



County-Wide Shared Services Plan

Informed Decisions, Measurable Results

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Contents

- I. **Executive Summary**..... 4
- II. **Part I Informed Decisions** 5
 - Overview 5
 - Introduction..... 5
 - Plan Committee 5
 - Timeline and Process 5
 - Initial Analysis 6
 - Approach..... 6
 - County 6
 - Towns 7
 - Villages..... 8
 - Schools..... 9
 - Combined Municipal Spending..... 9
 - Income..... 10
 - Opportunity Analysis 10
- III. **Part II Measurable Results**..... 12
 - Document and Records Storage..... 12
 - Highway Maintenance..... 13
 - Justice Courts..... 15
- IV. **Conclusion** 17

2017 County-Wide Shared Services Initiative- Participating Entities

Authorized Representative

Towns of

ARCADIA	Chuck Verkey
BUTLER	Dave Spickerman
GALEN	Steve Groat
HURON	Laurie Crane
LYONS	Brian Manktelow
MACEDON	Sandy Pagano
MARION	Monica Deyo
ONTARIO	John Smith
PALMYRA	Ken Miller
ROSE	Kenan Baldrige
SAVANNAH	Mike Kolczynski
SODUS	Steve LeRoy
WALWORTH	Patty Marini
WILLIAMSON	Tony Verno
WOLCOTT	Lynn Chatfield

Villages of

CLYDE	Paul Ferindino
NEWARK	Jonathan Taylor
SODUS	David Englert
SODUS PT	Chris Tertinek
WOLCOTT	Christopher Henner

School District

WILLIAMSON	Greg Mucaluso
NEWARK	Matt Cook

Local Government Property Taxes

County of Wayne	\$37,737,048
Town of Arcadia	\$1,467,377
Town of Butler	\$428,184
Town of Galen	\$610,666
Town of Huron	\$820,934
Town of Lyons	\$1,103,870
Town of Macedon	\$2,320,893
Town of Marion	\$1,159,106
Town of Ontario	\$2,831,368
Town of Palmyra	\$1,391,736
Town of Rose	\$682,703
Town of Savannah	\$358,648
Town of Sodus	\$1,074,460
Town of Walworth	\$1,888,907
Town of Williamson	\$1,986,551
Town of Wolcott	\$527,949
Village of Clyde	\$915,730
Village of Newark	\$4,098,122
Village of Sodus	\$555,603
Village of Sodus Point	\$557,484
Village of Wolcott	\$535,491
Newark Central School District	\$9,497,428
Williamson Central School District	\$8,115,972

Total **\$80,666,230**

County	\$37,737,048
Towns	\$18,653,352
Villages	\$8,297,541
School Districts	\$86,955,304
Total Property Tax Levy	\$113,906,197

Total Anticipated Savings	2018	2019	2020+
Digital Record Storage	\$49,853	\$49,853	\$49,853
Highway Consolidation	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
District Courts	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*
TOTAL	\$49,853	\$49,853	\$49,853¹

	2018	2019	2020+
Anticipated Savings to the Taxpayer	0.062%	0.062%	0.062%
Anticipated Savings to the Average Taxpayer	\$0.72	\$0.72	\$0.72
Anticipated Savings to the Average Homeowner	\$1.14	\$1.14	\$1.14
Anticipated Savings to the Average Business	\$0.48	\$0.48	\$0.48

Towns	Authorized Representative	Vote
Arcadia	Chuck Verkey	yes
Butler	Dave Spickerman	yes
Galen	Steve Groat	yes
Huron	Laurie Crane	yes
Lyons	Brian Manktelow	yes
Macedon	Sandy Pagano	yes
Marion	Monica Deyo	yes
Ontario	John Smith	yes
Palmyra	Ken Miller	yes
Rose	Kenan Baldrige	yes
Savannah	Mike Kolczynski	yes
Sodus	Steve LeRoy	yes
Walworth	Patti Marini	yes
Williamson	Anthony Verno	yes
Wolcott	Lynn Chatfield	yes

Villages	Authorized Representative	Vote
Clyde	Paul Ferindino	absent for vote
Newark	Jonathan Taylor	absent for vote
Sodus	David Englert	yes
Sodus Pt	Chris Tertinek	yes
Wolcott	Christopher Henner	absent for vote

School Districts	Authorized Representative	Vote
Williamson	Greg Mucaluso	absent for vote
Newark	Matt Cook	absent for vote

¹ Anticipated savings are an estimate and only include savings from Digital Record Storage not including new facility cost avoidance.

Executive Summary

Wayne County Administrator Rick House initiated the County Shared Services Plan at the direction of the Governor to evaluate opportunities to consolidate services between the County and towns in areas deemed reasonable, achievable, and logical. Discussions with the budget office, county planning staff, and board of supervisors led the County to an overall strategy of implementing an annual review of shared service opportunities moving forward and development of strategies not immediately implementable.

In order to initiate evaluation of opportunities a review of County, Town, Village, and School District budgets was completed to frame current spending patterns and their overall impact on allocation of resources. The evaluation was intended to identify similar spending patterns and opportunities for County-wide shared services. In addition to budget review, a survey of all Towns and Villages was completed to identify local priorities, and to gather information on services already being shared between local governments. The survey identified an interest in highway service and justice court sharing of services.

In addition the County had already initiated a digital record storage plan based on successes in Tompkins County and the County Clerks desire to create a more sustainable, user friendly, and efficient method of maintaining the growing number of records required to be maintained by the County.

Given the results of the budget analysis, survey, and already initiated projects, the plan focuses on these three strategies in evaluating initial opportunities. While none of these are expected to be implemented County-wide immediately, or result in substantial savings, opportunities to increase efficient delivery of services were made a priority and evaluated for future implementation.

This plan is intended to provide an initial evaluation and recommendations for further analysis moving forward. It is not a complete plan for full implementation, with particular implementation strategies being developed and implemented as time and resources allow.

As stated previously, the County intends to conduct this review and discussion annually to continue to refine approaches to shared services. This process will lead to well thought out, measurable, impactful implementation of strategies that will lead to a more efficient operation of County and local government services.

Part I Informed Decisions

Overview

Introduction

On May 4th 2018 the Governor signed legislation announced an initiative to reduce property taxes requires counties to assemble local governments to find efficiencies for real, recurring taxpayer savings. The County-Wide Shared Services Initiative, included in the enacted FY 2018 Budget, requires county officials to develop localized plans that find property tax savings by coordinating and eliminating duplicative services and propose coordinated services to enhance purchasing power.

The initiative establishes a shared services panel in each county, which is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of that county who is the county executive, county manager, county administrator, the chair of the county legislature or chair of the board of supervisors. The CEO shall chair the panel and invite each local government to join the panel which must consist of the mayor of every city or village and the supervisor of every town within the county. School districts, BOCES, and special improvement districts within the county are encouraged to participate as additional panel members.

Working together, the panels will develop a county-wide shared service property tax savings plan that creates actual and demonstrable property tax savings.

Plan Committee

Wayne County's Chief Executive Officer is the County Administrator, Rick House, who is chairing the committee and leading the effort. Director of Economic Development and Planning is assisting in development of the plan including evaluation of existing services and recommendations with assistance from numerous additional departments including but not limited to the Budget Department, IT Services, Real Property Tax, Buildings and Grounds, Highway, and Human Resources.

All fifteen (15) Town Supervisors in Wayne County are participating in the committee, as well as the Villages of Clyde, Newark, and Sodus Point. The Williamson Central School District and the CSEA have also contributed to the discussion and analysis.

Timeline and Process

The committee was required to submit a draft plan for submission to the County legislative body no later than August 1, 2017. Between the initiation of the process and submission of the draft plan, the committee met twice to review initial analysis, refine focus areas, review progress, and identify areas for future study.

Once formally accepted, there were several public hearings to provide opportunities for public input and modification of the plan based on feedback from the community.

Prior to final submission on or before September 15th a majority vote of the Panel is required for approval of the Plan. Each Panel Member must state in writing the reason for his or her vote. However, prior to the vote

each member of the Panel may remove any proposed action that affects their local government. Written notice of the removal will be provided to the CEO prior to the Panel-wide vote.

Once finalized, the CEO shall submit to the Director of the Division of the Budget a certification of the Plan and its property tax savings plan and disseminate the Plan to residents of the county in a concise, clear, and coherent manner using words with common and everyday meanings.

Initial Analysis

Approach

The Counties approach to an evaluation of shared service opportunities started with an initial evaluation of spending patterns at each level of local government as well as school districts, including an aggregation of Town and Village spending, and evaluation of aggregated spending at all levels of local government within the County. Spending Categories analyzed include General Government, Public Safety, Health, Transportation, Social Services, Economic Development, Culture and Recreation, Community Services, Utilities, Sanitation, Employee Benefits, and Debt Service.

County

Wayne County consists of fifteen (15) Towns, seven (7) Villages, eleven (11) School Districts, and two (2) Special Purpose units of government². The County’s population as of the 2010 Census was 93,772 and consists of 603.8 square miles. Annual Real Property Tax Collection in 2015 was \$37,737,048. Additional revenue includes \$41,119,703 in sales tax, as well as several other local revenues sources with total revenues in 2015 totaling ~\$148,801,000³. Figure I shows a breakdown of County Government spending in 2015.

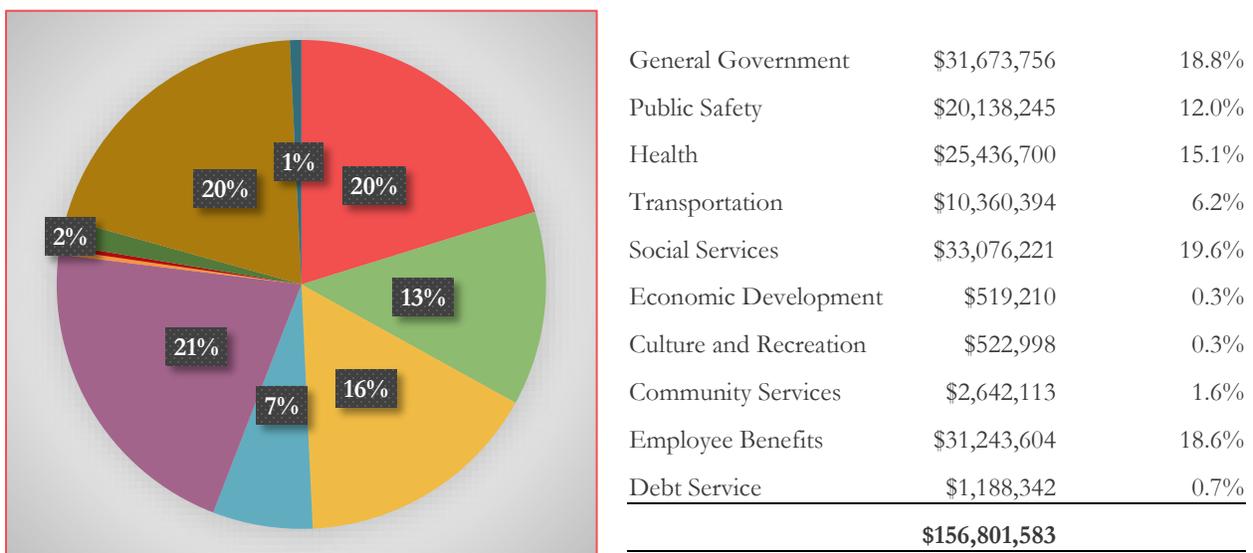


Figure I: County Spending

² For purposes of this study the two special units, Soil and Water Conservation District and the Sewer and Water Authority were not included in the initial analysis.

³ Local Revenue does not include state and federal aid (~\$36 million)

Social Services was the largest expense to the County in 2015 comprising 19.6% of total County spending, 72% of which was Medicaid and Social Service administration. General government and employee benefits are a close second and third, with public safety and health making up a substantial part of the remaining expenses. Total County expenditures for 2015 were ~\$147,642,000.

Social Services, which includes Social Service Administration and Medicaid, is the County's highest expense totaling nearly 20% of total expenditures. All New York counties currently pay 13% of the costs for Medicaid, the state-federal health care plan for the poor and lower middle class. Shifting those Medicaid costs onto the state would eliminate the largest driver of county property taxes.

"To put that in perspective, 95 percent of every dime taxpayers pay in County property taxes has gone to cover a bill that was always supposed to be paid for by the state,"

- Erie County Comptroller Stefan I. Mychajliw

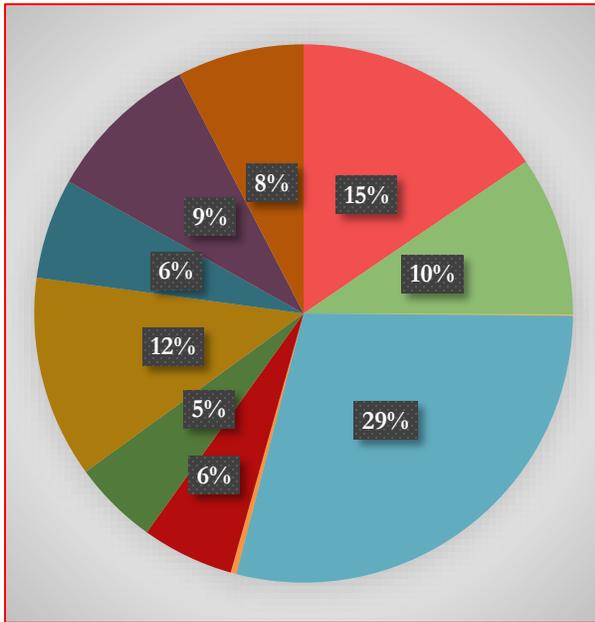
In Wayne County 83 percent County property taxes are utilized to cover Medicaid expenses⁴. In June 2017 Senate Republicans Chris Collins, R-Clarence and Rep. John Faso, R-Kinderhook revealed a health care reform bill that includes a provision that bars the state from charging upstate counties for a share of the cost of Medicaid. While any change wouldn't go into effect until at least 2020, and the Bill is tied to larger changes to federal healthcare law, relief from this expense could have a significant impact on County property taxes across the state.

General Government is the second highest expense to County Government, however approximately \$21,000,000 of the \$31,000,000 in expenses is made up of Sales Tax distribution to Towns and the School Districts. Transpiration costs ranked 6th among overall spending, consisting mainly of highway maintenance. The County Highway Department maintains 405 miles of paved road equating to an average highway maintenance expense of \$22,000/mile.

Towns

The fifteen (15) Towns in Wayne County include Arcadia, Butler, Galen, Huron, Lyons, Macedon, Marion, Ontario, Palmyra, Rose, Savannah, Sodus, Walworth, Williamson, and Wolcott. Annual Real Property Tax Collection at the Town level in 2015 was approximately \$18,653,000. Additional revenue includes \$3,858,000 in sales tax distribution, as well as several other revenue sources including Transportation charges and Interest income, with total local revenues just over \$41,602,000. As illustrated in Figure II, Individual Town expenditures in 2015 ranged from approximately \$833,000 to \$6,261,000, with per capita expenditures ranging from \$195 to \$690. It is important to note that towns with higher expenditures provide additional services including sewer, garbage, and landfill expenses all of which fall in the sanitation category. Total Town expenditures in 2015 were approximately \$40,425,000. The highest expense to Towns as an aggregate are Highway Maintenance totaling almost 29% of all expenditures.

⁴ After taking into account distribution of property taxes to Towns and School Districts



General Government	\$6,118,339	15.5%
Public Safety	\$3,794,451	9.6%
Health	\$32,606	0.1%
Transportation	\$11,428,797	28.9%
Economic Development	\$135,702	0.3%
Culture and Recreation	\$2,183,012	5.5%
Community Services	\$2,020,569	5.1%
Utilities	\$4,803,005	12.1%
Sanitation	\$2,382,730	6.0%
Employee Benefits	\$3,655,628	9.2%
Debt Service	\$3,010,398	7.6%
\$39,565,237		

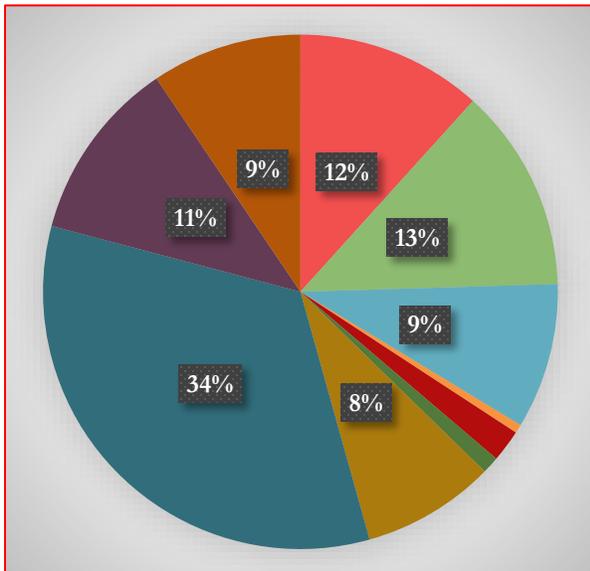
Figure II: Town Spending

General Government was second and Utilities, which is made up entirely of water costs, was third. Highway maintenance is one of three priority areas identified as a focus for shared service opportunities discussed later in this report.

Villages

There are seven (7) Villages in Wayne County with a population of 19,762, or 21% of the total population of the County. The recent dissolution of the Village of Macedon had a small impact on this, with just over 1500 former Village residents. Newark is by far the largest Village, with over 9,000 residents and \$9.5 million in local revenues.

As illustrated in figure III, approximately one-third of all Village spending across the County goes to sewer charges. Public Safety is the second highest expense, with 85% of costs associated with Police protection.



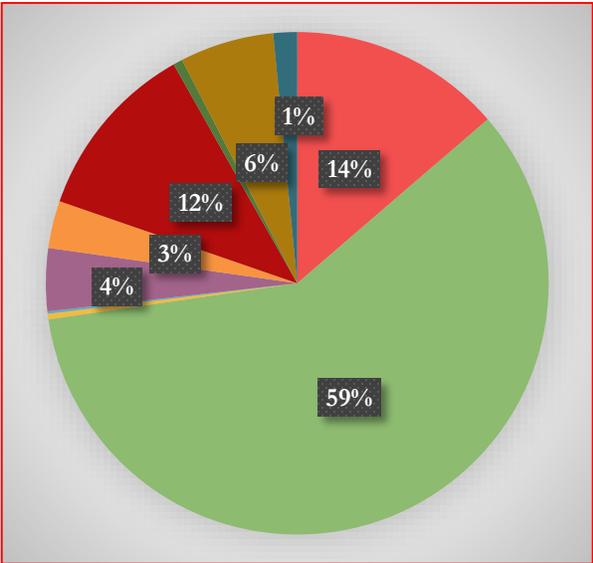
General Government	\$3,157,057	11.6%
Public Safety	\$3,461,023	12.8%
Transportation	\$2,471,513	9.1%
Economic Development	\$146,774	0.5%
Culture and Recreation	\$544,844	2.0%
Community Services	\$289,068	1.1%
Utilities	\$2,256,595	8.3%
Sanitation	\$9,031,519	33.3%
Employee Benefits	\$3,085,331	11.4%
Debt Service	\$2,549,304	9.4%
\$26,993,028		

Figure III: Village Spending

Schools

There are eleven (11) school districts in Wayne County with a combined annual expenditures of \$328,109,565 in 2016. Wayne Central and Newark central are the two highest, both around \$47 million and combined accounting for nearly 30% of total spending and 31% of total enrollment. Total enrollment in 2016 was 13,761 with combined spending of \$328,109,565 or \$23,843 per student.

For purposes of this study School District spending was reviewed, mainly to identify areas our local government and school districts share that may provide opportunities for savings.



General Government	\$44,486,175	14%
Education	\$187,704,570	58%
Transportation	\$1,179,306	0%
Community Services	\$501,745	0%
Retirement	\$13,121,900	4%
Social Security	\$9,895,488	3%
Medical Insurance	\$37,489,366	11%
Workers Comp	\$1,947,666	1%
Debt Service	\$19,659,239	6%
Interest	\$4,971,441	2%
\$320,956,896		

Figure IV: Schools Spending

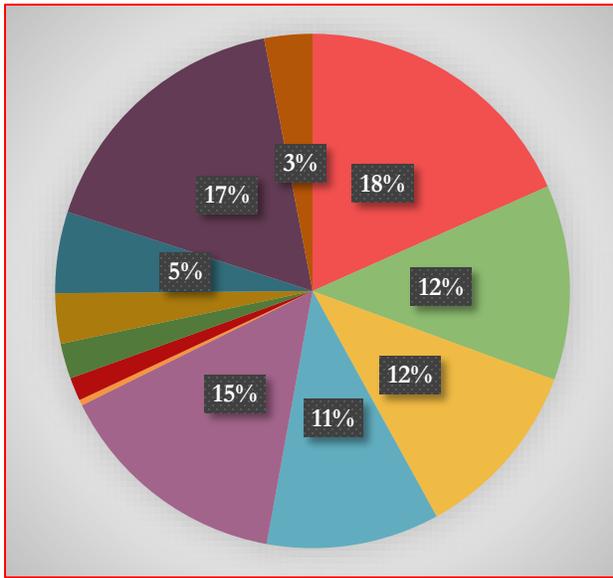
Education, not surprisingly, is by far the highest expense to schools. Education spending categories include instruction, pupil services, education transportation, and student activities. Medical Insurance and Debt service were two unexpected spending areas ranking third and fourth respectively.

Combined Municipal Spending

Analysis of the combined municipal spending at the County, Town, and Village provides another way to review local government spending patterns.

When combining all municipal spending, we see that, outside general government expenses, social services still accounts for 14% of total government spending, a costs borne entirely by the County. Transportation, public safety, and health all account for significant combined expenses.

General government and employee benefits are the highest expense at the combined level, as well as the Town level. General Government consist mainly of operations and administration at the Town level (93%), but only 53% at the County level, with nearly 40% accounting for the redistribution of sales tax.



General Government	\$40,949,152	17.4%
Public Safety	\$27,393,719	11.6%
Health	\$25,469,306	10.8%
Transportation	\$24,260,704	10.3%
Social Services	\$33,076,221	14.0%
Economic Development	\$801,686	0.3%
Culture and Recreation	\$3,250,854	1.4%
Community Services	\$4,951,750	2.1%
Utilities	\$7,059,600	3.0%
Sanitation	\$11,414,249	4.8%
Employee Benefits	\$37,984,563	16.1%
Debt Service	\$6,748,044	2.9%
\$223,359,848		

Figure IV: Combined Municipal Spending

Employee benefits consists mainly of medical insurance at the County level, as well as the town level, as well as a significant contribution to the State retirement system.

While these costs consist of a significant percentage of expenses, this analysis decidedly focused on potential efficiencies determined to be decidedly more achievable, as discussed in the upcoming sections.

Income

An analysis of expenses would be incomplete without a reference to income sources. At the County level, sales and property tax are the two main sources of revenue totaling nearly \$79 million in 2016, or approximately 59% of total local revenues. The same can be said for the Town level, with 61% of total revenues coming from sales and property taxes. However, 50% of total town local revenues came from real property taxes, suggesting they are significantly reliant on property taxes as a source of income, especially when compared to the County with 28% of income coming from real property taxes.

The sensitivity of local government’s reliance on real property taxes as a sources of income makes it increasingly difficult to identify areas where savings can have significant impacts on required revenues to cover operations.

Opportunity Analysis

On June 12th 2017 the Shared Services panel gathered to review data and attempt to prioritize areas for further analysis. In the weeks leading up to the meeting a survey was distributed to all of the panel members and collected in an effort to identify areas of interest and begin to prioritize categories to focus additional study.

Based on initial review of spending and income, as well as significant discussion on priorities and opportunities, it was decided to focus on areas considered the “low hanging fruit” where either non-formal arrangements are already in place like highway maintenance, and areas where high-level analysis was started, or where successes or precedence was already established in other areas of the state.

Of the areas discussed it was decided to focus on three main areas including records Storage, Justice Courts, and Highway Maintenance. Additional areas of interest identified for future study include Real Property Tax Services and Assessment, purchasing, human resources and payroll.

Part II Measurable Results

Document and Records Storage

Public records are essential to the administration of local government. Public records contain information which allows government programs to function, provides officials with a basis for making decisions, and ensures continuity with past operations. Public records document the legal responsibility of government, protect the rights of citizens, and provide citizens with a means of monitoring government programs and measuring the performance of public officials. Local government records also reflect the historical development of the government and of the community it serves. Such records need to be systematically managed to ensure ready access to vital information and to promote the efficient and economical operation of government.

In the development of records management programs, it is often helpful to segregate active records (those that need to be filed for easy retrieval and frequent use) from inactive records (those that have served the immediate purpose of their creation and are no longer needed frequently). Local governments lacking sufficient storage space for their inactive records may wish to consider alternatives including digital storage.

Digital records storage can provide numerous benefits including:

- Centralize the entire lifecycle of government records from creation to final disposition
- Increase transparency with digital public records
- Create cost-effective shared services
- Consistent framework to support compliance
- Risk mitigation through disaster recovery capabilities
- Ability for different departments and system members to leverage the cumulative accomplishments of their colleagues
- Internal and remote access to electronic documents
- Reduced printing and physical paperwork, minimizing requirements for physical file space

Wayne County and local governments are required to maintain records of information in (92) ninety-two categories, with (874) eight hundred and seventy four individual categories, including (223) two hundred and twenty three categories requiring potentially permanent storage⁵.

Nearly all categories maintained by the County are maintained by Towns, with some exceptions dependent upon the services provided in each local jurisdiction. It is clear that current levels of records storage and the increasing amount of information required to be maintained over time is unsustainable given current practices. Digital storage of records can have a dramatic impact on existing and future costs and is scalable as a service to all local governments.

In 2015 Tompkins County, NY implemented the Tompkins Shared Services Electronic Records Repository (TSSERR), a Laserfiche-powered digital archive that is hosted by the county and serves 19 municipalities

⁵ Records that governments must keep permanently to meet fiscal, legal, or administrative needs of the government or which the government retains because they contain historically significant information. Local officials need to appraise records with nonpermanent retention periods for potential research or historical value before destroying them.

including the City of Ithaca. This shared service approach has been especially cost effective for the county's taxpayers. Rather than having the different municipalities owning and supporting their own content management systems, each municipality could use the system managed by the County. This has reduced support maintenance costs and allowed participating municipalities to focus their resources elsewhere.

Over the past year the Wayne County IT and Clerks Offices have been pursuing a similar project utilizing the same system implemented in Tompkins County. Over 25% of all stored municipal records are associated with the County Clerk's office, with the second highest percentage associated with Family Court at 15% of all records.

This project essentially evolved out of a proactive approach to a problem with long term storage anticipated in the next 5-10 years. In general the project involves digitization of County records, and initial inclusion of several towns, with the capacity to extend service to all of the County towns, as well as the Villages, School districts, and BOCES. The initial capital investment on the County side is \$160,000 which mainly involves server storage and software. Anticipated initial costs per town are estimated at \$3,000-\$6,000 depending on availability of existing scanning technology, with ongoing expenses of around \$1500 a year.

Digital records storage in and of itself, does not provide a significant savings that could impact the Real Property tax rate in Wayne County. However, avoided future facility costs can be substantial (especially at the County level). Anticipated storage facility costs at the County level are approximately \$5,000,000. Given this potential expense and the initial investment moving forward is fiscally sound and is anticipated to provide substantial savings in upcoming years.

Based on this evaluation, the low costs of technology, and potential future facility costs, we are recommending moving forward with digitization at the County level, with integration of Towns over the next several years. While the overall goal of costs savings may not be significant enough to lower property taxes, the long term impact on efficiency, resiliency, and access to information provide enough benefits to pursue implementation at the County level.

Highway Maintenance

Highway and road maintenance services are significant responsibility at every level of government. New York State currently spends about \$15 billion annually in public funds and direct user charges to operate, maintain and improve transportation. The Wayne Highway Department has a crew of (52) and maintains (402) centerline miles of paved roads. The Towns in Wayne County maintain approximately (849) centerline miles of road, and the villages maintain approximately (104) centerline miles of road.

The County, Towns, and Villages in Wayne County spend a combined \$24 million a year to maintain approximately 1,354 center-line miles of roads. Services provided include street sweeping, snow and ice removal, road construction and maintenance, bridge maintenance, mowing, and culvert and ditch

maintenance. Transportation expenditures are the number one expense at the town level, comprising of nearly 29% of total annual expenditures⁶.

A common way to review highway maintenance costs are costs per mile and costs per capita. Table 2 shows those costs at the County, Town, and Village level.

Table 1: Highway Costs

	Costs	Miles	Cost/Mile	Cost/Capita
County	\$8,754,845	402	\$21,774	\$96
Towns	\$11,891,051	849	\$14,007	\$142
Villages	\$2,155,704	104	\$20,774	\$104

It is important to keep in mind that types of highway services and levels of service vary between municipalities. The pavement type (asphalt, oil and stone, gravel) impacts maintenance expenditures, equipment and personnel required.

In 2010 Chemung County took a deep dive into Highway Department shared services with completion of a comprehensive study County-wide including towns and Villages. The analysis was very comprehensive and included personnel, facilities, and machinery and equipment, and expenditures.

By far, road/street maintenance was the largest expenditure category among municipalities with the estimated median share of highway expenditures attributable to ~43%. Highway machinery at a median share of highway expenditures of 10% was a distant second. Furthermore, contractual expenditures comprised a significant type of expenditure at a median share of highway expenditure of 46% between 2004 and 2008.

Table 2: Chemung County Costs

Type of Expenditure	Average % of Overall Expenditure
Personnel	27.80%
Equipment and Capital	34.80%
Contractual	37.50%
Type of Service	
Highway Administration	3%
Road/Street Maintenance	43%
Permanent Improvements	13%
Snow Removal	10%
Highway Machinery	10%
Other	20%

⁶ Town Expenditures- Figure 2

In total the study indicated the potential for economies of scale through an alternative services delivery model where highway machinery and highway maintenance are shared to achieve cost savings and ultimately tax savings for residents. Estimated saving from functional consolidation of services was estimated to be \$2.6-\$2.9 million annually. Equipment provided the largest portion of that savings at nearly 68% of overall savings.

A comparison between Chemung County and Wayne County show the County maintains a relatively competitive costs per mile and and per capita when compared to Chemung and towns and Villages within.

Table 3: Highway Costs Comparison

		Cost/Mile	Cost/Capita
County	Chemung	\$37,636	\$104
County	Wayne	\$21,774	\$96
Town	Big Flats	\$16,991	\$168
Towns	Combined	\$14,007	\$142
Village	Horseheads	\$15,179	\$76
Villages	Combined	\$20,774	\$104

Village level costs in Wayne County are significantly higher, which may be attributable to type of road (paved or unpaved) but may also suggest the Village level could provide the largest savings opportunity. Village transportation costs in 2016 were approximately \$2.4 million and were just over 9% of total Village spending.

The Chemung County study provides a good template towards a more detailed evaluation. High level analysis suggests similar savings, in particular in relation to machinery and equipment could be very attainable. A full and complete evaluation of current equipment at the Village, Town, and County level is a good next step. For purposes of this plan there are no immediate recommended steps that would result in a significant impact of costs, or in turn, real property taxes.

Justice Courts

Justice courts adjudicate offenses under penal, vehicle and traffic (V&T), civil and other laws, where the charges fall below the level of felony. Justice courts also conduct arraignments for felony offenses occurring anywhere in the county, and can handle arraignments on lesser offenses, but only for adjacent municipalities. Typically, vehicle and traffic violations are the most numerous cases heard in a justice court, followed by penal law cases.

Case distribution is largely a function of municipal characteristics, dependent on such things as population density, roadway design and function, and commercial concentrations. Justice courts interact regularly, at times on a daily basis, with county officials, including the district attorney, conflict defender, probation department, sheriff's department, and the public defender's office, and with a variety of service providers.

Justice court cases have different levels of complexity and county involvement, and accordingly require varying amounts of court time and resources.

Local justice courts are entities of their sponsoring municipalities, which are responsible for funding the courts, providing adequate facilities, and staffing them. Local justices are elected by the voters of the town or village in which they reside. In addition, the sponsoring locality has responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of court financial records. This leaves justice courts functionally independent from the State, even though Office of Court Administration (OCA) exercises oversight responsibility over judicial matters.

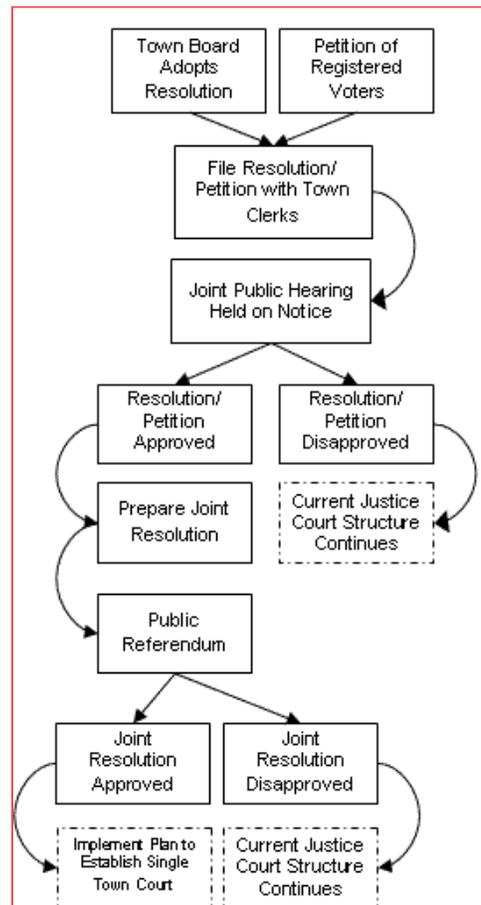
In Wayne County, there are (15) individual Justice Courts which includes (8) full time clerks, and (17) part time clerks. In 2016 revenues were \$754,011 and expenditures were \$1,195,015 with an overall shortfall of \$441,000. This level of shortfall is unsustainable, unnecessary, and can be overcome however, there are significant hurdles to overcome.

The NYS Comptroller’s Office recently provided significant guidance on the process for consolidation of Justice Courts. If a village has its own justice court, the village can abolish the office of village justice. Once the office of village justice no longer exists, the town justice court for the town in which the village is located has jurisdiction of all justice court matters arising in the village. The village board must abolish the office of village justice by local law or resolution, subject to permissive referendum.

Consolidation at the Town level is significantly more complicated. Two or more towns that form a contiguous geographic area within the same county may establish a single justice court. This new court would be composed of justices elected from each town whose terms may not end during the same year.

The process to establish a single court may be initiated by a petition of registered voters or by Town Board Resolution. Once the process to establish a single town court is initiated, the boards of the affected towns must hold a joint public hearing, which must be held 20 to 40 days after the notice is published. Within 60 days after the hearing, the town boards must determine whether to approve the petition or resolution. Each town board must approve the petition or resolution. If they do not, the proceedings terminate and the current justice court structure continues. If a single town court is established under this process, each justice must keep separate sets of records and dockets and maintain separate bank accounts for each town in which he or she has jurisdiction. When a single town court is established, each town will retain their respective fine revenues.

Table 4: Justice Court Consolidation Process



A full estimation of savings has not been completed as part of this study. It was made clear that the majority of savings from implementation of this strategy would be from elimination of redundant personnel, and could be achieved through attrition over time.

Town Supervisors were surveyed as part of this evaluation. 53% of those polled supported Court consolidation. 23% were undecided and 23% did not support consolidation. Reasons given for not supporting consolidation include the fact that their court operates at a surplus, a desire to maintain local control, and a desire to maintain staffing levels.

Conclusion

In our evaluation of opportunities the County considered current allocation of resources, common sense shared service opportunities, and already initiated projects. Digital record storage is the most achievable initial opportunity with efforts already underway for County wide digital record storage and incorporation of several towns, with plans to provide opportunities for participation to all of the Towns as well as the Villages and school districts. While savings are anticipated to be substantial, the ability to have an impact on the property tax levy remains to be seen.

Additional measures including highway maintenance and justice courts require additional analysis and discussion. Highway departments already share substantial services, with many operating on hand-shake agreements. Memorializing those, and an evaluation of additional opportunities including sharing of equipment, facilities, and consolidation of services all require additional analysis.

Justice Court consolidation also requires additional analysis, but is achievable given identification of a particular path and strategy that makes sense given the population disbursement across the County.

In all these particular shared services will continue to be evaluated with digital record storage being the most immediate with plans for initial implementation in 2018. An evaluation of cost savings at the County as well as financial impacts at the Town level will be evaluated in order to refine anticipated cost savings and provide the most accurate information in evaluation of opportunities to reduce the property tax levy across municipalities.