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# ST. LOUIS CITY-COUNTY GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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January 2019

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## GOVERNANCE IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION: HOW DID WE GET TO WHERE WE ARE NOW?

1875 was a big year for St. Louis, Missouri. It was America's fourth largest city, its economy was booming and skyline growing rapidly. Logan Uriah Reavis had published a monograph predicting that St. Louis would be "the future great city of the world."<sup>1</sup> Many read it and shared his optimism – yet few today would argue that the region has fulfilled its lofty potential. In part, that is a result of a decision made the following year, in 1876, that has had a dramatic impact on St. Louis' trajectory – the Great Divorce.

Divisions between the 300,000-plus residents of the urban part of St. Louis and the 30,000 residents of the surrounding rural county had been brewing since before the Civil War. When the Missouri Constitution was revised in 1875, a provision was inserted to allow for a "Scheme and Charter" to split the city and county via a public vote. After months of contentious debate, St. Louisans went to the polls on August 22, 1876. The vote itself was mired in allegations of corruption: initially, the measure appeared to have been defeated, but supporters of the split called for an investigation. A commission ultimately invalidated a number of votes from the rural part of St. Louis, reversing the outcome. The new "City of St. Louis" was now comprised of 66.2 square miles, while St. Louis County covered 521.8 square miles.<sup>2</sup>

Today, St. Louis is one of the nation's smallest cities by land mass. The following table<sup>3</sup> offers a comparison with peer cities.

CITY	SQ. Miles
Philadelphia, PA	141.6
Seattle, WA	142.5
Denver, CO	155
Chicago, IL	234
Kansas City, MO	319.03
Memphis, TN	324
Phoenix, AZ	517.94
Houston, TX	627.8

Just two decades after the split, the St. Louis City population was already pressing the edges of the 1876 boundary. City leaders were beginning to regret the Great Divorce and, over the course of the next century, various efforts were made to undo the fateful decision. These began in earnest in the 1920s, when a Board of Freeholders was established to look at various methods of reform. The Board of Freeholders is a constitutionally-created, 19-member panel with the mandate to propose solutions to boundary issues. Since the Great Divorce, the Boards of Freeholders have investigated everything from a city takeover of the county (1920s and '30s) to a District Plan (1950s) to a Borough Plan (1960s), and every effort has failed at the polls. Meanwhile, modest, incremental changes toward regionalism were successful, such as the creation of the Metropolitan Sewer District (1954), a Junior College District including both city and county (1962), and the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (1965) to provide for a regional approach to planning and infrastructure.<sup>4</sup> Most recently, St. Louis County tried to reduce the number of municipalities through yet another Board of Freeholders effort. This attempt was to combine many of the county's 90 municipalities and include one or two City-County districts, but it was mired in litigation and a far less ambitious plan failed at the polls in 1992.<sup>5</sup>

Fragmentation of governance over the last 150 years has had myriad detrimental effects on the St. Louis region's economy, public health and safety, and sense of community.

Missouri's "home rule" laws allowed for relatively easy municipal incorporation within St. Louis County, which has encouraged a proliferation of small municipalities, starting in the early 1900s and exploding in the 1950s. Driven by the independence and power afforded through home rule (such as the ability to tax residents, access debt, implement zoning ordinances, and provide services), localities sought to incorporate.<sup>6</sup> By 2000, there were 91 municipalities in St. Louis County, despite the implementation of heightened requirements for municipal incorporation in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the vast powers that these municipalities wielded "facilitated and invited a prolonged pattern of local piracy as political units sought to maximize local wealth and tax bases while minimizing any claims that might be made on them. This pattern – enshrined in local realty, zoning, taxes and economic development policies – pitted municipality against municipality and (more generally and starkly) the suburbs against the older city."<sup>8</sup>

This period of proliferating municipalities is also marred by implicit and explicit federal and local public policies that perpetuated and promoted racial segregation, adding to the depth and magnitude of governmental fragmentation, racial disparities, and inequity



that plague the St. Louis region.<sup>9</sup> In their respective books, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* and *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*, Richard Rothstein and Colin Gordon meticulously lay out the profound role race and racism have played in the development and implementation of policies in American history, including in the history of St. Louis. For an example, one need only look back seventy years to find St. Louis at the center of race-based restrictive residential covenants preventing African Americans from moving into neighborhoods and communities of their choice. This exclusionary practice was legally kept in place in St. Louis until the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that such covenants were unenforceable.<sup>10</sup> The *Shelley* decision, however, did not end these forms of discrimination, and the heart of the matter remained: people in this region did not want to live as one community. As such, it is difficult to deny that race and racism had a role in perpetuating fragmentation in our region.

Moreover, our region's fragmentation has impacted many of the current racial disparities that we face. These disparities harm individual citizens as well as the region as a whole. In 2015, a University of Missouri St. Louis Public Policy Research Center report revealed that the 2012 Gross Domestic Product of the St. Louis region would have increased by nearly \$14 billion if there was no racial income inequality.<sup>11</sup> Other studies, such as those by Dr. Raj Chetty, have found correlations between where one lives and economic and social mobility – the ability to move up or down the socioeconomic ladder.<sup>12</sup>

Another sign that fragmentation is harming our community comes from the recently released Equity Indicators Report for the City of St. Louis.<sup>13</sup> This report showed a score of only 25.75 out of a possible 100 in the area of child well-being.<sup>14</sup> This score attempts to quantify “the disadvantages and burdens that children carry with them from outside school that affect their ability to perform in school.”<sup>15</sup> While the assessment for St. Louis County is ongoing, it is unlikely the picture will be vastly different.

Fragmentation harms not only those who are most vulnerable to this exclusionary system; it harms the region as a whole. As a 2015 Washington Post article states, “The case of St. Louis quickly comes to mind as a good illustration of the phenomenon, examined in a big new report from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, of what happens when otherwise intertwined metropolitan areas slice themselves up into tiny pieces. Fragmented government, in short, makes entire metros horribly inefficient. It hamstring[s] their ability to solve collective challenges. And it costs them economically, too.”<sup>16</sup>

By 2013, these pressing concerns were motivating civic, community, and business leaders to address the divide between City and County. They quickly found there was little data to inform any meaningful public discourse about the future of our region. While each of the 115 local governments in St. Louis City and County kept some records of how they operated, no central source existed to provide information on the region's spending or the delivery of local government services. In response, Better Together was launched to take a fresh and analytical look at the fragmentation and wasteful governmental systems that have come to define the St. Louis region.<sup>17</sup> By relying on quantitative data to demonstrate the cost to the region – both monetary costs and opportunity costs – Better Together began conducting studies to educate citizens about the landscape of local governments in St. Louis City and County. Unlike previous, top-down qualitative attempts to look at regional reform, Better Together took a grassroots perspective, listening to more than 10,000 citizens and community leaders over a five-year period, beginning in late 2013. It released a number of studies based on empirical data to inform the public about the challenges and opportunities confronting the St. Louis region. These reports also included comparisons with other metropolitan areas that operate much more efficiently and cohesively than St. Louis.

When Better Together began its research, it uncovered some staggering statistics, starting with the sheer number of local governments and administrative entities, which total 115 across St. Louis City, St. Louis County, 90 Municipalities, and 23 Fire Protection Districts. In addition, the region maintained 60 police departments, 20 municipal fire departments, and 81 municipal courts. Taken together, St. Louis spent \$2.3 billion annually to simply operate and administer these governments.<sup>18</sup> Through its studies, Better Together found that \$750 million in excess tax dollars are spent each year, and the St. Louis region supports 684 elected officials who have produced 52,631 pages of ordinances.

For the past five years, Better Together has conducted in-depth studies in six key areas of local government service – Public Finance, Economic Development, Public Health, Public Safety (focusing on policing, municipal courts, and fire protection), Parks and Recreation, and General Administration – in an effort to answer the following basic questions:

- 1) What is the status quo of service delivery?
- 2) What are best practices nationally to deliver those services?
- 3) How does our region compare to these best practices?
- 4) What are scenarios for making appropriate changes to enhance the future?

## **WHAT WE LEARNED FROM STUDYING OUR REGION (2014-2016)**

### ***Public Finance (Released January 2014, utilizing 2012 financial figures)***

Better Together's first study was in the area of public finance. The goal of the study was to accurately report the overall revenues and expenditures in the region and to understand what major sources of debt existed. Through data collected from the 115 governments comprising St. Louis City and County, Better Together found that our region's government spent \$2.3 billion annually. Approximately \$1.6 billion of that spending was from local taxes, with the remainder generated from various fees.

By examining which cities had debt and which did not, the public finance study also led to an unexpected finding: government fragmentation serves as a structural impediment to reinvesting in our community. The small size of some municipalities, paired with declining and stagnant property tax revenue, made it nearly impossible for many communities to access capital debt markets. The result is an inability to adequately fund necessary infrastructure improvements in communities that most need the investment. This lack of public investment hinders efforts to attract private investment and new business development.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Economic Development (May 2014)***

An ongoing obstacle to economic growth in the St. Louis region is the inconsistent relationship between the City and the County. Sometimes, the City and the County cooperate as partners, while at other crucial times, they function as competitors. This is further complicated by internal competition among municipalities within the County. Our region cannot compete with places like Nashville or Chicago when we are too busy pitting Maplewood against Kirkwood.

Not only does fragmentation hold back the region from making consistent, coordinated progress, the myriad of governmental entities collecting taxes has generated a host of problems for our region's economic vitality. One key area is Tax-Increment Financing (TIF), a public financing tool used as a subsidy for redevelopment. Missouri is one of only two states that allow diverting both sales tax and property tax revenues through TIFs, with no strong regional oversight. Thus, over the past two decades, more than \$2 billion of public tax dollars have been diverted to private developers through TIF.<sup>20</sup> That

diversion often comes at a direct cost to public schools, which are increasingly reliant on property taxes. And while there can be some increased revenue and jobs associated with a TIF project in a particular municipality, corresponding losses of revenues and jobs elsewhere in the region are the norm.<sup>21</sup> Having two (or even six!) different municipalities competing against one another to lure the next shopping center has resulted in a dysfunctional system that fails to protect taxpayers. Instead, fragmentation ensures that developers and big box stores have all the power over municipalities. The result: poorer schools and poorer public services for people that live here.

Another area where our lack of regional cooperation has caused economic hardship is workforce diversity. While St. Louis City and, more recently, the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) have set thorough and effective workforce diversity standards, St. Louis County is only now beginning to analyze these issues. Inconsistent workforce standards at the region's largest governments undermine the worthy goal of developing a workforce that truly reflects and represents the people of St. Louis.

### ***Regional Demographics & Workforce Standards***

#### **Regional Demographics (2012 Census Projections)**

	<b>St. Louis City</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Combined (City &amp; County)</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	319,112	1,000,473	1,319,585
<b>Female</b>	51%	52.7%	52%
<b>White</b>	45.9%	70.5%	65%
<b>African American</b>	48.5%	23.6%	30%
<b>Asian</b>	3%	3.8%	3.6%

## Regional Workforce Goals

	<b>St. Louis City<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>MSD - Construction<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>MSD - Construction<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>MSD - Professional Services<sup>4</sup></b>
<b>Minority</b>	<b>25%</b>	-	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>5%</b>	-	-	<b>7%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Resident</b>	<b>20%</b>	-	-	<b>30%</b>	-
<b>Apprentices</b>	<b>15%</b>	-	-	*	-

1 Applies to each public works contract, tax increment financing project, and St. Louis City Bonded Project with an estimated base value of \$1 million or more

2 Projects estimated at \$50,000 and over

3 Projects estimated \$500,000 and over

4 Includes both professional engineering and non-engineering professional services

\* MSD requires that 40% of apprentices working on projects estimated at \$500,000 and over be minority or female apprentices

Inconsistent workforce standards don't just affect workers – they affect the entire region's ability to attract and retain job-creating businesses and entrepreneurs.

Many cities across America claim to be the most “business-friendly” in the land, with streamlined licensing and inspection processes to remove regulatory impediments for entrepreneurs. Neither St. Louis City nor County could credibly claim to be business-friendly, and the region suffers because of it. There are more than 90 ways to license a business in our region.<sup>22</sup> The incredible frustration of trying to determine how to get a business license, and then receiving confusing and often unreliable information from the local authorities, is an all-too-common occurrence in our region.

The places in America that have streamlined licensing and regulation most effectively are experiencing the greatest economic growth and business start-up successes. Through consolidation and centralization, St. Louis could make vast improvements that would remove bureaucratic barriers for area entrepreneurs and make St. Louis a more attractive place to do business. Real people would feel the benefits of regional cooperation and subsequent economic growth.

## ***Public Health (August 2014)***

Disease knows no boundaries, and neither should our approach to addressing the region's health issues. Through conversations with public health practitioners, Better Together has found no one in the public health community who believes that having two separate health departments benefits our region. The fact that the St. Louis County Health Department serves a population more than three times the size of St. Louis City creates inefficiencies in the distribution of care and is detrimental to individual health at the most basic human level.

The City's \$24 million annual health budget depends on grants for 51% of its funding. The County, conversely, spends \$57 million annually, with the vast majority of its funding coming from a dedicated health property tax.<sup>23</sup> The County operates four health centers and can be responsive to local health needs, while the City must set priorities largely based on what grant funding is available. A unified approach to public health would better enable us to address known public health issues like the growing opioid crisis, significant health disparities between black and white St. Louisans, and high rates of sexually transmitted infections.

One promising model is the 2011 creation of the Summit County Public Health Department (SCPH) in Summit County, Ohio. Three separate health departments (the Summit County Health Department, the Akron Health Department, and the Barberton Health Department) merged to form a new, more efficient, and more comprehensive department for service delivery. According to a 2012 Kent State University Study, the agency, even early on, demonstrated that "the overall impacts of the consolidation to date are positive..."<sup>24</sup>

## ***Public Safety Introduction***

In the area of public safety, which includes municipal courts, policing, and fire protection, Better Together found one of the greatest opportunities to build a more efficient, cohesive, and equitable St. Louis region. Better Together's public safety research over the past five years has yielded some of the most substantial findings in any area. To date, their work on municipal court reform has already led to reform efforts by the Missouri General Assembly, most notably Senate Bill 5, which became law in July 2015.<sup>25</sup> The results of Better Together's studies, summarized below, reveal

significant opportunities to build a public safety system that delivers justice efficiently and equitably for everyone in the region.

### ***Public Safety: Municipal Courts***

While an average Missouri judicial circuit contains 8.6 municipal court divisions, the judicial circuit in St. Louis County (21st Judicial Circuit) has 81 separate municipal divisions. The sheer number of municipal courts has led to a broken and discriminatory system badly in need of reform. In 2013, for example, St. Louis City and County municipal courts collected \$61.2 million in fines and fees, which represents 46% of all fines and fees collected that year throughout the entire state.<sup>26</sup> As St. Louis City and County are home to only 22% of Missourians, this figure is astounding.

Further analysis revealed that the municipalities in St. Louis County are the biggest contributors to our region's outsized collection of the state's court fines and fees. St. Louis City accounts for 5% of the state's population and 7% of the fines collected statewide. Unincorporated St. Louis County, similarly, represents 5% of the population and 5% of statewide fines and fees. Both of these areas generate fines and fees roughly in proportion to their population. In contrast, the combined population of the incorporated municipalities in St. Louis County comprises 11% of Missouri's population, yet accounts for a staggering 34% of all fines and fees collected in Missouri.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Revenue Collected from Municipal Court Fines & Fees (2013)**

State of Missouri	\$132,032,352	% of State Total
St. Louis Region*	\$61,152,087	46%
St. Louis County	\$6,699,384	5%
St. Louis City	\$9,316,287	7%
St. Louis County Municipalities	\$45,136,416	34%

\* Consists of St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and Municipalities in St. Louis County

It is alarming to note who is most affected by these practices. As of 2013, 21 municipalities in the region produced over 20% of their operating budgets from fines and fees. Of these, 20 are located north of Olive Boulevard and east of I-270 in St. Louis County. The population of these municipalities is 62% African American, while the population of the county as a whole is 24% African American.<sup>28</sup> 22% of residents of these 20 north County municipalities live below the federal poverty line, compared to 11% of residents of the County as a whole.

In other words, through court fines and fees, municipalities are imposing “hidden taxes” on disproportionately African-American and disproportionately poor citizens. Largely on the basis of this research, Senate Bill 5 was introduced and passed in 2015 to cap fines in the municipal courts.<sup>29</sup>

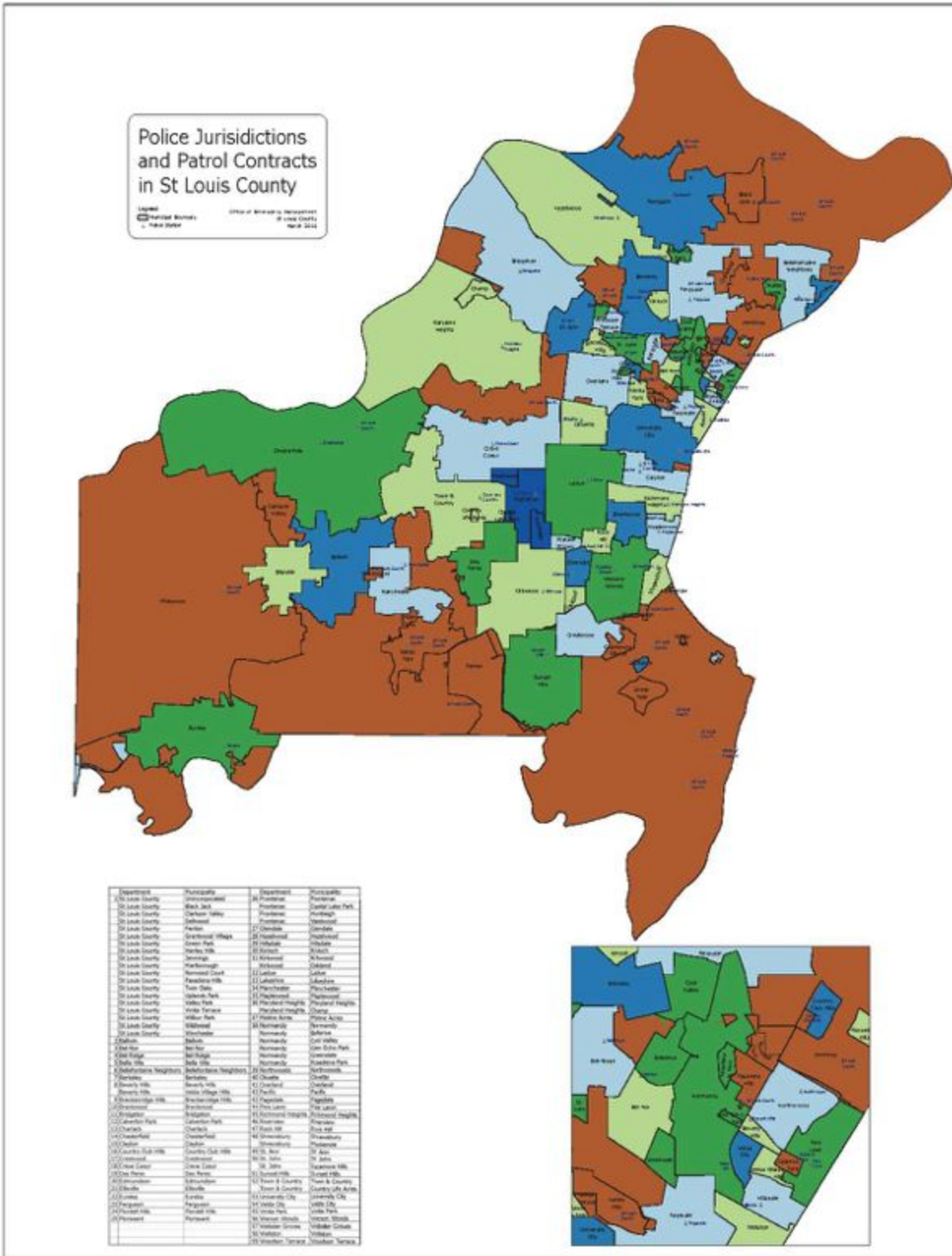
In addition to Senate Bill 5, other positive gains have been made related to municipal reform. The municipalities of Vinita Park and Vinita Terrace combined, and Mackenzie voted to disincorporate in 2018. While these isolated developments are helpful, they are a far cry from the broad, comprehensive reforms needed to effect meaningful change to this fragmented and broken system. Municipal court reform remains a major priority for the region and one that can help inspire profound positive change. Better Together is not alone in this conclusion. Reform of the municipal courts through consolidation is advocated in the Ferguson Commission Report, Washington University Professor Kimberly Norwood’s 2016 Opinion and Recommendations of the Missouri Supreme Court Municipal Group Report, and the 2014 ArchCity Defenders White Paper on Municipal Courts.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Public Safety: Policing***

The landscape of police departments in the region is almost as fragmented as that of the municipal courts. A resident living in west St. Louis County who decides to attend a St. Louis Cardinals game drives through 9 to 12 separate police jurisdictions en route to Busch Stadium. A 14-minute trip from Brentwood to St. Louis Lambert International Airport traverses as many as 14 different policing jurisdictions. It is safe to say that, in this regard, St. Louis, Missouri is unique in the United States.<sup>31</sup>



## GEOGRAPHIC JURISDICTIONS



In 2015, there were 60 separate police departments in St. Louis City and St. Louis County, (there are 55 today), and \$468 million was spent on policing.<sup>32</sup> Expenditures on policing are likely substantially higher today given the passage of Proposition P in St. Louis County in April 2017 and the passage of Proposition P in the City in November 2017.

In its study of policing, Better Together conducted independent research and data analysis, held over 200 meetings involving over 2,500 area residents, and engaged the services of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a premier organization with decades of law enforcement research and policy development experience.<sup>33</sup>

Better Together released a comprehensive PERF report presenting a series of findings and recommendations based on original research, public feedback, and interviews with stakeholders.<sup>34</sup> A crucial takeaway of PERF's report was that regional fragmentation undermines effective policing – making officers' jobs harder and citizens less safe.

The key findings provide a roadmap to reform and improved public safety and policing throughout the region. Those findings include:

- High crime rates in various parts of the region, which add considerable cost in addition to the human suffering involved.
- Per capita policing costs that are far above similarly sized cities.
- Inefficiency, including the lack of a coordinated, region-wide response capacity; citizen apprehension, particularly in African American communities; and disparate training requirements.
- Many departments have inappropriate goals that prioritize policing for revenue-generation over public safety.
- A culture of community policing is lacking in a number of smaller police departments located in high-crime areas.
- The unprofessional “muni-shuffle,” in which poorly-performing officers bounce from one small municipal force to the next.
- Many smaller departments lack basic accreditation from a recognized agency.

Clearly, high costs and large-scale inefficiencies exist in the current system. One of the more remarkable findings is that St. Louis spends \$468 million on policing, or \$355.20 per capita, while the cost is significantly lower in peer cities with one unified police department, such as Indianapolis, IN (\$242.02 per capita) and Louisville, KY (\$257.06 per capita).<sup>35</sup> Both Louisville and Indianapolis overcame regional fragmentation through consolidation efforts.

At the same time, 75% of the police departments in the St. Louis region were not accredited through either of the recognized entities in the State of Missouri. Departments that are accredited undergo assessments to ensure quality policies are followed, and these accredited departments often receive lower rates for liability insurance compared to those without accreditation. Fragmentation means a missed opportunity to both raise policing standards and to save tax dollars. The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) is a 35-year-old international organization that sets strong standards for local law enforcement jurisdictions.<sup>36</sup> The second group, the Missouri Police Chiefs Charitable Foundation (MPCCF), provides an evaluation system similar to CALEA at a slightly reduced cost to the local law enforcement agency.<sup>37</sup>

Only 15 departments had received international accreditation through CALEA. These include Chesterfield, Clayton, Creve Coeur, Florissant, Maplewood, Richmond Heights, Shrewsbury, St. Louis County, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, and Webster Groves.<sup>38</sup> There were four departments that were fully accredited through MPCCF – Bellefontaine Neighbors, Maryland Heights, Olivette, and St. John. Per a 2017 press release from the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis, some departments are reportedly in the process of applying for accreditation. However, as of January 2019, there has been no public announcement on this process.<sup>39</sup> The fact remains that having 75% of local departments unaccredited is a cause for public concern.

While accreditation alone is not the answer for better policing, especially in communities where trust between the police and its citizens has eroded, accreditation achieves an internationally-recognized standard that provides financial benefits to the department and should lead to a better trained officer. In turn, a better trained officer is better positioned to rebuild trust in the community they serve, which is an essential component of effective community policing.

Discrepancies in police equipment are another result of fragmentation in the St. Louis region's policing structure. While many departments issue body armor, service weapons, radios, winter caps, and body cameras, other departments offer little more than a badge and an identification card.<sup>40</sup> It is impossible to expect different departments to serve their communities equally well when officers receive such wildly varying levels of support. Additionally, the 60 different policing jurisdictions utilize 21 separate dispatches for communication. Such duplication makes coordinating emergency response more difficult and results in higher costs for taxpayers.

PERF's recommendations point to one consolidated department as the ideal. However, as an intermediate step, they suggested targeted, voluntary agency consolidations if full consolidation was not feasible in the short-term.

### ***Public Safety: Fire Safety***

Fire protection in the region, much like policing, is a fragmented, decentralized hodgepodge of providers. The City of St. Louis maintains one fire department made up of 32 fire houses located in the City and at Lambert Airport. This structure is typical of fire protection in large metropolitan areas throughout the United States. In St. Louis County, however, fire protection is carried out through 42 municipal departments and fire protection districts, which independently operate 188 fire houses.<sup>41</sup> Through Mutual Aid agreements, there is a high level of cooperation among the various fire protection entities. Generally, serving large fires or other disasters has been handled effectively throughout the region. However, there are disparities among the various municipal departments and fire protection districts in the quality of equipment.

One area that the Better Together study highlighted involves addressing potential hazardous materials (hazmat) situations. While the City operates a full-time hazmat unit, no department in the County operates a 24/7 hazmat unit.<sup>42</sup> This could lead to delayed response times to combat a hazmat emergency occurring in the County. Such an emergency would require a cobbling-together of municipal or fire protection district resources and would, most likely, involve the deployment of the City's hazmat unit as a first-responder.

### ***Parks and Recreation (June 2015)***

St. Louisans rightly boast of their parks and recreation facilities. The amazing Forest Park, which contains our world-class Saint Louis Zoo, Missouri History Museum and Art Museum, is an international treasure. In some respects the park system is subject to the same fragmentation concerns of other governmental operations in the area – throughout the region, we spend \$117 million on 470 parks covering 16,420 acres, and these various parks are overseen by 47 separate departments or governmental units.<sup>43</sup> However, innovative solutions have already begun to emerge. The Parks and Recreation Cooperative (PARC) created by the cities of Maplewood, Brentwood, and Richmond Heights in 2003 allows residents of these cities to enjoy the parks and facilities in the whole territory without paying “non-resident” rates. Through this initiative,

the Brentwood Ice Rink, the Heights (Richmond Heights recreation center), and the Maplewood Aquatics Center are available to all residents of the three-city co-op.

In 2000, St. Louis County voters approved a 1/10-cent sales tax to create a Municipal Park Grant Commission, which was doubled in 2013 by a subsequent public vote. This commission annually disburses \$33 million to 69 municipalities with over 237 grants to enhance municipal park and trail experiences. With St. Louis County now playing a major role in municipal parks, there is a substantial amount of regional cooperation in this area. Parks and recreation offers a glimpse of what strong regional cooperation can achieve for St. Louis.

### ***General Administration (Various Reports - December 2015 to January 2016)***

General governmental administration represents some of the most shocking levels of waste, duplication, and confusion in our region. In St. Louis City and County, we spent \$281,078,709, or \$213.16 per person, to simply administer local government.<sup>44</sup>

Compare this spending with Louisville, Kentucky, which spends \$126.73 per person. The administrative costs to maintain more than 100 governmental entities is an unnecessary and costly burden on the citizens of St. Louis.

This administrative burden on taxpayers has been exacerbated by the transition, over the last few decades, from reliance on property taxes to reliance on sales taxes in order to pay for local government administration. Prior to 1969, local governments were funded largely with property taxes paid by residents in their home municipality that were adopted through public votes. However, beginning with state legislation that allowed local municipalities to levy local sales taxes, many St. Louis County municipalities moved quickly to replace the funding for their day-to-day operations that was previously generated from local property taxes with new and increasing sales taxes. This shift from reliance on property taxes to sales taxes has led to residents in a given municipality having less awareness of the cost of operating local government, particularly as property taxes were reduced (or in some cases eliminated altogether) and a mad rush ensued to collect as much sales tax revenue as possible.<sup>45</sup>

Reliance on sales taxes causes local municipalities to compete with one another. The race to entice sales tax-producing enterprises and generate revenue creates costly and counterproductive giveaways to retail developers. In the end, consumers, schools, and workers all lose. Today, 36.7% of all municipal revenues are derived from sales taxes.<sup>46</sup> Thriving cities, such as Indianapolis and Louisville, have no such structure. There is one

sales tax for the city which results in a streamlined funding mechanism and, in many cases, a savings for taxpayers. The fact that 3 of the 10 wealthiest municipalities in St. Louis County levy no municipal property tax means these communities are taxing all of the residents of St. Louis to pay the costs of operating small, local governments.

Unfortunately, such governments are small only in geographic size, not in the size of government. In St. Louis City and County, taxpayers support the salaries and/or expenses of a whopping 684 elected officials. We have a total of 571 aldermen, 196 of whom represent fewer than 500 people. Add to that the collective costs of each city's administrator (or clerk, or city manager), and another \$5.7 million is spent annually. Not counting hourly billings, which were not universally made available to Better Together, city attorneys add another \$1.2 million-plus to the cost of these governments.<sup>47</sup> After five years of study and hundreds of community meetings involving thousands of area citizens, we can confidently say that virtually no one believes we are receiving sound value for our expensive, multiplicity of governments.

Some make the argument that at least the myriad of local governments allows citizens to interact with their municipalities at the most localized and intimate level. If citizens truly found this to be a benefit, one might expect to see engaged voters and large voter turnout to select a mayor, alderperson, or city councilperson. However, voter turnout in municipal elections is low even in comparison with the paltry national average of 21%. In 2011, only 12.2% of St. Louisans voted in municipal elections.<sup>48</sup> In some municipalities, turnout was as low as 6.5%. Fully 29 municipal mayors were elected with fewer than 100 votes. By comparison, voter turnout in St. Louis City and County for November elections averages well over 70% in presidential cycles and between 35% and 60% in midterm general elections.

Some states, recognizing the widespread lack of voter participation in municipal elections, have opted to move them to the November ballot. Kentucky, for example, has made that move in its urban counties and towns. As a result, turnout for these elections has ranged from 49% to 60% in the past three elections.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Bringing These Ideas Together: The Will to Change Report (June 2016)***

In 2016, Better Together sought to understand the common threads across its previous six study areas. The summary report, titled *The Will to Change*, asked the question, "Why does a region with world-class resources struggle to thrive?"

The answer is that our outdated and obsolete fragmented structure of governance holds us back. *The Will to Change* emphasized that in addition to the expensive nature of our status quo, there were harmful byproducts of our fragmentation. Those byproducts included:

1. A system focused on internal competition over regional growth;
2. A disparity in services and the allocation of resources that results from fragmentation and internal competition; and
3. An inability to formulate and execute a shared vision for regional success.

The complete document can be found in Appendix A of this report. Wasteful spending, internal competition, and disparities in services result in a region that cannot realize its full potential.

## **TASK FORCE FORMATION, GOALS, AND PROCESS (JUNE 2017 TO PRESENT)**

In the spring of 2017, Better Together set out to determine appropriate next steps for addressing the issues revealed in these studies. It began by updating regional spending figures to understand how the landscape had changed since its early studies.

Since Better Together began its work in late 2013, Vinita Park and Vinita Terrace took the unprecedented step of combining their municipalities.<sup>50</sup> By the spring of 2018, the Village of Mackenzie would also vote to disincorporate, leaving the region with 113 local government units.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, through contracting with neighboring departments and cooperative agreements, the number of police departments in the region had decreased from 60 to 55, and there were now 78 municipal courts rather than the 81 from Better Together's 2014 study. Moreover, other communities have explored disincorporation or combining local services and functions with varying degrees of success, and there is ongoing talk of at least two other municipalities consolidating.

The leaders in these communities are to be commended for making difficult decisions to chart a new course for their residents. However, these positive steps did not fundamentally change the overall fragmented landscape and related disparities or the spending trajectory in the region. Indeed, by June 2017, Better Together's research showed local government spending had grown by \$119 million over the previous three years to reach a staggering \$2.5 billion annually. Much of this spending growth was

fueled by the approval of 120 local tax increases since April 2012. At the same time, the latest available census figures indicate that both the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County have lost population since the 2010 census.<sup>52</sup>

In sum, taxpayers in our region were paying even more for providing the same services to fewer people. It became increasingly clear that the status quo was unsustainable.

### ***St. Louis City-County Governance Task Force***

In response to these findings, Better Together formed a citizens' task force to provide an independent perspective and offer recommendations for how our region might address its fragmented structure of governance. The St. Louis City-County Governance Task Force was announced in June 2017 with the endorsement of Mayor Lyda Krewson and County Executive Steve Stenger. The founding Task Force members were:

- Suzanne Sitherwood, President and Chief Executive Officer, Spire
- Dr. Will Ross, Associate Dean for Diversity and Professor of Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine
- Arindam Kar, Partner, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP

The Task Force subsequently added two additional members:

- Joe Adorjan, Chairman, ADVEN Capital Partners
- Kira Van Niel, Program Manager, The Boeing Company

The Task Force began its work with the charge to understand the thoughts, concerns, and values of the St. Louis community related to regionalism and how these perspectives would impact any potential governmental reforms to improve cost and effectiveness to government services. The Task Force made it clear that it wanted to develop recommendations that would support more equitable access to and delivery of government services to people. Informed by four years of research and data collection from Better Together, its mission was to go beyond facts and figures to engage real people in our community in a year-long dialogue. The St. Louis City-County Governance Task Force is incredibly grateful to the more than 2,500 individuals who engaged and provided their input through in-person town halls, online surveys, one-on-one meetings, and community events. The perspectives provided by these community members were critical in shaping the ultimate recommendations that follow.



## ***Community Engagement Activities***

As part of its outreach, the Task Force conducted seven public forums attended by over 400 people and collected over 1,200 online engagement surveys that mirrored the value-eliciting questions posed in the forums. In addition, more than 250 stakeholder meetings were held to discuss all aspects of local governance. The Task Force also held three youth engagement sessions with 45 participants and three large community events that drew over 500 attendees.

The surveys completed through this effort yielded some remarkable findings:

- Eight of 10 (82%) think it is likely or very likely that fragmentation impacts regional economic growth.
- Eight of 10 (84%) think it is likely or very likely that fragmentation impacts the financial stability and sustainability of some municipalities.
- Eight of 10 (80%) think if all municipalities are stronger, their municipality would also benefit.
- Nearly 9 of 10 (88%) think it is important or very important for all residents to receive consistent service quality and professionalism.
- Nearly one of four (24%) felt all services should be considered for possible reorganization.
- Police services were identified as the top service to be evaluated for reorganization.
- Only four percent (4%) of respondents felt no services should be assessed or evaluated for possible reorganization.<sup>53</sup>

More data from our town halls and youth engagement can be found in Appendices B and C.

Community input coupled with Better Together's studies made it apparent to the Task Force that programmatic or incremental change could not adequately address all of the issues identified during the information and values-gathering phase. Community input also revealed that there was a deep interest in transformational change that would better the entire region.

## ***Task Force Decision-Making Values: Four Pillars***

It became evident to the Task Force that a systems change – a change to the structure by which services are accessed by and delivered to citizens – was the only way to

achieve meaningful reform. But before issuing any specific recommendations for effecting that change, the Task Force decided to establish a set of values to guide their decision-making, ensuring that they incorporated diverse thought leadership and community engagement efforts into their process.

The Task Force agreed that the four pillars to its work would be: (1) community input, (2) the work of Better Together, (3) the Ferguson Commission Calls to Action, and (4) the *For the Sake of All* (now Health Equity Works) report on health disparities. Additionally, upon its release in April 2018, the Task Force incorporated the *Segregation in St. Louis: Dismantling the Divide* report under its Health Equity Works pillar. These reports reflect the work of respected researchers and community leaders on major issues facing the St. Louis region. Just as importantly, the authors of these works engaged thousands of residents to reach their conclusions and recommendations.

These reports, in conjunction with the reports relied upon for Better Together's own studies, represent the hard work of dedicated leaders and engagement with more than 10,000 citizens seeking to move our region forward.

### ***Forward Through Ferguson: A Path Toward Racial Equity***

In November 2014, Governor Jay Nixon appointed the Ferguson Commission to examine and address the “underlying root causes that led to the unrest in the wake of Michael Brown’s death and to publish an unflinching report with transformative policy recommendations for making the region stronger and a better place for everyone to live and to guide the community in charting a new path toward healing and positive change for the residents of the St. Louis region.”<sup>54</sup> In September 2015, the Ferguson Commission issued its report with an eye toward “a better, more unified, more equitable St. Louis [that] is not only possible, but worth pursuing together.” To that end, the Ferguson Commission Report outlined 47 Signature Priorities and 189 Calls to Action. The Commission readily acknowledged that its report was “an outline” and “[n]ot an [i]mplementation [p]lan.”<sup>55</sup>

In April 2018, Forward Through Ferguson, the successor organization to the Ferguson Commission, issued its #STL2039 Action Plan.<sup>56</sup> This plan acknowledged limited progress of the Ferguson Report goals while calling for, among other items, systems change to help facilitate the transformation necessary to achieve those goals.<sup>57</sup>

## ***Health Equity Works Reports***

In 2014 the For the Sake of All initiative, now known as Health Equity Works, issued its groundbreaking report (*For the Sake of All*).<sup>58</sup> The report quantitatively identified racial health disparities in our community based on several social determinants of health. In particular, the *For the Sake of All* report found that “[w]here you live in St. Louis has a powerful impact on your health. Residents of zip codes separated by only few miles have up to an 18-year difference in life expectancy...because of considerable residential segregation in St. Louis...” The report goes on to call for reforms to “tax, zoning, and other housing policies.” In April 2018 Health Equity Works released its *Segregation in St. Louis: Dismantling the Divide* report, which reflected the “culmination of two years of community meetings and cross-stakeholder collaboration to better foster quality neighborhoods.”<sup>59</sup> This report issued 11 recommendations, building upon *For the Sake of All*, to help address segregation by, in part, tax increment financing and zoning practices reforms.<sup>60</sup>

All of these inputs were used in evaluating which potential reforms would have the greatest equitable impact for the community. The outcome of each decision was assessed not only by the Task Force but by trusted members in the community on the forefront of pursuing equity in St. Louis. In basic terms, this meant that for every recommendation regarding potential governmental reform, the Task Force and others analyzed (1) who benefits from the proposed change, and (2) whether the outcomes of the proposed change truly benefit the community it was intended to impact.

In one example of this process, the Task Force created visual grids that listed recommendations from the core pillar reports and community input values. They then compared how each potential government structure might facilitate – or otherwise provide a better platform for – the enactment of the reports’ recommendations and values. The Task Force was clear from the beginning that no single action or structure of government would immediately bring all needed changes or satisfy all of the criteria selected for evaluation. Instead, the Task Force sought to understand the viability of a given reform under the different considered structures of government – in other words, did the proposed structure help, hinder or simply perpetuate the status quo? The grids quickly became a valuable tool in understanding the possibilities for and limitations of reform.

## Sample Evaluation Grid

### Ferguson Commission Calls to Action - Ability to Address

Ferguson Commission Call to Action	Ability to Address				
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	McNary Boroughs Plan	Metro City	Unigov
Justice For All					
Revise Use of Force Policies and Training					
Prioritize De-Escalation and Tactical Withdrawal					
Establish Use of Force Database					
Minimize Use of Militarized Weaponry					
Update Use of Force Statute for Fleeing Suspects					
Assign Attorney General As Special Prosecutor In Use of Force Cases					
Appoint Special Prosecutor In Use of Force Cases Short-Term					
Assign Missouri Highway Patrol to Investigate Use of Force					
Create Task Forces for Short-Term Investigation of Use of Force					
Pass the Protecting Communities and Police Act					
Develop Policies for Use of Technology to Serve Special Needs and Disabled Populations					
Use Technology to Limit Use of Force					
Ensure Adequate Bandwidth for Use of Technology					
Fund Technology Storage					
Evaluate Effectiveness of Technology					
Engage Community Advisory Boards for Technology Policy					
Create Technology Clearinghouse					
Clarify Public Record Laws					
Formalize and Standardize Court Documenting Procedures					
Clearly Define Municipal Court Procedures					
Eliminate Sharing of Municipal Files					
Conduct Annual Municipal Court Audits					
Ensure Staffing of Annual Court Audits					
Fund Existing and New Laws					
Create Civilian Review Boards at the Municipal Level					
Create Civilian Review Boards at the County Level					
Handle Serious Incidents Swiftly, Openly, and Neutrally					
Consolidate Law Enforcement Agencies					
Evaluate Consolidated Departments					
Hold Non-Consolidated Agencies to Shared Standards					
Consolidate Dispatch Centers					

(Additional grids available in Appendix D)

Over the course of the Task Force's work, there were several iterations of the grids, evaluating many different structures of governance. The governmental structures that were ultimately chosen for comparison reflected the most commonly discussed forms of government locally, as well as other regions that have implemented structural changes in government. These included: (1) the status quo structure, (2) St. Louis City re-entering St. Louis County as an 89<sup>th</sup> municipality, (3) former County Executive Gene McNary's Borough's plan, (4) a Metro City structure similar to that of Louisville, KY, and (5) a Unigov model based on Indianapolis, IN, (with the understanding that neither the Metro Louisville nor the Unigov model could be simply replicated as a model for St. Louis). Sample iterations of these grids can be found in Appendix D.

Finally, the Task Force closely studied best practices elsewhere. The Task Force's members learned from the experiences of other cities and officials from those cities who have traversed a similar path in the relatively recent past. Cities including, but not limited to, Nashville, Louisville, and Indianapolis provided valuable context for St. Louis in examining the key question, "What structure of government best lends itself to enacting reforms that citizens in our region called for in these reports, surveys, public forums, and face-to-face meetings?"

## ***Key Takeaways***

Through this comprehensive process, certain key takeaways became quite clear and helped to confirm some of the Task Force's preliminary observations:

- Be bold and transformative – incrementalism does not address the severity of the issues our region faces.
  - As was made plainly clear through the evaluation grids, steps like St. Louis City re-entering St. Louis County as an additional municipality would fail to address critical issues. For example, the City re-entering the County would continue the existence of 55 independent police departments. The Ferguson Commission's Calls to Action around providing additional training and support to police officers would still require the herculean effort of implementing these reforms one department at a time.
  - Police powers are regulated by the state government and the only way to comprehensively address issues such as consistent standards for police departments would be through state law. Recent history has shown considerable obstacles and legal impediments to crafting solutions for the St. Louis City-County region without concerns for spillover effects to other parts of the state. The 2015 Senate Bill 5 municipal court reform is just one prominent example. Despite passing out of the State Senate unanimously, each subsequent legislative session has yielded efforts to roll back portions of these reforms intended to protect citizens from predatory practices in the municipal court system and has yielded various lawsuits seeking to invalidate these needed reforms. Expert observers agree that it is only a matter of time before these efforts are successful and the legislation is effectively repealed.
  - Local efforts by the St. Louis County Executive to implement minimum police department standards were also challenged in court and ultimately struck down as in excess of the County's powers. And while there were indications that some St. Louis County municipalities had finally agreed to seek certification, without an alternate mechanism, accreditation and other reforms to bring consistent police department standards will remain voluntary and exceedingly difficult to implement and monitor in each of the various municipal police departments.<sup>61</sup>
- Create a government with a strong executive.

- As noted in *The Will to Change*, one of the core negative byproducts of our current structure of governance is an inability to formulate and execute a shared vision for the region. Elected and civic leaders from other regions frequently emphasized that one of their chief accomplishments in their own consolidation efforts was the newfound ability to speak with one voice. A clear, strong executive allowed other regions to set a vision for who they wanted to be and proactively pursue opportunities for economic growth. At the same time, it made them more effective in marshaling resources to address primary regional issues like health disparities and crime and created greater government accountability for regional outcomes.
- Have a significantly-sized legislative body with leadership elected from within.
  - One key challenge in creating a new structure of government is ensuring adequate representation for citizens' voices. While it was tempting to consider a smaller legislative body in the interest of efficiency, lessons from other regions indicated that having a larger legislative body allowed for better resident-to-representative ratios, greater diversity, and a body that was appropriately deliberative in crafting public policy. With smaller legislative districts, there is greater opportunity for ethnic and political minorities to have representative voices elected to advocate for issues. Caucuses could be formed, and healthy, diverse public debate on regional issues could take place. Similarly, having leadership elected from within the body creates an environment where legislative leadership is more likely to have positive working relationships with fellow legislators and increased opportunity for the election of minority representatives to leadership roles.
- Ensure the legislative body is professional and well-staffed.
  - A central lesson in understanding how legislative bodies function well in other regions was to ensure not only that they were appropriately-sized, but also that they had adequate resources. Well-functioning legislative bodies had the necessary professional staff to address constituent services in a timely and professional manner and to research and develop legislation and public policy proposals for members. Without resources for these two key functions of professional staff, legislators would lack the time and ability to meaningfully engage in public debate and might fall short when addressing community-level issues of the citizens who elected them.

- Create a government with a modern structure that is conducive to continued reforms.
  - While the Task Force members and leaders of other regions have endeavored to create new structures of government that would address as many of the needs of the day as possible, it is clear that the needs of citizens change over time. Moreover, it is unlikely that all needed reforms could be captured in a single effort. All regions the Task Force researched continued to make changes to their government after the initial consolidation effort, underscoring the necessity of a structure conducive to further reform. A nimble and responsive government can enact policies that its citizens ask for and address evolving issues that face the community.
  
- Develop a government and tax structure in which all are incentivized to work for the economic growth of the whole, rather than the success of the part at the expense of the whole.
  - The problem of local governments competing internally for local tax dollars is certainly not unique to the St. Louis region. Indeed, one of the driving forces for reform in other regions was to reduce their own internal competition. Louisville and its surrounding county even began to reduce the competition over tax dollars between their two governments as a precursor to consolidation. Leaders in all of the governments studied indicated that civic energy was much better spent attracting growth to their region rather than competing internally with their neighbors.

From the lessons and insights gleaned through community engagement and the relevant studies, four core principles emerged, all of which require equity and accountability to be truly successful. Citizens valued and wanted to see:

- A unified approach to government economic development
- A unified approach to public safety
- More efficient use of tax dollars
- Maintained community cultural identities and creation of a structure that supports more equitable access to and delivery of government services to everyone in our community

With these principles in mind, the Task Force offers the following recommendations.

## **TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Overview***

The Task Force recommends the creation of a new class of local government in the state of Missouri called a Metropolitan City (Metro City). This new form of government would encompass the current geographic boundaries of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County. Select services, such as public safety, municipal courts, planning and zoning, and economic development, must be equitably administered to all in the new Metro City on a regional basis. Current municipalities in St. Louis County would be preserved as “municipal districts” with newly limited authority. School districts, fire protection districts, and all other political subdivisions would be largely unaffected for reasons discussed below.

### ***Governance***

In accordance with the lessons learned from best practice research, the Task Force recommends the new Metro City be governed by an elected Metro Mayor and a 33-member Metro Council, whose members represent districts drawn to the one-person, one-vote standard. These districts will initially be drawn by a nonpartisan expert and approved by the St. Louis County Council and St. Louis City Board of Aldermen. Other elected offices would include one Prosecuting Attorney and one Assessor. All duties and obligations of the current Mayor of the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis County Executive will transfer to the new Metro Mayor. Other administrative functions, such as the recording of deeds and collection of revenues, will be performed through appointed administrative offices.

A 33-member Metro Council is consistent with the lesson that an appropriately-sized legislative body is conducive to help form coalitions and to foster healthy public debate. Thirty-three council districts would yield district populations slightly larger than the current districts for the Missouri House of Representatives. Based on the Task Force’s review, the larger Metro Council is also the best model by which to address concerns of African American political representation in the region.<sup>62</sup> Recent history, including the election of St. Louis County Prosecutor Wesley Bell, demonstrates that majority white populations can and do elect African American officials. Nonetheless, the Task Force understood that the status quo has not yielded equitable outcomes for the region’s black residents and has endeavored to ensure that their recommendations offer proportionate



representation in the future. The Task Force developed a proposal that can provide not only fair representation, but also the resources required in order for elected officials to be successful in meeting the needs of their constituents and formulating public policy. By recommending a larger 33-member council, the region is assured the opportunity to elect a legislative body reflective of the demographics of the people it will serve. The resulting district size will also allow residents to have functional relationships with their Council member. Ideally, each Metro Council member would have at least two professional staff members to aide in serving constituent needs and policy research. Finally, the leadership of the Metro Council – Council President, for example – should be elected from within the body. This assures that the Metro Council leadership has a good working relationship with its members and further enhances the opportunity for minority voices to rise to leadership positions within the council.

The Task Force also recommends the creation of four deputy mayor positions. These deputy mayors will be appointed by the Metro Mayor and have responsibilities to oversee successful, equitable access to and delivery of service in the specified area. The Metro Mayor may appoint additional deputy mayors, but the Task Force members identified the following four positions as directly related to ongoing core functions of this new government.

- Deputy Mayor for Community Engagement and Equity
- Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Innovation
- Deputy Mayor for Public Health and Safety
- Deputy Mayor for Community Development and Housing

By institutionalizing these four positions, the Task Force seeks to assure that these vital focus areas are priorities for any occupant of elected office with the Metro City.

### ***Economic Development***

A recurring theme throughout the Better Together studies and the Task Force's research was frustration with the divided nature of government economic development functions and the unhealthy competition that it spurred. To address these challenges, the Task Force recommends centralized and streamlined business licensing, which will likely be one of the first tangible business and economic benefits for the Metro City. By centralizing business licensing, the Metro City will be able to reduce barriers to entry for businesses of all sizes. Consistent, transparent, and clearly communicated procedures will simplify the process for starting or expanding a business, and prevent citizens from

having to learn and navigate various bureaucratic, opaque processes. Consolidating these functions will make it easier to follow the trend of other leading cities by modernizing processes and making many of the necessary resources and processes available online.

Additionally, a unified Metro City will present the opportunity for a single, comprehensive economic development plan for the region. Currently, many communities have independent plans – or no plan at all – that prioritize retail or small-scale developments that may not align with broader regional priorities. Whether our future is in biotechnology, entrepreneurship and innovation, manufacturing, or any other sector, a shared vision for achieving economic growth can be devised and pursued. With a united approach to economic development, the region can, for the first time, be proactive in seeking opportunities for growth that truly benefit the region as a whole.

### ***Planning and Zoning***

The studies by Richard Rothstein, Colin Gordon, and Health Equity Works referenced earlier have documented the destructive effect that exclusionary zoning and related practices have had on some neighborhoods, and the people who live in those neighborhoods, while allowing other communities and neighborhoods to thrive off of the same exclusionary practices. Local reporting like St. Louis Public Radio's "We Live Here" have further demonstrated the detrimental impact of our fragmented approach to housing, zoning, and planning.<sup>63</sup> That is why the Task Force recommends strong, centralized regional planning and zoning.

It is critical to have a structure that can facilitate a comprehensive, cohesive, inclusionary, and equitable approach to our region's housing, land use, and development policies. Planning functions should be conducted by a professional department that can consider the entire region's fate, in concert with a comprehensive regional plan, in order to advise Metro City and municipal officials. Moreover, by regionalizing planning functions, citizens can have greater assurance that development incentive proposals are applied fairly and considered on their merits, rather than as a tool to compete with neighboring communities. That said, the Task Force recognizes that some zoning and adjustment decisions may have an outsized effect on a community at the hyper-local level and lack any potential exclusionary impact. Such decisions should begin consideration and analysis at the municipal level before a more regional and potentially objective lens may be applied by the Metro City.

## ***Public Safety***

Based on public input, lessons learned from other regions, and the reports of Better Together, the Ferguson Commission, and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), the Task Force recommends consolidating the 55 police departments in the St. Louis region into one professional, accredited police department serving the entire area.

This recommendation does not come lightly. Some of the feedback heard from the community provided anecdotal evidence of citizens who valued the ability to have a local police department where they had personal relationships with the officers who patrolled their community. This is certainly a critical feature of quality community policing. At the same time, other citizens, who received their policing services from one of the two largest departments (St. Louis City and St. Louis County Police Departments), expressed similar familiarity with officers in their neighborhoods. The fact that these types of relationships could and did exist despite a larger department size ultimately left other considerations as leading factors on this recommendation.

Better Together and the Task Force, in discussions with public safety officials, learned of situations in which departments do not share crime data; instances in which addressing crime meant nothing more than trying to move issues into another municipality; and anecdotes of police departments being unable, or unwilling, to cooperate among themselves to address crime. The Task Force also learned of the desire of officers to have more training and more support from social and mental health services when responding to calls. In sum, with no existing mechanism to regulate the consistency of police service in the region, it is necessary to establish one department that ensures adequate and equitable public safety services for all.

As Better Together noted in its studies, we all travel the region for work, education, and recreation and need to be able to rely on the police when we call, wherever we are. The current practices around the “muni shuffle” documented in the PERF report and *The Will to Change*, the lack of shared data across agencies, inconsistent hiring and training standards, and the high levels of crime in parts of the region all demand strong action. The most direct way to address the myriad issues needed to reform policing in the region is through one regional department that can be held accountable, with oversight, by all its region’s citizens.

To be sure, one department for the region will not cure all that ails the region. However, enabling better access to data and more equitable distribution of holistic public

resources – meaning not just police officers, but also social work and mental health professionals – will help the region begin to substantively address crime on a regional basis. The primary goal of a single professional police department is not to concentrate resources in one area or another. Instead, by utilizing more complete data and having adequate access to regional resources, a single department can make real-time decisions about how to deploy those resources, accounting for the mobile nature of crime. Moreover, any further policing reforms needed can be aimed at a single department, rather than the current landscape of over four dozen departments.

### ***Municipal Courts***

The Task Force recommends one municipal court system for the region. As outlined in the 2014 Better Together study on municipal courts, the central issue enabling many of the abuses in the municipal courts was a lack of adequate oversight. The sheer number of municipal courts makes it nearly impossible for even the most well-intentioned public servants to monitor and address problems that arise. Paired with the potentially limited life of the current reforms aimed at curbing abuse in the system, the Task Force viewed one court system to service all municipal-level offenses throughout the new Metro City as the most prudent path forward. This court should be full-time and professionally staffed with satellite locations for convenience to residents. Attorneys serving in these courts will no longer be asked to serve multiple roles and any appearances of conflict of interest will be eliminated.

Further, in recognition of the combining counties of St. Louis City and St. Louis County, the Task Force recommends one prosecuting attorney for the new Metro City, and that the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuits be combined to form a single judicial circuit. A single prosecuting attorney is appropriate to match the new structure of government and a single circuit court would allow for the necessary implementation of criminal justice reforms and provide a jury pool more reflective of the community.

### ***Fire Safety***

Finally, the Task Force recommends that the City of St. Louis's fire department become a fire protection district and all other fire services continue to be delivered in their current manner. The Task Force carefully weighed this recommendation against the possibility of consolidating fire protection services into a single fire department, and ultimately determined that such a reform would be too costly at this stage. However, it is

entirely consistent with the experiences of other regions that fire protection would be a candidate for future consolidation efforts in subsequent years depending on community input to the Metro City government.

Better Together spent nearly a year meeting with representatives of various fire protection districts and labor leaders in an effort to design a new fire protection scheme for the entirety of St. Louis City and St. Louis County. Fire protection services in the region are unique in the landscape of their delivery. Many residents receive service from fire protection districts that cross municipal boundaries and are funded by property taxes. Others receive service through municipal fire departments. Some fire departments also offer emergency medical services and many of their firefighters are trained to deliver such services, while other jurisdictions contract with private companies for EMS.

This complicated landscape, paired with a greater disparity in employee pay and benefits than is found in other service areas, ultimately made the creation of a new, single fire department unrealistic to recommend at present. As previously acknowledged, reforms of this scale must, in part, include dealing with the art of the possible and recognize that not all desired reforms can be accomplished with a single effort.

In the interim, creating a fire protection district in place of the current St. Louis Fire Department will enable the largest and most well-equipped department in the region to begin contracting its services to neighboring communities. The Task Force anticipates market forces and community desires will lead to some natural consolidation of fire protection services in the coming years. Additionally, if the Task Force recommendations are implemented, the Metro City government will have the ability to pursue further consolidations.

### ***Preserving Local Community and Culture***

One of the most consistent messages the Task Force heard from citizens across the county was regarding the uniqueness of the communities in St. Louis and the desire to promote regionalism while preserving the cultural identities of those communities. The Task Force listened to these messages and worked toward a recommendation that could reap the benefits of a more equitable, regional governance structure, while at the same time safeguarding the sense of identity in these communities. For this reason, the

Task Force recommends that current municipalities in St. Louis County be reclassified as municipal districts of the Metro City, with authority to deliver select services for their constituents. The goal is that this change will allow communities to retain meaningful autonomy and self-governance while also participating in, and benefitting from, larger regional cooperation.

These municipal districts would have the authority, but not the obligation, to offer services in the areas of fire protection, parks and recreation, trash and recycling, general administrative functions, and any other services that are desired by citizens but not provided by the Metro City government. Municipalities would no longer be able to operate independent police departments or municipal courts. Further, general sales tax revenue would be collected on a Metro City-wide basis to help support regionally-delivered services including, but not limited to, public safety. Municipal district operations would be funded through local property taxes, utility taxes, and fees for service collected within the district. Sales taxes dedicated for services not provided by the Metro City or designated to the repayment of current debt – including for special taxing districts such as Transportation Development Districts or Tax Increment Financing districts – would stay with the municipal district to meet those current obligations. This includes previously approved parks, stormwater, or similar dedicated taxes. A more complete description of the tax distribution, including examples, is available in the “Finances Overview” document in Appendix E.

## ***Finances***

Better Together’s research previously found more than \$750 million in excess spending in the region when compared to peer cities. Given that the Task Force recommendations leave fire protection districts untouched and municipalities largely intact, it was understood from the outset that the full measure of those savings could not be realized. However, the magnitude of the excess spending and the projected growth in sales tax revenue offer insights for what is possible under a new government structure. Financial documents from the current governments have been utilized to get a clear sense of the functions performed, and budget professionals provided an understanding of how to appropriately plan for necessary expenditures.

Under the Task Force’s recommendations, the City and County’s functions are to be fully consolidated into the Metro City by January 1, 2022, meaning initial savings beginning even before the end of the proposed two-year transition in January 1, 2023. Reforms implemented by the Metro City to eliminate duplication and create greater

efficiency could yield hundreds of millions of dollars in long-term savings for taxpayers. Better Together estimates revenues to Metro City would exceed expenses by approximately \$250 million.

To ensure that the Metro City implements strategies to capture such cost savings and the benefit of such savings inures to taxpayers, the Task Force recommends the property tax for the Metro City be lower than the current St. Louis County property tax. Additionally, the earnings tax in the current City of St. Louis will be phased-out, according to established state law, by ten percent annually. Following anticipated accelerated debt payments, City taxpayers are expected to begin seeing dramatic tax relief within five years post-transition.

A major concern expressed by many citizens throughout the Task Force process was the potential transfer of debt from one local government to another – and in particular any debt that St. Louis County residents might be forced to incur as a result of consolidation. To address this concern, the Task Force recommends that all current debt and outstanding liabilities remain with the municipal district in which they were incurred. This includes, but not limited to, general obligation and other indebtedness, as well as pension liabilities. These debts will be paid utilizing existing revenues collected within a given municipal district.

The City of St. Louis will continue as the St. Louis Municipal Corporation to satisfy the City's outstanding obligations through existing revenues streams and perform municipal functions authorized by the Metro City. Other services will be provided by the Metro City or the newly-created St. Louis Fire Protection District. Based on current City debts and earnings tax revenues, all City of St. Louis obligations could be retired within seven years of enactment.

## ***Schools***

The Task Force recommendations do not specifically address schools for two reasons. First, the Task Force, as endorsed by the Mayor of St. Louis and St. Louis County Executive, charged its members to review potential efficiencies in government/municipal services – a scope that does not include schools. Second, in the state of Missouri, school districts are a different class and type of political subdivision, separate from a city or county in which they are located. This is evidenced, in part, by the fact that education is governed by an entirely different part of the Missouri Constitution than provisions governing cities and counties.

Since Better Together's inception in 2013, there have been requests to explore school reform, even though the organization's mission has always focused on local governments delivering municipal services, which includes the City of St. Louis and the 88 municipalities in St. Louis County. Fire districts and St. Louis County were included because 20 municipalities deliver fire protection services and the County provides municipal services to its unincorporated areas, which account for approximately one third of the County's population.

Throughout the Task Force process, members were repeatedly asked about education reform as well. This highlights the level of interest in and public concern for our region's education system. One can reasonably suggest that school reform is among the most important ways to address many of the systemic issues our region faces. Therefore, while these recommendations do not include schools for the reasons described above, the Task Force did engage in numerous conversations about how its scope of work could impact education.

One of Forward Through Ferguson's signature priorities called for the creation of an education design and financing task force, an idea that the Task Force supports. The transcript of the Ferguson Commission meeting in which this call to action was recommended indicates that the Commissioners felt the issues surrounding educational equity were so massive as to warrant the creation of a dedicated task force to explore needed solutions.<sup>64</sup> The Commissioners recognized their own robust process was insufficient to formulate recommendations on systemic changes to the local education system.

Finally, the Task Force recommendations regarding tax reform and zoning should impact children and schools in at least two positive ways: (1) the reform surrounding the use of TIFs in our region should help restore lost funding to school districts; and (2) once an inclusionary zoning policy is implemented in the Metro City, it should have an impact on economic and social mobility such that children and families that may live in an underperforming school district will have the ability to move and attend school in a school district where the needs of those children are met.

### ***Forming the Metro City***

The relationship between the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County is defined by the Missouri Constitution and the pathway to change that relationship necessarily lies there.



The typical way to amend the constitution in our state is through a statewide vote on an initiative petition submitted by the people or a measure submitted by the Missouri General Assembly. However, there is a narrow exception to this requirement found in Article VI, Section 30(a)-30(b) of the Missouri Constitution, which provides a limited path to altering aspects of the relationship between the City and County, although it does not reference any of the municipalities. This limited exception sets forth a process, originally developed and enacted as a constitutional amendment in 1924, by an entity known as a “Board of Freeholders.” The Task Force thoroughly explored the Board of Freeholders process as a mechanism for adopting its recommendations. However, in order to adopt the Task Force recommendations, including public safety, tax and municipal reforms along with creating flexible, innovative new government structures, the Task Force determined that the traditional means of amending the state constitution was necessary in order to legally implement the Task Force’s recommendations.

To understand this conclusion, it is worth exploring the Board of Freeholders process and its inherent limitations in addressing the problems of fragmentation we face.

The Board of Freeholders process described in the Missouri Constitution specifies several plans to adjust the relationship between the City and the County that may be proposed by the Board of Freeholders for separate votes by the City and the County. In 1966, by a statewide vote, the Board of Freeholders process was amended to authorize the Board of Freeholders to “to formulate and adopt any other plan for the partial or complete government of all or any part of the city and the county.” A new Board of Freeholders would have to be established to attempt to utilize this provision, which has never been interpreted by the courts.

The Board of Freeholders process is as follows:

1. Separate initiative petitions calling for a Board of Freeholders must be circulated in the City and the County. Each petition must be signed by 3% of the votes cast in the most recent gubernatorial election
2. Within a month of the signatures being certified, a 19-member Board of Freeholders must be selected by the relevant public officials. Nine members are appointed by the Mayor of the City of St. Louis, nine are appointed by the County Executive of St. Louis County, and one (neither a resident of the City or County) is appointed by the Governor. Neither the Mayor, nor the County Executive can appoint more than five members of the same political party.

3. At 10:00 am on the second Monday after their appointment, the Board of Freeholders is required to meet in the chamber of the Board of Aldermen in the City of St. Louis. From that time, they have a year to propose a plan and can meet as often or as little as they agree upon.
4. In order to approve a plan, a majority of the Board of Freeholders must vote to adopt the plan. After adoption, 70 days must pass before the plan can be on a ballot in the City and a ballot in the County. Furthermore, the plan cannot be voted on within 70 days of any state or county primary or general election day in the City or the County.
5. If the plan is approved by concurrent majorities in both the City and County, it “take[s] the place of and supersede[s] all laws, charter provisions and ordinances inconsistent therewith relating to said territory.”

The Task Force recommendation cannot be enacted through the special exception in the Missouri Constitution for a number of legal reasons that would make any Board of Freeholders plan subject to an immediate challenge. Most significantly, a Board of Freeholders plan cannot supersede generally applicable inconsistent state laws or previously-enacted constitutional provisions. This significantly limits, if not wholly eliminates, the ability of such a plan to adopt recommended reforms related to public safety, courts, taxes, and municipal governments, and it limits the ability to provide new and innovative government structures that provide the flexibility for continued change, while also maintaining and preserving community identity.

The Task Force understands that many observers anticipated the possibility of enacting change through a local vote. Indeed, the Task Force members, not unlike other members of our community, were hopeful that some form of local vote would be the ultimate outcome. However, the obligation to offer the best possible recommendation for the region was paramount. The Task Force is confident that the Metro City is by the far the most appropriate solution for the St. Louis region based on its work and engagement with the community. Due to the inherent limitations in the nearly century-old Board of Freeholders, which prevents the adoption of the Task Force recommendations, a constitutional amendment, which can only be adopted by a statewide vote, is the best path to put these recommendations before the people.

The Task Force evaluated multiple governance structures, including some with aspects that may have been eligible for a local vote, but only the Metro City satisfied the need for transformative change and the four pillars outlined at the beginning of the process.

By way of example, the Unigov model, in which all governments within the St. Louis City-County territory combine into a singular governmental unit, preliminarily appeared to meet the goals of the four Task Force pillars. However, Unigov failed to deliver on a fundamental value Better Together and the Task Force heard consistently throughout their respective studies – the ability to maintain community cultural identities. Similarly, the Borough model did not necessarily preserve the communities that currently exist and there were insufficient examples of similarly-sized cities using such a model. The Task Force could not confidently or ethically recommend either of these structures.

The Task Force members recognized from the beginning of their work that any recommendations that emerged from their process had to be tailored to the distinct nature of fragmentation in St. Louis and reflective of the cultural values of the people who live here. As such, outside-the-box thinking might be required. The desire to address government functions regulated by general state law and the Missouri Constitution, paired with the value found in maintaining local communities while capturing the benefits of regional service delivery, called for the creation of a new form of local government in Missouri – the Metro City with its municipal districts. These and other aspects of the Task Force recommendation necessitate a constitutional amendment, which must be adopted through a statewide vote.

Accordingly, an initiative petition proposing a constitutional amendment reflecting the above recommendations is included in Appendix F of this report. Assuming the successful collection of signatures, the Task Force recommends the constitutional amendment be put to a vote of the people in the November 2020 election.

### ***What now?***

The publication of these recommendations begins a new phase of this community project. Throughout 2019 and 2020, Better Together and its partners will embark on a robust effort to educate the St. Louis community on the current status of our local governments and the City-County Governance Task Force process and recommendations. This effort will include hundreds of public meetings, dozens of community events, and thousands of interactions with residents in this region. Our goal is for every St. Louisan to have ample opportunity to learn about these recommendations and engage in this critical dialogue so that they can make an informed decision when the recommendations make it to the ballot.

If the constitutional amendment reflecting the Task Force recommendations is adopted by voters in November 2020, a two-year transition period begins January 1, 2021. This transition period will be led by the elected heads of the two combining counties of the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County, until after the first elections are held for the Metro Council in November 2022. This allows for the initial legislative districts for the Metro Council to be drawn in 2021 with the census data that will become available with the 2020 Census. A timeline of the transition period is available in Appendix G.

## **REIMAGINING ST. LOUIS REQUIRES EVERYONE**

Imagine a region no longer constrained by decisions made to separate us 142 years ago – decisions that have hampered our growth, prosperity, and sense of community. Imagine a region that does not put up arbitrary boundaries in an effort to stymie innovation and keep others out. Imagine a region that no longer coerces vast sums of money from its citizens to operate a series of wasteful, fragmented, overlapping governments that cost too much and produce too little. Imagine a thriving region that – finally – successfully competes against domestic and international cities to attract entrepreneurs and jobs; a region that is more equitable, more prosperous, safer, and more welcoming.

We, as a region, can create this reimagined St. Louis.

With the enactment of the Task Force’s recommendations, the “story” of St. Louis, Missouri, would change overnight. St. Louis would become the 9th largest city in the United States (between Dallas and San Diego). Our region’s crime ranking would drop from the top of the “most dangerous cities” lists to the upper 20s. More importantly, our ability to holistically and substantively address crime regionally and comprehensively will be enhanced through better data sharing and resource allocation. These recommendations would put St. Louis on a path for unprecedented economic growth and will improve our way of life.

As enthusiastic as the Task Force and Better Together are about the recommendations within this report and the positive, impactful change they represent, they are nevertheless cognizant of their limitations. No single initiative can embody all of the needed changes for a community. Furthermore, those who care about St. Louis may not all agree on where to start to bring meaningful change, but so long as there is a common, aligned vision for an equitable, resilient community, everyone can still work together, as partners, and achieve that common goal.

During the Task Force process, the members were consistently reminded of the distinctions between creating improved structures of governance and designing policy that directly addresses a particular issue. The Task Force prioritized recommending a structure that provides the platform in which holistic public policy and related reforms can be implemented, without systemic barriers, to move toward the desired goal. It will always be incumbent upon citizens to advocate for good policy, whether it is around transportation, taxes, policing, youth services, social justice, housing, or any other local issue.

To that end, Better Together remains committed to working with community partners to convene area citizens and stakeholders to reimagine what good policy might look like if the Task Force recommendations were adopted. These conversations will take many forms and cover a variety of policy areas. Discussions could range from how a Metro City could be a “smart” city to in-depth examinations of housing issues resulting in specific policy recommendations that should be implemented by the first elected officials of the new Metro City. The common goal across these dialogues will be to engage St. Louisans in building greater capacity for good public policy that will then flow toward implementation by the new government structure on day one. It is anticipated, and expected, that citizens will substantively engage in forming what the new Metro City will be like. This is our opportunity to reimagine St. Louis and build it in a way that is truly representative of its people and ideals while being accessible and responsive to all.

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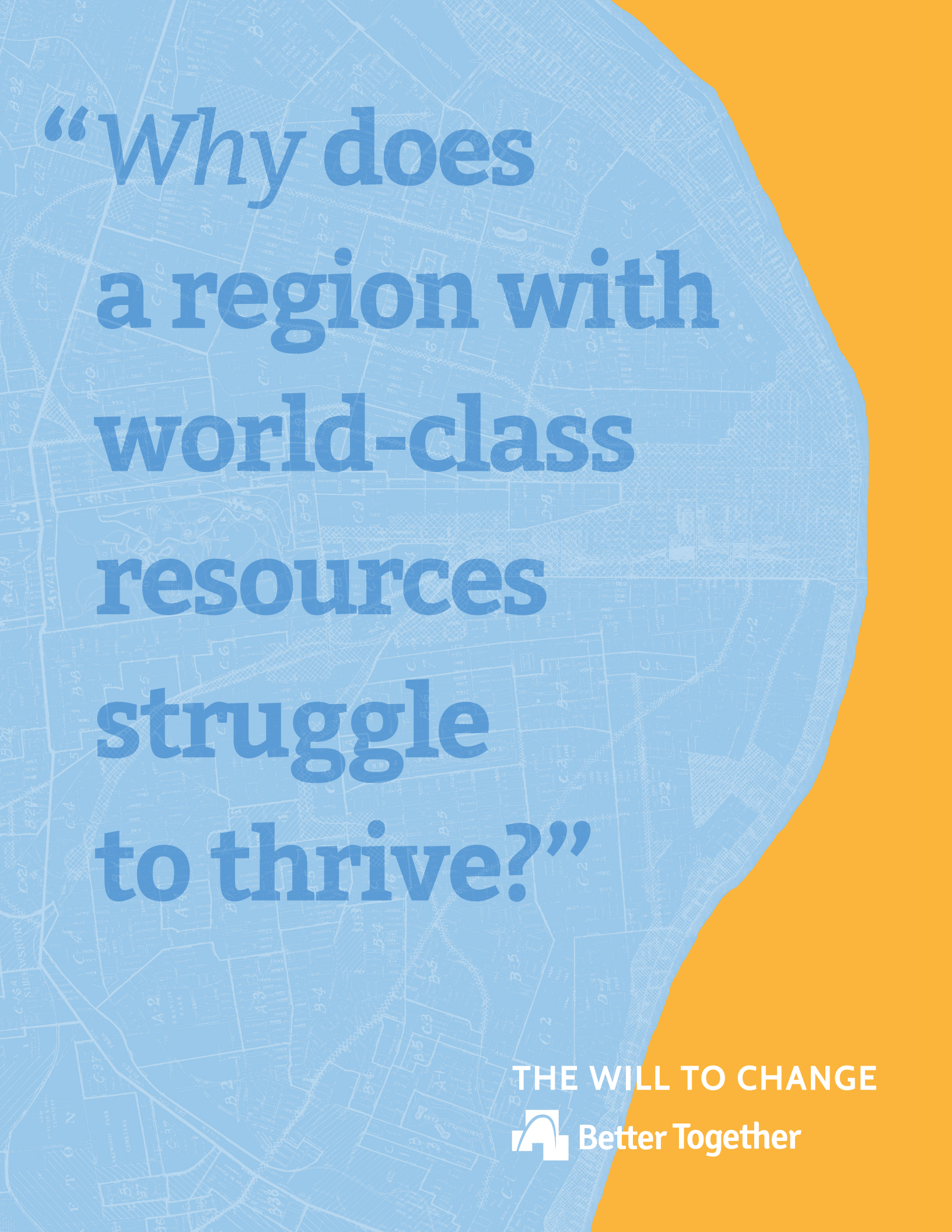
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**Appendix A**  
**The Will to Change**



***“Why does  
a region with  
world-class  
resources  
struggle  
to thrive?”***

THE WILL TO CHANGE

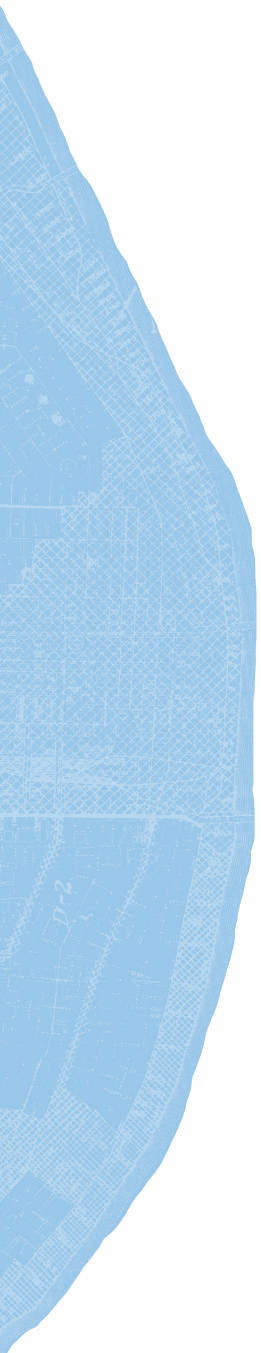


Better Together









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# INTRODUCTION

## ST. LOUIS CITY AND COUNTY

Affton Fire Protection District • Ballwin • Ballwin Police Department • Bel-Nor • Bel-Nor Police Department • Bel-Ridge • Bel-Ridge Police Department • Bella Villa • Bella Villa Police Department • Bellefontaine Neighbors • Bellefontaine Neighbors Police Department • Bellerive • Berkeley • Berkeley Police Department • Berkeley Fire Department • Beverly Hills • Beverly Hills Police Department • Black Jack • Black Jack Fire Protection District • Breckenridge Hills • Breckenridge Hills Police Department • Brentwood • Brentwood Fire Department • Brentwood Police Department • Bridgeton • Bridgeton Police Department • Calverton Park • Calverton Park Police Department • Champ • Charlack • Chesterfield • Chesterfield Police Department • Clarkson Valley • Clayton • Clayton Fire Department • Clayton Police Department • Community Fire Protection District • Cool Valley • Country Club Hills • Country Club Hills Police Department • Country Life Acres • Crestwood • Crestwood Police Department • Crestwood Fire Department • Creve Coeur • Creve Coeur Police Department • Creve Coeur Fire Protection District • Crystal Lake Park • Dellwood • Des Peres • Des Peres Public Safety Department • Edmundson • Edmundson Police Department • Ellisville • Ellisville Police Department • Eureka • Eureka Fire Protection District • Eureka Police Department • Fenton • Fenton Fire Protection District • Ferguson • Ferguson Fire Department • Ferguson Police Department • Flordell Hills • Flordell Hills Police Department • Florissant • Florissant Valley Fire Protection District • Florissant Police Department • Frontenac • Frontenac Fire Department • Frontenac Police Department • Glen Echo Park • Glendale • Glendale Fire Department • Glendale Police Department • Grantwood Village • Green Park • Greendale • Hanley Hills • Hazelwood • Hazelwood Fire Department • Hazelwood Police Department • Hillsdale • Hillsdale Police Department • Huntleigh • Jennings • Jennings Fire Department • Kinloch • Kinloch Fire Protection District • Kinloch Police Department • Kirkwood • Kirkwood Fire Department • Kirkwood Police Department • Ladue • Ladue Fire Department • Ladue Police Department • Lakeshire • Lakeshire Police Department • Lemay Fire Protection District • Mackenzie • Manchester • Manchester Police Department • Maplewood • Maplewood Fire Department • Maplewood Police Department • Marlborough • Maryland Heights • Maryland Heights Fire Protection District • Maryland Heights Police Department • Mehlville Fire Protection District • Metro North Fire Protection District • Metro West Fire Protection District • Mid-County Fire Protection District • Moline Acres • Moline Acres Police Department • Monarch Fire Protection District • Normandy • Normandy Police Department • North County Police Cooperative • Northeast Fire Protection District • Northwoods • Northwoods Police Department • Norwood Court • Oakland • Olivette • Olivette Fire Department • Olivette Police Department • Overland • Overland Police Department • Pacific • Pacific Fire Protection District • Pacific Police Department • Pagedale • Pagedale Police Department • Pasadena Hills • Pasadena Park • Pattonville Fire Protection District • Pine Lawn • Richmond Heights • Richmond Heights Fire Department • Richmond Heights Police Department • Riverview • Riverview Fire Protection District • Rock Hill Police Department • Riverview Police Department • Robertson Fire Protection District • Rock Hill • Rock Hill Fire Department • Shrewsbury • Shrewsbury Police Department • Spanish Lake Fire Protection District • St. Ann • St. Ann Police Department • St. John • St. John Police Department • St. Louis City • St. Louis Fire Department • St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department • St. Louis County • St. Louis County Police Department • Sunset Hills • Sunset Hills Police Department • Sycamore Hills • Town and Country • Town and Country Police Department • Twin Oaks • University City • University City Fire Department • University City Police Department • Uplands Park • Valley Park • Valley Park Fire Protection District • Velda City • Velda City Police Department • Velda Village Hills • Vinita Park • Vinita Terrace • Warson Woods • Warson Woods Police Department • Webster Groves • Webster Groves Fire Department • Webster Groves Police Department • Wellston • West County EMS District • West Overland Fire Protection District • Westwood • Wibur Park • Wildwood • Winchester • Woodson Terrace • Woodson Terrace Police Department

90

**INDEPENDENT  
MUNICIPALITIES**

57

**POLICE  
DEPARTMENTS**

81

**MUNICIPAL  
COURTS**

43

**FIRE DISTRICTS**

52

**THOUSAND PAGES  
OF ORDINANCES**

2.3

**BILLION DOLLARS  
ANNUALLY**

St. Louis is home to world class universities and cultural institutions, an entrepreneurial community that rivals any in the country, top-tier sports franchises, and one of the most philanthropic citizenries in the nation. However, in spite of many of these attributes that cause other regions to thrive and grow, both St. Louis City and County have lost population. Unemployment rates reflect similarly troubling trends, with the St. Louis region lagging a full percentage point or more behind other regions and the State of Missouri as a whole. These statistics are not the only troubling indicators. Over the past two years, St. Louis has seen social strife and governmental abuses play out on an international stage, contributing to a negative image. Better Together's own studies have revealed significant inequalities between municipalities in St. Louis County, which have exacerbated racial tensions. The question naturally arises: Why does a region with world-class resources struggle to thrive and compete in a global economy? The answer lies in St. Louis' outdated and obsolete fragmented structure. If St. Louis is to grow and prosper, this structure must be addressed.

For over two years, Better Together has studied the impact of the structure and function of the St. Louis region consisting of the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, 90 independent municipalities within St. Louis County, 43 fire districts, 57 police departments, 81 municipal courts, and the more than 52,000 pages of ordinances that govern the 1.3 million citizens that call it home. Better Together's studies have revealed that fragmentation has resulted in three core negative byproducts:

- 1** *A system focused on internal competition over regional growth;*
- 2** *A disparity in services and the allocation of resources that results from fragmentation and internal competition; &*
- 3** *An inability to formulate and execute a vision for regional success*

In addition to these core byproducts, all of this government costs over \$2.3 billion annually, which is significantly more than our cohorts in cities that have consolidated their governments. Better Together research shows that these governments cost the taxpayers approximately \$1,800 per capita. When contrasted with the per capita cost of just over \$1,200 for the same services in Indianapolis-Marion County, IN and an even lower \$1,100 per capita in Louisville-Jefferson County, KY, it is clear there is a significant overspend on local government in the St. Louis region. In fact, that overspend adds up to over \$750 million annually on local government services. The overspent sum represents huge opportunity costs for the region and is enough to pay for efforts like the CityArchRiver project more than twice over or provide our vibrant start-up community with a best-in-class fiber network. The extravagant cost and detrimental byproducts combine to paint a clear picture that the current structure of our governments is not sustainable.

***What follows is an honest assessment of the St. Louis region, its structure and functions, and their impact on St. Louis' ability to thrive as a just and prosperous region for all who call it home.***

# INTERNAL COMPETITION

## A TALE OF TWO CITIES

*While Pine Lawn and Des Peres are very different places, they have one thing in common: They both fund their municipal government through dollars that largely come from people outside their cities. Some may say one method is superior to the other, but we can all agree that neither is sustainable or fair.*



**Des Peres, MO** is a midsized municipality located at the intersection of two major thoroughfares—I-270 and Manchester Road—in St. Louis County, MO. It has a population of about 8,500 and are 94.3% white with a median household income of \$116,000. Residents pay no municipal property tax and yet their municipal government has a police and fire department and offers its residents premium services like a state-of-the-art recreation facility and free trash and leaf collection. West County Mall is situated in Des Peres and is a destination shopping center for the region. Des Peres collects \$12.7 million in sales taxes (fully 60% of Des Peres' total revenue) from the mall and other smaller commercial sites. This means that more than half of all revenue in Des Peres comes from citizens outside its borders.

**Pine Lawn, MO** is a municipality bordering I-70 in north St. Louis County with a population of about 3,200. Pine Lawn is 97.7% African American and has a median household income of \$26,632. Pine Lawn recently had to dissolve its police department due to financial hardships. In doing so, it chose an unaccredited agency to police the community because of the higher cost of professional police services from the CALEA-certified St. Louis County Police Department. Pine Lawn has also recently upgraded one of its municipal parks but cannot keep it open regularly due to an inability to have police patrol the area with the needed regularity to guarantee safety. The few services Pine Lawn is able to provide its residents are primarily funded through municipal courts fines and fees, which totaled \$2.4 million in 2014 or 62% of its budget.

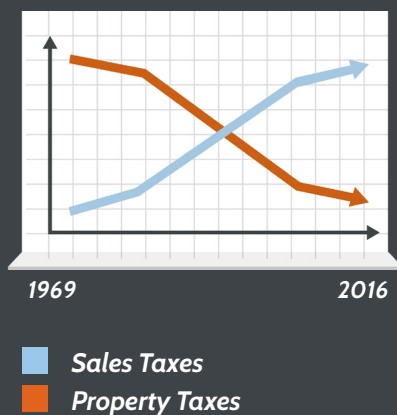


## THE HISTORY OF SALES TAX IN ST. LOUIS

In 1969, legislation allowing for a municipal sales tax was approved. It quickly became a popular option for municipalities in St. Louis' fragmented structure. A municipality with a sales tax could attract shoppers from its neighboring cities and then utilize that tax revenue to pay for services for its own residents. Since 1969, sales tax revenue has come to account for over a third of the region's general revenue. While paying for services via sales tax is politically expedient, it has led St. Louis to be home to some of the highest sales taxes in the United States. The region's reliance on sales taxes has become so prominent that 69 of St. Louis' 92 local governments count sales tax revenue as their single largest source of funding.

## TRENDS IN SALES & PROPERTY TAXES

(% of St. Louis' general revenue)



*Better Together's studies have revealed that extreme fragmentation in the St. Louis region fosters intra-regional competition among the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and the 90 municipalities in St. Louis County. The result of this environment is a hyper-localized definition of economic and community success—providing the highest level of services and amenities not at the lowest overall cost, but at the lowest direct cost to the individual municipality's citizens. With each individual municipality accounting for just a fraction of the region's citizens, each has over 1,000,000 citizens from which to extract revenue. This competition for revenue has permeated the psyche of local governments and St. Louis' fragmentation has created a prisoner's dilemma, wherein municipalities must either compete or lose out—resulting in revenue from their citizens going into the coffers of neighboring municipalities. This regionally debilitating dilemma is present in an insatiable intra-regional pursuit of sales tax revenue amongst municipalities that have the resources to compete and an abuse of municipal courts in many communities that do not.*

## SALES TAX REVENUE

While the fragmentation of the St. Louis region deters collaboration, it is the availability of external revenues that fuels competition. Nowhere is this more clearly exemplified than in the competition for sales tax revenue.

The State of Missouri levies a sales tax of 4.225%. However, unlike Indiana and Kentucky, which levy flat sales tax rates of 7% and 6% respectively, Missouri currently allows for municipalities to levy local sales taxes in addition to the state sales tax rate. This was not always permitted. Prior to 1969, local sales taxes for municipalities were not authorized. The two principal revenue sources at the time for local governments were property and utility taxes. However, in 1969, the State of Missouri began to authorize local sales taxes.<sup>1</sup> Almost immediately after, 56 municipalities in St. Louis County approved a local sales tax, with many passing a corresponding decrease in their city's property tax.<sup>2</sup> Numerous additional municipal sales taxes have been added since this time.

When combined with the fragmentation of the St. Louis region, the lack of a flat sales tax rate in Missouri fuels a cannibalistic competition for sales tax revenue, resulting in a disconnect

between citizens and the actual costs of services provided to them. Further, it reinforces drastic disparities in resources across the region. As St. Louis municipalities were quick to realize, because of the small size and close proximity of so many neighboring municipalities, the cost of local government could be spread to citizens of those other municipalities rather than be borne solely by their own citizenry. The passage of the first municipal sales tax and its pairing with corresponding reductions of property tax rates serves as direct proof of this model's intent. It is a model that has been perfected by many municipalities,

**“Sixty-nine of the ninety-two local governments in the St. Louis region count sales taxes as their number-one source of revenue.”**

to the detriment of the whole of the region. After all, raising taxes on your own citizens is politically unpopular, while attracting retail and spreading the cost burden across a million potential customers levies an indirect tax on a far greater pool of people, many of whom do not have a vote in that municipality's local elections.

Because of the prisoner's dilemma that is created for municipal leaders in the current system (i.e. either chase the sales tax revenue or lose out to the communities that do), the St. Louis region has gone from having no municipal sales tax to gathering 36.7% of its annual regional revenue from sales taxes. Sixty-nine of the ninety-two local governments in the St. Louis region count sales taxes as their number-one source of revenue. The pursuit of externally sourced municipal revenue amongst each municipality's neighbors is prolific. The result is an average sales tax rate in the St. Louis region of

8.04%. In some special taxing districts in the region, sales tax rates regularly eclipse 10% and rank among the highest in the country, over 40% higher than Missouri's average sales tax rate of 7%.

Just as troubling as the competition for sales tax revenue are the strategies and mechanisms utilized in its pursuit. St. Louis is home to 92 different entities, all pursuing economic development in their municipalities. This competition leads to the rampant use of economic

development incentives, not to attract businesses to the St. Louis region, but to get them to relocate within it.

In particular, **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** is a common tool used across the region to attract retail and the sales tax revenues that accompany it. While TIF is not unique to Missouri, the regulations regarding its use are. In fact, Missouri is one of only two states that allows for revenues beyond property taxes to be captured under a TIF, while also only requiring municipal approval for creation of a TIF.<sup>3</sup> On

average, most states require in excess of two agencies or bodies to approve a TIF before it can be established.<sup>4</sup> These extra rounds of approval assure that the TIF will be used to the benefit of the entire region or state.

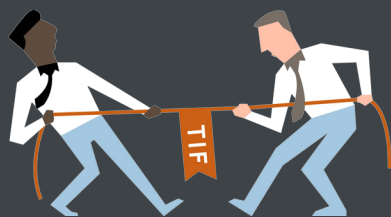
However, in St. Louis' fragmented structure, economic development success is not measured in regional terms with a focus on all boats rising. Instead, success equates to besting a neighbor. It is achieved by at-

tracting a store just a few blocks down a street out of a neighboring municipality and into their own. Examples of this are common. To see the dysfunction that belies economic development in the St. Louis region, one need look no further than a 2010 TIF approved by the Bridgeton City Council that provided \$7.2 million in tax-increment financing for the creation of a Walmart on St. Charles Rock Road.<sup>5</sup> This TIF was granted so that Walmart could

**“In the past 20 years, over \$2 billion of public tax dollars have been diverted to developers as subsidies for private developments through tax increment financing across the entire St. Louis region.”**

## TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax increment financing (TIF) is an economic development and redevelopment tool that generates a pool of money, which is used for reinvestment within a designated area. The money is generated by freezing the assessed value of property that is to be developed. Taxing districts (municipal, county, school) continue to collect property tax based on the frozen assessed value. As property values in the TIF district increase as a result of the development, additional tax reserves resulting from the increased values are placed into a TIF fund for TIF development projects. That additional reserve from increased property values is the “increment.” A municipality establishes a TIF district and the increment created may be utilized to develop the TIF district. TIF is political process that results from the partnering of developers with local government entities; it is not a matter of filling out forms and checking boxes.



relocate from an older store already located on St. Charles Rock Road and only two miles away. The older Walmart was located in both Bridgeton (93%) and St. Ann (7%).<sup>6</sup> However, when Walmart announced it was seeking to move to another site with expanded space, Bridgeton stepped forward with a new TIF to retain the store and the sales tax revenue. Municipal leadership warned that Walmart would simply close the smaller store and relocate to another city if Bridgeton refused to offer a TIF, and the store would take \$1 million in annual sales tax revenue with it.<sup>7</sup> The initial site of the original Walmart remains undeveloped today.

This story highlights a few key issues with the St. Louis region's structure for approving and using TIF. First, large corporations and big-box stores have a strategic advantage. With 92 entities in the St. Louis region independently chasing sales tax revenue in order to maintain service levels, businesses and developers can leverage the fragmented nature of our region against individual municipalities to their own benefit. In fact, research shows that while there are positive uses of TIF such as the Cortex development, the widespread use of TIF for retail development in St. Louis does more harm than it does good. Key findings on TIF use in the St. Louis region include:

- ***In the past 20 years, over \$2 billion of public tax dollars have been diverted to developers as subsidies for private developments through tax increment financing across the entire St. Louis region.<sup>8</sup> (Retail development can be found in about 80% of Missouri's TIFs.)<sup>9</sup>***

- ***An examination of sales tax revenues and the use of TIF demonstrate that declining shares of sales tax revenue in one municipality often coincides with the use of incentives and growth of tax revenue share in neighboring municipalities.<sup>10</sup>***
- ***Local governments have increasingly turned to using economic development incentives, particularly TIF and special taxing districts, as a mechanism to fund services. They are tools that local governments can use to control an additional revenue stream without a popular vote and while avoiding legislative caps on major revenue sources. This is not a sustainable means of financing government.<sup>11</sup>***
- ***Development incentives have primarily acted to redistribute spending and taxes.<sup>12</sup>***
- ***Household income is lower and increasing more slowly than in most of our peer regions.<sup>13</sup>***

Both the pursuit of sales tax revenue and the use of TIF in this endeavor illuminate a region that is pitted against itself and fueled by a structure that perpetuates a pursuit of external revenue in the form of sales tax.

# MUNICIPAL FINES AND FEES

While many municipalities utilize economic development incentives to net sales tax revenues, those communities almost always have an advantage of encompassing major thoroughfares or interstates in more affluent areas of the region. Those that do not have these advantages will turn to court fines for revenue. Both represent a politically expedient way to raise local municipal funds through a regional pool of citizens while maintaining or increasing services at no direct cost to constituents.

The use of courts in this manner brings with it many non-economic issues, which have been documented in numerous studies and news reports in the nearly two years following the unrest in

Ferguson. Many of those issues will be discussed in greater detail later in this report. In economic terms, Better Together's study on municipal

courts revealed that municipal courts across St. Louis County were, in both practice and intent, being utilized as revenue generators. Despite only 11% of Missouri's population living in the 90 municipalities in St. Louis County, those municipalities were found to have brought in 34% of all municipal fines and fees—totaling over \$45 million in revenue.

**“Better Together’s study revealed that municipal courts across St. Louis County were being utilized as revenue generators.”**

The municipal courts study revealed widespread abuse of courts across the entire St. Louis County region. However, a high percentage of general revenue from fines and fees was focused in an area of

## THE STORY OF ST. ANN

At one time, St. Ann was home to Northwest Plaza, the 27th largest mall in the United States, which brought sales tax revenue into the city. However, the mall slowly declined and closed in 2010. In response, St. Ann began running radar traps on I-70 near the airport and saw its revenue from court fines and fees reach \$3,415,671, or 37.47% of its general revenue, in 2013, while sales tax revenue dropped and property taxes accounted for only \$360,746 in revenue.<sup>14</sup>

*St. Ann’s Northwest Plaza brings in thousands of customers a day.*



St. Louis County located north of Olive Boulevard and within the boundary of I-270. Of 14 municipalities that counted court fines as their top source of revenue, 13 were located in this area. Further, of 21 municipalities that obtained 20% or more of their general revenue from fines are located in the very same area. Of these municipalities, their populations on average are 62% African-American, and 22% of residents live below the poverty level. In comparison, St. Louis County as whole is 24% African-American and has a poverty rate under 11%. The fact that the municipalities most reliant on fines and fees for revenue are disproportionately poor lends to the belief that the revenue generated by fines and fees is intended to supplement revenue that would come from sales taxes in more affluent areas. While sales tax revenue and municipal fines are on the surface quite different, in the St. Louis region fragmentation leads to both being pursued as forms of revenue. In some cases, one is utilized to replace the other, as in St. Ann.

*The pursuit of sales tax revenue across the St. Louis region is a troubling byproduct of St. Louis' fragmen-*

*tation. The use of municipal courts as sources of revenue is abhorrent. Yet, what they both reflect is a region struggling to persist rather than one focused on prosperity. While it is difficult to discuss sales tax revenue and court fines in the same context, in St. Louis they are mechanisms for getting other citizens to foot the bill. And it is a practice that is prolific. In fact, of the 90 municipalities in St. Louis County, 83 count sales tax revenue or court fines as their single largest source of revenue. The St. Louis region has some of the highest sales tax rates in the country and has become nationally known for its broken system of municipal court abuses.*

*All of this together depicts a broken regional system where 90 actors are pitted against one another with the ability to pass taxes and use fines in a way that is politically expedient and which creates a disconnect with the actual cost of goods and services. As the next section of this report details, this fragmented system also serves to increase and reinforce disparities across the region.*

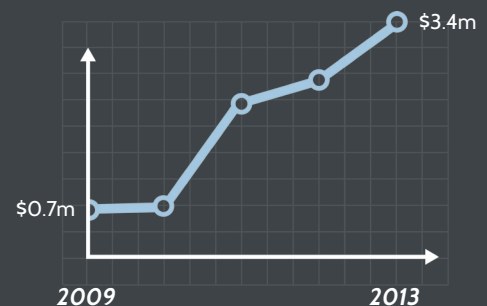
*Northwest Plaza declines and permanently closes in 2010.*



*St. Ann drastically increases traffic stops and fines, particularly along a small, but busy stretch of I-70 near Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.*

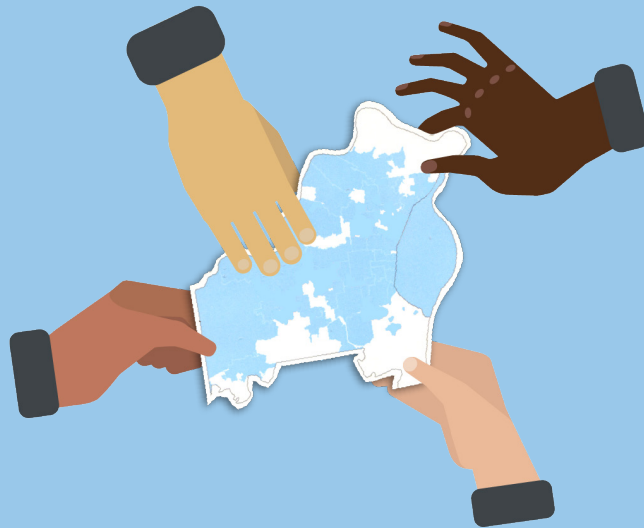


*In 2009, before Northwest Plaza closed, St. Ann collected \$722,727 in municipal fines and fees. Just four years later, that amount increased to 3.4 million dollars in 2013.*



# DISPARITY IN SERVICE PROVISION

**“HEIGHTENED FRAGMENTATION AND ONGOING  
COMPETITION LEAVES THE REGION WITH A MORE  
STRATIFIED VERSION OF WINNERS AND LOSERS  
AND LITTLE INCENTIVE TO ACT IN A WAY THAT  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE MUTUALITY  
OF OUR COLLECTIVE FATES.”**



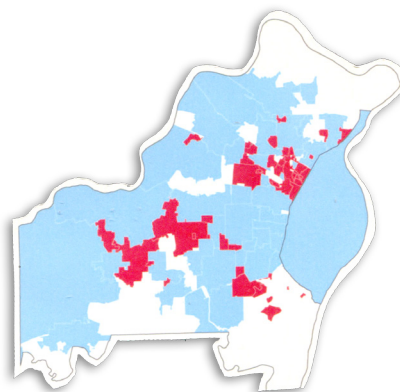


*A natural consequence of the internal competition in the St. Louis region is the creation of winners and losers. This systemically fosters an “us versus them” mentality that manifests in a disconnect from issues facing neighbors mere miles away and ultimately serves to reinforce and perpetuate disparities in the delivery of services across the region. While some communities celebrate services like free leaf pick-up and tree trimming while levying no property tax, just miles away other communities are arming their police with only a badge and nametag, with additional equipment to be purchased by the individual officer.<sup>15</sup> Short-term successes can certainly take hold in pockets, but a region with such drastic disparities can never truly thrive as a whole with the presence of such disparate interests, goals, and resources. This is highlighted prominently throughout the findings of Better Together’s studies.*

## PUBLIC FINANCE

When Better Together studied public finance in early 2014, it made a startling discovery: fragmentation serves as a structural impediment to community reinvestment in parts of our region. The small size of some municipalities, paired with declining and stagnant property tax revenue resulted in an inability for many communities to access capital debt markets. In examining municipal revenue streams and debts, it was discovered that the municipalities with no debt told a clear story.

### ***St. Louis City and County municipalities with and without debt***



■ **Municipalities with debt**  
■ **Municipalities without debt**

These no-debt municipalities largely fell into one of two categories. Some were relatively affluent communities where debt was not utilized because other resources were available to pay for infrastructure investment. The other category included a concentration of small municipalities in north St. Louis County that have been disproportionately impacted by the economic downturn and whose property values never fully recovered after the recession. This led to a reduced ability to rely on traditional funding sources like property tax revenue and ultimately an inability to access debt capital through traditional markets. The communities most affected by this reality are home to over 100,000 people, predominantly African-American, and typically had higher rates of poverty when compared to the overall rates of St. Louis County.

Some have pushed back on the idea that fragmentation is at the heart of these no-debt issues. Instead, they cite reasons such as unfamiliarity with the process for issuing debt bonds, an uneasiness with the notion of debt on the part of elected officials, or the calculation that the high cost of debt for their community was not worthwhile. One may reasonably argue that all of these alternate reasons for a community to not carry debt are directly related

to fragmentation and add credence to the theory that fragmentation itself causes small, poor communities to be locked out of debt capital markets. It is however not in dispute that the ultimate result is an inability to adequately fund necessary infrastructure improvements in communities that most need the investment. This lack of public investment is a hindrance to attract private investment in the form of new business development that simply does not exist for larger or more affluent municipalities. This reality, borne out of fragmentation, puts these communities at a further competitive disadvantage in the

ongoing internal competition present in the St. Louis region and leaves them without a mechanism for revitalization.

**“Fragmentation is a structural impediment to community reinvestment.”**

*-Jim Buford, former President of the Urban League and Better Together board member, in remarks at the St. Louis University Law School Symposium*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In Better Together’s study of economic development, differences in service provision could be found in the areas of business licensing and the impact of disparate workforce development goals by larger governmental actors. Additionally, prolific use of development incentives such as tax increment financing (TIF) to acquire retail development diminishes the effectiveness of such tools for the communities most in need of addressing blight.

As Better Together worked to document the 90-plus different ways in which a business license was obtained in the various municipalities across the region, we also spoke with hundreds of business owners about their experiences across different cities. While the experiences of these business owners varied, two elements emerged as key factors in determining whether starting a business was a positive or negative experience: clarity and certainty. Business owners, whether operating in the City of St. Louis, unincorporated St. Louis County, or a municipality expressed either gratitude for the clear requirements provided or their frustration over the lack of the same.

With few exceptions, the positive experiences shared with Better Together staff tended to be from business owners who had dealt with municipalities that were larger in size and more affluent. By most accounts this was not for lack of desire on the part of smaller municipalities. Rather, larger or more affluent cities simply had more resources dedicated to their business development efforts. This unfortunate condition contributes to the perception that some communities are not as business-friendly, further compounding issues of resources for service provision in other service areas. Disparities in business licensing practices also highlight another problem with fragmentation. While best practices for business licensing can be found in some municipalities in St. Louis County, the fragmented structure of government and disparity in resources available to those governments make it nearly impossible to replicate those best practices across the region. This truism is not limited to best practices in business licensing but can also be seen in service provision for municipal court practices, as well as police and fire protection.



The disparities found in Better Together's economic development study are not isolated to the provision of services like business licensing. Fragmentation also has a profound effect on the outcomes of policies local governments employ to reduce disparities between various populations. Two examples of this can be found in the different workforce development standards and the use of economic development incentives like TIFs.

In examining the workforce development standards of the region's most prominent governmental contractors, it was discovered that while St. Louis City and the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) have strong standards for minority participation on projects, St. Louis County's government had no standards at all. Workforce development standards are primarily implemented as a way to ensure that contractors on sizeable government contracts utilize minority and women workers to carry out their work.

It is a government's way of attempting to ensure the continued development of a workforce that reflects the demographics of its citizenry and can lead to job training and better wages for individuals who participate. However, the fragmentation of local governments and their policies significantly lessen the intended impact of these policies.

When a contractor working with St. Louis County gets additional work with either St. Louis City or MSD, the ideal would be for that contractor to

hire the necessary number of additional minority or female workers to meet the workforce development standards. However, since St. Louis County currently has no minimum standards for minority or female participation, instead of hiring additional underrepresented workers as the standards are intended to prompt, the contractor can and may have to simply move the already existing minority workers in their company to the projects that require it. This diminishes the effectiveness of the existing workforce development standards

and undercuts the legitimate goals of other governments to train a workforce that is reflective of its population.

This dynamic also plays out in the use of development incentives like TIFs. These incentives were initially designed to combat blight and help spur development and growth in areas that were not reasonably anticipated to be developed but for the adoption of the tax incentive. As discussed

**“Fragmentation also has a profound effect on the outcomes of policies local governments employ to reduce disparities between various populations.”**

in the previous section, these criteria have been grossly redefined and led to the proliferation of tax incentives for ordinary development with TIFs being among the most abused. The ultra-competitive pursuit of sales tax dollars in the region has served to undermine the effectiveness of these tools for those communities that experience true economic blight. The result again puts communities that may already have been at a competitive disadvantage even farther behind.

# PUBLIC HEALTH

Perhaps the most troubling result of fragmentation is its contribution to great disparities in health outcomes among African Americans and the broader St. Louis population, as demonstrated in the *For the Sake of All* report.<sup>16</sup> This report showed great disparities in health outcomes based on an individual's race and zip code. The executive summary of *For the Sake of All* states,

***Where you live in St. Louis has a powerful impact on your health. Residents of zip codes separated by only a few miles have up to an 18-year difference in life expectancy. Because of considerable residential segregation in St. Louis, many areas with high African American populations are also areas with concentrated poverty and poor health.***<sup>17</sup>

The report goes on to make a compelling case about the relationship among education, poverty, and place on health and life outcomes. In addition to factors like “access to healthy foods, safe green spaces for recreation, and convenient access to medical care,” Better Together found that the structure of our public health services in St. Louis City and County also play a role in exacerbating disparities in health outcomes. We frequently heard from experts and professionals working locally in the health care and public health sectors that “disease knows no political boundaries,”

therefore our approach to combatting disease and health issues should reflect that reality. While many familiar with the two health departments in the region (St. Louis City and St. Louis County) acknowledged differences in how they operated, none were willing to defend the separation of the bodies and primarily spoke of the difficulties the current system presents when carrying out their work.

Fragmentation has enabled vastly different funding scenarios for these two public health departments. St. Louis City Department of Health receives approximately 51.5% of its funding from grants and contracts, with the remainder coming from the City's general fund. In contrast, St. Louis County's department of public health has a dedicated property tax as its primary funding mechanism and only 3.5% of its funding is from grants. The reliance on grant and contract funding means that the priorities of the City health department are often dictated by available grant funds rather than the health priorities as determined by the local department. The separation of the two departments also means that health programs provided through third-party partners aimed at addressing local health concerns may not be available to some who need them, owing only to the physical address of the individuals seeking the service. These kinds of arbitrary calculations greatly impede our region's ability to coordinate resources and directly address pressing health issues that contribute to the vast disparity in health outcomes between African-American and white residents.

# PUBLIC SAFETY

While the disparity in health outcomes is an alarming result of fragmentation, the inequity in public safety service provision is just as stark and plays out in a myriad of ways.

## POLICE

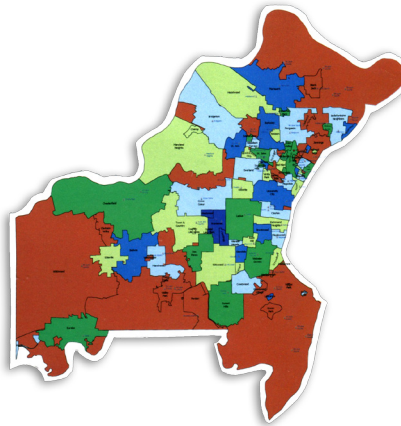
The level of police service a citizen receives in the St. Louis region depends entirely upon where one lives or the area one is traveling. There are currently 57 police departments serving St. Louis City and County with a wide range of policies and practices. Disparities among the departments and the subsequent service each provides is most easily demonstrated by noting the differences in hiring requirements, equipment provided, and officer pay.

To understand a police department's ability to protect and serve a community, it is helpful to know what resources are available to an officer in that department. During its study of policing, Better Together staff compiled data provided by the police departments that showed the equipment provided to the officers by the department upon their hiring. Some departments, like St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and the larger municipal departments provide a comprehensive list of equipment to all officers. Others may provide some basic equipment like a service weapon, uniform, badge, while requiring individual officers to furnish their own department approved supplemental equipment. Some departments, like Flordell Hills, provide only a name identification and badge. Resources matter. For example, training on the use of less lethal force is rendered moot in departments that do not provide less lethal weapons.

Great disparities exist in the hiring processes and standards across departments. In the more professional departments, all officer candidates are

required to undergo extensive background checks that include drug screenings, credit checks, character references, as well as independent physical and psychological screening before they can be approved for hire. Other departments have no formal written requirement for hiring beyond the minimum licensure mandated by the state or have vague standards such as requiring applicants to be in "good emotional health."

### *Police Jurisdictions and Patrol Contracts in St. Louis County*



These disparities are further highlighted in the pay differences among departments. While the average officer pay across the region is \$48,659, Better Together's studies found that some department's average officer pay was below \$27,000. More alarming was the finding that some part-time officers are paid less than \$12/hr. Further, some police departments' use of reserve officers was found to be inconsistent and inappropriate. Reserve officers typically have a lower level of training, are not paid and are designed to be under the direct supervision of a fully licensed officer at all times. However, some departments in St. Louis County allowed reserve officers to patrol without being partnered with more experienced

officers. This misuse allows those communities to have substandard service and can lead to potentially dangerous outcomes for police and public alike, in order to save money.

Better Together worked with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to better understand ideal policing strategies for St. Louis. Their findings further highlight the differences in levels of police services based on department. In addition to concluding that

“fragmentation undermines effective policing,” PERF observed that many of the highest crime areas of St. Louis County also had high ratios of officers to residents and lower average pay. This suggests that in the areas most in need of more effective

policing, officers may be undertrained or at the very least utilized incorrectly to address the most pressing crime issues of those communities. Moreover, the fragmentation in the region creates a system in which the *“muni shuffle”* is able to persist. From the PERF report:

***“Police standards, training, pay, and professionalism vary dramatically throughout the region. Of particular concern is the so-called ‘muni shuffle,’ in which police officers who are fired or allowed to resign because of disciplinary or performance issues in one department are quickly hired by another department, because it can be less expensive to hire an experienced (albeit compromised) officer than to recruit and train a new officer.”***

**“PERF has never before encountered what we have seen in parts of St. Louis County.”**

This not only leads to communities with fewer resources having compromised officers, but it breeds mistrust in law enforcement at-large. While the residents of the communities policed by those departments bear the brunt of the problem, one need only be reminded that a driver traveling from the Galleria to the airport travels through 15 independent police jurisdictions during the 14-minute trip.

PERF went on to suggest that while the ideal policing solution would be one department for the region, there are at least three areas in St. Louis County in dire need of quick restructuring to bring a level of police professionalism to the residents currently lacking in many of the existing departments. Their recommendation to strategically cluster police service in three areas of St. Louis County speak directly to the critical state of the current structure and the inadequacy of service present in parts of our region.

## COURTS

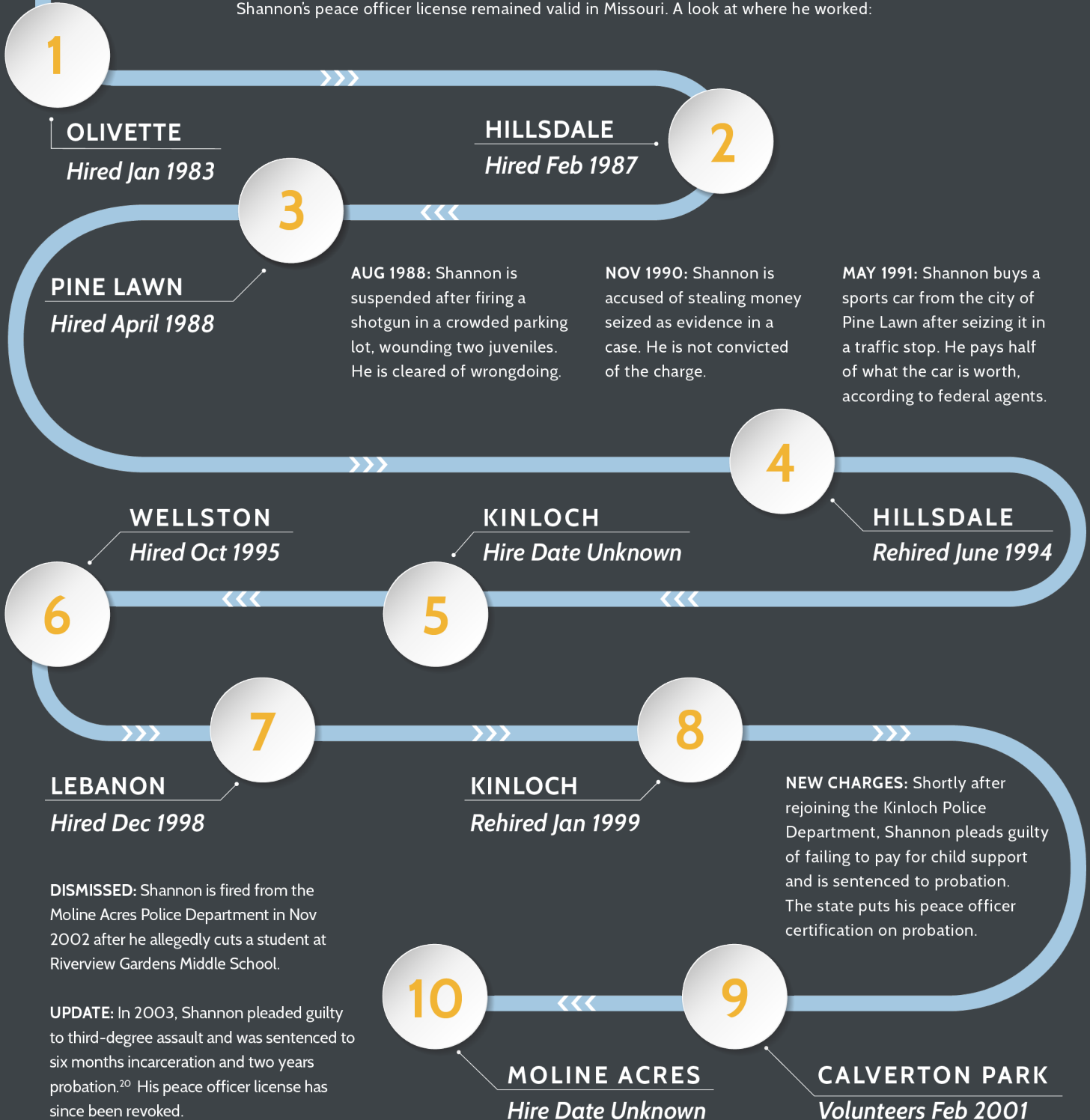
The disparity in service delivery can also be seen in the municipal courts in St. Louis County. As highlighted above, the chase for external revenue through the courts disproportionately impacts African Americans and the poor in St. Louis. A recent report by Saint Louis University even showed that the experiences in a municipal courtroom varied depending on where one was in court. After interviewing over 700 people about their experiences in municipal court,<sup>18</sup> the study found that blacks and whites alike had better experiences in municipalities with higher median incomes. It is highly problematic that African Americans were more likely to



# THE MUNI SHUFFLE<sup>19</sup>

In 2003, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported on a troublesome practice known as the "muni shuffle" wherein police officers who have been fired or allowed to resign because of disciplinary or performance issues in one department find employment in neighboring departments. Over a decade later, the Police Executive Research Forum found this practice remains prevalent in the St. Louis region "because it can be less expensive to hire an experienced (albeit compromised) officer that to recruit and train a new officer." The following is a real life example of the "muni shuffle" and the negative impact it has on policing in the St. Louis region.

**MARVIN SHANNON, 44**, worked as a police officer for 19 years for at least eight police departments on both sides of the Mississippi River. He has been sued, suspended, and charged with crimes several times, but Shannon's peace officer license remained valid in Missouri. A look at where he worked:



have negative experiences than their white counterparts. That the experience is more negative depending on the median income of the municipality is even more unacceptable and further highlights the disparities created and exacerbated by fragmentation.

A look at some basic facts about common practices in the municipal courts across the region further highlights the prevalence of disparate treatment. During Better Together's own examination of the municipal courts in St. Louis County, research revealed that access to courts was particularly problematic and served as a stark example of the disadvantage many working class citizens face in engaging with the system. For instance, most municipal courts only hold 1-2 sessions per month. These sessions are typically two to three hours long during the evening and can average over 500 cases per session. It is highly unlikely that substantive judicial hearings can be had for that number of cases in such a short time span. Further, the individuals

who are most often asked to appear in these courtrooms face additional barriers to attending that are rarely given consideration. Time and again Better Together researchers and partner organizations like Arch City Defenders heard stories of individuals having to choose between appearing in municipal court to address a minor violation or showing

up to work. Further complicating matters was a common practice of not allowing children or non-defendants into courtrooms. This created an additional dilemma in which parents who could not afford or otherwise procure childcare were forced to either miss their court date or not provide adequate care for their children. For

**“Access to courts was particularly problematic and served as a stark example of the disadvantage many working class citizens face in engaging with the system. For instance, most municipal courts only hold 1-2 sessions per month.”**

one parent attempting to pay a municipal fine in Hazelwood, this illegal policy became a life-altering event.<sup>21</sup> After being told that he could not bring his children into court, the father had them wait in the parking lot with a friend who was also at court. While the father was inside paying the fine, a police officer entered and arrested him for child endangerment, for leaving his children outside to come pay his fine. While actions have been taken to address this harmful policy, it is clear that those injured while it was in full effect were overwhelmingly poorer than the region's overall population. In a region where poverty rates are so strongly associated with race, African-American residents were once again most negatively

impacted by these poor practices.

The disparate impact of poor municipal court practices is further amplified by the multiple roles attorneys within the system play. Better Together research and subsequent news stories in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* revealed that a great number of attorneys serving as judge or prosecutor in a municipal court



were also serving in one of those roles in another municipality.<sup>22</sup> These attorneys also frequently practice defense law for private clients in this same system of municipal courts. This means that Attorney A can defend a client before Attorney B who is the judge in a municipality on Monday, then on Tuesday in a different municipality Attorney A is the prosecutor or judge and Attorney B has the client before the court. These potential conflicts of interest fuel mistrust in the court system and further compound the perception and reality that those who are poorer do not receive equal representation. The impact of these special relationships and multiple roles are even harsher in more resource-strapped municipalities. In these cities, judges and prosecutors are under pressure from the municipal officials who hired them to bring in revenue. Surely, any breaks given to defendants go to those with lawyers rather than the poorest among us who lack legal representation and oftentimes are unaware of their basic rights in court. This feature of the municipal courts in St. Louis County has become characteristic of the lack of oversight in the courts and underscore the notion that many courts exist not to deliver justice but to generate revenue with a blind eye to the impact it has on individuals, families, and whole communities.

## FIRE

Fire protection is another service area in which the disparities in resources threaten the public safety. Currently 43 fire departments—23 fire protection districts and 20 municipal fire departments—provide fire protection services to residents in St. Louis City and St. Louis County. The fragmentation present in this system has contributed to wide variance in pay, training, and equipment available to fire fighters in parts of the region. Of particular note is the effect these disparities have

## *Fire Districts and Departments St. Louis County, Missouri*



on the region's ability to staff specialized units and individual departments' abilities to effectively contribute to the mutual aid agreements.

The smallest departments in the region operate with as few as a dozen employees, while larger departments operate with staffs of over 100. St. Louis City Fire Department employs approximately 800 people. Due to fragmentation, the region lacks several dedicated units that an area the size of St. Louis, with a high level of development and large population, should have. There exists no dedicated, properly staffed, heavy rescue squad in St. Louis County, for example. Additionally, only St. Louis City operates a full-time, dedicated hazardous materials (hazmat) response unit. Within St. Louis County, no department operates a full-time dedicated hazmat response unit, which can pose a significant risk to the region. When a hazmat incident occurs in St. Louis County, for example a train derails while transporting hazardous chemicals, those county departments have to muster a hazmat response team from across the region. Individual officers are specially trained and certified in hazardous material response, and they leave the firehouses where they are stationed to respond to the incident. Because critical time is



## 8 people taken to hospital after ammonia leak at Brentwood rec center • FROM B1 By Joel Currier

**BRENTWOOD** • Eight people were taken to a hospital after an ammonia leak in a room with a refrigeration system for the ice rink at the newly renovated Brentwood Recreation Complex.

Of the eight, three were firefighters, four were construction workers and one was a city employee. The firefighters were treated and released from Mercy Hospital in Creve Coeur; the city employee was treated and released from St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond Heights. One of the construction workers was treated for ammonia burns at Mercy Hospital in Creve Coeur.

None of the injuries was life-threatening, according to a statement from Brentwood's city administrator.

Ammonia can burn skin and be toxic, even fatal, if inhaled. It is used as a refrigerant at many ice rinks.

The complex is at 2505 South Brentwood Boulevard. The call came out at about 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Firefighters and paramedics from Affton, Brentwood, Clay-



**St. Louis firefighters wear their hazardous materials suits preparing to enter the Brentwood Community Center to check on an ammonia leak on Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2015. Photo by Robert Cohen**

ton, Ladue, Maplewood, Richmond Heights, Rock Hill, Shrewsbury and the St. Louis Fire Department responded to the leak. Authorities said the leak was contained and the building cleared of ammonia about 1 p.m. Brentwood Boulevard is open to traffic in both directions.

The center's ice rink was closed for the summer for a \$7.2

million renovation that included a new rink and ammonia-based cooling system for the rink. The complex reopened Sept. 5, and workers were checking the system when the leak was discovered, said Ben Von Harz, a Brentwood project manager.

The complex was reopened but the rink would remain closed while the ice refreezes.

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lost during the “mustering” period, the St. Louis City hazmat team is likely the first to respond. It is important to note that this situation exists because individual St. Louis County departments are not large enough to ensure that a hazmat team is always on duty.

Further, disparities among departments also impact their ability to provide effective mutual aid. Mutual aid agreements provide for overlapping coverage in cases of emergency across the region and are critical to emergency responders’ ability to adequately address a variety of situations. Disparities in department resources and standard operating procedures make it difficult for some departments to respond properly when requested or may impede the fire fighters’ abilities to face an emergency in the most efficient manner available.

## **PARKS & RECREATION**

While the Better Together study of parks and recreation largely found a strength in our region’s parks systems, disparity in service delivery and availability still managed to play a role. Dan McGuire, former Director of Parks for St. Louis City and Chairman of the Parks Committee, summed up issues of disparities, stating that “when a community is strapped for resources, upkeep of the parks and programming is the first to go. Often, those most in need of safe, affordable leisure are the ones who lose out. Continual investment in local parks and infrastructure is critical to maintaining a healthy, vibrant community.” As has been stressed in other service areas, the resources to properly invest in these parks services are not often available to less affluent communities as a result of fragmentation.

**“When a community does not have the adequate resources to fund both public safety and infrastructure investment, residents lose out on one or both services.”**

As highlighted in a local news story last year, local elected officials must, at times, attempt to balance protecting the investments made in parks with the need to provide public spaces for recreation. This dilemma is demonstrated in stories relayed to Better Together researchers and in instances like Pine Lawn wherein a recently upgraded park was locked “more often than not.”<sup>24</sup> Without adequate resources to provide desired safety protection for renovated parks and community members, the end policy is to severely restrict hours at parks or allow use by permit only. When a community does not have the adequate resources to fund both public safety and infrastructure investment, residents lose out on one or both services. When contrasted with the abundance of available municipal and county parks and recreation centers in other parts of the region, this disparity appears even starker.

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the governments in the St. Louis region is, in part, at the heart of many of the disparities present in service delivery. The ability to attract and hire professional staff to manage the affairs of a government is often what sets apart those municipalities that engage in best practices and those that do not or cannot. While the Better Together study of general administration highlighted the fact that we spend far too much of our region's resources on the administration of governments, even the overspent amount is not distributed equitably nor are services provided across the re-

gion in an equitable manner. While some municipalities have full-time staff and city halls open five days a week during generally recognized business hours, others have part-time staff and office hours that make it difficult for those seeking contact. For example, over the course of three separate information requests from municipal governments in the region, Better Together staff experienced delays for a variety of reasons. In more

than one case, the U.S. Postal Service was unable to deliver registered mail with the information request because the municipality's hours were so limited. Another time, a staffer was told there would be delays in providing information because they were "a very part-time municipality." While this certainly was an inconvenience to our work, it would be far more frustrating for a citizen with more

limited time seeking to engage with their local government.

With limited resources for staff or administration of services, some communities struggle to maintain basic operations and provide adequate oversight

of other services. Some have argued that the current fragmented system allows for residents to be closer to elected officials. However, the data suggest otherwise. The current structure, cobbled together over more than 200 years, fosters civic disengagement. In fact, in the most recent municipal elections, only 12.21% of registered voters (or 9.41% of the voting-age population) cast a ballot. To put that number in perspective,

**"29 municipal  
mayors in  
St. Louis County  
were elected  
with 100 or  
fewer votes"**

684

ELECTED  
MUNICIPAL  
OFFICIALS

571

ALDERMEN

91

MAYORS

a recent University of Wisconsin survey found that about 21% of the voting-age population cast ballots in 2011.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the same pool of St. Louis voters turned out at a rate of over 60% across the region in the November 2012 elections. While proponents tout local control and civic engagement as benefits of smaller, localized municipal governance, data across the St. Louis region, including the fact that 29 municipal mayors in St. Louis County were elected with 100 or fewer votes, demonstrates that several factors including the extreme fragmentation of the region drastically reduce citizen engagement.

Lastly, the simple existence of 90 municipalities in St. Louis County and a separate St. Louis City lends itself to a disparity in ability for the area's residents to hold their governments accountable. News media is one of the primary ways citizens in a democracy rely on to understand what is happening with their governments. Our current fragmentation makes it impossible for the media to appropriately cover all the governments' working in the region. Often, this results in the largest municipalities receiving the most media coverage. In effect, this means residents of smaller municipalities have a diminished ability

to follow the workings of their government and ultimately hold them accountable to the citizens who underwrite those very governments.

*To be sure, many of the issues identified in Better Together findings in differences in service across municipalities are not unique to the St. Louis region. All metropolitan areas have some levels of disparity. St. Louis' structure reinforces it. The competition over finite resources is intensified because of the sheer number of actors vying for a piece of the pie. This heightened fragmentation and ongoing competition leaves the region with a more stratified version of winners and losers and little incentive to act in a way that acknowledges the mutuality of our collective fates. The resulting environment is one in which rather than having all communities receive a high quality of basic services with the option to fund increased levels through their citizenry, we have communities with a premier level of service, often at no direct cost, while others struggle to address the most basic of needs. Most troubling is that this disparity is not naturally occurring. Rather, it is reinforced and perpetuated by St. Louis' structure and the negative competition it spurs within the region.*

131

SEPARATE MUNICIPAL  
MEETINGS EACH MONTH

14

ATTORNEYS SERVE AS  
THE CITY ATTORNEY FOR  
MORE THAN HALF OF  
OUR REGION'S LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS.

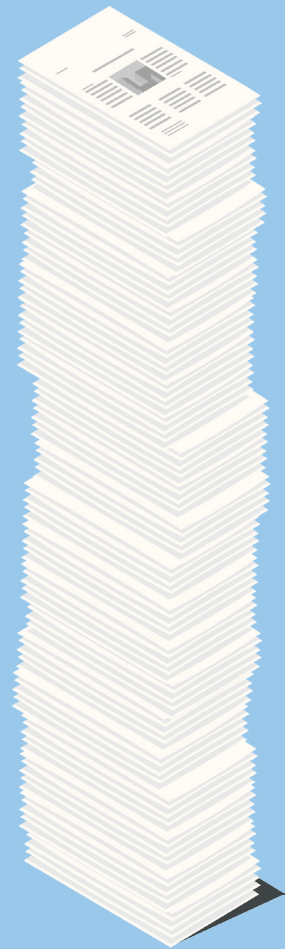
5.78

MILLION DOLLARS  
SPENT ANNUALLY  
ON TOP MUNICIPAL  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
POSITIONS.

# REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & SHARED VISION



**IRS TAX CODE**  
*9,000 pages*



**ST. LOUIS  
ORDINANCES**  
*52,000 pages*

*Fragmentation perpetuates itself. It is perhaps its greatest flaw. The fragmentation of the St. Louis region is reflective more of this fact than of a conscious choice to be structured in its current state. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find anyone who, if charged with drawing the political structure for a thriving St. Louis region, would design anything remotely resembling its current system. Yet, it sustains itself by its very nature in several critical ways.*

## LACK OF A STRONG REGIONAL LEADERSHIP POSITION

St. Louis' fragmentation has created a system that is devoid of a singular strong leadership role. In addition to the absence of such a role, fragmentation prevents any individual leader from stepping into such a role. An example of this can be found in the recent action taken by County Executive Steve Stenger, who is elected by all citizens living in St. Louis County. County Executive Stenger led an initiative to implement basic standards for police departments across St. Louis County. In most regions, such standards would have been implemented and almost immediately an improvement in service provision would have resulted. However, because St. Louis County is composed of 90 municipalities and patrolled by 56 police departments, this action was met by opposition and a pending lawsuit. The stated reason for the lawsuit was not opposition to the standards themselves. Rather, the municipalities and their leaders have called into question the authority of the St. Louis County Executive to implement the standards. Thus, a reform, the spirit and context of which have widespread support in the region, may go unimplemented solely because the region deters strong leadership.

The St. Louis region is left without a regional leader to foster collaboration on substantive issues ranging from public health to economic development to public safety. In place of such a role is a maze of bureaucracy consisting of 684

local elected officials that meet each month across 131 city council meetings. To put that in perspective, 92 local St. Louis governments employ more elected officials to determine the course of the region than all of Congress employs in the governance of the United States. The regulatory product of this system is 52,000 pages of municipal ordinances that govern the daily lives, businesses, homes, and actions of the St. Louis' citizens. Placed end to end these ordinances would pave a trail that stretched from Busch Stadium to the St. Louis Galleria. For further context the entirety of the IRS tax code is 9,000 pages. In aggregate, the number of elected officials, council meetings, and ordinances provide a sobering picture of the weight of the status quo and the difficulty of leading within it. Just as problematic are the enormous financial and opportunity costs incurred under the current system of fragmentation.

In 2014, St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and the 90 municipal governments in St. Louis County spent \$281,078,709 on general administration. Per capita, a resident of the St. Louis region paid \$213.16 solely for general administration costs in 2014. By way of comparison, Louisville-Jefferson County is home to 83 municipalities and has a fully integrated regional government, Louisville Metro, which was established on January 1, 2003. Louisville Metro handles many of the administrative functions that are divided amongst 92

local governments in the St. Louis region. As such, the regional administrative cost is significantly lower. The cost of general administration for Louisville-Jefferson County in 2014 was \$95,913,714. When spread over a population of 756,832, the cost of general administration cost per capita is \$126.73, which is \$86.43 or 41% less per capita than in the St. Louis region.

If the St. Louis region were able to reduce its per capita general administration cost to that of Louisville-Jefferson County, it would result in a savings of \$113,967,462 annually. Prior to the consolidation, Louisville-Jefferson County saw a trend of steadily increasing government spending.

Now, nearly 13 years after the creation of Louisville Metro, that trend

has stopped—meaning not only that Louisville Metro is operating more efficiently than the St. Louis region, but also that trends indicate the gap in spending between the two regions will continue to grow. In fact, while regional spending in St. Louis continues to grow, at the end of 2015, Louisville Metro Mayor Greg Fischer announced a surplus of \$12.6 million, savings that he directly attributed to efficiencies in the Louisville metro government.

In addition to the economic costs of St. Louis' fragmentation, the opportunity costs incurred under fragmentation prevent the region from realizing the population growth and economic

benefits that regions such as Louisville-Jefferson County are currently experiencing. A short visit to Louisville Metro's government website provides access to business licensing, regional service requests, and budgets. In addition, [www.louiestat.com](http://www.louiestat.com) provides perfor-

mance metrics for all major departments. Most striking is the access to a 6-year strategic plan for Louisville Metro. In combination, these resources create a streamlined structure focused on constant planning and reassessment to ensure proactive and rapid response to seize opportunities for the region and address issues before they arise.

In contrast, fragmentation renders the St. Louis region reactive. Fragmentation lends to a lack of cen-

tralized resources and difficulty in obtaining critical data to inform decisions across the region. In fact, over the course of two years, Better Together expended hundreds of hours and paid over \$25,000 for the "publicly available" data that comprises our reports. Similarly, while Louisville-Jefferson County and Indianapolis have centralized processes and standards for business licensing, St. Louis has over 80 separate processes. Overall, St. Louis' byzantine system of regulation and inability to leverage the weight of the regions resources behind economic opportunities further emphasize the pitfalls of fragmentation.

**“You would be hard pressed to find anyone who, if charged with drawing the political structure for a thriving St. Louis region, would design anything remotely resembling its current system.”**

## UNUSUAL MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES

### *Phrenology*

#### **Brentwood 215.205**

Prohibition on fortune telling, palmistry, mediumship, phrenology, astrology, spiritualism, or clairvoyance.

### *Sagging*

#### **Country Club Hills 7.5.08**

Pants worn by any person, regardless of age, should be size appropriate and secured at the waist to prevent the pants from falling more than three inches below the hips causing exposure of the person or the person's undergarments.

### *Limitations on Barbecue or*

#### *Outdoor Cooking*

#### **Pagedale 210. 700**

Subject to certain exceptions, all persons must conduct barbecue cooking or outdoor cooking at the rear of the building line of any single-family dwelling, multi-family dwelling, or commercial structure.

### *Dance Permit*

#### **Berkeley 615.010**

Every person or persons conducting or providing dances shall, except as otherwise provided, secure a Dance Permit and it shall be unlawful to operate, conduct or provide a dance without securing a Dance Permit.



# DOES ST. LOUIS HAVE THE WILL TO CHANGE?

*Better Together's studies of the St. Louis region have revealed the devastating impact and costs of fragmentation on the St. Louis region. The resulting internal competition, disparities, and deterrence of strong regional leadership are barriers to justice, equity, and prosperity. Those barriers are real and they are significant. However, they are not insurmountable. Throughout this report and each of Better Together's studies, there is not one finding that indicates that the St. Louis region, as a whole, lacks the resources or ability to flourish. The universities, cultural institutions, entrepreneurial environment, and philanthropic community of St. Louis are world class. The building blocks for a thriving, vibrant region are present and in many cases the reasons its residents choose to call the St. Louis region home. However, what has been evident time and again is that the citizens of the region lack a structure worthy of its people. Therefore, St. Louis is not without a pathway forward. The only true obstacle is whether St. Louis has the **WILL TO CHANGE**.*



# NOTES

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- <sup>3</sup> Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, State Tax Increment Finance Programs (2010), available at: [www.lincolnst.edu/subcenters/...tax/upload/.../TIF\\_Table\\_2010.xls](http://www.lincolnst.edu/subcenters/...tax/upload/.../TIF_Table_2010.xls)
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- <sup>5</sup> Gillerman, Margaret "Walmart Store Gets Bridgeton's Approval." St. Louis Post-Dispatch 8 July 2010. Available at: [http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/walmart-store-gets-bridgeton-s-approval/article\\_8d158273-5237-5e5d-b0d8-fc23c94dc3ff.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/walmart-store-gets-bridgeton-s-approval/article_8d158273-5237-5e5d-b0d8-fc23c94dc3ff.html)
- <sup>6</sup> Gillerman
- <sup>7</sup> Gillerman
- <sup>8</sup> East-West Gateway Council of Gov't, An Assessment of the Effectiveness and Fiscal Impacts of the Use of Local Development Incentives in the St. Louis Region: Final Report 35 (2011)—this figure includes the entire St. Louis Metropolitan region.
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# Better Together

*Better Together is a grassroots project born in response to growing public interest in addressing the fragmented nature of local government throughout St. Louis City and County, which dates back to 1876, when St. Louis City broke away from St. Louis County.*

*The resulting absence of a cohesive governmental structure left a void and many smaller governments formed to fill it. This is why the 1.3 million people who call St. Louis home are served by 115 local governments, which include St. Louis City and County, as well as 90 municipalities and 23 fire districts. The costs associated with funding all 115 governments (excluding airport and water service fees) has reached a staggering \$2 billion per year.*

*Better Together's comprehensive studies look across the City and County to determine whether the region could improve both service and cost by streamlining and eliminating redundancies and better serve the people of St. Louis.*

## VISION

Striving together to create a just and prosperous St. Louis region.

## MISSION

We support the St. Louis region by acting as a catalyst for the removal of governmental, economic, and racial barriers to the region's growth and prosperity for all of our citizens by promoting unity, trust, efficiency, and accountability.

## COMMITMENTS

- *We are committed to fact driven research to address the challenges of fragmentation in the region and to inform policy.*
- *We are committed to open and direct dialogue with all constituencies and stakeholders for the greater good of our community.*
- *We are committed to supporting organizations that share our mission and vision.*

STAY ENGAGED AND SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER AT:

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**Appendix B**  
**Town Hall Summary**

## **St. Louis City-County Governance Task Force Town Hall Discussion – After Action Report**

Throughout October and November 2017, Better Together hosted a series of town hall discussions on behalf of the St. Louis City-County Governance Task Force. These discussions were designed to provide the five-person task force with community feedback regarding the possible reorganization of municipal services between the City of Saint Louis and Saint Louis County. Utilizing the public's feedback, along with fact-driven research assembled by Better Together, the task force is developing recommendations to improve the cost and quality of municipal services in the St. Louis region.

Notification of the forums was distributed through traditional media, social media, and advertising. Among the five forums, 270 residents attended the events and an additional 800 residents responded to the same questions via an online survey.

### **Small Group Discussion Results**

Providing an opportunity for all attendees to speak, up to five small groups of forum attendees were formed and directed by third-party professional facilitators. The discussion revolved around the following questions:

- What advantages exist by having individual services, such as police departments, municipal courts, and fire districts? What do residents gain? What does the region gain?
- What disadvantages exist by having individual services, such as police departments, municipal courts, and fire districts? What do residents lose? What does the region lose?
- Of the public services (police, fire, courts, public works, parks and recreation, etc.) offered by your municipality, should not be considered for reorganization and why?

During the small group discussions, the task force members floated among groups to hear the participants' responses to questions. The feedback captured on the following pages represents a summary of the most common statements made by forum attendees. *Italicized responses were expressed in at least 70% of the small group discussions.*

What advantages exist by having individual services, such as police departments, municipal courts and fire districts? What do residents gain? What does the region gain?		
ADVANTAGES	RESIDENTS	REGION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Local control</b> and direct <b>accountability</b> of those delivering services;</li> <li>▪ <b>Easier access</b> to municipal staff (including police and fire) and elected officials;</li> <li>▪ Elected officials live in the municipality being served;</li> <li>▪ Having their <b>voices heard</b> in smaller communities;</li> <li>▪ A <b>more democratic process</b>, where their vote counts more;</li> <li>▪ <b>Responsive and quick resolution</b> to problems because municipalities are serving fewer residents over a smaller area;</li> <li>▪ Municipal employees being <b>familiar with the area</b> and providing faster service delivery and problem resolution;</li> <li>▪ A <b>choice of service quality and availability</b>, based on ability to pay (property tax revenue)</li> <li>▪ <b>Small town feel</b> and sense of community surrounded by <b>cosmopolitan amenities</b>;</li> <li>▪ <b>Customized services</b>, such as snow removal, tailored to their needs and based on what is valued most;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>More municipal employment opportunities</b>;</li> <li>▪ <b>Economic stability</b> and less employee turnover;</li> <li>▪ More <b>efficient municipalities</b> because they are learning from each other and experimenting with and implementing practices of good government;</li> <li>▪ <b>Municipal collaboration, sharing and support</b> because there are more;</li> <li>▪ Increased <b>neighborhood and municipality diversity</b>;</li> <li>▪ <b>School choice</b>, where those who can move to the best districts; and</li> <li>▪ <b>Strong and stable neighborhoods</b>, which attract residents and businesses.</li> </ul>

What advantages exist by having individual services, such as police departments, municipal courts and fire districts? What do residents gain? What does the region gain?		
ADVANTAGES	RESIDENTS	REGION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having <b>more opportunities to serve</b> as an elected official or commission; and</li> <li>▪ <b>Enhanced sense of community</b> and neighborhood pride because residents are more connected to each other.</li> </ul> <p><u>Mentioned by fewer than 70% of small groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tax revenue remaining in the municipality to benefit residents;</li> <li>▪ Less expensive services due to competitive bidding process and volume discounts;</li> <li>▪ Courts within close proximity;</li> <li>▪ Better zoning and more rigorous code enforcement;</li> <li>▪ Job stability for municipal employees; very low turnover;</li> <li>▪ Preferential treatment for those with stronger municipal relationships;</li> <li>▪ Protection from “bullying” by larger and more wealthy governmental entities; and</li> <li>▪ Public school choice.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Mentioned by fewer than 70% of small groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protection from “bullying” by larger and more wealthy governmental entities; and</li> <li>▪ Consolidation of specialized services, e.g. helicopter and major case squad;</li> <li>▪ Lower crime rates in some areas because police are more familiar with residents</li> </ul>

## Sampling of Online Survey Responses

*“not much, but if I'm reaching, I would say more accountability. That is, if I don't think Ballwin is doing it right, it means the task for me to get a Ballwin city alderman un-elected is to change the minds of a few hundred voters. If I don't like what a county executive is doing, I would have a task 100x as large.”*

*“Local officials know the residents and residents can more easily reach out to local officials they know with smaller/local individual services.”*

*“Residents could gain personal relationships with departments but I don't think most bother. I do like having the Creve Coeur fire and police departments making visits to neighborhood block parties and similar events.”*

*“nothing”*

*“A sense of self identity.”*

*“Probably a very good thing for the wealthier suburbs but not for the majority municipalities.”*

*“Fire districts offer faster response time and maybe the police too but we gain nothing with separate government ran municipalities.”*

*“I don't think the fragmentation benefits the region as a whole. I think it is divisive and perpetuates the segregation and racism in our region. The zip codes that are more affluent are ok with the status quo and those who are in struggling zip codes are hurt by resource and wealth hoarding.”*

*“A smaller government is more efficient and less corrupt.”*

DISADVANTAGES

What disadvantages exist by having individual services, such as police departments, municipal courts and fire districts? What do residents lose? What does the region lose?	
RESIDENTS	REGION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Disparity and inequities of service quality</b> between high and low income/property value municipalities;</li> <li>▪ <b>Limited access to economic drivers</b> for lower income municipalities;</li> <li>▪ <b>Lack of knowledge and understanding about varying ordinances</b>, especially important when traveling through and/or moving to a different municipality;</li> <li>▪ <b>Lack of preparation for natural disasters</b> due to minimal funding for crisis situations;</li> <li>▪ Duplication of services and <b>no economies of scale</b>, leading to possible <b>waste of tax payer revenue</b>;</li> <li>▪ Possible <b>excessive ticketing and fines</b> to support municipal budget;</li> <li>▪ Potentially, <b>limited access to municipal administration</b> (some municipalities have a city clerk with multiple responsibilities)</li> <li>▪ Poor <b>law enforcement response time</b> because one officer may be closer to crime, but it's not his/her municipality;</li> <li>▪ <b>Unqualified and fired police officers can float</b> from one municipality to another; and</li> <li>▪ Lack of professionalism, competence, especially with police departments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Inter-municipal competition</b> for state, federal and corporate funding, as well as economic development (Ballwin and Ellisville competing for Wal-Mart and City/County competing for Amazon;</li> <li>▪ <b>Limits our ability to compete with other parts of the country</b> (i.e. departing corporate HQs, loss of airport hub)</li> <li>▪ <b>Skewed statistics</b> because City of St. Louis (smaller population) is assessed as the representation of the region;</li> <li>▪ <b>Poor national reputation and image</b>;</li> <li>▪ <b>Varying zoning codes makes negotiations</b> for residential and commercial developers more difficult and time consuming and deters movement throughout the region;</li> <li>▪ <b>No true governmental structure for regional decision-making, limiting ability to create a regional vision</b> and plan for transportation, public health, etc. (policies which impact us all);</li> <li>▪ "... the system of multiple municipalities makes racial and economic equity/justice impossible by encouraging those with means to settle in insular communities" (From post-it-note);</li> <li>▪ <b>Reinforces the "us vs. them" mentality</b> among high and low income municipalities; County residents benefit from City's assets, but they don't want to pay for them;</li> <li>▪ <b>Reinforces stereotypes</b> because people are judged by their zip codes and high schools</li> <li>▪ Too many <b>opportunities for corruption, nepotism and dishonesty</b> (e.g., excessive ticketing impacts all who travel through St. Louis City and County;</li> <li>▪ <b>Limits our ability to attract and retain young talent</b> who favor urban living with accessible and broad public transportation;</li> <li>▪ People don't care to change, if their services are great; minimal concern about those without financial resources; and</li> <li>▪ <b>Less safe throughout the region</b> with competition for resources, especially true with public safety (police and fire).</li> </ul>

## Sampling of Online Survey Responses

"The duplication of services and thus the cost...then small areas need to find revenue and might over ticket, etc., to support costs."

"We lose a fast response that saves lives. We lose our closeness in the community."

"So many departments, so many different standards. The quality of employees probably varies greatly from one municipality to the next. We probably lose out on overall higher quality of services."

"The region loses the opportunity to create economies of scale through the wasteful spending of taxpayer funds."

"nothing, the city and county should not merge. We moved to the county to get away from corrupt city government."

"Local affluent areas will lose some control and may see their services diminished if the " money pot" is diluted. However, there are great gains to be had by correcting inefficiencies. As long as we have such parochial attitudes, the region loses."

"Economic waste, uneven services to citizens, confusion as to where you are, too many mid to top level officials."

"Constant fighting for grants and federal funds."

"The region loses the ability to compete with other cities that are investing in their infrastructure, and our brand as a region continues to suffer under this separation."

"Too much parochialism leads to lack of ownership of Regional Problems."

"I don't feel there is a disadvantage."

"Lack of standardized, quality and equitable public services, inefficiencies in their delivery."

"Staffing redundancy, which mean very little coordination across the region on common topics. It also means redundant/wasteful expenses/costs. Petty competition amongst municipalities. Many municipalities don't have the resources/tax base to support even the most basic government functions."

"Dollars are wasted. Wealthier areas receive superior services while lower income neighborhoods increasingly suffer. In this cycle, those same lower income residents are disproportionately affected by aggressive ticketing and policing policies that are developed in order to raise income to keep afloat. If combined, the higher income areas will have a stake in what happens in lower income places which does not currently exist today."

"It is so much more expensive to run everything separately. Combining services would save money and allow for more uniform services."

"Merge!!!!"

"Consolidation would decrease racial and economic segregation and that's crucial for making this city a respectable place."



***Of the public services (police, fire, courts, public works, parks and recreation, etc.) offered by your municipality, which should not be considered for reorganization and why?***

For many small groups, regardless of the forum, this question did not always lead to a discussion about which public services should remain locally managed and controlled by the municipality. Two camps existed – those who did not want to consider reorganization for any service and those who felt all services should be assessed for reorganization. If satisfied with service quality and delivery, the rationale was why fix something that isn't broken; and if dissatisfied, the rationale was assessment and change could lead to better service quality and delivery, as well as cost efficiencies.

In many, but not all small groups, residents will consider some form of reorganization after a third-party assessment; and if a vote is required, only those living in St. Louis City and County should be allowed to vote.

Additionally, at all forums in a few small groups, the social inequities and disparities within public education were discussed; and many wanted to know why this public service was not being considered by Better Together.

Finally, residents talked about “organic” grown collaboration that occurs when neighboring municipalities develop cooperating agreements based on local needs and cost savings. Some residents felt municipal officials and staffers were better qualified to assess reorganization because their interest is for their residents.

As reflected below, there was very little agreement about what services should not be considered for reorganization.

SERVICE	RATIONALE
Parks and Recreation	Parks are more localized and have special programs based on community desires; no issue in my municipality.
Public Works	Slow response time already and could become slower with consolidation.
Fire Districts	Work well as they are structured today.
Police	Many police departments are working; fear that would not continue, if reorganized; not duplicate or redundant services.
Municipal Courts	Community doesn't have an issue; voting would not occur in close proximity to home.

### Sampling of Online Survey Responses

*"Not sure"*

*"None. They should all be re-organized and consolidated."*

*"Merge everything into one large city."*

*"Would have it all on the table for consideration. Some things might best remain somewhat segmented, but I imagine most things would benefit from more sharing and centralization."*

*"None. all should be subject to this change through a rigorous testing process with the goal of using data to determine what is working well as a regional service and what is working well as a local/municipality service."*

*"Fire department because they respond fast and don't kill people. Public works need to stay local as well because they respond quickly."*

*"Everything should be 'on the table' especially the public services."*

*"Other than school districts (which aren't aligned with municipalities anyway), they should all be reorganized."*

*"I think public works MIGHT remain a local function but that option is on the table."*

*"Police, fire, public works should not be brought together. Collaborate yes, but no, not consolidate. Parks, recreation...yes could be consolidated."*

Aligned with the previous question, forum attendees were asked about their satisfaction with public services:

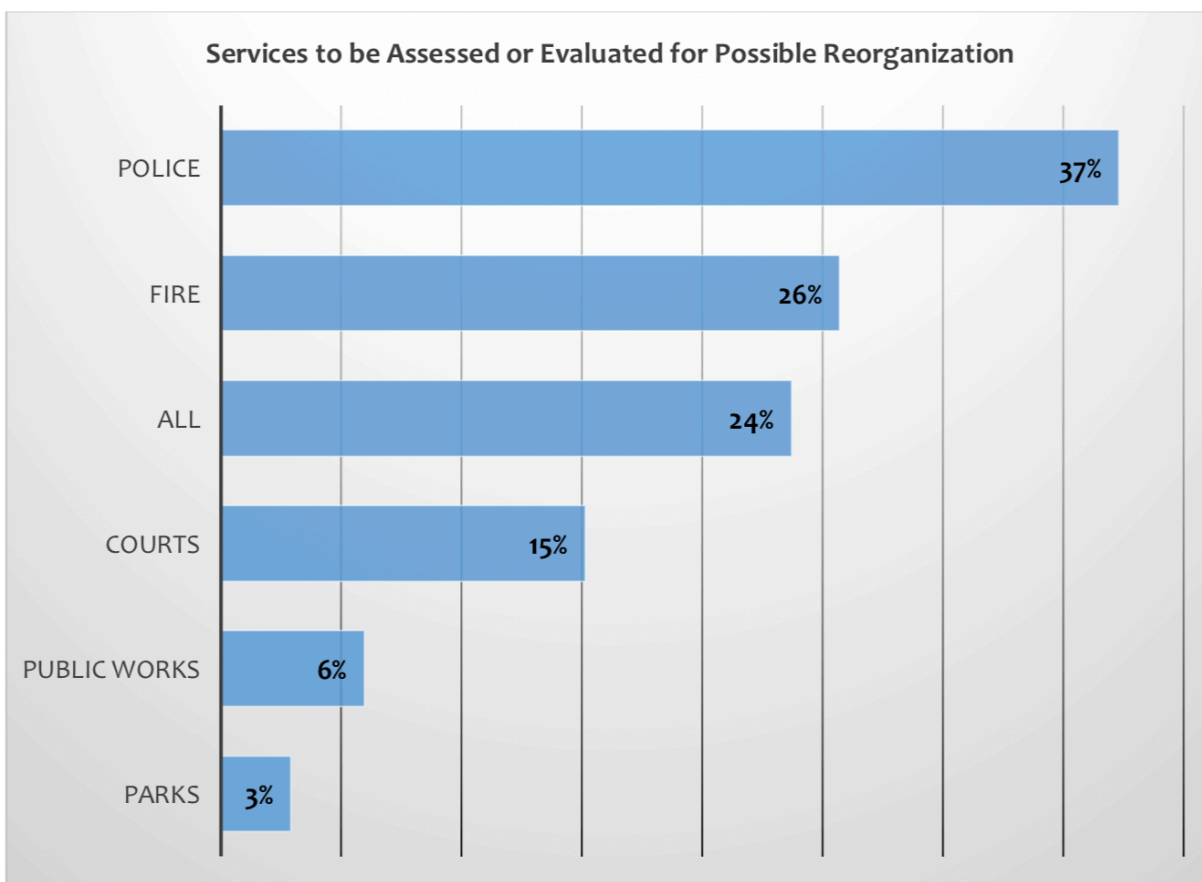
- St. Louis County residents are most satisfied with their services with **86% of them rating their satisfaction level as either "satisfied or very satisfied."**
  - For those living in unincorporated St. Louis County, **79% rated their satisfaction as either "satisfied or very satisfied."**
- For those residing in the City of St. Louis, **34% rated their satisfaction as either "satisfied or very satisfied."** The services most mentioned as requiring improvement were policing and public works.

Additionally, town hall attendees and online survey respondents noted the following:

- **Eight of 10 (82%) think it is likely or very likely that fragmentation impacts regional economic growth.**
- **Eight of 10 (84%) think it is likely or very likely that fragmentation impacts the financial stability and sustainability of some municipalities.**
- **Eight of 10 (80%) think if all municipalities are stronger, benefits accrue to their municipality.**
- **Nearly 9 of 10 (88%) think it is important or very important for all residents to receive consistent service quality and professionalism.**

With the goal of promoting economic growth and improving efficiencies and operations for St. Louis City and County, residents were asked which public services, if any, should be assessed or evaluated for possible reorganization.

- **Slightly more than one third (37%) of respondents felt police services should be evaluated for reorganization.**
- **Roughly one of four (26%) felt fire services should be evaluated**
- **Nearly one of four (24%) felt all services should be considered for possible reorganization**



Only four percent of respondents felt no services should be assessed or evaluated for possible reorganization.

Finally, one of the most frequently mentioned services was economic development and/or planning. From several responses, it appears residents felt economic development and the use of incentives should be managed by one entity instead of multiple governing bodies.

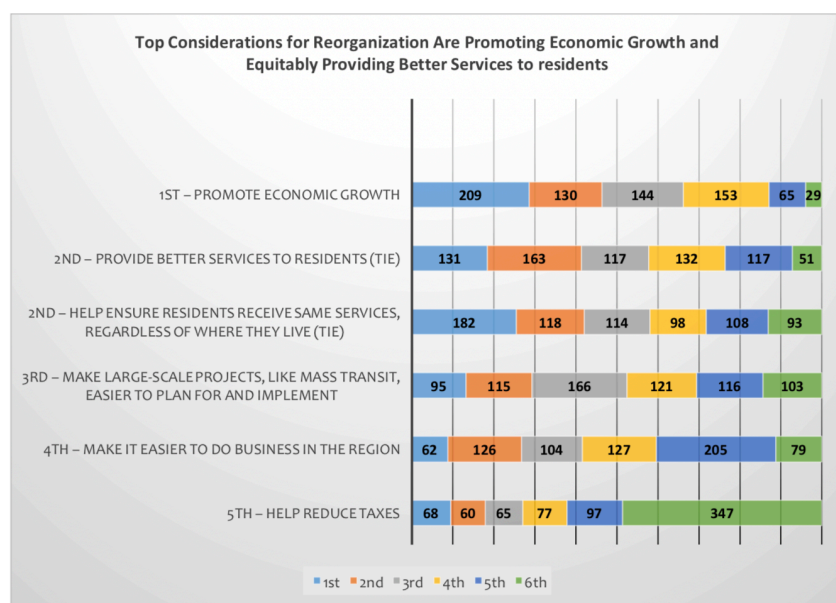
Residents were asked to rank possible considerations for reorganization; notably for the purpose of promoting economic growth and equitably providing better service to residents, regardless of where they live.

- **Nearly five of ten (46%) ranked promoting economic growth as either a first or second consideration.**
- **Four of ten (41%) ranked providing better services to residents as either a first or second consideration.**
- **Four of ten (42%) ranked helping to ensure residents receive the same services as either a first or second consideration.**

Alternatively:

- **Only three of ten (29%) ranked making large-scale projects easier to plan for and implement as either a first or second consideration.**
- **Only three of ten (27%) ranked making it easier to do business in the region as either a first or second consideration.**
- **Less than two of ten (18%) ranked helping reduce taxes as either a first or second consideration.**

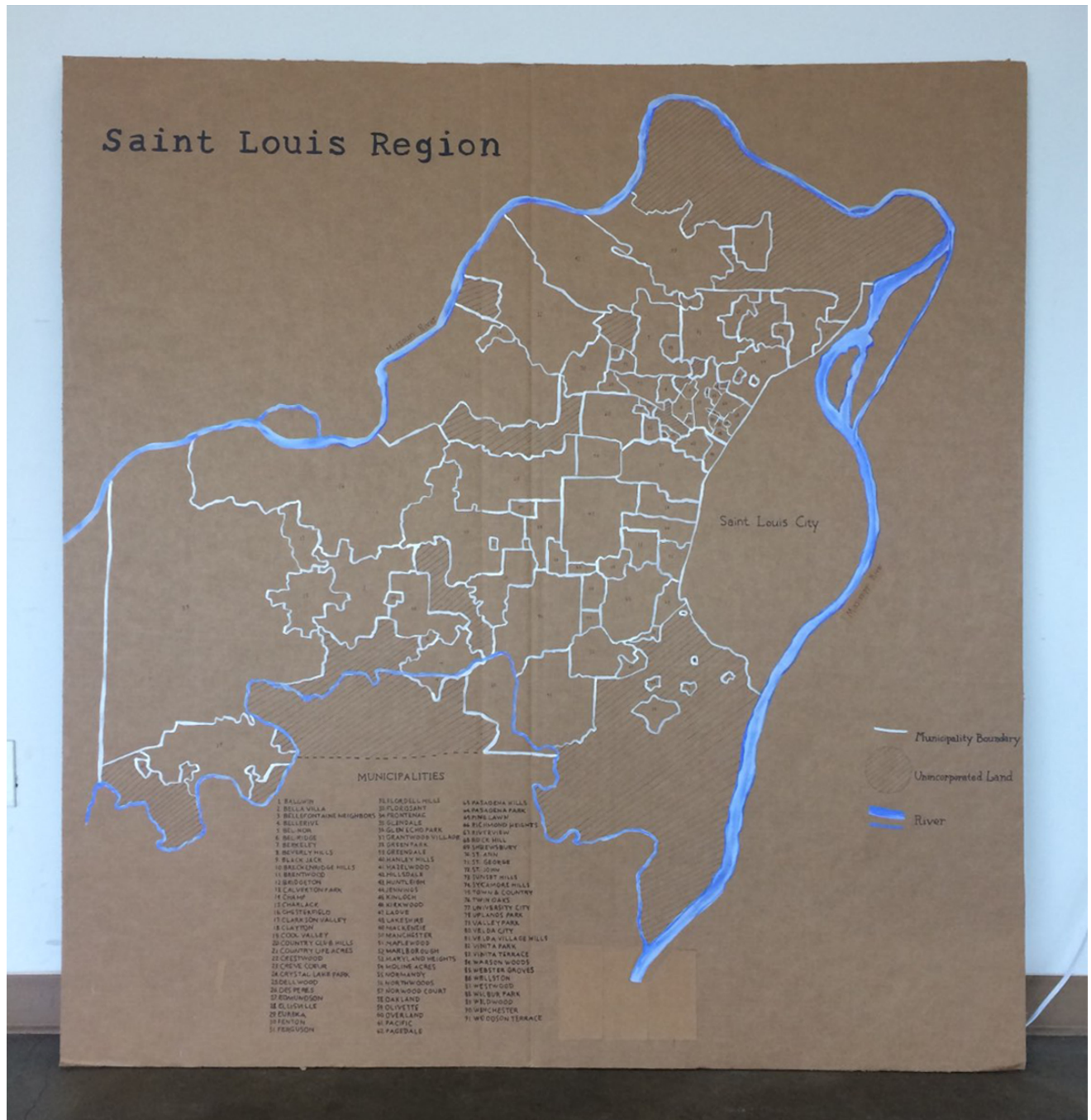
*Please rank the following considerations for regional reorganization from most important to least important.*



**Appendix C**  
**Youth Engagement Summary**

**“The St. Louis area in my mind is really special. From the artists and culture and rich history, it used to be one of the best or noteworthy cities in the U.S. But sadly that has changed. I want St. Louis to reclaim its influence once again. It is notable and noteworthy. So if there is a way to make it cooler, then I’m all for it.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018



## Executive Summary

In the summer 2018, GoodVoice partnered with Better Together St. Louis to engage teens at St. Louis ArtWorks to produce Youth Listening Sessions. Three 2-hour sessions took place with 40 participants ages 14-19 from 20 unique zip codes and 27 different public and private high schools in the St. Louis region. Participants were (self-identified) 65% female, 35% male, and 87.5% black, 12.5% white. The sessions were designed to provide teens with an opportunity to share perspectives on local identity, regional fragmentation, and their vision for St. Louis.

Participants were asked to discuss their experiences living in St. Louis and share their priorities and concerns related to living in the region. Recurring themes in the discussions include county/city divide, safety, status, policing, racism, resources, and unity. Participants share a range of responses, voicing fatalistic views about the lack of youth representation in regional issues, feelings of resignation towards a better St. Louis, a sense of urgency and a need for positive change in the region, a desire to better understand issues that affect them, and an eagerness to participate in creating solutions.

### Key Takeaways

- Youth desire more dialog between people who might not interact daily (i.e. youth and adults from different racial, economic, and geographic backgrounds; black teens and police officers; city kids and county kids).
- Youth value being included in conversations about a vision for St. Louis.
- Youth recognize that many regional issues—safety, policing, racial equity, educational/professional/economic opportunities—are shared across the city/county divide.
- Youth are aware of the impacts of regional fragmentation on their lives, families, and communities.
- Combining young people's awareness, willingness, and imagination with regional systemic efforts will be an essential step towards addressing the challenges of fragmentation, informing policy, and transforming the St. Louis region.



## Introduction

Better Together has done significant work to carefully investigate and state the challenges the St. Louis region faces, present that information back to the broader community, and engage the region by inviting feedback through multiple pathways including community gatherings and digital survey outreach. Leveraging community insight and buy-in is essential to any meaningful forward movement that addresses the complex challenges the St. Louis region faces. This process of listening to the community in an inclusive and authentic way is incomplete without a thoughtful approach aimed at listening to our region's youth and including their insights and perspectives.

GoodVoice has done extensive work with youth (ages 11-26) across the St. Louis region to address systemic issues through empowering youth voice and amplifying youth impact on regional challenges.

A core question that Better Together puts on the table is, "Does St. Louis have the will to change?"

A Spring 2018 GoodVoice youth survey found that 91% of participants think that youth have the ability to create social change; 69% stated that topics surrounding social justice and inequity are the greatest concerns they have when thinking about their future; 67% stated that education, training, and civic action would help provide confidence to meet these challenges. Their responses suggest that youth participation may be the answer to the question posed by Better Together. The young people of the St. Louis region are an underutilized resource who are hungry to share their experiences, insights, and energy in meaningful ways that contribute to making their community and world a better place.

GoodVoice operates as a bridge between youth experience and those who can benefit from their perspective. This summer GoodVoice partnered with St. Louis ArtWorks and Better Together St. Louis to engage teens in Youth Listening Sessions. These sessions were designed to provide teens with an authentic and safe opportunity to share perspectives on local identity, regional fragmentation, and their vision for St. Louis.

Over the course of the past two years, GoodVoice has co-designed Youth Listening Sessions, developed in collaboration with GoodVoice creative director and lead facilitator Mike Pagano and participating youth through multiple prototypes and iterations. GoodVoice collaborated with a Community Arts Facilitator, a Youth Engagement Consultant, 2 SIUE graduate student/interns in Arts Based Community Development, ArtWorks' on-staff Art Therapist, and Better Together's Deputy of Community Based Studies to customize Youth Listening Sessions designed to engage young people and amplify their participation in Better Together's process of community voice inclusion.

The Youth Listening Sessions model is designed to be flexible, modular, highly collaborative, and address bias and context in a clear and transparent manner. The sessions themselves are crafted to engage youth in experiential learning and creative processes. They are fast paced, fun, and

challenging. During this 2-hour experience, participants move through sequenced activities that build off each other to generate questions, conversation, and craft statements; the experience culminates with engaged youth self-selecting to record their statements on video.

## **“Do you feel like you’re a part of the community you live in?”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018



## **Youth Engagement**

GoodVoice and Better Together St. Louis hosted three Youth Listening Sessions at St. Louis ArtWorks on 7/13 (2) & 7/18 (1) with 40 teen participants, ages 14-19, from 20 unique zip codes in the St. Louis region. Participants attend 27 different public and private high schools in the city and county. They identify as: 65% female, 35% male, 87.5% black, and 12.5% white.

ArtWorks provides an ideal site and culture for meaningful youth engagement. GoodVoice engaged young people where they were already at to amplify their participation in Better Together's community engagement process. GoodVoice's partnership with ArtWorks and their teen apprentice summer program provided a huge amount of support and allowed the project to move efficiently through some of the most challenging and uncertain parts of the process: scheduling, outreach, participant buy-in, and confirmation of attendance. This site and population selection set the tone for the demographic sample that GoodVoice was able to engage. They represent economic, geographic, age, and racial diversity within the St. Louis regional youth community.

**[LINK 1: Listening Session Demographics](#)**

**“St. Louis used to be big; what happened to make it fall?”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

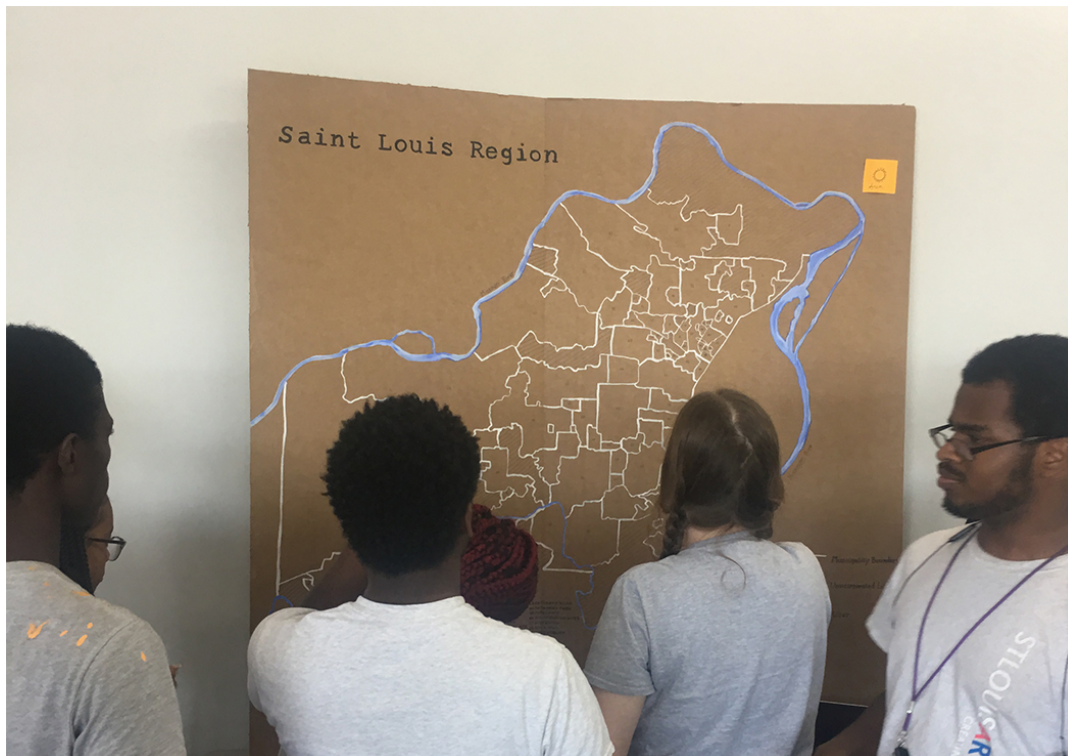
**Youth Listening Session included the following components:**

- an introduction to Better Together's vision, mission, and commitments
- an explanation of the strong alignment of values between GoodVoice, ArtWorks, and Better Together
- an introduction of all the participants and facilitators
- a primer conversation to establish the context and goals of the experience
- an ice-breaker activity (“Circle Up”) to build trust and community
- a question generation activity to recalibrate the conversation around youth language and interest
- a group dialog and synthesis activity to organize and prioritize the questions
- a statement generation activity to allow youth to form thoughts related to self-selected questions
- a group dialog to allow youth to share their statements with each other
- an optional opportunity to record their questions and statements as a video stand-up

Youth statements were collected and notes were taken throughout the sessions. A \$20 cash gift was given to each teen participant as an incentive, sign of respect, and recognition of the value of their time and contributions.

**“Why do you think it's so hard for people to come together when we share so many of the same problems?”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018



## Framing the St. Louis Region

### Intro primer and discussion prompts:

3 sets of (3 or 4) municipalities with common themes

What do you think of when you hear these municipality names?

1. Chesterfield, Ladue, Town and Country, Frontenac
2. Wellston, Pine Lawn, City of St. Louis
3. Hazelwood, University City, Creve Coeur

**[LINK 2: Framing STL Intro SESSION NOTES](#)**



**“What is the purpose? There's always ways to improve, so where do we start?”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018



**Circle Up**

Circle Up is an icebreaker activity designed to help the teens get to know one another and bring forward their own storytelling skills. During the three listening sessions, the facilitators used the Circle Up activity where the teens stood in a circle to observe each other and then closed their eyes. The lead facilitator walked around the circle and surreptitiously touched one person on the shoulder. Then the group opened their eyes and each person pointed to who they thought had been tapped. The group talked about why they thought a person was tapped on the shoulder. The conversation shifted to the use of the senses, observations about people's behavior, drawing on past experience with a person, and other skills of narrative. The facilitator pointed out the role of curiosity in narrative, and the importance of asking questions to learn and discuss more deeply. These concepts laid the foundation that allowed for a richer conversation about the topic at hand.

**“What has to change about St. Louis to make people want to stay?”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

## Questions & Statements Activities

In two smaller break-out groups, participants were asked to build on the introductory conversation – looking at Key Facts and Sample Questions co-designed by GoodVoice and Better Together. Participants were then invited to write down questions from the sample list and/or generate their own questions related to the themes presented. This part of the activity allows youth to recalibrate the language and focus of the session, to democratize the group's input, and address generational and cultural bias inherent in the facts and questions provided. A typical session group (13 youth) would generate about 75 questions and these questions would then serve as a tool for inspiring dialog and organizing understanding of the common themes, language, and priorities of the group. The Questions Activity culminated with students each selecting a question or questions they chose to answer in the Statements Activity which followed. In two smaller groups participants would discuss their questions, write their responses, and sharing their statements with the larger group.

### Youth Engagement Key Facts:

1. St. Louis City is separate from St. Louis County
2. 1.3 million people live in the St. Louis region
3. 88 independent municipalities are within St. Louis County
4. A child born in Clayton can expect to live 18 years longer than a child born in the Jeff-Vander-Lou neighborhood in N. St. Louis
5. 55 police departments, 44 fire departments, 78 municipal courts
6. 14 municipalities had court fines and fees as their #1 source of income in 2014
7. St. Louis County municipal courts account for 11% of the state of Missouri's population but collect 34% of the municipal court fines and fees – over \$45 million!

### Youth Engagement Sample Questions:

1. What is your vision for an ideal St. Louis? Do you think the way we are set up now (multiple police departments, governments, etc.) will help or hurt us in achieving your vision?



2. Tell us about experiences you or your family members have had with local governments/police departments/courts/parks in the region. Were the experiences positive or negative? How are those experiences the same or different in different parts of the region (e.g. north county vs. the city vs. west county?)
3. What benefits do you see in having different police departments/governments in the region?
4. If you were to reimagine the local governments/services/policing/parks/courts in the St. Louis region, what are the ways you could keep it the same and what would you change?

**LINK 3: Questions & Statements SESSION NOTES**

**“There are more opportunities in the county... better schools with newer books and latest technology, more safety features with gated neighborhoods, healthier food opportunities, overall help in rising up.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018



**“I don't feel connected to the city or the county. I feel trapped in between thriving communities that I'm not a part of.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

## Priority Questions & Statements // Culminating Video

Of the 40 participants, 16 self-selected to record their questions and statements, and answer a few follow up questions related to local identity, regional fragmentation, and their vision for St. Louis. This generated 77 minutes of video content and approximately 15 pages of video transcripts.

The transcripts reveal a number of themes that illustrate the complex experiences, concerns, and insight of the 16 video participants. Their points of view also reflect the views of the larger group of participants. When compared to the notes from the discussion and writing process there is a strong continuity between what was expressed and grappled with during the process leading up to the video statements and the video statements themselves. The major themes that emerged from the listening sessions and videos included:

Themes	Number of statements
County vs. City	( 18 )
Safety	( 18 )
Status	( 13 )
Policing	( 13 )
Racism	( 13 )
Resources	( 12 )
Unity	( 12 )

While these themes all intersect and influence each other, the statements were organized (in the table above) to quickly sketch out a simplified proportional understanding of what the teens were speaking to collectively. It is not surprising to see that the City vs. County theme was among the most prevalent, though it is a meaningful marker of the conversation staying on topic. On the other hand, a significant finding is that when youth are talking about their lived experience in St. Louis City and St. Louis County, the most frequently talked about theme is that of safety. The question, “Are we safe?” was selected by 3 (19%) video participants and safety was often an intersecting theme when youth spoke about status, policing, racism, and resources. Gun violence, tension between police and youth, especially black youth and black people in general, along with concerns about the local and global environment, trash, pollution, and air quality all led to the articulation of a lack of safety for St. Louis’ young people.

**“Are we safe? Yes, this a lot of things going on in this generation today with the police and all that, but it’s not really, it’s never going to be a, ‘yes’ we’re safe...”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

**There were a range of responses to the perception of lack of safety they experience:**

- a fatalistic attitude that does not expect their point of view will be heard or acted on
- a sense of urgency that something must be done immediately to work towards change
- a desire to better understand the issues that affect them and talk about shared challenges
- a feeling of resignation, that this is just the way things are here and leaving might be the best option

The video content was edited down to create a 5-minute short video highlighting three major themes:

safety, policing, and unity.

**[LINK 4: Short Video \(3:50\)](#)**



**“In order for the police department to change, we as people also have to change and we have to listen to each other and understand where both sides are coming from because there is always two sides to a story. In order for us to change the problems that we have between each other we have to learn how to listen to each other and communicate.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

**“I just feel like we just need to connect more and come together more and forget the divide, and talk, and just socialize about what we of have in common and what we want to see together.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

## Conclusions

Young people in the St. Louis region offer complex and nuanced points of view when asked in a thoughtful way to share their experiences. The wisdom of young people is often overlooked – these Youth Listening Sessions were designed to carefully and respectfully include youth voice and insight in Better Together’s community engagement process.

**“I would like my community to be more unified, in the way we are, and interact with each other, the places we live. I know that there are a bunch of different municipalities and I would like to see those come together more and people interacting with people they might not interact with daily.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

What did we learn?

Young people value the opportunity to be asked about their experiences and to be included in conversations about a vision for the St. Louis region. Many youth expressed a desire for more dialogue and more exchange of ideas between people who might not interact daily, i.e. youth and adults from different racial, economic, and geographic backgrounds; black teens and police officers, or city kids and county kids. Teens point to the importance of communication and understanding multiple sides of a story. They are not distracted by how things used to be, yet they are eager to learn about the past and draw connections to its influence on their lives. Teens point out that they are aware of the harshest aspects of life in St. Louis (because they have lived it) and while there are distinct and various differences between the city and county municipalities, many of the most challenging issues we face are common across the city county divide, such as safety, policing, racial equity, educational, professional, and economic opportunities. They are acutely aware of the impacts of regional fragmentation on their lives, families, and communities and are eager to be involved in creating solutions. Combining young people’s awareness, willingness, and imagination with regional systemic efforts will be an essential step on the path toward the racial and economic equity necessary to transform the St. Louis region.

**“Imagination, despite what people think, is actually a really valuable asset to not only St. Louis, but all of the U.S. However, imagination is often times overshadowed by other things.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018



**“I think it was a good experience I had today. I think talking about these things is good because it is our community and life isn’t perfect here. So we need to be able to talk about how we can make things better.”**

– St. Louis area teen at Better Together Youth Listening Session, July 2018

### **GoodVoice and St. Louis ArtWorks support team:**

Lead facilitators:

Mike Pagano, GoodVoice Creative Director, Community Arts Facilitator

Pacia Andersen, GoodVoice Community Arts Facilitator

Larry Morris, Youth Engagement Consultant

Session Co-facilitators:

Kath Morgan, ArtWorks Art Therapist

Genesis Powell, ArtWorks Program Manager

Kiah Earl, SIUE candidate for Masters in Public Administration and Policy Analysis

Theresa Hitchcock, SIUE candidate for Masters in Art Therapy Counseling

### **Special Thanks:**

Special thanks to all of the St. Louis regional youth who have participated and informed GoodVoice over the past 2 years; to all of our partners in education, youth empowerment, and civic engagement these Youth Listening Sessions would not be possible without your collaborative support.

St. Louis ArtWorks, Priscilla Block, Byron Rodgers, Janet Scurlock, Mark Clark  
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Aziza Binti, Kira Van Niel, Marius Johnson-Malone

**Attached Documents and Additional Video Transcripts:**

**[LINK 1: Demographics break down and participants LOG](#)**

**[LINK 2: Framing STL Intro SESSION NOTES](#)**

**[LINK 3: Questions & Statements SESSION NOTES](#)**

**[LINK 4: Short Video \(3:50\)](#)**

**[LINK 5: Video Transcript NOTES 3 \(3:50 minutes, final video\)](#)**

**[LINK 17: Video Transcript NOTES 2 \(17 minutes, with themes\)](#)**

**[LINK 77: Video Transcript NOTES 1 \(77 minutes, raw content\)](#)**



## Appendix D

# Values Grids

## MUNICIPAL COURTS

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Better Together				
Establish consolidated, full-time, professionally staffed courts				
Provide additional circuit judges to assist the presiding judge in oversight				
Lower cap on the amount of general revenue that can be collected via fines/fees				
Establish a strict framework for annual reporting to the State Auditor for review				
Pool fines/fees among all municipalities or counties within a judicial circuit				
Establish a cap on cases per session of municipal court				
Provide a uniform list of rights and procedures on the back of all municipal citations				
Provide contact numbers to potential legal resources and clinics				
Require courts to utilize alternative means to collecting fines/fees outside of jailing				
Provide for an “ability to pay” hearing before detainment or failure to appear				
Require municipal judges be selected by a panel in their judicial circuit				
Require municipal courts to have a paid public defender available to defendants				
Increase diversity among municipal judges				
Limit the number of municipal courts that a municipal judge or prosecutor can serve				
Ban municipal judges from practicing law in the same judicial circuit they serve				
Ferguson Commission				
Clarify Public Record Laws				
Formalize and Standardize Court Documenting Procedures				
Clearly Define Municipal Court Procedures				
Eliminate Sharing of Municipal Files				
Conduct Annual Municipal Court Audits				
Ensure Staffing of Annual Court Audits				
Fund Existing and New Laws				
Consolidate Municipal Courts				
Communicate Rights to Defendants in Person				
Provide Defendants with Clear Written Notice of Court Hearing Details				
Inform Defendants of Right to Counsel				
Assign Public Defenders for Criminally-Charged Minors				
Prevent Conflicts of Interest Among Judges				
Prevent Conflicts of Interest Among Prosecutors				

# MUNICIPAL COURTS

Best Practice or Recommendation	Status Quo	Ability to Address		
		City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Apply Conflict-of-Interest Rules Universally				
Prevent Targeting and Collusion in the Municipal Governance System				
Notify Parents of Detained Minors				
Change Rules for Municipalities Holding Defendants for Other Municipalities				
Provide Medical Services for People in Custody				
<b>Train Municipal Court, Jail, and City Government Employees in Constitutional Rights</b>				
<b>Collect Municipal Court Debts Like Civil Debts</b>				
Determine Defendants' Ability to Pay				
Assess Ability to Pay at Nonpayment Hearings				
Consider Payment Plans and Fine Revocation				
<b>Eliminate Incarceration for Minor Offenses</b>				
Expunge Old Convictions of Non-Repeat Offenders				
Cancel "Failure to Appear" Warrants				
Develop New Process to Review and Cancel Outstanding Warrants				
Schedule Regular Warrant Reviews				
<b>Treat Nonviolent Offenses as Civil Violations</b>				
Close Records of Non-Violent Offenses by Minors				
<b>Establish Alternative Sentences Options</b>				
Provide Municipal Court Support Services				
<b>Create Community Justice Centers</b>				
<b>Community Input Values</b>				
Allow for local control and accountability of services				
Quick and responsive resolution to problems				
Municipal employment opportunities				
Opportunities for best practice sharing from different governments				
Reduce disparity in service quality				
Better economies of scale and efficiency of tax dollar use				
Ticketing and fines based on public safety (vs. revenue collection)				
Adequate access to municipal administration				
Reduce opportunities for corruption				
Provide better services to residents				
Help ensure residents receive same services, regardless of where they live				

# PUBLIC SAFETY

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
<b>Better Together</b>				
Consolidate police departments to ensure adequate and equitable coverage				
Establish a public-private partnership for creating a regional training facility				
Modify the training standards for POST licensure				
Establish heightened requirements for the accreditation of departments				
Incentivize municipalities contracting with St. Louis County Police Departments				
Establish mandate for reporting specified data				
Establish a regional data warehouse and make it available to the public				
Establish regional standards				
Establish a multi-agency Comp-stat program & a regional major case squad				
Cross-Deputize St. Louis County and SLMPD officers				
Reduce the number of dispatch centers in the County				
Provide POST resources to increase oversight and monitoring				
Survey the community on an on-going basis to measure citizen satisfaction				
<b>Ferguson Commission</b>				
<b>Revise Use of Force Policies and Training</b>				
Prioritize De-Escalation and Tactical Withdrawal				
<b>Establish Use of Force Database</b>				
Minimize Use of Militarized Weaponry				
<b>Update Use of Force Statute for Fleeing Suspects</b>				
<b>Assign Attorney General As Special Prosecutor in Use of Force Cases</b>				
Appoint Special Prosecutor in Use of Force Cases Short-Term				
Assign Missouri Highway Patrol to Investigate Use of Force				
<b>Create Task Forces for Short-Term Investigation of Use of Force</b>				
Pass the Protecting Communities and Police Act				
Develop Policies for Use of Technology to Serve Special Needs and Disabled Populations				
Use Technology to Limit Use of Force				
Ensure Adequate Bandwidth for Use of Technology				
Fund Technology Storage				
Evaluate Effectiveness of Technology				
Engage Community Advisory Boards for Technology Policy				

PUBLIC SAFETY

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Create Technology Clearinghouse				
Clarify Public Record Laws				
<b>Create Civilian Review Boards at the Municipal Level</b>				
<b>Create Civilian Review Boards at the County Level</b>				
Handle Serious Incidents Swiftly, Openly, and Neutrally				
<b>Consolidate Law Enforcement Agencies</b>				
Evaluate Consolidated Departments				
Hold Non-Consolidated Agencies to Shared Standards				
Consolidate Dispatch Centers				
<b>Consolidate Police Training Centers</b>				
Prevent Targeting and Collusion in the Municipal Governance System				
Increase Funding and Support for POST				
<b>Increase Police Training Hours</b>				
Conduct Peer Review of Critical Incidents				
Provide Mental Health Services for Officers				
Support Officer Well-Being				
Require Psychological and Bias Screenings				
Notify Parents of Detained Minors				
<b>Develop a Comprehensive Demonstration Response Plan</b>				
Establish Communication Protocol for Demonstrations				
Train for Incidents Requiring Multiple Law Enforcement Agencies				
Facilitate More Positive Police-Community Interactions				
Engage Civilians in Police Operations				
Foster Police-Community Interactions in Schools				
Seek Civilian Input on Police Programs and Policies				
Engage Youth in Joint Training				
Foster Positive, Proactive Police Interactions with Youth				
Build Trust Among Youth				
Train Police to Better Engage Citizens				
Include New Approaches in Anti-Bias Training for Police				
<b>Include Social Interaction Training in POST</b>				
Enact Officer Identification Policies				
Prohibit Profiling and Discrimination				
<b>Include Implicit Bias and Cultural Responsiveness Training in POST</b>				
Require Psychological and Bias Screenings				
Establish Search and Seizure Procedures for LGBTQ and Transgender Populations				

# PUBLIC SAFETY

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Community Input Values				
Allow for local control and accountability of services				
Easy access to staff and elected officials				
Quick and responsive resolution to problems				
Customizable services and taxation levels				
Municipal employment opportunities				
Opportunities for best practice sharing from different governments				
Reduce disparity in service quality				
Simplified system of ordinances				
Better funding and preparation for natural disasters and emergencies				
Better economies of scale and efficiency of tax dollar use				
Ticketing and fines based on public safety (vs. revenue collection)				
Adequate access to municipal administration				
Better law enforcement response time				
Standardized hiring standards and professionalism in policing				
More accurate regional statistics				
Reduce opportunities for corruption				
Enhance safety throughout region				
Provide better services to residents				
Help ensure residents receive same services, regardless of where they live				



PUBLIC HEALTH

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
<b>Better Together</b>				
Align resources and services with community needs rather than available funding				
Establish a single regional health department				
<b>Ferguson Commission</b>				
Provide Mental Health Services for Officers				
Deliver Trauma-Informed Care				
Build Safe Neighborhoods				
End Shame and Stigma				
<b>End Hunger for Children and Families</b>				
<b>Establish School-Based Health Centers &amp; Trauma-Informed Schools</b>				
Increase Health Insurance Coverage and Access				
Coordinate Support Efforts				
Create School-Based Early Warning Systems				
Measuring Child Well-Being				
<b>Expand Medicaid Eligibility</b>				
Provide Gap Coverage				
Increasing Enrollment on the ACA Marketplace				
<b>For the Sake of All</b>				
Improve the level of child care subsidies for low-income families				
Expand home visitation services and other supports to parents that cover prenatal through early childhood period				
Expand coordinated school health programs to all schools, particularly in high-poverty communities				
Make positive child and youth development opportunities available through afterschool and other programming				
Implement evaluation, technical assistance, and resource plans to support school districts in their effort to create/expand coordinated school programs				
Build private-public partnerships to support coordinated school health efforts				
Invest in counseling and psychological services for young people through private and public sources				
Improve mental health awareness using community-wide education				
Invest in more outpatient community mental health centers				
Improve the quality and availability of mental health data by establishing regional systems for tracking and reporting				
Invest in the viability, stabilization and health promotion of neighborhoods through strategic community partnerships and regional economic integration				
Address violence as a public health problem that impacts the quality of neighborhoods				
Expand health promotion partnerships across sectors to address chronic diseases that are the leading causes of death in the region				
Address social and economic barriers to health in medical settings				
Consider the health impacts of all policies at the state and local level				
Invest in chronic and infectious disease prevention and management by making healthy behavioral choices easy choices				

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
<b>Better Together</b>				
Establish a mechanism for sharing all new economic activity in the region				
Establish a streamlined process for business licensing				
Offer licensing forms and instructions to non-English speakers				
Reform TIF to focus on regional growth over intra-regional competition				
Establish heightened requirements for the approval of TIFs				
Eliminate access to sales tax revenues for TIF projects				
Establish regional workforce development standards				
<b>Ferguson Commission</b>				
Expand Internship and Apprenticeship Opportunities				
Enhance Collaboration Between Educational Institutions and Employers				
Support Federal "Gainful Employment" Regulations				
Expand Funding for Public Colleges that Serve Disadvantaged Students				
Ensure Employer-Educator Collaborations Build a Love of Learning				
Strengthen the Community Reinvestment Act				
Embed Public Banking Models into Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)				
Build the Capacity of CDFIs				
<b>Invest in High Functioning CDFIs</b>				
Empowerment Centers				
<b>Raise the Minimum Wage</b>				
<b>End Predatory Lending</b>				
Implement Earned Income and Child Tax Credits				
Develop a State Supported Funding Plan for Public Transit				
<b>Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the St. Louis Region</b>				
Encouraging Use of Public Transportation				
Protect the Rights of Workers to Organize				
Implement a Statewide M/WBE Program				
Launch an Employer Grading System for Economic Mobility				
Develop and Implement an Economic Inclusion Infrastructure				
Stabilize Middle-Market Neighborhoods				
Use Federal Funds in Strategic Maximally Impactful Ways				
<b>Prioritize Transit-Oriented Development</b>				
Encourage CDCs to Collaborate or Merge				
Align Funding to Build Capacity of CDCs				
Expand the Statewide Housing Trust Fund				
Expand the City of St. Louis Housing Trust Fund				
Prioritize Tax Incentives for Youth-Serving Job Programs				
Evaluate Job Training Success and Award Funding Accordingly				
Build a Poverty-to-Professional Model for Youth Serving Organizations				
<b>Create Universal Child Development Accounts</b>				
<b>Create Individual and Family Development Accounts</b>				
Raise Awareness of Development Accounts				
Encourage Savings With Tax-Refund Matching				
Teach Financial Literacy to Section 8 Housing Beneficiaries				
Implement a State Section 3 Hiring Program				
Launch Best Practice-Driven Job Training Programs				
Assess Tax Incentives to Ensure that They Serve the Intended Population				
Create Pathways for Lower Skilled Employees				

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Best Practice or Recommendation	Status Quo	Ability to Address		
		City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Expand Funding for Job Training and Wage Support Programs				
Modify Procurements Systems to Encourage Hiring of Targeted Employees				
Preferentially Fund Job Training Programs that Show Impact				
Implement Work-Based Learning Opportunities				
Identify Job Training Best Practices				
<b>For the Sake of All</b>				
Make college saving accounts universally available for children at birth or school entry				
Provide additional savings as incentives for educational success and parental engagement throughout K-12 schooling				
Make financial advice and services easily accessible and affordable to families at all income levels				
Promote development and housing choice without displacement				
Invest in the viability, stabilization and health promotion of neighborhoods through strategic community partnerships and regional economic integration				
Use tax, zoning, and other housing policies to allow residents choice and voice in development				
Promote the benefits of diverse neighborhoods through community partnerships that highlight model communities				
Create an affordable housing trust fund for St. Louis County				
Fully fund and increase contributions to affordable trust fund in St. Louis City				
Create Greenlining Fund, enabling high loan-to-value lending to help low-income families obtain mortgages for home ownership				
Increase affordable housing options in areas of opportunity				
Eliminate housing discrimination based on source of income				
Reform TIF and other public tax incentive programs to ensure optimal community input, transparency, and implementation				
Motivate busienses, philanthropies, and others in the private sector to support a regional Community Reinvestment Fund				
Establish a Community Benefits Agreeemet policy in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County				
<b>Community Input Values</b>				
Employee familiarity with community				
Customizable services and taxation levels				
Municipal employment opportunities				
Opportunities for best practice sharing from different governments				
Access to economic drivers for low income communitites				
Simplified system of ordinances				
Better economies of scale and efficiency of tax dollar use				
Reduce inter-municipal competition for economic development				
Increase competitiveness with peer regions				
More accurate regional statistics				
Enhanced national reputation				
Governmental structure for regional decision-making				
Increase ability to attract and retain young talent with public transportation				
Promote economic growth				

LICENSING, PLANNING, AND ZONING

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
<b>Better Together</b>				
Establish a streamlined process for business licensing				
Streamline municipal ordinances and omit outdated ordinances				
<b>Ferguson Commission</b>				
Develop a State Supported Funding Plan for Public Transit				
Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the St. Louis Region				
Encouraging Use of Public Transportation				
<b>Enact Inclusionary Zoning Ordinances</b>				
<b>Build Healthy, Affordable Housing</b>				
Create a St. Louis County Land Bank				
Stabilize Middle-Market Neighborhoods				
Use Federal Funds in Strategic Maximally Impactful Ways				
Institute Fair Housing Protections				
Prioritize Transit-Oriented Development				
Encourage CDCs to Collaborate or Merge				
Align Funding to Build Capacity of CDCs				
Expand the Statewide Housing Trust Fund				
Expand the City of St. Louis Housing Trust Fund				
<b>For the Sake of All</b>				
Promote development and housing choice without displacement				
Invest in the viability, stabilization and health promotion of neighborhoods through strategic community partnerships and regional economic integration				
Use tax, zoning, and other housing policies to allow residents choice and voice in development				
Promote the benefits of diverse neighborhoods through community partnerships that highlight model communities				
Safeguard fair housing by enforcing existing laws				
Create an affordable housing trust fund for St. Louis County				
Fully fund and increase contributions to affordable trust fund in St. Louis City				
Create Greenlining Fund, enabling high loan-to-value lending to help low-income families obtain mortgages for home ownership				
Increase affordable housing options in areas of opportunity				
Eliminate housing discrimination based on source of income				
Reform TIF and other public tax incentive programs to ensure optimal community input, transparency, and implementation				
Build support and infrastructure to provide housing services, legal representation, and better tenant protections to reduce evictions and lockouts				
Eliminate unfair local nuisance ordinances				
<b>Community Input Values</b>				
Allow for local control and accountability of services				
Easy access to staff and elected officials				
Democratic process emphasized through adequate representation				
Quick and responsive resolution to problems				
Employee familiarity with community				
Customizable services and taxation levels				
Opportunities for best practice sharing from different governments				
Diversity of neighborhoods				
Diversity of municipalities				

LICENSING, PLANNING, AND ZONING

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Strong and stable neighborhoods				
Reduce disparity in service quality				
Access to economic drivers for low income communities				
Simplified system of ordinances				
Reduce inter-municipal competition for economic development				
Streamline zoning for easier development				
Governmental structure for regional decision-making				
Reduction of "us vs. them" mentality				
Promote economic growth				

# GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
<b>Better Together</b>				
Move municipal elections to the November ballot				
Reassign polling locations co-located with police stations				
Incentivize or provide support to municipalities disincorporating or merging				
Establish a strong regional leadership position with the ability to form a regional vision				
Streamline municipal ordinances and omit outdated ordinances				
Provide that all municipal ordinances are available to the public online				
Thoroughly review all warrants in St. Louis County to determine validity				
Establish a regional or statewide sales tax rate				
<b>Ferguson Commission</b>				
<b>Broadly Apply a Racial Equity Framework</b>				
<b>Create a 25-year Managed Fund</b>				
Utilize Shared Guidelines				
Ensure Language Access				
Create Region-Wide Benchmarking Process				
Establish Regional Baselines				
Disaggregate Data				
Create a Rating System				
Create a Clearinghouse				
<b>For the Sake of All (none)</b>				
<b>Community Input Values</b>				
Allow for local control and accountability of services				
Easy access to staff and elected officials				
Democratic process emphasized through adequate representation				
Quick and responsive resolution to problems				
Customizable services and taxation levels				
Many opportunities to serve in elected role				
Municipal employment opportunities				
Opportunities for best practice sharing from different governments				
Reduce disparity in service quality				
Simplified system of ordinances				



## GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
Better economies of scale and efficiency of tax dollar use				
Adequate access to municipal administration				
Increase competitiveness with peer regions				
Governmental structure for regional decision-making				
Reduce opportunities for corruption				
Provide better services to residents				
Help ensure residents receive same services, regardless of where they live				

# PUBLIC FINANCE

Best Practice or Recommendation	Ability to Address			
	Status Quo	City Re-Entry	Metro City	UniGov
<b>Better Together</b>				
Establish a mechanism for accessing debt markets				
Establish a county-wide bond pool				
Establish a pool of social-impact bonds				
<b>Ferguson Commission</b>				
Embed Public Banking Models into Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)				
Build the Capacity of CDFIs				
Invest in High Functioning CDFIs				
Develop a State Supported Funding Plan for Public Transit				
<b>For the Sake of All (none)</b>				
<b>Community Input Values</b>				
Better economies of scale and efficiency of tax dollar use				
Provide better services to residents				

## Appendix E

# Finances Overview

## **Metro City Finances Overview**

Under the proposed amendment, the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County combine as the Metropolitan City of St. Louis (“Metro City”), with the powers of both a city and a county, charged with providing “general district services” (e.g., police protection and municipal courts) throughout its territory. Municipalities (including the City until after the transition period) continue as “Municipal Districts” authorized to provide “municipal district services” (e.g., fire protection, parks and recreation, trash removal, etc.) and satisfy outstanding obligations of the Municipality, such as previously-incurred debt and pension obligations.

The following is an overview of the fiscal structure for the Metro City and its Municipal Districts, which is designed to ensure that: (1) municipal district services and the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of a Municipal District are financed from revenues collected within or secured by the Municipal District; and (2) general district services and the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of the Metro City are financed from revenues collected throughout the Metro City, including within the territory of a Municipal District, or otherwise secured by the Metro City. To that end, upon the effective date of the amendment, all taxes imposed at that time by the County, City, or Municipalities continue with respect to the territory to which they applied, subject to any requirement for voter reauthorization (e.g., earnings tax reauthorization vote in 2021), until modified by the Metro City. The Metro City is required to distribute revenues generated from these legacy taxes to the Municipal District in which the tax is imposed as necessary to satisfy any outstanding obligations of the Municipal District. Any remaining revenue generated by legacy property taxes or special assessments levied within the territory of the Municipal District would be distributed to that Municipal District for the purpose of providing municipal district services. In the event revenues from property taxes and special assessments collected within the Municipal District are insufficient to support the services provided by that district, the Metro City is authorized to distribute to the district any remaining revenue generated from legacy sales or use taxes levied within the district as necessary to provide municipal district services.

The fiscal structure outlined above will be phased-in during the transition period and through the first budget of the Metro City post-reorganization (i.e., the 2023 annual budget). During each year of the transition period, the budget for the Metro City and the Municipal Districts is the combined budgets of the County, City, and Municipalities for the twelve-month period beginning January 1, 2019. During the transition period, all revenues generated within a Municipal District required to satisfy outstanding obligations or to provide municipal district services are to be distributed by the Metro

City to the Municipal District in accordance with the adopted budgets for the Municipal Districts. Beginning with the first budget following the transition period (i.e., the 2023 annual budget), Municipal Districts must submit to the Metro City 90 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year: (1) an estimate of outstanding obligations and revenues required to support repayment during the ensuing fiscal year; and (2) an estimate of the cost to provide municipal district services and revenues necessary for such services during the ensuing fiscal year. During the ensuing fiscal year, the Metro City will distribute revenues collected solely within a Municipal District in the order outlined above: (1) all revenues required for the satisfaction of outstanding obligations; (2) any remaining property tax or special assessment revenues for providing municipal district services; and (3) any remaining sales tax and use tax revenues only as necessary for providing municipal district services.

Each Municipal District is a taxing subdistrict of the Metro City, which enables the Metro City to impose taxes within the subdistrict that are different than the taxes imposed generally throughout the Metro City. Thus, the Metro City can, with approval by voters of the Municipal District, levy different taxes within the Municipal District to increase the level of general district service provided within the Municipal District, such as police protection.

Each Municipal District is also a separate taxing district and is authorized, in the manner and to the extent the Municipality was authorized prior to the effective date, to levy its own property tax and utility tax and to charge fees for providing municipal district services. Revenues generated from these taxes and fees can be used by the Municipal District to satisfy outstanding obligations or to support the provision of municipal district services pursuant to an annual budget adopted by the Municipal District. The amendment also standardizes the fiscal year for the Municipal Districts and the Metro City to align with the calendar year, as is currently the case for the County.

The structure outlined above ensures outstanding obligations remain with the taxpayers who originally incurred them, rather than being assumed by taxpayers of the Metro City generally. It also ensures that sufficient revenues are available to Municipal Districts to provide municipal district services, while making sales taxes a primarily regional funding source for general district services and property taxes a primarily local funding source for municipal district services. Finally, this structure gives the Metro City authority over legacy taxes, which will enable it to adjust and equalize the tax structure over time as outstanding obligations of Municipal Districts are retired and costs to provide municipal district services are funded in greater proportion by taxes and fees imposed directly by the Municipal Districts.

The following examples illustrate the operation of this fiscal structure:

**Example A.** Prior to the amendment, a Municipality imposed a ½ cent sales tax for capital improvements, with the revenues generated by the tax used to service debt issued for construction of designated improvements. The payment of principal and interest on this debt is an outstanding obligation of the Municipality, which would continue as an outstanding obligation of the Municipal District. This sales tax continues as a sales tax of the Metro City imposed solely within the Municipal District, the revenues from which the Metro City is required to distribute to the Municipal District for the payment of principal and interest on the outstanding debt. This sales tax would continue to be imposed until otherwise provided by the Metro City, for example, once the debt it services has been retired.

**Example B.** Prior to the amendment, a Municipality levied a property tax for pensions, with revenues generated by the tax used to satisfy pension obligations. Pension obligations are outstanding obligations of the Municipality, which would continue as outstanding obligations of the Municipal District. This property tax continues as a tax of the Metro City levied solely within the Municipal District, the revenues from which the Metro City is required to distribute to the Municipal District for the payment of pension obligations. This property tax would continue to be levied until otherwise provided by the Metro City, for example, as legacy pension obligations have been retired.

**Example C.** Prior to the amendment, a Municipality levied a property tax for general municipal purposes, with the revenues used for various purposes, including funding the Municipality's police department and its fire department. Police protection is a general district service to be provided by the Metro City, while fire protection is a municipal district service that may be provided by the Municipal District. This property tax continues as a property tax of the Metro City levied solely within the Municipal district, the revenues from which the Metro City is required to distribute to the Municipal District for municipal district services, such as fire protection. The Municipal District would no longer be permitted to use revenues generated by the property tax to fund police protection, and therefore any portion of such property tax revenues previously used for such purpose could be used by the Municipal District for other municipal district services (e.g, parks and recreation, trash removal, etc.).

**Example D.** Prior to the amendment, a Municipality imposed a ¼ cent local option sales tax, with revenues used for various purposes, including funding the Municipality's police department and its fire department. Police protection is a general district service



to be provided by the Metro City, while fire protection is a municipal district service that may be provided by a Municipal District, if not otherwise provided by a fire protection district. This sales tax continues as a sales tax of the Metro City levied within the Municipal District, which the Metro City is authorized to distribute to the Municipal District if necessary for municipal district services. Thus, if revenues generated from property taxes levied solely within the Municipal District that remain available after the satisfaction of outstanding obligations and revenues generated by any taxes or fees imposed by the Municipal District, taken together, are insufficient to support municipal district services such as fire protection, the Metro City may distribute revenues generated from any sales tax imposed by the Metro City solely within the territory of the Municipal District to the Municipal District for such purpose. Any portion of the revenues generated by such sales tax not distributed to the Municipal District are used by the Metro City for providing general district services.

**Appendix F**  
**Amendment Summary and Language**

## **Amendment Summary**

### **I. METRO CITY**

- A. Provides a two-year (and two month) period between adoption of the amendment by voters on November 3, 2020 and full implementation by January 1, 2023. The transition period formally begins January 1, 2021 (the “effective date of this section”).
- B. Combines the territory of the County and City to create “The Metropolitan City of St. Louis,” which is a newly-created metropolitan city form of government, with its seat of government in the former City.
- C. Grants the Metro City the powers of the County, the City, the Municipalities, and any other city or county, and provides that such powers are cumulative and construed broadly.
- D. Makes the County Charter as of January 1, 2019, the initial charter of the Metro City, except as otherwise provided in the amendment and as may be amended in the manner provided in the section (e.g. through the government reorganization plan jointly prepared by the Mayor and Transition Mayor).
- E. Authorizes the charter to be amended following the transition period, but requires a two-thirds majority for any charter amendment submitted to voters by ordinance of the Metro Council.
- F. Specifies elective officers of the Metro City as the members of the Metro Council, the Metro Mayor, the Prosecuting Attorney, and the Assessor. Sets salaries for Metro Council as that provided for members of the City Board of Aldermen, and salaries for other elective offices as that provided by the County. Authorizes salaries to be subsequently modified by ordinance.

### **II. METRO COUNCIL**

- A. Creates a 33-member Metro Council to serve as the legislative branch of the Metro City.
- B. Provides an initial apportionment process similar to that used in Louisville/Jefferson County, with neutral experts jointly appointed by the Metro Mayor and Transition Mayor drawing district boundaries and submitting an apportionment plan by no later than September 1, 2021, for approval by the then-serving members of the St. Louis County Council and the governing body of the St. Louis Municipal District. If the boundaries are not approved by December 31, 2021, they are deemed approved as of that date.
- C. Establishes four-year terms for the Metro Council, except the initially-elected members have two or four-year terms to provide for staggered terms.

- D. Members of the Metro Council are first elected in November 2022, and take office on January 1, 2023. This allows for candidate filing/primary elections during 2022 on the same schedule as county/state offices.
- E. Establishes a President and Vice-President of the Metro Council, elected by the members to two year-terms.
- F. Provides that vacancies in the Metro Council are filled by appointment of the President, with the appointee serving until a successor is elected at a special election.
- G. St. Louis County Council members as of January 1, 2021, are permitted to serve out their terms with the duties specified in the section.

### **III. METRO CITY EXECUTIVE OFFICIALS**

- A. Creates a Metro Mayor with the executive authority of the chief executive of a city and a county. Makes the County Executive serving as of January 1, 2019, the initial Metro Mayor, with the first election in November 2024 for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2025.
- B. The President of the Metro Council serves as Mayor in the event of a vacancy following the Transition Period. The Transition Mayor serves as Mayor in the event of a vacancy during the transition period.
- C. Creates Deputy Mayors appointed by the Metro Mayor for: Public Safety & Health, Economic Development & Innovation, Community Development and Housing, Community Engagement and Equity.
- D. Retains an elected Prosecuting Attorney and makes the initial Prosecuting Attorney the incumbent serving as of January 1, 2019, with the first election November 2024 for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2025.
- E. Retains an elected Assessor (consistent with 2010 constitutional amendment) and makes the initial Assessor the incumbent serving as of January 1, 2019, with the first election November 2024 for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2025.
- F. Provides for a Metro City Counselor appointed by the Metro Mayor.
- G. Establishes the current departments, boards, and commissions of the County as the initial departments of the Metro City.
- H. Makes the Mayor of the City of St. Louis as of January 1, 2019, the Transition Mayor of the Metro City, concurrently exercising the functions of chief executive officer of the governing body of the St. Louis Municipal District. A vacancy in the office of Transition Mayor is appointed by the Mayor from a list of persons nominated by the governing body of the St. Louis Municipal District.

- I. Provides that the Mayor and Transition Mayor are to jointly oversee implementation during the transition and jointly undertake or order actions necessary and proper to implement the amendment, including (1) by February 1, 2021, establishing a procedure to resolve any nonconcurrence of mayor and transition mayor; (2) by April 1, 2021, appointing offices designated for appointment by the Mayor; (3) ordering the provision of general district services within a Municipal District; (4) administering the budget during the transition; (5) transferring and assigning functions of employees; (6) entering into contracts and agreements; (7) transferring and accepting the transfer of property; and (8) executing any necessary documents.
- J. Imposes an affirmative duty on any official or employee of the Metro City or Municipal Districts to cooperate in implementation.
- K. Requires the St. Louis County Council and the Board of Aldermen to adopt resolutions and ordinances jointly recommended by the Mayor and Transition Mayor during the transition period as necessary to implement the section.
- L. Requires the Metro Mayor and Transition Mayor to jointly develop and publish a government reorganization plan by November 15, 2022. Requires submission of the plan to the Metro Council after the Transition Period, and the plan takes effect if not disapproved within 30 days of submission by a resolution adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Metro Council. Upon taking effect, the charter, ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, or orders of the Metro City are amended to reflect the plan.

#### **IV. METRO CITY GENERAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

- A. Makes the territory of the Metro City a general services district upon effective date of the section, but to prevent disruption, allows Municipal Districts to continue providing general district services on behalf of the Metro City until provided by the Metro City.
- B. Defines a “general district service” as any duty, service, or function now or in the future assigned to the Metro City, to a county, or to a city. Examples provided in the amendment include: public health, safety, and general welfare; police, law enforcement, and municipal court; licensing and regulation; transportation, infrastructure, and public works; and economic development.
- C. During the transition period, property, contracts, records, and personnel related to general district services are transferred to the Metro City. Employees transferred continue in service, with seniority, compensation and benefits intact, until otherwise provided by the Metro City.
- D. Provides that county offices of the City and the County operate on behalf of the Metro City, until January 1, 2022, when property, contracts, records, and employees related to county functions are transferred to the Metro City. The City’s county officials are entitled to serve out their terms with the Metro City.

- E. Charter provisions, ordinances, and other enactments of the County, City, or a Municipality become effective for the Metro City with respect to the territory to which they applied, until changed by the Metro City, and enforced by the Metro City, but to prevent disruption, a Municipal District is authorized to continue enforcement during the transition period under the direction of the Metro City. By November 15, 2022, the Metro City Counselor is required to solicit public comment and prepare a report and recommend modifications for approval by the Metro Council.
- F. Creates a single municipal court of the Metro City. Authorizes the municipal court to operate in convenient divisions. Sets forth the manner of appointment, tenure and compensation for municipal judges and necessary non-judicial personnel. Requires court fines and penalties net of costs to be distributed annually to schools of the Metro City.

## **V. METRO CITY MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS**

- A. Municipalities (including the City until January 1, 2023) continue as Municipal Districts of the Metro City, which are political subdivisions, exercising the powers and functions of the City or the Municipalities as of the effective date the section to provide municipal district services, to provide general district services until provided by the Metro City, and to satisfy outstanding obligations of the Municipality.
- B. Defines a “municipal district service” as any duty, service, or function of the Municipality/City as of the effective date of the section, other than those defined as a “general district service.” Examples in the amendment include: fire protection, parks and recreation, proprietary/enterprise functions, and administration of the municipal district.
- C. Makes outstanding obligations, including indebtedness and pension obligations, remain the obligation of the Municipal District, continues the taxes and fees supporting payment until obligations are satisfied, and requires property securing outstanding obligations to remain the property of the Municipal District until satisfied.
- D. Municipal Districts are governed by the governing body of the Municipality/City as of the effective date, with incumbent officeholders serving as the initial governing body and successors elected at the first general municipal elections following the transition period.
- E. Provides that the governing body of a Municipal District serves the function of a planning commission and board of adjustment to the Metro City with respect to zoning ordinances applicable within the Municipal District, in the manner authorized by Metro City ordinance.
- F. Prohibits altering Municipal District boundaries unless approved by Metro City. Authorizes Municipal Districts to merge, consolidate, or dissolve with Metro City approval.

## **VI. ST. LOUIS MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

- A. On January 1, 2023, the St. Louis Municipal District continues as The St. Louis Municipal Corporation, which is empowered to satisfy outstanding obligations and, to the extent authorized by the Metro City, provide municipal district services.
- B. The St. Louis Municipal Corporation is governed by a five-member board appointed by the Transition Mayor and successors appointed by the Metro Mayor.
- C. Members of the governing body of the St. Louis Municipal District are entitled to serve out the remainder of their terms and perform duties directed by the governing body of the Municipal Corporation.

## **VI. METRO CITY FINANCES**

- A. General district services and outstanding obligations of the Metro City are to be financed from funds generated throughout the Metro City, including within the territory of the Municipal Districts, while municipal district services and satisfaction of outstanding obligations of Municipal Districts are to be financed from funds generated within or secured by the Municipal Districts.
- B. Maintains the current tax structure, tax rates, and level of services as of the effective date of the section, until modified by the Metro City, by continuing all taxes, fees, or special assessments then imposed by the County, City, or Municipalities, but subject to any requirement for reauthorization by voters and subject to any requirement regarding the use of funds generated thereby for satisfaction of outstanding obligations.
- C. Requires funds generated from any tax, fee, or special assessment levied solely within the territory of the Municipal District to be distributed to the Municipal District for satisfaction of outstanding obligations. Requires any remaining funds from any property tax or special assessment levied solely within the territory of the Municipal District be distributed to the Municipal District for municipal district services. Authorizes distribution of any remaining funds from any sales or use tax levied solely within the territory of the Municipal District to the Municipal District as necessary for municipal district services.
- D. Each Municipal District is constituted as a taxing subdistrict of the Metro City, allowing for taxes to be levied by the Metro City within the Municipal District differently than taxes imposed generally throughout the Metro City in order to increase the level of general services provided in the Municipal District or to satisfy outstanding obligations.
- E. Each Municipal District is also a separate taxing district which may, in the manner and to the extent authorized for the Municipality: (i) levy annually a property tax or special assessment, which may be in addition to any property tax levied by the Metro City within the Municipal District; and (iii) levy a tax upon utilities in place of any tax upon utilities that may be levied by the Metro City within the Municipal District.
- F. Authorizes a Municipal District to collect fees related to the provision of municipal district services in the manner and to the extent authorized for the Municipality.



- G. Makes the fiscal year of Municipal Districts the same as the fiscal year of Metro City, and provides that Municipal Districts are to administer revenues pursuant to an annual budget adopted by the governing body of the Municipal District, beginning with the budget for the 2023 fiscal year.
- H. Requires each Municipal District, at least 90 days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, to submit to the Metro City: (1) an estimate of outstanding obligations and the revenues and taxes in support; and (2) an estimate of the cost of municipal district services and the revenues and taxes to support.
- I. The Metro City is entitled to receive all state, federal, and other funds that would otherwise be available to a county or a city, and a Municipal District is entitled to receive state, federal, and other funds that would otherwise be available to a political subdivision and that are in furtherance of the Municipal District's powers.
- J. All apportionments, allocations, distributions, or reimbursements of state, federal, or other funds are to be calculated as if the reorganization had not occurred, but are to be provided to the Metro City to distribute to the Municipal District as required for satisfaction of outstanding obligations or for municipal district services.
- K. Provides that the budget for the Metro City and the Municipal Districts each year of the transition period is the combined adopted budgets, including supplemental or emergency appropriations, and the taxes and tax rates for the County, City, and Municipalities covering the twelve-month period beginning January 1, 2019, along with any supplemental appropriation and appropriations for the satisfaction of indebtedness during the twelve-month period beginning January 1, 2020.
- L. Gives the Metro Mayor and Transition Mayor the power to jointly control spending during the transition period.
- M. Requires revenues from any tax, fee, or special assessment levied solely within the Municipal District required for the satisfaction of outstanding obligations or for municipal district services to be distributed to the Municipal District.
- N. Sets forth the process for the Metro Mayor and Transition Mayor to jointly propose the first budget of the Metro City (i.e. the 2023 fiscal year) by November 15, 2022, for approval by the Metro Council.
- O. Requires that the rate of any property tax levied by the Metro City within the former territory of the County for county purposes for the 2023 fiscal year be reduced to generate no greater than half of the revenue generated in the prior fiscal year.
- P. Budgets for subsequent fiscal years are to be adopted pursuant to the process in the charter and by ordinance, except the Metro Mayor has additional authority to control spending and has line-item veto authority.

- Q. Requires the Metro City to levy its general county purposes property tax throughout its territory, including within the former City, in place of the county purposes property tax levy solely within the former City.

## **VII. ST. LOUIS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

- A. On January 1, 2023, the St. Louis Fire Protection District is formed within the former City to provide fire protection services. The governing body of the fire protection district is a five-person board, initially appointed by the Transition Mayor and subsequently elected in the manner provided for a fire protection district.
- B. For the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2023, the Fire Protection District is funded by a distribution of revenues generated from property taxes collected by the Metro City within the territory of the former City.
- C. Effective January 1, 2024, there is levied a property tax for the Fire Protection District to generate substantially the same amount of revenue for 2024 operations.

## **VIII. ELECTIONS**

- A. Directs the General Assembly to provide a board of election commissioners or other election authority for the Metro City, but until such time requires the two existing boards of election commissioners to cooperate in the conduct of elections.
- B. Directs the General Assembly to provide for party committees of the Metro City, but until such time requires the city and county committees to cooperate in performing the functions of county committees within the Metro City.
- C. Prohibits any special election during the transition other than in the event of death or incapacity of both persons designated to serve as Mayor and Transition Mayor prior to the effective date.
- D. Prohibits submission of any question or issue to voters during the transition period with respect to reauthorization of any tax. Upon the failure to submit such question, the earnings tax begins phasing out by one-tenth of a percent each year for the next ten years, and the payroll expense tax begins phasing out by one-twentieth of a percent each year for the next ten years.
- E. Provides that no special district is prohibited from submitting a question or issue to voters during the transition period.

## **IX. SPECIAL DISTRICTS**

- D. Provides that special districts shall continue unaffected, unless otherwise provided, except that any power to appoint, nominate or recommend appointments possessed by any official

within the Metro City are to be exercised by the Metro Mayor and any power related to a special district possessed by the County, City, or Municipality with respect to a special district is to be exercised by the Metro City.

- E. Defines “special districts” as any municipal corporation, political subdivision, body corporate and politic, taxing district, taxing subdistrict, or authority, other than a Municipality and excluding school districts, located wholly or partially within the City or County prior to the effective date of this section.
- F. The definition of “special districts” is intended to include any fire protection district, levee district, library district, sewer district, street light maintenance district, special business district, community improvement district, transportation development district, zoo-museum district, metropolitan sewer district, community college district, convention and visitors commission, metropolitan development district, metropolitan park and recreation district, housing authority, land clearance for redevelopment authority, port authority, regional sports authority, regional arts authority, land reutilization authority, industrial development authority, planned industrial expansion authority, clean energy development board, urban redevelopment corporation, or similar taxing district, authority, or board.

#### **X. SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

- A. Excludes school districts and laws pertaining thereto from being affected by the amendment.

#### **XI. CIRCUIT COURT GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES**

- A. Authorizes the Judicial Conference to submit a circuit realignment plan law to create a single judicial circuit for the Metro City. Such plan would take effect January 1, 2022 assuming submission during the 2021 legislative session.
- B. Provides that all judges of the City and County circuits continue as judges of a Metro City circuit and that the number of judges is the number currently authorized.
- C. Judicial vacancies filled pursuant to the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan.

#### **XII. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- A. Provides that nothing in the section shall impair any obligations of contract. Preserves existing actions, causes of action, rights, duties, titles, claims, obligations, debts, judgments, recognizances, fines, penalties, and forfeitures in favor of or against a Municipality, the City, or the County against the Metro City or a Municipal District.
- B. Provides that matters pending before any Municipality, the City, or the County may be acted upon as if originated with the Metro City or a Municipal District. Provides that bonds previously authorized but not issued by the County, City, or Municipalities may be issued by the Metro City or Municipal District.

- C. Provides that all labor contracts continue in effect until expiration, at which time new contracts shall be negotiated with the Metro City or Municipal District and requires the Metro City and Municipal Districts to recognize existing bargaining units. Provides procedure for the event that the amendment causes a merger of bargaining units which cause conflicts.
- D. Provides a refundable tax credit for County or municipality employees who become subject to the earnings tax as a result of locating the seat of government in the City.
- E. Preserves all rights to pension and retirement benefits, including continued participation in the current pension or retirement system of the employee.
- F. Provides that a Municipality located partially within the Metro City (i.e. Pacific) remains unaffected, except that its territory within the Metro City is detached and annexed into Metro City, and the Metro City is required to distribute revenue that would have otherwise been received, until otherwise provided by law.
- G. Authorizes geographic designations based on the territorial boundaries of the City or the County to continue to be construed as the territory of the City or the County as of the effective date of the section.
- H. Authorizes the General Assembly to enact consistent legislation.
- I. Severs any portion of the amendment found to be invalid.
- J. Repeals inconsistent provisions of the Missouri Constitution related to the City and County.

## Constitutional Amendment Language

*Be it resolved by the people of the state of Missouri that the Constitution be amended:*

Article VI of the Constitution is revised by repealing Sections 30(a), 30(b), 31, 32(a), 32(b), 32(c), and 33 and adopting one new section to be known as Article VI, Section 30 to read as follows:

### 1. Definitions.

(1) When used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) “Effective date of this section” shall mean January 1, 2021, which shall be the effective date of the enactment of Section 30 of this article and the repeal of Sections 30(a), 30(b), 31, 32(a), 32(b), 32(c), and 33 of this article.

(b) “General district service” shall mean any duty, service, or function of the metropolitan city, a county, or a city, now or in the future assigned by law, charter, or ordinance, of the metropolitan city including, without limitation: public health, safety, and general welfare; police, law enforcement, and municipal court; the licensing, taxing, and regulation of businesses, occupations, professions, activities, and things; transportation, infrastructure, and public works; and economic development.

(c) “Mayor” shall mean the mayor of the metropolitan city.

(d) “Metropolitan city” shall mean The Metropolitan City of St. Louis.

(e) “Municipal district” shall mean a municipal district of the metropolitan city, comprising the territory within the municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section.

(f) “Municipal district service” shall mean any duty, service, or function of the municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section or in the future assigned to the municipal district by law, charter, or ordinance of the metropolitan city, and which is not otherwise a general district service provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district, including, without limitation: fire protection, emergency medical, and related services; parks and recreation; proprietary and enterprise functions of the municipality; and administration of the municipal district.

(g) “Municipality” shall mean any incorporated city, town, or village located wholly within the territory of the city of St. Louis or the county of St. Louis as of January 1, 2019, including the city of St. Louis.

(h) “Special district” shall mean, excluding school districts, any political subdivision, municipal corporation, body corporate and politic, authority, taxing district, taxing subdistrict, public corporation, or quasi-public corporation, other than the county of St. Louis or a municipality, located wholly or partially within the territory in the city of St. Louis or the county of St. Louis immediately prior to the effective date of this section.

(i) “Transition mayor” shall mean the transition mayor of the metropolitan city.

(j) “Transition period” shall mean the period between the effective date of this section and January 1, 2023.

### 2. Metropolitan City.

(1)(a) Upon the effective date of this section, the territory of the county of St. Louis is extended to embrace the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis and the county of St. Louis, and the county of St. Louis so expanded shall continue its corporate existence as a new political

subdivision, body corporate and politic, and municipal corporation, which is hereby created, with its name “The Metropolitan City of St. Louis” and its seat of government within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis.

(b) All rights, duties, personnel, property, contracts, records, assets, liabilities, and obligations of any kind of the county of St. Louis, including, without limitation, the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, and any obligations related to employee benefits, including, without limitation, pension, retirement, medical, life insurance, and similar benefits for employees and beneficiaries, shall continue without impairment with the metropolitan city by operation of this section to continue the corporate existence of the county of St. Louis as the metropolitan city.

(2) The metropolitan city shall be a metropolitan city form of government, which is hereby created and which shall possess all the powers and privileges of both a constitutional charter county and a constitutional charter city, including any city not within a county. The powers and privileges of the metropolitan city shall include, without limitation, all powers and privileges of the county of St. Louis and of any municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section, and all powers and privileges now or in the future granted to the metropolitan city, to a county, or to a city under this constitution and the laws of this state. Such powers and privileges shall be cumulative and shall be construed broadly in favor of the metropolitan city.

(3) The metropolitan city shall be governed by a charter. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the initial charter of the metropolitan city shall be the charter of the county of St. Louis as of January 1, 2019, except as otherwise provided in this section. The specific mention of or the failure to mention a particular power or privilege in the initial charter shall not limit in any way the powers and privileges granted herein to the metropolitan city. The initial charter shall be liberally construed to effectuate this section and in harmony therewith. The initial charter may be amended in the manner provided in this section and, following the transition period, in the manner provided by charter, provided that any amendment submitted by ordinance shall require the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the qualified electors voting thereon.

(4)(a) Unless otherwise provided by charter following the transition period, there shall be no elective officers of the metropolitan city other than the mayor, the members of the metropolitan council, the assessor, and the prosecuting attorney. Elective officers shall be qualified voters of the metropolitan city and shall possess such additional qualifications provided by charter. Except as otherwise provided in this section, elective officers of the metropolitan city shall be nominated and elected in the manner provided in the election laws for state and county officers. No person duly serving in any office of the county of St. Louis or of any municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall be disqualified from candidacy for elective office of the metropolitan city or of a municipal district, but shall forfeit such office upon assuming elective office of the metropolitan city or of a municipal district.

(b) The salary for members of the metropolitan council shall be as provided for members of the board of aldermen of the city of St. Louis immediately prior to the effective date of this section and as may be fixed by ordinance. The salary for all other elective officers of the metropolitan city shall be as provided for corresponding officers of the county of St. Louis immediately prior to the effective date of this section and as may be fixed by ordinance.

(5)(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section with respect to the transition period, the legislative power of the metropolitan city shall be vested in the metropolitan council and shall include the exercise of legislative power throughout the territory of the metropolitan city,

including within the territory of any municipal district, pertaining to any and all duties, services, and functions now or in the future assigned to the metropolitan city, to a county, or to a city.

(b) The metropolitan council shall consist of thirty-three members, elected for terms of four years by the qualified voters of the districts in which they reside, except that members initially representing even-numbered districts shall be elected for terms of two years to provide for staggered terms. Members shall be elected at the general election in 2022, and so on at succeeding elections, and shall take office on January first following election. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the members of the county council of the county of St. Louis duly serving as of the effective date of this section shall be entitled to continue service as members of the county council of the county of St. Louis for the term of office for which they were elected or appointed and receive compensation therefor in the exercise of the duties specified in this section.

(c) Members of the metropolitan council shall be elected from districts established in the manner provided in this section.

(i) Before April 1, 2021, the mayor and transition mayor shall jointly appoint a member or members of the faculty, with relevant expertise and without partisan affiliation, of one or more universities located within the metropolitan city to prepare a plan to divide the metropolitan city into districts from which members of the metropolitan council shall be elected. The plan shall include a statement of the boundaries of the initial districts, together with a map of such districts. Districts shall contain as nearly equal population as practicable, shall be compact and contiguous, and shall comply with all requirements of the United States Constitution and federal laws, including, but not limited to, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended. Such districts shall respect boundaries of municipal districts and communities of interest whenever practicable.

(ii) Before September 1, 2021, the plan shall be submitted for adoption, with or without amendment, by the county council of the county of St. Louis and the governing body of the municipal district within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis. If both shall fail to adopt identical plans on or before December 31, 2021, the plan as submitted shall be deemed approved as of that date. Upon approval, the plan shall be filed with the official performing the duties of a county clerk and the office or officers charged with conducting elections in the metropolitan city and shall be deemed incorporated into the charter.

(iii) On or before December thirty-first of the year following a federal decennial census, beginning with the first federal decennial census following the transition period, the districts shall be reapportioned, if necessary, in the manner provided in the charter and with the characteristics provided in this section.

(d) At its first regular meeting following the transition period, and every two years thereafter, the members of the metropolitan council shall designate a president and vice-president, whose terms of office shall be for two years.

(e) Any vacancy in the metropolitan council shall be filled by appointment of the president of the metropolitan council. Any person appointed to fill such vacancy shall have the same qualifications otherwise established for the office and shall serve until a successor is duly serving following a special election for the unexpired or full term.

(6)(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section with respect to the transition period, all executive and administrative power of the metropolitan city shall be vested in the mayor, who shall be the chief executive officer of the metropolitan city and shall possess and exercise all the



powers and duties of the chief executive officer of a county and of a city now or in the future granted. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or this constitution, the initial mayor shall be the person duly serving as county executive of the county of St. Louis on January 1, 2019, who shall assume office upon the effective date of this section and hold office until a successor is duly serving. The mayor shall be elected at the general election in 2024, and every four years thereafter, and shall take office on January first following election. Except as otherwise provided in this section with respect to the transition period, a vacancy in the office of mayor shall be filled by the president of the metropolitan council, who shall possess and exercise the powers and duties of the office until a successor is serving following a special election for the unexpired or full term. While so holding the office of mayor, a temporary vacancy shall exist in the office of the president of the metropolitan council. The vice-president of the metropolitan council shall hold the office of president of the metropolitan council during any such vacancy, with the right of succession to the office of mayor. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the transition mayor shall possess and exercise the powers and duties of the office of mayor in the event of a vacancy in such office during the transition period. The vacancy in the office of transition mayor thereby created shall be filled by appointment of the transition mayor, now serving as mayor, from a list of no less than three qualified voters nominated by the county council of the county of St. Louis. If the county council of the county of St. Louis shall fail to submit such list within seven days of the vacancy, the office shall be filled by appointment of the transition mayor, now serving as the mayor.

(b) The mayor shall appoint no fewer than four deputy mayors, to serve at the pleasure of the mayor and with such duties as directed by ordinance or executive order, with respect to public health and safety; economic development and innovation; community development and housing; community engagement and equity; and as otherwise designated by charter.

(c) There shall be an assessor of the metropolitan city who shall possess and exercise all the powers and duties of a county assessor now or in the future granted. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or this constitution, the initial assessor shall be the person duly serving as assessor of the county of St. Louis as of January 1, 2019, who shall assume office upon the effective date of this section and hold office until a successor is duly serving. The assessor shall be elected at the general election in 2024, and every four years thereafter, and shall take office on January first following election. A vacancy in the office shall be filled by appointment of the mayor, and the person so appointed shall hold office until January first following the next general election at which a successor shall be elected for the unexpired or full term.

(d) There shall be a prosecuting attorney of the metropolitan city who shall possess and exercise all the powers and duties of a prosecuting attorney and the circuit attorney for the city of St. Louis now or in the future granted. Notwithstanding any other provision of law or this constitution, the initial prosecuting attorney shall be the person duly serving as prosecuting attorney of the county of St. Louis on January 1, 2019, who shall assume office upon the effective date of this section and hold office until a successor is duly serving. The prosecuting attorney shall be elected at the general election in 2024, and every four years thereafter, and shall take office on January first following election. A vacancy in the office shall be filled by appointment of the mayor, and the person so appointed shall hold office until January first following the next general election at which a successor shall be elected for the unexpired or full term.

(e) There shall be a metropolitan city counselor appointed by the mayor, with such qualifications provided by charter, who shall serve as the metropolitan city's attorney and

counselor at law and shall possess and exercise all the powers and duties of a county counselor and a city attorney now or in the future granted.

(f) Except as provided in this section, the metropolitan city shall have such departments and offices as established by the county of St. Louis as of the effective date of this section and as may be subsequently established by the metropolitan city. Except for the heads of a department appointed by the majority of the circuit judges as provided by charter, the heads of each department shall be appointed by the mayor and shall assume office upon appointment. Upon the effective date of this section, a board or commission of the county of St. Louis, and which is not the governing body of a special district, shall continue as a board or commission of the metropolitan city, until otherwise provided by charter or by ordinance of the metropolitan city, with the members duly serving holding office until a successor is duly appointed. The members of boards and commissions of the metropolitan city shall be appointed by the mayor, or otherwise as designated by charter, and shall exercise such duties and functions as assigned by law, charter, ordinance, or order.

(7)(a) During the transition period, all executive and administrative power of the metropolitan city shall be vested jointly in the mayor and transition mayor, who shall together constitute the chief executive officer of the metropolitan city and who shall jointly undertake or order the exercise or performance of any power, duty, or function necessary and proper to faithfully execute the orderly administration and implementation of this section. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the transition mayor shall be the person serving as mayor of the city of St. Louis on January 1, 2019, who shall assume the office of transition mayor upon the effective date of this section and hold office until January 1, 2023. During the transition period, the transition mayor shall concurrently exercise the powers, privileges, duties, and functions of the chief executive officer of the governing body of the municipal district within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis. A vacancy in the office of transition mayor shall be filled by appointment of the mayor from a list of no less than three qualified voters nominated by the governing body of the municipal district within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis. If the governing body of the municipal district shall fail to submit such list within seven days of the vacancy, the office shall be filled by appointment of the mayor.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, to the extent a power, duty, or function is required to be exercised or performed by the metropolitan city during the transition period, such power, duty, or function may be exercised or performed jointly by the mayor and transition mayor or, at their joint direction, by an official or employee of the metropolitan city or of a municipal district, but shall be deemed exercised or performed by the metropolitan city. Such powers, duties, and functions shall include, without limitation: (i) on or before February 1, 2021, establishing procedures related to the joint exercise and performance of the power, duties, and functions authorized by this section, including, without limitation, a procedure for the resolution of any nonconcurrence among the mayor and transition mayor; (ii) on or before April 1, 2021, making appointments to offices, departments, boards, and commissions, except for officers appointed by a majority of the circuit judges as provided in the charter, with such persons assuming office upon their appointment; (iii) ordering the metropolitan city provide or secure the provision of a general district service within the territory of a municipal district; (iv) administering the budget for each year of the transition period in the manner provided in this section; (v) transferring and assigning the functions and duties of personnel; (vi) entering into contracts and agreements; (vii) transferring and accepting the transfer of property; and (viii) executing any necessary documents or instruments related thereto on behalf of the metropolitan

city. The mayor and transition mayor shall jointly undertake or order the exercise or performance of such powers, duties, or functions pursuant to executive order contemporaneously transmitted to the county council of the county of St. Louis and the governing body of each municipal district.

(c) During the transition period, the mayor and transition mayor shall jointly solicit public comment and, before November 15, 2022, shall jointly present to the public, at meetings called for such purpose, a plan to create, organize, and abolish departments, divisions, bureaus, commissions, boards, offices, and employments, and transfer the functions and duties thereof, as necessary and proper to effectuate this section and to ensure the proper and efficient administration of the affairs of the metropolitan city. The plan shall provide for the exercise of all powers and duties of counties and county officers prescribed by this constitution and laws of the state and shall provide for the exercise of all powers, privileges, duties, and functions of the metropolitan city prescribed in this section, including, without limitation, providing or securing the provision of general district services throughout the territory of the metropolitan city. On or after January 1, 2023, the plan shall be submitted to the metropolitan council and shall take effect within thirty days of submission, unless disapproved by resolution adopted by two-thirds of all members voting in the affirmative, provided that if the plan would affect the department of judicial administration, such plan shall not become effective unless upon the concurrence of a majority of the circuit judges within the metropolitan city. Upon taking effect, the plan shall take the place of and supersede all charter provisions, ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders inconsistent therewith.

(d) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, during the transition period, the county council of the county of St. Louis and the governing body of the municipal district located within the territory heretofore of the city of St. Louis, upon the joint recommendation of the mayor and transition mayor, shall adopt resolutions, ordinances, and orders consistent with this section and its orderly implementation and administration, with such resolutions, ordinances, and orders deemed as on behalf of the metropolitan city upon their adoption by both such bodies and the joint approval thereof by the mayor and transition mayor.

(e) During the transition period, the governing body of a municipal district shall administer the affairs of the municipal district in the manner provided in this section, provided that no municipal district shall incur any new obligation extending beyond the transition period nor dispose of its property without the joint approval of the mayor and transition mayor.

(f) During the transition period, it shall be the affirmative duty of any official or employee of the metropolitan city, the county of St. Louis, or a municipal district to cooperate in the orderly administration and implementation of this section under the joint direction of the mayor and transition mayor and to refrain from any action that would impair or frustrate its orderly administration and implementation.

(8) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, upon the effective date of this section, the powers and duties of any county office of the city of St. Louis or the county of St. Louis shall be deemed exercised or performed on behalf of the metropolitan city. Except as otherwise provided in this section, on or before January 1, 2022, all property, contracts, records, and personnel related to any such county office shall be transferred to the corresponding office of the metropolitan city. Incumbents serving in such offices shall serve the remainder of the term for which they were elected or appointed, subject to any right of resignation, and shall receive compensation therefor in the performance of such duties directed by the metropolitan city.

(9) The entire territory of the metropolitan city shall be a general services district throughout which the metropolitan city shall provide or secure the provision of general district services, including within the territory of any municipal district. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a municipal district shall continue to provide or secure the provision of a general district service on behalf of the metropolitan city until provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district pursuant to executive order or ordinance of the metropolitan city. Except as otherwise provided in this section, property, contracts, records, and personnel of a municipal district related to providing or securing a general district service shall be transferred to the metropolitan city.

(10)(a) The metropolitan city shall enforce its ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders throughout its territory. Ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders of the county of St. Louis in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall remain effective as ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders of the metropolitan city and shall be enforced by the metropolitan city until repealed, modified, or amended by the metropolitan city, except to the extent of any conflict with this section. Charter provisions, ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders of any municipality in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall become effective as ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders of the metropolitan city as if enacted or promulgated by the metropolitan city and shall be enforced by the metropolitan city with respect to the territory to which they applied immediately prior to the effective date of this section until repealed, modified, or amended by the metropolitan city, except to the extent of any conflict with this section. Notwithstanding the foregoing, during the transition period, a municipal district may, under the direction of the metropolitan city, continue to enforce such ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders within its territory, and such enforcement shall be deemed on behalf of the metropolitan city. All ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, or orders of the metropolitan city shall be construed to effectuate this section.

(b) The metropolitan city counselor shall review all charter provisions, ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders and shall solicit public comments related thereto. By no later than November 15, 2022, the metropolitan city counselor shall issue a report on such modifications and revisions necessary or advisable, including, without limitation, to resolve any conflicts whereby any rights, remedies, entitlements, or the enforcement thereof, cannot reasonably be reconciled. The metropolitan council may adopt the report by ordinance, and, upon adoption, the charter, ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and orders in effect shall be deemed modified to reflect the report so adopted.

(11)(a) Upon the effective date of this section, the jurisdiction of the municipal court for the county of St. Louis shall be extended to the entire territory of the metropolitan city and shall constitute the municipal court for the metropolitan city. The municipal court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine cases involving violations of ordinances in the manner provided by this constitution or by law, rule, charter, or ordinance. Notwithstanding the foregoing, during the transition period, a municipal court within the metropolitan city immediately prior to the effective date of this section may continue to operate as a division of the municipal court of the metropolitan city, with any act of such division deemed performed on behalf of the municipal court of the metropolitan city. On or before January 1, 2023, property, contracts, records, and personnel of any municipal court within the metropolitan city immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall be transferred to the municipal court of the metropolitan city.

(b) The metropolitan city may authorize the municipal court to operate within divisions and in such locations as are convenient to residents of the metropolitan city and which may correspond with the geographic boundaries of one or more municipal courts immediately prior to the effective date of this section. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the municipal court shall have such municipal judges, and the necessary non-judicial personnel assisting them, as provided by law and ordinance. Unless otherwise provided by ordinance of the metropolitan city respecting a municipal court, the mayor shall appoint, with advice and consent of the metropolitan council, the judges of the municipal court. The metropolitan city shall prescribe by ordinance the tenure and compensation of the judges of the municipal court. Municipal judges and necessary non-judicial personnel shall serve full-time, unless otherwise provided by charter of the metropolitan city, provided that the compensation for any full-time judge of the municipal court shall not exceed the compensation for an associate circuit judge.

(c) The clear proceeds of all penalties, forfeitures, and fines collected by the municipal court shall be distributed annually to the schools of the metropolitan city according to law.

### 3. Municipal Districts.

(1)(a) Upon the effective date of this section, a municipality shall continue its corporate existence as a municipal district, with its name the term "Municipal District" preceded by the name of the municipality, less any previous designation as to city, town, or village, unless otherwise designated by the municipal district or by law. A municipal district of the metropolitan city, which is hereby created, shall be a political subdivision, body corporate and politic, and municipal corporation, exercising and performing such powers, privileges, duties, and functions of the municipality necessary and proper: (i) to provide or secure the provision of a municipal district service not otherwise provided or secured within its territory; (ii) to provide or secure the provision of a general district service until provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district pursuant to executive order or ordinance of the metropolitan city; and (iii) for the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of any kind incurred by the municipality prior to the effective date of this section.

(b) All rights, duties, personnel, property, contracts, records, assets, liabilities, and obligations of any kind of the municipality, including, without limitation, the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness and any obligation related to employee benefits, including, without limitation, pension, retirement, medical, life insurance, and similar benefits for employees and beneficiaries, shall continue without impairment with the municipal district by operation of this section to continue the corporate existence of the county of St. Louis as the metropolitan city. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the municipal district and the territory therein shall continue to be held responsible for any such outstanding obligation, and any tax, fee, or special assessment levied or imposed for the satisfaction of any outstanding obligation shall continue to be levied or imposed within its territory until such obligation is satisfied. Any property securing an outstanding obligation shall remain the property of the municipal district until such obligation is satisfied. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the metropolitan city may assume any outstanding obligation of the municipal district, provided that no such assumption shall impair any obligation of contract.

(2)(a) The governing body of a municipal district shall be the governing body of the municipality, exercising and performing such powers, privileges, duties, and functions of the governing body of the municipality necessary and proper to effectuate this section and for the proper and efficient administration of the municipal district, including, without limitation, serving the function of a planning commission and board of adjustment to the metropolitan city,

in the manner authorized by the metropolitan city, with respect to zoning ordinances applicable to territory of the municipal district.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the initial governing body shall consist of the members of the governing body of the municipality duly serving immediately prior to the effective date of this section, who shall assume office with the municipal district upon the effective date of this section and hold office until a successor is duly serving following election, beginning with the first general municipal election following the transition period.

(c) Upon the effective date of this section, a board or commission of the municipality, and which is not the governing body of a special district, shall continue as a board or commission of the municipal district, until otherwise provided by the municipal district, by the metropolitan city, or by law, with the members duly serving holding office until a successor is duly appointed in a manner consistent with that of the municipality or as provided by law.

(3) The boundaries of a municipal district shall not be altered except as approved by ordinance of the metropolitan city. Following the transition period, a municipal district may merge or consolidate with one or more municipal districts or may be dissolved as authorized by ordinance of the metropolitan city providing for the transfer of any rights, duties, personnel, property, contracts, assets, liabilities, and obligations and the procedure and effective date for such merger, consolidation, or dissolution. Such ordinance may provide for creation of a new municipal district to assume the powers, privileges, duties, and functions of any municipal districts so subsumed.

#### 4. The St. Louis Municipal Corporation.

(1)(a) On January 1, 2023, the municipal district within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis shall continue its corporate existence as a political subdivision and municipal corporation, with its name “The St. Louis Municipal Corporation.” The St. Louis Municipal Corporation shall exercise and perform such powers, privileges, duties, and functions of the municipal district necessary and proper: (i) for the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of any kind of the municipal district; and (ii) to provide or secure the provision of a municipal district service not otherwise provided or secured within its territory, if authorized to do so by ordinance of the metropolitan city.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this section, all rights, duties, personnel, property, contracts, records, assets, liabilities, and obligations of any kind of the municipal district within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis, including, without limitation, the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, and any obligation related to employee benefits, including, without limitation, pension, retirement, medical, life insurance, and similar benefits for employees and beneficiaries, shall continue without impairment with the St. Louis Municipal Corporation by operation of this section to continue the corporate existence of the municipal district as the St. Louis Municipal Corporation. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the St. Louis Municipal Corporation and the territory therein shall continue to be held responsible for any such outstanding obligation, and any tax, fee, or special assessment levied or imposed for the satisfaction of any outstanding obligation shall continue to be levied or imposed within its territory until such obligation is satisfied. Any property securing any outstanding obligation shall remain the property of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation until such obligation is satisfied. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the metropolitan city may assume any outstanding obligation of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation, provided that no such assumption shall impair any obligation of contract.

(2) The governing body of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation shall be comprised of a board of directors of five qualified voters appointed by the transition mayor, with three directors appointed for terms of three years and two appointed for terms of two years. Such initial members shall assume office on January 1, 2023, and shall hold office until a successor is duly appointed by the mayor of the metropolitan city. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the members of the governing body of the municipal district shall serve the remainder of the term of office for which they were elected or appointed, subject to any right of resignation, and receive compensation therefor in the performance of such duties as directed by the governing body of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation.

(3)(a) As provided in this section for a municipal district, the territory of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation shall continue as a taxing subdistrict of the metropolitan city, and the St. Louis Municipal Corporation shall continue as a separate taxing district, provided that it may exercise only such taxing powers of the municipal district authorized for its exercise by ordinance of the metropolitan city.

(b) Unless otherwise provided by ordinance of the metropolitan city, the metropolitan city shall distribute funds to the St. Louis Municipal Corporation in the manner and for the purposes provided in this section with respect to a municipal district and may levy or impose a tax, fee, or special assessment solely within the territory of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation in the manner and for the purposes provided in this section with respect to a tax, fee, or special assessment of the metropolitan city levied or imposed solely within the territory of a municipal district.

(c) Unless otherwise provided by ordinance of the metropolitan city, the St. Louis Municipal Corporation shall be deemed a municipal district for purposes of determining the right to receive, and for the calculation and receipt of, distributions, allocations, remittances, and reimbursements of any kind from the state or United States government, or from any other agency, public or private.

#### 5. Finances.

(1)(a) General district services and the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of any kind of the metropolitan city shall be financed with funds generated throughout the territory of the metropolitan city, including within the territory of any municipal district thereof, or otherwise secured by the metropolitan city. Municipal district services provided or secured by a municipal district within its territory and the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of any kind of a municipal district shall be financed with funds generated within the territory of the municipal district, or otherwise secured by the municipal district.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the metropolitan city shall be empowered to take any and all actions necessary and proper to ensure the satisfaction of outstanding obligations incurred prior to the effective date of this section and to prevent any impairment thereof.

(2)(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the tax structure, tax rates, and level of services in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall remain in effect until modified by the metropolitan city. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, in order to maintain the tax structure, tax rates, and level of services, all taxes, fees, and special assessments levied or imposed by the county of St. Louis or by a municipality shall continue as a tax, fee, or special assessment of the metropolitan city with respect to the territory to which the same applied immediately prior to the effective date of this section, until modified by the metropolitan city, but shall remain subject to any duty or requirement regarding the use of



funds generated thereby and shall remain subject to any requirement imposed by law for voter approval of the continued levy or imposition of any such tax initially levied or imposed prior to the effective date of this section.

(b)(i) The metropolitan city shall distribute funds generated by any tax, fee, or special assessment of the metropolitan city initially levied by the municipality to the municipal district as required for the satisfaction of any outstanding obligation.

(ii) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the metropolitan city shall distribute any remaining funds generated by any property tax or special assessment of the metropolitan city initially levied by the municipality to the municipal district for providing or securing the provision of municipal district services within its territory, and for providing or securing the provision of a general district service, until such service is provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district pursuant to executive order or ordinance of the metropolitan city.

(iii) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the metropolitan city may distribute, from any remaining funds generated by any sales or use tax of the metropolitan city initially levied or imposed by the municipality, to the municipal district as necessary for providing or securing the provision of municipal district services within its territory, or for providing or securing the provision of a general district service, until such service is provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district pursuant to executive order or ordinance of the metropolitan city.

(3) Each municipal district shall constitute a taxing subdistrict of the metropolitan city. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, taxes, fees, or special assessments of the metropolitan city levied or imposed solely within the territory of a municipal district may be different than taxes, fees, or special assessments of the metropolitan city levied or imposed generally throughout its territory. The metropolitan city may levy or impose a tax, fee, or special assessment solely within the territory of a municipal district in order to ensure the satisfaction of any outstanding obligation incurred by the municipality prior to the effective date of this section, and may levy or impose a tax, fee, or special assessment solely within the territory of a municipal district to provide or secure the provision of, or to increase the level of, any services provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district, and to incur indebtedness related thereto, upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the qualified electors of the municipal district voting thereon.

(4)(a) In addition to constituting a taxing subdistrict of the metropolitan city, each municipal district shall be a separate taxing district, with the taxing powers specified in this section and as may be provided by law. A municipal district may, in the manner and to the extent authorized for the municipality, exercise the following taxing powers for providing or securing the provision of municipal district services, and to incur indebtedness related thereto: (i) the levy of a property tax or special assessment, which may be in addition to any such tax or special assessment of the metropolitan city; and (ii) the levy of a tax upon utilities within the municipal district, which shall be in the place of any such tax upon utilities the metropolitan city is authorized to levy within the territory of the municipal district. The governing body of the municipal district shall set the rate of any property tax or special assessment levied by the municipal district in the manner provided by law and this constitution for the municipality.

(b) A municipal district may, in the manner and to the extent authorized for the municipality and as may be provided by law, charter, or ordinance of the metropolitan city,

impose and collect fees related to providing or securing the provision of municipal district services within its territory.

(c) The fiscal year of each municipal district shall be the same as the fiscal year for the metropolitan city. The governing body of a municipal district shall administer the revenues generated from taxes, fees, and special assessments, along with any funds otherwise secured by the municipal district, in a manner consistent with that provided for the municipality and as may be provided by law, charter, or ordinance of the metropolitan city, pursuant to an annual budget adopted by the governing body, beginning with an annual budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2023.

(d) Except as otherwise provided by law, charter, or ordinance of the metropolitan city, not later than ninety days prior to the first day of each fiscal year, beginning with the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2023, the governing body of a municipal district shall submit to the metropolitan city a true and accurate estimate of: (i) all outstanding obligations of any kind, including, without limitation, the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, for the ensuing fiscal year; (ii) the expenditures necessary to provide or secure the provision of municipal district services for the ensuing fiscal year; and (iii) the funds, revenues, taxes, fees, and special assessments for such purposes for the ensuing fiscal year.

(5)(a) The metropolitan city shall be entitled to receive all funds from the state or United States government, or from any other agency, public or private, to the extent and in the manner in which any county or city of the state is, or may in the future be, entitled to receive such funds. The metropolitan city shall be deemed both a city and a county for determining the right to receive funds from the state or United States government, or from any other agency, public or private.

(b) A municipal district shall be entitled to receive all funds from the state or United States government, or from any other agency, public or private, that are in furtherance of any power conferred upon a municipal district. A municipal district shall be deemed a political subdivision of the state and a municipal corporation for the purpose of determining the right to receive funds from the state or United States government, or from any other agency, public or private.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, all apportionments, distributions, allocations, remittances, and reimbursements of any kind from the state or United States government, or from any other agency, public or private, to counties, cities, towns, or villages that the county of St. Louis or any municipality was eligible to receive immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall be calculated in the same manner as if the reorganization pursuant to this section had not occurred, but any such apportionments, distributions, allocations, remittances, and reimbursements shall be made to the metropolitan city, which shall distribute to the municipal district only such portion thereof required for the satisfaction of any outstanding obligation or required to be used by the municipal district for providing or securing the provision of municipal district services within its territory.

(6)(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, except as otherwise provided in this section, the budget of the metropolitan city and the municipal districts thereof for each year of the transition period shall be the combined adopted budgets for the county of St. Louis and for each municipality covering the twelve-month period beginning January 1, 2019, along with any supplemental or emergency appropriations, and any additional appropriations necessary for the satisfaction of any indebtedness of the county of St. Louis or any municipality adopted during the twelve-month period beginning January 1, 2020. Such budget shall be the

complete financial plan for the metropolitan city and the municipal districts thereof for each year of the transition period. The amounts appropriated therein shall be deemed effective for each year of the transition period, and the taxes, fees, and special assessments levied and imposed in support thereof are hereby levied and imposed at the rates provided therein for each year of the transition period in order to create and provide new revenues in support of such appropriations. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, no adjustment to the rate of any levy therein shall be required during the transition period.

(b) The mayor and transition mayor shall jointly administer the budget for each year of the transition period. The mayor and transition mayor may jointly control the rate at which any appropriation is expended by allotment, may jointly reduce expenditures below appropriations, and may jointly transfer appropriations to ensure the proper and efficient administration of the metropolitan city and the municipal districts thereof during the transition period, provided that the mayor and transition mayor shall not reduce any appropriation for the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness. Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, if jointly recommended by the mayor and transition mayor, the county council of the county of St. Louis and the governing body of the municipal district located within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis shall by ordinance make supplemental or emergency appropriations from available funds, and such ordinances shall be deemed on behalf of the metropolitan city upon their adoption by both such bodies and the joint approval thereof by the mayor and transition mayor.

(c) During the transition period, the metropolitan city shall distribute, to the municipal district, funds generated from any tax, fee, or special assessment of the metropolitan city initially levied by the municipality: (i) as required for the satisfaction of any outstanding obligation of the municipal district; (ii) as necessary for providing or securing the provision of municipal district services within its territory; or (iii) as necessary for providing or securing the provision of a general district service, until such service is provided or secured by the metropolitan city within the territory of the municipal district pursuant to executive order or ordinance of the metropolitan city.

(7)(a) Not later than November 15, 2022, the mayor and transition mayor shall jointly recommend and publish a balanced budget for the metropolitan city, which shall provide a complete financial plan for the metropolitan city for the ensuing fiscal year and shall include proposed tax rates, all estimated income and revenue, all proposed expenditures, and such other matters as may be necessary or advisable.

(b) The metropolitan city shall set the rate of any property tax or special assessment of the metropolitan city, including any property tax or special assessment of the metropolitan city levied solely within the territory of a municipal district, in the manner provided in this constitution and by law, except that the rate of the property tax levy for general county purposes levied solely within the territory heretofore in the county of St. Louis shall be reduced, for each subclass of real property and for personal property, to yield revenues no greater than half of the amount of revenues generated by such levy during the prior fiscal year.

(c) On or after January 1, 2023, the budget may be adopted in the manner provided by charter and ordinance, except as otherwise provided in this section. The amounts appropriated and the taxes, fees, and special assessments levied or imposed in support thereof for the current fiscal year shall be deemed appropriated and levied or imposed for the ensuing fiscal year on a month-to-month basis, with all items prorated accordingly, until such time as the metropolitan council does adopt the budget. The mayor may object to one or more items or portions of items of appropriation, other than an appropriation for the payment of principal and interest on

indebtedness, in any ordinance presented, and such items or portions of items shall not take effect unless separately reconsidered and adopted by the metropolitan council with two-thirds of all members voting in the affirmative, the objections of the mayor notwithstanding.

(d) Following adoption of the annual budget, the mayor may control the rate at which any appropriation is expended by allotment, may reduce expenditures below appropriations whenever the actual revenues are less than the revenues upon which the appropriations were based, and may transfer appropriations to ensure the proper and efficient administration of the metropolitan city, provided that the mayor shall not reduce any appropriation for the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness. If recommended by the mayor, the metropolitan council may by ordinance make supplemental or emergency appropriations from available funds during the fiscal year.

(8)(a) Not later than sixty days prior to each fiscal year, beginning with the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2024, the mayor shall recommend to the metropolitan council a balanced budget, which shall provide a complete financial plan for the metropolitan city for the ensuing fiscal year and shall include proposed tax rates, all estimated income and revenue, all proposed expenditures, and such other matters as may be necessary or advisable.

(b) The metropolitan city shall annually set the rate of any property tax or special assessment of the metropolitan city, including any property tax or special assessment of the metropolitan city levied solely within the territory of a municipal district, in the manner provided in this constitution and by law, except that the property tax levy of the metropolitan city for general county purposes levied solely within the territory heretofore in the county of St. Louis shall be levied throughout the territory of the metropolitan city, for each subclass of real property and for personal property, and shall be in place of the corresponding property tax levy of the metropolitan city for general county purposes levied solely within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis.

(c) The budget may be adopted in the manner provided by charter and ordinance, except as otherwise provided in this section. The amounts appropriated and the taxes, fees, and special assessments levied or imposed in support thereof for the current fiscal year shall be deemed appropriated and levied or imposed for the ensuing fiscal year on a month-to-month basis, with all items prorated accordingly, until such time as the metropolitan council does adopt the budget. The mayor may object to one or more items or portions of items of appropriation, other than an appropriation for the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, in any ordinance presented, and such items or portions of items shall not take effect unless separately reconsidered and adopted by the metropolitan council with two-thirds of all members voting in the affirmative, the objections of the mayor notwithstanding.

(d) Following adoption of the annual budget, the mayor may control the rate at which any appropriation is expended by allotment, may reduce expenditures below appropriations whenever the actual revenues are less than the revenues upon which the appropriations were based, and may transfer appropriations within any department of the budget to ensure the proper and efficient administration of the metropolitan city, provided that the mayor shall not reduce any appropriation for the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness. If recommended by the mayor, the metropolitan council may by ordinance make supplemental or emergency appropriations from available funds during the fiscal year.

#### 6. The St. Louis Fire Protection District.

(1)(a) On January 1, 2023, there is hereby established a fire protection district, coextensive with the boundaries of the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis, to exercise the

powers, privileges, duties, and functions now vested or in the future granted to a fire protection district, with its name “The St. Louis Fire Protection District.” Such fire protection district shall be a political subdivision, municipal corporation, and a body corporate and politic, providing fire protection, emergency medical, and related services.

(b) The fire protection district shall be governed by a board of directors with the powers, privileges, duties, and functions now or in the future granted by law to such boards. The initial board shall be comprised of five qualified voters appointed by the transition mayor, with three directors appointed for terms of three years and two appointed for terms of two years. Thereafter, members shall be elected to terms of three years and serve until successors are duly elected and qualified in the manner provided by law for a fire protection district.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in this section, any property, contracts, records, and personnel related to the provision of fire protection, emergency medical, and related services within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis shall be transferred to the fire protection district.

(2)(a) For the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2023, the board shall certify to the metropolitan city the amount necessary to be raised by taxation and, with other revenues, to support the fire protection district, and shall certify the rate of levy which, when levied upon taxable property within the district as shown by the last completed assessment, shall raise the amount of revenues necessary to be raised by taxation, provided that the rate of levy shall not exceed one dollar and eighty-two cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation. During the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2023, the metropolitan city shall distribute to the fire protection district, from funds generated solely within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis, the amount of revenues necessary to be raised by taxation so certified by the board. In addition to such distribution, during such fiscal year, the metropolitan city may, by ordinance, make appropriations to the fire protection district from funds generated solely within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, effective January 1, 2024, there is hereby levied by the fire protection district, on all taxable property within the territory of the district, a tax sufficient to produce from all taxable property, exclusive of new construction and improvements, substantially the same amount of revenue certified by the board as necessary to be raised by taxation for the prior fiscal year.

(c) For each year beginning on or after January 1, 2025, the board shall determine the amount necessary to be raised by taxation and, with other revenues, to support the fire protection district, and shall set the rate of tax on all taxable property within the territory of the district to raise the amount required, in the manner provided by law and this constitution for a fire protection district. The board may fix an additional rate and may levy an additional tax for the purposes and in the manner authorized by law for a fire protection district.

(3)(a) The fire protection district may assume any outstanding obligations related to the provision of fire protection and related services within the territory heretofore in the city of St. Louis, including, without limitation, the payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, and any obligations related to employee benefits, including, without limitation, pension, retirement, medical, life insurance, and similar benefits for employees and beneficiaries, provided that no such assumption shall impair any obligation of contract. The board shall make provision for the payment of principal and interest on any outstanding obligation so assumed by levy of a sufficient tax within the district in the manner authorized by law for a fire protection district.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the members of the board of trustees or similar governing body for any retirement fund or pension system created prior to the effective date of this section shall continue to hold office until a successor is appointed and serving. Unless otherwise provided by law or by ordinance of the metropolitan city, the successors for such members who are officials of a municipality or who were required to be appointed by any official of a municipality prior to the effective date of this section shall be appointed by the mayor.

#### 7. Elections.

(1)(a) Following the effective date of this section, the general assembly shall provide by law for a board of election commissioners or other election authority to perform such duties and possess such powers as provided by law with respect to the conduct of elections within the metropolitan city. Until such time as the general assembly has provided for a board of election commissioners or other election authority, the respective boards of election commissioners shall cooperate in the performance of the duties provided by law for a board of election commissioners in the conduct of elections within the metropolitan city.

(b) Following the effective date of this section, the general assembly shall provide for party committees of the metropolitan city organized in the manner and to perform such duties provided by law for county party committees. Until such time as the general assembly has provided for such party committees, the respective party committees shall cooperate in the performance of duties provided by law for county party committees.

(2)(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, during the transition period, neither the metropolitan city nor any municipal district thereof shall have the power to submit any question to voters with respect to the continued levy or imposition of any tax initially levied or imposed by a municipality prior to the effective date of this section. Upon the failure to submit any question to voters with respect to the continued imposition or levy of any tax on earnings, such tax shall be reduced in the manner provided by law, and any tax on payroll expense initially levied or imposed by a municipality prior to the effective date of this section shall be reduced by one-twentieth of one percent annually until such tax is eliminated.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, in the event of the death or incapacity of both persons designated by this section to serve in the offices of mayor and transition mayor prior to the effective date of this section, the prosecuting attorney of the metropolitan city and the assessor of the metropolitan city shall jointly possess and exercise the powers and duties of the office of mayor and transition mayor and shall jointly act as the chief executive officer of the metropolitan city until such time as a mayor is elected by the qualified voters of the metropolitan city at the general municipal election in 2021 and has assumed office ten days thereafter. Notwithstanding any provision of this section, the mayor so elected shall constitute the chief executive officer of the metropolitan city and shall exercise and perform any power, duty, or function otherwise to be jointly exercised by the mayor and the transition mayor during the transition period and shall exercise and perform any power, duty, or function of mayor until January 1, 2025, when a successor elected at the general election in November 2024 is duly serving. Except for the election of the mayor as provided in this paragraph, during the transition period, neither the metropolitan city nor any municipal district thereof shall have the power to call an election or to submit any question to voters with respect to any other office of the metropolitan city or of any municipal district.

(c) Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent a special district from submitting any question to voters, and the costs of submitting such shall be borne according to law, unless otherwise provided by ordinance of the metropolitan city.

#### 8. Judicial Circuit Boundaries.

(1) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, upon the effective date of this section, the judicial conference of the state of Missouri, as established by law, is hereby authorized to submit a circuit realignment plan, in the manner provided by section 478.073 of the revised statutes of Missouri, as such section existed on January 1, 2019, for the alteration of the geographical boundaries of the judicial circuits to create a single judicial circuit for the metropolitan city, provided that no judge shall be removed from office during his or her term by reason of any alteration of the geographical boundaries of any judicial circuit. Such plan shall become effective January first of the year following the session of the general assembly to which it is submitted, unless a bill providing such is presented to the governor and is duly enacted. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the general assembly from providing by law for the alteration of the geographical boundaries of the judicial circuits as authorized by this constitution.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the judges of the circuit courts for the city of St. Louis and for the county of St. Louis shall continue as judges of any judicial circuit for the metropolitan city, and the number of judges for any such circuit shall be the number authorized by law for both circuits as of the effective date of this section, unless subsequently modified in the manner provided by law.

(3) Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of circuit judge or associate circuit judge of a circuit court within the metropolitan city, the vacancy shall be filled in the manner provided by article V, sections 25(a)-(g) of this constitution.

#### 9. Special Districts.

(1)(a) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, upon the effective date of this section, all special districts shall continue unaffected, unless otherwise provided by law or in the manner authorized thereby, and shall continue to exercise all powers, privileges, duties, and functions authorized by law as of the effective date of this section, except that any power to appoint, nominate, or recommend an appointment to the governing body of a special district possessed by any official of the county of St. Louis or of a municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall be exercised by the mayor, and any other power related to a special district possessed by the county of St. Louis or by a municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall be exercised by the metropolitan city, unless otherwise provided by law or pursuant thereto.

(b) Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the general assembly from providing by law for the consolidation of special districts made duplicative by the adoption of this section, provided that no such consolidation shall impair any obligation of contract.

#### 10. School Districts.

(1) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, nothing herein shall be construed as affecting any school district or any provisions of this constitution or the laws of this state pertaining thereto, and such laws and constitutional provisions shall continue in operation with respect to such school districts as if the reorganization adopted pursuant to this section had not occurred, including, without limitation, any law that constitutes the territorial boundaries of any school district based on the territorial boundaries of any municipality.

#### 11. General Provisions.



(1)(a) Nothing in this section shall be construed to impair any obligation of contract, and the provisions of this section shall be administered so as to preserve and protect any vested rights therein. Any conflict in the provisions of contracts, bonds, franchises, deeds, obligations, and instruments shall be resolved in a manner that shall protect and preserve any vested rights and shall not impair the rights of any parties thereto.

(b) No action shall be taken to impair any contract with or any claim in favor of or against the county of St. Louis or any municipality in existence immediately prior to the effective date of this section or to impair or affect the validity of any indebtedness or any other outstanding obligation of any kind incurred prior to the effective date of this section.

(c) All actions, causes of action, rights, duties, titles, claims, debts, judgments, recognizances, fines, penalties, forfeitures, and obligations of any kind in favor of or against the county of St. Louis or any municipality as of the effective date of this section shall continue in full force and effect in favor of or against the metropolitan city or a municipal district, as the case may be.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in this section, all matters pending before or under consideration by the county of St. Louis or any municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section may be acted upon and disposed of as if originated, initiated, or introduced with the metropolitan city or a municipal district, as the case may be.

(e) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, if the requisite vote of the electors of the county of St. Louis or of any municipality shall have occurred with respect to the issuance of bonds or other indebtedness prior to the effective date of this section, the metropolitan city or a municipal district, as the case may be, shall have the right to take any and all steps necessary to issue the same, with the same effect as if such actions had been taken by the metropolitan city or a municipal district and as if the vote had been of the requisite vote of the electors of the metropolitan city or the municipal district, as the case may be.

(2)(a) Any employee transferred to the metropolitan city pursuant to this section shall be entitled to continue in service with the metropolitan city, with seniority, rank, compensation, and accrued benefits intact, until otherwise provided by ordinance or order of the metropolitan city. Any rights, protections, and privileges attributed to any such employee by a civil service or similar system shall continue unimpaired with respect to any such employee in a corresponding civil service or similar system of the metropolitan city.

(b) Unless otherwise provided by ordinance of the metropolitan city following the transition period, any employee of the metropolitan city previously employed by the county of St. Louis or any municipality, other than the city of St. Louis, who is not a resident of the territory heretofore within the city of St. Louis and who became an employee of the metropolitan city as a result of the adoption of this section, shall be entitled to receive annually from the metropolitan city a refundable tax credit in an amount equal to the amount of taxation collected by the metropolitan city upon the earnings of such employee.

(3)(a) All collective bargaining agreements under negotiation or in existence with the county of St. Louis or any municipality immediately prior to the effective date of this section shall, if being negotiated, continue to be negotiated and, if in existence, continue in effect until the expiration of the terms of such agreements, at which time new agreements shall be negotiated with the metropolitan city or municipal district, as the case may be. The metropolitan city shall be the successor to any existing collective bargaining agreement in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this section between a recognized or certified majority collective bargaining representative and the county of St. Louis or the city of St. Louis related to a general district

service. The metropolitan city shall continue to recognize and bargain in good faith with such collective bargaining representatives and shall abide by the terms of any collective bargaining agreement then in effect.

(b) Should the adoption of this section result in the merger of one or more collective bargaining units with another such unit represented by recognized or certified collective bargaining representatives, any disputes concerning such merger, including the status of a representative or conflicts between agreements, that cannot be resolved through negotiations shall be submitted to interest arbitration, which shall bind all required parties and which shall be conducted by an experienced labor interest arbitrator mutually selected by the metropolitan city and the affected collective bargaining representatives.

(4)(a) Nothing herein shall deprive any person of any right or privilege to retire or to retirement or pension benefits, if any, to which he or she was entitled immediately prior to the effective date of this section. All rights, protections, and privileges of beneficiaries in any retirement fund or pension system related to the county of St. Louis or a municipality as of the effective date of this section shall continue unimpaired until all benefits due such beneficiaries have been paid.

(b) Employee members of a retirement fund or pension system who are transferred to the metropolitan city pursuant to this section shall remain members of and continue to earn service credit toward the benefits of such retirement fund or pension system during their employment with the metropolitan city. The metropolitan city shall contribute proportionately to any such retirement fund or pension system for each such employee member with respect to their employment with the metropolitan city as required by law or ordinance, but any contribution or portion thereof attributed to benefits accrued prior to the transfer of such employee to the metropolitan city shall remain an outstanding obligation satisfied solely from funds generated within the territory in which such obligation was incurred as provided in this section.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, the members of the board of trustees or similar governing body for any retirement fund or pension system created by state law prior to the effective date of this section shall continue to hold office until a successor is appointed and serving. The successors for such members who are officials of a municipality or who were required to be appointed by any official of a municipality prior to the effective date of this section shall be appointed by the mayor.

(d) Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the general assembly from providing by law for the modification of any pension or retirement system created by state law or to prohibit the metropolitan city from providing by charter or ordinance for the modification of any pension or retirement system created by charter or ordinance of a municipality or the county of St. Louis prior to the effective date of this section.

(5) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, a geographic designation in law or this constitution based upon the territorial boundaries of the county of St. Louis or of any municipality may continue to be construed as the territorial boundaries of the county of St. Louis or the municipality, as the case may be, as such boundaries existed immediately prior to the effective date of this section.

(6) Notwithstanding any provision of law or this constitution, any city, town, or village located partially but not wholly within the territory of the metropolitan city shall remain unaffected by this section, except that its territory located within the metropolitan city shall be detached and annexed to the metropolitan city upon the effective date of this section. The metropolitan city shall distribute annually to such city, town, or village, funds in an amount equal

to the revenues generated within the former territory of such city, town, or village and that would have otherwise been received if the reorganization adopted pursuant to this section had not occurred, until otherwise provided by law.

(7) Notwithstanding any provision of this section, any charter provision in effect immediately prior to the effective date of this section requiring a public vote related to the sale, lease, or disposition of any real estate designated as a public park shall continue to apply to the territory to which it applied immediately prior to the effective date of this section, until amended in the manner provided in this section for amending the charter of the metropolitan city.

(8) The general assembly may enact such laws as may be necessary and proper to aid in effectuating this section.

#### 12. Severability.

(1) The provisions of this section are severable, and if any portion, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this section, or an application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remaining portions, subsections, sentences, clauses and phrases, and the application of the section and its provisions to other persons and circumstances, shall not be affected, but shall remain in full force and effect.

[Section 30(a). The people of the city of St. Louis and the people of the county of St. Louis shall have power (1) to consolidate the territories and governments of the city and county into one political subdivision under the municipal government of the city of St. Louis; or, (2) to extend the territorial boundaries of the county so as to embrace the territory within the city and to reorganize and consolidate the county governments of the city and county, and adjust their relations as thus united, and thereafter the city may extend its limits in the manner provided by law for other cities; or, (3) to enlarge the present or future limits of the city by annexing thereto part of the territory of the county, and to confer upon the city exclusive jurisdiction of the territory so annexed to the city; or, (4) to establish a metropolitan district or districts for the functional administration of services common to the area included therein; or, (5) to formulate and adopt any other plan for the partial or complete government of all or any part of the city and the county. The power so given shall be exercised by the vote of the people of the city and county upon a plan prepared by a board of freeholders consisting of nineteen members, nine of whom shall be electors of the city and nine electors of the county and one an elector of some other county. Upon the filing with the officials in general charge of elections in the city of a petition proposing the exercise of the powers hereby granted, signed by registered voters of the city in such number as shall equal three percent of the total vote cast in the city at the last general election for governor, and the certification thereof by the election officials to the mayor, and to the governor, then, within ten days after the certification the mayor shall, with the approval of a majority of the board of aldermen, appoint the city's nine members of the board, not more than five of whom shall be members of or affiliated with the same political party. Each member so appointed shall be given a certificate certifying his appointment signed by the mayor and attested by the seal of the city. Upon the filing with the officials in general charge of elections in the county of a similar petition signed by registered voters of the county, in such number as shall equal three percent of the total vote cast in the county at the last general election for governor, and the certification thereof by the county election officials to the county supervisor of the county and to the governor, within ten days after the certification, the county supervisor shall, with the approval of a majority of the county council, appoint the county's nine members of the board, not more than five of whom shall be members of or affiliated with the same political

party. Each member so appointed shall be given a certificate of his appointment signed by the county supervisor and attested by the seal of the county.]

[Section 30(b). Upon certification of the filing of such similar petitions by the officials in general charge of elections of the city and the county, the governor shall appoint one member of the board who shall be a resident of the state, but shall not reside in either the city or the county, who shall be given a certificate of his appointment signed by the governor and attested by the seal of the state. The freeholders of the city and county shall fix reasonable compensation and expenses for the freeholder appointed by the governor and the cost shall be paid equally by the city and county. The appointment of the board shall be completed within thirty days after the certification of the filing of the petition, and at ten o'clock on the second Monday after their appointment the members of the board shall meet in the chamber of the board of aldermen in the city hall of the city and shall proceed with the discharge of their duties, and shall meet at such other times and places as shall be agreed upon. On the death, resignation or inability of any member of the board to serve, the appointing authority shall select the successor. The board shall prepare and propose a plan for the execution of the powers herein granted and for the adjustment of all matters and issues arising thereunder. The members of the board shall receive no compensation for their services as members, but the necessary expenses of the board shall be paid one-half by the county and one-half by the city on vouchers signed by the chairman of the board. The plan shall be signed in duplicate by the board or a majority thereof, and one copy shall be returned to the officials having general charge of elections in the city, and the other to such officials in the county, within one year after the appointment of the board. Said election officials shall cause separate elections to be held in the city and county, on the day fixed by the freeholders, at which the plan shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the city and county separately. The elections shall not be less than ninety days after the filing of the plan with said officials, and not on or within seventy days of any state or county primary or general election day in the city or county. The plan shall provide for the assessment and taxation of real estate in accordance with the use to which it is being put at the time of the assessment, whether agricultural, industrial or other use, giving due regard to the other provisions of this constitution. If a majority of the qualified electors of the city voting thereon, and a majority of the qualified electors of the county voting thereon at the separate elections shall vote for the plan, then, at such time as shall be prescribed therein, the same shall become the organic law of the territory therein defined, and shall take the place of and supersede all laws, charter provisions and ordinances inconsistent therewith relating to said territory. If the plan be adopted, copies thereof, certified to by said election officials of the city and county, shall be deposited in the office of the secretary of state and recorded in the office of the recorder of deeds for the city, and in the office of the recorder of deeds of the present county, and the courts of this state shall take judicial notice thereof.]

[Section 31. The city of St. Louis, as now existing, is recognized both as a city and as a county unless otherwise changed in accordance with the provisions of this constitution. As a city it shall continue for city purposes with its present charter, subject to changes and amendments provided by the constitution or by law, and with the powers, organization, rights and privileges permitted by this constitution or by law. As a county, it shall not be required to adopt a county charter but may, except for the office of circuit attorney, amend or revise its present charter to provide for the number, kinds, manner of selection, terms of office and salaries of its county officers, and for

the exercise of all powers and duties of counties and county officers prescribed by the constitution and laws of the state.]

[Section 32(a). The charter of the city of St. Louis now existing, or as hereafter amended or revised, may be amended or revised for city or county purposes from time to time by proposals therefor submitted by the lawmaking body of the city to the qualified voters thereof, at a general or special election held at least sixty days after the publication of such proposals, and accepted by three-fifths of the qualified electors voting for or against each of said amendments or revisions so submitted.]

[Section 32(b). In the event of any amendment or revision of the charter of the city of St. Louis which shall reorganize any county office and/or transfer any or all of the duties, powers and functions of any county officer who is then in office, the officer shall serve out the remainder of his or her term, and the amendment or revision of the charter of the city of St. Louis shall take effect, as to such office, upon the expiration of the term of such office holder. In the event of any amendment or revision of the charter of the city of St. Louis which shall reorganize any county office and/or transfer any or all of the duties, powers and functions of any county officer, all of the staff of such office shall be afforded the opportunity to become employees of the city of St. Louis with their individual seniority and compensation unaffected and on such other comparable terms and conditions as may be fair and equitable.]

[Section 32(c). An amendment or revision adopted pursuant to section 32(a) of this article shall not deprive any person of any right or privilege to retire and to retirement benefits, if any, to which he or she was entitled immediately prior to the effective date of that amendment or revision.]

[Section 33. Copies of any new or revised charter of the city of St. Louis or of any amendments to the present, or to any new or revised charter, with a certificate thereto appended, signed by the chief executive and authenticated by the seal of the city, setting forth the submission to and ratification thereof, by the qualified voters of the city shall be made in duplicate, one of which shall be deposited in the office of the secretary of state, and the other, after being recorded in the office of the recorder of deeds of the city, shall be deposited among the archives of the city, and thereafter all courts of this state shall take judicial notice thereof.]

**Appendix G**  
**Transition Timeline**

<b><u>Timeline</u></b>	
November 3, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendment approved by Missouri voters.</li> </ul>
January 1, 2021 (“effective date of this section”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition Period begins</li> <li>• The City and County are combined as the Metropolitan City of St. Louis, which is a metropolitan city form of government, with the powers of a charter city and a charter county.</li> <li>• Models the initial charter of the Metro City on the charter of the County, except as otherwise provided in the amendment and as may be amended.</li> <li>• Municipalities and the City become “Municipal Districts” governed by governing body of the Municipality or City, with current incumbents assuming office with the Municipal District.</li> <li>• The current County Executive assumes office as Metro Mayor, and the current Mayor of the City of St. Louis assumes office as Transition Mayor. During transition period, implementation is jointly overseen by the Mayor and Transition Mayor, who together act as the chief executive officer of the Metro City.</li> <li>• Current County Prosecuting Attorney and Assessor assume offices with the Metro City.</li> <li>• The Metro City is responsible for provide “general district services.” Examples include licensing, public health and safety, police and law enforcement, municipal court, transportation, public works, and economic development.</li> <li>• Municipal Districts authorized to continue providing “municipal district services” and the satisfaction of outstanding obligations of the municipality. Examples of municipal district services include fire protection, parks and recreation, and enterprise functions of the municipality. During the transition period, Municipal Districts are authorized to continuing providing a general district service under the direction of the Metro City until such service is provided by the Metro City.</li> <li>• Municipal Districts are governed by the governing body of the Municipality, with the current elected officials assuming office with the Municipal District and serving through the Transition Period to implement the section.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordinances and other enactments of the County, City, and Municipalities become effective as ordinances and enactments of Metro City with respect to the territory to which they applied, until modified by the Metro City.</li> <li>• Outstanding obligations (e.g. bonded indebtedness, pensions) of a Municipality or the City remain the obligation of the Municipal Districts, to be satisfied from revenues generated within the municipal district or otherwise secured by the municipal district.</li> <li>• Taxes imposed by the County, City, and Municipalities continue until modified by the Metro City, but subject to any requirement regarding the use of revenues and any requirement for voter reauthorization.</li> <li>• Municipal Districts are taxing subdistricts of the Metro City in which taxes levied by the Metro City may be different than the taxes levied generally throughout the Metro City in order to satisfy outstanding obligations or to increase the level of services provided by the Metro City within the Municipal District.</li> <li>• Municipal districts are also separate taxing districts, which, in the manner and to the extent authorized for the Municipality, may levy a property tax and utility gross receipts tax, and may charge fees related to municipal district services.</li> <li>• For each year of the Transition Period, the budgets and taxes for the County, City, and Municipalities for calendar year 2019 are made effective for the Metro City and Municipal Districts. Mayor/Transition Mayor jointly administer the budget for each year of the Transition Period.</li> <li>• General Assembly is to consolidate Boards of Elections. Until the Boards of Election are consolidated, the respective Boards are required to cooperate in conduct of elections.</li> <li>• Judicial Conference is authorized to consolidate judicial circuits pursuant to a circuit realignment plan submitted during the 2021 legislative session. If the General Assembly does not pass a law consolidating the two circuits, then the circuit realignment plan takes effect on January 1, 2022. If the General Assembly passes such a law, then the consolidation of the circuits could occur sooner—i.e. August 28, 2020.</li> <li>• Special districts (e.g. TDDs, CIDs, ZMD, etc.) are unaffected, except that appointing/nominating powers are transferred to the Mayor and other powers exercised by the County, City, or Municipalities are transferred to the Metro City. School districts are unaffected.</li> </ul>
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March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2020 Census data available for use in apportionment plan for 33 Metro Council districts.</li> </ul>
By April 1, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor/Transition Mayor jointly appoint neutral experts to develop apportionment plan for 33 Metro Council districts.</li> <li>• Mayor/Transition Mayor jointly appoint heads of departments and offices of Metro City.</li> </ul>
By September 1, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apportionment plan is to be submitted for approval by members of County Council and governing body of the St. Louis Municipal District.</li> </ul>
December 31, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apportionment plan deemed approved if not previously approved.</li> </ul>
January 1, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All county functions fully consolidated into Metro City. Incumbents serve out their terms as employees of the Metro City. Employees transfer to the Metro City and continue in service until otherwise provided by the Metro City.</li> <li>• Judicial circuit realignment plan to create single circuit becomes effective (assuming submission during 2021 legislative session).</li> </ul>
March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate filing for Metro Council</li> </ul>
August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary elections for Metro Council</li> </ul>
October 1, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Districts submit to the Metro City estimates of outstanding obligations, cost of municipal district services and revenues collected within the Municipal District.</li> </ul>
November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General election for first Metro Council</li> </ul>
By November 15, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor/Transition Mayor jointly publish reorganization plan.</li> <li>• Mayor/Transition Mayor jointly recommended budget for Metro City.</li> <li>• Metro City Counselor publish report of conflicting ordinances.</li> </ul>

January 1, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition Period ends</li> <li>• First Metro Council takes office.</li> <li>• The St. Louis Municipal District continues as the St. Louis Municipal Corporation to administer outstanding obligations and provide municipal district services as authorized by Metro City. Governed initially by five-person board appointed by the Transition Mayor, with successors appointed by the Metro Mayor.</li> <li>• The St. Louis Fire Protection District is established to provide fire protection within the boundaries of the St. Louis Municipal Corporation. Governed initially by five-person board of directors appointed by the Transition Mayor, with members subsequently elected in the manner of a fire protection district.</li> </ul>
On or after January 1, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro Council may adopt budget (failure to adopt the budget enacts budget of prior year on month-to-month basis until a budget is adopted).</li> <li>• Metro Council may disapprove government reorganization plan by two-thirds majority, otherwise the plan takes effect 30 days after submission.</li> <li>• Metro Council may adopt ordinance conflict report.</li> <li>• Municipal Districts administer affairs pursuant to an annual budget adopted by the governing body of the Municipal District.</li> </ul>
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate filing deadline for governing bodies of Municipal Districts.</li> </ul>
April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elections for members of governing bodies of Municipal Districts.</li> </ul>
March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate filing deadline for Metro Mayor, Prosecuting Attorney, Assessor, even-numbered Metro Council districts</li> </ul>
August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary election for Metro Mayor, Prosecuting Attorney, Assessor, even-numbered Metro Council districts</li> </ul>

November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General election for Metro Mayor, Prosecuting Attorney, Assessor, even-numbered Metro Council districts</li> </ul>
January 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro Mayor, Prosecuting Attorney, Assessor, even-numbered Metro Council districts sworn in for four-year terms.</li> </ul>