WHERE WE STAND

Update

Where We Stand is the strategic assessment of Greater St. Louis and peer metros nationwide

Issue #9

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A Look at the 2002 U.S. Census of Governments

Originally published in 1992, Where We Stand: The Strategic Assessment of the St. Louis Region compares the socio-political composition and economic performance of metropolitan areas nationwide.

According to the latest report, released by East-West Gateway in 2002, metro St. Louis ranked fifth among 35 peer metropolitan areas in total units of local government, second in units of local government per capita, and third in municipalities.[1]

In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau released updated data about local governments. How have the number, form and purpose of local governments changed in the U.S. and in St. Louis since the 1997 Census of Governments? What are the national trends and does St. Louis follow or diverge from them? And how does the number of local governments affect the region's economic performance?

A Survey of Peer Metros

Between 1997 and 2002, the average number of local governments among metropolitan areas measured in the 2002 *Where We Stand* dropped from 364 to 360. Eleven peer metros recorded an increase in local government ... *inside*

Governments Per Capita

Between 1997 and 2002, the average ratio of local governments per person decreased from 14.6 to 13.3. Indianapolis showed significant downward movement with a decrease of 28 special-purpose governments ... *inside*

Municipalities Per Capita

Louisville continued to lead the *Where We Stand* peer metro pack in 2002 with 11.5 municipalities per 100,000 persons. However, following the national trend,[1] Louisville registered an overall decrease of municipalities ... *inside*

Special-Purpose Governments

Of the 87,576 governments identified by the 2002 Census of Governments, 40 percent were special-purpose governments—independent public entities that provide distinctly local functions to serve local and regional needs. Examples are local governments formed for cemetery management, fire protection, library administration, and the construction and operational support of public transportation systems ... *inside*

How has local government changed in metro St. Louis?

Since 1987, St. Louis has added 103 units of local government, despite modest population gains in the 1990s.

[1] Between 1992 and 1997, 93 municipal governments were added to the total of local governments nationwide. Between 1997 and 2002, that rate of growth slowed, with an increase of only 57 units.

... Survey (continued)

Of the 11 metros that added governments between 1997 and 2002, seven rated above average in estimates of population growth. Atlanta added 21 units of government, all of the special-purpose variety. Dallas and Denver, areas of population growth, added 15 local governments each. Four metros increased the number of local governments despite below average population gains. Metro St. Louis is among them, boosting an already high ratio of local governments per capita (among peer metros, only Pittsburgh outranks St. Louis for local governments per capita).

Conversely, Los Angeles, which ranked well above average in number of local governments in 1997, eliminated 31 units of governments, dropping 13 below the peer metro average in 2002. Of the 35 peer metros, Baltimore recorded the most dramatic decrease in units of local government.[2]

Net Change in Local Governments Among Peer Metros, 1997-2002

1	Atlanta	21
2	Dallas	15
2	Denver	15
4	San Antonio	9
4	Washington DC	9
6	St. Louis	7
7	Charlotte	5
8	Miami	4
9	Cincinnati	2
9	Memphis	2
11	New York	1
12	Austin	0
12	Cleveland	0
12	Kansas City	0
12	Milwaukee	0
16	Phoenix	-1
17	Columbus	-2
17	Detroit	-2
17	Oklahoma City	-2
20	Chicago	-4
20	Nashville	-4
Average		-5
22	Salt Lake City	-5
22	Seattle	-5
24	Houston	-6
25	Minneapolis	-8
25	San Francisco	-8
27	Louisville	-10
28	San Diego	-11
29	Boston*	-18
30	Philadelphia	-20
31	Portland	-22
32	Pittsburgh	-26
33	Indianapolis	-28
34	Los Angeles	-31
35	Baltimore	-37

*New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)

UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

General and special-purpose units of government, 2002

1	**Chicago**	**1,452**
2	Pittsburgh	832
3	Philadelphia	825
4	Houston	796
5	**St. Louis**	**795**
6	Boston*	747
7	Minneapolis	511
8	Kansas City	482
9	Denver	445
10	Indianapolis	433
11	Cincinnati	383
12	Detroit	370
Average		360
13	Los Angeles	347
14	Dallas	346
15	Cleveland	345
16	Atlanta	284
17	Seattle	281
18	Columbus	280
19	Louisville	266
20	Portland	260
21	Phoenix	214
22	New York	202
23	Milwaukee	195
24	Austin	187
25	San Francisco	183
26	Washington DC	174
27	San Diego	169
28	Oklahoma City	168
29	Salt Lake City	137
30	Nashville	106
31	San Antonio	101
32	Memphis	94
33	Charlotte	93
34	Baltimore	44
35	**Miami**	**40**

HIGHER — AVERAGE — LOWER

*New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)

... Governments (continued)

Austin added four general-purpose governments, while eliminating four special-purpose governments. The increase in population in Austin caused an overall decrease of the ratio of local governments per capita.[3]

Interestingly, in a 15-year span, between 1987 and 2002, the ratio of local governments per capita in Portland dropped from 20.5 to 13.2. Portland experienced a 27 percent increase in population between 1990 and 2000.

RATIO OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO CITIZENS

Units of government per 100,000 population, 2002

1	Pittsburgh	35.5
2	St. Louis	30.2
3	Kansas City	26.4
4	Indianapolis	26.2
5	Louisville	25.6
6	Cincinnati	22.9
7	Denver	20.3
8	Houston	18.0
9	Columbus	17.7
10	Chicago	17.2
11	Minneapolis	16.7
12	Philadelphia	16.0
13	Cleveland	15.3
14	Oklahoma City	15.1
15	Austin	13.9
Average		13.3
16	Portland	13.0
17	Milwaukee	12.9
18	Boston*	12.1
19	Seattle	11.4
20	San Francisco	10.7
21	Salt Lake City	10.0
22	Dallas	9.2
23	Nashville	8.3
23	Detroit	8.3
25	Memphis	8.1
26	Atlanta	6.5
27	Phoenix	6.1
27	San Antonio	6.1
29	Charlotte	5.9
30	San Diego	5.8
31	Los Angeles	3.5
32	Washington DC	3.4
33	New York	2.1
34	Miami	1.7
34	Baltimore	1.7

HIGHER — AVERAGE — LOWER

*New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)

[2] Overall, Baltimore ranked second from last of the 35 peer metros in *Where We Stand*. The ranking is artificially low because the U.S. Census Bureau classifies public school districts in metro Baltimore as "dependent public school systems." Dependent school systems are considered substrata of general-purpose governments, thus not counted in the overall total.

[3] Austin experienced 47.7 percent growth between 1990 and 2000, with an additional 8 percent growth between 2000 and 2002, based upon U.S. Census Bureau population estimates.

... Municipalities (continued)

In raw numbers, Louisville eliminated nine municipalities—the most among the 35 peer metros between 1997 and 2002. St. Louis remains 3rd among peer metros with 8.7 municipalities per 100,000 persons.

METRO AREA MUNICIPALITIES
per 100,000 population, 2002

1	Louisville	11.5
2	Pittsburgh	10.1
3	St. Louis	8.7
4	Kansas City	7.6
5	Cincinnati	7.5
6	Minneapolis	6.3
7	Oklahoma City	6.0
8	Cleveland	5.1
9	Indianapolis	4.9
10	Columbus	4.7
11	Dallas	3.9
11	Milwaukee	3.9
Average		3.7
13	Memphis	3.6
13	Charlotte	3.6
15	Chicago	3.5
15	Nashville	3.5
17	Austin	3.3
18	Salt Lake City	3.2
19	Philadelphia	2.8
19	Portland	2.8
21	Detroit	2.5
22	Seattle	2.4
22	Atlanta	2.4
24	San Antonio	2.1
25	Washington DC	1.9
25	San Francisco	1.9
27	Houston	1.8
28	Denver	1.5
29	Miami	1.3
30	Phoenix	0.9
30	Los Angeles	0.9
32	Baltimore	0.8
33	Boston*	0.7
34	San Diego	0.6
34	New York	0.6

HIGHER
AVERAGE
LOWER

***New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)**

... Special-Purpose (continued)

According to the 2002 Census of Governments, special-purpose governments showed the greatest volatility from the 1997 census, increasing 1.1 percent over the 5-year period.[4] In 1992, 31,555 special-purpose governments existed. By 2002, the number had increased by 11 percent.[5]

Among states, Missouri ranked sixth with 1,514 special-purpose governments. Illinois has 3,145—the highest nationwide. Between the 1997 and 2002 census, metro St. Louis added six special-purpose governments.

SPECIAL-PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS
per 100,000 population, 2002

1	Denver	17.9
2	Houston	15.0
3	St. Louis	13.8
4	Pittsburgh	13.1
5	Kansas City	12.7
6	Indianapolis	11.7
7	Louisville	8.8
8	Austin	8.0
9	Chicago	7.8
10	Seattle	7.4
11	Portland	7.2
12	Cincinnati	6.2
13	San Francisco	6.1
14	Salt Lake City	6.0
Average		5.6
15	Philadelphia	5.4
16	Boston*	5.2
17	Nashville	4.2
18	San Diego	3.5
18	Memphis	3.5
20	Milwaukee	3.2
21	Minneapolis	3.0
21	Atlanta	3.0
21	Phoenix	3.0
21	Columbus	3.0
21	Dallas	3.0
26	Oklahoma City	2.9
27	Cleveland	2.5
28	San Antonio	2.2
29	Los Angeles	1.7
30	Charlotte	1.6
31	Washington DC	1.1
32	Detroit	1.0
33	New York	0.7
33	Baltimore	0.7
35	Miami	0.3

HIGHER
AVERAGE
LOWER

***New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)**

In the 2002 *Where We Stand*, only **three** peer metros with an above-average number of local governments per capita experienced higher than average job growth. All three contained **fewer** than average municipalities per capita.

A report of metro area economic vitality was recently released by the *American Cities Business Journal.* Of the peer metros that registered above average municipalities per capita in *Where We Stand*, only Dallas had higher than average job growth in the *American Cities* report.

[4] An example of a special-purpose government in St. Louis is the Metropolitan Sewer District, an autonomous government body tasked with the safe and efficient operation of sanitary and storm sewers and sewage disposal facilities in St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis.

[5] The classification special-purpose government does not include school districts. Of the 87,576 units of government identified in the 2002 Census of Governments, 13,506 are independent school districts.