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PartnerSTAT? Performance Measurementand Management forInter-Municipal Partnerships

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Executive Summary

In April of 2010, the Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission issued its findings advocating for inter-local partnerships in eleven specific areas. The study found that "as the costs of government services rise faster than available revenues and cities and towns struggle to provide essential services, regionalization and collaboration become more palatable to municipalities wishing to deliver essential local services more economically and efficiently" (Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission, 2010, p. 43).

This research seeks to assess in what ways, to what extent and for what reason could and should a municipal performance measurement and management model, like the 'Stat' model, be adopted and amended to measure and improve the performance of inter-municipal partnerships?

Adopted in Springfield, Lowell and Somerville Massachusetts, the 'Stat' model is the process of holding "an ongoing series of *regular, frequent, periodic, integrated meetings* during which the chief executive and/or the members of the chief executive's leadership team plus the individual director (the top managers) of different sub-units, *use data* to analyze the unit's past *performance*, to follow-up on previous decisions and commitments to improve *performance* objectives, and to examine the effectiveness of its overall *performance* strategies" (Behn, Robert. 2008, p. 2).

In order to assess if a PMM can and should play a role in inter-municipal partnerships, this research first focuses on the extent to which inter-municipal partnerships have successfully been established in the Commonwealth. Three categories of inter-municipal partnerships were identified: 1) those with ***thorough integration***; 2) those with ***moderate integration***; and 3) those with ***moderate to low integration***. A total of 5 cases of inter-municipal partnerships in the Commonwealth are examined and assessed for their compatibility and aptitude for continued or greater success with a PMM. Finally, a critical analysis and discussion of the findings yields a final recommendation of one of the considered alternatives.

The results showed that it is not, in fact, possible *in most cases* to adopted a performance measurement and management model designed for a single municipality to meet the needs of an inter-municipal partnership. Their needs and capacity are simply too different. Only in the cases where an inter-municipal partnership is working on a large-scale, long-term project and is working as a united front with a shared vision of success, can a PMM like 'Stat' be effective in an inter-municipal environment because it is centralized enough.

That said, in the vast majority of inter-municipal partnership cases where 'Stat' doesn't work, performance evaluation is still conspicuously and unnecessarily absent. Therefore a coordinated effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships with ad-hoc PMMs, that are customized to fit the varying needs of counties, regions and partnerships across the Commonwealth, should be considered.

Introduction

In April of 2010, the Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission issued its findings advocating for inter-local partnerships in eleven specific areas including education, elder services, municipal finance, green communities, housing and economic development, information technology, libraries, the departments of public health, safety and works and veterans' services (MRAC, 2010, p.8). The study found that "as the costs of government services rise faster than available revenues and cities and towns struggle to provide essential services, regionalization and collaboration become more palatable to municipalities wishing to deliver essential local services more economically and efficiently" (Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission, 2010, p. 43). As Massachusetts moves towards inter-municipal partnerships by leveraging the collective negotiating power of regions, phasing out unnecessary and duplicative services, and dramatically reducing overhead, quantifying the successes and exposing the underperformance of these initiatives will be critically important.

New performance measurement and management (PMM) models, like the 'Stat' model, use evidence-based, data-driven analysis of municipal services to increase efficiency and accountability in government and to administer a standard of quality that citizens demand (M.B. Sanger, 2008, p. S70). These models are centralized, integrated and evaluate performance in real-time, such that the data analyzed is updated bi-weekly to facilitate rapid response to underperformance. Adopted in Springfield, Lowell and Somerville Massachusetts, the 'Stat' model is the process of holding "an ongoing series of *regular, frequent, periodic, integrated meetings* during which the chief executive and/or the members of the chief executive's leadership team plus the individual director (the top managers) of different sub-units, *use data* to

analyze the unit's past *performance*, to follow-up on previous decisions and commitments to improve *performance* objectives, and to examine the effectiveness of its overall *performance* strategies" (Behn, Robert. 2008, p. 2).

Since its inception in 2000 in the City of Baltimore, CitiStat has been adopted and amended to fit the needs of a vast and growing number of cities across the country including Los Angeles, CA; Coral Springs, FL; Providence, RI; Atlanta, GA and Lowell, Somerville, and Springfield MA. Variations of the 'Stat' model have also been implemented statewide in Maryland, Washington, Utah, and Oregon. However, less is known about the model's scalability at the inter-municipal (regional) level or the significant challenges associated with trying to implement a centralized and hierarchical municipal management system in a decentralized, ad-hoc, assessment-delayed, inter-municipal or regional context.

As municipalities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts continue to bridge partnerships to administer essential local services, this research seeks to assess in what ways, to what extent and for what reason could and should a municipal performance measurement and management model, like the 'Stat' model, be adopted and amended to measure and improve the performance of inter-municipal partnerships?

Project Description and Methodology

For the purposes of this policy analysis, the most successful, widely implemented and flexibly adapted performance measurement and management model (PMM), the 'Stat' model, will be the referenced PMM of record, particularly as it relates to recommendations for adaptation. In order to assess a PMM's capacity for adaptation at the inter-local level and its

worthiness for consideration of implementation among inter-municipal partnerships in Massachusetts, the following methods were employed:

First, a comprehensive literature review of performance measurement and management broadly, and specifically the successes and shortcomings of the 'Stat' model was conducted. The literature review also includes an analysis and historical account of the design and implementation of the original 'Stat' model in Maryland at the state, local and regional level, a brief historical account of the Commonwealth's long-standing aversion to inter-municipal partnerships, as well as recent efforts by the Patrick Administration and the Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission to foster greater collaboration between cities and towns.

As a leader in the PMM phenomena, and the birthplace of the inter-departmental municipal 'Stat' model, it was critical to include Maryland's employment of 'Stat' at the state, local and regional levels in this analysis. Maryland also has a population and land mass similar to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and recently implemented a regional 'Stat' model with their BRACStat initiative, designed to coordinate Maryland's base realignment and closure (BRAC) program.

In order to assess if a PMM can and should play a role in inter-municipal partnerships, my research first focuses on the extent to which inter-municipal partnerships have successfully been established in the Commonwealth. Three categories of inter-municipal partnerships were identified: 1) those with *thorough integration*; 2) those with *moderate integration*; and 3) those with *moderate to low integration*. A total of 5 examples of inter-municipal partnerships in the Commonwealth are examined and assessed for their compatibility and aptitude for continued or

greater success with a PMM. Finally, a critical analysis and discussion of the findings yields a final recommendation of one of the considered alternatives.

Absent from the process of establishing inter-municipal partnerships in Massachusetts is, a dedicated, coordinated effort by a governing body or designated authority, which has resulted in an underwhelming number of partnerships and a lack of performance assessment. If these partnerships are ad-hoc and decentralized, can their successes and failures be measured by a uniformed set of performance indicators to identify underperformance and opportunities for growth? This research seeks to address this question by constructing four alternatives for the implementation of a PMM at the regional level across the Commonwealth and assessing their feasibility by analyzing the capacity of 5 cases to effectively integrate the 'Stat' model into their inter-municipal partnerships.

The criteria for assessing inter-municipal partnerships' capacity to operationalize a PMM, like the 'Stat' model, begins with an assessment of the partnerships themselves. The criteria are as follows:

* **Level of integration**
* **Efficiency** (*cost cutting; how much are municipalities involved in the partnership saving?*)
* **Improved Service Delivery** *(has the partnership yielded an improved [faster, more effective, higher quality] standard of service?)*
* **Equity** *(are all participating municipalities benefitting equitably from the partnership, such that as one municipality experiences a higher degree of efficiency, the other experiences a higher degree of improved service delivery.)*
* **Political Feasibility** (*what type of political environment is necessary to foster a successful inter-municipal partnership?*)

The alternatives under consideration are:
* Maintaining the Status Quo (inter-municipal partnerships continue to establish themselves at the local level without the advisement, oversight or coordination of a governing entity);

* A coordinated, statewide effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships without a PMM;
* A coordinated effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships with a statewide, uniformed PMM across counties and regions;
* A coordinated effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships with ad-hoc PMM's that are customized to fit the varying needs of counties and regions across the Commonwealth.

Background

The conception of regionalization in the Commonwealth began in 1643, and continues today in some regions of the state, in the form of county government. At its inception, county government served as an administrative function for the operation of the court system but never developed into an actual intermediary governing body between state and local governments. At the time they were disbanded, the role of counties in Massachusetts had expanded to include (in addition to their state required court administrative role) agricultural functions, hospitals and clinics, county health departments, training schools for police and fire, county airports and other local services (MRAC, 2010, p. 22).

It wasn't until the 1980s and '90s (at the same time as, but likely not related to the growing popularity of quantifying the efficacy of government) that "counties increasingly came under criticism for financial mismanagement, leading to widespread public distrust" (MRAC, 2010, p. 23). The result was 1997 legislation that abolished eight of the fourteen county governments in the Commonwealth including Berkshire, Essex, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Suffolk and Worcester (MRAC, 2010, p. 23).

Today, only the county governments on the South Shore, Cape and Islands remain: Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, Norfolk and Plymouth, the economies of which are so different, with thriving tourism and fishing industries, that comparing them to the rest of the state would be of

limited value. This dichotomy however, of longstanding, successful county governments in one region of the state, and the cynicism and hesitation to regionalize felt by the rest of the Commonwealth, illustrates the varying degrees of willingness and political feasibility to even small-scale inter-municipal partnerships.

Despite the breakdown of the county system and never having had a statewide regional governance structure (MRAC, 2010, p. 19), Massachusetts has had tremendous success with small scale, ad-hoc inter and multi-municipal partnerships. The Commonwealth offers five mechanisms for smaller scale regionalization including: (1) inter-municipal agreements, (2) county government (on the South Shore, Cape and Islands) (3) special districts, (4) regional planning agencies, and (5) councils of government. (MRAC, 2010, p. 20). For the purposes of this research, only inter-municipal agreement partnerships will be analyzed in detail.

Though challenges to full-scale regionalization (in the form of an integrated county government structure that serves as a legitimate intermediary between local and state government) are vast and well-documented, the urgency for smaller scale, even informal municipal partnerships between neighboring communities cannot be ignored. In 2001, Massachusetts health insurance cost for municipal employees was $900 million. By 2008, at the start of the global economic recession, that expenditure alone more than doubled to $1.9 billion (MRAC, 2010, p. 19). At the same time, cities and towns became increasingly dependent on regressive property taxes as state aid dropped 3.5%. In addition, expenditures (then as now) continued to rise at an unsustainable rate: in the same seven year period revenue rose 37% as total fixed costs rose nearly 50% (MRAC, 2010, p. 19). A lack of inter-municipal partnerships is not the cause of the rise in health care costs, nor is it the cause of rising total fixed costs.

However, forming inter-municipal partnerships is one way that cities and towns can reduce their bottom line and maximize capacity, by partnering to phase out duplicative services and sharing the cost of administering services that all municipalities provide.

Municipalities' insistence on autonomy and aversion to regionalization is unnecessarily suffocating their budgets and jeopardizing their ability to provide statutorily required public services. According to the Report of the Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission "Maryland, a state with a population and land area comparable to Massachusetts, has only 24 [public safety] call centers, one per 233,000 people; Massachusetts has 262... the state of Texas has 107 public health departments; as of 2008, Massachusetts had one for every single city and town (351)" (MRAC, 2010, p.4). In 2009, the cities of Melrose and Wakefield became the first communities in the Commonwealth, to merge public health departments, under a formal, short-term inter-municipal agreement.

Inter-Municipal Partnerships

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4A authorizes the "chief executive officer, board or committee of a town...to enter into an agreement with another governmental unit to perform jointly or for that units services, activities or undertakings which any of the contracting units is authorized by law to perform..." (Mass.gov., 2012, MGL, Ch. 40, Section 4A). Three types of inter-municipal partnerships exist under this law: ***formal contracts*** (in which municipalities enter into a contractual agreement where one municipality agrees to provide services to the other for a fee); ***joint service agreements*** ("agreements between two or more municipalities to jointly plan, finance and deliver a service within the boundaries of all participating jurisdictions"(Schumaker, 2009, p. 27); and ***service exchange agreements***

("participating jurisdictions agree to lend services to one another, generally without any payment required. The most common example of a service exchange arrangement is mutual aid for emergency services, used by municipal police and fire departments" (Schmaker, 2009, p. 27).

Barriers to Partnership

In their report, the Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission identified the 5 top barriers to expanding inter-municipal partnerships in the Commonwealth. They are:

1. Inter-municipal Agreements under Chapter 40 Section 4A require that a municipality be designated as the "lead". Municipalities considering entering into an inter-municipal agreement might have problems reaching consensus on identifying a lead municipality. Or the municipalities making up the group might be hesitant in taking on the "lead" role.
2. Seeing neighbors as rivals [for funding or else usurping their control] rather than potential partners can keep cities and towns from engaging in municipal agreements.
3. Inter-municipal agreements also may impose too many burdens on local officials where several agreements are involved, not all of which include the same municipalities.
4. There is an absence of similarly situated municipalities in need of a similar solution. Oftentimes, a "perfect storm" of circumstances needs to occur for municipalities to collaborate. This perfect storm is often the confluence of a lack of funding, departure of key personnel, presentation of opportunity for substantial cost savings, and political and managerial leadership.
5. A lack of understanding on how to evaluate regional service potential.

(MRAC, 2010, p. 21)

After decades of operating as 351 distinct and largely autonomous cities and towns, today municipalities across the Commonwealth are recognizing that they cannot afford to continue to offer duplicative services any longer and are actively pursuing opportunities to partner with neighboring communities as well as being encouraged to partner by state government.

In July of 2008, MGL Chapter 188 of the Acts of 2008, *An Act Regulating Inter-Municipal Agreements*, was signed into law. The law, "filed by Senator Pam Resor and championed by the Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Metropolitan Planning

Council, makes it dramatically easier for municipalities to enter into inter-municipal agreements and reflects an interest on the part of the Commonwealth to encourage municipalities to work collaboratively and regionalize" (Schumacher, 2009, p. 27).

In August of 2009, Governor Deval Patrick filed An Act Establishing a Regionalization Advisory Commission, which produced its findings in April of 2010 (many of which the Administration has already seen fit to implement). The next year the Governor created a Municipal Affairs Coordinating Cabinet within the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, and the state now regularly incentivizes, but does not mandate, local partnerships through grant awards and facilitated introductions. For example: the state awarded the communities of Cohasset, Hingham, Hull and Norwell a $10 million grant in 2010 for the creation of the Commonwealth's first regional 911 call center, which is now open and services each of those communities (Office of the Governor, 2011, p. 1).

At the same time, single municipalities across the Commonwealth and the Executive Branch of state government have embarked on an aggressive move towards performance measurement and management of agencies and the provision of essential services. In Springfield, Lowell and Somerville, the 'Stat' model has helped to expose underperformance and provide managers with the information and tools they need to manage effectively.

Review of the Literature

What is Performance Measurement and Management?

Though performance measurement has been in practice in cities across the United States for over a century, the evolution of corresponding management practices has intensified in the

last twenty years, with the creation and subsequent mass popularity of the 'Stat' model. Dr. Robert Behn of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University is an author and preeminent researcher of performance measurement and management (PMM) in general and the 'Stat' model specifically.

PerformanceStat is a term coined by Behn as a catch-all for the different types of 'Stat' models that have emerged since the inception of CompStat, the NYPD performance measurement and management tool that was designed to identify and reduce the City's various types of crime and was the model on which CitiStat, StateStat and all the other 'Stat' models are based.

According to Behn, the purpose of PerformanceStat is not strictly to identify underperformance and inefficiency but to determine what type of performance to measure; to establish a set of criteria for measurement; assess the strengths and weaknesses of what is being measured (a process, a service, a department); and to determine the management tools necessary to address the weaknesses. Eight managerial purposes exist for the measurement of performance. Each has a different set of criteria and each requires different tools to address underperformance. Those eight purposes are to: evaluate, control, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate, learn, and improve (Behn, 2003).

The 'Stat' Model

By Behn's estimation, the success of the 'Stat' model depends largely on five key variables: the capacity of municipal departments to produce useful, standardized data; dedicated staff to analyze the information independently, standardize it across departments and ensure that underperformance is exposed and addressed; a clear link made between the data produced, the

analysis of that data and the decisions made; the commitment of elected officials and city administrators to make institutional change and demand accountability; and constituent involvement (Behn, 2006, p. 332-338).

CitiStat is "a data-driven management system designed to monitor and improve the performance of city departments in real-time" (Center for American Progress, 2007, p. 3). The model collects information from municipal departments on everything from "response times for pothole abatement, trash collection, and snow removal, to the prevalence of illegal dumping, vacant buildings, and sewage overflows" (Center for American Progress, 2007, p. 1). Using computer systems that the city already purchases, including the Microsoft Office suite (mostly Powerpoint and Excel), and a geographic information system (GIS), a dedicated staff gathers, analyzes and tracks the data from each department. The Mayor's (and/or Governor's) Office then uses the analyses to identify underperformance and hold managers accountable with bi-weekly meetings (Center for American Progress, 2007, p. 1).

CitiStat was created in Baltimore, Maryland in 2000 and is based on a New York City Police Department program called CompStat that uses data and mapping to track every type of crime throughout the city, enabling the department to allocate specific resources to address specific types of crime. Upon his election in 1999, then mayor Martin O'Malley commissioned former NYPD deputy police commissioner for crime control strategies, Jack Maple, to replicate the model for the Baltimore P.D. At the time, Baltimore was paralyzed by the crippling effects of an unresponsive government bureaucracy, unsustainable budget deficits and the second highest crime rate in the nation. By 2002 O'Malley had expanded the program to include 16 city departments, believing that a performance and data driven management model that exposed

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underperformance and tracked progress in real time was the only way to reclaim the city (Center

for American Progress. 2007).

Since CitiStat's inception, "the City of Baltimore has saved more than $350 million,

eliminating its budget deficits, allowing the city to lower its property taxes to their lowest point

in 30 years and improving city services" (Center for American Progress, 2007, p. 1+4). In early

2000, when now Governor O'Malley became Mayor of Baltimore, among Baltimore's many

problems was an entrenched culture of absenteeism and abuse of the overtime system, which was

taxing the city's finances. On any given day, one in seven employees was not reporting to work,

affecting employee morale, significantly increasing overtime expenditures, and negatively

impacting the delivery of basic municipal services. The data generated by CitiStat gave

managers, particularly in the Department of Public Works where absenteeism was most

pervasive, the tools they needed to measure and address abuse. In its first year, the program

saved the city $13.2 million—$6 million in overtime pay alone. In the first three years, overtime

fell by 40% outside of the B.P.D. and in some agencies, absenteeism dropped by as much as 50%

(Center for American Progress, 2007, p. 1+4).

In 2007, Governor O'Malley initiated StateStat. At the time, Maryland was only the

second state in the country to implement the 'Stat' model statewide. Modeled after CitiStat,

StateStat standardizes and collects data from fourteen executive branch agencies, much the same

way CitiStat does at the local level, and Governor O'Malley or his designee meets with

secretaries, in some cases every week, to address underperformance.

The participating agencies include: Agriculture (MDA), Business & Economic

Development (DBED), Environment (MDE), General Services (DGS), Health and Mental

Hygiene (DHMH), Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Human Resources (DHR),

Juvenile Services (DJS), Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), Natural Resources (DNR),

Planning (MDP), Maryland State Police (MSP), Public Safety and Correctional Services

(DPSCS), Transportation (MDOT) (State of Maryland homepage, 2012).

The changes since implementation, though less well documented, have been dramatic: "A

reduction in homicides and violent crimes, the closure of dilapidated and unsafe state facilities (a

mental institution and a prison), increased mass transit ridership, and a decreased number of

structurally deficient bridges" (Hoover, 2010, p. 1).

Gibson and de Lancer Julnes assessed the efficacy of the 'Stat' model at the regional level

in their article, *A Bridge Too Far? Maryland's BRACStat as a Regional Network Governance

and Performance Management Tool,* by researching the successes and challenges of its

implementation for the state of Maryland's 2008 base realignment and closure (BRAC) program,

dubbed BRACStat. What they found was tremendous added value in the outcome, but challenges

in the logistics of operating a 'Stat' model intergovernmentally, uniforming data, establishing

regular and frequent meetings with stakeholders and without an operational leader. In the end,

though the approach resembled 'Stat' and was without question a performance-based evaluation,

it differed wholly operationally to the established tenets of the 'Stat' model.

Challenges

˙In Streib and Poister's 1999 article, *Assessing the Validity, Legitimacy, and Functionality

of Performance Measurement Systems in Municipal Governments*, among their many significant

findings was the question of legitimacy, as 25% of their respondents reported not involving

lower level employees in the development of their performance measurements. Rather the tool

was meant for the exclusive use of senior level managers in the executive branch (G. Streib and T. Poister, 1999, p. 113).

Further, in Donald Moynihan's 2006 article, *Managing for Results in State Government: Evaluating a Decade of Reform,* he argues that though performance measurement has been adopted by a great and growing number of municipalities and states across the country, the performance management techniques necessary to effectively utilize the data generated, has been largely ignored, resulting in underwhelming outcomes.

Behn identifies seven of the biggest mistakes that municipalities and states make when adopting this prototype to meet their needs. He states: "PerformanceStat... can't simply be copied. It isn't a system. It can't be airlifted from one organization into another. Obtaining the benefits of this approach to performance - using this strategy to produce real improvements and results - requires more than the mindless mimicry of the most visible and most superficial elements of the approach" (Behn, 2008, p. 6).

Among those critical mistakes are: no clear purpose; no one has specific responsibilities; meetings are held irregularly, infrequently or randomly; no one is authorized to run the meetings; no dedicated staff; no follow up; and, in particular, no balance between the brutal and the bland (Behn, 2008). He describes NYPD's CompStat and Baltimore's CitiStat as "tough and uncompromising [with poor performers]... and having accumulated an image of being aggressively demanding, sometimes even sarcastically demeaning" (Behn, 2008, p. 6). In addition, he cites a report that characterized CompStat as having "a reputation among line officers as brutal and punitive rather than collaborative and creative" (Behn, 2008, p. 6).

CitiStat and ATLStat meetings in Atlanta, Georgia "have been described as "brutal, unsentimental affairs." (Behn, 2008, p. 6). In response to that, some communities have reduced their 'Stat' meetings to involve as little ownership and accountability as possible, including allowing department heads to analyze their own data and present "yet another glowing picture of the unit's latest accomplishments" (Behn, 2008, p. 6); the antithesis of what 'Stat' is about. The 'Stat' model requires both accountability and reason. Quantifying results and holding managers accountable does not have to equate to frigid, unfeeling and non-collaborative work environments that cannot foster the type of soft-power (employee morale) that contributes to the success of the 'Stat' model.

Is it Possible?

In short, Behn argues that there is a science to implementing the 'Stat' model in a way that will yield positive results. It is a model that requires centralization, hierarchy and the right balance of leadership and management that inter-municipal partnerships fail to provide in ad-hoc, decentralized environments. By their very nature, hierarchies can't exist in inter-municipal partnerships (except in the case of one city agreeing to "lead" an agreement, which has dissuaded communities from inter-municipal partnerships altogether) because cities and towns are working *with* each other and not *for* each other. Every municipality has its own mayor, city or town administrator and legislative body. Not all municipalities measure data in a standardized way and no governing body exists with the authority to hold municipalities accountable to each other. With this in mind this research seeks to assess in what ways, to what extent and for what reason could and should a municipal performance measurement and management model, like the 'Stat'

model, be adopted and amended to measure and improve the performance of inter-municipal partnerships?

Success of Inter-Municipal Partnerships in Massachusetts

	River's Edge	**Melrose and Wakefield**	**Becket and Washington**	**Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth**	**District 14**
Level of Integration	Fully Integrated	Fully Integrated	Moderate Integration	Moderate/Low Integration	Moderate/Low Integration
Goals of the Partnership	- Increased Efficiency - Increased Economic Development - Improved Service Delivery - Equity for participating communities	- Increased Efficiency - Improved Service Delivery	- Increased Efficiency - Increased Service Delivery	- Increased Efficiency - Maintenance of Service Delivery	- Equity of Service Delivery for participating communities

Thorough Integration

River's Edge

In 1996 the cities of Medford, Malden and Everett came together to launch a regional economic development project, now called River's Edge (formerly TeleCom City). The proposed development site rests on a 200 acre parcel of land, a portion of which is owned by each municipality. To facilitate the project, the state established the Mystic Valley Development Commission (MVDC) which, through its agent, the Malden Redevelopment Authority, is the lead architect behind the design of the project and "selected Preotle, Lane & Associates ("PLA") as their developer through a public process" (Preotle, Lane & Associates Ltd. 2012, web address).

When finished, the site will contain 410,000 square feet of rentable office space (115,000 square feet of which are currently complete) ; 222 luxury apartments spread across 115,000 square feet; a 10 acre riverfront park, 1/3 of a mile of which abuts the Malden River (completed); an athletic field; a cafe; the Tufts University Boat House (completed); and a host of other amenities. The success of this project involved agencies from every level of government (local, state and federal). At the local level, the planning and design of the riverfront park alone included the coordination of the MVDC (including the cities of Medford, Everett and Malden), the Malden Redevelopment Authority, the Medford and Everett Conservation Commissions, the Medford Planning Board and Office of Community Development, and the MVDC's Citizens Advisory Board which includes citizens of Everett, Malden and Medford (Preotle, Lane & Associates Ltd. 2012, web address).

By a special act authorization, the three municipalities now share property tax revenues from the development (MRAC, 2010, p. 16). Further, all three communities profit equally from the development of the site and not based on which building is being sited on respective thirds of the property. This has resulted in the ability of the MVDC and the MRA to plan the site without political posturing about building siting.

In the intervening years, every political administration from each municipality has supported and continued work of River's Edge, to a large extent because each municipality sees the opportunity to spur economic development, invigorate a former brownfield site, and maximize the tax base of their respective communities by working together to develop the whole site instead of working independently on fractions of the parcel. The result is a shared tax based that is infinitely more valuable to the three communities than the land was to them individually.

The project has been credited with enhancing the technological capabilities of schools in each of the three communities (Preotle, Lane & Associates Ltd., 2012, web address) and was designated a Showcase Community in 2000 by the National Brownfields Partnership (the U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers). River's Edge was also named Brownfield Project of the Year by the Environmental Business Council of New England in 2008, was awarded the Agency Award of Excellence by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials and the MVDC has been commissioned to facilitate a host of other project in the tri-city area (Preotle, Lane & Associates Ltd. 2012, web address).

The River's Edge project is an example of an inter-municipal partnership that is totally integrated, efficient, and equitable, which is likely why it was politically feasible to attempt in 1996 and why it's popularity has stood the test of time and multiple local administrations changes.

An Unprecedented Merger

In another example of a successful, fully-integrated, inter-municipal partnership: the cities of Melrose and Wakefield partnered in 2009 to share local public health services. (To date, there remain 350 public health departments across the state.) By way of a formal, inter-municipal agreement under M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 4A, the two communities (using the City of Melrose as the "lead") retained their local boards of health, but share the services of a full−time health director, a full-time inspector, two part−time inspectors and a part−time public health nurse who are officially employed by the City of Melrose. Wakefield reimburses Melrose for an agreed upon percentage of the personnel cost and both maintain minimal, independent staff (MRAC, 2010, p. 43 and 44).

The agreement is short-term and only commits them to a three-year contract, however the results of the first year have fostered interest from both communities to continue the program. In 2009 alone, the City of Melrose maximized its efficiency by saving $30,000 on the total cost of delivering the same quality of service to a larger population. By contrast, Wakefield, though not reducing costs, improved their service delivery and the standard of care they are able to provide their residents by identifying a cost effective way to make professional staff accessible (MRAC, 2010, p. 43 and 44). This unprecedented merger is yet another example of a fully integrated, efficient, equitable partnership, that improves the standard of service that residents receive.

Moderate Integration

Sharing the Wealth

Libraries Partner to Share Services

Despite the ubiquitous nature of mass media and technology, among the many essential services that cities and towns continue to provide is access to public libraries. The western Massachusetts town of Becket is now offering library services to the neighboring town of Washington, which lacks the capacity to provide those services to its constituency. Becket does not offer a library system, but rather a single library with a full-time director and librarian, board of trustees, and archive of over 10,000 books, to which residents of both Becket and Washington have access (Becket Athenaeum, 2012, p. 1). Through a formal inter-municipal agreement, the town of Washington purchases public library services and access for its residents from the town of Becket (MRAC, 2010, p. 9).

This partnership was made more politically tenable in the initial stages because the towns of Becket and Washington were already regional school partners (they share a single elementary

school between the two of them and are part of the Central Berkshire Regional School District).
Although different types of shared resources, a culture of partnership was established between
the two communities when they regionalized school districts in 1958.

This partnership serves as an example of a moderately successful inter-municipal
partnership because the town of Becket is able to provide the same quality of library services, to
a larger region at a deferred cost, and the town of Washington is able to officially provide public
library services to its residents, making it both efficient and equitable. However, it is unclear
what public transit services are available to residents of the town of Washington to facilitate their
access to the Becket Public Library, thus calling into question the actual improvement of service
delivery.

Moderate/Low Integration

Leveraging Bargaining Power

In 2009, the cities of Quincy, Braintree, and Weymouth combined efforts to jointly
provide solid waste collection services to their constituencies. By leveraging their combined
bargaining power, they were able to attract more competitive bids and stabilize costs through a
nine-year contract. In addition, they were able to "enhance their revenue streams from recycling
and scrap metal beyond what they could have achieved independently" (MRAC, 2010, p. 10). In
the first year of the program, each community saw dramatic savings, as total cost was three to
five percent below 2009 estimates (MRAC, 2010, p. 10).

In this case, the inter-municipal partnership between Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth is
low to moderately integrated. The communities involved were satisfied with the quality of

service previously provided and each only entered into the agreement with the objective of cost control. As a result of their partnership, all municipalities involved were able to reduce their bottom line on solid waste disposal, however the quality of service did not improve (or weaken), and measuring success beyond efficiency (e.g. improved service delivery or expanding the partnership over time) was never considered.

District 14

Among the statutorily required local provisions that municipalities are obligated to ensure is the health and safety of their residents. Across the Metro-West section of Massachusetts, the towns of Acton, Ashland, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Framingham, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Lincoln, Marlborough, Maynard, Milford, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough are engaged in a service exchange agreement, authorized by MGL Chapter 40, Section 4A. The partnership, called Fire District Fourteen, is an informal district that consists of the fourteen towns in the Metro-West regional of Metropolitan Boston. Communications for the District operates through the Ashland Fire Department. (MRAC, 2010, p.20)

The goals of the district are to:

- To provide Fire Services mutual aid assistance in the District Fourteen area including hazardous materials response and other specialized operations.

- To provide coordination of all Fire Services' mutual aid activities in the area. To interface with existing Civil Defense and provide fire mobilization.

- To provide overall planning for coordinated activities in times of emergencies and disasters.

- To provide other common functions for the good of the Fire Service in the area served.

(Massachusetts Fire District 14, 2012, website.)

Here, Metro-West towns devised a politically tenable way to maintain autonomy as it pertains to the provision of fire safety services, while simultaneously supporting each other and ensuring that all communities have access to an acceptable standard of service around emergency and disaster preparedness that is uniformed across the region. Each municipality continues to maintain its own respective fire departments, but has access to an additional layer of emergency response, which yields satisfactory improvements to service delivery, a heightened degree of equity, and remains efficient as there is no additional cost to the any of the municipalities in the agreement.

Analysis

'Stat' Model Key Variables to Success	River's Edge	Melrose and Wakefield	Becket and Washington	Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth	District 14
Capacity of Municipalities to Produce Useful Data	5	5	3	5	2
Dedicated Staff to Analyze Information Independently	4	5	2	2	2
Standardize Data Across Municipalities	5	5	0	5	2
Clear Link Between Data and Decisions	5	5	3	5	0
Commitment of Elected Officials	5	4	2	0	0
Constituent Involvement	5	4	4	0	0
Capacity to Meet Regularly	5	5	1	3	2
Total	34	33	15	20	8

* Alternatives were graded on a 1-5 scale (0=lowest level, 5=highest level). Maximum points: 35.

Having assessed each inter-municipal partnership across a standard set of criteria, the above matrix now evaluates the capacity of each inter-municipal partnership to implement the five key variables that qualify a PMM as 'Stat'.   For the purposes of this examination, one of the variables (the need for dedicated staff to analyze the information independently and standardize it across departments) was broken into two categories and a final category (capacity to hold regular meetings) was added. (Please refer to Appendix I for a detailed matrix justifying each assessment.)

Several themes are present in the above data:

1) The capacity of an inter-municipal partnership depends entirely on a) the level of integration and the objective of the partnership.

Fully integrated programs have more variables to measure and are typically committed to improving service delivery as much or more than efficiency. These partnerships tend to be larger scale, have the input and the support of local elected officials in their infancy and, most importantly, have a unified objective. For these reasons and others, they are typically able to produce the quality and quantity of data necessary to measure their success in achieving their objectives.

Such is the case with the River's Edge project in Medford, Malden and Everett. In contrast to the less 'Stat' adaptable examples, all the municipalities involved in the River's Edge project came together and agreed on a collective objective. In addition, the sheer size and scope of the project requires a level of reporting that lends itself to producing the type of data the 'Stat' model needs to measure success. Lower integrated partnerships or those partnerships with conflicting objectives, in most cases, cannot meet the basic data collection needs of the 'Stat'

model and typically, are partnering to provide a specific service that is too small in scale to be

worth the investment of time and money necessary to conduct a comprehensive performance

evaluation.

2) The five key variables (except for Constituent Involvement which relates more to the way municipal residents view the transparency and accountability of their government) are dependent on each other.

       The 'Stat' model relies entirely on the capacity of a municipality, state, or region to

produce useful data. If an IMP can't produce useful data, there is little need for an objective,

external, dedicated staff to analyze the data. There is no way to standardize data across

municipalities without a dedicated staff, and there can be no allocation of staff without the

commitment of elected officials who also control the extent to which decisions are made based

on the performance indicators.

       There are three reasons an inter-municipal partnership would not be able to effectively

implement one (and therefore likely all) of the variable(s):

1) The objectives of the partnership do not support a performance measurement and management model, as in the case of District 14, where the IMP represents a commitment that neighboring municipalities made to each other but is not a partnership with deliverable performance measurements.
2) The integration of the IMP is so low that the partnership could better be described as a business transaction as in the case of Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth, where the only performance indicator of interest is efficiency and, having achieved that, there is little interest in pursuing evaluation further;
3) The respective municipalities have conflicting objectives and therefore cannot produce useful data that can be standardized, as in the case of Becket and Washington where the objective of the town of Becket is to subsidize their library expenses and the objective of the town of Washington is to improve its access to public library services for its residents (an objective, which if analyzed alone, could be a candidate for 'Stat'.)

3) As the level of integration and the capacity for the adaptation of the 'Stat' model rise, the advantages and disadvantages of implementation also rise.

Larger-scale, fully integrated partnerships, like River's Edge, have the capacity to implement 'Stat' which, if implemented correctly, could identify tremendous opportunities to streamline their processes, learn from their partners and maximize the benefit of their involvement in this project. However, fully implementing a model like 'Stat' requires dedicated staff and therefore both a financial and time commitment from local officials.

Findings

The above examples of inter-municipal partnerships in Massachusetts represent a cross section of the types of ad-hoc partnerships currently being established in every region of the Commonwealth. Each partnership came to pass as a result of specific characteristics unique to the needs, capacity and objectives of each municipality.

The results of the case study yielded two critical findings:

1) Performance measurement and management models like the 'Stat' model do not make sense for every inter-municipal partnership; and
2) The 'Stat' model, in particular, is only a viable option for the most fully integrated partnerships. The greater the integration and the more unified communities are about their objectives, the higher their capacity to adopt the 'Stat' model and the more opportunity they have to identify and rectify underperformance and maximize the benefits of the partnership.

As such, these findings reflect the following:

Inter-municipal partnerships in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are growing in popularity. As cities and towns continue to look to their neighbors to jointly provide essential services, and state government works to fosters those relationships by facilitating introductions and offering incentivizes, it is clear that the Status Quo of anti-regionalization (if only on a small scale) is changing in Massachusetts.

As communities form these partnerships, it is clear that quantifying their successes and identifying underperformance can create opportunities for greater and lasting success. Therefore, it is not enough for state government to make a coordinated effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships statewide, without a performance measurement and management component.

However, it is also clear that no two partnerships are created equal. Each of the examples contained in this report have capacities and challenges that are unique to their partnership and are not transferable. Therefore, a coordinated effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships with a statewide, uniformed PMM, it is clear, would be inappropriate and unsuccessful.

Inter-municipal partnerships need to be managing to key performance indicators broadly, but that is not the same thing as implementing a 'Stat' model. As Gibson and de Lancer Julnes found in their evaluation of BRACStat, the nature of inter-municipal partnerships requires a model of performance evaluation that differs wholly operationally from the established tenets of the 'Stat' model and requires the flexibility to think creatively about the key performance variables specific to their partnership.

Therefore, the results conclude that a coordinated effort to establish inter-municipal partnerships with ad-hoc PMMs, that are customized to fit the varying needs of counties, regions and partnerships across the Commonwealth, should be considered.

Recommendation

As municipalities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts continue to bridge partnerships to administer essential local services, this research sought to assess in what ways, to what extent and for what reason could and should a municipal performance measurement and

management model, like the 'Stat' model, be adopted and amended to measure and improve the performance of inter-municipal partnerships?

The research proved this question to be a complicated one and one without a clear answer. In answer to the question of *should* a municipal performance measurement and management model be adopted: the research is clear that a lot of questions related to the success of these partnerships remain unanswered because they are not implementing any type of performance evaluation into their processes. Questions like: is a 3 - 5% reduction in solid waste disposal costs in the cities of Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth considered successful and, if so, why? Those municipalities consider it successful because they are measuring it again the previous year's cost, but could it have been more? Or in the case of Becket and Washington: Washingtonians have *permission* to use the Becket Athenaeum now, but do they have greater *access*? Has there actually been an improvement in service delivery?

The question of *can* a municipal performance measurement and management model be adopted, is more complicated. In short, it is not possible in most cases to adopted a performance measurement and management model designed for a single municipality to meet the needs of an inter-municipal partnership. Their needs and capacity are simply too different. Only in the cases where an inter-municipal partnership is working on a large-scale, long-term project and is working as a united front with a shared vision of success, can a PMM like 'Stat' be effective in an inter-municipal environment because it is centralized enough.

That said, in the vast majority of inter-municipal partnership cases where 'Stat' doesn't work, performance evaluation is still conspicuously and unnecessarily absent. The fact that 'Stat' doesn't work, does not mean that it's not possible to measure underperformance with a

different assessment and as state government continues to incentivize inter-municipal partnerships across the Commonwealth, it is imperative that performance evaluation is advocated for as well.

Limitations

Several limitations were confronted in the course of this research:

* A performance measurement and management model like this has never been adopted and amended to fit the needs of inter-municipal partnerships before. In fact, the literature suggests that it has only been implemented regionally once, in Maryland with the creation of BracSTAT. There is no precedent for how a model would work or even if it is possible.

* Even if it was possible to design a PMM to fit the vastly different needs of different inter-municipal partnerships, in order to scientifically quantify the successes of inter-municipal partnerships, a uniformed weight of measurement needs to be designed to measure success (not only across a partnership's year-over-year progress but) across partnerships and across sectors.

* Based on the structure of the 'Stat' model, the design of the PMM will necessarily have to include some type of centralized, hierarchical system. Without a neutral governing body to hold municipalities accountable, managing performance will be difficult at best.

* The Massachusetts Regionalization Advisory Commission recommended the consideration of regionalization in eleven different areas; however each of those areas comes with its own set of regulations, laws, restrictions and barriers to amendment. Not only are these findings not fully generalizable beyond Massachusetts, but the specific examples are not generalizable outside of the context with which the partnership was formed: the community it is in, the political feasibility, the policy area's capacity for change, etc.

* The reality is that this research proposal was too big for a policy analysis and too big for a capstone. Conducting the type of study required to assess if a proposal like this could be successful would take years to do right, first to design the study and the weight of measurement and then to conduct the study over a period of 3 - 5. This research can only hope to serve as a foundation for a much more involved study than a literature review and case study can offer.

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'Stat' Model Key Variables to Success	River's Edge	Melrose and Wakefield	District 14	Becket and Washington	Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth
	5	5	2	3	5
Capacity of Municipalities to Produce Useful Data	- Supported by state government, all 3 municipalities, the MVDC, MRA and Private Developer - Subject to intense scrutiny by award grantors and key stakeholders - Known capacity to produce satisfactory data to compel municipalities to "buy in" and stay committed	- D.P.H. are under strict state and federal reporting guidelines. - 3 sets of data (Melrose, Wakefield and both) - Know capacity to produce useful data	- 14 participating towns, all with varying degrees of capacity to produce data will make data harvesting difficult.	- Only Becket, which can produce efficiency and improved service delivery data. (Can track who accesses the library based on library cards issued and books checked out.)	- Yes. Depts. of Works in each town can track service delivery (e.g. amount of solid waste collected, response time, constituent satisfaction, etc.)
	4	5	2	2	2
Dedicated Staff to Analyze Information Independently	- Would require a full-time, dedicated staffer initially (could likely scale back after initial data harvesting phase) to collect all the data from every town (re: growth to tax base, leveraging economic development of project to incentivize greater private community investment.) - Should work for the MVDC and not one of the participating communities.	- Would require a full-time, dedicated staffer to collect and analyze all the data from Melrose, Wakefield and the joint office. - Could be a responsibility of an existing staffer in the Mayor's Office. - As Melrose is the "lead" community, it would be appropriate for said allocation of responsibility to fall to Melrose.	- As the communication hub for the whole district, Ashland is best positioned to allocate the partial time of an existing staffer to harvest and conduct data analysis. - Towns unlikely to be receptive to having their information analyzed by a neighboring municipality. - Ashland unlikely to want that responsibility.	- Would have to be time allocated from an existing staffer from the town of Becket, because Washington doesn't have the data, however the analysis should be done by the town of Washington. - Quantifying performance indicators can inform Washington officials as to whether or not Washingtonians are taking advantage of the service or they are subsidizing Becket's library and providing limited added value to residents.	- Since none of the municipalities were the "lead" per se, identifying one municipality to analyze the data for the other two would likely create animosity between the participating towns.
	5	5	2	0	5
Standardize Data Across Municipalities	- If River's Edge can allocate a full time staffer with experience in data analysis, and all three municipalities buy in to the PMM, then it is possible to collect useful data that can be standardized.	- Depended on Melrose's allocation of a dedicated staffer. The data is available in Wakefield to be standardized and in the data is Melrose is standardized across it's independent team and the joint public health team because both are administered by Melrose.	(Limitation: This data does not contain information on Fire Dept. reporting protocol.) - Unlikely. 14 Separate Sets of Data - Capacity to standardize subject to allocation of staff.	- Impossible. In order to determine if the partnership is in the best interest of both communities, different sets of data would be required from each.	- If a staffer in one of the municipalities could be identified, and each municipality agreed to supply the "lead" with the requisite data, the process of standardizing the data would not be hard.
	5	5	0	3	5
Clear Link Between Data and Decisions	- Capacity to manage is contingent upon performance measurement outcomes, not contingent upon the way each other manages/makes decisions. (Decisions and management practices do not have to be uniformed, they just have to be made using the same information.) -Would be worth the investment if each municipality could learn from the management and economic leveraging techniques of each other to maximize performance.	- High degree of capacity for performance indicators to directly impact the way Melrose, Wakefield and their joint team conduct business.	- Difficult if not impossible to synthesize the objectives and decision making processes of 14 Fire Depts. to correspond with performance indicators. - Operationally, the district Fire Dept. is not a separate entity with independent staff, but rather a formal agreement between the participating communities.	- Only for the town of Washington, such that if month over month data indicates that Washingtonians have permission but not greater ACCESS to the Becket library, the decision making process to either improve access or assess the continuation of the partnership would fall to Washington, not to both communities.	- To some extent, this process has already happened in this case, such that the municipalities came together, assessed their individual and joint expenses on solid waste disposal, leveraged their negotiating power during contract negotiations and made a joint decision on a contract and a vendor. - Limited capacity going forward as the only performance indicator they seek to assess is efficiency.
	5	4	0	2	0
Commitment of Elected Officials	- Long standing support of local and state representatives for this project. - Would require support not just from local elected officials, but from the MVDC and MRA.	- Both Mayor's Offices are totally "bought in" to IMP. - Higher likelihood that they would "buy in" to measuring improvability of service delivery and not just efficiency (subject to cost).	- Could only be possible if all 14 Fire Chiefs "bought in" and even then, the model requires oversight and an operational leader to demand accountability. - Towns unlikely to be receptive to Ashland or another "lead" municipality asserting authority over them.	- Goal of the program: to improve and expand service delivery. Requires measurement of performance results and commitment from elected officials to increase the library's use and access. (Interest from elected officials will largely depended on their capacity to improve access.)	- The intent of the partnership was not to improve service, it was simply to improve efficiency. Having achieved that, there will likely be little interest from elected officials to measure anything else.
	5	4	0	4	0
Constituent Involvement	- Well documented community input prior to the introduction of a PMM suggests a high capacity for constituent involvement in the performance evaluation process.	- D.P.H. offices are required to hold public meetings. - Discussion of key performance indictors must be driven by the Mayor.	- There is no constituent input because the district only exists in so far as the Fire Depts. of each municipality coordinate and work together.	- Capacity exists for residents to voice success (or lack thereof) of the partnership (Library Board of Trustees, Town Meetings in Becket and Washington, etc.)	- None. (Strictly a contract negotiation. These communities did not establish this partnership to build bridges or develop relationships. It is strictly a business agreement.)
	5	5	1	3	2 (Capacity but not necessity)
Capacity to Meet Regularly	- Stakeholders are in constant communication and MVDC could easily facilitate regular meetings between representatives of the three towns	- High capacity to meet regularly if they don't already. The joint team is primary player; Melrose and Wakefield independent teams function more a support staff. Meetings would require the director of the joint team and both mayors.	- Unlikely to coordinate a meeting time that meets the needs of 14 fire chiefs without a directive from a higher authority. If a "lead" municipality were identified, fire chiefs could send designees, but all municipalities would have to commit to the model and take the meetings seriously.	- Ideally, oversight for this PMM would be administered by the Mayor's Office in Washington, who would hold accountable whoever from the town of Washington is responsible for facilitating and improving access to the Becket Library. - Capacity dependent on "buy in" from elected officials.	- 'Stat' meetings are only useful to the extent that useable data is analyzed and deliverable action steps are decided upon as a result of that data. Here, Quincy, Braintree and Weymouth are engaged in a business partnership to improve efficiency. If they have already achieved the objective of their partnership, there is little reason to meet.