

CHAPTER 4

CONSOLIDATION OF CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS: ATTEMPTS IN FIVE CITIES

In Chapter 2, the concept of degrees of constitutional change was introduced. Comprehensive city-county consolidation was posited to be a radical, revolutionary form of constitutional change since different levels of constitutions are involved, a new constitution replaces two former constitutions, and the resulting local governance constitution could be quite divergent from the present institutional arrangement. Five of the nine cities in this study attempted radical constitutional change between 1960 and 1990. Three of the cities were in Florida and two in Georgia. These cities attempted consolidation a total of twelve times with two consolidation constitutions attempts by the electorate. Consolidation constitutions for Jacksonville in 1967 and Athens in 1990 were accepted. Table 4.01 presents the consolidation cases.

Table 4.01 Consolidation Cases

Florida	Jacksonville – Duval County, successful in 1967 Tampa – Hillsborough, failed attempts in 1967, 1970, and 1972 Pensacola – Escambia, failed attempt in 1970
Georgia	Macon – Bibb County, failed attempts 1960, 1972, 1976 Athens – Clarke County, failed attempts 1969, 1972, 1982, and successful in 1990

Each city and each attempt was unique to the city and county involved. However, there were some common points between the cities and the attempts. A short history for each city and each attempt is provided below. Each city's consolidation attempt is discussed in the order of their first consolidation attempt.

4.01 Macon-Bibb County, Georgia

Macon and Bibb County Georgia have had three formal consolidation attempts: 1960, 1972, and 1976. There was an attempt in 1983 that did not go to the Referendum Campaign Stage and in 1999 a Joint Unification Study Commission was set up to explore consolidation

(1999 Ga. Law p. 3511).

Within the 51-year span, Macon had three unsuccessful consolidation attempts that went to referendum, 1960, 1972, and 1976. However, these are not the only consolidation attempts. Before the 1960 attempt, Macon had three previous unsuccessful attempts, 1929, 1933, and 1946, plus there was a 1983 (1983 Ga Law p. 4263) and 1999 (1999 Ga. Law p. 3511) consolidation study commission set up that did not produce a consolidation referendum. The earliest attempt, 1929, required the Macon mayor, Macon city council and the Bibb county Commission to accept the enabling act, but the county commission rejected the act (*Macon Telegraph* 1957). The 1933 attempt went to referendum where the city and county voter both rejected the consolidation charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1957, 10). The 1946 attempt did not proceed to ratification of the consolidation charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1957).

One of the contentions throughout all three of the attempts was the cost of water and sewerage. This prompted the suburban homeowners' association to sue the water board and city council over water rates (*Macon Telegraph*. 1955a).

1960 Macon-Bibb Consolidation Attempt

In September 1956, the Macon Chamber of Commerce released a bulletin of projects that included annexation of suburban areas and consolidation (*Macon Telegraph* 1956). The editorial that announced this list of projects said it was time for action. Macon and Bibb County's 1960 consolidation attempt began with a constitutional amendment that was passed in 1958. In 1959, both the city council and the county commission endorsed proposed legislation to outline the consolidation charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1959).

The 1960 decennial census was a shock to the city of Macon. Between 1950 and 1960, the city lost about 1,000 people. The *Macon Telegraph* front-page article said Macon was the only large city in Georgia to lose population, but that actually the population had just moved to the suburbs, since Bibb County gained over 27,000 people (Gulliver 1960). The author noted that the city had not annexed significant areas of suburb in the last 10 years. A few days later the *Macon Telegraph and News* editorial stated that if Macon could find 575 more people then they could pass Augusta as the fourth largest city in the state (*Macon Telegraph and News* 1960). The editor called on the citizens to call the census bureau if they were not counted or to fill out a form

that was in the paper in order “to find the missing 575” (*Macon Telegraph and News* 1960, 6). The editor in another editorial said that census figures should convince city and county voters to support consolidation (*Macon Telegraph* 1960b, 4).

Final proposed charter for consolidation. The proposed Macon-Bibb Charter (1960 Georgia Law p. 3223) provided for a Chairman ex-officio Mayor who would be elected directly, serve for four years with a one-term limit, who had veto power, but no vote. Representation would be a total of twelve Commissioners with nine elected from single member districts and three elected at-large, serve for four years with appointment power (1960 Georgia Law p. 3223). There would be direct election of constitutional officers, but the sheriff’s duties would be limited to the courts and the jail. All other police powers would be held by the Police Commissioner appointed by the Commission (1960 Georgia Law p. 3223).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. Supporters of the proposed consolidation charter included: the chairman of the Macon-Bibb County Board of Health who said it would improve public health and sewage disposal; a lawyer who is chair of the consolidation information committee; the former county attorney; and the former city attorney (*Macon Telegraph* 1960d, 1). A third lawyer argued that consolidation would end conflict between the two governments, provide “complete home rule” and boost the declining population as reasons to support merger (*Macon Telegraph* 1960d, 1). The Sunday before the election the publisher of the two daily newspapers published support of the consolidation effort (Anderson 1960, 1).

The day before the referendum, John Raymond (1960a, 1) a newspaper reporter, noted that the consolidation charter was “endorsed by the county commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce and numerous civic groups and civic leaders, as well as the past city administration.” A newspaper report asked the citizens to support the charter since it represented over three years of work by trusted members of the community in the City-County Governmental Planning Commission (*Macon Telegraph* 1960c).

The newspaper article provided the occupation, civic organization membership and civic offices held by each member (*Macon Telegraph* 1960c). The charter commission members, predominately represented the elected officials and business groups. The chairman was a lawyer and former president of the Bar Association; the vice chairman was a former alderman, former

chairman of the County Commission, and director of several local businesses; the treasurer was a local bank president and former president and general manager of the Chamber of Commerce; the secretary was the editor of the local newspaper; one member was also a former chairman of the county commission, former president of the state fair association; one member was a farmer and past president of the local Farmer's Club (*Macon Telegraph* 1960c, 6). There was a real estate developer and former president of the Macon Home Builders Association; a businessman and former president of the Chamber of Commerce; one member was the present mayor and law professor; one member was vice president of Georgia Power Company and past president of the Macon Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce; one member was a former Bibb County Superior Court Judge; one member was the president and chief engineer of the local radio and television station; and one member who was a former mayor, former member of the Georgia State Assembly, past president of both the Chamber of Commerce and Jaycees, and was currently the executive director of the Macon Area Development Committee (*Macon Telegraph* 1960c, 6).

During the proposed consolidation charter campaign, there were organized groups who publicly opposed consolidation. Their members included: a lawyer who argued that the charter would "reduce individual liberties by extending the jurisdiction of a local Recorder's court;" an attorney and former legislator; and a restaurant owner (*Macon Telegraph* 1960d, 1). In one public debate, the supporters of the charter charged one opposition speaker of being an "outsider" brought in by the opponents to help defeat the merger (*Macon Telegraph* 1960a, 1). The opposition speaker, who had recently moved back to the area, was a lawyer who owned a farm in the county.

In one of the public debates before the referendum, one member of the audience asked if the Black community was going to oppose the merger in a "bloc vote" to which the former city attorney said there was race was not a factor in the proposed consolidation charter and what was good enough for one racial group was good enough for another (*Macon Telegraph* 1960d, 1). This report had noted that there was one Black organization that opposed the charter and referred to one local attorney who had spoken for and against consolidation to an unidentified Black organization, but the local papers did not carry his message (*Macon Telegraph* 1960d, 1). The day of the referendum in the letters to the editor, one Black man noted there was no "bloc vote"

and many Black people supported the consolidation charter (Hutchings 1960, 4). The Black community in Macon in 1960 comprised 44 % of the population (1960 U.S. Department of Census).

Outcome. The day of the referendum, June 1st, the *Macon Telegraph* presented the notice of the referendum on the front page and next to it an article titled “Macon is One of Few Cities Losing Population in Last Ten Years” (*Macon Telegraph* 1960e). The referendum vote was set as three separate votes for the city, county, and Payne City. If one of the areas rejected the proposed consolidation, the attempt would fail. The small incorporated Payne city rejected the attempt 55 to 37, the county voted 7368 to 2302 against merger, and the city supported merger by 4,598 to 4,288 (Raymond 1960b, 1). There may not have been a Black bloc vote, but the Black community overwhelmingly voted against the proposed consolidation charter with 582 votes “for” and 1,523 votes “against” within the city and 200 votes “for” and 630 votes “against” in the county (*Macon Telegraph* 1960f, 20).

1972 Macon-Bibb Consolidation Attempt

The summer before the 1972 consolidation attempt saw racial unrest in Macon. In late June there was a shooting of a Black man by a police officer (Lee 1971). Then in early July, there were fire bombings, snipers, and curfews (Carter 1971). When the police officer was not indicted by the Bibb Grand Jury, the Black community held a march on City Hall to protest discrimination in jobs and police treatment (Birdsey 1971; Crawford 1971). The end of July saw efforts to overcome job discrimination (Jackson 1971).

Final proposed charter for consolidation. The proposed 1972 Macon/Bibb County consolidation charter provided for twelve councilmen, six elected at-large and six elected from six single member districts. Each would be elected for four years with a residency requirement for the district elected members (1972 Georgia Law p. 2211). The mayor would be elected for four years with a two-term limit. As the chief executive, he would have appointment power and could remove the chief administrative officer; would have veto power over ordinances and resolutions; and would submit the budget. The sheriff would be the chief law enforcement officer, directly elected by the citizens, but eight council member can relieve him of police duties and appoint a police commissioner (*Macon Telegraph* 1972g). There would be an ad valorem

millage cap of 28 mills in the city which would decrease one mill over four years to 24 mills and outside the city the millage cap would be 14 mills and decrease to 12 mills over four years. General obligation debt limit would be capped at ten percent of assessed value and new bonds would require a referendum (*Macon Telegraph* 1972g). Supporters contended that lower taxes that would lure new business to the area, but opponents noted that the limit on taxes would not include fees and licenses which could increase and drive business away (Doss 1972a).

When the consolidation bill was still in the Assembly one senator wanted to amend it to assure the county sheriff's position could not be easily eliminated (McCash 1972). The senator said that the proposed charter would allow the mayor and council to repeal the law enforcement powers of the sheriff and since this was a constitutional office, elected every four years, it should be protected (McCash 1972, 1A, 9A).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. During the referendum campaign, there were several articles on the opposing views of consolidation. The point was made that the consolidation did not include the new section of Macon in Jones County, but supporters explained that the enabling legislation was written prior to the annexation of Jones County area (Doss 1972a). Another point of contention is that the recorder's court would become the Municipal court, which in one section has the recorder appointed by the mayor but in the next section has the office directly elected by the people. The editorial noted that this error occurred during the final days of the assembly and could be easily corrected (*Macon Telegraph* 1972b).

Two of the members of the charter commission said that consolidation would be a way to curb spending by the School Board (*Macon Telegraph* 1972h). The school board had increased their budget for the coming year citing a decrease in funds from the state, but the commission members said the reduction in state support was because of a decrease in students in the public schools (*Macon Telegraph* 1972h, 3A). The Chamber of Commerce (*Macon Telegraph* 1972c) and the mayor (*Macon Telegraph* 1972d) requested that the school board waive millage rate increase. The day before the consolidation referendum, the school board set a tentative budget and noted the need for a millage increase to assure accreditation of the schools (Birdsey 1972).

A second consolidation debate reiterated the conflict over services, tax millage, schools and the chief law enforcement officer. On the subject of services, opponents expressed the

concern that services to unincorporated areas would be like the 1961 annexation which significantly enlarged the city, but services still had not been provided and that few would directly benefit from consolidation (Doss 1972b). Supporters noted that the proposed charter placed a millage limitation and would be a way to cut the school boards excessive spending, but opponents said that the millage rate was above the present rate and tampering with the school system could “destroy public education” (Doss 1972b, 1D). When the mayor said that the charter commission member would personally benefit from consolidation, one of the member of the consolidation charter commission and supporter of consolidation said that he worked for a corporation who wanted to develop a large area and needed sewers, but that was not his reason for supporting the effort (Doss 1972b, 1D).

The Macon Jaycees voted as a group to support the consolidation charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1972a). The Macon-Bibb County Taxpayers League in a paid political advertisement urged acceptance of the consolidation charter since it would control taxes for not only taxpayers, but also renters and “force economy in local government” (Macon-Bibb County Taxpayers League 1972, 7A).

Many of the editorials in the papers championed support for the consolidation charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1972b; *Macon Telegraph* 1972i; *Macon Telegraph and News* 1972). One editorial ended with the statement that the citizens could “enjoy the benefits of consolidation if voters approve the change in Wednesday’s referendum” (*Macon Telegraph* 1972e, 6A). Two of the local legislators supported the attempt since the city had lost residents, the county’s growth had been only one percent in the last ten years, and that the opposition was not telling the truth about the charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1972f, 3A).

The city council voted to oppose the consolidation charter, thirteen to two (Parham 1972). Most of the council member cited opposition to the charter and not consolidation as reason for their decision (Parham 1972, 3A). An editorial a few days earlier in the *Macon Telegraph and News* (*Macon Telegraph and News* 1972, 2D) noted that since the mayor and councilmen had just been elected the past November, they did not want to run again for a post on the consolidated government.

Opposition to the consolidation included the county commissioners, who “individually”

opposed the consolidation charter (*Macon Telegraph* 1972k, 3A). The independent auditor who served both the city and the county said that tax limits in the proposed charter would cause financial problems for the proposed government (Lee 1972, 8A). A letter by the auditor, dated March 27, 1972 was reprinted in the local paper on the May 14, 1972 (Clifton 1972, 6A). The newspaper advertisement with the letter did not indicate who had placed the letter in the paper, only an endorsement of the auditor's knowledge of the two governments' financial operation and the note that citizens should read and think about the contents.

Outcome. The referendum vote was structured as combination of a county and city vote counted separately and jointly, plus those residents of Macon who live in Jones County could vote with the city (*Macon Telegraph* 1972j). This part of the city would be removed if the consolidation was successful (*Macon Telegraph* 1972k). The next day the headlines reported that the consolidation attempt was defeated three to two (Jackson 1972). The mayor was credited with the defeat of the consolidation charter (Jackson 1972, 5A). City and County officials announced the next day that they would “continue consolidation efforts of departments in the two governments” (*Macon Telegraph* 1972k, 3A).

It should be noted that a week after the referendum, Bibb County Commissioners approved a tax increase and the Board of Education received an increase that was twice what the county commissioners had said they would permit (Canady 1972, 1A, 5A). The County Commission said that the millage rate would be the same as 1971 and 7.75 mills under 1970 (*Macon Telegraph* 1972l, 1A). However, with a reassessment the taxes still increased (Doss 1972c).

1976 Macon-Bibb Consolidation Attempt

The final consolidation attempt for Macon and Bibb County was held on May 4, 1976. This attempt was also rejected by the electorate.

Final charter for consolidation. Macon-Bibb County, Georgia (1976 Georgia Laws p. 3818) proposed 1976 consolidation charter provided for a fifteen member council, two representatives elected from six districts with residency requirement and three representatives elected at-large. Council members would be elected for four-year terms with a president elected from the council. The council could override a mayor's veto with a two-thirds majority vote. The

mayor, the CEO, would be elected directly by the citizens for a four-year term and a two-term limit with veto power. The mayor has power to appoint the Chief Administrative Officer and department heads Recall of mayor could occur by petition of thirty percent of voters eligible to vote in last election, but requires a two-thirds vote of electorate in the recall election.

There is a debt limitation of ten percent of assessed value of taxable property and a referendum required to issue revenue bonds. There is also a provision for petition for amendments by ten percent of electors eligible to vote in last election (1976 Georgia Laws p. 3818). According to the editorial a few days before the referendum, this charter was drafted to address concerns that were voiced in the 1972 proposed consolidation charter while providing efficiency, responsible, and “probably more economical form of government for the city and county” (*Macon Telegraph and News* 1976, 6A).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. Early in April, during the campaign for consolidation the Macon League of Women Voters championed the effort under the slogan “Merger is Motherhood for Macon-Bibb” (Wilson 1976b). The League of Women Voters held discussions and debates on the proposed charter. In one of the debates, a local Black leader stated that city residents suffered from double taxation, while one federal employee noted that the citizens need a government efficient and economical service delivery (Wilson 1976c, 1B). A paid political advertisement in the local paper noted consolidation should be supported for these two reasons (Macon/Bibb Committee 1976).

The mayor expressed the view that consolidation was needed to eliminate the tax burden since city residents pay for services they do not receive like road improvement and county sheriff (Savage 1976c, 1B). The Macon Chamber of Commerce endorsed consolidation for the same reasons, “city residents pay 79.7 percent of the Bibb taxes” and “\$1.5 million annually” for services provided for non-city residents (Wilson 1976a, 1B).

Other supporters included: city council president, a local black leader, and a candidate for the county commission (Wilson 1976d). That local leader and another local Black leader led a charter forum to answer consolidation questions from the Black community (White 1976, 1B). Right before the referendum one council member endorsed the proposed charter since the positives offset the negatives (Savage 1976e, 1B).

Just two weeks before the referendum the local paper stated that there was little opposition to the proposed charter (Wilson 1976b). However, opposition forces did appear soon after the newspaper article. The group “Citizens Opposing Consolidation” stated that the merged government would cost more, would be big and impersonal, and have few checks and balances (Howard 1976).

One of the county commissioners disputed the Chamber of Commerce tax figures saying that the county residents are 14.6 percent of the population and pay twenty-three percent of the tax digest (Savage 1976d, 12A). During the debates a local insurance agent expressed fear that big government would be removed from the people with few checks and balances (Wilson 1976c, 1B). Opposition for the consolidation was expressed by the Bibb County farmers, who felt consolidation would increase costs to farmers, while Black minister and Black community leader said that consolidation was just a “money issue” (Wilson 1976a, 1B). Other opponents included: the commission finance committee chairman, the county sheriff, and a second candidate for county commissioner (Wilson 1976d). The former mayor announced his opposition to the proposed charter at the last minute, stating that this charter was a spiritless version of the 1972 consolidation charter (Savage 1976e, 1B).

There was two events during the referendum campaign, conflict over police pay and a county tax increase. In middle of April, the city council rejected a request from the police for a thirty percent pay hike, the council countered with a twelve percent increase with lower increases for the next three years if a four-year budget passed (Savage 1976a). The mayor had proposed a five percent cost of living raise and a four percent merit pay increase for all employees if the one cent sales tax passed (Savage 1976a). This set off a Fraternal Order of Police declaration of a “slowdown” (Savage 1976b). The *Macon Telegraph* the next day called the slowdown “counterproductive” (*Macon Telegraph* 1976a, 4A).

Outcome. The citizens of Macon and Bibb County rejected the consolidation constitution unofficial count 16,090 against to 8,624 for consolidation (Wilson 1976e). The editorial on that day stated that “gradual consolidation may be the only way” (*Macon Telegraph* 1976b). The editors blamed the rejection on opponents’ “scare tactics” and “misrepresentation,” as well as the proponents delay in informing and “selling” the consolidation charter to the public (*Macon*

Telegraph 1976b, 6A).

4.02 Athens-Clarke County Georgia Consolidation Attempts

The 1969 consolidation attempt was formalized when, in 1966, the local legislative delegation proposed a constitutional amendment in the Georgia Legislature (Fort 1966, 1). The proposed amendment (Ga. Laws, 1966, 1050) required that the local citizens pass a referendum to set up the Athens City-County Consolidation Study Commission. The referendum, voted on November 8, 1966, passed in both the city and county. The actors who were important at this agenda stage were: Athens Chamber of Commerce who represented almost 1000 merchants, League of Women Voters, Mayor of Athens, top level city and county officials, and the director of the University of Georgia's Institute of Government (Fort 1966, 1). One of the residents in the small town of Winterville felt there was little the community would gain with consolidation, but decided to wait and see (Fort 1966, 5).

The 1969 Athens-Clarke County Consolidation Attempt

Early in 1967, the legislative delegation could not agree on the jurisdictional boundaries for the enabling act for the charter commission and the charter referendum. Two delegation members, headed by the Freshman State Representative, said there should be a vote of concurrent majorities inside and outside the city, while the other two delegates, headed by the State Senator, said the agreement was a vote inside the city tallied separately and a vote of the total county (Cohn 1967). The one freshman representative refused to sign the bill since a vote for consolidation would amount to the city annexing the county (Young 1967a.). The disagreement was so strong that there was talk of introducing two separate bills (*Athens Daily News* 1967a).

This was a local bill and usually local bills were automatically passed if the local delegation was in agreement, but the conflict between the members of the delegation could kill the bill (Phillips 1967). The legislative delegation was the group that decided which local bills were introduced and a bill could not get out of committee if there was not a unified local delegation (Phillips 1967; Young 1967a). "Local legislative delegations do not readily give up their very considerable power" (Shannon 1968, 10). The newly-elected representative's view of two concurrent votes tallied separately (one from just the city residents and one from just the county residents) pitted the city with 80% of the population with an interest in economical urban

services against the rural county (plus remember a small incorporated town) with only twenty percent of the population and a fear of higher taxes (Cohn 1967). If the county rejected the proposal then the effort would fail, so twenty percent of the population dominated the other eighty percent. On the other hand, the state senator's view of two concurrent votes but one of just the city residents and one vote of the total county population, city plus county, set up a bias for the city and questions of "one man, one vote" (Cohn 1967).

There was also a disagreement about who should be on the charter commission and how it should be formed. The new representative believed that there should be 20 members, 10 from county and 10 from the city with the city members chosen by naming 2 from each ward (*Athens Daily News* 1967a). The senator supported the joint city-county membership version of 15 members appointed by the county and city, with 5 from the county and 10 from the city (*Athens Daily News* 1967a). The first method gave equal status to the county interests, although the county could appoint someone who lived in the city. The other method provided bias for the city.

There was a compromise. The referendum vote would be 2 concurrent votes, one in the city alone and one in the county alone (Phillips 1967). "In other words, a negative vote by county voters would void even a landslide vote inside the more populous city limits" (*Athens Daily News* 1967b, 2).

The compromise on the charter commission was 16 members: 8 appointed by the county commissioners and 8 by the city council and mayor. The compromise, here, was that in the city two ward representatives would appoint 1 person and the mayor would appoint 3 members and at least 4 of the counties 8 members had to be from outside the city (Phillips 1967). The other stipulations were that no elected official could serve and the senator suggested that there should be at least one member who was African American (Phillips 1967). Two Black citizens were appointed to the commission (Shannon 1968, 60).

Final charter for consolidation. The charter was completed on December 8, 1968, almost a year and a half after the commission was set (Johnson 1968). A copy of the complete charter was published in the Sunday edition of the *Athens Banner-Herald* and *Daily News* on February 16, 1969 anticipating the March 12th referendum (*Athens Banner-Herald* and *Daily News* 1969).

In looking at the final proposed charter it seemed that all the disagreement over city versus county in the proposal for the vote had disappeared. The charter called for a ten person council with seven members elected from the single member districts and three members elected at-large (Johnson 1969). The seven districts radiated from the center of the city outward to achieve almost equal population in pie fashion (Bailey 1969a). At that time the city had ten councilmen elected from five wards, while the County Commission had three members elected at-large (Bailey 1969a). The proposed charter would actually reduce the number of representatives. According to Sharon Baily (1969a) consolidation would provide a “new legislative ‘critter’ with authority to pass ordinances and adopt resolutions for the consolidated territory.” In one of the public meetings on consolidation one citizen asked if the council ward lines were going to be school district lines was brought up (Deats 1969, 5).

The mayor would be the Chief Executive Officer, serve for four years with a three-term limit (Art. 4). The mayor could nominate department heads and the manager, but the council would confirm the nomination. Constitutional officers would be elected (Art. 11). One of the ways the charter could be amended would be through a citizens’ petition with twenty percent of voters (Sec 12.104).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. The mayor was a supporter of the charter and said that although he did not agree with some points the document “met all the requirements for a good consolidated government” (Davis 1969, 1). At one meeting the mayor tried to mobilized voters in an effort to increase voter turnout and also offered some benefits of consolidation in “law enforcement, water service, fire protection, and recreation” (Fort 1969a, 1).

The newspapers supported consolidation and one county commissioner remarked that the effort to get the charter accepted may have caused the rejection (Bailey 1969d, 3). The day before the referendum, one councilman, who had served on the council for 22 years, noted that consolidation would be good for the community since it would provide county residents: a voice in government on services; reduce water and sewer rates; better lighting, police, and fire protection; and garbage collection (Bailey 1969c, 1). Just after the referendum a report on the Athens League of Women Voters noted that one of their topics of interest was “continued support and evaluation of Athens-Clarke County consolidation (Bailey 1969e, 8).

One of the most vocal opponents to consolidation was a county commissioner. According to him the charter did not give enough rights to the citizen and needed more checks and balances (Bailey 1969b). He said the Chamber of Commerce and a local newspaper publisher were trying to “force consolidation” and “establishing urban service areas without consent is annexation without a referendum” (Bailey 1969b).

A second county commissioner also publicly opposed the charter since it would produce a powerful centralized government, plus the “city orientation” of the charter would create county opposition (Taylor 1969, 12A). A reporter noted that there was friction between the consolidation supporters and the sheriff, since the proposed charter would decrease the powers of the office, but the sheriff when interviewed said he had not read the charter (Taylor 1969, 12A). It was noted that county residents would not support the charter since it would create a “city-oriented type of government” (Taylor 1969, 12A).

Outcome. The city supported the consolidation charter (2,538 accept and 1,703 reject) and the county overwhelmingly rejected (789 accept and 1,907 reject) the attempt; a combined vote of 3,327 “for” and 3,610 “against” (Fort 1969b). Only 6,937 of the 21,219 registered voters voted – 27.4% in the city and 47.8% in the county (Fort 1969b).

When the referendum failed there were several people who offered reasons why. The county commissioner, who was the most outspoken in opposition, said he opposed the charter, but not the concept of consolidation (Bailey 1969d). The county commissioner suggested one reason for failure was how the districts were drawn up with the rural county added into the pie shape of the urban area (Bailey 1969d). Another suggestion was that the press was too pro-consolidation (Bailey 1969d).

The Athens -Clarke County 1972 Consolidation Attempt

The second consolidation proceeded closely on the heels of the first unsuccessful attempt. Some observers thought the second attempt was too close to the first (Hayslett 1971a). The civil unrest continued. Disputes over desegregation of the newly-unified school district occurred in 1970 (Bailey 1970). By November 1970, the local newspaper saw the need to foster better race relations (Christensen 1970). In October 1970, a Grand Jury recommended the formation of a new consolidation charter commission, since there was great distrust between the people in the

city and the county (Young 1971).

In the fall of 1971, the charter commission had problems in choosing the rules for the charter. Their indecisions were noted in the press. The group could not reach consensus on a form of government, either commissioner/manager or mayor/council (Hayslett 1971b). An original 159 page “trial balloon” draft of the charter by the county appointees on the commission called for a commission form of government, while the city appointees wanted a strong mayor form (Christensen 1972b).

The commission’s indecision was due, in part, to the outcome of a committee exploring partial consolidation. When the committee finally gave their report, it did not alleviate any of the conflict. The report suggested consolidation be tabled until 1974 and in the interim have the departments in the city and county voluntarily merge (Christensen 1971). The report also suggested a separately elected chief executive who would not sit on the commission; eight district commissioner who must reside in the districts but elected at-large; an authority to handle fire, water, and sewage; and introduce legislation to increase county commissioners to five (Christensen, 1971). This was typical of many of the commission’s decisions and the vacillation may have cost them success in the consolidation effort.

Final charter for consolidation. The Charter was ready for approval by the Consolidation Charter Commission on Tuesday, February 16, 1972. The commission voted, eleven to one with three abstentions, to adopt of the proposed charter (Hayslett 1972a; Christensen 1972a.). The commission hoped that there would be few changes. There were changes. In March 1972, the commission changed and re-changed the personnel board from elected to appointed and back to elected in response to pressure from the mayor and the county commission chairman, who did not want elected members (Hayslett 1972b). The proposed charter would change two more times before the final charter was ready (Hayslett 1972c.).

The proposed consolidation charter proposed a legislative body of eleven commissioners, three elected at-large and eight commissioners would be elected from districts. The executive officer would be a mayor, elected at-large, but have no veto power over the Commission. The mayor would serve for four years with a three-term limit (Art. 4). The mayor would appoint the department heads and the manager. There would be a recall provision (Art. 9 Ch. 3). One of the

ways the charter could be amended would be through a citizens' petition with twenty percent of voters (Sec 12.104).

The referendum was two concurrent votes in the city and the county. However, the rule again stipulated that the vote would only be successful if it passed in both the county and the city. Again, the county dictated the outcome.

In the margin of one of the early drafts of the consolidation charter, dated "1/24/72," a note was written. "Who is going to sell it!" [emphasis in original] (University of Georgia Special Collections, 1972). This remark was an important point.

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. Perhaps due to the constant modifications of the charter or the content of the charter, support was mild. When the charter was ready for the final vote by the Charter Commission, not everyone agreed on the charter, only four of the eight county appointed members approved, while seven of the eight city appointed members approved of the proposed charter (Hayslett 1972a).

The pro-consolidation group, Citizens for Better Government, CBG, noted that the charter would bring down the water rates in the county, provide efficiency, better services, responsiveness, economy, etc, and tried to capitalize on the lack of enthusiasm by city and county officials with the statement that this proves the charter comes from the citizens not the governments (Hayslett 1972d). Five city council members and one county commissioner announced their support and although the Mayor was displeased with the charter, he was quoted as saying he would "hold my nose" and vote for it (Hayslett 1972d). Other support came from the head of the Charter Commission (a businessman); a university professor; a university registrar who was also a former city councilman; and a university official, who headed the first Charter Commission (Christensen 1972c, 8).

The opposition included three city councilmen and two county commissioners. The anti-consolidation group, Citizens for Preserving Athens and Clarke County, was concerned with the size of government and costs for utilities (Hayslett 1972d, 14). The head of the opposition group managed the Rural Electric Cooperative (Hayslett 1972d, 14). The consolidation charter contained a provision that the electric plant could not expand, so the groups campaigned to defeat the effort (Horton 1990, 1).

Two farmers who sat on the Charter Committee opposed the final proposed charter (Christensen 1972c, 8). Other opposition to the form of government came from a restaurant manager, a business enterprise counselor, and another businessman, also, wanted the police and fire personnel under civil service (Christensen 1972c, 8).

Outcome. The consolidation charter met defeat for the second time on May 24, 1972. The vote passed in the city but failed in the county. The final tally of the vote according to the referendum election results in the Laws of Georgia (State of Georgia 2000, CCLXI) were: the city voted 3,263 “for” consolidation and 2,961 “against,” while the county voted 1,707 “for” and 2,369 “against.” Years later, one of the members of the charter commission stated that the group had held many meeting and explained the proposed charter to the public but could not overcome the opposition (Horton 1990, 1). One of the positive outcomes of the failed 1972 attempt was a change in the number of county commissioners. In 1973, the number of commissioners in Clarke County increased from three to five after a successful countywide referendum (1809 voted “for” and 1125 voted “against”) (Tilley 1973).

The Athens-Clarke County 1982 Consolidation Attempt

Prior to the 1982 consolidation attempt, there were incidents in the community that could shed light on the interaction between the city and county governments. In 1979, two incidents occurred. First a conflict over how to split the local option sales tax revenue. The city wanted 60 percent with the other 40 percent for the county, but the county wanted 60 percent (Sanderlin 1979a). This began a “war” between the two governments. The tax split was settled the next week with a 50-50 split (Sanderlin 1979b). However, the war continued. In June, the city raised the county fire protection fees by 1000 percent (Toon 1979a). Then the city wanted the county to pay an outstanding debt for sewer improvements financed by the city with a bond (Sanderlin 1979c). On that same day, the local newspaper informed the county residents that they paid almost two and one half as much as city residents for city water and sewer services (Toon 1979b). The county countered with a call for an outside study on city charges for recreation and fire protection fees (Sanderlin 1979d). On July 12th the next round began. The city requested the county install street signs within the city limits, since they had installed them in the two small towns in the county (Toon 1979c). This conflict between the city and the county was an

important feature in the continued call for consolidation.

The fall 1979 city council race saw many of the candidates call for consolidation. Seven candidates for five city offices, including mayor, all said it was time to consolidate the two governments, for efficiency reasons (Toon 1979d). Early in 1980, population growth in the area had increased to the point that the chairman of the county commission noted, in a lengthy newspaper article, that there was a need for a solution to county governance. The chairman noted that Clarke County should think about a Chief Executive Officer to run the day-to-day business of the county (Sanderlin 1980). According to the Commissioner, there was legislation that would allow the voters to choose or the county commission to appoint an administrator, but the salvation would be to consolidate the city and county.

The third attempt at consolidation began on January 13, 1981 when the county board of commissioners agreed with the mayor and city commission to create a consolidation study commission (Adair 1981a). The first conflict in the rules for this attempt was introduced at this meeting. The county commission wanted the referendum vote to be a concurrent majority vote of the city and county, as before, the mayor and city council had already approved the charter commission method for voting by concurrent majorities: One vote in city and one county-wide vote that included the city (Adair 1981b). So, the city countered with another proposed voting method – a single countywide vote (Adair 1981b). This suggestion was not taken and the final vote was a concurrent majority of a vote in the city and a vote in the unincorporated county.

City and county officials discussed the need to concentrate on the content of the proposed charter and expressed their fears early in the process. In February 1981, as the bill to start the consolidation process was introduced in the Georgia legislature, the officials discussed the fears of different groups which, again, centered around the dilution of the African American voting strength, the ability of Winterville to vote down the proposed charter, the tax split between the city and county, and the dominance of the elected officials in the process (Ready 1981).

Although, the officials feared the tax split would be a problem, the financial problem in the introduction of the proposed consolidation bill was a cap on the consolidated government budget. One of the local representatives refused to sign the local bill unless it included a cap on the budget. The bill contained the provision that the consolidated government would have a first

year budget of the combined city and county budget plus thirteen percent for inflation (Morgan 1981). The bill was introduced by two of the three members of the local delegation.

The Final charter for consolidation. Proposed representation was ten commissioners with eight elected from eight districts and two elected at-large, plus a consolidated government chairman elected at-large (Sanderlin 1982a). The council would serve two-year terms (Sec. 2.101). There was also a provision for a county executive, CEO, not a member of the commission, elected at-large serving for four years with a two-term limit (Sec 2.201., *Athens Banner-Herald and Athens Daily News* 1982). One provision was for equalization of water and sewer rates (Sanderlin 1982a). Neither the proposed charter nor the people interviewed stated how the adjustment would be made.

An ad valorem tax limit was provided, but there was no limit for principal and interest on debt (Sec 6.102), plus there was a limitation on borrowing and indebtedness of ten percent of assessed value (Sec. 6.02). Constitutional officer elections and amending the charter would be the same as the proposed 1972 charter.

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. The mayor supported the proposed consolidation charter and felt that this consolidation attempt would succeed by concentrating of educating the citizens on the charter (Sanderlin 1982b). Members of the Concerned Taxpayers of Clarke County (CTCC) voted to support the charter and one member, a dairy farmer, said the proposed charter would provide answers to problems in the county (Toon 1982a, 5A). The current president of CTCC was a former county commissioner who had opposed the last two consolidation charters, but said this charter provided the safeguard of a tax millage cap (Toon 1982a, 1A). The past president of the CTCC, also was an opponent to the last two charters but felt this charter was an improvement (Toon 1982a, 5A).

A Black attorney, who grew up in Athens, was the Vice Chairman of the Charter Commission. He assisted in the formation of the districts for the consolidation charter to assure that the Black community had a chance to elect an official (*Athens Daily News* 1982, 1). A few days after the referendum, an article noted that the owner of a broadcasting corporation in the city was part of the “power structure” pushing consolidation (Toon 1982b, 1A).

One council woman said she supported the consolidation charter because citizens would

have the ability to introduce and overturn ordinances through petitions and that voters would have “a representative who would be answerable to their individual problems” through district representation (Otto 1982a, 1). Actors who were not mentioned in newspaper articles, but were mentioned in a local paper telephone poll, included the two local newspapers and a local radio station as strong supporters of consolidation and a group from the Chamber of Commerce as supporters (*Athens Observer* 1982, 6A).

The anti-consolidation groups, such as the Committee for the Preservation of Athens and Clarke County, feared that the consolidation charter granted too much power to the county executive (Evans 1982). One of the county commissioners, who opposed past consolidation attempts, told the anti-consolidation group that the consolidation was a “take over” by the city and under the proposed charter many existing administrative boards could be abolished (Evans 1982, 1, 13).

The real estate developer who sat on the charter commission opposed the consolidation. He said ““It seems to me that by now it should be apparent to the proponents that the people of this community don’t want it [consolidation]”” and it is “three strikes your out”” (Ready 1982, 1). Other opposition to the consolidation charter included: the mayor of the small town, Winterville; two former county commissioners; two other county commissioners; and two University of Georgia professors (Sanderlin 1982b, 1A, 4A). The present county commission chairman was also opposed to the proposed charter, but not consolidation (Otto 1982b, 1A).

A week before the referendum was held, an article in the *Athens Banner-Herald and Athens Daily News*, did not support or oppose the consolidation attempt but asked the voters to weigh the pros and cons (Adair, 1982). Adair (1982, 1) noted that there were no scandals, no annexation problems, no economic problems, representation problems, but “efficiency and economy” problems caused by the already consolidated services in the governments, such as fire and recreation.

Outcome. On Tuesday, 16 February 1982, the voters of Athens and Clarke County rejected the consolidation attempt. Again, the vote was concurrent in the city and county. The official count in the Laws of Georgia Index (State of Georgia 2000, CCXCI) was: in the city 2,393 “for” consolidation and 2,354 “against” consolidation, while the vote in the county was

2,257 “for” consolidation and 2,338 “against” consolidation.

The opposition’s success was attributed to a “grass roots movement” (Sanderlin 1982c). The chairman of the charter committee said that the opposition distracted the voters with “old-time county politics” where the opposition cited problems in other consolidated governments (Sanderlin 1982c, 1A). Opponents did note that the supporters of consolidation spent more on the campaign (Ready 1982, 1).

Less than one month later after the defeat, an article in the *Athens Observer* questioned whether or not there had been a conspiracy in the defeat of the consolidation charter and the running of city government (Toon 1982b). “According to those opponents [of consolidation], a small group of ‘establishment’ leaders were trying to foist consolidation off onto the hapless citizens to further their own sinister goals” (Toon 1982b, 1-A). Those who were interviewed all noted that they wished there was a “power structure” so that things in the community could get done. The city attorney, an African American, noted that there were different interest groups who tried to get things done but a “power structure creates a self-fulfilling prophecy” which could inhibit people from voting and if one existed then consolidation should have been successful (Toon 1982b, 2-A).

In 1983, one of the local Legislative Representatives tried to reconcile the water rate problem in Clarke County through legislative action (Adair 1983). The Representative said that he would try four different tactics to resolve the water problem: two bills would “abolish” the city and reconstitute it with new “language” on water and sewer; one bill would amend the city charter; or he would introduce a population bill, which could be unconstitutional under the new Georgia Constitution (Adair 1983, 1). The other two representatives thought that the matter would be best dealt with at the local level.

The Athens-Clarke County 1990 Consolidation Attempt

In 1985, the county went to a county manager form of government, the county manager became a county administrator the next year (Veal 1989). The first manager did not work out and caused tension between the commissioners. At one point in mid-1985, one of the commissioners asked for the resignation of the commissioner and the general services director “because of their links” to the manager (Veal 1989).

By early 1988, the Clarke County Commission had settled into the county administrator form of government and commissioners began viewing growth of the county as one of the biggest issues (Ralston 1988). Growth problems became evident in 1989 when the Focus section of the local newspaper noted in the cover story “planning, which is spelled Z-O-N-I-N-G” as the number one issue with the public (Veal 1989). In 1985, a joint City and County Land Use Plan was adopted and new zoning ordinances were adopted, but there was tension between those who wanted to develop their land and those who want controlled and regulated growth (Cunningham 1989).

At this point the county was increasingly more urban and the county land-use policy invariably led to a lawsuit (Veal 1989, 2P). One commissioner said it was time to think about consolidation since a public administration service study made in November 1988 found problems in personnel, recreation, magistrates court, and fire protection (Veal 1989, 2P).

In February 1989, the American Civil Liberties Union said they would provide legal counsel and support for students who wanted to challenge the voting district designation based on the civil rights act gerrymandering section (Todd 1989). Voting lines, drawn to satisfy the U.S. Justice Department racial voting equity, did not take into account the University of Georgia Student voting minority base. The suggestion in the article, in a University of Georgia newspaper, would be for the University with one third of the city population, to become a sixth ward and have 2 seats on the city council.

By July 1989, the final consolidation attempt had started in earnest. Three hundred people attended the first meeting to explore “unification” of the two governments to provide a “unified” voice for the community (Schuh 1989, 7A). As a side note the term “unification” that was linked to the success was also used in the 1972 attempt.

The new committee, Government Reorganization Committee of the Quality Growth Task Force, would petition the city and county governments to set up a 15 member commission with five appointed by the city, five by the county, and five by the Task Force and no elected officials (Schuh 1989, 7A). The Task Force that had its beginning as a task force to look at a one penny sales tax referendum (Horton 1990, 10). The group remained together after the successful referendum to address other concerns and decided to explore consolidation. The success of the

charter commission was its ability to get input from the general community; this secured a grassroots effort (Horton 1990).

The Final Charter for Consolidation. The referendum vote rule for this attempt differed from the previous votes. The consolidation effort would be successful if there was a majority of “yes” votes in the entire county and a majority of “yes” votes to relinquish the city charter within the city of Athens (*Athens Daily News/Athens Banner-Herald* 1990).

There was little difference between 1982 proposed charter and the 1990 proposed charter representation and voting jurisdictions boundary rules. There would again be ten commissioners with eight members elected from districts and two members elected at-large, plus a part-time Chief Elected Officer (CEO), who would be elected at-large (Morris 1990). The final charter raised no objections from the U. S. Justice Department for district approval and was ready for voters (Sanderlin 1990, 3A).

One conflict in the past between city and county residents was the cost and provision of water and sewer. This proposed charter contained the equalization of the rates between the city and county. It was decided to raise the city rates and lower the county rates so everyone paid the same. Based on 1000 cubic feet of water, the average city rate was \$21.74 and the average county rate was \$41.27 (Adair 1990). The equalized rate would be \$29.50, an increase of thirty-five percent for city and a decrease of twenty-eight percent for county residents (Adair 1990).

Actors at the Referendum Campaign Stage. The Task Force that initiated the consolidation effort stayed active throughout the process. In order to assure acceptance of the final charter, they solicited citizen input, recommendations from officials and citizens, and strived for a consensus (Horton 1990, 10). The group viewed themselves as “grass roots,” not “elitists” (Morris 1990). It should be noted that the vice chairman of the charter commission and supporter of the proposed consolidated government was also the president of the local NAACP (Hester 1990).

Supporters for consolidation, Citizens for Unified Government (CUG), out numbered the citizens present at the first public forum (Adkins-Ramey 1990a). The CUG raised over \$40,000 for the campaign and paid an Atlanta firm half of the sum to help canvas the community through telephone calls, home visits, and media advertisement (Morris 1990).

Local elected officials who supported the charter included three of the ten city council members and three county commissioners (*Athens Observer* 1990c, 3A). A former state senator noted consolidation of government structures and functions are a viable alternative to fiscal restraints (*Athens Observer* 1990-3, 8A).

The list of contributors to the Citizens for Unified Government included: the Athens Chamber of Commerce; several local businesses; three banks; and numerous individuals (*Athens Observer* 1990b, 3A). The president and CEO of one local paper was a supporter of the charter. He noted that a university professor said that unification was just to increase the city's tax base and that was correct, but what he failed to say was that the county cannot survive if the city fails since the two are interrelated (Grimes 1990, 8A). A former publisher of the same local paper said he supported the charter since a single layer of government would be "neater, cleaner, and more responsive" (McCommons 1990, 11A). In a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, the former police chief with thirteen years as top city law enforcement official said he had publicly supported consolidation for several years since it would be best for the county to have unified law enforcement (Price 1990, 10A).

The group who opposed consolidation, Community Coalition Against Consolidation, expressed the view that the supporters did not have any "grass-roots people" and were professionals (Morris 1990). Opposition to the consolidation included a city council member who expressed concerns as to the consolidated government's responsibilities especially the description of "human services" (Adkins-Ramey 1990b). Reasons for opposition ranged from fear that taxes would go up, district lines would weaken their vote, and that the banks and newspaper were for it (*Athens Daily News Staff*. 1990). In writing the opposition view for the Unification analysis, Dr. Richard Timberlake (1989; 1990, 11), a professor of economics at the university, viewed consolidation as means for downtown Athens to have the entire county pay for redevelopment.

Local elected officials who opposed the charter included four of the ten city council members and one county commissioner (*Athens Observer* 1990b, 3A). One report named five current city council members and two former city council members opposed the charter since it would dilute minority representation (Morris 1990, 5B). One city council member, who was

Black, said he worried about the about Black representation in the charter, however a council woman said that with three Black city council members and one Black county commissioner proved that the people vote for the person not their race (Morris 1990, 5B). The letter to the editor in opposition to the charter was signed not only by the city council member but also by two community representatives: an officer with the Inter-Community Council of Neighborhood Associations and a representative from the African-American Interdenominational Ministerial Association (Sims et. al. 1990, 10A). In their letter, they note that the consolidation effort appears to be supported by the “upper middle class” neighborhoods but not the “low income” neighborhoods (Sims et. al. 1990, 10A).

Outcome. The prediction was that this would be a loss for those who desired change. Merrill Morris (1990) of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* predicted that “despite a well-funded advertising campaign in favor of consolidation, many predict the voters will turn it down for the fourth time.” The final official count was 11,572 “for” and 8,110 “against” this was a combination of a city vote of 3,618 “for” and 2,624 “against” and a county wide vote of 7,954 “for” consolidation and 5,486 “against” consolidation (Just the Facts 1990, 5).

4.03 The Jacksonville-Duval County Florida Consolidation Attempt: 1967

Richard Martin described the 1967 consolidation of Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida as *A Quiet Revolution* (1993). However, the path of consolidation was not as quiet or with such ease as is portrayed. Many in the Black community supported the consolidation, even though the Black community knew that the consolidation would dilute their strength from forty percent of the population to a little over twenty percent. Why would a minority group allow this to happen without a fight? Why would they support the revolutionary change?

The reason is that the Black community was losing political ground and had been losing political ground since the early 1950s. On May 3, 1949, a referendum in Jacksonville reduced the number of wards from eighteen to nine and the number of representatives by the same number (*Florida Times Union* 1949b). In the same referendum the mayor would be elected as a commissioner and five commissioners would be elected at-large (*Florida Times Union* 1949a.). Under the new system the election of council members would go from district elections to at-large.

Final charter for consolidation. The final proposed consolidation charter provided for nineteen representatives with fourteen elected from single member district and five elected at-large for four years (FL Law 67-1320, Art. 5). This would equal the representation that the citizens had in both the city and county, since there were nine council member, five commissioners, and five county commissioners. The mayor would be the Chief Administrative Officer, elected for four years with a two term limit, with veto power (FL Law 67-1320, Art. 6). Constitutional Officers would remain elected. There were also provisions for recall and referendum by freeholders for tax reduction (FL Law 67-1320).

During the consolidation constitutional crafting stage two significant events occurred. On July 11, 1967, The local paper announced that the local legislative delegation was preparing a legislative bill that would annex all populated area adjacent to Jacksonville, if the consolidation was rejected (*Florida Times Union* 1967b). This was suggested earlier in the summer by six of the local legislative delegation (Martin 1967a). The group had wanted a back-up plan for the community which included a strong mayor, abolishment of the city commission and annexation (Martin 1967a, 1A).

The other event was the passage of a bill that would change the districts lines to ensure that the only two Black council members would represent two different districts had passed both houses of the state legislature and was sent to the Governor for approval (*Florida Times Union* 1967g). The very next day, the Black leaders of the city endorsed consolidation and said they were organizing a committee to convince Black voters to support consolidation (*Florida Times Union* 1967f; *Florida Times Union* 1967h). With the current representation of only two Black council member out of twelve (nine council members and four commissioners) and no Black representation on the county commission out of five county commissioners, the alternative of consolidation versus annexation was probably clear for Black leaders.

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. Other actors who supported consolidation of Jacksonville and Duval County included: Four of the local legislative delegation (*Florida Times Union* 1967c); the Jaycees (*Florida Times Union* 1967c); the Third Congressional District Voters League (*Florida Times Union* 1967d); the Jacksonville Branch of the American Association of University Women (*Florida Times Union* 1967l); two city council members, one a Black woman

(*Florida Times Union* 1967e). The acting county health officer supported consolidation since it would merge the health departments and would streamline services (Kerr 1967). The Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce endorsed the consolidation charter as local government reform (*Florida Times Union* 1967m). Richard Martin (1967d, 1B) noted the mayor supported consolidation attempt, as well as other community leaders and organizations, including: the Duval Medical Society; the local Bar Association; Friends of the Public Library; civic groups like the area Jaycees, the Civitan club, Rotary club, and Kiwanis; the local Black organizations such as the Jacksonville NAACP and the Urban League; Republican Executive Committee; area churches and the Ministerial Alliance; and “small businessmen’s clubs, and neighborhood associations” (Martin 1967d, 1B).

The Florida Times Union wrote several supportive and endorsing editorials and the day of the referendum had an endorsement of consolidation on the front page of the paper (*Florida Times Union* 1967n). The Duval County Republican Executive Committee stated they would officially support the revised consolidation charter (Courson 1967). The revision curtailed some of the power and strength of the mayor, reduced the size of the council, gave the small incorporated towns the right to opt out of the consolidated government, maintained the elective constitutional officers, and provided a millage limit (Courson 1967, 1A).

Groups who opposed the merger were also vocal. There were members of the Duval County Republican Executive Committee who did not support the merger. One member who was head of the opposition group said that consolidation would produce “big government” by granting it too much power (Courson 1967, 18 A; Martin 1967b). The small beach towns feared they would lose autonomy (*Florida Times Union* 1967j). Two of the local democratic representatives opposed the consolidation (*Florida Times Union* 1967c) and the Jacksonville Democratic Executive Committee also opposed the attempt (Martin 1967d). Richard Martin (1967d, 1B) noted that six local state representatives opposed the consolidation effort.

The local union of city and county government workers feared loss of public employees’ jobs (*Florida Times Union* 1967i; *Florida Times Union* 1967k; Martin 1967c). One of the Black councilwomen feared dilution of Black votes in elections (Martin 1967b). The local utility commissioner feared the change from elected utility commissioner to appointed and increase in

rates (*Florida Times Union* 1967l).

Outcome. The referendum was held on Tuesday, August 8, 1967. The proposed consolidation charter was accepted by a margin of two to one, an unofficial vote of 52,585 “for” to 28,872 “against” (Sigler 1967, 1A). According to the newspaper report the small towns in the county voted not to join the consolidated effort (Sigler 1967, 1A).

4.04 Tampa-Hillsborough Consolidation Attempts: 1967, 1970, and 1972

Tampa and Hillsborough’s purposeful look at consolidation was in 1958. The “Cole Report” named several problems in the city and county that could be answered through government reorganization (Cole 1958; *Tampa Daily Times* 1958). A citizens committee, Citizens Committee on City of Tampa and County of Hillsborough Governmental Reorganization, suggested consolidation of services which would form a “metropolitan federation” (*Tampa Daily Times* 1958, 1). By November of that year proposed legislation was drawn up for the next state legislative session, but the city council was opposed to several points that they considered risky and stated that the proposed charter was just a “copy” of the Dade Metro Plan (V. Bradford 1958b). Henry Cole suggested a metro form since it would leave the present cities intact, would reduce the number of duplicated jobs and politicians, recognize responsible agencies, and produce efficiency (Cole 1958; V. Bradford 1958a). The least desirable tactic would be complete consolidation since attempting to form a single government would be met with extreme opposition (Cole 1958; V. Bradford 1958a). The two local governments strived to take this last road.

The 1967 Tampa-Hillsborough Consolidation Attempt

The formal consolidation attempt began on November 8, 1966 when voters approved a Florida Constitutional amendment for consolidation of Hillsborough County and Tampa (Hendrick 1967b, 20A). The vote was 42,005 for consolidated government and 18,429 against consolidation (Hendrick 1967b, 20A). The Consolidation Charter Committee was formed from nine local leaders, one was Black (Watson 1967b, 16A). In last minute changes, the legislative delegation mapped the proposed districts by registered voters and not population (Inglis 1967, 1A).

Final charter for consolidation. The representation for the proposed 1967 consolidated

government was thirteen representatives, all elected at-large for four-year terms (FL. Law 67-2122). There would be eight districts and eight of the representative would reside in those districts; one representative nominated and elected at-large would serve as the vice mayor; plus four representative would be nominated by groups and elected at-large (Sec. 3.01). The mayor would be elected directly for four years with appointment and veto power (Art. 4). The mayor would appoint the county administrator who assists the mayor (Sec. 4.04).

A referendum of freeholders would be required for ad valorem bonds (Sec. 6.703). There is also a provision for initiative, referendum, and recall (Art. 15).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. The “governors of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce” endorsed the proposed consolidation charter and the Chamber voted to support the charter over objections from the Chamber’s aviation committee, stating that the charter did not pose a threat to the airline industry (Purvis 1967, 1B; *Tampa Tribune* 1967c). The Chamber’s aviation committee had expressed concern that the proposed charter might effect the sale of airport improvement bonds, so although the Chamber voted to support the charter, there were some members who said they “personally” would oppose adoption of the consolidation charter (Purvis 1967, 1B).

A debate on the proposed consolidation charter held by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce had supporters represented by a Tampa insurance executive and the former Tampa mayor against the opponents represented by a Plant City attorney and one of the county commissioners (Wilkerson 1967b, 2B). The proponents noted that consolidation would provide: efficiency; home rule; elimination of future cities from incorporation in the county; internal audit; and taxation equity (Wilkerson 1967b, 2B). Opponents countered with the fear that this charter would not eliminate the inefficiencies in government, would give too much power to the Chief Executive, and with no limit on tax rates would increase cost of government (Wilkerson 1967b, 2B). One of the biggest issues was the elimination of the aviation and expressway authorities, as well as the Hospital and Welfare Board (*Tampa Tribune* 1967d, 1A).

Consolidation was endorsed by the Bar Association of Tampa and Hillsborough, the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, the Central Trades and Labor Assembly, the Hillsborough County Taxpayers Association, the League of Women Voters, Merchants

Association of Greater Tampa, three Kiwanis Clubs, Meninak Club of Tampa, President's Roundtable of Tampa, Tampa Board of Realtors, Tampa Jaycees, Temple Terrace Civitan Club, and Treasure City Jaycees (Citizens Committee for Consolidation 1967). The former mayor and an insurance executive were supporters of the charter and led public debates to garner support from the citizens for ratification (Wilkerson 1967b, 2B). In an article, one reporter noted that the current mayor of Tampa supported the charter (Henderick 1967b). However, a few days before, during an election debate, one reporter noted that the mayor supported consolidation, but did not report if he supported the charter (Plumb 1967, 2B).

The opposition group, the Hillsborough County Citizens Committee for Defeat of the Charter, was led by a retired minister (Hendrick 1967b, 20A). Opposition to the consolidation charter included the county commissioners. Two commissioners worked publicly, to defeat the attempt, while the other three said they were for consolidation, but against this charter (Hendrick 1967b, 20A). Two incorporated towns in the county were vocal in their opposition to the charter (Hendrick 1967b, 20A).

A week before the consolidation referendum, the Pinellas, West Pasco-Hernando edition of the Tampa Tribune ran a small article entitled: "Charter in Trouble as Election Nears" (Watson, 1967a, 2B). The article noted that several supporters of the consolidation charter now felt that the charter would be rejected. The only explanation was that a strong campaign by opponents and disputes over provisions in the charter may have raised too many questions, but that under the state constitutional amendment, this would not be the end of the attempts only this round (Watson, 1967a, 2B). A reporter noted that the average citizen was apathetic and ignorant of the proposed charter (Wilkerson 1967a, 3B). The day after the referendum, it was noted that the city police "were considered sure opponents of the charter because it would have put city and all other law officers under the county sheriff" (Cribb 1967c, 14A).

Two days before the referendum one of the local state representatives noted that the reason that the legislative delegation set up the charter commission and supported the consolidation charter was that the city had trouble with service delivery to the fringe areas; could not get money from the county to provide services; and sought legislation to remedy the situation, while the county sought legislation "which was just as vigorously opposed by the City

of Tampa” (Sessums 1967, 2B).

One significant event occurred two weeks before the referendum. There were riots, snipers, and fire bombs for four nights in the Black community after a white policeman shot a young Black man who was fleeing from an area where a robbery occurred (Wood 1967, 19A). There seemed to be conflicting views as to the status of race relations in the city. Although the editorials noted that relations had always been good (Deloach 1967, 1B; *Tampa Tribune* 1967b), one another article noted that conditions, police brutality and community relations had kept the Black community on edge for years (Cribb 1967a, 3B). Calm was restored by the leaders and young Black volunteers who patrolled the streets and wore white hats (*Tampa Tribune* 1967a). The action was so beneficial that within days it became known as the “Tampa Technique” and representatives from the United States Justice Department visited the area to study Tampa’s solution to a problem that plagued many cities (Cribb 1967b, 1B).

A second event occurred the day before the referendum. The County Assessors office sent out the notices of the new tax assessments that bore a “countywide 100 per cent valuation reassessment” and over 500 irate taxpayers stormed the office to protest (Herdrick 1967a, 1B).

Outcome. The 1967 consolidation charter was rejected by the voters in Tampa and Hillsborough by 11,281 “for” and 28,451 “against” with only 22 percent of the vote (Cribb 1967c, 1A). One supporter blamed the news media for not publicizing the charter (Cribb 1967c, 1A).

Two days after the failed attempt, the county commissioners discussed merging several functions with the city. Functions such as building and planning were discussed but the decision was to seek legal advice, while the much needed merger of water and sewer department was opposed by one of the county commissioners who represented a small city and unincorporated town (Hendrick 1967c, 2B).

The 1970 Tampa-Hillsborough Consolidation Attempt

In the 1970 attempt campaign, there were many reports in the local paper compared the proposed consolidation charter and the local context of Tampa and Hillsborough with the accepted consolidation attempt in Jacksonville and Duval County (Greene 1970e; Greene 1970f; Greene 1970g; *Tampa Tribune and Times* 1970). This occurred when the Chamber of Commerce invited the president of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce to speak at a luncheon to boost

the Tampa Chambers support for consolidation (Emmons 1970).

One Black attorney, who was a member of the consolidation charter, fought hard for district representation and district election, but was not pleased with the final changes by the local legislative delegation since the chairman of the council would be decided from the at-large representatives (Inglis 1970a, 8A). The attorney said the charter was the only way for a Black citizen to get elected to a local office (*Tampa Times* 1970b, 7).

Final charter for consolidation. The representation for the 1970 proposed consolidated government increased to fifteen representatives elected for four years, five elected at-large and ten elected from ten districts (FL. Law 70-724). The mayor would be elected directly for four years (Art. 14) with appointment and veto power (Art. 6). There was a provision for millage limits (Sec. 8.12) that set the limit and provided for a referendum for confirmation of a *valorem* rate change . Direct election of constitutional officers (Art 14). There is also a provision for initiative, referendum, and recall (Art. 15).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. Supporters of the consolidation charter listed in the local paper included: a local homeowner association, a veteran's association, a merchants association, League of Women Voters, the homebuilder's association, County Taxpayers Association, Chamber of Commerce, the local Bar Association, newspapers, the president's roundtable, television station, and a radio station (Citizens for the Charter 1970a, 10 G). Two days before the referendum, there was a political advertisement by the Board of Directors of the First Federal Savings and Loan in support of the charter as a way to diminish pollution, improve transportation, strengthen law enforcement and provide efficient government, as well as "pinpoint responsibility, streamline operations and allow appropriate agencies to tackle problems" (*Tampa Tribune* 1970a, 7B). The president of the League of Women Voters said that the city and county had problems with water and sewage, as well as the lack of cooperation between the governments (*Tampa Times* 1970b, 13). The League president also successfully ran for County Commissioner two years later (Kaighin 1972, 5A).

A pro-consolidation group, the next day listed the members of the Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation, the Tampa mayor, the County Sheriff, and one city councilman as supporters (Citizens for the Charter 1970b, 9 A). The mayor said that he did not approve of all of

the sections of the proposed charter. He said he supported consolidation as a way to make residents who moved to the suburbs to avoid high city taxes pay for city services they still used (Craddock 1970, 9A).

One local legislative delegation member noted that consolidation should be supported for efficiency reasons. He stated that county government was could no longer solve many local problems like the purchase of voting machines, the auto inspections process, local expressway construction progress, and the high property taxes (Walker 1970a, 1). In support of the charter, one of the proponents noted that this would be a way for Tampa to get some of the road and bridges fund revenue, a contentious point between the city and county for some time (Inglis 1970b, 15A). It was also reported that the local Black community paper, Florida Sentinel Bulletin, supported the charter (*Tampa Times* 1970b).

The local paper editorial said that the county commissioner opposed consolidation since they would lose their jobs, but that consolidation was needed to reduce property taxes, increase state transfer of cigarette tax funds, promote efficiency in government, assist in pollution cleanup, and other positives (*Tampa Tribune* 1970b, 1C). One of the local newspaper's journalist explored an in depth comparison of the Jacksonville savings and expenditures and did not provide the reader with a definitive answer to whether consolidation would save money, but stated that citizens will "make the decision based on the pocketbook issue" (Greene 1970h, 2B). A discussion by a legislative delegation, a pro-charter member, and a member of the Charter Commission, an anti-charter member, on the charter was held for the city employees, who had questions about their employment and pension status (Greene 1970d, 1B). Both sides tried to assure the group that they would be continued.

In June, an official from the city electric company, also a member of the commission expressed fears that the compromises in representation would be a problem (Inglis 1970a, 8A). Months later, during the campaign, he became one of the opponents to the proposed charter, since it was changed by the legislative delegation (Greene 1970d, 1B).

There was vocal opposition to the charter. During the referendum debates, two of the city council members said their main opposition was district representation, city employees would lose benefits, and the citizens would lose the right to vote on franchises (Greene 1970b, 1B). The

city council wanted to censure the Chamber of Commerce for supporting the consolidation effort, since the chamber is provided public monies and six of the seven council members oppose consolidation (Greene 1970i, 2B). The Chamber denied that they used public funds (Brantley 1970). One of the opposition group chairmen and the county commissioners wanted the County Charter Commission to stop endorsing the consolidation charter with public funds and should get bids for printing materials (Greene 1970a, 2B). Five of the seven council members opposed the charter (*Tampa Times* 1970b, 10). The County Commissioners were vocally opposed to the charter, of the five commissioners, four opposed the charter and one had “no comment” (*Tampa Times* 1970b, 11).

The Black community was divided between support and opposition. One local Black activist, who headed the poverty program for the county, expressed the view that the charter was a token effort toward minority representation (*Tampa Times* 1970b, 7). This man was the head of the NAACP (DeLoach 1967, 1B). However, references of opposition to the charter by the NAACP were not found in the local paper.

Not quite a month before the referendum an opposition organization, Truth Squad, was formed to oppose the consolidation charter. The director of the organization, a former newswriter who lived in Pinellas County, was joined by five county commissioners, a city council member, and several unnamed “private parties” (Jerke 1970a, 7C).

Members of the local farming community declared their opposition to the charter. Opposition to the charter by the board of directors of the Hillsborough County Farm Bureau and the Turkey Creek Farmers’ Activity Club was reported by the director of the anti-consolidation group (*Tampa Times* 1970a, 5A).

The small communities next to Tampa were opposed to the charter. Several businessmen, the South Brandon Civic Club, and the Brandon Chamber of Commerce voted to oppose the charter and expressed concern that the consolidation charter which was changed to include five at-large districts would limit their voice in the government (M. Bradford 1970, 6A).

Independent political parties also addressed the proposed charter. The day before the referendum, a paid political advertisement compared the proposal to a Karl Marx ideal of consolidated government that would place “power in the hands of a few,” increase taxes, and

citizens to loose their “voice” in local government since each citizen could only vote for seven officials instead of sixteen (American Independent Party 1970, 8C).

The city police did not publicly oppose the charter, but the Fraternal Order of Police did vocally oppose the consolidation of the city police and the county sheriff’s department (Raum 1970a, 11B). Days after the referendum, a reporter interviewed city police and fire departments and reported that they were opposed to the charter (Hathaway 1970). These employees voiced concerns over job security and pensions (Hathaway 1970, 8A).

There were two critical events during the campaign. First, the city was cited by the county pollution control board for discharging waste effluent into the river (Walker 1970b, 1B). A few days before, the city found out that an advanced sewer treatment system would increase the customer bills by 400 percent (Greene 1970c, 1B). The second event would be news worthy for the next few years. The county’s purchase of 200 new voting machines was investigated by a county grand jury in August 1970; the scandal included bribery and mail fraud in the sale of the old machines and the resale, in Texas, at a considerable profit (Blount 1971, 21 A).

Two days before the referendum, a viewpoint by a *Tampa Times* reporter noted that the consolidation effort was hard to call; there appeared to be as many supporters as opponents (Raum 1970b). Opposition viewed consolidation as generated by the local press and that the county commissioners, plus the voting machine scandal was a way for the two daily newspapers to convince the citizens to vote for the charter (Raum 1970b, 13A).

Outcome. The consolidation referendum was rejected by the voters; the vote tally the next day was 50,623 to 35,478 with opposition in rural area thirty to one and a slight support within the city (Greene 1970j, 1; *Tampa Tribune* 1970c). It was noted that not everyone who went to the polls voted in the referendum; 107,000 electors voted for Governor while only 86,101 (unofficial numbers) voted in the referendum (Greene 1970j, 8).

Both the proponents and opponents said it was time for the two governments to work together to solve local government problems (Greene 1970j, 8). Two days after the referendum the county commission announced that they would ask the legislative delegation to reduce the county tax millage rate (Jerke 1970b). The editorial on that same day said that fear had driven the voters to choose the wrong outcome, money problems of the city would not go away while

citizens would continue to pay for county services they did not receive, and finally that consolidation of functions would happen in time (*Tampa Tribune* 1970d, 20A).

The 1972 Tampa-Hillsborough Florida Consolidation Attempt

If critical events produced a successful consolidation attempt, then Tampa and Hillsborough voters should have overwhelmingly approved the 1972 consolidation charter. The first was water shortage. In the fall of 1971, early in October a water crisis occurred. The water pressure in the city dropped to a trickle (*Tallahassee Democrat* 1971, 12).

In July 1971, a former president of a local bank, an election board member, a county election board member and a Jacksonville man were indicted on bribery and mail fraud stemming from the sale and resale of the old voting machines after the county purchased expensive “new” machines (Blount 1971; Manning 1971). There were indications that the county commissioners were involved in the bribes, but the county commission chairman said he was not aware of any bribes (Alarcon 1971, 6A).

By January 1972, the Shoup’s case had extended to an allegation of \$110 thousand in bribes to county elected officials (Hendrick 1972a, 1A). By February, the Shoup executives pleaded “no contest” (Alarcon 1972) and the federal prosecutor said he would ask for indictments against four county commissioners (Hendrick 1972b, 1A). It was also suggested that the Shoup’s bribery scandal and the indictment of county commissioners could help the cause of consolidation (Franklin 1972a, 8A).

Final charter for consolidation. The representation for the 1972 proposed consolidated government would be nine representatives from nine districts, all elected at-large for four years (FL. Law 72-555). The mayor would be elected directly for four years (Art. 14) with appointment and veto power (Art. 6). Direct election of constitutional officers (Art 14). Again, there was a millage limit provided (8.12). There is also a provision for initiative, referendum, and recall (Art. 15).

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. The third and as yet last consolidation attempt began in 1971 when the president of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce began calling for a third consolidation charter (Franklin 1972b, 7A). The Chamber feared that there would be a negative reaction if they pushed for consolidation, so the engaged a newcomer to

head the effort (Franklin 1972b, 7A). The Chamber was low keyed in this effort and no references to their support could be found in the local papers.

During the campaign, a court case initiated by one of the local citizens stopped the referendum campaign briefly when representation was found to be unconstitutional (Morgan and Lynch 1972, 1A). The issue was heard by the Florida Supreme Court (Stephens 1972b) and their decision was to allow the referendum to proceed and for the local circuit judge to redistrict the county before the county elections (*Tampa Times* 1972a, 5B). The opposition vowed to undertake a “door-to-door campaigning and education of the electorate” (*Tampa Times* 1972a, 5B).

In the height of the campaign, an editorial in one of the local papers noted that the outcome of this third attempt might be hard to predict, but with water supply and sewage disposal problems, as well as the problems in county government, made the choice of consolidated government “reasonable” (*Tampa Times* 1972b, 8A). The editorial warned that given the division of the legislative delegation into rural versus urban legislators this could be the last chance.

Although supporters held an active campaign, there did not appear to be as great a diversity of individuals and groups who publicly voiced their support. However, two actors who opposed the last consolidation attempts joined the supporters. One councilman and another member of the Truth Squad that opposed the charter in 1970, both felt that this charter remedied the problems in the other consolidation charters (Stephen 1972a, 1B). The mayor and one other council member voiced their support of the charter (Franklin 1972c, 6A). Two of the councilmen were publicly institutional neutrals and the city clerk who would lose his job under the new charter did not publicly support or oppose the charter (Franklin 1972c, 6A). The president of a local bank who was the chairman of the charter committee and the charter commission attorney also supported the charter, citing “efficiency, economy, accountability, and representation” as their reasons for support (Franklin 1972c, 6A).

Candidates for local office were cautious about their stand on the charter; of the eight candidates for county commission and state legislature there were seven who admitted opposition to the proposed charter (Stephens 1972d, 1B). The Hillsborough Council of Civic Organizations voted to oppose the charter because of the strong mayor provision (Stephens 1972d, 2B).

According to a reporter, the present county commissioners were not vocal about the charter; the reporter assumed it was because of the voting machine scandal (Franklin 1972c, 6A). However, the reporter noted that privately that out of the five commissioners only one commissioner supported the charter (Franklin 1972c, 6A).

Vocal opposition to the charter was expressed by the small county towns and rural areas. One reporter commented that the small town, Plant City, had fought against consolidation in the past because it was closer in proximity and philosophy to more rural counties to the east of Hillsborough, while a rancher from the rural area of the county opposed the charter and said that the area should explore regional governance (Franklin 1972d, 1A). The rancher was a former member of the Aviation Authority and the regional water management district (Stephens 1972c, 2B). Other members of the opposition included: an attorney in the small unincorporated community of Brandon supported consolidation but feared that the proposed charter is would produce big government with too much power; the Temple Terrace mayor and council member viewed the charter as a threat to the town's autonomy; a plant city businessman viewed the attempt as creating big government and a threat to the small towns; and one city council woman said she supported consolidation but not the strong mayor provision (Franklin 1972d, 12A). The Temple Terrace mayor was also a developer and former radio executive and the Temple Terrace council member was also an assistant professor at the University of South Florida (Stephens 1972c, 2B).

The Friday before the referendum, a *Tampa Times* reporter compared the Metro Dade, Jacksonville-Duval, and Tampa-Hillsborough charters. He noted that the fears of this attempt's opponents were the transfer of municipal debts to the entire county area and inequitable representation, plus he reported that Tampa and Hillsborough County did not have a crisis that would lead to consolidation (Franklin 1972e, 7A). The reporter did mention the Shoup Voting Machine Scandal and problems in services for the city and county, but ended on the note if this consolidation failed, supporters would probably not try again (Franklin 1972e, 7A). The Sunday before the referendum, the editorial noted Jacksonville residents had lower property taxes, fire insurance rates, and crime rate, while they had increased federal assistance for water and sewer lines (*Tampa Tribune* 1972, 1C).

The Saturday before the referendum the proponents of the consolidation charter said they saw victory based on a telephone survey of 300 citizens (Stephens 1972e, 1B). On the same page the Plant City High School was given notice that the school was substandard and needed renovation or the school would lose its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) (Corpin 1972a, 1B). The chairman of the SACS team noted that this happened to the Jacksonville schools (Corpin 1972a, 1B). There was also an article on the plight of fund-strapped Hillsborough School System; if funds did not appear within a month, the school system would have to borrow money to meet expenses (Corpin 1972b, 1B)

Outcome. With all these problems the consolidation should have been a sure bet, but the consolidation charter was rejected by a large margin. The unofficial vote the day after the attempt was 33,160 for and 73,568 against the proposed charter (Stephens 1972f, 1A).

4.05 The 1970 Pensacola-Escambia County, Florida Consolidation Attempt

Pensacola had one consolidation attempt during the time period. There were one significant event before the consolidation. Before 1959, Pensacola which had five districts and ten representatives, five elected at-large and five elected from districts. A successful referendum in 1959 changed the representation to five districts with ten representatives elected at-large (FL Law 59-1730). District representation had decreased. This is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Final charter for consolidation. The proposed consolidation charter (1970 FL 681) proposed representation in five districts with two members from each district, one elected at-large and one elected from the district, plus one representative elected at large (Sec 4.01). This would actually revert the city back to the pre-1959 representative form. However, there would be a total of eleven seats, one member would be elected at large with no district residency required. The council would serve for four years (Sec. 4.02) and a mayor would be chosen from the council members who would serve for two years (Sec. 4.06). The form of government would be council-manager with the council appointing the County Administrator (Sec. 5.01). The constitutional officers would be elected, but the council selects the judges (Sec 5.302 and Art. 6).

There would be a millage cap with an increase only after a freeholder referendum, also freeholder could petition to have a referendum to reduce millage rate (Sec. 8.302). A freeholder referendum would also be required for ad valorem bonds (Sec 8.202). One of the way to amend

the charter would be a petition (Sec. 12.02). However, how the percentage for the petition was determined was complex.

Actors at the referendum campaign stage. The Pensacola Bay League of Women Voters supported the consolidation charter since it would provide “efficiency, economy, and elimination of duplication in government” and protects the taxpayer (Aldea 1970, 5A). Other supporters noted that the charter would affix responsibility, since there would be a clear delineation of authority for problems; would eliminate the conflict between the governments; and provide greater efficiency and economy (Duke 1970b).

Actors who supported the proposed charter included an official from the local radio station who said the charter would eliminate duplication and conflict in several areas and would “stabilize the tax structure;” a county commissioner who listed conflict between the city and county led to continuing physical and management problems; one attorney said that consolidation would provide county residents greater voice in utility rates and would eliminate charges to city residents for county services they did not receive (Duke 1970b, 2A). The attorney, also said that consolidation would provide an organizational structure that can solve the area’s problems, while one councilman said consolidation would increase accountability and responsiveness (Duke 1970b, 14A).

Early in the campaign, the local newspapers began supporting the consolidation effort. The Sunday paper, which contained both of the local papers noted that consolidation would provide “the most efficient, effective, and active form of government to preserve the quality of life in Escambia County” (*Pensacola News Journal* 1970, 2B).

Supporters held several talks to gather support for the proposed charter. However, at one of the forums, just two weeks before the referendum, the talk became a shouting match between the supporters and the opposers in the audience (Bullis 1970). One of the paid political advertisements in the local paper was geared towards garner support for the charter listed all the local individuals who had worked on the charter, including the local legislative delegation (Escambia County Citizens For Better Government 1970). The assumption was that all these individuals supported the proposed charter. One of the attorneys who supported the charter asserted that the charter would not produce a “Metro” type area, but would provide some

resolution to inequities in taxes between the city and county and help to resolve pollution (Waite 1970, 6A).

In a paid political advertisement, the president of the Home Builders Association of West Florida noted that the organization voted 83-18 to support consolidation because duplication resulted in conflicting building codes; no planning for sewage disposal; increased costs; and “buck passing” (Home Builders Association of West Florida 1970, 19A).

The efficiency issue was one of the debated issues in the proposed charter. During debate one opponent, the president of a local hospital board, feared that the differences between the city and rural resident could not be served by one government and a former council man feared that consolidation would lead to not only higher taxes but also government run by “experts” (Duke 1970b, 2A). Escambia County Farm Bureau opposed the proposed charter for many of the same reasons. The Farm Bureau said that the merged government would: Cost citizens more in property taxes, fees, excise taxes, and service charges; have unlimited power with few checks and balances and “take land for any public use;” and “make a bureaucracy of our local government” (Escambia County Farm Bureau 1970, 6A).

The County Tax Collector said he opposed the charter for personal reasons (Duke 1970b, 14A). The Escambia County Circuit Court Clerk opposed the charter citing increased taxes and loss of employee jobs (Bogan 1970). The civil service system in the charter was not mapped out and would require legislative action after the charter was ratified (Harling 1970a, 13C).

Other opposition included: a county commissioner who said county residents feared consolidation; a city councilman who said the charter was confusing; another county commissioner who said efficiency would not be gained through consolidation; and a candidate for county commission who said the charter lacks representation for county residents (Duke 1970c, 1B, 4B).

In their political advertisement the Escambia County Freeholders Association opposed consolidation since it would lead to Metro government and increased taxes (Escambia County Freeholders Association 1970). The president of the Escambia County Freeholders Association said the charter was “dangerous” (Duke 1970c, 1B) and would result in higher taxes (Duke 1970b, 2 A).

There were articles on the problems in both city and county governments. One article noted the city council and city manager were aware of their deteriorating public image, a perception that the author viewed as due to the stating that gas rates would increase between five- and ten percent when in reality the increase was thirty percent (Duke 1970a). The reporter noted that this would fuel desires for change in city government (Duke 1970a, 1D).

Two events occurred during the referendum campaign. The first event was the investigation of the Escambia County Sheriff and Sheriff's office in July. The *Pensacola Journal* editorial hoped that the investigation would be open and fair (*Pensacola Journal* 1970, 4A). The second event occurred just before the referendum. The city was cited by the Florida Department of Air and Water pollution for discharging sewage, the sixth citation in three years (Albertson 1970, 1A). The article said that court action might be taken.

Outcome. The vote for consolidation would be a vote of the entire county and a vote of the entire city with success a majority in both (Harling 1970a). The vote reported in the paper was 29,694 against and 9,113 for consolidation with rejection in the city as well as the county (Harling 1970b, 1A). Supporters of the charter were surprised that the charter was overwhelmingly rejected and said they felt the subject would not come up for a long time (Duke 1970d, 7A). The official vote was 5,350 "for" and 7,686 "against" consolidation within the city and 4,554 "for" and 22,598 "against" consolidation within the county (Escambia Supervisor of Elections).

4.06 Conclusion

This chapter explored twelve consolidation attempts from 1960 to 1990 in five cities. Although each city had a different context that was important to the acceptance or rejection of the proposed consolidation charter, there are some common points. The proposed rules in these consolidation charters created conflict and were divisive to the community. For the rural residents the cost of government was important in all twelve cases.

The case analysis reveals that even though many suburban residents may desired services, they also desired low taxes. Farming and rural groups, also, might not need or desire the services that consolidation pledged to provide. Rural interests generally feared that they would be

burdened with the costs of services provided to all the residents. In Athens 1990, for example, when the cost of the services were resolved there was support for the proposed charter.

Civic organizations, like the League of Women Voters, supported consolidation for efficiency reasons. In all the cases, the business associations, like the Chamber of Commerce or the local Jaycees, also, supported consolidation for efficiency reasons. However, in the three attempts in Tampa, the chambers of commerce outside the central city did not support consolidation. Business associations outside of the city tended to focus on the costs of the proposed government. Since these groups were based outside the central city they also feared the loss of their identity.

In every attempt, the Black community played a significant role in the acceptance or rejection of the consolidation charter. When rules were crafted that did not provide the procedural safeguard for the electoral system that would provide access to the governing structure, Black leaders did not support the proposed rule change.

Elected officials support or opposition to the proposed consolidation charter, also depended on the rules. If the rules favored the city over the county, city elected officials tended to support consolidation. However, if the rules were crafted to favor the county, then the city officials did not support the change. The same was true for county officials.

How these groups and rules interact will be explored in Chapter 5. Boolean analysis will be used to determine which combination can be linked to the acceptance or rejection of the proposed consolidation constitution.