

VOLUNTARY MUNICIPAL COALITION:
A CASE STUDY IN REGIONAL PLANNING

by

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B.A., Wellesley College
(1978)

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Submitted to the
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Abstract

This thesis is about voluntary municipal coalition, a relatively new approach to regional planning in Massachusetts. It is a case study of how one coalition evolved and its efforts to address the issue of solid waste management. The organization is the South Shore Coalition which is comprised of ten towns within the metropolitan area south of Boston. The paper examines the factors which determine the effectiveness of this approach to regional planning. It concludes that the success of voluntary coalition depends primarily on the ability of coalition leaders and representatives to build consensus on regional issues among themselves, within their towns and among various state organizations.

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Langley C. Keyes, Professor of City and
Regional Planning

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INTRODUCTION

The creation of voluntary municipal coalitions in Massachusetts is an innovative concept in comprehensive regional planning. Municipalities are joining together in regional planning forums to collectively address common concerns and growth issues such as solid waste management, transportation, and housing which impact their particular localities.

This type of voluntary association for planning and problem solving is a deviation from the Massachusetts tradition of home-rule which has characterized decision-making in local government over the last 300 years. The emergence of problems with multi-town impacts has created a strong incentive for planning and implementing solutions on a regional level. Unfortunately few existing regional government structures are suited for the task of comprehensive regional planning. The state has attempted to fill this gap by creating various agencies to regulate environmental, transportation and other issues in place of regional government. Municipalities perceive state regulation as a threat to home rule, and are concerned that state imposed solutions to regional problems will not accurately reflect local needs.

Coalitions are an attempt to put regional planning and decision-making into the hands of local government. If coalitions are successfully able to build consensus on regional issues and actually implement joint regional decisions in their constituent municipalities, they might initiate a major shift in the distribution of regional decision-making power from the State to the local governments.

This thesis is a case study of the development of one voluntary municipal association, the South Shore Coalition, which was created to identify and solve problems unique to Boston's South Shore region. It examines the Coalition's efforts to plan for regional solutions to the problem of solid waste management in order to identify potential obstacles to successful regional cooperation.

Chapter one traces the evolution of regional government in Massachusetts and why perceived inadequacies in regional government have led to the creation of voluntary municipal coalitions. Chapter two provides background information on the South Shore Coalition, including: its origins, objectives, structural organization, key actors and financial backing. This information will provide a basis for evaluating Coalition performance. Chapter three examines why the waste problem is appropriate for planning at a regional level. It contrasts the technical and financial limitations of purely municipal options against the financial and political incentives for regional solutions. Chapter four analyzes the constraints to Coalition success as reflected in its efforts to address the issue of solid waste management. Chapter five presents recommendations to Coalition leaders on ways to overcome or mitigate the problems identified in the previous chapter. Chapter six draws some overall conclusions about the implications of voluntary municipal coalitions for regional planning.

1. REGIONAL PLANNING IN THE GREATER BOSTON AREA

Regional government is not a new concept in Massachusetts. Various forms of regional government have been in existence since 1643 when the four "shires" of Essex, Norfolk, Middlesex, and Suffolk were created by the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.¹ Their forms and purposes have evolved in an ad hoc manner as a response to modern growth patterns and emerging public service needs. The result is a patchwork of uncoordinated, overlapping jurisdictions serving constituencies and purposes as different as their geographical boundaries. This chapter provides a brief overview of the evolution and inadequacies of existing forms of regional government in Massachusetts. It then examines why the voluntary coalition form of regional government has emerged in response to these inadequacies.

The oldest form of regional government, the county, has been cited as the "least effective and most criticized level of government in the State."² Much of the criticism stems from the structural deficiencies or inadequacies of a "system created and then neglected by state government."³ Originally, counties were created as agents of the state government to facilitate administration of the courts, jails and tax collection. The counties only held those powers which the state legislation allowed them. Today, even some of the county's traditional functions have been taken over by the state or are threatened with state takeover, such as welfare, extension services, county jails and courts.⁴ A State study on regional government claims that "the powers which counties have now do not touch major aspects of regional or local society, including such concerns as regional

delivery of water, sewerage and solid waste services; economic development, land use reviews, housing, or health and social services planning." ⁵ Traditional county boundaries are often not appropriate for the delivery of many modern services like water, transportation and regional planning.⁶ Although a new County Charter Reform bill passed by the state legislature in 1985 might alter the powers or boundaries of the counties in the future, the past history of county government in Massachusetts has created the need for new forms of regional government to provide services on a regional basis.

In general, it was the state government which responded to the emerging need for new forms of regional government by creating a proliferation of special districts to provide water, transportation, sewage disposal and other specific services to regional districts. Organizations like the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), which provides a public mass transit system and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority which provides sewage treatment and water services to various municipalities in the Boston area are examples of single and multi-purpose districts based on functional needs. Although these organizations have been successful to varying degrees in providing needed services to towns, the high level of government financial or administrative involvement in these organizations has resulted in the perception that these organizations are "state" organizations as opposed to "regional" organizations and therefore removed from the needs of their local constituent municipalities. A recent "Report on Regional Organization" by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council contends that "the distinction between state and regional agencies is blurred by the long-standing tradition of providing essentially local services on a

regionalized basis through state agencies (eg: MDC, MASSPORT) rather than regional entities not part of the formal structure of state government." ⁷

These single and multi-purpose service organizations form a patchwork of service districts with overlapping activities and jurisdictions because they were created by various state agencies, at various times to perform specific functions. Conservation districts are not necessarily coterminous with economic development councils or or water pollution control districts. Control by different state agencies and varying constituencies limit the effectiveness of comprehensive planning and coordinated development activities at the regional level of government. "Despite the obvious services provided by special districts, their benefits are clearly limited in terms of overall planning and development activities. Because the districts are often autonomous and because of their intentionally narrow focus, their activities seldom take cognizance of other public service activities or planning. The result may be poor or non-existent communication between related service districts, conflicting plans and activities, and duplicative planning and research efforts. There are also major gaps in the provision of public services by many of these districts which are usually the result of the legal and political limitations of the districts." ⁸ As a response to the need for comprehensive planning to bridge the gap between the State, the service districts, and the local municipalities, the State created general purpose regional organizations for planning. In 1936, the Legislature created a State Planning Board and within it a Division of Metropolitan Planning (DMP). ⁹ The DMP provided comprehensive planning services to the municipalities in the Metropolitan Boston

area and served as a regional link between state and local government. In 1963, the DMP became the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) under Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws which grants municipalities the right to organize and join regional planning agencies. Since the creation of the MAPC, 12 other regional planning agencies have been created in Massachusetts covering nearly all of the municipalities in the Commonwealth.

Regional planning agencies are impeded both financially and administratively in their attempts to provide comprehensive planning services to their constituent municipalities. The MAPC, for example, must provide housing, transportation, environmental protection, and growth management services to 101 municipalities in Metropolitan Boston with an annual budget of only \$1,181,000.¹⁰ The resources available for planning and technical support are consequently limited. The MAPC must necessarily prioritize its projects, and is unable to respond to all of the study needs of its constituent municipalities. Administratively, the MAPC, has no power to implement its plans, and must depend on persuading its constituent municipalities to implement its suggestions.

Because the MAPC is financially unable to provide sufficient regional planning support to its constituent towns, it has actively promoted the formation of self-supporting voluntary municipal coalitions. The MAPC provides these organizations with leadership, technical and financial support. By involving local municipal leaders in their own regional efforts, the MAPC hopes to facilitate the implementation of coordinated regional development plans at the municipal level.

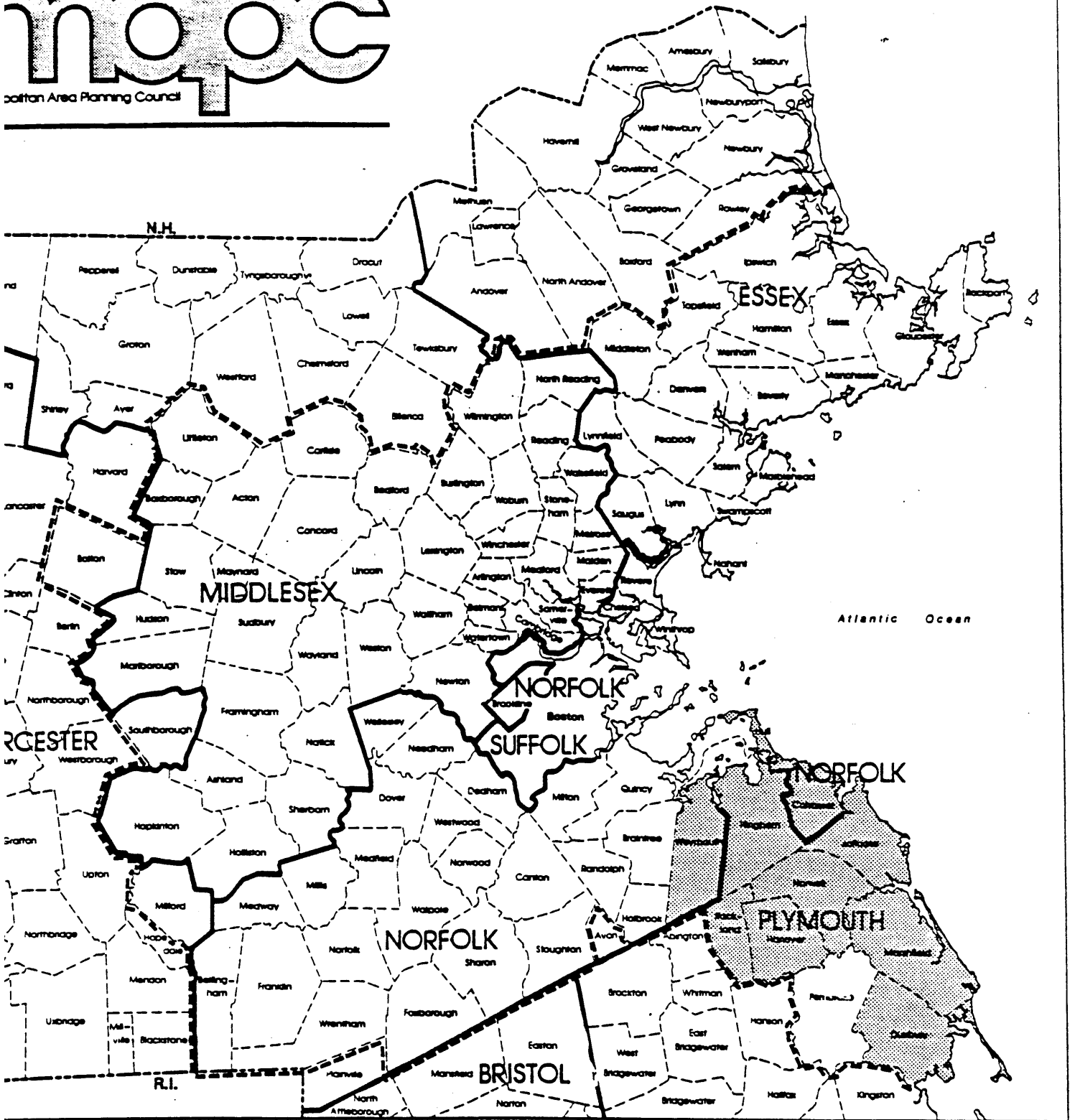
2. THE SOUTH SHORE COALITION




The South Shore Coalition (SSC) is one of three active Coalitions in the MAPC planning district. Although it has been functioning for less than one year, Coalition leaders are interested in identifying potential obstacles or limitations which might impede its efforts. This chapter describes the origins, objectives, and organizational structure of the Coalition in addition to its key actors and sources of financial support. In subsequent chapters, this information will form a basis for evaluating the performance of the Coalition in planning for solid waste management on a regional basis.

2.1 Origin

The South Shore Coalition (SSC) was formed in October, 1985 to assist member communities identify and address common problems in the South Shore area. Initiated by State Senator William Golden and the MAPC, the Coalition includes representatives from 10 municipalities, including: Cohasset, Duxbury, Hanover, Hingham, Hull, Marshfield, Norwell, Rockland, Scituate and Weymouth. (Refer to the map displayed in Exhibit 2.1).

The MAPC has experience in establishing similar types of sub-regional organizations. Three years ago, the MAPC helped created Metrowest, a voluntary association of eight towns west of Boston. Metrowest was formed to develop a regional plan for local action in resolving problems related to issues such as transportation on Route 9, growth management, and groundwater protection. The MAPC considers Metrowest to be a success since it has been responsible for the submission of State legislation to amend the Subdivision Control Act



-  South Shore Coalition
-  County Boundary
-  MAPC Boundary



to include special requirements for developments of regional significance; the postponement of several community decisions which might have adversely affected neighboring communities; and the support of proposed projects of a regional nature within the communities.¹¹ Most recently the Minuteman Council (MAGIC), a coalition of 11 towns northwest of Boston, was formed to address shared issues of mutual concern, particularly transportation and water quality. This organization was formed with the support of the MAPC, but has not received the same level of state support as Metrowest.¹²

Both Senator Golden and the MAPC perceived the need for a South Shore organization similar to Metrowest and the Minuteman Council. Such an organization would help promote a regional identity for South Shore area towns and allow them to guide growth in a coordinated manner. Coalition founders recognized that the South Shore towns had traffic problems similar to those of Metrowest. The impacts of continued development along the Route 3 South were shared by all of the Coalition towns. The towns had already participated in a number of regional transportation workshops under the auspices of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the MAPC, and were predisposed toward regional cooperation on the issue of transportation. Therefore, the transportation issue seemed to be a natural focal point for gathering support to establish the Coalition.

On October 2, 1985, the Coalition towns were asked to send representatives to a meeting arranged by Senator Golden and the MAPC to discuss the concept of establishing a South Shore Coalition.¹³ Representatives from each town were asked to obtain letters of support from their Boards of Selectman to participate in a proposal to the

Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD) to obtain grant money for a planner to coordinate the regional effort. On November 21, 1985 the Coalition was officially organized and named. The members established a preliminary list of concerns for the Coalition to address in future meetings.

2.2 Objectives and Plans

The objective of the Coalition is to develop a mechanism for member towns to collectively prepare regional plans and policies. In the EOCD proposal, the Coalition states that under the Massachusetts tradition of home rule, "there exists no means for municipalities to discuss and work towards the resolution of regional issues." The grant states that the Coalition requires "a management mechanism and process to establish a sub-regional effort that is not only linked to, but actually arises from and is vested in the participating towns".¹⁴ In this manner, the responsibility for comprehensive planning would be transferred from the MAPC to the Coalition towns thereby ensuring greater recognition of local concerns.

Apart from the stated objectives of the Coalition itself, there are some broader objectives which were envisioned by the Coalition founders. These include: recognition of the regional nature of many problems, creation of a multi-town alliance, development of a shared sense of need and concern, development of a regional identity for the South Shore, encouragement of inter-local cooperation in traditional public services, and the education of town leadership.¹⁵

The operating plans of the Coalition as outlined in its EOCD establish a formal group of members and an agenda for discussing regional issues at regularly scheduled meetings. One of the

Coalition's primary goals is to produce a Memorandum of Agreement from each of the towns to place the voluntary committee on a more formal basis, and show evidence of town commitment to the project. These agreements, signed by each town's Board of Selectmen, will establish the mechanism and process by which the organization will meet its goals. Technical memorandums will also be developed to outline and prioritize issues for detailed study. In a later phase, detailed studies will be conducted of the relevant regional issues.¹⁶

Although transportation was an initial rallying point for the Coalition, solid waste management was selected as a priority issue for investigation. Key coalition actors believe that an early "regional planning success" is necessary to sustain the momentum and interest of the Coalition members. Solid waste is considered a likely candidate due to an immediate requirement of several towns to find an acceptable waste disposal solution. Therefore Coalition leaders and representatives from the MAPC and the Bureau of Solid Waste Management (BSWM) have been actively promoting regional approaches to solid waste management at Coalition meetings.

2.3 Structure and Organization

In the original concept for the Coalition, the MAPC envisioned that each town would be represented by a Selectman and an alternate from the Planning Board.¹⁷ Because the Selectmen generally hold the power to make decisions in each town, it was considered highly important to have town representation at this level. At present however, Coalition members include Selectmen, Planning Board members, and town representatives to the MAPC. There is also a full time

project manager who is responsible for overall coordination of Coalition planning activities.

The Coalition holds monthly meetings to discuss emerging issues and establish priorities for more detailed studies. The Coalition has already been successful in fostering communication on a regional level among member towns and state government. One town representative expressed concern to the Coalition that utility rates were not dropping with the decrease in oil prices. The Coalition then invited the Chairman of the Department of Public Utilities to speak on the subject of utility pricing. Several town representatives expressed concern over the telephone company's attempt to remove several of the Coalition towns from the (617) or metropolitan Boston area code. A telephone company representative was invited to explain the company's motivation and to respond to the objections of the Coalition towns. Formal letters of objection were written by many of the towns at the suggestion of the Coalition and sent to the telephone company. It now seems likely that the South Shore will retain its area code. The MAPC Solid Waste Planner, Judy Weigand, and BSWM South Shore representative, Betsy Matyas, were invited to speak on options for regional waste disposal.

The actual planning work of the Coalition is done by technical subcommittees, composed of representatives from each town. Several subcommittees have been established including one for joint purchasing of fuel oil and one for organizing a conference on growth and development on the South Shore. The Solid Waste Subcommittee has thus far been the only subcommittee established to address a particular issue area. This subcommittee is composed of representatives appointed from local Departments of Public Works or Boards of Health,

who are responsible for the solid waste effort in their respective towns. Committee members meet on a bi-monthly basis to review the costs and legal aspects of various options for regional disposal of solid waste. The committee receives technical assistance from the BSWM South Shore representative and the MAPC Solid Waste Planner.

2.4 Financial Support

The Coalition has received State funding under two separate grants. The first was an Incentive Aid Grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development (EOCD). This grant provided \$35 thousand to hire a project manager for the Coalition for a period of one year.¹⁸ After the initial grant period the EOCD expects the Coalition to be self-supporting.¹⁹ Weston and Sudbury provide support for Metrowest, but Ms. Christensen feels that she needs a Coalition "success" to encourage the South Shore Coalition towns to contribute towards Coalition support. A second grant for \$60 thousand dollars was submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE) to fund a regional groundwater program to identify sources of pollution in the Coalition region and propose municipal regulations and policies to protect water resources from additional pollution.²⁰ In May, 1986, the Coalition was granted \$25 thousand from the DEQE.

2.5 Key Actors

Three key actors have greatly influenced the initiation and development of the Coalition. Massachusetts Senator William Golden, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Counties is a Coalition co-founder

and was largely responsible for obtaining the EOCD and DEQE grants for the Coalition. Ms. Jean Christensen, project manager for the Coalition has been an aggressive organizer and instrumental in coordinating coalition activities during this start-up period. Both Golden and Christensen are dynamic individuals with enough drive and familiarity with the region to help keep momentum in the Coalition. They both understand the problems confronting the Coalition and the political situation within its member towns.

There are several reasons why Senator Golden has been promoting the development of this organization. First, the Coalition includes all seven towns within his Senate district. He wants to encourage his towns to work together to solve common problems. Second, he believes that the Coalition effort will provide the South Shore with a strong regional identity. This identity should help to promote new business development, better public services and greater political clout for the South Shore. Finally, I believe that if the Coalition becomes a successful role model for regional government, it would promote his image as a dynamic and innovative State legislator.

The MAPC is the third key actor in the formation of the Coalition. This regional planning agency has a legislative mandate and statutory responsibility to establish, assist and administer sub-regional multi-town organizations. The MAPC has provided strong support and abundant technical assistance for the Coalition. Both of the Coalition's grant applications for state funding were prepared by the MAPC and it continues to provide a link to state and federal resources. There are other reasons why the MAPC supported the development of the Coalition. First, the Coalition is seen as an opportunity to promote their image as a regional organization which is

highly responsive to the needs of its municipal constituents. According to one MAPC staff member, "the MAPC is too large. We do planning work for 101 towns. Creating and assisting sub-regional organizations like the Coalition allows us to reach more towns at one time in our planning efforts."²¹ Second, in exchange for preparing Coalition grants for State funding, the MAPC becomes the subcontractor for the Coalition's planning studies. In this way, they can effectively increase their budget.

3. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The issue of solid waste management is a practical issue with which to evaluate the potential for this coalition form of regional government. Coalition leaders believe that planning and implementing a regional solution to the solid waste problem might give them the "success" which they believe is necessary to promote Coalition efforts and attract additional financial support from the State.

Whether Coalition towns decide to implement a regional waste disposal solution on the South Shore will depend on their perceptions of the trade-offs between implementing purely municipal waste options, and the economic and political incentives for cooperation on a regional level.

This chapter will examine whether the solid waste issue is technically appropriate for a regional solution in the Coalition area. It examines five disposal options and analyzes the technical and financial limitations to implementing purely municipal management options and the political and economic incentives for implementing regional management options.

3.1 The Waste Disposal Problem in Massachusetts

Six million tons of solid waste are produced each year in Massachusetts. Over four-fifths of this solid waste is buried in municipal or municipally-controlled commercial landfills. Within the next five years, it is estimated that 75 percent of the Commonwealth's current landfill capacity will be exhausted.²² As a result, many Massachusetts towns are faced with an immediate requirement to develop new alternatives for solid waste disposal.

Traditionally, waste disposal has been handled on a municipal level. Of the 168 municipal dumps in Massachusetts, only eight accept trash from neighboring communities.²³ Towns are beginning to recognize that purely municipal solutions to the problem of solid waste disposal are technically limited and less cost-effective than regional solutions. The cost of purely municipal options for waste disposal has risen so high that some towns may only be able to afford regional waste disposal solutions. Municipal landfills built to meet 1971 Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE) requirements were built at costs as low as \$8 to 18 per ton of waste processed. These prices did not include the cost of cleaning up pollution or closing the facility when it reached capacity. In contrast, current disposal costs for environmentally sound landfills range from \$25 to \$50 per ton because of new DEQE requirements for liners, leachate pollution controls, and caps for landfill closure.²⁴

Higher costs of municipal waste disposal alternatives provide the financial incentive for Massachusetts communities to explore regional disposal alternatives like shared landfills, recycling, or resource recovery facilities. Furthermore, the Commonwealth is actively promoting regional alternatives for waste disposal in its proposed Comprehensive Solid Waste Disposal legislation. This legislation, expected to pass the Massachusetts Legislature in 1986, would make loans available for cleaning up landfill pollution, closing down old landfills, and constructing new landfills or resource recovery facilities provided that communities open these facilities to regional waste.

3.2 Potential for a Regional Solution

The South Shore is the fastest growing region in Massachusetts. Population growth and industrial development are placing increasing demands on limited waste disposal facilities. Coalition communities currently use two methods of waste disposal: municipal and commercial landfills.²⁵ All of the Coalition towns must find alternative methods of waste disposal sometime within the next 15 years. Exhibit 3.1 lists the disposal methods used by each town, the waste generated per year, and the number of years left in each landfill.

There are two aspects of the waste disposal problem which point to the need for a regional approach to problem identification and solution. The first is potential groundwater pollution. Little is known about the aquifer systems which underlie the Coalition towns and provide much of the region's drinking water. Towns which share aquifers may also share pollution problems. Leachate, pollution created by the movement of rainwater or surface water through one town's landfill, may contaminate the drinking water in neighboring towns. New pollution controls may prevent new leachate problems, but will not eliminate problems due to past disposal practices. Traditionally, water quality studies have been conducted on a municipal, not a regional level.²⁶ Therefore, the Coalition sought and received funding from the DEQE to conduct a water management study for the region, to allow the towns to identify existing and potential pollution problems due to leachate, and to implement strategies to mitigate or prevent contamination of regional water supplies.

EXHIBIT 3.1

WASTE DISPOSAL METHODS AND WASTE GENERATION
IN SOUTH SHORE COALITION TOWNS

TOWN	DISPOSAL METHOD	WASTE GENERATED PER YEAR	YEARS LEFT IN LANDFILL
Hull	Municipal landfill	4,850	0 ***
Hingham	Municipal landfill	12,500	7
Cohasset	Municipal landfill	4,000	3
Duxbury	Commercial contract	8,000	n/a
Scituate	Municipal landfill	15,762	14
Marshfield	Municipal landfill	13,500	12
Rockland	Municipal landfill	7,885	7
Hanover*	Commercial contract	5,702	n/a
Weymouth**	Commercial contract	27,000	n/a
TOTAL		99,199 or 270 tons/day	
Norwell	SEAMASS contract	3,800	

* Hanover has a contract with a commercial hauler

** Weymouth is considering a proposal by Power Recovery Systems Inc. to retrofit their incineration facility which has been closed since DEQE set new requirements for pollution equipment.

*** Hull's landfill closure date has been postponed by the DEQE.

Information taken from: MAPC, Coping with the Solid Waste Crisis, Vol.3, Boston, MA. 1986

The second and most immediate solid waste management issue shared by all Coalition member towns is what to do about the actual disposal of waste when municipal landfills reach capacity or commercial disposal options are unavailable. The waste disposal problem does not necessitate a regional solution, but towns share a common need to find economically and politically viable solutions. The timeframe available to deal with the solid waste problem varies considerably among the Coalition towns. These differences create a risk of later conflict in collectively evaluating and implementing regional waste disposal alternatives in the Coalition region.

Only Marshfield, Scituate, Hingham, and Rockland have landfills with the capacity to accept waste after 1990.²⁷ These communities regard the management of solid waste as an issue of long term concern, but are interested in investigating regional options for waste management. However, they have no immediate requirement to find an acceptable solution.

For the other Coalition towns, the need to implement solid waste alternatives is more urgent. Hull's landfill was scheduled to close when it reached capacity in 1985. DEQE, the State organization which regulates landfills, granted Hull an extension because there were no viable disposal alternatives. Consequently, Hull will be seeking a regional disposal option that can be implemented in the next few years.

Hanover and Duxbury have contracts with commercial haulers. These haulers dispose of waste outside of the region, but the cost of this disposal alternative is rapidly increasing. Duxbury's waste disposal cost increased from \$20 to \$49.95 per ton during renegotiations with commercial contractors in 1986.²⁸

Weymouth is the only Coalition town which has an incinerator for waste disposal. This facility is currently closed since it does not meet the new DEQE emission control standards. As a result, Weymouth contracts with a commercial waste hauler for waste disposal. The facility has been sitting idle for several years, while the town continues to make payments on the loan. Weymouth is presently considering proposals to retrofit the plant.

Norwell is the only Coalition town which has contracted with a resource recovery facility, SEMASS, in Rochester, Massachusetts. This refuse-to-energy plant does not yet have an operator and Norwell is interested in investigating regional waste alternatives in case the SEMASS opening is delayed or the facility never opens.

Planning new waste disposal facilities does not necessarily require regional solutions, but the political and financial incentives offered by the proposed State Solid Waste legislation provide municipalities with a strong case for implementing regional waste disposal options.

3.3 WASTE DISPOSAL OPTIONS

3.3.1 Municipal Landfills

The primary waste disposal option available to municipalities is to build a new landfill or expand an existing one. In the past, this method of waste disposal was the most inexpensive way for a community to dispose of its waste. Towns simply burned or buried the waste on site with no environmental controls. The cost to the town was simply the cost of buying or claiming the disposal site, buying or leasing the collection equipment, and paying disposal personnel. Many

landfills built in wetlands or gravel pits provide easy access for contaminants into groundwater supplies. Environmental clean-up was rarely considered in disposal costs.

Today, the construction of a new landfill requires extra control measures which result in higher disposal costs. The ideal landfill facility is underlaid with an impermeable layer of clay or ultra-heavy gauge vinyl. New refuse is covered by soil daily. The capital cost of building a new 20 acre state-of-the-art landfill that would meet DEQE sanitary requirements costs approximately \$2,500,000.²⁹ Operating costs at this size facility range between \$20 and \$40 per ton. The per ton cost of landfilling waste decreases as the size of the landfill increases. The operating cost of landfilling waste in a facility which accepts 200-250 tons of waste per day is approximately \$16-18 a ton.³⁰ The Coalition towns, exclusive of Norwell, together generate approximately 270 tons of waste per day (See Exhibit 2.1). A regional landfill could meet all regional requirements while offering lower disposal costs than individual municipal facilities.

Successfully expanding an existing landfill is extremely difficult and requires the installation of subsurface liners. This option is not considered practical for Coalition towns since their landfills are already partially filled. More costly leachate collection and diversion systems must be installed along with a pollution monitoring system.

Only one municipality in the metropolitan Boston area, Peabody begins to approach model landfill status. In this case, the State financed major capital improvements on the condition that Peabody would landfill the residual ash from the RESCO Northeast Solid Waste Resource Recovery Plant in North Andover. The State is willing to

provide financial incentives for those municipalities who build facilities which accept solid waste or waste products on a regional basis.

The State, under its proposed solid waste management legislation will provide grants to municipalities for up to 50 percent of the cost of construction for landfills provided that "such landfills serve as regional facilities."³¹ They will also provide "financial assistance to public bodies for the closure of landfills and for the expansion of landfill capacity in an environmentally sound manner" provided that the facilities accept regional waste.³² One of the major purposes of this legislation is to promote regional solutions to both groundwater pollution and waste management problems.

3.3.2 Commercial Landfills

A second option for Coalition towns is to contract with commercial haulers to truck waste out of the region. Weymouth, Hanover and Duxbury all have contracts with commercial landfills. Commercial landfills are subject to the same DEQE requirements as municipalities. As these landfills near capacity, contractors may be unwilling, or unable to accept municipal waste.

An interesting illustration of this commercial landfill problem is the case of Duxbury. The town called for bids from commercial haulers. The bids came in too high and the town refused them. They called for another round of bids, and only one bid was returned. The contractor who was rejected in the first round returned with a higher bid in the second round. The town of Duxbury was forced to accept the new bid of \$49.95 per ton, which was significantly higher than the \$20

a ton they paid previously.

3.3.3 Recycling Facilities

A third disposal option for communities is to build a regional recycling facility which would cut down the waste stream by approximately 15 percent.³³ Currently paper, bottles, and metals are being recycled by Cohasset, Hingham, Scituate and Duxbury. Recycling is voluntary because there are no bylaws in any of the Coalition towns which mandate recycling.

There are precedents for small-scale regional recycling efforts in the Coalition area. Duxbury recycles approximately 330 tons of garbage a year at Scituate's recycling facility.³⁴

There are two major concerns with strictly municipal recycling programs. First, communities still require other methods of disposal for the remaining 85 percent of their waste stream. Second, municipal programs, where recycling is not mandatory, produce low volume and low quality materials, and have difficulty securing markets for their recycled products.³⁵

The Governor's proposed solid waste legislation outlines incentives for large-scale regional recycling efforts. The State will build Material Recovery Facilities (MRF's) in areas where a number of communities, with a combined population of 200,000 or more, have passed mandatory recycling ordinances or bylaws. The Commonwealth will provide up to \$500,000 for the purchase of recycling collection materials and up to \$100,000 for local public education on recycling procedures.³⁶ The BSWM will provide the communities with technical advice and studies on potential markets for recycled products.

Recycling is a possible regional option for the Coalition towns with a combined of approximately 180,022. The Coalition towns would need to involve other towns with a combined population of 20,000 or more, and pass mandatory recycling bylaws in order to qualify for this type of state-financed facility.

3.3.4 Contract with a Resource Recovery Facility

A fourth solid waste disposal option is for municipalities to contract with a Resource Recovery Facility, which uses new technologies to extract energy or other marketable products from waste. Norwell has signed up with the Southeastern Massachusetts (SEMASS) Resource Recovery Facility in Rochester, Massachusetts. None of the other South Shore Coalition towns have signed up with the facility although Cohasset is on the waiting list. But changes in Boston's proposed waste disposal plan could change this situation. The city of Boston has just indicated that it may construct its own waste to energy facility and there may still may be an opportunity for Coalition towns to sign up with SEMASS. Despite excitement over the facility, SEMASS has still not found an operator, yet the tipping fees have gone from a proposed \$12 to \$25 a ton and the facility has not even opened. At a \$25 tipping fee, the resource recovery facility option is not competitive with a regional landfill. One drawback to signing up with SEMASS is that the towns would be required to sign a 27 year contract. Towns fear that if new technologies become available, lowering the cost of other waste disposal option, they will be tied into a \$25 a ton tipping fee with SEMASS. There are also lingering doubts about the opening of the SEMASS facility. Mass Fair

Share has called for a moratorium on the construction of resource recovery plants until the dioxin pollutants given off by the facilities are better understood. The president of SEMASS is leaving the project because "it is going so well." Coalition members have their doubts and have remarked "does anybody ever leave a job because it is going so well?" Norwell is currently considering regional options along with the other Coalition towns in case the facility does not open.

Weymouth is considering proposals to retrofit their incineration plant so that it will meet DEQE emission standards. One proposal under consideration should enable the plant to handle approximately 400 tons of waste per day.³⁸ The Coalition towns, excluding Norwell, generate approximately 270 tons of waste per day, making the SSC a perspective customer for the facility.

3.3.5 Construct a Resource Recovery Plant

A fifth waste disposal option is the construction of a small-scale resource recovery plant. Building costs, insurance costs, and unreliable market returns on recovered products, make this a potentially more expensive alternative for individual municipalities. For this reason, there are no strictly municipal resource recovery facilities in Massachusetts.

Like the recycling option, the success of a resource recovery facility depends on producing quality products and finding reliable markets for them. The tonnage required by these facilities is more than any one town could supply. Of the eight resource recovery

facilities in Massachusetts, the smallest one is the Viacon mass-burn facility which serves the Pittsfield area, and handles 240 tons per day. (See Exhibit 3.2) No Coalition town alone could provide this tonnage, but together they could supply 270 tons of waste per day. This volume of waste makes a mass-burn facility, like the Viacon plant, a viable option in case the Weymouth facility does not open. The Coalition towns could look into larger facilities provided that they involve other towns and can guarantee the additional tonnage.

3.4 Opportunities and Constraints to Implementing a Regional Solution

To build a regional recycling plant, resource recovery facility, or landfill with state money requires that participating towns open their facility to regional waste. State funds are not available for purely municipal disposal options. Even towns that need to repair or expand existing landfills must provide proof that they will accept regional waste.

There are three options for coordinating regional cooperation among towns to plan and implement regional waste disposal alternatives. First, individual municipalities can build and accept sole responsibility for financing, insuring and managing the facility. They can apply for an interest free loan, build the facility and charge user fees to cover some of their costs. Under this scenario, towns do not have to give away any functional home rule, because they control the facility themselves.

Second, a number of municipalities could form a regional refuse disposal district. Forming such a district is a legal proceeding

EXHIBIT 3.2

DESIGN CAPACITY OF RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITIES
IN MASSACHUSETTS

FACILITY/LOCATION OWNER	DESIGN CAPACITY TONS PER DAY
RESCO/SAUGUS SIGNAL	1200
REFUSE FUELS INC. HAVERHILL	1300
NESWC/NORTH ANDOVER SIGNAL	1500
VIACON/PITTSFIELD VIACON RECOVERY SYSTEMS	240
ORFA/SOMERVILLE ORFA	330
SEMASS/ROCHESTER ENERGY ANSWERS	1200
CMRRC/MILLBURY SIGNAL	1500
HERCO/HOLYOAK HERCO EBASCO	800

SOURCE: MAPC, Coping with the Solid Waste Crisis:
A Practical Guide for Local Officials and
Citizens, Volume 1, 1986

which must be approved by the Massachusetts legislature. A group of towns is designated as a body politic with powers to: 1) sue or be sued; 2) purchase or take land by eminent domain for siting the facility; 3) incur debt; 4) issue bonds; and 5) assess membership fees based on tonnage.³⁹ The legislation allows the district to function like a municipality. The provision which allows the region to issue bonds is the greatest incentive for towns to form such a region. Until this legislation was enacted, a single municipality would have had to take sole responsibility for the loan. The greatest drawback of the solid waste district is the provision for eminent domain. The participating towns would have to abide by the decision of the district members and lengthy legal battles might ensue over disagreements. Towns may be sceptical of giving away this functional home-rule power over their towns to a regional organization.

Unlike a voluntary association, a regional solid waste disposal district requires a legal commitment from participants. Despite the fact that this legal option exists, there are few examples of such districts in Massachusetts. Martha's Vineyard has formed a solid waste district to plan for a solid waste disposal facility on the island. Towns on Cape Cod are currently considering this option.

Third, the towns could form voluntary associations or solid waste compacts. Most of the Massachusetts towns currently involved in regional solid waste management planning efforts belong to this type of voluntary association, rather than a solid waste district. It is unclear, however, whether the Governor's proposed solid waste legislation will require towns to form waste disposal districts. The Coalition essentially functions as a solid waste compact now, except that the member towns have not signed any written agreements

expressing their commitment to a regional waste disposal solution.

An example of a solid waste compact is the 128 West Resource Recovery Council (WRRC). This organization, now defunct, invited a contractor to submit a bid on a 1,500 ton per day plant to be located in Plainville. This ten year effort never succeeded for a number of reasons. First, there was only one staff person with the large job of coordinating 40 towns. It was difficult to maintain the interest and support of so many communities over a long period of time. Second, not all of the communities had the same "sense of urgency" to find immediate waste disposal solutions and were hesitant to sign a 20 year contract with the proposed facility. Third, and most important, the compact lost its intended site in Plainville. Although the Plainville Selectmen were supportive, the venture was voted down in the town meeting.

The Northeast Solid Waste Committee (NESWC) is another voluntary compact, which formed to explore the possibility of building a resource recovery facility in Haverill. NESWC decided against forming a solid waste district for two reasons. First, the towns believed that the taxing privileges available through establishment of a solid waste district were unnecessary because the BSWM was already acting as a technical consultant and coordinating the effort. Second, they were competing with other solid waste collectives for tonnage and would be in a better marketing position by not charging membership assessments.

Solid waste management appears to be a highly appropriate issue for resolution on a regional level. First, all of the Coalition towns share a common objective to find a politically and financially acceptable option for waste disposal, despite the fact that they have different timeframes for implementation. Second, the costs of

constructing and operating various regional disposal facility are lower than building and operating several smaller strictly municipal facilities due to economies of scale. Because the Commonwealth provides financial incentives for the construction of regional facilities, a regional solution becomes even less expensive than a municipal approach.

4. EVALUATION

The Coalition itself is a voluntary association of representatives from various towns. It has no authority to establish policy, set standards, collect taxes, or implement any solid waste disposal solution. The power of the Coalition lies in its ability to persuade its constituent municipalities to adopt a concerted approach to solve common problems. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Coalition can be measured by its ability to build consensus among its members and to ensure that regional decisions are implemented by its constituent municipalities.

The objective of the Coalition effort can be likened to the paradigm expressed by Edward Banfield. In his book, Political Influence, he states that the purpose of an organization can be defined as the "conscious concerting of action to achieve a purpose." He writes as follows:

"The actions of many persons, each of whom has independent authority must be concerted for a proposal to be adopted; the proponents of the proposal try to concert these actions by exercising influence- by persuading, deceiving, inveigling, rewarding, punishing, and otherwise inducing; meanwhile the opponents exercise influence either to prevent the actions from being concerted or to concert them on behalf of some alternative proposal which they prefer." 40

To build consensus requires a common purpose; strong leadership; a mutual understanding of each actor's objectives, resources and limitations; and a willingness to work together. Consensus building must be effective at many levels in order to ultimately yield success. One can view the Coalition as having three levels on which members must work toward concerted agreement. At the first level, Coalition

representatives must reach consensus among themselves. Coalition leadership is especially critical at this time to "concert" the activities of the membership. At the second level, Coalition representatives must develop the necessary cooperative support within their own municipalities. Achieving this support involves understanding the needs of their constituents and later selling them on a solution which meets these needs. At the third level, Coalition leaders must obtain support from the many autonomous actors within the State and the MAPC. They must ensure that the Coalition continues to receive sufficient funding and technical support. They must also promote the cause of the Coalition in obtaining approval and funding to implement any solid waste management project.

This chapter evaluates the effectiveness of the Coalition in building consensus on these three levels. It also identifies obstacles that may impede future success. While many of these obstacles or problems are a direct result of the Coalition's efforts to regionally address the issue of solid waste management, they are representative of the types of problems that will face the Coalition in handling other issues. Some of these problems are more generic and not related to the solid waste issue, but are important in evaluating obstacles to Coalition success. Whether the Coalition can overcome these generic and solid waste related obstacles will determine their ultimate success or failure in promoting regional planning and coordinated development in its constituent municipalities.

4.1 First Level of Consensus Building: Coalition Members

At this level, the Coalition has generally been successful in building consensus. They have identified overall issues of mutual concern, appointed a sub-committee to evaluate regional approaches to solid waste management, agreed to assemble a shared data base of solid waste management information and have established a regular schedule of meetings.

4.1.1 Leadership

Much of the Coalition's success up to this point has been a direct result of the dynamic leadership of State Senator Golden and the Coalition Project Manager, Ms. Jean Christensen. According to Roscoe Martin in, Metropolis in Transition, "strong leadership is essential for marshalling concern with respect to a particular problem, which would cause local governments to adapt new solutions to emerging needs."⁴¹ Both State Senator Golden and Ms. Christensen are energetic leaders and closely aware of the politics in the Coalition towns. They were instrumental in generating support for the establishment of the organization and largely responsible for obtaining support from 10 of the 11 towns originally targeted for the participation in the Coalition. As an MAPC employee, Ms. Christensen directed the writing of both grant applications and Senator Golden acquired the necessary financial backing for the Coalition .

4.1.2 Participation

Pembroke is the only town which did not join the Coalition. The town has been highly critical of the MAPC and was unwilling to

associate with an organization which they perceived as a MAPC venture. Despite a strong lobbying effort on the part of State Senator Golden and Ms. Christensen, the Coalition was not successful in securing the participation of Pembroke. The inclusion of Pembroke is not essential in dealing with the issue of solid waste management, since there is no requirement for shared resources. However, if the issue involved sharing of common resource such as in groundwater management, there could be a serious conflict.

The Coalition has not been highly effective in securing strong participation from its members. Coalition meetings rarely have had full attendance despite the fact that towns are supposed to send alternates in the event their regular representatives are unable to attend. At the first meeting of the solid waste subcommittee, only 5 out of 10 towns were represented, including: Duxbury, Marshfield, Scituate, Hanover and Cohasset. Weymouth and Norwell gave no reason for their absense, Hull had a conflict, Hingham never assigned a representative and the Health agent in Rockland was not sure that he had been appointed. In general, absenteeism indicates a communication problem among the towns or a lack of urgency on the issue.

4.1.3 Different Timeframes and Waste Management Options

All of these towns share the goal of finding an acceptable solid waste management solution. However, they do not have a common timeframe nor do they necessarily favor the same options for a solution. These factors will become of critical importance during the identification and evaluation of regional waste management solutions. Roscoe Martin, in his book Metropolis in Transition, suggests that one

of the reasons why towns might adapt to meet changing needs is because they share a similar "sense of urgency" on the issue.⁴² Hull requires an immediate solution, while Scituate can wait another 14 years. Norwell is under contract with SEMASS. Assuming SEMASS becomes operational, Norwell's solid waste management problem will be solved. Weymouth will have a solution if it decides to move ahead with the proposal to upgrade its incinerator.

This conflicting sense of urgency and differences in resources available in each town will affect Coalition efforts in dealing with almost any issue. For example, in the case of transportation, towns close to the MBTA are very interested in better bus links and parking, while coastal towns like Hull are highly interested in improved water transportation to Boston.

4.2 Second Level of Consensus Building: Municipalities

The Coalition is now in the process of beginning to build support among its constituent municipalities. The Coalition leadership recognizes the importance of establishing strong lines of communication between its Coalition representatives and their respective towns. Coalition representatives have been encouraged to keep their towns informed on Coalition activities. Towns have been asked to submit formal letters designating their official representatives to the Coalition. Formal letters will soon be requested to confirm each town's appointed representative to the Solid Waste subcommittee. Many towns have written to the telephone company to express their support for the Coalition's request that the South Shore region remain in the Metropolitan Boston area code (617). The

Coalition appears to be heading in the right direction. It has begun to take actions to create understanding and consensus among the member communities on the potential for a regional approach to solid waste management.

4.2.1 Power and Influence

The power and influence possessed by each Coalition and Solid Waste Subcommittee member within his or her own town will be a key determinant in achieving consensus. The Coalition's institutional structure was originally designed to ensure that only individuals with hometown support and municipal responsibility would be appointed. It was envisioned that all Coalition members would be Selectmen (with alternates from the Planning Boards) and all Solid Waste Subcommittee members would be appointed from local Departments of Public Works or Boards of Health. In this manner, there would be a reduced risk of having Coalition representatives with minimal political influence and municipal involvement.

Town Selectmen appointed to the Coalition would be expected to use their political influence to build consensus among other town leaders and town voters. The Selectman and Selectwomen appointed by the towns of Hull, Cohasset and Hanover are perceived as effective power brokers in their towns and have been active participants in Coalition efforts. Not all of the Coalition members are Selectman as originally envisioned by the Coalition founders. Some towns are not represented by either Selectman or Planning Board officials. For example, the Duxbury Coalition member is a representative to the MAPC. He is not a Selectman and therefore has less opportunity to exert

influence in his town. The Selectmen from Duxbury have not expressed much enthusiasm for the Coalition effort, and unlike Selectmen from other towns, have never attended a Coalition meeting. The Duxbury representative must also work against the opposition created by a recently released town study which recommends that Duxbury not participate in any regional waste disposal efforts.

All appointees to the Solid Waste Subcommittee are members of the Department of Public Works or Boards of Health and are directly involved in their town's efforts to address the solid waste issue. At this time there has not been enough Subcommittee activity to indicate the degree of influence any of these representatives hold within their towns.

Coalition leaders must build consensus among a changing group of representatives who come into and go out of power. The Coalition has already lost one of its most dedicated representatives. The Selectman from Rockland served as the town representative to the MAPC and had a strong commitment to regional government and active participation in the Coalition. Recently he lost his bid for re-election, leaving Rockland without a Coalition representative. The Rockland Standard, Rockland's local newspaper called up Ms. Christensen to say that a new representative had been selected. When she spoke to the new Selectman, he wasn't sure he had been appointed. This potential problem has not directly impacted the Coalition's efforts to address the solid waste issue. However, such obstacles may arise as representation on the Coalition or Solid Waste Subcommittee changes during the development of regional plans for solid waste management.

Another potential problem confronting the Coalition is political infighting. Political conflicts between Selectmen in one town may

have already spilled over into the Coalition. Ms. Christensen believes that Coalition feedback to this town may have been hampered by the tensions between two of its Selectmen. These tensions might explain why this town has not yet appointed a solid waste subcommittee member. She feels that this kind of potential political conflict could affect her efforts to establish strong communications networks within member towns.

4.2.2 Willingness to be a Team Player

Coalition towns must demonstrate their willingness to support a regional waste management program. This support must extend further than appointing a representative to the Coalition. The towns must demonstrate their support through local actions - expressed by the passage of pro-regional waste disposal bylaws.

Already tensions exist in the Coalition due to a proposed warrant article in Marshfield to prohibit regional waste from both municipal and commercial landfills. Concerns were raised at Coalition meetings about Marshfield's willingness to be a "team player" in regional waste disposal activities.

Marshfield's proposed warrant article was a response to conflict over the town's commercial demolition landfill. Currently, the owner accepts demolition material (wood and construction material) from BFI, a disposal company serving the Boston area. He wanted to site another demolition landfill in the town which required special permits from the Marshfield Board of Appeals.

Local residents were furious. They have been repeatedly objecting to the 18 wheeled trucks which rumble down Route 139 and enter residential areas, and the overwhelming smell from the existing

landfill. A more serious concern was that the owner was violating his 25 truckload per day limit for disposal at his existing site. Residents hired a private detective who counted up to 200 trucks of waste or fill entering the landfill area in a given day. A Board of Health member exclaimed "so what if he goes over the limit, he just fills the landfill faster." This attitude was not well received by the townspeople who were concerned about the quality of their neighborhoods and drinking water.

This proposed article was an attempt to block this second landfill by prohibiting demolition material from Boston to be landfilled in Marshfield. Articles like this have serious implications for future Coalition efforts to implement regional waste disposal schemes. The spirit of mutual cooperation among the Coalition towns is threatened and the issue of Marshfield's unwillingness to be a "team player" has been brought up at Coalition meetings. This movement could set a precedent for other towns which could block legal avenues to regional cooperation, and eliminate opportunities to qualify for state grants or loans to finance regional disposal options. The BSWM is providing the Coalition with a technical consultant because they perceive the Coalition as the kind of regional cooperative effort they want to support. If they believe that the Coalition towns are not "team players" they might withdraw this support.

The Coalition Project Manager is a Marshfield resident and therefore in an awkward position. How can a resident of a town which voted down regional cooperative efforts be successful in building the consensus needed to implement regional waste disposal plans?

Fortunately for the Coalition, this Article was voted down at the

Marshfield town meeting, yet the above concerns are still very real. This Article was the most volatile issue addressed at the town meeting and received wide press coverage in the town. Only 400 people out of 12,000 registered voters attended the town meeting to vote on the issue. Ms. Christensen feels the conflict is far from resolved and that there will be continued litigation over the issue. She is also concerned about the amendments to the substitute motion that was passed at the town meeting, which she referred to as "crippling amendments" for the Coalition effort. It is unclear from the motion whether landfills will only be able to accept regional demolition material. If this is the case, this bylaw cuts off the legal avenues for regional waste plans that call for disposal of household garbage. Although a town bylaw can be amended in light of an acceptable regional waste disposal alternative, Ms. Christensen feels that this will be a difficult task given town sentiment.

4.2.3 Public Education

Roscoe Martin, in Metropolis in Transition, suggests that one important condition for the adoption of policy is a public education campaign.⁴³ In general, the Coalition has been successful in getting several of the local newspapers to report on Coalition meetings. The Coalition is presently coordinating a major conference which will address growth related issues facing the South Shore. Solid waste management will be one of the topics that will be addressed. On July 7th, Ms. Christensen will be interviewed on the radio regarding the activities of the Coalition. This type of public exposure should encourage town officials and the general public to begin thinking about a regional approach to solving common problems.

4.3 Third Level of Consensus Building: Autonomous Actors

The Coalition has been highly successful in gaining support among various autonomous actors, such as the MAPC, EOCB, BSWM, and the DEQE. Financial support was obtained through grants from the EOCB and the DEQE, while technical assistance was secured from the MAPC and BSWM.

4.3.1 Leadership and Influence

The success of the Coalition in obtaining support from these various actors is largely due to the leadership and influence provided by State Senator Golden. His position as a State Senator and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Counties affords the Coalition direct access to state resources and the political clout to influence governmental agencies. In addition, he has a personal interest in the Coalition and devotes considerable time and effort to promoting the success of the Coalition.

4.3.2. Conflicts Over Financial Support

Autonomous actors have thus far provided all of the funds for start-up and operation of the Coalition. Such funding is limited and the Coalition must compete for funds with other organizations and state agencies. Consequently, ensuring the backing of these actors will be essential for the continued operation of the Coalition.

One problem became evident during the Coalition's search for financial support. Many organizations viewed the Coalition as a MAPC venture and thus were reluctant to provide assistance. This "identity" problem may have lost the Coalition the additional \$35 thousand requested from the DEQE for the groundwater management

study. Sources inside the DEQE confided to one MAPC staff member that the DEQE perception was that the MAPC had already received sufficient water quality study funding and that this money might be used by the MAPC to fund towns outside of the Coalition.

4.3.3 Competition with Other Regional Agencies

The MAPC views the Coalition's effort as both a boon to their regional planning efforts but also as a potential threat to their own organization. The MAPC has been criticized as having too large a planning area and insufficient budget to provide adequate services for its constituent communities. Regional coalitions are seen as one way to serve more communities for the same amount of resources.

One MAPC official envisions the MAPC as an umbrella organization with responsibility for administering several voluntary municipal associations, like the Coalition. However, the risk of giving too much autonomy to these Coalitions would endanger the role of the MAPC as a regional planning organization. If the MAPC perceives this as a more likely possibility, it might withdraw financial and technical support to the Coalition.

The Coalition may also be in direct competition with the counties at some point in time. Eight Coalition towns are located in Plymouth County, while two others are in Norfolk County. If voters in the counties choose to have counties acquire additional responsibility for regional issues under the new County Charter Reform Bill, conflicts may arise with the Coalition and the MAPC. Norfolk County was interested in addressing solid waste management on the county level and created a plan which was rejected by the State legislature. Plymouth County is presently examining county waste management

options. In order to avoid potential conflicts with County efforts, Ms. Christensen has already met with the Plymouth County Administrator and plans to meet with Norfolk County representatives. The purpose of these meetings is to describe Coalition activities and objectives, and to seek areas of cooperation.

4.3.4 State Support

Roscoe Martin, in Metropolis in Transition, writes that "despite home-rule, local governments are the legal creatures of the state. Every action taken by a local government is taken under a grant of power by the state."⁴⁴ Building or modifying waste disposal facilities of any kind requires DEQE approval. Obtaining DEQE funds for modifying or building waste disposal facilities requires a guarantee that the facility will accept regional waste. If the Coalition towns opt for a regional waste disposal option, they must actively promote themselves as a good region for investment. The Coalition has actively sought and received the assistance of the BSWM representative to the South Shore. She has attended both Solid Waste Disposal Subcommittee meetings and a number of general Coalition meetings. The Coalition has been successful in developing and maintaining this link with the BSWM which is essential for promoting the South Shore as a logical region for State funding. As a regional effort, the Coalition is tied to State government. This is also true in most of the major issue areas. In cases where the State plays a role in permitting or funding, the Coalition must seek to work establish good working relationships with the concerned State agency, to ensure that local needs are well understood and to promote regional efforts or direct State actions.

In general, the Coalition effort itself is dependent on State funding. The Coalition must promote itself as an effective form of regional government in order to ensure that it receives continued funding.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

One appropriate time for evaluating and making recommendations on a project, program or organization is during its early development. At this pliable stage, there is great latitude for rethinking goals and objectives, and redirecting plans for implementation. As stated by Weiss, in Evaluation Research Methods: A Basic Guide, "program managers will often want to know which kinds of modifications will make the program work better."⁴⁵ I hope that these recommendations will help to make the Coalition more effective in its efforts.

Implementation of regional waste alternatives depends on matching the size of the region involved with the scale of the facility. If larger regions are necessary, the Coalition must either expand its membership or involve itself in larger waste disposal efforts. It is recommended that the Coalition take the following actions:

- Assess which disposal options are favored by each town. Determine each town's future waste stream projections, and estimate the size of the waste disposal region.
- Target a number of logical South Shore communities and identify their disposal problems and waste projections, in preparation for expanding the Coalition waste disposal region, if necessary.
- Inform targeted communities of Coalition waste disposal sub-committee activities and findings by letter or personal contacts with their Health or DPW officials, so that when the Coalition is ready to move, they can be mobilized quickly for an expanded regional effort.

- Assist the town of Weymouth evaluate proposals to retrofit their incineration facility. Explore sources of funding for this venture on the basis that it will be used as a disposal facility for Coalition towns.

- Appoint Coalition members to run for seats on the County Charter Commissions in both Norfolk and Plymouth Counties to establish communications links with these regional organizations.

- Inform Norfolk and Plymouth Counties of Coalition activities and extend invitations to attend Coalition meetings, so that the counties can be used to identify other towns interested in regional disposal efforts.

- Maintain Contact with the BSWM representative to the South Shore and lobby this agency to consider the Coalition area as a logical region for a state-sponsored solid waste disposal facility.

- Maintain contact with the BSWM to determine which Massachusetts towns have been awarded grants for disposal facilities. Since these towns have guaranteed to open their disposal facilities to regional waste, the Coalition should investigate the possibility of disposing of their solid waste in these towns, if the transportation and disposal costs are less than they are paying now.

The success of the Coalition in implementing a regional waste disposal solution will depend on whether it can convince local member towns to relinquish the idea of purely municipal solutions to disposal problems and accept the legal and institutional arrangements involved with implementing regional disposal options. This change requires that Coalition towns: 1) Express a willingness to work together to evaluate regional waste disposal solutions; 2) do not prohibit town involvement in regional waste disposal activities; and 3) make the legal commitments necessary to facilitate regional efforts.

Recommendations for Coalition actions in this area include:

- Maintain constant contact with town Committee representatives and Sub-committee representatives to encourage attendance. The Coalition is small enough that personal diplomacy should be effective in encouraging this participation.
- Encourage Coalition Project Manager to attend Selectmen's meetings in member towns as appropriate to stimulate local interest in Coalition activities.

To encourage towns to accept regional solutions to waste disposal problems, the following public education steps are recommended:

- Conduct economic analysis to illustrate the savings to each community of choosing regional disposal options over purely municipal options, including the identification of state money available for regional facilities, and savings due to economy of scale.
- Disseminate the results of this evaluation via the local media, including newspaper editorials and cable television. Consider sending press releases or starting a Coalition column in local newspapers and encourage cable television coverage of Coalition meetings.
- Request presentations from the BSWM representative or the MAPC Solid Waste Planner to local towns on the savings associated with various regional waste disposal alternatives including an explanation of the State's requirements for allocation of waste disposal grants or loans.

The Coalition will not undertake efforts to implement regional waste disposal options unless they understand the breadth of the legal commitment which they must make to each other. To gain this legal understanding, the Coalition should:

- Invite the BSWM lawyer or legal representative to a Coalition meeting to discuss the legal

requirements of the new legislation.

- Request volunteer help, or hire a local attorney to review the complexities of legal arrangements for regional cooperation in waste disposal implementation.
- Investigate the experiences of NESWC, and the Route 128 Solid Waste compacts. Review legal commitments made among the member communities.

The role that the Coalition will play in implementing waste disposal solutions is dependent on securing continued financing. The following actions are recommended:

- Lobby local local Senators for fund RPAs in the Senate Budget. Member towns might send letters of support to their Senators provided that they obtain a guarantee from the MAPC that an agreed upon portion of the \$250,000 will go to the Coalition effort.
- Approach member towns for voluntary contributions only after the Coalition has had a "planning success" or as a last resort.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF VOLUNTARY MUNICIPAL COALITION FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

Twenty-eight of the MAPC's 101 towns are currently involved in three sub-regional coalition efforts. It seems likely that if these efforts are even marginally successful in providing economic or other benefits to towns which they could not gain independently, more municipalities will follow suite.

The solid waste issue examined in this case study, is just one of the issues a coalition might choose to address. The nature of other problems or issues like groundwater assessment, may require the participation of towns other than those associated with a specific coalition area. Coalitions may find that they need to expand or contract their coalition region to accommodate various issues, thereby creating the same patchwork of single purpose districts which plague Massachusetts regional government at the present time.

The MAPC might take on the role of orchestrating flexible coalition building, identifying the most appropriate regions for addressing each issue, and encouraging coalitions to redefine their regions in the light of emerging issues. This seems like an unlikely option, because the MAPC would be placed in the same position that the State currently finds itself in - administering a jurisdictional nightmare. More importantly, the strengths of the coalition movement is that it is perceived as a local cooperative effort, which towns have undertaken voluntarily. Administrative control by the MAPC would be considered a threat to coalition independence.

Juggling several different coalition issue regions would also be an administrative nightmare for coalition leaders. Consensus building would be more difficult, with a myraid of different actors constantly entering into coalition dynamics. A coalition might find itself spread too thin for an organization with limited resources and a possible participation problem.

It seems more likely that coalitions will concentrate on a few critical issues which are directly relevant to their specific region, adjusting their borders only when the involvement of other municipalities is absolutely necessary for solving an "urgent" regional problem.

It is too early to determine whether the coalition form of regional government will become a successful or lasting institution in Massachusetts. I believe that the mechanism created for encouraging and maintaining dialogue among neighboring towns is the most important aspect of this type of government. Establishing this communication network as an ongoing institution is a necessary first step for neighboring communities to collectively address regional issues. As long as coalition towns continue to identify and discuss common problems, there will always be an opportunity for cooperative effort to solve these problems. It is for these reasons that I support the continued formation and growth of organizations like the South Shore Coalition.

FOOTNOTES

1. **Massachusetts Records**, Volume 4, Part 2, 1662.
2. **Massachusetts Office of State Planning, Policy Perspectives on Regional Government in Massachusetts**, Boston, MA: November, 1975.
3. Ibid.
4. Cahill, Kevin P. **County Government in Massachusetts- Present Services and Future Plans**, State Senate Committee on Counties, Boston MA: November, 1985.
5. **Massachusetts Office of State Planning, Policy Perspectives on Regional Government in Massachusetts**, Boston, MA: November, 1975.
6. Some counties in Massachusetts have been more effective than others in delivering services to their constituent towns. Several counties provide some degree of planning services, human services and transportation services.
7. **Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Committee on Regional Organization, Report on Regional Organization**, MAPC, Boston, MA: September 1980.
8. **Massachusetts Office of State Planning, Policy Perspectives on Regional Government in Massachusetts**, Boston, MA: November, 1975.
9. Ibid.
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