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, 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

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.
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

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.

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.

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### Metro Area Municipalities per 100,000 population, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oklahoma City</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 5.7

13 Memphis 3.6
14 Chicago 3.5
15 Nashville 3.5
16 Austin 3.3
17 Salt Lake City 3.2
18 Philadelphia 2.8
19 Portland 2.8
20 Detroit 2.5
21 Seattle 2.4
22 Atlanta 2.4
23 San Antonio 2.1
24 Washington DC 1.9
25 San Francisco 1.9
26 Houston 1.8
27 Denver 1.5
28 Miami 1.3
29 Phoenix 0.9
30 Los Angeles 0.9
31 Baltimore 0.8
32 Boston* 0.7
33 San Diego 0.7
34 New York 0.6

*New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)

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### Special-Purpose Governments per 100,000 population, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Special-Purpose Governments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Indianapolis</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Louisville</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<td>Seattle</td>
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</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 5.6

15 Philadelphia 5.4
16 Boston* 5.2
17 Nashville 4.2
18 San Diego 3.5
19 Memphis 3.5
20 Milwaukee 3.2
21 Minneapolis 3.0
22 Atlanta 3.0
23 Phoenix 3.0
24 Columbus 3.0
25 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
34 Baltimore 0.7
35 Miami 0.3

*New England Consolidated Metropolitan Area (NECMA)

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... 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. In 1992, 31,555 special-purpose governments existed. By 2002, the number had increased by 11 percent.

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.

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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.

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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.