



# **NORTHSHORE BUSINESS COUNCIL**

## **COUNCIL COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2000, the St. Tammany Parish Council changed its government structure from a police jury system of government to a home rule charter with separate executive and legislative branches. During this transition, the number of members on the parish council remained the same at 14 elected council members, each representing a district. Before and since the change in government structure, St. Tammany Parish has continued to grow in population and economy, and the idea of assessing the council size, with the ultimate goal of increasing government efficiencies, has been discussed and encouraged among some council members and business leaders in the community.

The Northshore Business Council (NBC) is exclusively dedicated to improving the business and economic conditions in the Northshore region, which encompasses St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington Parishes. The NBC works closely with elected officials, at the local, state, and federal levels, to remain apprised of important issues to the business community and to provide direct input to elected officials.

In the spring of 2023, the NBC engaged Emergent Method, a Louisiana-based management consulting firm, to assess the current composition, structure, and operations of the St. Tammany Parish Council. The Council Composition Assessment includes an analysis of the St. Tammany Parish's current council structure and size, academic research on optimal council size and operations, research on council structures from peer communities, and a set of findings regarding the ideal size and structure of the council.

## SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

The St. Tammany Parish Council's system of governance and the size of the council have served it well for many years. However, as the parish continues to grow and flourish, changes to the council's structure and operations may be considered to address both opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. **Many potential options regarding St. Tammany Parish Council's structure are considered and assessed in this report. Research is presented to illustrate the benefits and potential drawbacks of the following options:**

- Keeping the size and structure of the council as-is.
- Reducing council size.
- Changing election methods to include at-large council positions.
- Creating an inspector general position.
- Transitioning to full-time council positions.

Based on our analysis, it was discovered that increasing or decreasing the size of a council comes with trade-offs and there is no precise method of determining the size of a governmental body that will maximize performance on all legislative goals. **While determining council size is a complex decision, there are a number of findings further expanded upon and cited throughout this report that can be utilized to inform decisions:**

- Across the U.S., the most common council size is seven or nine members.
- The average council size of the comparable councils assessed in this report is nine, and the median council size of comparable councils assessed in this report is seven.
- Many factors were found to have little to no effect on council size across the Legislative Branches studied for this report. Those variables include population, ethnicity, and poverty. Others, like education, land area, and per capita income were shown to have a non-zero relationship with council size.
- A Legislative Branch with governance over a population size of 200,000 or more is considered large. Part-time council members of large Legislative Branches work 42 hours per week on average, and 3/4 of these councils pay their council members \$20,000 or more per year.
- Of the councils assessed that employ part-time councilors, the average annual salary is \$19,987.15.
- Councils of larger size typically have increased annual expenditures as opposed to councils with fewer members.
- The most common type of governance across councils in the U.S. is the council-manager form of government.
- Election methods (at-large, district, ward, etc.) are more crucial to minority representation than council size.
- A smaller council is more likely to generate interest in full-time councilors. Conversely, a larger council is more likely to result in a part-time council because of the reduction in the workload faced by each council member and the overall higher total cost of the council.

# INTRODUCTION

The St. Tammany Parish Council has been successfully serving a diverse group of constituents for more than two decades. However, there are several local stakeholders and business leaders who were interested in assessing the current council in order to optimize its processes and improve the standard of service in the parish. One of the key factors in understanding the efficiency and representation of local governments is council size. The goal of this study is to analyze existing operations in St. Tammany Parish, gain stakeholder insights, review academic research on optimal council size, and assess comparable councils to formulate options that the St. Tammany Parish Council may wish to pursue in order to improve both council operations and constituent trust. In performing this analysis, the following materials were reviewed and incorporated into this report:

- Information on 16 other Legislative branches, along with one police jury for comparison; six of the councils/juries are in Louisiana, and 10 are in surrounding states.
  - In this report, “Legislative Branch” encompasses the governing body of cities, towns, or parishes and includes city councils, parish councils, police juries, and commissions.
- 19 media articles.
  - **Disclaimer:** The information contained in the “Relevant Media Coverage” sections throughout this report utilizes news and media articles and is not the opinion of the St. Tammany Parish Council, the Northshore Business Council, or the independent researcher. This information is presented for general information purposes only.
- 20 academic papers.
- Five stakeholder interviews.

# LANDSCAPE & CURRENT OPERATIONS OF ST. TAMMANY PARISH

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

In January 2000, St. Tammany Parish converted from a traditional police jury system to a president-council form of government under a home rule charter. St. Tammany's voters approved the new home rule charter in 1998 by a narrow 121-vote margin out of nearly 24,000 votes cast. While this change in government structure occurred in 2000, the parish's first home rule charter effort formally began in 1978 when the police jury established the charter commission. The commission proposed a home rule charter in April of 1979, and the police jury called a referendum that passed in May of 1979. Nearly three years later in April of 1982, the council called for a referendum to repeal the charter, which was passed by parish voters in September of 1982. The repeal vote caused controversy when citizens challenged the legality of the repeal referendum, which subsequently led to a district court ruling. The appellate court affirmed the repeal, and the council changed back to a police jury effective in January of 1984. During the next 14 years, critics of the police jury system voiced concerns that the fragmentation of the parish into 14 districts and the absence of a parish-wide elected official resulted in a competitive disadvantage for the parish in the modern economy. These concerns ultimately led to the creation of a new St. Tammany Parish Home Rule Charter Commission. This commission drafted the charter, and parish voters voted in favor of the charter in October of 1998. When adopting this charter, which is still in place today, St. Tammany Parish voters were not given the opportunity to vote on the size or composition of the parish council. The issue was one of the points of contention in the charter commission's debate, but the commission ultimately decided not to disturb the existing police jury districts or the concept of single-member districts. It was the judgment of the commission that not eliminating any elected positions would make the transition more palatable politically. This is in contrast to the 1979 charter, which mandated a referendum for the public to consider council size and composition.

## COUNCIL STRUCTURE & OPERATIONS<sup>2</sup>

The St. Tammany Parish Council operates under a president-council form of government. It is composed of 14 members elected from single-member districts, a composition that corresponds with the size and district makeup of the former police jury. The president is elected at-large by qualified voters and serves as the chief executive officer of the parish government and exercises general executive and administrative authority over all departments, offices, and agencies of the parish government. Council members are elected for four-year terms, and a person who has served as a council member for more than two and one-half terms in three consecutive terms is not eligible to qualify as a candidate for a member of the council for the succeeding term. An elected council member must have legally resided in the district for at least one year from the time of qualification and must remain legally resided in the district during their term in office. A council member may not hold other elected public office, nor be a compensated official or employee of the parish government during the term for which they were elected to the council and until two years after expiration of the term for which they were elected. At the first regular meeting of a newly elected council and annually thereafter, a chair and vice-chair of the council are elected by other council members. The council may, by ordinance approved by two-thirds of its authorized membership, authorize the hiring of other employees as may be necessary to assist the council in carrying out its duties and responsibilities.

In 2022, the council's budget was \$1,540,800.91, and the total projected budget for 2023 is \$1,686,703.50. Council members are compensated \$2,500 per month. If approved by two-thirds of its authorized membership, the council may fix the salaries of its employees. At the beginning of each term of the president, the salary of the president is the average of the salaries of the St. Tammany Parish sheriff, assessor, and clerk of court.

## POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

The chart below depicts the changes in population and demographic factors in St. Tammany Parish over a 21-year timespan. From 2000 to 2021, St. Tammany Parish's population grew by 40.2%. The average per capita income has increased by 22.3% and the median property value has more than doubled. The parish as a whole has become more educated. Homeownership has dropped. The gender ratio remained constant, and the number of citizens living below the poverty line has increased by 3.6%.

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR), 2022, The St. Tammany Parish Home Rule Charter: An Assessment, [https://www.bgr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/St.Tammany\\_.pdf](https://www.bgr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/St.Tammany_.pdf). Accessed 10 May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> "St. Tammany Parish Government Code of Ordinances." Home Rule Charter, 22 Feb. 2023, [library.municode.com/la/st.\\_tammany\\_parish/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodetd=HORUCH\\_ARTIIPACO](http://library.municode.com/la/st._tammany_parish/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodetd=HORUCH_ARTIIPACO).

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Population	192,131	217,358	234,564	249,116	264,933	269,388
Area	1,124 square miles (846 land and 279 water)					
Median Age	36.3	36.3	39.5	39.7	40.4	40.4
Average Per Capita Income	\$30,421	\$34,817	\$37,161	\$36,498	\$37,507	\$37,196
Median Property Value	\$123,900	\$152,729	\$210,000	\$204,700	\$241,400	\$260,000
Homeownership	80.5%	81%	82.5%	77.87%	81%	78.5%
Ethnicity	85.5% white	82.6% white	80.7% white	79.5% white	77.5% white	76.5% white
	9.9% African American	11% African American	11.4% African American	11.7% African American	12.9% African American	13.6% African American
	2.5% Hispanic	3.7% Hispanic	4.7% Hispanic	5.3% Hispanic	6% Hispanic	6.2% Hispanic
Gender	51% Women	51% Women	51% Women	51% Women	51% Women	51% Women
	49% Men	49% Men	49% Men	49% Men	49% Men	49% Men
High School Graduate or Higher	83.9%	Not Reported	88.0%	88.5%	90.5%	91.3%
Bachelor's degree or Higher	28.3%	Not Reported	30.1%	30.6%	34.3%	36.4%
Poverty Rate	10.1%	11.0%	9.2%	11.4%	11%	12.7%

3 4 5 6 7 8

3 "St. Tammany Parish, LA Population by Year, Race, & More." USAFacts, July 2022, [usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/louisiana/county/st-tammany-parish/?endDate=2021-01-01](https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/louisiana/county/st-tammany-parish/?endDate=2021-01-01).

4 "St. Tammany Parish Census Data." United States Census Bureau, 2020, [data.census.gov/table?q=st.tammany%2Bparish](https://data.census.gov/table?q=st.tammany%2Bparish).

5 "St. Tammany Parish, LA." FRED, [fred.stlouisfed.org/categories/28513](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/categories/28513). Accessed 10 May 2023.

6 "St. Tammany Parish Louisiana Household Income." Department of Numbers, 2021, [www.deptofnumbers.com/income/louisiana/st-tammany-parish/](https://www.deptofnumbers.com/income/louisiana/st-tammany-parish/).

7 Dot. "St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Real Estate Market Report." Argus Leader, Feb. 2023, [data.argusleader.com/real-estate-market-report/sales/st-tammany-parish/county-22103/](https://data.argusleader.com/real-estate-market-report/sales/st-tammany-parish/county-22103/).

8 US Census Bureau. "Louisiana: 2000 Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics." Last modified May 2003. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2003/dec/phc-2-20.pdf>.

# LITERATURE REVIEW & RESEARCH

The following information includes sources found when researching the optimal size of Legislative Branches, election methods, governance structures, and impacts and effectiveness of councils based on various variables. Sources include electronic books, articles, websites, and other internet sources.

## COUNCIL COMPOSITION

Drs. Moore, McGregor, and Stephenson<sup>9</sup> state in their research titled “Paying Attention and the Incumbency Effect” that the most important factors to consider when determining the appropriate size of a Legislative Branch and whether a ward or at-large system is appropriate are the population of the municipality; its geographic size; the number and diversity of identifiable communities; the geographic concentration and population of minority groups; and the strength of the mayor.

Across the U.S., councils range in size from five to 51 members, with the national average council size of seven or nine members. The number of council members is typically proportional to the population governed by the Legislative Branch. However, there is no national standard of proportion to guide the number of council members needed to serve a surrounding population.<sup>10</sup> Researchers Bruns and Himmler<sup>11</sup> introduced the number of Legislative Branch seats per 1,000 inhabitants, which was said to be positively related to efficiency. Conversely, Andrews and Entwistle<sup>12</sup> did not find population size related to efficiency in their research published in *Policy & Politics*. For cities, legislative sizes and population per legislator range widely, a reflection of varied histories, city sizes, and political cultures.<sup>13</sup>

Cities with a Best Cities Index of 30 or less and populations in the 800,000 range comprise an average of 9.66 council members. In the Southwest Central region of the country, the total number of council members per city council ranges from nine to 17 members.<sup>14</sup>

**In 2018, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) conducted a municipal form of government survey which found<sup>15</sup>:**

- Among survey respondents, nearly three-quarters of council members were male.
- More than two in five council members in the U.S. are over the age of 60.
- Council members are most commonly retirees. Those not retired are employed in a variety of occupations, the most common being business executives or managers.
- Most local governments do not have residency requirements for employees. Residency requirements are more common among local governments in sparsely populated areas.

Councils can employ either part-time or full-time councilors. A smaller council is more likely to generate interest in full-time councilors. While a smaller council reduces total cost, the workload facing each councilor will be relatively heavy, usually resulting in full-time council representation. Larger councils, on the other hand, increase the total overall cost of the council but result in reduced workload for each councilor and are therefore more likely to result in a part-time council representation.<sup>16</sup> One study found that the adoption of a charter or expanding the size of a council is most likely perceived to be necessary only for extremely large and/or diverse cities.<sup>17</sup>

9 Moore, McGregor, and Stephenson, *Paying attention and the incumbency effect*, 2017.

10 “City Councils.” National League of Cities, 2023, [www.nlc.org/city-councils/](http://www.nlc.org/city-councils/).

11 Bruns, C., Himmler, O., 2011. Newspaper circulation and local government efficiency. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 113, 2, 470–492

12 Andrews, R., Entwistle, T., 2015. Public–private partnerships, management capacity and public service efficiency. *Policy & Politics* 43, 2, 273–290

13 2009, *Sizing Up Local Legislatures*, <http://ubwp.buffalo.edu/ubri/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/12/Sizing-Up-Local-Legislatures-Policy-Brief.pdf>. Accessed 10 May 2023.

14 Johnson, Edward. “Council Sizes Throughout the United States.” Columbus City Charter Review Committee, 2016, [www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Elected\\_Officials/City\\_Council/Charter\\_Review\\_Commission/2016\\_Committee/1999%20Charter%20Review%20Committee%20Report.pdf](http://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Elected_Officials/City_Council/Charter_Review_Commission/2016_Committee/1999%20Charter%20Review%20Committee%20Report.pdf).

15 “2018 Municipal Form of Government Survey Report.” Summary of Survey Results, July 2019, [icma.org/sites/default/files/2018%20Municipal%20Form%20of%20Government%20Survey%20Report.pdf](http://icma.org/sites/default/files/2018%20Municipal%20Form%20of%20Government%20Survey%20Report.pdf).

16 Williams, Dr. Robert J., and Dr. David Siegal. *City of Guelph, 2021, “Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review”*, <https://pub-guelph.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=15856>. Accessed 10 May 2023.

17 Stone, Samuel & Tucker, Justin, 2016, “Variation in Structural Home Rule: Evidence from California City Councils. *California Journal of Politics and Policy*”. 8. 10.5070/P2CJPP8432629.



## Environmental Factors Affecting Optimal Council Operations

Apart from population size, there are a variety of other environmental factors that can affect council member responsibilities and tasks and should be considered when evaluating the most efficient size and makeup of a council, such as:

### SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

- **Population Growth Rate:** If population growth is high, Legislative Branches should increase local services and infrastructure correspondingly to meet population growth demands.
- **Age Distribution to the Population:** The age distribution of a population impacts the needs that local governments are tasked to meet. Higher percentages of younger inhabitants, individuals 18 or below, may demand more social and recreational services, resulting in additional work and time from legislative administrators. Further, Bosch-Roca<sup>18</sup> found that retired inhabitants, or those 65 years or older, may have greater control over council performance because they are more likely to take part in local organizations. Loikkanen and Susiluoto<sup>19</sup> considered the age of council employees, suggesting that employees aged 35–49 seem to be most beneficial to cost efficiency compared to younger or older groups.
- **Education Level:** Highly educated individuals are more likely to demand efficiency in government, as higher education affects political participation and control. Additionally, populations with a larger proportion of educated inhabitants may result in lower unemployment rates, higher incomes, and increased purchasing power and an increased tax base.
- **Share of Homeownership:** Individuals who own homes in an area, because of their significant financial investment, typically demand more efficient government behavior and monitor local politicians more than non-homeowners or renters.<sup>20 21</sup>
- **Ethnic Diversity:** Researchers Revelli<sup>22</sup> and Andrews and Entwistle<sup>23</sup> all studied indicators of ethnic composition of populations and concluded that higher ethnic diversity has a negative impact on council efficiency.

### ECONOMIC VARIABLES:

- **Unemployment Rates:** Higher unemployment rates in a population imply the need for increased attention to and higher spending on social and housing benefits.
- **Income Level:** The interest of the politicians in reaching efficiency in the provision of local services and facilities is found to be reduced in local governments that have greater financial resources as a result of constituents earning higher incomes and paying higher taxes.
- **Tourist Activity:** Seasonal population has an impact on the overall provision of services because local governments face higher investments during some periods of the year.

### POLITICAL VARIABLES:

- **Political Concentration/Fragmentation:** Many studies that measure political concentration in local government correlate high political concentration with high political strength and vice versa. When the degree of political concentration is higher, lower political opposition typically exists, making it is easier to implement policies and impose budget constraints at a local level.

18 Bosch-Roca, N., Mora-Corral, A.J., Espasa-Queralt, M., 2012. Citizen control and the efficiency of local public services. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 30, 2, 248.

19 Loikkanen, H.A., Susiluoto, I., 2005. Cost efficiency of Finnish municipalities in basic service provision 1994–2002. *Urban Public Economics Review* 4, 39–64.

20 Hayes, K., Chang, S., 1990. The relative efficiency of city manager and mayor-council forms of government. *Southern Economic Journal* 57, 1, 167–177.

21 Geys, B., 2006. Looking across borders: a test of spatial policy interdependence using local government efficiency ratings. *Journal of Urban Economics* 60, 3, 443–462.

22 Revelli, F., 2010. Spend more, get more? An inquiry into English local government performance. *Oxford Economic Papers* 62, 1, 185–207.

23 Andrews, R., Entwistle, T., 2015. Public–private partnerships, management capacity and public service efficiency. *Policy & Politics* 43, 2, 273–290.

## ELECTION METHODS

Many cities use a hybrid method in which some council members are elected at-large and others by district. In a nationwide survey, Svvara<sup>24</sup> finds that 45% of cities use at-large elections, 29% use district elections, and another 26% use a hybrid system. Literature broadly demonstrates that the election method is much more crucial to minority representation than council size. District elections may advantage Black representation on councils, though not necessarily Hispanic representation.<sup>25</sup> However, councils elected by district elections may experience more infighting and be less likely to prioritize the good of the city over the good of their individual districts.<sup>26</sup> At-large elections and hybrid elections may reduce the proportion of black and Hispanic representation.<sup>27</sup> Findings on the impact of election methods on policy are mixed.<sup>28</sup>

## GOVERNANCE SYSTEM & TERM LIMITS

In Louisiana, 38 of the state's 64 parishes operate under the police jury form of government. The other 26 parishes operate under a form of home rule charter. The home rule charter governments include a council-president, commission, consolidated government, and city-parish.<sup>29</sup> Louisiana's first home rule charter was granted in 1946 to East Baton Rouge Parish through an amendment to the 1921 Constitution. New Orleans and Jefferson Parish were granted home rule charters in 1950 and 1956, respectively. In 1960, Louisiana passed a general amendment allowing any parish to adopt their own home rule charter, this remained part of the 1974 Constitution. Home rule charters are most often sought when a city or parish finds the current government too restrictive. Home rule charters offer more autonomy, allowing more control over taxation, spending, and legislation.<sup>30</sup> Of the parishes that operate under a home rule charter, no parish has a larger legislative council than St. Tammany Parish Council, and only one other, Iberia Parish, has the same council size at 14 members.<sup>31</sup>

### **In 2018, ICMA conducted a municipal form of government survey which found<sup>32</sup>:**

- The council-manager form of government remains the most popular form of government for medium to large local governments and is concentrated among Legislative Branches in Southwest and Atlantic Coast states.
- The mayor-council form of government is the most popular form of government among responding Legislative Branches with fewer than 5,000 residents.
- Local governments in the South are about twice as likely to have their form of government established by charter than local governments elsewhere.
- Council member positions are rarely full-time positions as over 90% of survey respondents indicated that their council member positions are all part-time.
- Term limits on council positions are rare overall but are most commonly found in communities with 100,000 residents or more.

24 Svvara, J. H. (1991). *A survey of America's City councils (Research report on America's Cities)*. Washington, DC: National League of Cities.

25 Brouters, Lance Eliot; McClure, David Lawson. (1985). "The Effect of Council Size and District Elections on City Council Representation" *Aztlan*. 15 (2): 263-276.

26 "At-Large and District Elections ." National League of Cities , 14 Dec. 2016, [www.cityofws.org/DocumentCenter/View/13991/Cities-101---District-v-At-Large-Elections---National-League-of-Cities-pdf](http://www.cityofws.org/DocumentCenter/View/13991/Cities-101---District-v-At-Large-Elections---National-League-of-Cities-pdf).

27 Alozie, N. O., & Manganaro, L. L. (1993). Black and Hispanic Council Representation: Does Council Size Matter? *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 29(2), 276–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004208169302900205>

28 Stone, Samuel & Tucker, Justin. (2016). Variation in Structural Home Rule: Evidence from California City Councils. *California Journal of Politics and Policy*. 8. 10.5070/P2CJPP8432629.

29 "Parish Government Structure - Police Jury Association of Louisiana." Police Jury Association of Louisiana, 2023, [www.lpgov.org/page/Parish-GovStructure](http://www.lpgov.org/page/Parish-GovStructure).

30 Cross, Pearson. "Home Rule Charters." 64 Parishes, 28 Apr. 2023, [64parishes.org/entry/home-rule-charters](http://64parishes.org/entry/home-rule-charters).

31 From Pagones, Sara. "Should St. Tammany Parish Council Shrink? Some Want to Cut Size, Go Full Time." *NOLA.Com*, 22 Jan. 2023, [www.nola.com/news/northshore/should-st-tammany-shrink-its-parish-council-size/article\\_0893be7e-9372-11ed-85be-8f2bbbed9f06b.html](http://www.nola.com/news/northshore/should-st-tammany-shrink-its-parish-council-size/article_0893be7e-9372-11ed-85be-8f2bbbed9f06b.html).

32 "2018 Municipal Form of Government Survey Report." Summary of Survey Results, July 2019, [icma.org/sites/default/files/2018%20Municipal%20Form%20of%20Government%20Survey%20Report.pdf](http://icma.org/sites/default/files/2018%20Municipal%20Form%20of%20Government%20Survey%20Report.pdf).

## ADDITIONAL ROLES

Some councils utilize additional roles and committees outside of elected council member positions to meet the needs of the region. In the past several decades, city councils have become more institutionalized in American cities, with more councils using committees to conduct their work and hiring paid staff. According to survey data from the National League of Cities, 81% of city councils in 2001 relied on committees, which was an increase from 61% in 1979. Committee use was less common in cities with a council-manager form of government (64%) than in those with a mayor-council government (85%).<sup>33</sup> The use of committees can be an effective way to involve citizens in decision-making processes, serve as a sounding board for new policies and programs, and endorse or dilute opposition to existing programs. City council size proportionately increases the use and number of committees, but findings on the impact on policymaking of these committees are mixed. Pelisserro and Krebs<sup>34</sup> find little impact, but Johnson<sup>35</sup> finds that larger city councils are more able to form committees that are then able to secure intergovernmental aid for their cities.

The council-manager form of government is designed for the elected city council to set policy direction as the direct representatives of the community with the city manager providing the professional expertise to manage the organization and carry out the council's direction. Employing a city manager can provide a number of benefits such as, providing objective information about local operations, serving as a chief advisor to the council, preparing council budget for consideration, recruiting and managing government staff, and carrying out council policies. Additionally, Arcelus et al.<sup>36</sup> took into consideration the existence of a public comptroller in the Legislative Branch. The hypothesis is that a higher degree of local supervision should lead to better management practices and more efficiency in the provision of local services.

Research has shown that an Office of Inspector General (OIG) is a fiscally sound decision. Cutting OIG budgets leads to an increase in spending. Conversely, these offices are revenue-generating by recouping money owed, preventing misappropriations of funds, and ensuring efficient spending.<sup>37</sup> After aggregating the 74 federal OIGs, the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's report for 2020 details the efficiency and effectiveness of these offices, finding a \$17 return on every dollar spent.<sup>38</sup>

33 "City Councils." National League of Cities, 2023, [www.nlc.org/city-councils/](http://www.nlc.org/city-councils/).

34 Pelisserro, John P., and Timothy B. Krebs. 1997. "City Council Legislative Committees and Policy-making in Large United States Cities." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (2): 499–518.

35 Johnson, Bertram. 2007. "Collective Action, City Council Committees, and State Aid to Cities." *Urban Affairs Review* 42 (4): 457–478.

36 Arcelus, F.J., Arocena, P., Cabas'es, F., Pascual, P., 2015. On the cost-efficiency of service delivery in small municipalities. *Regional Studies* 49, 9, 1469–1480.

37 Hudak, John, and Grace Wallack. "Sometimes cutting budgets raise deficits: The curious case of inspectors' general return on investment." Center for Effective Public Management, April 2015.

38 Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. "Annual Report to the President and Congress." IGNET. Accessed May 12, 2023. [https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/417329-FY20\\_Annual\\_Report-President%26Congress-WEB.pdf](https://www.ignet.gov/sites/default/files/417329-FY20_Annual_Report-President%26Congress-WEB.pdf).

# FISCAL INFORMATION

## COMPENSATION

The average number of hours spent per week on council-related matters in small, medium, and large cities is 20, 25, and 42, respectively. Accordingly, only 2% of council members from small cities (population: 25,000-70,000) and 7% of those from medium-sized cities (70,000-200,000) receive \$20,000 or more in salary. Among those from large cities (200,000 and up), three-quarters of council members receive \$20,000 or more.<sup>39</sup> All councilors serving one city make the same salary, regardless of experience or education. Many city councilors receive additional compensation for serving on city committees or boards.<sup>40</sup> The estimated cost of running a competitive parish-wide campaign for a council position runs from a few hundred thousand dollars to as much as \$1 million, according to several political consultants.<sup>41</sup>

**In 2018, the ICMA conducted a municipal form of government survey which found<sup>42</sup>:**

- Part-time council members are paid an average of \$5,244 per year.
- Some local governments symbolically pay their elected officials \$1 per year. This typically only happens among council-manager communities in which elected officials do not provide day-to-day administration.

## EXPENDITURES

Bradbury and Stephenson<sup>43</sup> tested the “Law of 1/n” which measures the number of seats in a representative legislature and the amount of spending. They used 159 counties in Georgia and found that a larger board size translates to an increase in expenditures. Langbein, Crewson, and Brasher<sup>44</sup> studied data from a 1981 ICMA survey and selected 192 council-manager cities where the mayor is elected by the board. This study found that larger councils spend significantly more than councils with fewer members. Some academic research has suggested that a larger board may be more likely to conduct business through committees, and this in turn may increase the amount of intergovernmental aid a city receives.

39 “City Councils.” National League of Cities, 2023, [www.nlc.org/city-councils/](http://www.nlc.org/city-councils/).

40 “How Much Money Does a City Councilor Make?.” Indeed, 24 June 2022, [www.indeed.com/career-advice/pay-salary/how-much-does-city-councilor-make](http://www.indeed.com/career-advice/pay-salary/how-much-does-city-councilor-make).

41 Patterson, Blake. “Jefferson Parish’s At-Large Council Races Likely to Be Intense, Expensive.” NOLA.Com, 25 Mar. 2023, [www.nola.com/news/jefferson-parish-council-at-large-races-likely-to-be-costly/article\\_afb7d5fe-ca91-11ed-90df-9711d264118d.html](http://www.nola.com/news/jefferson-parish-council-at-large-races-likely-to-be-costly/article_afb7d5fe-ca91-11ed-90df-9711d264118d.html).

42 “2018 Municipal Form of Government Survey Report.” Summary of Survey Results, July 2019, [icma.org/sites/default/files/2018%20Municipal%20Form%20of%20Government%20Survey%20Report.pdf](http://icma.org/sites/default/files/2018%20Municipal%20Form%20of%20Government%20Survey%20Report.pdf).

43 Bradbury, John Charles, and E. Frank Stephenson. 2003. “Local Government Structure and Public Expenditures.” *Public Choice*, 185–98.

44 Langbein, Laura I., Philip Crewson, and Charles Niel Brasher. 1996. “Rethinking Ward and At-Large Elections in Cities: Total Spending, the Number of Locations of Selected City Services, and Policy Types.” *Public Choice* 88: 275–93.

# INTERVIEW THEMES

## TRANSPARENCY

A major concern among some interviewees was the perceived lack of transparency and accessibility from the council. It was stated that the public does not seem to trust the council or its decisions, partially due to the lack of public engagement and information offered to the citizens. One opinion was that the negative perception of the council is historic, stemming from previous administration efforts. Some interviewees felt that the public was not engaged enough with the parish council, while some interviewees stated that council members are expected to attend many meetings across their district, which is not always feasible due to time restraints. Additionally, it was noted that the lack of information or complexity of information provided to the public often leads to the spread of misinformation across social media platforms, furthering citizens' mistrust or apathetic feelings toward the council.

## STRUCTURE CHANGES

When discussing potential structure changes, interviewees expressed varying opinions and ideas on the future of the council. Some interviewees wanted to incorporate at-large positions, decrease council size, and a change to full-time positions to be considered. Others stated that decreasing the council size and/or changing the council's structure may lead to a decrease in representation and may further exacerbate budget constraints. Of the interviewees that expressed the need to reduce the size of the council, the ideal council structure was said to be either seven or nine total members to include five district councilors and two at-large members, or seven district councilors and two at-large members. Some stated that because the council does not currently have at-large members, there is a lack of oversight across the entire parish, which leads to a division among council members and voters. While there was mixed opinion on the council structure and possible changes, all interviewees recognized that the parish is still fundamentally functioning as a police jury. It was mentioned that as the parish continues to grow, the council's responsibilities and authorities should evolve as well. Finally, interviewees said that the lack of cohesion that the council has with the parish president could be a major threat to the council in the future.

## ADDITIONAL POSITIONS

Some interviewees raised concerns over accountability and the council's lack of oversight. The notion of adding an inspector general to oversee the whole parish was mentioned as a possible fix to this perceived lack of oversight. Additionally, it was stated that hiring an inspector general may resolve some of the perceived corruption and public mistrust in the parish. Most stakeholders agreed that they were not in favor of hiring a city manager or other type of leadership position, while some opined that a city manager may be a good option if it would alleviate some of the responsibilities of the parish president. One stakeholder proposed the idea of adding administrative positions to serve the council, stating that this will decrease the administrative burden among council members and reduce the amount of time council members' work.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Infrastructure, roads, traffic, drainage, and water issues were identified as major concerns and threats to the parish in interviews. Because these are parish-wide concerns, it was noted that no single councilor can address these issues, nor do they individually have the authority to implement change outside of setting budget parameters.

Another recommendation noted by interviewees was tax reform. Some stakeholders expressed issues with the current tax structure. An example provided was that when one area (district) has excess funds and another does not have enough, it is difficult to reallocate tax dollars, leading to inefficiencies. Additionally, it was noted that tax reform may also provide more transparency by informing citizens about where and how their tax dollars are being spent.

# ANALYSIS OF OTHER COUNCILS

In order to understand how similar or aspirational Legislative Branches structure their governing bodies and the various factors that may impact governance structure and operations, the following councils were identified and analyzed:

Jefferson Parish Council

Huntsville, Alabama City Council

Lafayette City-Parish Charter Commission

Greenville, South Carolina City Council

New Orleans City Council

Durham, North Carolina City Council

East Baton Rouge City-Parish Council  
(Metropolitan Council)

Chattanooga, Tennessee City Council

Tangipahoa Parish Council

Columbia, South Carolina City Council

Calcasieu Parish Police Jury

Ashville, North Carolina City Council

Plano, Texas City Council

Baldwin, Alabama County Commission

Jackson, Mississippi City Council

Columbus, Georgia City Council

The following matrix references 2020 census data and provides an overview of each area's population, average per capita income, council size, annual salary of council members, work style of council members (part-time or full-time), representation style, term limit for council members, governance structure, total operating budget of the parish/city, and the parish/city council budget. Following this matrix, various data points have been analyzed to determine trends in data and how they impact council size.

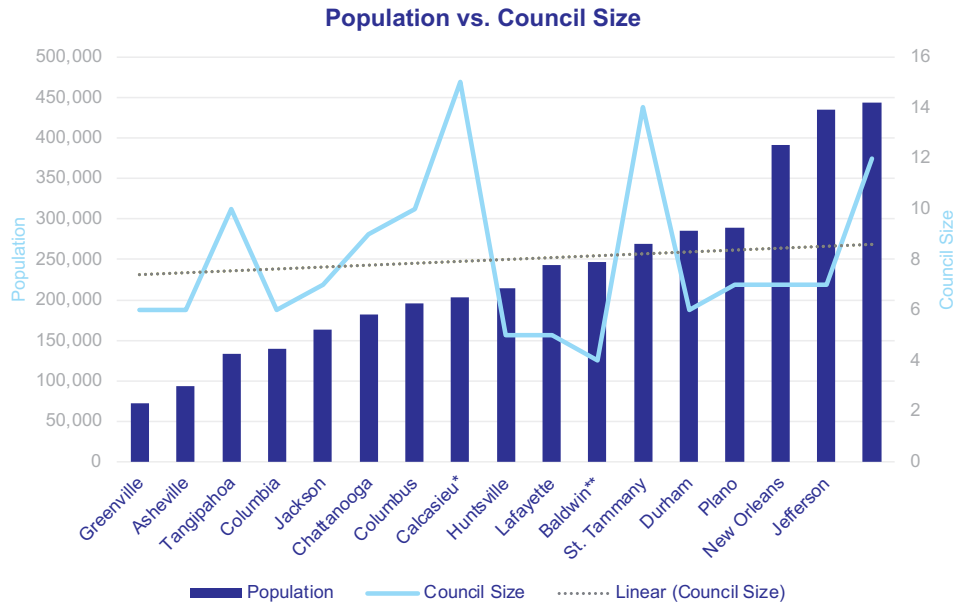
Parish/City/County	St. Tammany	Jefferson	Lafayette	New Orleans	East Baton Rouge	Tangipahoa	Plano	Jackson	Calcasieu	Columbus
Population	269,388	434,903	243,692	391,249	443,158	133,753	288,870	163,778	202,858	195,418
Average Per Capita Income	\$38,532	\$34,205	\$35,348	\$34,036	\$35,081	\$27,747	\$51,624	\$23,176	\$29,886	\$28,523
Council Size	14	7	5	7	12	10	7	7	15	10
Annual Salary	\$30,000	\$80,831 - \$121,148	\$30,356	\$93,504	\$12,000	\$24,000	\$12,000	\$25,000	\$19,200	\$15,585
Work Style	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time
Representation Style	By District	By District & At-Large	By District	By District & At-Large	By District	By District	At-Large	By District (Ward)	By District	By District & At-Large
Term Limit	3	2 in same seat	3	2	3	3	2	None	None	None
Governance Structure	President-Council	Council-Manager	President-Council	Mayor-Council	President-Council	President-Council	Council-Manager	Mayor-Council	Police Jury	Mayor-Council
Total Operating Budget	\$113.6 Million	\$850.1 Million	\$705.6 Million	\$1.4 Billion	\$1 Billion	\$7.7 Million	\$677 Million	\$401.6 Million	\$427.2 Million	\$314.5 Million
Parish/City Council Budget	\$1.5 Million	\$7.8 Million	\$245 Thousand	\$22.5 Million	\$1.7 Million	\$640 Thousand	\$213 Thousand	\$306 Thousand	\$684 Thousand	\$634 Thousand
Land Area	846 mi2	296 mi2	269 mi2	170 mi2	455 mi2	791 mi2	72 mi2	111 mi2	1064 mi2	216 mi2

Parish/City/County	Huntsville	Greenville	Durham	Chattanooga	Columbia	Ashville	Baldwin
Population	214,372	72,095	285,527	182,113	139,698	93,776	246,435
Average Per Capita Income	\$41,897	\$48,837	\$39,396	\$34,080	\$32,954	\$37,392	\$35,384
Council Size	5	6	6	9	6	6	4
Annual Salary	\$38,093	\$15,000	\$35,200	\$26,919	\$13,350	\$16,823	\$63,563
Work Style	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
Representation Style	By District	By District & At-Large	By Ward & At-Large	By District	By District & At-Large	At-Large	At-Large
Term Limit	2	None	None	None	None	None	None
Governance Structure	Mayor-Council	Council-Manager	Council-Manager	Mayor-Council	Council-Manager	Council-Manager	Commission
Total Operating Budget	\$467.4 Million	\$237.1 Million	\$705.6 Million	\$317 Million	\$165 Million	\$216 Million	\$240.9 Million
Parish/City Council Budget	\$633 Thousand	\$238 Thousand	\$245 Thousand	\$921 Thousand	\$846 Thousand	\$249 Thousand	\$516 Thousand
Land Area	215 mi2	30 mi2	113 mi2	142 mi2	137 mi2	45 mi2	1,590 mi2



# POPULATION VS. COUNCIL SIZE

As visualized in the graph below, the population of a city, parish, or county does not directly correlate with the size of its council. For example, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury and Huntsville City Council have roughly the same population. However, the sizes of their councils are significantly different at 15 and five, respectively.

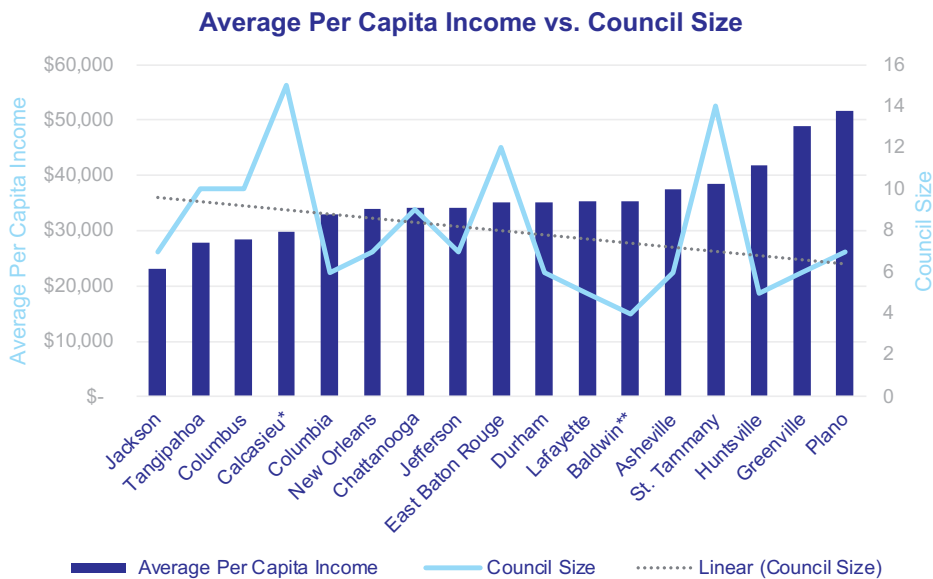


\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.

\*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

# AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME VS. COUNCIL SIZE

The graph below shows that, generally, the lower the average per capita income is in an area, the smaller the size of the council. This could be due in part to the notion that downsizing legislative bodies reduces costs.



\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.

\*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

# PART-TIME POSITIONS – COUNCIL SIZE VS. SALARY

Of the councils assessed that employ part-time councilor positions, it was discovered that councils with smaller council sizes generally compensate part-time councilors more than councils with larger council sizes. The average annual salary of part-time councilors analyzed in this report is \$19,987.15. The average council size of councils that employ part-time councilors is 9 members.

**Part-Time Councils - Size vs. Salary**

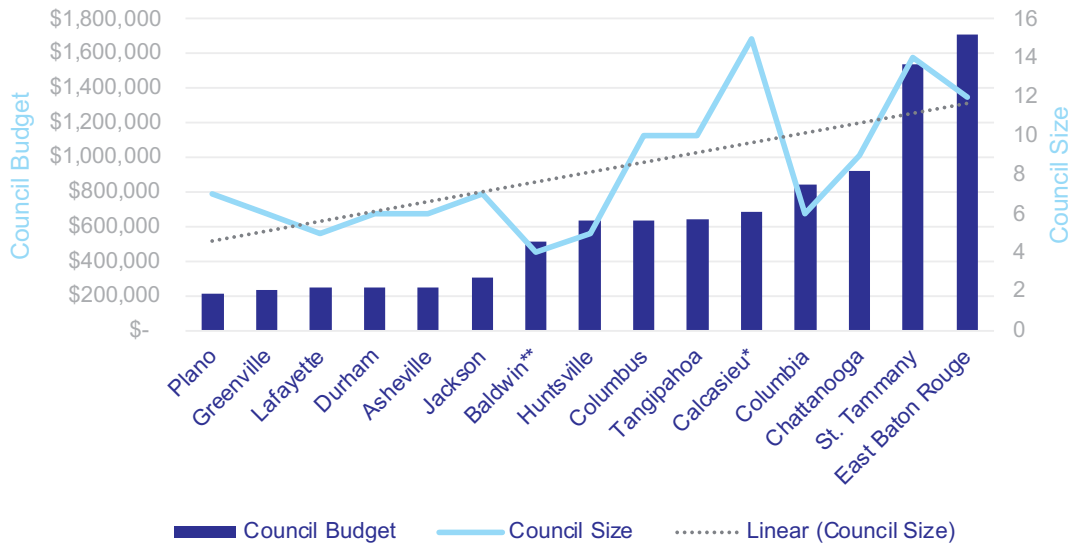


\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.

# COUNCIL BUDGET VS. COUNCIL SIZE

Because Jefferson's City Council budget more than tripled the third highest council budget, it was excluded from this analysis as an outlier, as was New Orleans' as it was more than double Jefferson's budget. The chart below demonstrates that, generally, the higher the council budget, the bigger the council size.

**Council Budgets vs. Size (Excluding New Orleans & Jefferson)**

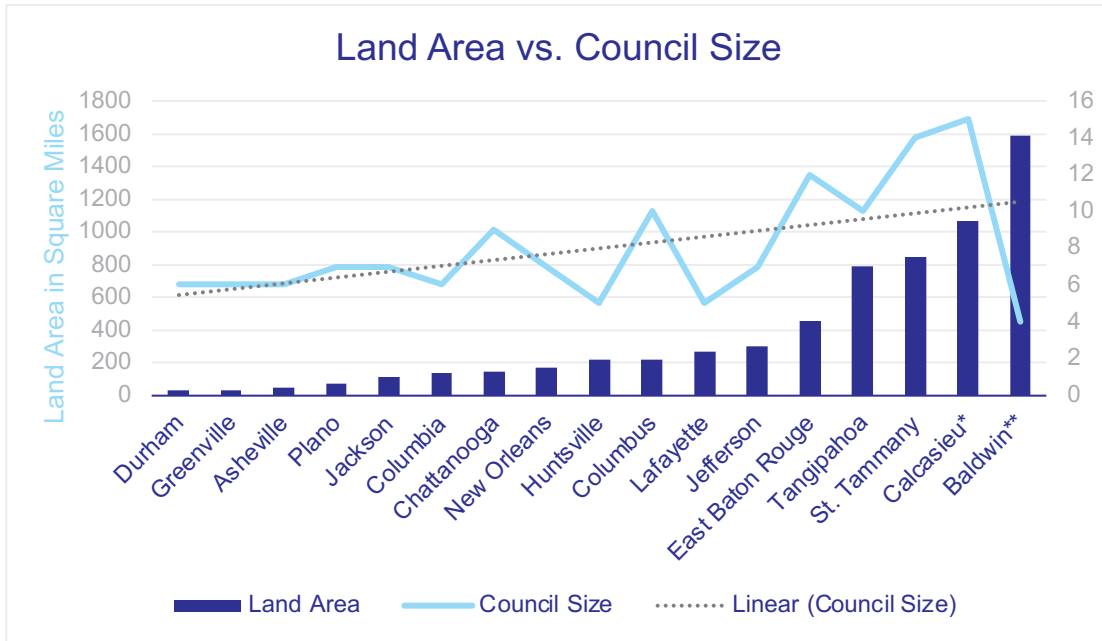


\*\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.

\*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

## LAND AREA VS. COUNCIL SIZE

As demonstrated in the graph below, the land area in square miles and the size of the council are positively related.

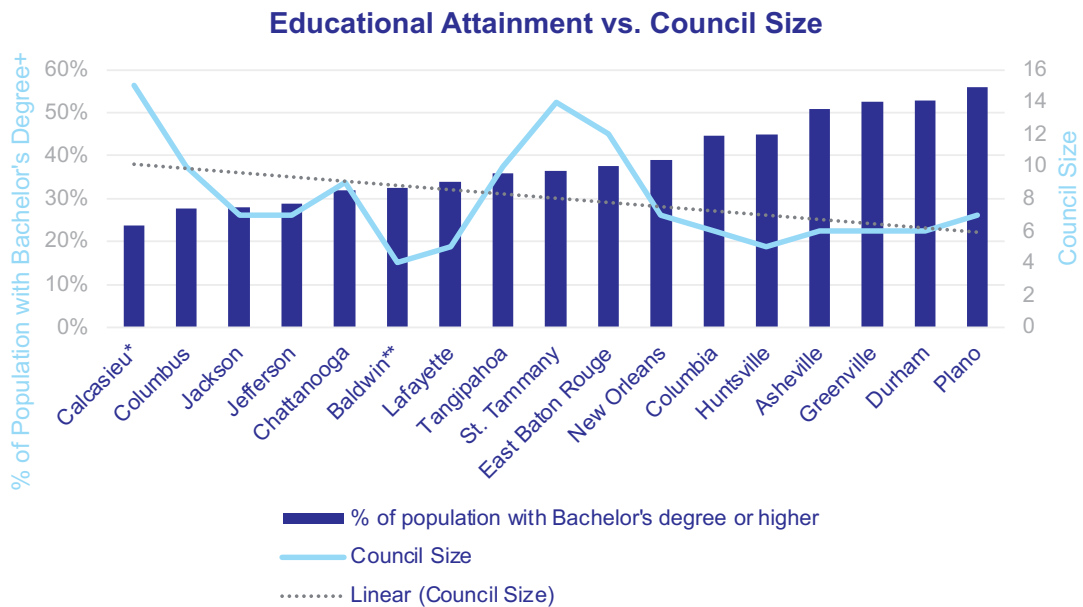


\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.

\*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT VS. COUNCIL SIZE

The graph below shows that, generally, the lower the percentage of the population that has a bachelor's degree or higher, the larger the council is in size, and vice versa.

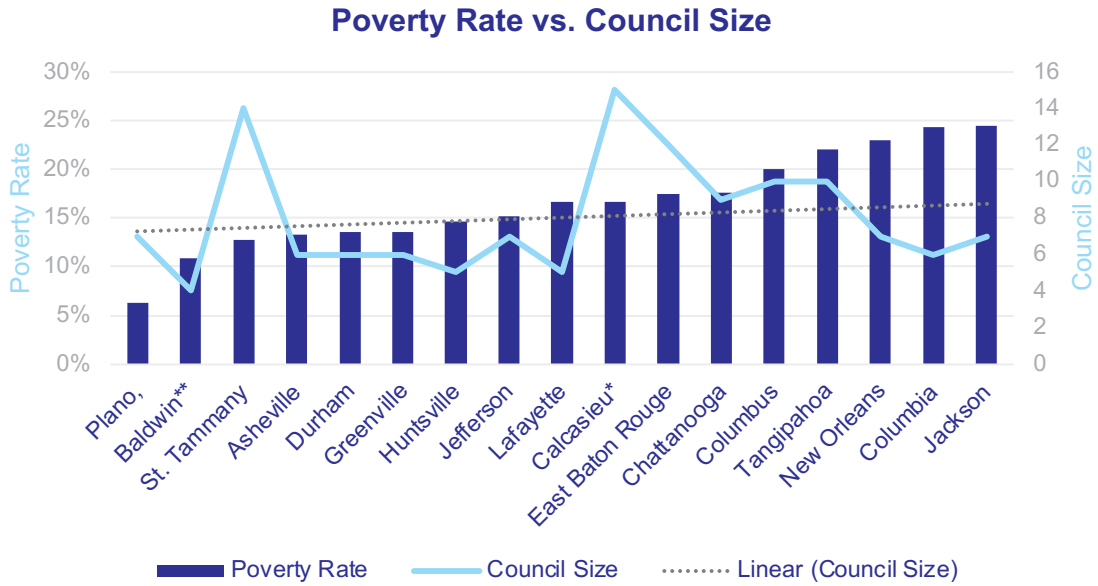


\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.

\*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

# POVERTY RATE VS. COUNCIL SIZE

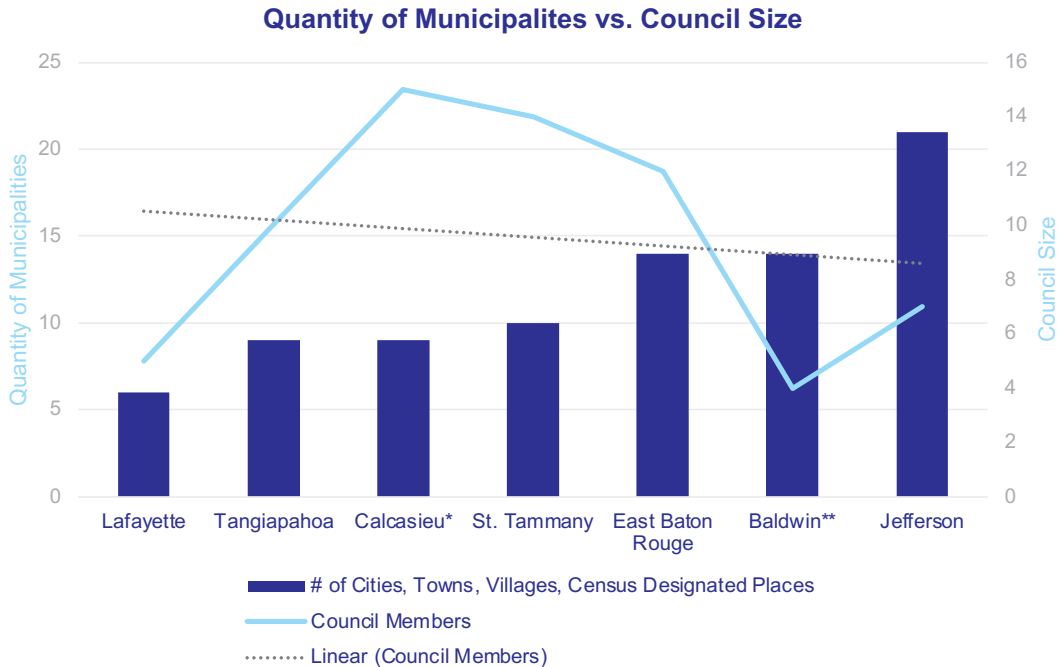
As demonstrated in the graph below, the poverty rate of an area does not appear to have an influence on the size of the council.



\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.  
 \*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

# QUANTITY OF MUNICIPALITIES VS. COUNCIL SIZE

The graph below only considers those areas studied that are parishes or counties as they are composed of multiple smaller municipalities including towns, cities, villages, or census-designated places. As illustrated below, the relationship between the number of municipalities within a parish/county and council size is small, but, in general, more municipalities are associated with a smaller council.



\*Calcasieu Parish operates as a police jury.  
 \*\*Baldwin County operates as a commission.

# JEFFERSON PARISH COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>45 46</sup>

**POPULATION:**

434,903

**AREA:**

665 square miles (296 land square miles and 370 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

39.5 years

**MEDIAN INCOME:**

\$54,825

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$34,205

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$193,600

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

62.7%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

52% of the population are white, 26.6% are African American, and 8.31% are Hispanic

**GENDER:**

52% of the population are women and 48% are men

**EDUCATION:**

29.2% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 28.7% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

15.2%

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, retail trade, and construction

<sup>45</sup> "Jefferson Parish, LA." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/jefferson-parish-la](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/jefferson-parish-la).

<sup>46</sup> "Jefferson Parish Louisiana Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Jefferson-Parish-LA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Jefferson-Parish-LA-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>47 48 49</sup>

The Jefferson Parish Council has seven members. Five members represent each of the five districts and there are two council members at-large. The council has a chairman and vice-chairman. The council is supervised by the parish president. The council members are full-time employees. Council members are limited to two consecutive terms in the same seat. Council members are supported by the parish clerk, the office of the chief of staff, and the research and budget analysis staff.

The office of the chief of staff of the parish council is responsible for preparing and administering the annual council budget, maintaining records of the council employees, directing supervision of all office staff not reporting directly to a council member or parish clerk, and preparing the information handbook and council activities calendar. The office of the chief of staff may provide one chief of staff and two administrative aide positions for at-large and district council members. The research and budget analysis staff of the parish council is composed of a research director, a director of legal analysis, and other personnel as the council may from time to time authorize.

In 2013, Jefferson Parish added an office of inspector general. Citizens voted to add this office to provide an independent authority to investigate, audit, and review all levels and areas of the parish government. The inspectors are chosen by Jefferson Parish's Ethics and Compliance Commission. The office of the inspector general has 10 employees in total.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>50 51 52 53</sup>

The council members elected at-large receive an annual salary of 75% of the annual salary of district judges of Jefferson Parish, and all other council members receive an annual salary of 50% of the annual salary of district judges of the parish. The annual salary of the parish president equals the annual salary of district judges of Jefferson Parish. According to Jefferson Parish's schedule of councilmembers' compensation, at-large councilors were paid \$121,148, and district councilors were paid \$80,831 in 2021. The parish's total combined annual 2023 Budgeted Expenditures is \$850.1 million. The 2023 budget for the parish council is \$7,845,714. In 2022, the inspector general's salary was \$190,000.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>54</sup>

The upcoming Fall 2023 Jefferson Parish Council election is expected to be costly and competitive. Outside opponents are mounting campaigns for each of the seven council positions. Additionally, four current council members facing term limits and multiple outside candidates are vying for the two at-large seats. The at-large seat elections are anticipated to dominate headlines and be the most expensive of the campaigns. NOLA.com notes that personal wealth will likely be a big factor in election contests.

47 Roberts III, Faimon A., and Chad Calder. "The Future of the Jefferson Parish Council? What to Expect for the Post-Chris Roberts Era." NOLA.Com, 5 May 2019, [www.nola.com/news/politics/the-future-of-the-jefferson-parish-council-what-to-expect-for-the-post-chris-roberts/article\\_0f1f2e51-5475-5e85-ae8a-3f822db4b225.html](http://www.nola.com/news/politics/the-future-of-the-jefferson-parish-council-what-to-expect-for-the-post-chris-roberts/article_0f1f2e51-5475-5e85-ae8a-3f822db4b225.html).

48 "Jefferson Parish Government ." Parish Council, 2023, [www.jeffparish.net/government/parish-council](http://www.jeffparish.net/government/parish-council).

49 Office of the Inspector General - Jefferson Parish - Home. Accessed May 12, 2023. <https://www.jpoig.net/>.

50 "Jefferson Parish Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 10 Apr. 2023, [library.municode.com/la/jefferson\\_parish/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=14447](http://library.municode.com/la/jefferson_parish/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=14447).

51 Jefferson Parish, Department of Finance, 2021, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the Year Ended December 31, 2021, [https://app.la.la.gov/publicreports.nsf/0/27abb8a8274034248625887e0077a85e/\\$file/000275b8c.pdf](https://app.la.la.gov/publicreports.nsf/0/27abb8a8274034248625887e0077a85e/$file/000275b8c.pdf). Accessed 11 May 2023.

52 Jefferson Parish Council, 2023, Jefferson Parish, LA 2023 Annual Budget, <https://jefferson-parish-government.azureedge.net/2023%20JP%20Annual%20Budget%20Book%20-Final.pdf>. Accessed 11 May 2023.

53 Roberts, Faimon A. "There's a New Inspector General in Jefferson Parish. See Who Will Replace David McClintock." NOLA.com. Last modified February 24, 2022. [https://www.nola.com/news/theres-a-new-inspector-general-in-jefferson-parish-see-who-will-replace-david-mcclintock/article\\_1fbd1c2a-9590-11ec-9179-0f21f277ac79.html](https://www.nola.com/news/theres-a-new-inspector-general-in-jefferson-parish-see-who-will-replace-david-mcclintock/article_1fbd1c2a-9590-11ec-9179-0f21f277ac79.html).

54 Patterson, Blake. "Jefferson Parish's At-Large Council Races Likely to Be Intense, Expensive." NOLA.Com, 25 Mar. 2023, [www.nola.com/news/jefferson-parish-council-at-large-races-likely-to-be-costly/article\\_afb7d5fe-ca91-11ed-90df-9711d264118d.html](http://www.nola.com/news/jefferson-parish-council-at-large-races-likely-to-be-costly/article_afb7d5fe-ca91-11ed-90df-9711d264118d.html).

# LAFAYETTE-CITY PARISH CHARTER COMMISSION

## Population and Demographics<sup>55 56</sup>

**POPULATION:**

243,692

**AREA:**

269.5 square miles (269 land square miles and 0.5 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

35.5 years

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$25,348

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$189,700

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

66.8%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

65.2% of the population are white, 25.7% are African American, 3.1% are Hispanic

**GENDER:**

51% of the population are women and 49% are men

**EDUCATION:**

29.8% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 34% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

16.7% below the poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, retail trade, education

55 "Census Profile: Lafayette Parish, LA." Census Reporter, 2021, [censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US22055-lafayette-parish-la/](https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US22055-lafayette-parish-la/).

56 "Lafayette Parish Louisiana Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Lafayette-Parish-LA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Lafayette-Parish-LA-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>57</sup>

The Lafayette-City Parish Charter Commission operates under a home-rule charter known as the president-council. It consists of an elected city council, the Lafayette City Council, and an elected parish council, the Lafayette Parish Council. The Lafayette City Council constitutes the legislative branch of the city, and the Lafayette Parish Council constitutes the legislative branch of Lafayette Parish. It consists of an elected mayor-president that serves as the chief executive officer and head of the executive branch of the City of Lafayette, the Parish of Lafayette, and the Lafayette City-Parish Consolidated Government.

Both the Lafayette City Council and the Lafayette Parish Council consist of five members elected from single-member districts for four-year terms. No person may serve concurrently on both the city council and the parish council. Members of both councils must have legally resided in the city or parish, depending on the council, for at least one year prior to being elected and must remain legally resided in the city or parish during their term in office. The city council and parish council jointly appoint a clerk of council who serves at the pleasure of both councils. Both councils may, by ordinance, hire additional employees as necessary.

Council members are part-time employees. A city or parish council member who has served more than two and one-half terms in three consecutive terms is no longer eligible to qualify as a candidate in the next term, on the same council on which he/she has served. These limitations only apply to consecutive terms on the same council.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>58</sup>

The salary of each city council and parish council member is \$30,356.44 per year, and members of each council are eligible for health and hospital insurance benefits. The city council or parish council may, by ordinance, increase the salaries of its respective members during the term elected. However, the total of all salary increases during a term may not exceed a 10% increase of the total salary amount.

The salary of the mayor-president is \$75,000 per year and the mayor-president is eligible for health and hospital insurance and retirement benefits. By a favorable vote of the majority of both the city council and parish council, the councils may, by ordinance, increase the salary of the mayor-president during the term elected, however, the total of all salary increases during a term may not exceed a 10% increase of the total salary amount.

The total 2023 budget for Lafayette Parish is \$705,583,986. The adopted 2023 budget for the city council is \$365,791 and \$ 245,444 for the parish council.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>59 60 61</sup>

In May 2023, state auditors identified two dozen potential problems with Lafayette Consolidated Government's 2021-2022 operation, including possible violations of state bid law, the state constitution, the Home Rule Charter, and its own policies and procedures. Another prevalent public issue in September 2022 was the council's hiring of an independent auditor to investigate drainage projects overseen by the mayor-president after the mayor-president refused to answer questions related to the projects.

Also gaining prominent media attention this past spring was the approval of a proposal that moved the authority and power from the mayor-president to the parish council to appoint board members to the Lafayette Library Board of Control.

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57 Roberts III, Faimon A., and Chad Calder. "The Future of the Jefferson Parish Council? What to Expect for the Post-Chris Roberts Era." NOLA.Com, 5 May 2019, [www.nola.com/news/politics/the-future-of-the-jefferson-parish-council-what-to-expect-for-the-post-chris-roberts/article\\_0f1f2e51-5475-5e85-ae8a-3f822db4b225.html](http://www.nola.com/news/politics/the-future-of-the-jefferson-parish-council-what-to-expect-for-the-post-chris-roberts/article_0f1f2e51-5475-5e85-ae8a-3f822db4b225.html).

58 Touts, Lorrie. "Annual Comprehensive Financial Report - Lafayettela.Gov." 2022-2023 Adopted Operating and Five-Year Capital Improvement Budget, 2022, [www.lafayettela.gov/docs/default-source/finance-management-documents/accounting/annual-comprehensive-financial-report-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=cdddff2e\\_4](http://www.lafayettela.gov/docs/default-source/finance-management-documents/accounting/annual-comprehensive-financial-report-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=cdddff2e_4).

59 Taylor, Claire. "2021-22 Lafayette Government Audit Suggests Bid Laws, Constitution, Charter Violations." The Advocate, 3 May 2023, [www.theadvocate.com/acadiana/news/2021-22-lcg-audit-suggests-bid-laws-constitution-violations/article\\_abc08098-e9bf-11ed-b17c-e7eff4786d2b.html](http://www.theadvocate.com/acadiana/news/2021-22-lcg-audit-suggests-bid-laws-constitution-violations/article_abc08098-e9bf-11ed-b17c-e7eff4786d2b.html).

60 White, Ashley. "Council Votes to Move Forward with Audit, Investigation into Guillory's Drainage Projects." The Daily Advertiser, 7 Sept. 2022, [www.theadvertiser.com/story/news/2022/09/07/lafayette-city-council-investigation-mayor-president-josh-guillory-drainage-project/65470553007/](http://www.theadvertiser.com/story/news/2022/09/07/lafayette-city-council-investigation-mayor-president-josh-guillory-drainage-project/65470553007/).

61 Allen, Renee. "Proposal to Give Power to Restructure Boards to Parish Council, Not Mayor-President." KLFY.Com, 20 Apr. 2023, [www.klfy.com/local/lafayette-parish/proposal-to-give-power-to-restructure-boards-to-parish-council-not-mayor-president/](http://www.klfy.com/local/lafayette-parish/proposal-to-give-power-to-restructure-boards-to-parish-council-not-mayor-president/).



# NEW ORLEANS CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>62 63</sup>

**POPULATION:**

391,249

**AREA:**

349.9 square miles (169.5 land square miles and 180.4 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

37.2 years

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$34,036

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$250,000

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

49.8%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

58.6% of the population are African American, 30.7% are white, 2.75% are Asian

**GENDER:**

53% of the population are women and 47% are men

**EDUCATION:**

22.4% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 39.1% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

23% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and educational services

62 "New Orleans, LA." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/new-orleans-la#demographics](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/new-orleans-la#demographics).

63 "New Orleans Louisiana Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/New-Orleans-city-LA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/New-Orleans-city-LA-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size & Operations<sup>64 65</sup>

The New Orleans City Council is composed of seven members. Two are members at-large and the remaining five represent the five districts within the city. There is a council president and vice-president, both of whom are elected by the council. Members serve four-year terms. A person who has served as a council member representing a council district for more than one and one-half terms in two consecutive terms may not be elected as a council member representing a council district for the succeeding term. A person who has served as a councilmember-at-large for more than one and one-half terms in two consecutive terms may not be elected as a councilmember-at-large for the succeeding term. One of the council members at-large is elected by the council as president and the other council member-at-large is elected by the council as vice president. In practice, the presidency and vice presidency rotate between the two council members-at-large annually.

New Orleans citizens voted to approve a charter allowing an office of the inspector general in 1996. Established in 2006 and made permanent in 2008 as an independent program, the office has 13 employees in total and oversees all “entities of city government or entities receiving funds through the city.”

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>66 67 68 69</sup>

Council members’ salaries are adjusted annually based on the 12-month average of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Currently, each member of the council receives the same salary of \$93,504. The council cannot increase its own salary.

The City of New Orleans’ budget for 2023 is \$1.4 billion, with \$124 million of this budget allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The total budget for the city council in 2022 was \$22,487,645, which included spending on personal services and all other operating expenses.

The office of the inspector general currently receives 0.55% of the city’s general fund as its budget. The inspector general receives a salary of \$205,609 annually and the office has an annual budget of \$3,581,753. Reportedly, the inspector general saved the city \$80 million dollars over the course of the offices’ first six years in operation.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>70</sup>

In March of 2022, the New Orleans City Council unanimously approved new borders for the city’s five council districts on the last day it could do so before missing the deadline set in the city charter. The passage of the map did not end the local redistricting debate. During public comment, residents criticized the process and the lack of public engagement. One council member committed to introducing a city charter amendment to ensure a longer redistricting process and allow the council to create additional districts. A central requirement of redistricting is ensuring that all districts have roughly the same populations. The city charter requires the council to create a new district map within six months of each federal decennial census. The 2020 census was finalized on September 16, and the redistricting process began on February 23 when the city’s consultants released draft maps and started collecting public comment through an online portal. On March 16, the day of the council vote, the city’s consultants presented new maps to the council that did not undergo the same public comment period. The council selected one of these new maps, resulting in frustration from some citizens. Some residents complained that because the final maps were released roughly two hours before the council voted, the public never got the chance to make meaningful comments. One citizen stated, “I don’t see us included anywhere in this process. It’s very, very discouraging.” Other residents expressed frustration that the process didn’t allow for consideration of expanding the council by shrinking the existing districts and adding new ones. The council member, who previously committed to introducing a city charter that ensures longer redistricting processes, stated that this charter amendment would also include language that gives the council the flexibility to change the number of districts. To date, a charter amendment that includes these changes has not been proposed.

64 “New Orleans Code of Ordinances .” Municode Library, 20 Apr. 2023, [library.municode.com/la/new\\_orleans/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances).

65 “New Orleans City Council.” Home - New Orleans City Council, 2023, [council.nola.gov/home/](https://council.nola.gov/home/).

66 “New Orleans City Council.” Guide - New Orleans City Council, 2023, [council.nola.gov/guide/](https://council.nola.gov/guide/).

67 “The City of New Orleans.” Mayors Office - News - Articles - November 2022 - 2022-12-01 Budget 2023 - City of New Orleans, 1 Dec. 2022, [nola.gov/next/mayors-office/news/articles/november-2022/2022-12-01-budget-2023/#:~:text=NEW%20ORLEANS%20%E2%80%94%20The%20City%20of,improvements%20and%20expanded%20youth%20programming](https://nola.gov/next/mayors-office/news/articles/november-2022/2022-12-01-budget-2023/#:~:text=NEW%20ORLEANS%20%E2%80%94%20The%20City%20of,improvements%20and%20expanded%20youth%20programming).

68 “History Of The OIG.” Office of The Inspector General of New Orleans. Accessed May 12, 2023. <https://nolaig.gov/history/>.

69 City of New Orleans. Accessed May 12, 2023. <https://nola.gov/nola/media/Mayor-s-Office/Budget/2022/City-of-New-Orleans-2022-Adopted-Budget-Book.pdf>.

70 Stein, Michael I. “City Council Finalizes New District Map, but Redistricting Debate Will Continue.” The Lens, 16 Mar. 2022, [thelensnola.org/2022/03/16/city-council-finalizes-new-district-map-but-redistricting-debate-will-continue/](https://thelensnola.org/2022/03/16/city-council-finalizes-new-district-map-but-redistricting-debate-will-continue/).

# EAST BATON ROUGE CITY-PARISH COUNCIL (METROPOLITAN COUNCIL)

## Population and Demographics<sup>71 72</sup>

**POPULATION:**

443,158

**AREA:**

470 square miles (455 land square miles and 15 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

34.2 years

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$35,081

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$201,100

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

60.1%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

45.5% of the population are African American, 44.3% are white, 3.18% are Asian

**GENDER:**

52% of the population are women and 48% are men

**EDUCATION:**

25.8% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 37.5% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

17.4% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, retail trade and educational services

<sup>71</sup> "East Baton Rouge Parish, LA." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/east-baton-rouge-parish-la](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/east-baton-rouge-parish-la).

<sup>72</sup> "East Baton Rouge Parish Louisiana Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/East-Baton-Rouge-Parish-LA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/East-Baton-Rouge-Parish-LA-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>73 74</sup>

The City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge are managed by a single, consolidated form of government. This form of government stems from 1947 when the people of the parish voted to consolidate the functions of local government so that the City of Baton Rouge and the rural, unincorporated areas of East Baton Rouge Parish, would be served by a single government. The local government was further consolidated in 1982 when citizens voted to join the city and parish councils into a single governing body called the Metropolitan Council.

The Metropolitan Council is composed of 12 members, each representing one of 12 districts. The council elects a president/mayor pro tempore. Council members serve four-year terms, as does the president. Council members may serve three consecutive terms and are not eligible for election in the succeeding term. The council reports to the mayor-president.

The Metropolitan Council must appoint and fix the compensation of a council administrator. A council budget officer must be appointed by the council as an unclassified employee to serve an indefinite term. Additionally, a parish attorney must be appointed by the Metropolitan Council for an indefinite term.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>75</sup>

Council members are part-time and receive \$1,000 a month for their position. East Baton Rouge's 2023 budget is \$1,085,419,560. The 2023 budget for the Metropolitan Council is \$1,707,970.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>76</sup>

In August 2022, the Metropolitan Council approved a redistricting proposal that prompted legal action by local civil rights groups, including the Baton Rouge chapter of the NAACP, which said the new district map needed to increase minority representation to better reflect the community's diversity.

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73 "City of Baton Rouge Plan of Government ." Plan of Government | Baton Rouge, LA, 2023, [www.brla.gov/1257/Plan-of-Government](http://www.brla.gov/1257/Plan-of-Government).

74 "City of Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council ." Metropolitan Council | Baton Rouge, LA, 2023, [www.brla.gov/561/Metropolitan-Council](http://www.brla.gov/561/Metropolitan-Council).

75 "Annual Operating Budget ." City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge Annual Operating Budget , 2023, [www.brla.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16712/2023-City-Parish-Annual-Operating-Budget-PDF](http://www.brla.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16712/2023-City-Parish-Annual-Operating-Budget-PDF).

76 Braun , Paul. "Baton Rouge Council Approves Status Quo Redistricting Proposal Despite Minority Population Growth." WRKF, 11 Aug. 2022, [www.wrkf.org/news/2022-08-11/baton-rouge-council-approves-status-quo-redistricting-proposal-despite-minority-population-growth](http://www.wrkf.org/news/2022-08-11/baton-rouge-council-approves-status-quo-redistricting-proposal-despite-minority-population-growth).

# TANGIPAHOA PARISH COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>77 78</sup>

**POPULATION:**

133,753

**AREA:**

823 square miles (791 land square miles and 32 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

35.5 years

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$27,747

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$167,900

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

70.3%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

62.8% of the population are white, 29.7% are African American, 3.17% are Hispanic

**GENDER:**

51% of the population are women and 49% are men

**EDUCATION:**

21.2% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 36% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

22% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, retail trade and educational services

<sup>77</sup> "Tangipahoa Parish, LA." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/tangipahoa-parish-la](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/tangipahoa-parish-la).

<sup>78</sup> "Tangipahoa Parish Louisiana Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2021, [www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Tangipahoa-Parish-LA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Tangipahoa-Parish-LA-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>79 80</sup>

Tangipahoa Parish was originally governed by a police jury style of government until 1986 when it began operating as a council-president home rule charter form of government. The Tangipahoa Parish Council consists of 10 members, each representing one of 10 districts. One member serves as the chairman. Council members are part-time and serve four-year terms. An elected president, otherwise referred to as the chief executive officer, exercises general executive authority over the council. As of January 1, 2016, no council member or president may serve more than three consecutive four-year terms. At the first regular meeting of a newly elected council and annually thereafter, a chairman and vice-chairman are elected by a majority vote of the council from among the council members. The council may, by an ordinance approved by the favorable vote of at least a majority of the council, create the position of chief administrative officer.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>81</sup>

Council members are compensated \$2,000 per month. The council may periodically review compensation and may change compensation by ordinance, provided that no ordinance changing such compensation is passed during the last year of a term and further provided that a change would not become effective during the current term of the council members adopting the ordinance. The salary of the president is the average of the annual salaries of the Tangipahoa Parish sheriff, assessor, and clerk of court. Tangipahoa Parish's total budget for 2022 was \$7,730,001, \$1,470,018 of which was the general fund. The council budget in 2022 was \$639,865.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>82</sup>

In May 2015, the council voted to give voters of the parish an opportunity to decide whether the parish president and council members should be limited to three consecutive four-year terms. Reportedly, the idea of implementing term limits had been lingering for the previous two years (2013-2014) when a Charter Review Committee asked the council to allow voters to decide if term limits should be applied to the parish president and council members. With the majority vote from the council, term limits were proposed on a single ballot to voters in October 2015 and voters decided to implement the term limits beginning at the start of 2016.

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79 "Tangipahoa Parish Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 31 Mar. 2023, library.municode.com/LA/Tangipahoa\_Parish\_Council.

80 "Parish Council." Council | Tangipahoa Parish Government | Louisiana, 2023, tangipahoa.org/council.

81 Miller , Robby. "Tangipahoa Parish Government 2022 Operating & Capital Improvement Budget ." Tangipahoa Parish Government, 2022, www.tangipahoa.org/Portals/0/Council/Budgets/2022-Budget-for-Final-Adoption%20.pdf.

82 Couvillion , Vic. "Tangipahoa Parish Council Pushes Forward Term Limit Proposal; Next Step Is a Public Hearing." The Advocate, 13 May 2015, www.theadvocate.com/baton\_rouge/news/communities/tangipahoa-parish-council-pushes-forward-term-limit-proposal-next-step-is-a-public-hearing/article\_d13705b4-9fb5-58f2-adfb-c04bc97214c9.html.

# CALCASIEU PARISH POLICE JURY

## Population and Demographics<sup>83 84</sup>

**POPULATION:**

202,858

**AREA:**

1095 square miles (1064 land square miles and 31 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE: 3**

6.1

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$29,886

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$160,800

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

68.5%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

70% of the population are white, 25.1% are African American, 2.3% are multiracial

**GENDER:**

52% of the population are women and 48% are men

**EDUCATION:**

34.4% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 23.8% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

16.7%

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, construction, and retail trade

83 "Calcasieu Parish, LA." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/calcasieu-parish-la](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/calcasieu-parish-la).

84 "Calcasieu Parish Louisiana Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2021, [www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Calcasieu-Parish-LA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Louisiana/Education/Calcasieu-Parish-LA-Education-data.html).

## Jury Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>85</sup>

The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury has 15 members, one elected for each of the 15 districts in the parish. Jurors serve four-year terms in office. The jury elects a president and vice-president annually in January, and neither may succeed themselves. The jury does not appear to have any term limits, as one member is serving his sixth consecutive term in the same district.

## Jury Compensation & Budget<sup>86 87</sup>

Each member of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury is paid a salary of \$1,600 per month, an amount set in January 2016. The juror who serves as president receives an additional amount of \$200 per month while holding office. The 2023 police jury budget, in total, is \$427,157,263, and the legislative budget is \$683,888.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>88</sup>

The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury releases a citizen survey each year and uses those results to prioritize work items for the next year. The highlights of the 2022 results were: calls to address drainage and litter issues and decreased satisfaction with homeland security, human services, juvenile justice services, animal services, and emergency preparedness.

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85 "Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, LA." Police Jury, 2023, [www.calcasieu.gov/government/police-jury](http://www.calcasieu.gov/government/police-jury).

86 "Calcasieu Parish Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 20 Dec. 2022, [library.municode.com/la/calcasieu\\_parish\\_police\\_jury/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COOR\\_CH2AD\\_ARTIVCOPOJU](http://library.municode.com/la/calcasieu_parish_police_jury/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH2AD_ARTIVCOPOJU).

87 Beam, Bryan C., and Kelly B. Fontenot . "2023 Annual Budget Calcasieu Parish Police Jury." The Police Jury, Calcasieu Parish LA, 2023, [www.calcasieu.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/11068/638043002569370000](http://www.calcasieu.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/11068/638043002569370000).

88 "CPPJ Citizen Survey 2022." Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, LA, 2022, [www.calcasieu.gov/residents/citizen-survey-2022](http://www.calcasieu.gov/residents/citizen-survey-2022).



# PLANO, TEXAS CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>89 90</sup>

**POPULATION:**

288,870

**AREA:**

103 square miles (72 land square miles and 31 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

38.9 years

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$51,624

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$341,800

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

58.9%

**ETHNICITY:**

51.3% of the population are white, 21.7% are Asian, 8.6% are African American

**GENDER:**

50% of the population are women and 50% are men

**EDUCATION:**

13.4% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 56.1% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

6.29% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Professional, scientific, and technical services, retail trade, and health care and social assistance

<sup>89</sup> "Plano, TX." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/plano-tx](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/plano-tx).

<sup>90</sup> "Plano CCD Texas Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Texas/Education/Plano-CCD-TX-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Texas/Education/Plano-CCD-TX-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>91</sup>

Plano is governed by the council-manager form of government where the council sets city policy, and the manager is responsible for city operations. The city council consists of the mayor and seven city council members, all of whom are elected at-large. There are eight council districts, called places, in the City of Plano, including the place of the mayor. All council members run and serve at-large, which means that all council members represent the entire city, with an additional district-specific residency requirement for candidates who run for each seat in places one through four. City of Plano residents, regardless of address, may vote for council representation for all eight places. Each council member serves a four-year term, and all members are limited to no more than two consecutive terms. The council is elected in odd-numbered years on a rotating basis. For example, council elections for places 1, 3, 5, and 7 were held in May 2023, and council elections for places two, four, six, and eight will be held in 2025.

The mayor must preside at meetings of the council and is recognized as head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes and by the governor for purposes of military law but has no regular administrative duties.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>92 93</sup>

The city's total operating budget for 2023 is \$677,024,132. The budget for the Plano City Council in 2023 is \$213,604. City council members receive \$1,000 per month and the mayor receives \$1,400 per month.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>94</sup>

The Plano City Council passed the Plano Tomorrow plan in October 2015. The comprehensive development plan, about two years in the making, would eventually win awards at state and national levels, but some residents felt the plan had ignored their concerns. Citizens expressed frustration and discontent with the plan when it was drafted, and once the council approved the plan, expressed these concerns through a petition that was submitted to the city. In November 2014, the petition was formally submitted to the city, and according to the city's charter, the secretary was responsible for presenting the petition to the city council immediately upon filing. However, the secretary did not present the petition to the council, which resulted in much controversy over the city's right to petition. In 2015, a group of citizens sued the city council and secretary, demanding that the petition be provided to the council and that the Plano Tomorrow plan should be approved by a city-wide vote. In 2019, the judge ruled that the secretary did not have to turn over the petition to the council. Ultimately, the Plano Tomorrow plan was abandoned after the legal battle, and the city reverted back to the last approved development plan from 1986.

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91 "Mayor & City Council." Plano City of Excellence , 2023, [www.plano.gov/1345/Mayor-City-Council](http://www.plano.gov/1345/Mayor-City-Council).

92 "Program of Service 2022-23." City of Plano, Texas , 2022, [content.civicplus.com/api/assets/782a36c6-6b69-4329-a759-05e943ca8b63?-cache=1800](http://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/782a36c6-6b69-4329-a759-05e943ca8b63?-cache=1800).

93 Beattie, Chris. "McKinney Voters to Decide on Mayoral, Council Compensation Cap." Star Local Media, 4 May 2014, [starlocalmedia.com/mckinneycouriergazette/news/mckinney-voters-to-decide-on-mayoral-council-compensation-cap/article\\_0d8056d6-d2ec-11e3-b6f0-0019bb2963f4.html](http://starlocalmedia.com/mckinneycouriergazette/news/mckinney-voters-to-decide-on-mayoral-council-compensation-cap/article_0d8056d6-d2ec-11e3-b6f0-0019bb2963f4.html).

94 Webster, Teri. "After Repealing Controversial Plano Tomorrow Plan, the City Goes Back to the Drawing Board." Dallas News, 11 Aug. 2020, [www.dallasnews.com/news/2020/08/11/after-repealing-controversial-plano-tomorrow-plan-the-city-goes-back-to-the-drawing-board/#:~:text=Plano%20Tomorrow%20was%20abandoned%20after%20a%20five-year%20legal,what%20they%20described%20as%20the%20city%E2%80%99s%20suburban%20character](http://www.dallasnews.com/news/2020/08/11/after-repealing-controversial-plano-tomorrow-plan-the-city-goes-back-to-the-drawing-board/#:~:text=Plano%20Tomorrow%20was%20abandoned%20after%20a%20five-year%20legal,what%20they%20described%20as%20the%20city%E2%80%99s%20suburban%20character).

# JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>95 96</sup>

**POPULATION:**

163,778

**AREA:**

113 square miles (111 land square miles and 2 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

33.5 years

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$23,176

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$91,400

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

49%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

82.2% of the population are African American, 15.4% are White, 1% are Hispanic

**GENDER:**

54% of the population are women and 46% are men

**EDUCATION:**

24.8% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 27.9% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

24.5% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services

<sup>95</sup> "Jackson, MS." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/jackson-ms](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/jackson-ms).

<sup>96</sup> "Jackson Mississippi Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Mississippi/Education/Jackson-city-MS-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Mississippi/Education/Jackson-city-MS-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>97</sup>

The City of Jackson operates under the mayor-council form of government with a full-time mayor elected at-large and seven part-time council members elected, one each from the seven wards. Both the mayor and council members serve four-year terms. Council members elected to represent wards must be residents of their wards for two years at the time of qualification for election.

During the first council meeting of a new council, the council elects one member as president of the council and one member as vice president. The elected president and vice president serve one-year terms and both positions may serve successive terms at the pleasure of the council. The council is required to appoint a clerk of council, and deputy clerks, as necessary. Clerical work of council members in the performance of the duties of their office must be performed by council employees or at council expense. The mayor may attend meetings of the council and may take part in discussions of the council but does not have a vote except in the case of a tie on the question of filling a vacancy in the council.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>98 99</sup>

The mayor's salary is \$120,000 per year. The salary of each member of the council is \$25,000 annually, except that the council member serving as president of the council receives an additional \$2,000 annually, prorated to reflect the length of the member's term of office. Any increases or decreases in the salary for the mayor or council members may be authorized by the council at any time prior to 90 days before the next general election for the selection of officers. Such increases or decreases do not become effective until the next elected mayor and council takes office.

The 2021-22 fiscal year operating budget for the City of Jackson was \$401,648,838 and the budget for the city council was \$305,508.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>100</sup>

Over the past year and a half, the mayor and city council of Jackson have been disputing over which of the two government entities hold responsibility and authority to award a contract for garbage pick-up services. The mayor leveled claims of corruption within the Jackson City Council involving a garbage contract that he submitted to the council following a request for proposal process. After the council voted against his submitted contract, the mayor alleged that some of the city council members were receiving bribes to select another vendor. The mayor then proceeded to award the contract to the New Orleans-based firm he selected via the RFP process as an emergency declaration, despite the council's negative vote on the matter, and the firm began working without council approval. The council sued the mayor. The Mississippi Supreme Court ruled that the mayor acted improperly in his attempt to veto the council's rejection of the garbage-collection contract and noted that the mayor does not have legal authority to veto a non-action or negative vote by the council. This legal dispute and uncertainty in garbage collection caused a portion of the community to feel discontent toward both the mayor and council members.

97 "Jackson City Council." Jackson, MS, 24 Jan. 2023, [www.jacksonms.gov/departments/jackson-city-council/](http://www.jacksonms.gov/departments/jackson-city-council/).

98 "Jackson City, MS Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 9 Jan. 2023, [library.municode.com/ms/jackson/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?no-deld=COOR\\_CH2AD\\_ARTIICICO\\_DIV1GE](http://library.municode.com/ms/jackson/codes/code_of_ordinances?no-deld=COOR_CH2AD_ARTIICICO_DIV1GE).

99 "FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget." Jackson, MS, 2022, [www.jacksonms.gov/documents/fy-2021-2022-annual-budget/](http://www.jacksonms.gov/documents/fy-2021-2022-annual-budget/).

100 Pettus, Emily W. "Court: Mississippi Mayor Wrong in Veto of Disputed Contract." AP NEWS, 10 Mar. 2023, [apnews.com/article/jackson-mississippi-garbage-contract-dispute-658503a5a72566a21872ad4483fe1e4b](https://apnews.com/article/jackson-mississippi-garbage-contract-dispute-658503a5a72566a21872ad4483fe1e4b).

# COLUMBUS, GEORGIA CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>101 102</sup>

**POPULATION:**

195,418

**AREA:**

221 square miles (216 land square miles and 5 water square miles)

**MEDIAN AGE:**

34.4

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$28,523

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

142,900

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

49.1%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

45.6% of the population are African American, 39.8% are white, 3.7% are multiracial

**GENDER:**

52% of the population are women and 48% are men

**EDUCATION:**

26.8% completed only high school/GED equivalent, 27.6% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

20% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services

101 "Columbus, GA." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/columbus-ga](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/columbus-ga).

102 "Columbus Georgia Education Data." Towncharts Education Data, 2022, [www.towncharts.com/Georgia/Education/Columbus-city-GA-Education-data.html](https://www.towncharts.com/Georgia/Education/Columbus-city-GA-Education-data.html).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>103 104 105</sup>

The Columbus City Council is a mayor-council organization. The council is comprised of 10 members, eight representing the districts, and two at-large. The at-large council members are designated as districts nine and 10. Beginning in 2024, Columbus change to nine districts, nine councilmembers and a hybrid at-large system. Council terms are four years. No person holding the office of councilor may hold any other elective public office or any appointive position of employment within the consolidated government.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>106 107</sup>

City councilors receive an annual salary of \$15,585. The total operating budget for the City of Columbus in 2023 is \$314,533,253 and the 2023 budget for the city council is \$633,911.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>108</sup>

The City of Columbus has recently adopted a new pay plan, increasing salaries for many government employees. A consulting firm was brought in to analyze pay and find a solution for high vacancies and turnover rates. Columbus was compared to many local cities, counties, governments, and one organization, and it was found that three-quarters of employees were making only the minimum to mid-point pay grade. Pay increases are expected to be implemented next year, but the city council is currently dealing with over 400 appeals from employees who were dissatisfied with the final decision. There was no recommendation for increases to city council salaries, but the findings did recommend increases for the clerk and deputy clerk of council.

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103 "City of Columbus, GA Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 7 Apr. 2023, [library.municode.com/ga/columbus/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTICH\\_ARTIIIILEBR\\_CH1THCO](https://library.municode.com/ga/columbus/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICH_ARTIIIILEBR_CH1THCO).

104 "Columbus Council Members." Columbus City Council, 2023, [www.columbusga.gov/Council/](https://www.columbusga.gov/Council/).

105 "City of Columbus." Council Residential Districts Home, [www.columbus.gov/districts/](https://www.columbus.gov/districts/). Accessed 8 June 2023.

106 "Councilor, City of Columbus ." GovSalaries, 2015, [govsalaries.com/davis-glenn-20809783](https://govsalaries.com/davis-glenn-20809783).

107 "Fiscal Year 2022 - Columbus, Georgia." Columbus, Georgia Consolidated Government , 2022, [www.columbusga.gov/finance/pdfs/FY22%20Recommended%20Budget%20Book%20\(web%20version\).pdf](https://www.columbusga.gov/finance/pdfs/FY22%20Recommended%20Budget%20Book%20(web%20version).pdf).

108 James, Hannah. "Columbus City Workers Fighting for Pay Increase." WRBL, 2 Nov. 2022, [www.wrbl.com/news/local-news/columbus/columbus-city-workers-fighting-for-pay-increase/](https://www.wrbl.com/news/local-news/columbus/columbus-city-workers-fighting-for-pay-increase/).

# HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>109 110 111</sup>

**POPULATION:**

214,372

**AREA:**

218.1 land square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

36.8

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$41,897

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$194,500

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

57%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

59.9% of the population are white, 30.9% are African American, 6.4% are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

51.3% are female, 48.7% are male

**EDUCATION:**

91.1% completed high school or higher, 44.8% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

14.6% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Professional, scientific, and technical services, manufacturing, and health care and social assistance

109 "U.S. Census Bureau ." Quickfacts: Huntsville City, Alabama, 1 July 2022, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/huntsvillecityalabama](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/huntsvillecityalabama).

110 "Huntsville Alabama Household Income." Department of Numbers, 2021, [www.deptofnumbers.com/income/alabama/huntsville/#:~:text=The%20ACS%201-year%20survey%20shows%20the%20per%20capita,Huntsville%20median%20per%20capita%20income%20is%20%2411%2C289%20higher](http://www.deptofnumbers.com/income/alabama/huntsville/#:~:text=The%20ACS%201-year%20survey%20shows%20the%20per%20capita,Huntsville%20median%20per%20capita%20income%20is%20%2411%2C289%20higher).

111 "Industries with the Highest Employment in Huntsville." Stacker, 25 Feb. 2021, [stacker.com/alabama/huntsville/industries-highest-employment-huntsville](http://stacker.com/alabama/huntsville/industries-highest-employment-huntsville).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>112</sup>

The Huntsville City Council is the legislative branch of the Huntsville City government as defined by the Mayor-Council Act of the State of Alabama. It is made up of five members, representing five distinct geographic districts of Huntsville, Alabama. Following election, city council members decide by majority vote who will serve as president of the council. The president of the council acts as the department head and coordinates the council office staff and operations of the office; except that any personnel matter regarding the hiring of or disciplinary action involving a member of the council office staff is approved by a majority of the members of the city council. Members of the council are assigned by the council president to one or more of 10 committees and boards, with one or two council members serving on each committee. Each committee is responsible for hearing items that fall under its jurisdiction and then making recommendations to the council as a whole. The city council does not have term limits; however, all board and committee members may only serve for two consecutive terms.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>113 114</sup>

Council members receive an annual salary of \$38,093.75. The council president receives an annual salary of \$45,712.50. The mayor receives an annual salary of \$152,375. The City of Huntsville's budget in 2022 was \$467,360,697 and the city council budget in 2022 was \$532,867.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>115</sup>

In July 2021, council members voted to change their bylaws relating to public comment procedures. Prior to the change, public comments were heard at the beginning of council meetings and, at times, involved dozens of citizens addressing the council on topics that were not included in the meeting agenda, causing a delay in voting and business-related issues until 10 p.m. or later. To resolve this, the council voted to amend the bylaws to only allow for public comment pertaining to the agenda to occur at the beginning of the meeting, and for non-agenda-related topics to be addressed at the end of the meeting. Some citizens were unhappy with this change as they believed that moving public comment to the end of the meeting diminished the importance of public opinion and would ultimately reduce the number of speakers.

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112 "Huntsville, Alabama Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 20 Apr. 2023, [library.municode.com/al/huntsville/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/al/huntsville/codes/code_of_ordinances).

113 Joseph , Chris, and McKinley Strother. "Huntsville City Council Approves Pay Raises, Insurance for Deceased Employees' Families." WAFF 48, 19 Dec. 2019, [www.waff.com/2019/12/19/huntsville-city-council-vote-pay-raises-elected-leaders-insurance-deceased-employees-families/](https://www.waff.com/2019/12/19/huntsville-city-council-vote-pay-raises-elected-leaders-insurance-deceased-employees-families/).

114 "Adopted Annual Budget ." City of Huntsville, Alabama Fiscal Year 2023 , 2022, [www.huntsvilleal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Adopted-Budget-9-22-22-FINAL.pdf](https://www.huntsvilleal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Adopted-Budget-9-22-22-FINAL.pdf).

115 Gattis , Paul. "Why the Huntsville City Council Changed How It Hears from the Public." AL.Com, 9 July 2021, [www.al.com/news/2021/07/why-the-huntsville-city-council-changed-how-it-hears-from-the-public.html](https://www.al.com/news/2021/07/why-the-huntsville-city-council-changed-how-it-hears-from-the-public.html).



# GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>116 117</sup>

**POPULATION:**

72,095

**AREA:**

29.7 square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

35

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$48,837

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$332,700

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

41.3%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

65.6% of the population are white, 23.2% are African American, 5.7 % are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

53.3% are female, 46.7% are male

**EDUCATION:**

91.7% completed high school or higher, 52.5% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

13.6% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and professional, scientific, and technical services

116 "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Greenville City, South Carolina." Quickfacts , 2022, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/greenville-city-southcarolina/PST045222](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/greenville-city-southcarolina/PST045222).

117 "Greenville, SC." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/greenville-sc](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/greenville-sc).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>118</sup>

Greenville City Council functions as a council-manager form of government and is made up of the mayor and six council members. Of those members, two are at-large and four represent their districts. Members serve four-year terms and elections are staggered, occurring every two years. For 2022, the council adopted the following priorities: neighborhoods and affordable housing, economic development, recreation, open space environmental sustainability, public safety and engagement, and mobility.

The City of Greenville has a city manager who advises the city council, implements its policies, prepares the budget, and sets council meeting agendas. The city manager is a full-time employee, but the mayor and council members are part-time employees.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>119 120</sup>

The annual budget for the City of Greenville in FY 2022-23 is \$237,068,492 and the city council's budget is \$237,803. The budgets for the mayor's and city manager's offices were \$179,606 and \$1,262,739, respectively. The council members receive \$15,000 annually and the mayor is compensated \$24,000 annually.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>121</sup>

In an attempt to see a change in the city council and address housing cost issues, the citizens of Greenville County did not re-elect four long-standing members of the council, one of whom had served five terms. After a swearing in ceremony in January 2023, the newly elected councilors expressed their understanding of some constituent's desire for change.

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118 "City Council." City Council | Greenville, SC - Official Website, [www.greenvillesc.gov/283/City-Council](http://www.greenvillesc.gov/283/City-Council). Accessed 19 May 2023.

119 Connor, Eric. "Greenville Mayor, City Council Raise Own Pay." The Greenville News, 24 Oct. 2017, [www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2017/10/24/greenville-mayor-city-council-raise-own-pay/793870001/](http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2017/10/24/greenville-mayor-city-council-raise-own-pay/793870001/).

120 "City of Greenville, South Carolina ." FY 2022-23 Annual Operating Budget, 2022, [greenvillesc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21034/Greenville-Budget-Public-Hearing-Notice-FY-22-23?bidId=](http://greenvillesc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21034/Greenville-Budget-Public-Hearing-Notice-FY-22-23?bidId=).

121 Harris, Kennedy. "Greenville's County's New Council Leaders, Ready for Change." Fox Carolina, 10 Nov. 2022, [www.foxcarolina.com/2022/11/10/greenvilles-countys-new-council-leaders-ready-change/](http://www.foxcarolina.com/2022/11/10/greenvilles-countys-new-council-leaders-ready-change/).

# DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA CITY COUNCIL

## Population and Demographics<sup>122 123</sup>

**POPULATION:**

285,527

**AREA:**

112.8 square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

34.1

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$39,396

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$243,000

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

51.9%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

40.6% of the population are white, 37.2 % are African American, 13.2% are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

52.9% are female, 47.1% are male

**EDUCATION:**

90.6% completed high school or higher, 52.8% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

13.5% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, educational services, and professional, scientific and technical services

122 "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Durham, NC." Quickfacts , 2022, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045222](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045222).

123 "Durham, NC." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/durham-nc](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/durham-nc).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>124</sup>

The Durham City Council operates under a council-manager form of government. The council is the legislative body of the city. Council members establish general policies, appoint the city manager, serve on boards, committees, and commissions, and approve the annual budget. The council has seven members, made up of one mayor and six councilors. Three city councilors are elected from specific wards, and three are elected at-large. The terms for the mayor and council are four years, and elections are staggered every two years. Council members and the mayor are part-time employees.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>125 126</sup>

Council members make \$35,200 per year. The annual budget for the city in 2022-23 is \$568,900,000 and the budget for the city council is \$788,394. The budget for the city manager's office is \$3,408,527.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>127</sup>

In 2021, the public had mixed reactions regarding a city council pay raise. After council members gave themselves a \$10,000 raise, some community members believed that the raise was necessary, while others did not feel that their elected officials deserved a raise.

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124 "City Council." City Council | Durham, NC, [www.durhamnc.gov/1323/City-Council](http://www.durhamnc.gov/1323/City-Council). Accessed 19 May 2023.

125 Overton, Rodney. "Durham City Council Votes 6-1 to Give Themselves a \$10,000 Yearly Raise." CBS17.Com, 19 Oct. 2021, [www.cbs17.com/news/local-news/durham-county-news/durham-city-council-votes-6-1-to-give-themselves-a-10000-yearly-raise/](http://www.cbs17.com/news/local-news/durham-county-news/durham-city-council-votes-6-1-to-give-themselves-a-10000-yearly-raise/).

126 "City of Durham Adopted Budget ." Fiscal Year 2022-23, 2022, [www.durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/46235/Final-FY23-Budget-Book](http://www.durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/46235/Final-FY23-Budget-Book).

127 Overton, Rodney. "Durham City Council Votes 6-1 to Give Themselves a \$10,000 Yearly Raise." CBS17.Com, 19 Oct. 2021, [www.cbs17.com/news/local-news/durham-county-news/durham-city-council-votes-6-1-to-give-themselves-a-10000-yearly-raise/](http://www.cbs17.com/news/local-news/durham-county-news/durham-city-council-votes-6-1-to-give-themselves-a-10000-yearly-raise/).

# CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE CITY COUNCIL

## Population & Demographics<sup>128 129</sup>

**POPULATION:**

182,113

**AREA:**

142.35 square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

36.7

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$34,080

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$174,900

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

51.6%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

56.3% of the population are white, 30.6% are African American, 7.3% are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

52.5% are female, 47.5% are male

**EDUCATION:**

89% completed high school or higher, 32% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

17.6% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services

128 "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Chattanooga City, Tennessee." Quickfacts , 2022, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/chattanoogacitytennessee/PST045222](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/chattanoogacitytennessee/PST045222).

129 "Chattanooga, TN." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/chattanooga-tn](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/chattanooga-tn).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>130</sup>

The Chattanooga City Council operates under a mayor-council form of government. The council is composed of nine council members and the mayor. The council members and mayor each serve four-year terms. Each councilor represents one of the city's nine districts. The council elects a chairperson and vice chairperson who each serve for one year. Currently, there are no term limits for Chattanooga City Council members.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>131</sup>

Members of the council are paid 15% of the mayor's salary. The chairperson is paid an additional \$5,000 per year, and the vice chairperson is paid an additional \$2,500. The current annual salary of councilors is \$26,919 and the current annual salary of the mayor is \$179,460. The total annual budget for Chattanooga in FY2023 is \$317,000,000 and the city council's budget is \$921,139.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>132</sup>

In March 2023, a proposal to add term limits and change the election schedule for the Chattanooga City Council was brought up by a council member. The founder of the Hamilton County Voters Coalition polled members of the coalition and discovered that they have a desire to combine council elections with county generals and state primaries. These citizens also supported adding term limits. It was stated that turnout is low for city council elections and having fewer election days could increase voter participation. However, this effort was denied by the council, and citizens were not given the chance to vote on either matter.

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130 "Chattanooga TN Code of Ordinances ." Municode Library, 31 May 2023, [library.municode.com/tn/chattanooga/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT8DIPO\\_CHILE\\_S8.12SA](https://library.municode.com/tn/chattanooga/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT8DIPO_CHILE_S8.12SA).

131 "Top City of Chattanooga Salaries 2022." Chattanooga.Com , 30 June 2022, [www.chattanooga.com/2022/6/29/451614/Top-City-Of-Chattanooga-Salaries-2022.aspx](http://www.chattanooga.com/2022/6/29/451614/Top-City-Of-Chattanooga-Salaries-2022.aspx).

132 Floyd, David. "Push to Change Chattanooga Election Schedule, Set Term Limits for City Council Fails." Chattanooga Times Free Press, 16 Mar. 2023, [www.timesfreepress.com/news/2023/mar/15/change-chattanooga-election-schedule-set-term-limits-fails-ftp/](https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2023/mar/15/change-chattanooga-election-schedule-set-term-limits-fails-ftp/).

# COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA CITY COUNCIL

## Population & Demographics, 2020<sup>133</sup> <sup>134</sup>

**POPULATION:**

139,698

**AREA:**

136.78 square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

28.2

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$32,954

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$193,100

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

46.1%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

50.7% of the population are white, 40.9% are African American, and 5.6% are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

50% are female, 50% are male

**EDUCATION:**

90.5% completed high school or higher, 44.7% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

24.3% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Education services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services

133 "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Columbia City, South Carolina." Quickfacts, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/columbiacitysouthcarolina](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/columbiacitysouthcarolina). Accessed 31 May 2023.

134 "Columbia, SC." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/columbia-sc/](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/columbia-sc/).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>135</sup>

The Columbia City Council operates under the council-manager form of government, effective July 1, 2024, and consists of the mayor, four council district members, and two at-large council members. The mayor and council make policies and enact laws, while the city manager serves as the chief executive officer of the city and head of the administrative branch of the city government. The mayor is elected from the city at-large and is recognized as head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes and by the governor for purposes of military law. The mayor presides over the meetings of the city council unless otherwise provided by the council but has no regular administrative duties. The council appoints a city manager by a majority vote for an indefinite term. The city manager is required to attend all meetings of the council unless excused by the council in order to keep the council advised of the status of matters pending for council consideration, make recommendations and present ordinances and resolutions for council action, participate in the discussion of any matter involving the welfare of the city, and present items on the council agenda. The council evaluates the performance of the city manager on an annual basis. The timely completion of the council's goals and work plan objectives is used as a measure in the city manager's evaluation.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>136 137</sup>

The salary of the mayor is \$75,000 annually, and the salary for each member of the city council is \$13,350 annually. The city manager currently makes \$228,314.01 annually. For the years 2022 – 2023, the city budget is \$164,810,594, the council budget is \$845,927, and the city manager's budget is \$793,930.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>138</sup>

In May 2023, the City of Columbia hosted its second and final public forum to gain feedback on the Heart of Connect Columbia Comprehensive Plan. This meeting was attended by several citizens and business owners, many of whom took advantage of the opportunity to provide input. City employees expressed the need to review the comprehensive plan every three–five years due to how fast the city is growing to ensure that the vision of the plan continues to align with community needs and desires. Ultimately the city was praised for its transparency and work to gain public opinion on the plan and strategic direction of the city, with one individual stating, “I feel like the city has done a good job in making us aware. And that's not just as a business owner, but as a citizen...I like the idea that they are really trying to be intentional with this.”

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135 “Columbia, South Carolina .” Code of Ordinances , 10 Apr. 2023, library.municode.com/sc/columbia/codes/code\_of\_ordinances?nodeId=CO-OR\_CH2AD\_ARTIIMACOMA\_DIV1GE\_S2-32CIMA.

136 “City of Columbia Salaries Over \$50,000 as of July 1, 2021 .” Human Resources , 1 July 2021, hr.columbiasc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/City-of-Columbia-Salaries-Over.pdf.

137 “City of Columbia - Budget Office .” FY 2022-2023, budget.columbiasc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/FY-22-23-Budget-for-Web-6-21-22.pdf. Accessed 31 May 2023.

138 Powell, Jay. “City Staff Says ‘The Public Is a Key Element’ in Connect Columbia Plan.” Yahoo! News, 24 May 2023, news.yahoo.com/city-staff-says-public-key-141129360.html.



# ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA CITY COUNCIL

## Population & Demographics<sup>139 140</sup>

**POPULATION:**

93,776

**AREA:**

45.47 square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

39.6

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$37,392

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$291,800

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

50.6%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

81.4% of the population are white, 10.9% are African American, and 7% are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

52.2% are female, 47.8% are male

**EDUCATION:**

93.3% completed high school or higher, 50.8% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

13.3% below poverty line

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and retail trade

139 "U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Asheville City, North Carolina." Quickfacts , 2020, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ashevillescitynorth-carolina/PST045222](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ashevillescitynorth-carolina/PST045222).

140 "Asheville, NC." Data USA, 2020, [datausa.io/profile/geo/asheville-nc](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/asheville-nc).

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>141 142</sup>

The City of Asheville operates under the council-manager form of government. The council is composed of a mayor and six council members who are all elected at-large. Council members serve four-year staggered terms. The council also appoints a city manager whose job is to oversee day-to-day city operations and execute the council's laws and policies. The mayor's term of office is four years. The city manager is appointed for an indefinite term and acts as the chief executive officer of the city. A member of the council is appointed vice mayor by the city council.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>143 144</sup>

The current annual salary of city council members is \$16,823. The current annual salaries of the mayor and vice mayor are \$22,898 and \$19,003, respectively. The city manager's annual salary is \$231,138. The annual operating budget for the City of Asheville is \$216,895,708 for 2022 – 2023. For 2022 – 2023, the office of the city manager has a budget of \$1,426,430 and the city council has a budget of \$249,215.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>145</sup>

The Asheville City Council voted in February 2023 to end “check-in” meetings after they were called into question due to concerns regarding legality and transparency. These meetings were held with one to three council members and occurred behind closed doors. These meetings will now be work sessions with public agenda briefings. This change also created a more formal framework for receiving and documenting legal advice received in check-ins. The council members have been supportive of this change, and the public believes this will increase transparency.

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141 “Meet City Council.” The City of Asheville, 9 May 2023, [www.ashevillenc.gov/government/meet-city-council/](http://www.ashevillenc.gov/government/meet-city-council/).

142 “Asheville, North Carolina Code of Ordinances.” American Legal Publishing, Nov. 2022, [codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/ashevillenc/latest/asheville\\_nc/0-0-0-1](http://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/ashevillenc/latest/asheville_nc/0-0-0-1).

143 Honosky, Sarah. “Asheville Council Considers 4% Salary Increases for City Employees, 2.5% for New Hires.” The Asheville Citizen Times, 27 Apr. 2022, [www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2022/04/27/asheville-council-hears-proposal-city-employee-salary-increases/9543734002/](http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2022/04/27/asheville-council-hears-proposal-city-employee-salary-increases/9543734002/).

144 “FY23 Adopted Budget .” City of Asheville , 2022, [drive.google.com/file/d/1A5cpxsucJ4saUYnDOJ2PJMXTs67vvvOT/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A5cpxsucJ4saUYnDOJ2PJMXTs67vvvOT/view).

145 Honosky, Sarah. “‘Big Win’ for Open Meetings: City Council Does Away With Regular ‘Check-in’ Meetings.” The Asheville Citizen Times, 15 Feb. 2023, [www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2023/02/14/asheville-city-council-does-away-with-regular-check-in-meeting-format/69904913007/](http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2023/02/14/asheville-city-council-does-away-with-regular-check-in-meeting-format/69904913007/).

# BALDWIN, ALABAMA CITY COMMISSION

## Population & Demographics<sup>146 147</sup>

**POPULATION:**

246,435

**AREA:**

1589.84 square miles

**MEDIAN AGE:**

43.2

**AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:**

\$35,384

**MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE:**

\$211,600

**HOMEOWNERSHIP:**

77.1%

**RACE & ETHNICITY:**

87.4% of the population are white, 8.6% are African American, and 4.8% are Hispanic or Latino

**GENDER:**

51.3% are female, 48.7% are male

**EDUCATION:**

91% completed high school or higher, 32.5% received a bachelor's degree or higher

**POVERTY RATE:**

10.8%

**LARGEST INDUSTRIES:**

Construction, elementary and secondary schools, and restaurants and food services

146 "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Baldwin County, Alabama." Census Bureau QuickFacts. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/baldwincountyalabama>.

147 "Baldwin County PUMA, AL." Data USA. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/baldwin-county-puma-al>.

## Council Structure, Size, & Operations<sup>148</sup>

Baldwin County, 10 years older than the State of Alabama, remains Alabama's largest county and has the distinction of having four seats of county government throughout its history. The Baldwin County Commission operates under a county commission. The commission's four members work alongside the administration department, and all report to the county administrator. All commission members are elected at-large, every four years.

At the first commission meeting in January of each year, deemed the Organizational Meeting, each commissioner is designated or elected among themselves to exercise one of the following duties per commissioner:

- **Chairman & Purchasing Division Commissioner**, authorized, among other things, to preside over meetings, sign warrants and act as purchasing agent.
- **Road & Bridge Commissioner**, authorized among other things, to recommend to the commission the location, construction, maintenance and repair of all roads and bridges in the county and render assistance to State Highway Department with work in the county.
- **Finance & Taxation Commissioner** authorized, among other things, to keep the commission informed as to the financial condition of the county and gather information necessary for the proper valuation of property in the county.
- **Civic & Industrial Commissioner** authorized, among other things, to survey the natural resources in the county to ensure they are fully developed and utilized and act as a liaison with all communities, municipalities, and State agencies.

## Council Compensation & Budget<sup>149 150 151 152</sup>

The annual basic compensation of each member of the county commission is the average of the median annual household income in Baldwin County for the previous four years as ascertained and adjusted each four-year term by the State Department of Labor to take effect on the first day of November the first year of each four-year term. Commission members elected to serve the 2022 – 2026 term receive \$63,563 annually. The county commission member serving as the chair of the commission receives an additional \$5,000 annually.

The county administrator's annual salary is \$135,478. The total county commission budget for 2022-23 is \$21,715,610 which includes \$21,199,423 worth of fund transfers, bringing the commission office expenditures to \$516,187. The administrator and central administration budget is \$1,092,229. The total operating budget for Baldwin County is \$240.9 million.

## Relevant Media Coverage<sup>153</sup>

In May 2023, a previous council member prepared a resolution that would add a fifth member to the commission. It was shot down by the commission in the most recent meeting, but the former council member believes that this legislation will pass soon. He cites the frequent 2-2 deadlock votes, the growing county budget, and the need for a full-time central chairperson as the basis for this desired change. This is not the first time Baldwin has seen a push for an additional commissioner. This issue was considered in 2018 as well.

148 "County Administration." BCC. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://baldwincountyal.gov/departments/county-administration>.

149 "Alabama Code Title 45." Findlaw, 1 Jan. 2019, [codes.findlaw.com/al/title-45-local-laws/al-code-sect-45-2-70-01.html](https://codes.findlaw.com/al/title-45-local-laws/al-code-sect-45-2-70-01.html).

150 "Estimate of Median Household Income for Baldwin County, AL." Economic Research , 21 Dec. 2022, [fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MHI-AL01003A052NCEN](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MHI-AL01003A052NCEN).

151 "Baldwin County Fiscal Year 2023 Budget." Home. Accessed June 5, 2023. [https://baldwincountyal.gov/docs/default-source/budget-documents/fy-budgets/2022-2023-fy-budget.pdf?sfvrsn=5faf02c4\\_1](https://baldwincountyal.gov/docs/default-source/budget-documents/fy-budgets/2022-2023-fy-budget.pdf?sfvrsn=5faf02c4_1).

152 Busby, Guy. "Baldwin County budget hits record \$240.9 million." Gulf Coast Media. [https://gulfcoastmedia.com/stories/baldwin-county-budget-hits-record-2409 million,133500#:~:text=The%20Baldwin%20County%20Commission%20voted](https://gulfcoastmedia.com/stories/baldwin-county-budget-hits-record-2409-million,133500#:~:text=The%20Baldwin%20County%20Commission%20voted)

153 "A Fifth County Commissioner for Baldwin County? Senator Presses the Issue, Commissioners Say No." A Fifth County Commissioner for Baldwin County? Senator Presses the Issue, Commissioners Say No - Gulf Coast Media. Last modified May 4, 2023. <https://gulfcoastmedia.com/stories/a-fifth-county-commissioner-for-baldwin,166859>.

# FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

Through the literature review, comparable council analysis, and stakeholder interviews, it was discovered that increasing or decreasing the size of a council comes with trade-offs and there is no precise method of determining the size of a governmental body that will maximize performance on all legislative goals. However, the predominant takeaway of the research and interviews conducted is that the optimal size for a city council is the size that best aids in implementing policy/political goals while addressing the concerns of constituents.

Other notable findings include the following:

- From 2000 to 2021, St. Tammany Parish's population grew by 40.2%. The average per capita income increased by 22.3%. The median property value has more than doubled. The parish as a whole has become more educated. Homeownership has dropped. The gender ratio remained constant, and the poverty line increased by 3.6%.
- There is a very low degree of wealth disparity across St. Tammany Parish, which may indicate that a wide level of representation is not needed.
- Across the U.S., the most common council size is seven or nine members.
- The average council size of the comparable councils assessed in this report is nine, and the median council size of comparable councils assessed in this report is seven.
- The population of a city/parish does not appear to have an influence on council size or structure.
- Generally, the lower the average per capita income in an area, the smaller the size of the council.
- Generally, the lower the percentage of the population that has a bachelor's degree or higher, the larger the council is in size, and vice versa.
- A Legislative Branch with governance over a population size of 200,000 or more is considered large. Council members of large Legislative Branches work 42 hours per week on average, and 3/4 of these councils pay their council members \$20,000 or more per year.
- Of the councils assessed that employ part-time councilors, the average annual salary is \$19,987.15.
- Councils of larger size typically spend more than councils with fewer members.
- The most common type of governance across councils in the U.S. is the Council-Manager form of government.
- Election methods (at-large, district, ward, etc.) are more crucial to minority representation than council size.
- A smaller council is more likely to generate interest in full-time councilors. Conversely, a larger council is more likely to result in a part-time council because it will reduce the workload faced by each councilor and increase the total cost of the council.
- Term limits on council positions are rare overall but are most commonly found in communities with 100,000 residents or more.
- Utilization of an Office of Inspector General is mostly viewed as a fiscally sound decision for Legislative Branches.
- Among comparable councils assessed, the lack of transparency with the public was the most predominant issue reported in the media.

# OPTIONS CONSIDERED

## Continue Operating Under the Current Size and Structure of the Council

### PROS

- No new ordinances need to be passed and no legislative changes must occur.
- Public confusion and media coverage resulting in changing council size or structure can be avoided.
- Individuals not in favor of changing size or structure are satisfied.

### CONS

- St. Tammany has not changed the make-up of its council since transitioning from the police jury system despite all of the changes in the parish. Continuing to operate in the same model may result in missed opportunities and could be perceived as not meeting the demands of the growing population.
- Organizational inefficiencies and council member frustrations may continue.
- Council members may represent only the interests of their districts, not the whole parish.

## Reduce the Size of the Council

### PROS

- When the home rule charter was established, citizens were not given the chance to vote on council size, but if the council structure is reduced, the parish could do so in a way that allows for citizen input. After reviewing media coverage from many Legislative Branches, concerns typically originate when public input is ignored or the public is not engaged in important matters.
- An opportunity can be created to increase council member salaries without increasing the budget and an opportunity to change election methods and move to full-time positions.
- Reducing the size of the council to seven or nine members is supported by the data contained in this report.
- Councils of larger size typically spend more than councils with fewer members.

### CONS

- Decreasing the number of council members will require redistricting. The parish would need fewer districts, thereby increasing the size of each district.
- There are concerns regarding a reduction in representation as a result of downsizing.

## Add At-Large Members

### PROS

- Council members in an at-large system can be more impartial, rise above the limited perspective of a single district, and concern themselves with the problems of the whole community.
- Many concerns voiced in the stakeholder interviews affected the entire parish and the majority of stakeholders saw value in a hybrid election method.
- Because at-large members are not required to reside in any certain district, these positions could increase the candidate pool for council members.

### CONS

- A lack of representation for certain geographical areas and minorities is possible.
- To add at-large members without increasing the council size, the number of districts in the parish must decrease and the parish will have to redistrict. In some Legislative Branches with at-large members, the at-large members receive a higher salary than district council members, this would require changes to the charter.

## Add Inspector General Position

### PROS

- Offices of inspector generals have been found to pay for themselves in the long run. These offices are revenue-generating and encourage responsible spending.
- This office could increase transparency and accountability for the council and the entire parish – a concern that was raised in some stakeholder interviews and a consistent theme in the council's media coverage.
- Many media articles highlighted issues in Legislative Branches that required an independent auditor or that brought on a lawsuit. An independent inspector could be expected to decrease such instances.

### CONS

- This addition has associated costs. The salary of the inspector general in Jefferson Parish is \$190,000 and in New Orleans is over \$200,000. The office budgets in Jefferson and New Orleans are \$1.4 million and \$3.6 million, respectively.
- There are many steps to adding this office, including but not limited to amending the charter, creating a group to appoint the inspector, and reallocating funds to this office.

## Switch to Full-Time Council Positions

### PROS

- Councils with full-time positions generally can impact greater change because councilors are more accessible to constituents.
- With a population of over 250,000 people, St. Tammany is considered a large parish. Input from stakeholder interviews and research analysis found that council members from large counties, parishes, cities, or towns that are considered part-time typically work well over 20 hours per week making full-time positions more in line with the workload expected of the St. Tammany Parish Council.
- Because council members currently have numerous responsibilities, yet they are officially part-time members, many of the members are retirees or self-employed. Creating full-time council seats could result in a larger candidate pool.
- Changing to full-time positions would likely increase the annual salary of council members, which may further increase the candidate pool.

### CONS

- A transition to full-time councilors would likely require an increase in the council budget. Of all surveyed Legislative Branches, those with full-time members had the largest council budgets and highest council salaries.
- Changes to council member salaries require the passage of a new ordinance.
- The majority of councils in the U.S. and councils surveyed in this report employ part-time councilors, which may make the decision to switch to full-time positions less defensible.

# STEPS TO CHANGE COUNCIL STRUCTURE

The steps detailed below outline the processes that must be followed to change the council structure, should the council consider the options presented in this report.

## AMENDING THE CHARTER:

- Proposing amendments to the charter requires an ordinance. Ordinances require form, procedure, and approval. Proposals to amend are made by a two-thirds vote from the council, or through a petition signed by at least 20% of the number of registered voters of the parish.
- Within 30 days the amendment must be published in the official journal.
- Next, the amendment proposal must be submitted for voting. This can take place at a previously scheduled election, or at a special election at least 30 days from the publication in the journal.

## REAPPORTIONMENT:

- After each census, and at least six months prior to a council member election, the council should alter the district boundaries if necessary. Plans must be compliant with all federal and state laws. Currently, the charter states “The reapportionment plan shall provide for a single member district for each member of the council.”. This may need to be altered if at-large members are added.

## ADDING AN EMPLOYEE TO THE COUNCIL:

- The council may, by ordinance approved by two-thirds of its authorized membership, authorize the hiring of such other employees as may be necessary to assist the council in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. Every ordinance must be approved by the parish president.

## ADDING AN INSPECTOR GENERAL:

- There are many changes that will need to be made at the parish level to update the charter including the addition of the office and allocation of funds for this office.
- Section 4-12 of the Home Rule Charter (Administration reorganization) states,
  - The president may propose to the council the creation, change, alteration, consolidation or abolition of parish departments, offices and agencies and the reallocation of the functions, powers, duties and responsibilities of such departments, offices, or agencies, including those provided for in this charter.
  - Upon receipt of the president's proposed plan of reorganization, the presiding officer of the council shall cause to be introduced an ordinance to implement the proposed reorganization plan. The ordinance shall follow the same procedure as provided in the section on "Ordinances in General" of this charter.
  - The reorganization plan submitted by the president shall become effective if the council fails to act on the proposed reorganization within 90 days of its submission to the council.
- Section 5-02 (Operating budget preparation and adoption) states:
  - At least 90 days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the president shall submit to the council a proposed operating budget in the form required by this charter.
  - At the time and place so advertised, the council shall hold a public hearing on the budget as submitted. Changes in the proposed operating budget by the council shall be by favorable vote of at least a majority of the authorized membership of the council. Upon final adoption, the budget shall be in effect for the budget year and copies shall be filed with the clerk of the council.
- A board/committee to appoint the inspector general must be appointed.



