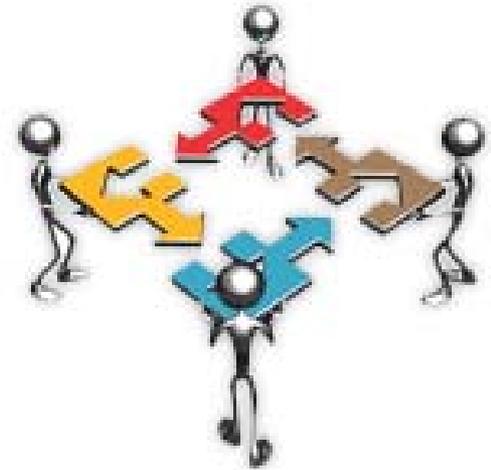


# Community Collaboration Work Group

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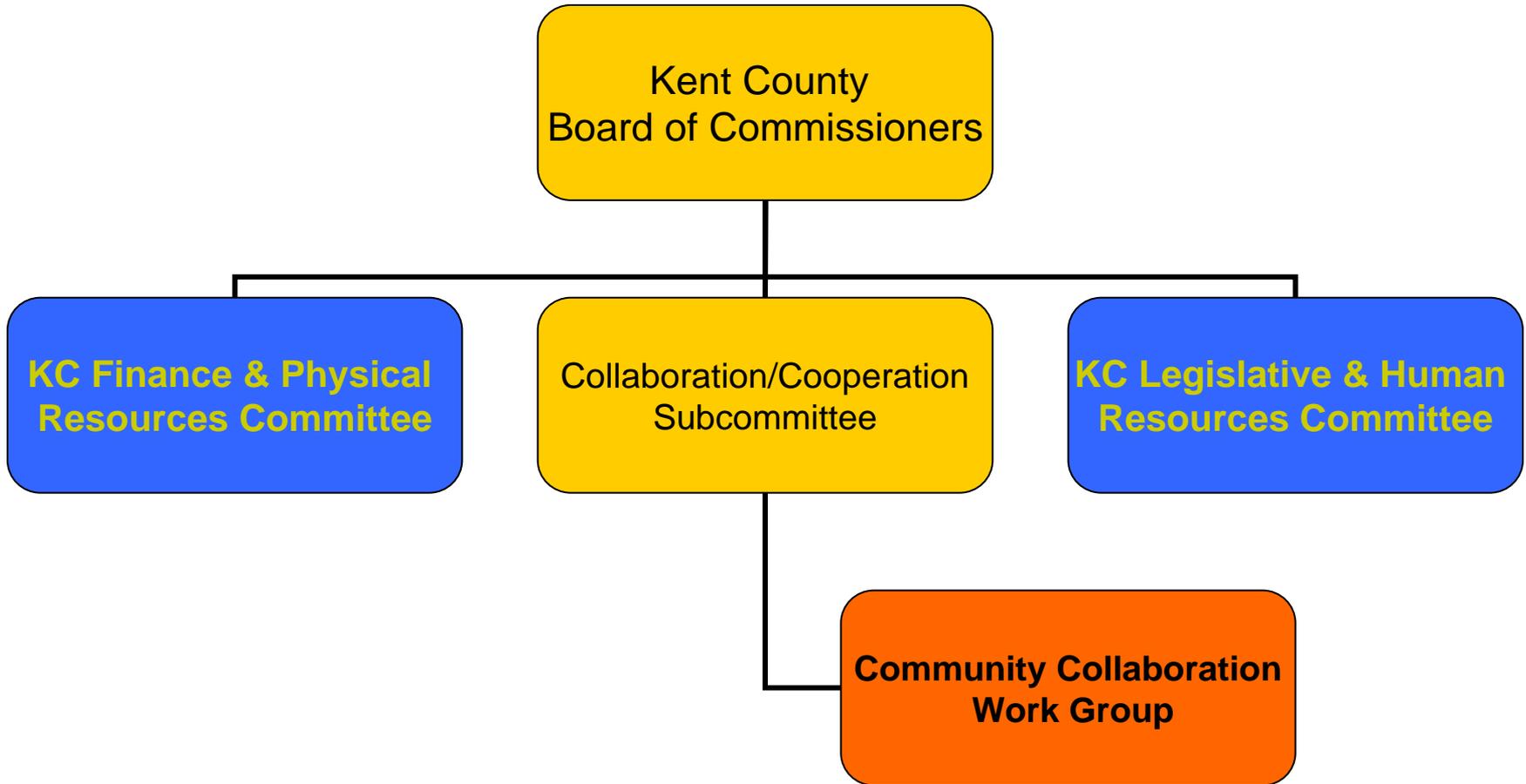
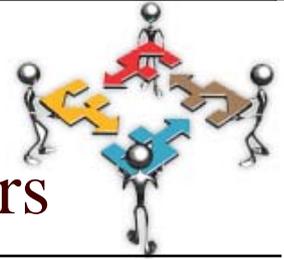
May 2013

[www.ccwq.info](http://www.ccwq.info)



# CCWG:

A Workgroup of the KC Board of Commissioners



# CCWG

## Public & Private Sector Representation

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### **County Commissioners:**

Jim Saalfeld, *Chair*  
Carol Hennessy  
Dan Koorndyk  
Michael Wawee, Jr.

### **Grand Rapids City Commissioners:**

Rosalynn Bliss, *Vice-Chair*  
James White

### **Township Representative:**

Mike DeVries, Township Supervisor –  
Grand Rapids Charter Township

### **City Representative:**

Cathy Vander Meulen, City Manager –  
City of Walker

### **Chamber Member:**

Rick Baker, CEO – Grand Rapids  
Area Chamber of Commerce

### **Economic Expert:**

Dr. Paul Isely, Professor –  
Grand Valley State University

### **Constitutional/Municipal Law Expert:**

Jim Brown, Attorney –  
Mika, Meyers, Beckett & Jones

### **Business Development Expert:**

Birgit Klohs, President & CEO –  
The Right Place, Inc.

### **Non-Profit Representative:**

Martha Gonzalez-Cortes, CEO –  
Hispanic Center of Western Michigan

# CCWG - Charge

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- To determine:
  - (i) the best means to achieve effective and efficient government, and
  - (ii) whether collaborative and/or consolidation efforts will help accomplish those goals for the citizens of Kent County.

The subcommittee should consider what efforts have worked in the past, what opportunities are present today, and what consequences (good and bad) are likely to result.

# CCWG

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- Met 16 times.
- Presentations by approximately 25 subject matter experts.
- Received research by national experts.

# CCWG – Time Spent

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- Reviewing and understanding the historical underpinnings of local government in Michigan and why government is organized the way it is.
- Reviewing major functions and services provided by cities, townships and counties.
- Consider what other models of governance exist in other areas of the country and evaluate their services.

# The Test

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From this study, CCWG developed simple but effective test to consider any proposal for change:

Will one of the three “C’s,”

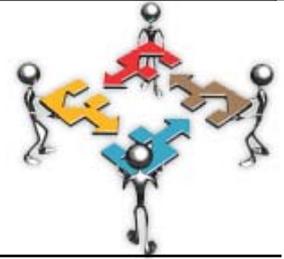
*Collaboration, Cooperation and Consolidation*

bring about the three “E’s?”

*Efficiency, Effectiveness or Economic Development*

# Intro to Findings

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Based on study, CCWG made various findings on which they based their recommendations.

# CCWG Finding #1

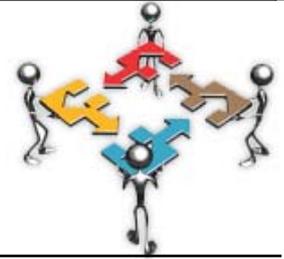
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- Communities in Kent County have a long & strong history of cooperation and collaboration.
  - The County maintains a list of over 100 public and private sector collaborations and/or consolidations.

# CCWG Finding #2

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- Collaboration and consolidation are more likely to be successful if between governments of the same type which provide similar services.

# CCWG Finding #3

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- Service collaboration should demonstrate cost-effectiveness and/or significant service improvements (quality of service) to garner support from citizens and community leaders.
  - W.E. Upjohn Report found that successful collaborations in Kent County appear to be based upon improved service delivery and not necessarily cost savings.

# CCWG Finding #4

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- Public support is essential for service collaborations and/or consolidations.
  - If the proposal is viewed by the public as inconvenient, uncertain or otherwise a poor substitute for the current arrangement, the collaboration will fail.

# CCWG Finding #5

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- Collaborations which have the greatest impact are the most beneficial and successful.
  - Many local units of government spend a majority of their General Fund on public safety and judicial services making these areas prime candidates for collaboration efforts.
    - For example: In Kent County, this represents 50% of the budget.
      - In 2012:
        - Public Safety = 38%,
        - Judicial Services = 12.5%

# CCWG Finding #6

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- Trust & Transparency are essential for successful collaborative efforts.
  - Requires time, effort, and commitment by local leaders.

# CCWG Finding #7

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- Research suggests that there is no certainty that consolidated governments perform better economically as a result of collaboration.
  - Dr. Kurt Thurmaier of Northern Illinois University has concluded the following:
    - Evidence that consolidated governments are not more efficient.
    - Voters don't believe the argument that consolidated governments are more efficient.

# Upjohn Report

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- ❑ Studied 9 city-county consolidations in Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, & Oregon.
- ❑ Compared to a non-consolidated “control” group.
- ❑ Indianapolis grew at annual rate of 1.2%, while control group grew at rate of 2.1%. And, they had lower employment growth.
- ❑ Idea that Louisville, Indianapolis & Nashville had economic gains is “no more than a perception.”
- ❑ Not able to conclude that consolidated governments actually performed better economically because of consolidation.

# CCWG Recommendations

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- Continue to focus on collaborative efforts that have *verifiable data* which support efficient and effective government and economic development.

# CCWG Recommendations

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- Utilize the *Municipal Partnership Act* as a tool to develop additional collaborations and/or consolidations.

# CCWG Recommendations

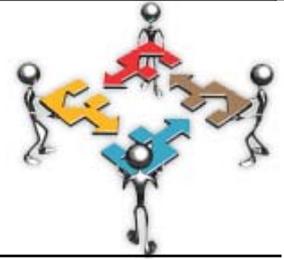
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- To support economic development, communities should work to standardize policies and procedures, including forms, applications, and establish common definitions for *land-use planning and zoning*.

# CCWG Recommendations

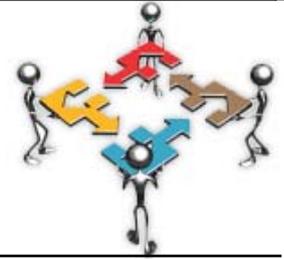
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- Continue to work towards collaboration in the *property tax administration system* (property assessment, inspections, tax tribunal cases).

# CCWG Recommendations

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- Focus on *critical/impactful* public services (police and fire).

# CCWG Recommendations

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- Establish a *task-force* of subject matter experts in the areas of law, justice, and court operations to make recommendations to the legislature to support additional opportunities for collaboration.

# CCWG Conclusions & Recommendations

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- Kent County communities have long been committed to local government collaboration.
- These efforts have yielded countless cost-savings and service improvements.
- Kent County Board of Commissioners should continue to support local units of government to promote further collaborations and/or consolidations.