract from Silicon Valley; they won the U.S. government save-the-computer-chip-industry contract for Sematech; and they attracted one of the highest concentrations of venture capitalists which still spawn and attract new business. With considerable success, the twin Kansas Cities KC-1 consortium merged the broad tourism industries of the two cities (in two states), merging, in particular, their convention bureaus, their restaurant associations their regional marketing, and integrating their regional tour packages. Chicagoland is the major and highly influential public-private, reputation-building and visioning enterprise organization in Greater Chicago.



Non-government regional organizations are not just one step in the progression of regionalism. They may be the one functioning regional body in some metro areas, and as such, they may inspire successful efforts that later create formal regional government entities. These non-government regional organizations, however, must continue to be supported even after regional government organizations are established. These are the organizations that include the region's professionals and top community and corporate leaders. They are attuned to the merits of disciplined management and future needs. Regions need to have both: formal regional structures of government, and effective regional non-government, catalyst organizations, at the same time.

The primary regional non-government (public-private) organization in Hampton Roads today is the Hampton Roads Partnership (HRP)<sup>13</sup>. While seeking broad regional improvements, such as higher wage scales and an improved quality-of-life, any investments made or actions taken to strengthen or revitalize the Hampton Roads Partnership organization would, obviously, be beneficial.

### 3. Single tier government organizations:

In recent years and considering metro areas of about the size or the character of Hampton Roads, single tier regional governments have been created by the process of annexation (Phoenix and Albuquerque in the 1980s), by the process of merging city and county governments (Charlotte, Indianapolis, Nashville, Louisville), and by the process of merging two or more city governments (Halifax Regional Municipality and Thunder Bay).

Each of the metro areas cited above has an element of interest and some lessons learned for Hampton Roads. Charlotte is one of our top competitors; they built their union and regional promise with strong leadership and in part on the economic development value of their national-hub airport. In Nashville, the new Mayor of "The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County" told a visiting Hampton Roads delegation, "Manage the future, or be managed by it", during a visit of Hampton Roads leaders to his newly re-structured, metropolitan city. Louisville is a particularly important case to study because of the long-term and orderly depth of effort invested, and because it is one of the nation's most recent regionalism successes, one that involved public organizations of all types and the general public in modern ways throughout. In Nova Scotia, the cities of Dartmouth, Bedford, and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Regionalist Paper No. 3.

Halifax were consolidated into one new city, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). This was an example of the merging of three maritime cities, Halifax and Dartmouth across the river from each other (like Norfolk and Portsmouth) and Bedford at the end of the river (like Chesapeake at the end of the Elizabeth River). Also, in the 1990's the two port cities of Fort Williams and Port Arthur in Ontario, Canada consolidated into one new city, Thunder Bay, now the second largest port on Lake Superior.

Should we merge two or more cities in Hampton Roads?<sup>14</sup> Neal Peirce, author of *Citistates*<sup>15</sup> and former Mayor of Phoenix, is a particularly strong advocate of creating more capable cities and/or single metropolitan cities by any means. He seeks two things—local management cost efficiencies, and effective external competitiveness in the new global economy<sup>16</sup>.

The ratio of local governments to population is one parameter of interest. Hampton Roads has sixteen local governments and a population of about 1.6 million, or one government per 100,000 citizens. Literature<sup>17</sup> on this parameter is sparse. For small to mid-size metro areas, Hampton Roads' ratio for this parameter is in the middle, or average. The general public is opposed to merging governments, both nationwide and in Hampton Roads. They want to save their unique municipal heritage and independence. Creating single governments by the merging of cities, therefore, is unlikely, and no one would seriously recommend this be pursued. However, if a studied plan for merging two cities in Hampton Roads arose, had real traction, and public support, we suggest it be supported. Over the past twenty five years, Germany has decreased its number of local governments from about 600 to 400 in a nationwide effort to find efficiencies. Keep an open mind; the era of consolidation may come back.

4. Coordinated government organizations: There is an important variation to the city-county consolidation process that needs to be acknowledged. It is a “divide-the-responsibilities” option. The Miami-Dade County government arrangement retains both city and county governments. It is based on re-writing their respective government charters to prevent mission overlaps. Government functions are

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<sup>14</sup> As unlikely as this is to happen, we recall newspaper coverage of the debates in 2004 that addressed the pros and cons of merging Norfolk and Portsmouth.

<sup>15</sup> Neal R. Peirce, Curtis W. Johnson, and John Stuart. *Citistates—How Urban America Can Prosper in a Competitive World*, Washington, D.C.: Seven Locks Press,

<sup>16</sup> See Regionalist Paper No. 7, *The Importance of Regionalism in the Global Economy: Why Must We Adjust?*

<sup>17</sup> Robert Puentes, *Valuing America's First Suburbs: A Regional Policy Agenda*, National League of Cities, First Tier Suburbs Council Briefing, The Brookings Institution, March 2004.

rationalized; they are assigned either to the city level or to the county level, but never to both.

By most measures and by reputation, the Miami-Dade County government arrangements have been successful and are referred to by several authors. This particular organizational option, a horizontal division of labor, would not fit well into the Hampton Roads system. Still, it has achieved regional efficiencies and has served as a source of important lessons learned. One interesting feature of their allocation of government functions has to do with education. Most every other re-allocation of duties around the country has left K-12 education with the local levels of government, but in Miami-Dade, education was assigned to the county level. In its own way, their decision shows again there are no cook-book solutions. Regional decisions must and will always fit the unique traditions and interests of its respective regional citizens.

5. Two-tier (federated) regional government structures:

Two-tier situations exist when some government functions are carried out at the local level (by city and county governments) and other government functions are carried out at the metro level (by regional organizations duly empowered to do so), a vertical division of labor.

In this category, and at the metro level, we will define four distinct sub-categories to be included in our spectrum of regional organizational possibilities. These four sub-categories are listed in ascending levels of metro governance capacity (resources) and capability (authority):

- (1) A metro layer of Regional Authorities,
- (2) A metro layer with a Regional Services Oversight Board,
- (3) A metro layer with an effective MPO organization, and
- (4) A metro area with a limited function Metropolitan Council government, or the like

(1) Regional Authorities metro layer. Hampton Roads, as discussed earlier, is a region that has a substantial and effective layer of state-empowered political subdivisions, its family of Regional Authorities, Districts, and Commissions.

(2) Regional Services Oversight Board metro layer. Leading a State Commission in 1967, Marshall Hahn<sup>18</sup> applauded the formation of a system of regional authorities in Virginia. At the same time, he cautioned that too many, over time, could produce a new kind of organizational-fragmentation, needing new attention. Nationwide, regions that have created an organization to coordinate, or to ensure local governments are aware of, the work of many Regional Authorities fall into this category. These oversight organizations may range from one that only reviews and comments on reports, to one that has audit and/or some degree of veto authority over regional authority plans, or anything in between. Once the need for such an organization was recognized and was formed, its experience has led toward additional regional planning and management. If deemed meritorious, and as one idea for Hampton Roads, this function could be assigned to the state-established Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, an existing organization, or pending study, to a different or new organization. This is a useful regional idea.

(3) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) metro layer. Weiss, Larson and Orfield are researchers who have identified MPO<sup>19</sup> organizations around the country as especially important and successful test-beds and training-grounds for developing regional perspectives and regional skills. Orfield has concluded that “metropolitan planning organizations [MPOs] are the most widespread form of regional governance in the United States today”<sup>20</sup>. Responsible for regional transportation investments and for transportation planning and programming—genuine, large scale regional issues—Metropolitan Planning Organizations are federally mandated (obligatory) regional organizations. The Hampton Roads MPO is well staffed, but its capacity has been severely constrained by an historic state reluctance to devolve transportation planning and programming down to the metropolitan level as provided for in federal legislation.

In our spectrum of regional organizational possibilities that have developed around the country, this particular ‘effective-MPO’ sub-category<sup>21</sup> of two-tier regionalism has been an important phase for, and has contributed significantly, to the

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<sup>18</sup> Marshall Hahn, Jr., *The Report of the Virginia Metropolitan Areas Study Commission*, referred to as the “Hahn Commission Report”, Virginia Senate Document No. 14, 1967.

<sup>19</sup> See Regionalist Paper No. 5, *Coming of Age - The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regionalism*

<sup>20</sup> Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitanities: The New Suburban Reality*, (The Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2002), p. 137

<sup>21</sup> Robert Puentes and Linda Bailey, *Improving Metropolitan Decision Making in Transportation: Greater Funding and Devolution for Greater Accountability*, Washington, D.C.: a report of the Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy, The Brookings Institution Series on Transportation Reform, October 2003.

process of building the expertise, experience and skills needed for effective regional management. For Hampton Roads, this could be a promising next option.

(4) Metropolitan Council, a “limited function” metro government.

This last sub-category of two-tier structures is itself divisible into multiple sub-sub-categories. Designing government organizational structures will never be easy. This is the category with state-empowered ‘limited function’ regional government bodies, something less than one tier regional governments with general powers. We will use the term Metropolitan Council to describe this kind of limited function regional government organization, but one could use any number of other terms, e.g., Metropolitan Commission, or The Metro.

Pursuant to its state-issued charter, a Metropolitan Council may be assigned responsibilities for many or for few government functions; they may have appointed or elected leaders; their finances may be tax-based or fee-based, or some mixture of the two; they may have authority to review local level government plans or not, just to name a few variables.

This sounds daunting, but it is not. In designing a Metropolitan Council, citizens and their leaders simply need to identify what is best managed at the metro level and what is best managed at the local level, and draft charters accordingly. Any decision to create a Metropolitan Council is also a decision to give it the authority and the resources it needs to successfully carry out its assigned functions. Of course, there are political factors that bear on this question, but these are also questions that require a pragmatic and calculated decision, and much wisdom. Other issues need similar attention. This is very hard work, but if the time is right for any metropolitan area in the United States to do this, then they need to do it well.

We argue that some day, whether near term, or many years from now, the time will come when it is right for Hampton Roads. It is a process and work that will require several years of effort.

Minneapolis-St. Paul; Portland, Oregon<sup>22</sup>; and Toronto, Canada are three of the most advanced regional structures described in literature. None are alike. Twin Cities is

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<sup>22</sup> Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom. *Place Matters – Metropolitcs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, revised, 2005 for a discussion of the Twin Cities Metro program, its ups and downs; and Orfield, Myron, *American Metro-Politics: The New Suburban Reality*, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2002 that describes both regional

physically divided by the upper Mississippi River as we are divided by the James. Such geography puts a bit of a limit on regionalism; they have figured that out. Toronto may be too big to have good lessons learned for us, but it was the first of these three regions to construct metro governments.

The Twin Cities Metro (the name of their limited function regional government) and the Portland Metro (their limited function regional government) are very different, but both declare they drew early inspirations from their respective MPO experiences. Commissioners for the Twin Cities are appointed by the Governor<sup>23</sup>. Commissioners for the Portland Metro are elected by the general public, three at-large, and eight by district, as representatives of the districts in the metro area.

The Twin Cities Metro uses a revenue sharing program<sup>24</sup> as a core management instrument, an idea being examined by many. Throughout the Twin Cities metro area (about sixty communities), forty percent of all tax revenues from new businesses go to a metro pool and are redistributed from there. Their idea is to ensure every community benefits whenever one community wins a new business in order to stem damaging competition between communities, and to ensure geographic fiscal inequities are not magnified over time.

The Portland Metro has been the leading test bed for several policies that have placed all land-use decisions at the metro level—linking housing and road decisions, preventing encroachment, location decisions for the next landfill, and saving green space—a set of policy ideas being studied by many. Most observers consider they have been successful in this regard and that their planning process more assuredly considers long term factors than anywhere else.

It was a mixture of management and financial pressures that started the process of regional cooperation in both metro areas, more by pre-planning in the Twin Cities case, and more crisis-driven in Portland. Three disturbing problems were at the root of Portland's effort. One was a crisis of uncoordinated, costly growth getting all the attention, with out-year maintenance costs beyond any budget possibilities. Another was a decaying downtown and a decaying inner ring of first-suburbs getting no attention, and

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programs. See also the Twin Cities Metro and Portland Metro websites at: [www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org) for Twin Cities and [www.metro-region.org](http://www.metro-region.org) for Portland

<sup>23</sup> Admittedly, this has been controversial. It goes to the question of legitimacy. In the long run, it has worked well, however, there have been periods when it was claimed that patronage drove decisions rather than the merits of plans and policies. Motions in the state legislature to change the selection process for board members (some or all) to a public election process have so far failed, once by a single vote.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Regionalist Paper No. 12.

third was a public angry about the unending loss of farmland, woods, and esthetics in general. In short, a mixture of fiscal realism and idealism combined in Portland to be the motivation for building a new, coordinated way of managing some government functions at the regional level, and other government functions at the customary local level.

### **III. Conclusions**

We have examined process (How regionalism is achieved) and found that the methods most fitting for Hampton Roads are likely to be those of federation, partial consolidation, and two-tier endeavors.

We have examined the spectrum of possible end results, be they historic, London in 1898, or recent, Louisville in 1995. We have learned that Hampton Roads is in the midst of the regionalizing process with its family of Regional Authorities at the metro level.

From here, when to go further along in the process, if at all, and to what kind of end result (or to what next step) are pending decisions. The options available include any, some, or all of the following: (a) further expand or improve the current family of Regional Authorities, (b) robust our non-government Hampton Roads Partnership organization, (c) multiply ongoing voluntary regional coordination projects, (d) robust the Hampton Roads MPO organization, (e) consider a Regional Services Oversight Board, or similar entity, and (f) begin developing a Hampton Roads Metropolitan Council, our own Metro.

Ray Taylor, Future of Hampton Roads, April 2006