Integrative Leadership and the Creation of Collaborative Public Organizations

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MetroGIS Background

- 13-year-old collaboration in Minneapolis-St. Paul region
- involves 300 units of government and several businesses, nonprofits
- nationally and internationally recognized
- Sponsored by the Metropolitan Council
  - Staff at Met Council
  - Independent Policy Board, Coordinating Committee, Technical Advisory Group, working groups
Our Research Focus

- How did public managers and partners practice integrative leadership as they created and stabilized MetroGIS?
Framework for understanding leadership in cross-sector collaboration

- Initial conditions
- Process
- Structure
- Boundary experiences, objects, and organizations or groups
- Contingencies
- Outcomes and accountability
FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS

INITIAL CONDITIONS

PROCESS

BOUNDARY EXPERIENCES, OBJECTS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

CONTINGENCIES & CONSTRAINTS

OUTCOMES & ACCOUNTABILITIES

STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE
Findings on Initial Conditions

• Leaders were able to identify a problem and opportunity arising from
  – government fragmentation and inadequacy
  – demand for better information
  – availability of GIS technology

• Powerful sponsor and committed champion launched the effort, other leaders contributed

• Policy entrepreneurs took advantage of window of opportunity
Integrative Process

- Reliance on boundary experiences, objects, and groups
- Design and use of multi-stakeholder forums
- Intentional, phased planning
- Conflict resolution
- Multiple opportunities for leadership
  - Visionary leadership
  - Political leadership
  - Consistency
Governing & Operational Structure

• Emerged from process
• In sync with existing structures
• Phased development
• Virtual enterprise created
Contingencies

- Coping with power imbalances
  - Shared-power decision-making structures
  - Links to the top of Met Council
- Blending institutional logics
  - Local vs. regional government view
  - Business and government views
Outcomes and Accountability

• Tangible data-sharing systems
• Intangible outcomes
  – Trusting relationships
  – Recognition
  – User satisfaction
  – Taken-for-grantedness
  – Learning
• Performance measurement system, audit, monitoring, peer pressure
Conclusions

• The framework seems to make some sense as a guide
• The intriguing role of boundary experiences, objects, and groups or organizations,
• The crucial role of leadership
• The obvious need for more research