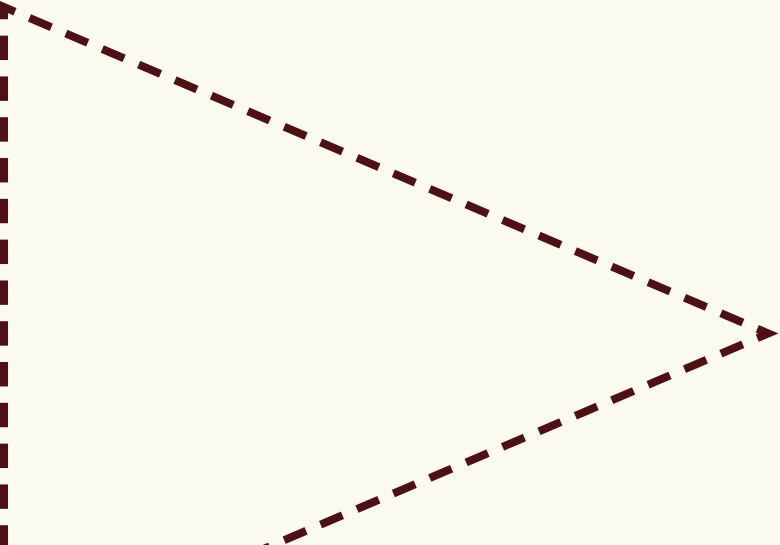


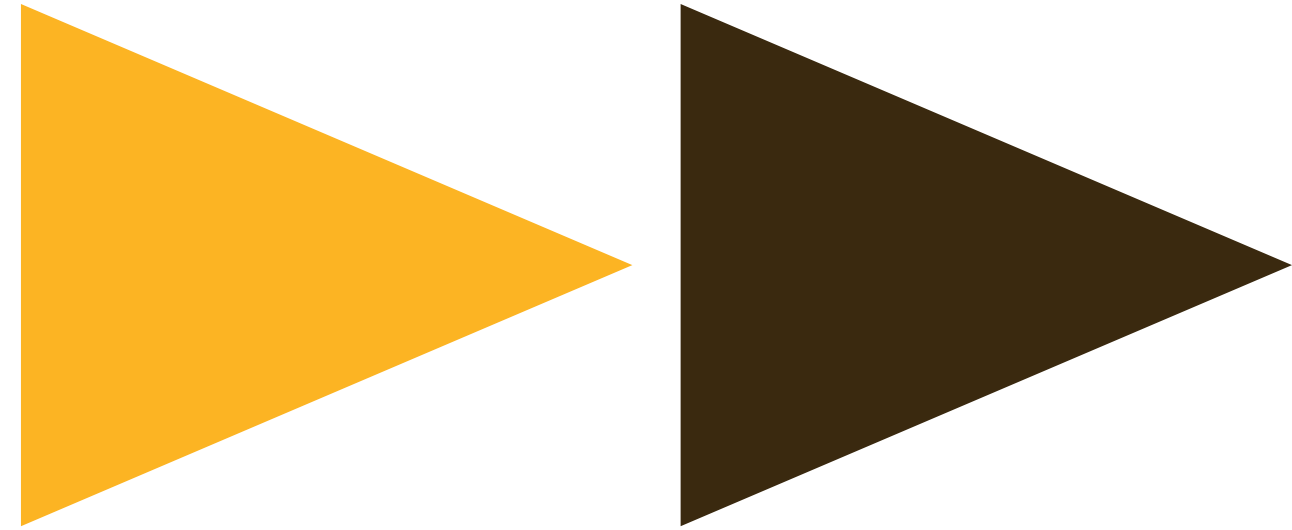
MetroCommon × 2050
Action Brief

Dynamic and Representative Government for a Greater Boston Region

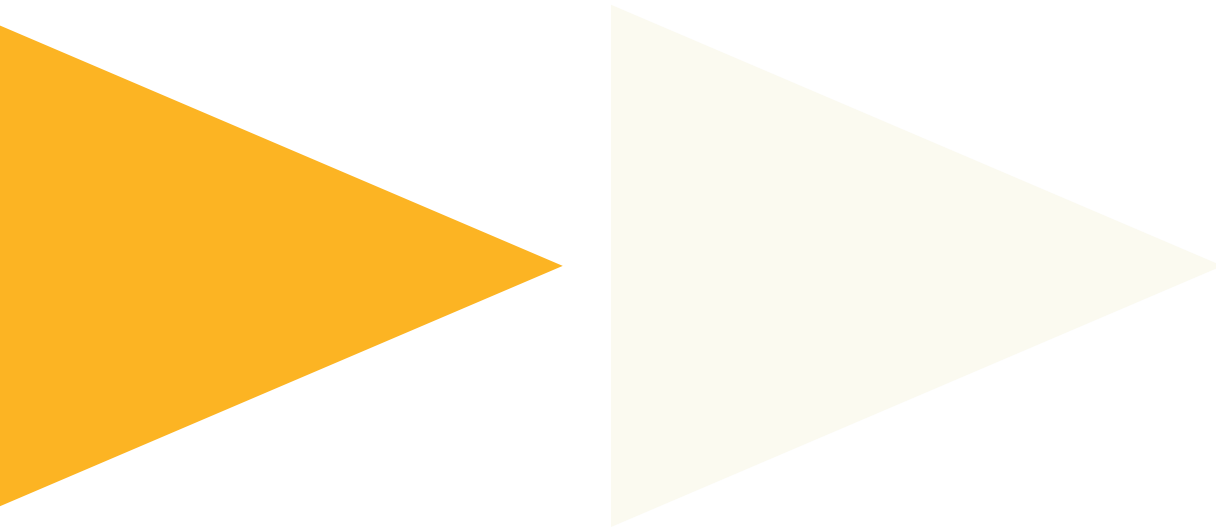


What's the challenge?

Greater Boston's 400-year tradition of highly-localized, participatory, largely-volunteer government is legendary.

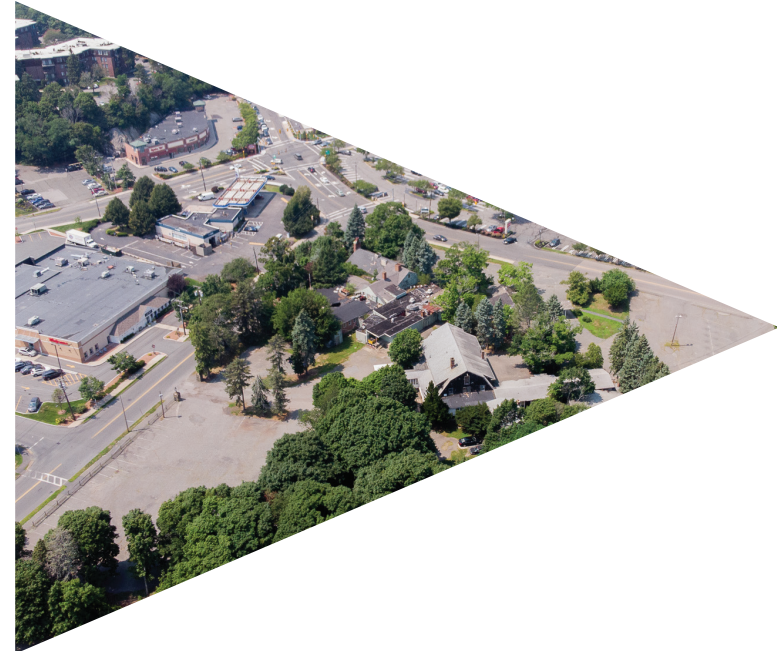


Each of our 351 cities and towns has a lot of local control, but our state government sets the rules. This makes it hard to develop policy and programs that are responsive to regional needs.

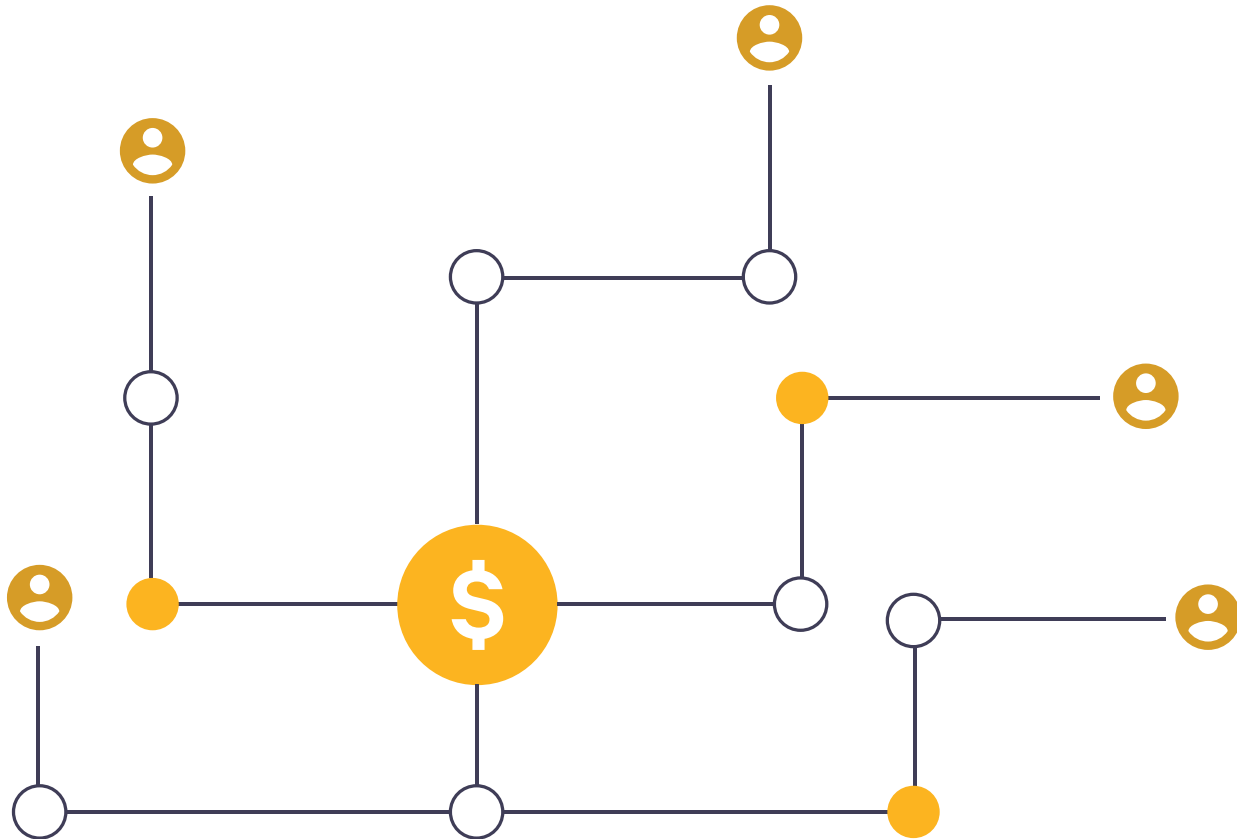


Why does it matter?

- ▶ Local governments are not structured to respond to the scale and urgency of regional challenges, such as climate change, affordable housing, inadequate transportation infrastructure, or public health.



Why does it matter?



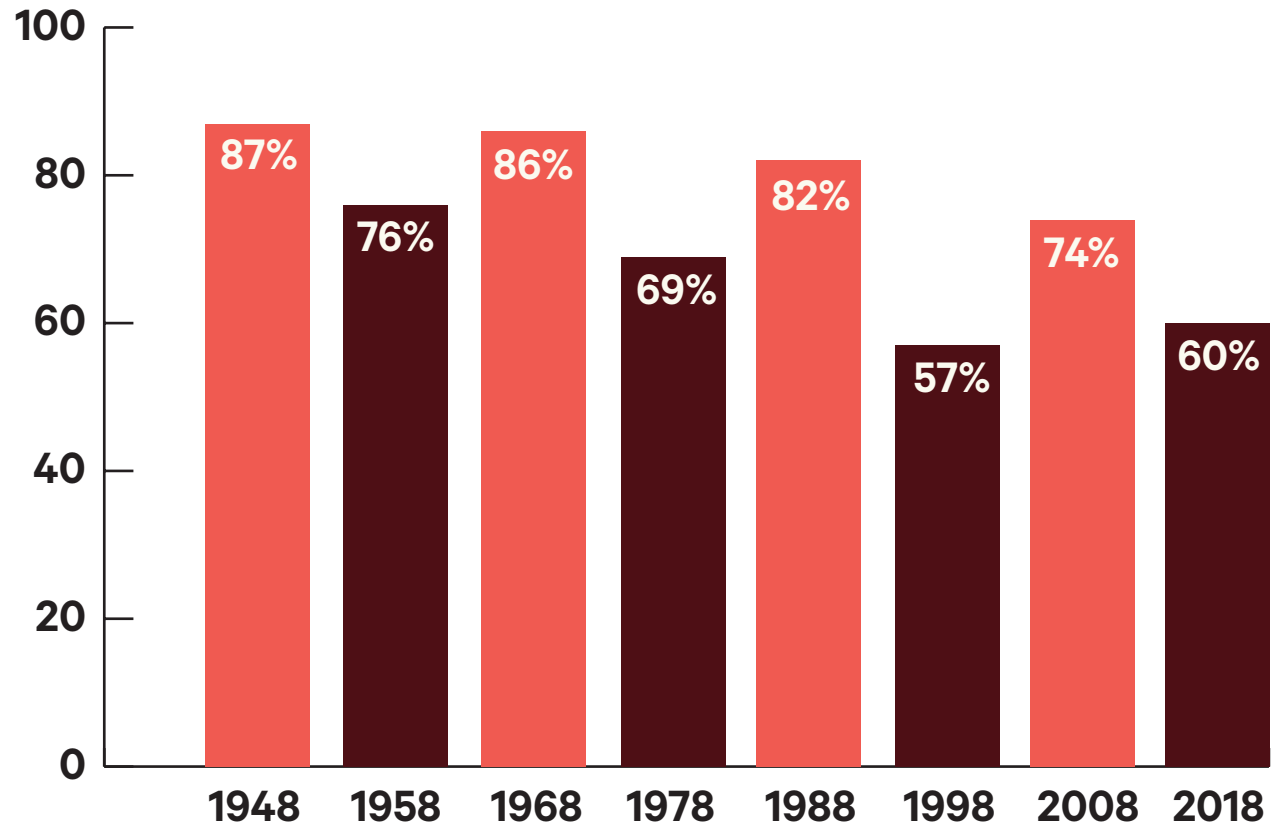
- ▶ Municipalities face increased costs for pension and health benefits and to maintain aging infrastructure. State Aid funding to municipalities fluctuates, and the Commonwealth constrains ways local governments can raise revenues.

Why does it matter?

- ▶ Participation in civic life and decision-making is declining. This goes for voting in local elections, attending meetings, and running for office. Participants seldom reflect the diversity of the region.

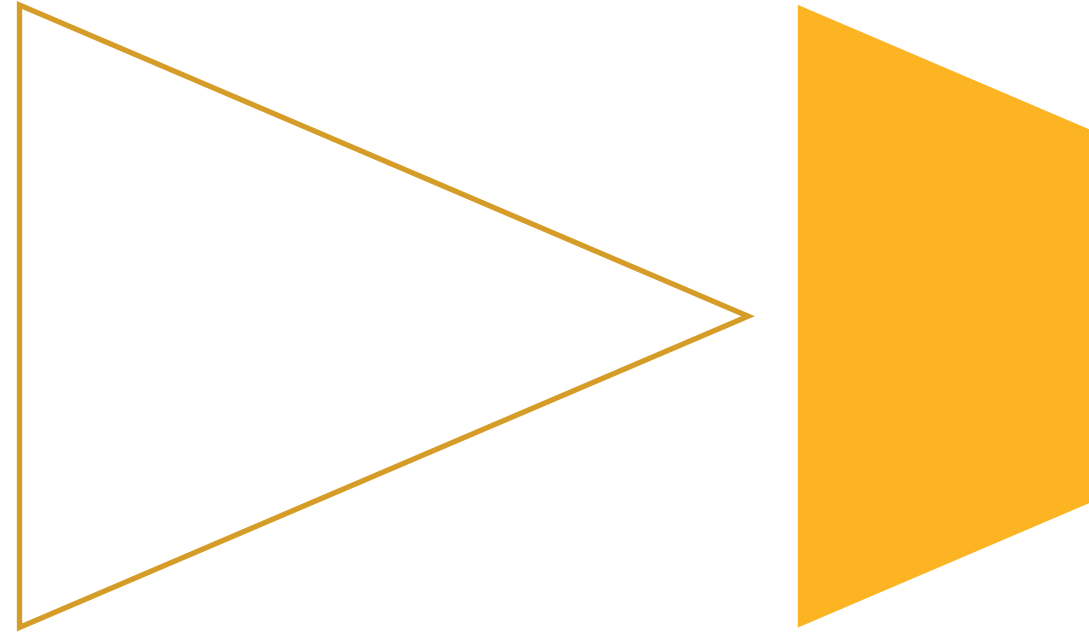
<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elevoterturnoutstats/voterturnoutstats.htm>

Voter Turnout Statistics



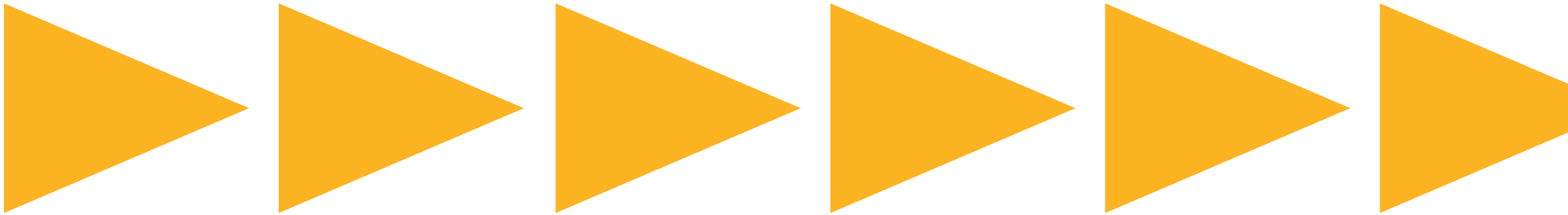
Why does it matter?

- ▶ Trust in government, albeit higher than elsewhere in the country, is low. This is true for groups whose expectations have been shaped by state-sanctioned mistreatment, and for those whose mistrust is part of a larger political worldview.



Why does it matter?

- ▶ Our local municipal workforce is older and whiter than the region, and some types of jobs are dominated by a single gender.
- ▶ In many of our municipalities, the elected and appointed leaders do not reflect the demographics of their constituents.

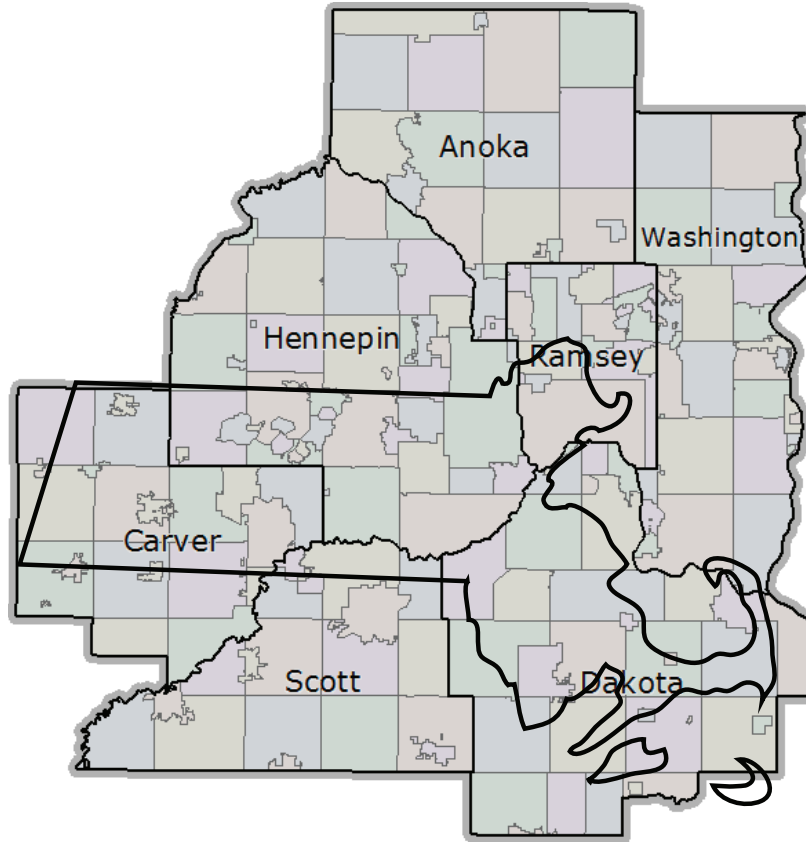


MetroCommon 2050 × Action Brief

Dynamic Government

Why does it matter?

- ▶ While there are some examples of inter-municipal collaboration, our current governance makes collective action difficult. Funding and administrative programs usually operate at the state or municipal level, making collaboration the exception rather than the rule.

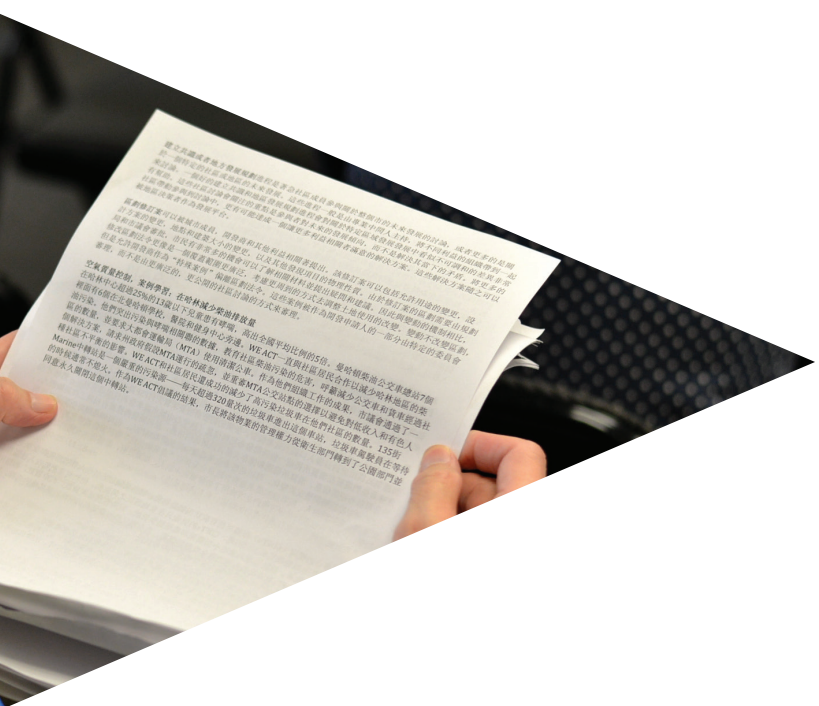


MetCo/MA overlay: The Minneapolis Metropolitan region, roughly the size of Massachusetts, covers seven counties and includes a world-class regional park system and wastewater infrastructure. Regional governance can work.

MetroCommon 2050 × Action Brief

Dynamic Government

Goals for the region



- ▶ Cities and towns receive the federal and state revenue they need to support critical services, including schools, public safety, and transportation, and to ensure equity among communities.
- ▶ Cities and towns have greater flexibility to modernize their governance and to raise funds needed to address local issues, and they are careful stewards of these funds.
- ▶ Historically underrepresented populations work, volunteer, vote, serve in leadership positions, and are empowered in public decision-making.
- ▶ Complex policy issues, data, and processes are made accessible to and understandable by the public through better information design, technology, and educational programs.

MetroCommon 2050 × Action Brief
Dynamic Government

Goals for the region

- ▶ The Commonwealth provides cities and towns meaningful incentives to collaborate with each other in planning, procurement, and delivery of local services, including regionalization and consolidation where appropriate.
- ▶ Cities and towns form creative partnerships with health, education, and commercial entities in their communities.
- ▶ Municipalities work together and with regional government to plan for, coordinate, and fund vital functions such as land use, transportation, housing, water, and energy.



Why haven't we fixed this yet?

- ▶ Changing local government structure in a locality is not easy. It requires an elected charter commission, a subsequent general vote, and special state legislation. The people most likely to benefit from governance reforms have been the ones least welcomed into civic life, least likely to be engaged.
- ▶ Changing local government requires large changes in ways of life, business, and government – it's hard to envision deep change.



MetroCommon 2050 × Action Brief

Dynamic Government

Why haven't we fixed this yet?



Collaboration between or among municipalities is difficult.

- ▶ Municipalities often view operating in partnerships or sharing services as a loss of power.
- ▶ Constituents often view services regional or state services providers as not specifically accountable to their municipality.
- ▶ Real or perceived differences in values between municipalities create barriers to collaboration.
- ▶ Some hearken to county governance as ineffective, costly, duplicative, and corrupt.

As a result, issues most conducive to cooperative arrangements are “things that are less political, where there’s not a lot of risk.”

What's been done so far in our region?

Regional collaboration on public safety

- Metro Mayors Coalition
- North Shore Task Force
- Regional Housing Services

Law Enforcement Councils (LECs)

Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC)

Health & Medical Coordinating Councils (HMCCs)

Joint purchasing agreements

Joint municipal ventures:

Telecom City

Golden Triangle

Stories of Innovation

- ▶ Counties that support regional infrastructure, such as transit on west coast
- ▶ Regional ballot initiatives, often used to fund transportation projects
- ▶ Twin Cities – planning agency runs transit and water
- ▶ Nashville, Louisville – city and county merged
 - London – 32 boroughs run services, mayor and council run transportation
 - Boroughs have a say in major planning, little say in public safety
- ▶ Transport for London – trains and buses, run by mayor – decide where trains and bus lanes go, boroughs can't veto
- ▶ Law enforcement councils

Challenges and Opportunities

Revenue sources & structures

- Local property tax assessment policies and capacity
- State laws/policies on municipal revenue-raising
- Enterprise funds and special assessments
- Local option taxes

Governance structures

- Meeting and decision-making formats (select boards, town meeting, night meetings)
- Volunteer committees
- Decision maker diversity
- Lack of data or understandable, accessible data
- Silo syndrome

Municipal capacity

- Technical systems and workflow practices
- Procurement methods and policies
- Service delivery and construction practices
- Record keeping

Challenges and Opportunities

Fixed costs and legacy expenses

- Municipal pension programs
- Municipal & school health insurance costs
- Legacy infrastructure maintenance activities

Distrust of government

- Legacies of government sponsored violence and discriminatory policies
- Decisions that benefit certain constituents over others