

APPENDIX

“A”

Governance History of Onondaga County

Governance Structure: 1794 to 1900

The structure of local government established by New York State after the Revolutionary War followed the pattern of English colonial administration. Counties and towns were created to serve administrative needs of the state. Twenty counties were established for the administration of justice and most county officers served the Circuit Court. Towns were established within counties as taxing units to fund the county courts. Cities and villages were chartered by the state, at local request; to provide additional services for more densely settled areas within counties.

The local governance structure based on both strong towns and strong counties in New York State is unusual. New England states have strong towns. Many western states have strong counties that govern unincorporated areas outside cities.

Onondaga County

Colonial settlement of central New York was sparse. In 1794 New York State designated the Military Tract and divided it into mile-square Military Lots to be given to soldiers in compensation for service and to entice settlement. Surveys that established the Military Tract and Lots also set out the boundaries of Onondaga County. Five townships were mapped - Lysander, Pompey, Manlius, Marcellus and Scipio - but not given responsibility for civil governance. The geography of Onondaga County was soon trimmed by the creation of Cayuga, Cortland and Oswego counties, to permit settlers to reach a county seat in a days ride.

By 1810, eleven towns were created from four of the original five townships. (Scipio was no longer part of Onondaga County.) Subsequently some towns were split, bringing the total number of towns to nineteen. Towns were responsible for raising tax revenues for county courts, road building and providing for the needs of the poor. The Town Supervisor was the chief elected officer.

Towns supervised early road building, on a district basis; district residents were required by state law to contribute labor to road building press gangs. The town Overseer of the Poor was responsible for addressing the needs of the destitute; towns sometimes contracted for the needs of the poor with the lowest bidder at public auction. In 1812, the state required that each town divide its territory into school districts and provide a school within each district. The first school districts were very small; some towns had over 20 school districts. Elected commissioners were responsible for the school districts administration.

Board of Supervisors

Town Supervisors were required to meet annually, as the County Board of Supervisors, to discuss the state of the county, and when authorized by the state undertake public projects for the county that would be funded by the towns. The first of these projects in Onondaga County was the Courthouse built on Onondaga Hill in 1810. Later the state authorized the counties to build

poor houses; the construction of the Onondaga County Poor House in the Town of Onondaga was approved in 1827.

Villages

New York State approved village charters, at the request of local voters, to provide population centers with additional services such as fire protection, water supply, streets and sidewalks. Despite incorporation, village residents are eligible to vote in town elections and property owners are subject to town as well as village taxes. Of the 15 villages in existence today in Onondaga County, nine were chartered by legislative action between 1830 and 1852. Six additional villages were incorporated after 1874 under the general law rather than by legislative action. The Village of Syracuse was established in 1825 and soon emerged as the commercial center for Onondaga County based on the growing salt industry and the Erie Canal.

City of Syracuse

In 1847 the City of Syracuse was incorporated under a State charter, encompassing the villages of Syracuse and Salina, to gain additional municipal powers. Eventually Geddes, Eastwood, Danforth and Elmwood villages and town lands from Salina, Dewitt, Geddes and Onondaga were annexed by the City of Syracuse to gain access to urban services.

Growth and Shifting Government Functions In the Twentieth Century

Government structure remained mostly unchanged from the late 18th Century through the 20th Century but assignment of responsibility for various functions continues to evolve with changing demand for services and redistribution of population and wealth.

Between 1850 and 1920, Syracuse grew in population from 22,000 to 172,000 along with transportation on the Erie Canal and the railroad, a booming industrial economy, immigration of European populations, as well as the annexation. Town population grew from 57,000 to 64,000 during the same period but remained primarily agrarian.

The transfer of some town functions to county government followed the shift of relative wealth and population to Syracuse. The County Highway Department was formed in 1910, with responsibility for many farm-to-market roads; towns retained responsibility for local roads. During the Depression the Board of Supervisors accepted additional town roads as county highways and several large county parks were developed around unique natural features and tax delinquent farmlands. In 1938, the County Department of Welfare was formally assigned responsibility for the poor, in anticipation of New York State requirements.

The Depression and the Federal New Deal brought significant changes to government and development patterns in Syracuse and Onondaga County. Pioneer Homes, which opened in 1940, the first public housing in Syracuse, built with Federal funds. The FHA mortgage program adopted national standards; race, national origin, and religion of neighborhood residents among other things were used as indicators of risk for insuring residential mortgages. Most of the city

and many older neighborhoods adjacent towns failed to meet those standards and mortgages were unavailable or limited to a low percent of value in redlined areas. Redlining was not outlawed until 1961. The result was the beginning of disinvestment and the beginnings of concentrated poverty in Syracuse.

By the end of World War II, Onondaga County was one of the top manufacturing locations in the country. Population living in Syracuse was estimated at 244,000 by the Health Department. The severe restriction in building materials and intense population pressure led to illegal conversions to create more living units; deteriorated, substandard, and overcrowded housing increased. The housing shortage was to be exacerbated by the return of soldiers, the GI Bill and growth of Syracuse University enrollment, and boom in marriages and births that followed.

The Syracuse-Onondaga Post War Planning Council submitted its report to the community in December of 1945. The Post War Plan set out a new direction for Onondaga County and Syracuse; recommendations laid the ground for much of the change that was to follow in Syracuse. Projects and programs set forth in the plan included the location of Interstate highways in and around Syracuse; the development of Hancock International Airport on the site of the Army Airbase; the demolition of substandard; cultural facilities including a science museum (the Museum of Science and Technology (MOST)); centers for trade and tourism including a convention center (the Oncenter Convention Center) and the expansion of the Regional Market; County administration of human services and the merger of the city and county health departments; expansion of the Van Duyn Home and Hospital, expansion of Memorial Hospital, Hutching Psychiatric Center, Upstate Medical University; a unified water supply system (OCWA and the Metropolitan Water Board), and Onondaga Lake Reclamation. Other recommendations addressed social welfare, public safety, expansion of the county parks system, suburban growth, metropolitan planning and zoning, solid waste disposal, flood control facilities, conservation easements to protect open space, clearance of slums and blighted areas, homeownership subsidy, and public finances required for implementation.

The Postwar plan was not formally adopted by either Syracuse or Onondaga County, however the location of future Interstate highways through and around Syracuse and demolition of the city's oldest neighborhoods (Urban Renewal) were implemented over the following two decades.

After World War II, growth shifted to the suburbs. Modern one-story factories had already begun to locate on large flat sites just outside of Syracuse. New housing was built in the towns with VA and FHA mortgages and shopping centers followed the population and wealth. Federal and state funds provided over 87% of the financing for suburban water and sewer systems to support new neighborhoods and industrial parks.

At the same time, federal Urban Renewal funds were used to demolish some of the city's oldest and most dense neighborhoods in an effort to remove slums and blight. Much of the city street grid in these areas was eliminated to make room for "super blocks" - deemed better for traffic flow-- and development followed a suburban rather than an urban pattern with buildings set way back from the street.

The 15th Ward had been the center of the city's black community. Beginning with land clearance to make way for the construction of Pioneer Homes in the late 1930s, residents of the Ward were relocated to surrounding neighborhoods. Other public housing projects were built to the east, south and west of downtown. The Urban Renewal Program in the 1950s and 1960 continued to clear "slums and blight" and relocated the remaining residents to surrounding neighborhoods. The black community was fragmented by relocation, but former residents continue to hold the "SyraQue Reunion" more than 50 years later, a testimony to the strength of the community ties in the Ward.

Suburbanization of the middle class and concentration of housing and services for the poor in the city ultimately left the city with a poorer population. Public investments in highways and tax exempt civic buildings, a shift in the city's mixed economic to government services, higher education and healthcare, and private sector disinvestment left the city with substantially less tax base.

Regional Trends

The County's population peaked, at 472,853 in 1970. 1970 was also the first year that a majority of county residents lived in the towns since 1890. Population in Syracuse peaked in 1950 at 220,583 according to the Census; since then, the number of city residents and households has continued to decline along with housing stock and the tax base.

Between 1950 and 2000, the European heritage of Syracuse was enriched. The racial, ethnic, and cultural character of the population changed first with growing numbers of African Americans from the rural south, followed by Hispanic people primarily from Puerto Rico, and most recently people from many Asian countries. By 2000, Syracuse had become substantially more diverse while the town population remains primarily white; the white population in Syracuse accounted for 64% of the total and 94 % of the town total; African-Americans accounted for 25% of the city and 1.7% of the towns.

Economic Trends

Dramatic changes in the county's economic base began in the mid 1960s with the downsizing of GE. Job losses felt initially in manufacturing spread to many sectors of the economy. In the early 1990s over 30,000 jobs were lost coincidentally with the national recession; rebound has been slow and the nature of the job market continues to change with the regional and global economy. Most recent monthly employment numbers are encouraging.

Demographic Impact

The countywide loss of 10,600 people and a city loss of 17,000 (2000 Census) reflect the impact of job losses in the 1990's, the continuing geographic expansion of urbanized areas in Onondaga County, and the movement of residents from the city to suburban towns. Urban growth without population growth has been called sprawl. People move to suburban towns as well as to other regions of the country in search of better opportunities. By 2000, total County population had

declined to 458,336 and the City population dropped to 147,306. Recent Census estimates (2004) place the county up by about 1,500 people and the city down by about 4,200, resulting in a continuing net increase in the towns.

Young adults and young families account for a large share of the out-migration from the region; this age group is most mobile in seeking economic opportunity, a trend has continued since 1970 and spiked in the 1990's. Loss of young adults is particularly significant -- resulting in declining school populations in many districts in Onondaga County. In the coming decades, the out migration in the 1990s will be reflected in the loss in natural increase (surplus of births over deaths). Natural increase until recently has mitigated the impact of out-migration. Population projections, prepared by Cornell Institute of Statistical Research, based on age specific trends for migrations, fertility and mortality, suggest continuing population decline unless major shifts in economic trends occur.

Trends in Governance: 1950 to 2005

Beginning with the adoption of the Onondaga County Charter in 1961, countywide solutions have been created to address regional needs related to human services, distribution of local tax revenues, metropolitan infrastructure and facilities. Increasing use of special districts and authorities provide services and facilities outside the direct oversight of county government. In state law, the separation of authority of local governments to regulate planning and land use from the responsibility to provide major infrastructure capacity by the county and state increases complexity of the development process.

Onondaga County Charter

In 1961 Onondaga County adopted a home rule charter to put in place the County Executive and Legislature. The Charter created 24 Legislative Districts to achieve equal representation between districts, to provide full time executive management for growing county responsibilities. The legislative districts have since been streamlined to 19, based on population density and vary significantly in geographic size. Legislators are elected for two year terms. The Legislature meets monthly and has the responsibility to adopt the Budget and Capital Program, approve Executive appointments, and pass legislation. In conjunction the Budget, Legislature votes on the annual Tax Abstract and Warrant (prepared by the County Office of Real Property Tax Services) that distributes county taxes over the city and town real property tax base and authorizes local tax collectors to collect the levy between January and March each year.

The County Executive, elected to a four-year term, is responsible for preparing the county budget and capital improvement program, appointing department heads and board members, and managing the performance of county functions.

Consolidation of the City and County Health Departments, 1967

Public Health departments in the city and county merged in 1967 to provide public health programs countywide. The Division of Environmental Health has responsibilities for the safety

of public drinking water and approval of onsite waste water systems in rural areas, as well as approval of all plumbing connections.

Social Services and Medicaid

Social Services, and Medicaid in particular, have grown to dominate the county budget; the federal Medicaid program in New York State provides a particularly rich package of covered services and costs continue to escalate. Counties in New York State must pay half of the nonfederal share of Medicaid, placing a major share of the county budget and local property tax burden beyond the control of county officials. This year an agreement was reached to cap county responsibilities for Medicaid.

Local Tax Revenues

Sales Tax Onondaga County has collected a sales tax since 1967; the City of Syracuse no longer collects a sales tax. Under §1262 of the Sales Tax Law counties may keep all the tax it collects or share the revenue with towns, villages, cities and school districts. Under the most current agreements adopted by the County Legislature, Onondaga County retains 46.5 % of the sales tax and distributes 22.8 % to the City, 24.9 % to the towns and 5.7 % to the city and independent school districts.

Real Property Tax

The real property tax system provides revenues for about 20 % of the County budget, as well as for revenues for city, town and village, and special district services. Assessments of real property and initial tax collections fall to the city and towns. About 10 % of the property tax revenue stays with the city and the towns; approximately 45 to 50 % goes to school districts and the rest goes to the county. In other words, about 90 % of property tax revenue goes to jurisdictions that cross town and city boundaries.

The Tax Abstract and Annual Warrant is a means of distributing the annual county budget across the city and town property tax base using specific tax rates for each assessing unit derived from percent of full value of property in each the city and all the towns. This step is necessary to spread the county's tax collection equitably because assessment practices vary in each town and the city. The Abstract is also a means to bill local governments for services provided by Onondaga County, directly on behalf of the city and towns. For example, the Abstract is used to bills city residents directly for services provided directly to or on behalf of the city by county employees. The bill is assigned to the county tax line on the city tax bill and thus removes those costs from the City's Constitutional Tax Limit.

County Responsibility For Regional Facilities

The County has assumed responsibility for many facilities that serve the metropolitan community; some were transferred from the city, some were jointly funded ventures; others are funded through the Tax Abstract.

The Onondaga County Public Library provides technical support to 31 public library sites in the county. The library also directly staffs eight City Branch Libraries and two satellites in community centers funded through the Abstract. In addition the county purchases books for distribution through public health nurses, focusing on population using the White, Mundy, Beauchamp Branch Libraries.

The War Memorial Arena, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, the Oncenter-Convention Center and Civic Center Auditoriums, Alliance Bank Stadium serve the metropolitan community; the zoon and stadium were transferred from the city to the county as replaced with new facilities on sites that remain with in the city. The Oncenter which now includes the War Memorial Auditorium and Civic Center Auditoriums, along with the Convention Center are County facilities in downtown Syracuse. Capital and operating expenses for Onondaga Community College, in the Town of Onondaga, are funded in part by Onondaga County.

The Public Safety Building was funded jointly to provide space for city and county justice system functions. The new Justice Center provides pretrial detention facilities for all municipalities in the county. The Forensic Science Center and the new Court House were built by the County with city contributions.

County Responsibility for Regional Infrastructure

The County provides significant regional infrastructure. The Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over 810 miles of highways and provides snow and ice control on short sections of city streets that link county roads with major highways. County highways are located outside the City of Syracuse; inter-municipal agreements on snow and ice control provide for county plowing some state roads and towns plowing some county roads for compensation

The Metropolitan Water Board was established by referendum to expand the county's water supply with Lake Ontario water. MWB is responsible for the Lake Ontario water pipeline, transmission lines and reservoirs. The Ontario water project is funded by the County Water District, which has three zones of assessment related to relative benefits.

The Department of Water Environment Protection maintains and operates the wastewater collection and treatment system. The Consolidated Sanitary District was created in 1976 to bring uniform rates to customers in 20 separate districts. As part of the consolidation the County acquired responsibility for the Metropolitan Sewage Treatment Plant and 60 miles of trunk sewers in Syracuse. The Metro plant serves parts of several towns that are adjacent to the city. Historical design of the city sewer system initially provided for the overflow of stormwater into Onondaga Creek and other tributaries to Onondaga Lake. The County thus acquired responsibility for the court ordered Onondaga Lake Reclamation Project.

WEP also provides operation and maintenance services for most town sewer districts on a contractual basis. Four County drainage districts provide stormwater management facilities within parts of the City of Syracuse and surrounding towns; district property owners in the towns are billed directly for maintenance of these facilities; the city spreads the city share of the cost

over its entire tax base. Outside these districts, stormwater management is the responsibility of municipal governments under the regulation of federal regulations.

The County Division of Environmental Health reviews and approves all septic system plans, sewer connections and public water supplies directly for individual applicants

Authorities and Special Districts in Onondaga County

Authorities and special districts have been added to provide specific services funded by fee based revenues rather than general taxes. Authorities are single purpose entities chartered by the State of New York to provide specific services funded by revenues. The Syracuse Housing Authority and several village housing authorities provide subsidized housing within their municipal boundaries.

Other authorities in Onondaga County provide services to the entire county. The Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA) provides retail water sales to most towns and other locations in Oswego and Madison Counties. The Central New York Transportation Organization (CENTRO) provides transit services and the William Walsh Transportation Center (inter-modal regional bus and rail terminal) throughout the metropolitan region but the most dense route distribution is in Syracuse; recent initiatives have focused on the commute from the city to suburban job locations. The Onondaga County Resource Recovery authority (OCRRA) has jurisdiction over disposal of solid waste disposal and provides transfer stations, recycling facilities, and the Waste to Energy plant.

Most recently an authority has been proposed for the management of Hancock International Airport but this transition from City of Syracuse's responsibility has not been completed.

Special Districts are a fiscal vehicle to provide of direct services to properties, taxing only the properties benefited. There are four County drainage districts involving areas in Syracuse, Dewitt, Salina, Geddes, and Onondaga and administered by the Department of Water Environment Protection. Towns have created over 1,400 special districts for water, sewer, lighting, hydrants and drainage unique to individual residential subdivisions and industrial developments.

County Services to Local Governments

The county administers the civil service system for all municipalities, real property tax services including tax billing for the towns (but not for the city), some planning services for all municipalities, community development for the towns and villages; 911 emergency communication system services all municipalities, and emergency management coordinates disaster preparedness response programs countywide.

Real Property Tax Services. The County Office of Real Property Tax Service provides significant services for municipalities including: preparation of current tax maps for each municipality, maintenance of NYS assessment programs and town data on county computers, preparation of

tax rolls (with tax rates), printing and mailing of tax bills for towns, villages and school districts. The office prepares the Tax Abstracts and Warrants for adoption by the Legislature, which apportion the total county levy among the towns and authorizes tax collection by the towns from January through March. After March each year, taxes that have not been collected by the towns must be paid direction to the County. The County makes the towns, villages and school districts whole, returning 100 % of their budgeted levys. The County accepts the shortfall and attempts to collect or ultimately foreclose and sell tax delinquent properties at auction. The County also provides advice and training to town assessors and Grievance Boards.

The City prepares its assessment and tax rolls, collects all city, city school district, and county taxes; and forecloses and auctions tax delinquent city properties. The city does not make the County levy whole but shares collection of delinquent taxes with the county.

(In contrast, Tompkins County and Nassau County both provide countywide assessment.)

Onondaga County Personnel Department - Services to Municipalities.

The Onondaga County Personnel Department is the local civil service agency responsible for administration of the NYS Civil Service Law for all municipalities within Onondaga County. This includes the recruitment of personnel through the posting of announcements for civil service examinations, advising appointing authorities regarding the provisions of law, enforcing legal requirements such as maintaining records of employment history, certifying payrolls, classifying positions, and approving all appointments.

This civil service responsibility covers the City of Syracuse, 19 towns, 15 villages, 18 school districts (including BOCES), 3 municipal library districts, and 7 special districts and authorities. There are over 10,000 positions in these combined municipalities. This is in addition to the over 4,000 positions in Onondaga County government and Onondaga Community College.

The largest segment of employees is in the school districts and libraries (41%), followed by county government (32%), city government (15%), Towns (7%), Villages (4%), and special districts (1%).

Each municipality has an assigned technical liaison in the Personnel Department who assists the administrators and employees with matters related to civil service law and rules. The liaisons are familiar with their various agencies' missions and provide assistance and guidance on a variety of human resource issues in an effort to administer a personnel program that provides qualified staff to perform public services.

Some of the specific services provided include:

- " Reviewing applications to determine eligibility for examination or appointment
- " Reviewing personnel transactions for compliance with civil service law
- " Performing annual payroll certifications for each agency
- " Maintaining historical roster records for all local government employees reflecting their civil service classification, salary, jurisdictional class and civil service status

" Reviewing classifications of existing positions, classifying new positions and developing job descriptions and minimum qualifications for each title

" Establishing, certifying and maintaining civil service eligible lists for the appointment of competitive class employees

" Advising and counseling local officials and employees regarding interpretation of NYS Civil Service law and local rules

" Providing on-line web site access to all job descriptions, examination announcements, local rules, forms, examination study guides and FAQ's.

Civil Divisions Within the Jurisdiction of the Onondaga County Personnel Department:

Onondaga County (32 departments plus Onondaga Community College)

City of Syracuse (17 departments including the Syracuse Housing Authority)

School Districts:

Baldwinsville

BOCES

East Syracuse - Minoa

Fabius-Pompey

Fayetteville-Manlius

Jamesville-Dewitt

Jordan-Elbridge

Lafayette

Liverpool

Lyncourt

Marcellus

North Syracuse

Onondaga Central

Skaneateles

Solvay

West Genesee

West Hill

Syracuse City

Towns:

Camillus

Cicero

Clay

Dewitt

Elbridge

Lafayette

Lysander
Manlius
Marcellus
Onondaga

Salina
Skaneateles
Spafford
Tully
Van Buren

Fabius
Geddes

Otisco
Pompey

Villages:

Baldwinsville

Camillus
East Syracuse
Elbridge
Fabius
Fayetteville
Jordan
Liverpool
Manlius
Marcellus
Minoa
North Syracuse
Skaneateles
Solvay
Tully

Library Districts:

Baldwinsville
Liverpool
Northern Onondaga County Public Library

Special Districts:

OCCRA
OCWA
Belgium Cold Springs Fire District
Dewitt Fire District
Pompey Fire District
Soil and Water Conservation District

Village of North Syracuse Housing Authority

Planning and Development

In New York State, planning and the regulation of land development are home rule powers that belong to the city, towns and villages. Responsibility for the major infrastructure that supports urbanization (highways, water, wastewater) on the other hand, rests primarily with Onondaga County and New York State. This means that potential investors and developers encounter 34 sets of procedures and substantive regulations (Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations). The Town of Otisco takes no direct responsibility for planning or land use regulation. Several municipalities also require review of proposals by a Conservation Advisory Commission and a Historic Preservation Board. Local governments approve development proposals, but developers must seek independent approval from several layers of state and county agencies.

The Onondaga County Planning Board is responsible for reviewing certain proposals for countywide and inter-community impact and making recommendations to local governments but has no independent approval authority. The City of Syracuse Planning Commission and the City Engineer have independent powers to review subdivisions within three miles of the city limits for coordination of drainage and traffic facilities. The Planning Commission power stems from NYS enabling legislation in 1922; the extra-territorial review authority is unique to Syracuse and Schenectady.

The Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency was created in 1970. The city planning Commission and County Planning Board meet independently to conduct reviews of development proposals within their separate jurisdictions; the two bodies also meet together as the SOCPA Board and are responsible for the preparation of the County's comprehensive plan. The City Office of Zoning Administration and specific planning services are provided for the city by Onondaga County and funded via the Abstract. The Agency also has responsibility to provide planning information, data and training for town and village planning and zoning boards.

The Federal Highway Administration funds the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) and the Federal Transit Administration to build regional consensus on the distribution of federal highway funds transportation plans and the Transportation Improvement Program must be prepared by the metropolitan planning organization a prerequisite for federally funded transportation projects. Member agencies represent New York State, Onondaga County, the City of Syracuse, Centro, and the Metropolitan Development Organization.

The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board is a regional planning body funded by Onondaga County and the four surrounding counties. The RPDB is a conduit for economic development grants and a vehicle for planning studies that affect areas beyond a single jurisdiction. Currently the RPDB is assisting the county and municipalities in compliance with the EPS's Phase II Stormwater Management Regulations.

Towns

In New York State, Town Law grants powers to towns based on size. Population density and the value of taxable real estate influence the activities of town government, the services it provides and the taxes it needs to pay for them. (Page 13, Patterns of Government in Onondaga County). In Onondaga County there are 10 towns of first class (population over 10,000) and nine towns of the second class (population under 10,000). Suburban towns may be granted additional powers by New York State. Suburban towns may separate administrative operation from policy-making operation and establish departments within town government; suburban towns have flexibility in funding capital improvements, and regulation of traffic and share in traffic-fine receipts. Camillus, Onondaga, Clay and Geddes have adopted the Suburban Town Law. The town supervisor, town boards, which consist of four to six members, clerk, superintendent of highways, justices, and tax collector, are elected. Town planning boards and zoning appeals boards appointed by the town boards.

As town population in Onondaga County grew from the 1950's to 2000, many of the services that were historically provided only by the villages began to be provided also through town special districts including sewers, water, drainage, hydrant, and lighting, fire protection and ambulance service, and trash collection. Towns typically are responsible for real property tax assessment, tax collection, and local roads; towns may provide police, zoning and planning, parks and recreation. Some towns purchase professional services including legal, engineering, building inspection, and real property assessment. Suburban growth typically increases the demand for public services and increasing costs have led to consolidation and shared service agreements between towns and villages. Most recently creation of multi and single town Trash Collection Districts have been formed based on services fees, to decrease costs of this service to residents without adding to town taxes

City of Syracuse

The Mayor of the City of Syracuse serves as the chief executive of the city and is elected every four years. The Common Council, the legislative body of city government, consists of a council president, four at-large councilors and five district councilors. The council president and at-large councilors serve four-year elected terms while the district councilors, are elected to two-year terms. The Common Council approves the city and school budget and votes on legislation. Voters also elect seven city court judges and the city auditor. The Mayor appoints the city's department heads. Major city departments in addition to administrative departments include Police, Fire, Water, Public Works, Parks, Community Development and the Airport.

Villages

An elected mayor and an elected board of trustees govern the villages. The mayor and board meet once or twice a month. The mayor appoints the village treasurer and village clerk and the board approves the appointments. There are official posts that a village can opt, but is not required to fill, such as attorney, engineer or auditor, frequently consultants provide these services. Village governments are responsible for sewer, water supply, streets and court systems. Some villages have expanded through annexation but most have not experienced recent population growth.

Schools

Beginning in 1830 but particularly after 1900 New York State encouraged consolidation of the rural school districts with fiscal incentives but met with significant resistance. Most school consolidation was completed by the 1960's although some small districts still decline the opportunity.

There are nineteen school districts entirely in the county and another ten districts that overlap county boundaries. School districts boundaries follow property lines and bare no relationship to town boundaries; some districts cover part of seven towns and some towns are served by as many as seven school districts. All districts but the Syracuse City School District operate independently from local government and collect taxes directly. The Syracuse City School District continues to be dependent on city financing but is governed by an elected Board of Education. NYS BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services) was created to provide cost effective vocational education and other services that were too expensive for individual districts.