

## Intergovernmental Collaboration Between the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County

### Purpose

This policy brief summarizes key findings from the Intergovernmental Collaboration Study, prepared by PFM in 2011, which examined opportunities for the **City of St. Louis** and **St. Louis County** to improve efficiency and service delivery through **shared services and cooperation**, without changing political boundaries or governance structures.

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### Background

- The City and County have been formally separated since 1876, resulting in **fixed boundaries and fragmented service delivery**.
  - Missouri has one of the highest numbers of local governments in the United States, creating duplication and inefficiencies.
  - Multiple constitutional amendments permit cooperation or consolidation, but **full consolidation efforts have repeatedly failed**.
  - Fiscal stress following the 2008–2009 recession intensified the need for **cost containment and operational efficiency**.
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### Key Findings

The study identifies substantial opportunities for collaboration across most service areas. Shared service opportunities generally fall into four categories:

- **Economies of scale**
- **Combined purchasing power**
- **Co-location of services**
- **Use of excess capacity**

High-potential areas include:

- **Administration** (shared purchasing, training, and administrative functions)
- **Finance** (shared tax assessment and collection systems)
- **Public Works** (joint fuel purchasing, fleet standardization)

- **Public Safety** (shared electronic monitoring for non-violent offenders)

Other areas, such as **health and human services**, are more likely to improve service quality and outcomes than generate direct fiscal savings.

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### **Fiscal Implications**

- The study cautions that precise savings estimates are difficult due to implementation, political, and external factors.
  - Nevertheless, PFM estimates that **successful implementation of key initiatives could yield \$10–\$40 million in combined annual savings.**
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### **Policy Implication**

Intergovernmental collaboration offers a **practical, incremental alternative** to structural consolidation, capable of delivering meaningful cost savings while improving service coordination across the region.