

Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County Unification Survey



September 2012

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates - FM3
Public Opinion Research & Strategy

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Introduction and Methodology

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) conducted a survey of Missouri voters by telephone (both landline and cell phone) regarding the concept of unifying Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County. The survey interviews were collected between September 4th and 9th, 2012. Two hundred randomly selected voters each were polled in the City of Saint Louis and the County of Saint Louis. Three hundred randomly selected voters were interviewed in the balance of the state.

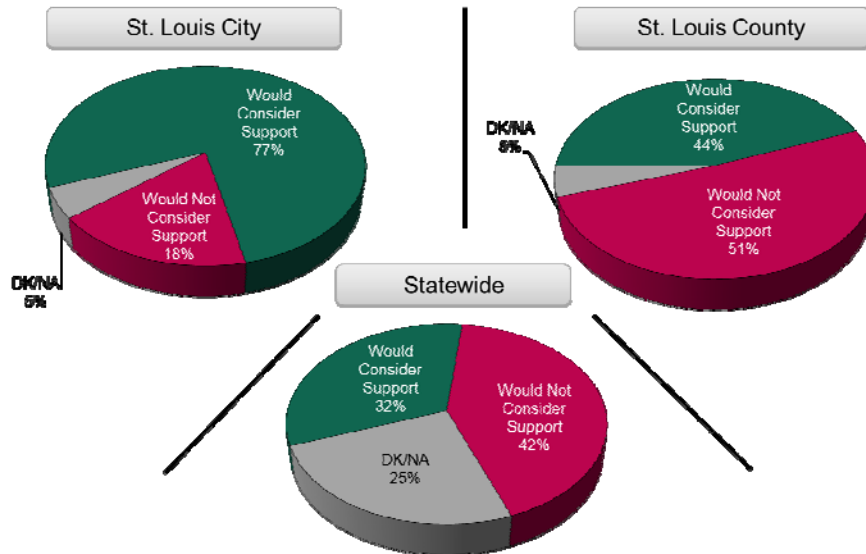
The margin of error due to pure chance for City of Saint Louis and the Country of Saint Louis voter samples is plus or minus 6.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The error margin for interviews in the balance of the state is plus or minus 5.6 percent. Weighting the Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County respondents to their true proportion on a statewide basis renders a statewide sampling of voter opinion with an error margin of plus or minus 3.6 percent.

In all, the survey took 23 minutes to complete on average. The survey's questions went from the general to the specific as details of and arguments for and against two unification options – “Full Unification” of the City and County and adding a “New Municipality” to Saint Louis County -- were supplied to respondents. In a rough sense, this research design simulates a campaign for each of the two unification options.

Basic City-County Unification Concept

When asked whether they would consider supporting a Missouri “constitutional amendment that would unify Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County,” a large majority of voters in Saint Louis City (77 percent) answered affirmatively. But voters in Saint Louis County and in Missouri as a whole were much less enthusiastic for the idea as Figure 1 shows.

**Figure 1:
Consider Support for Constitutional Amendment to Unify Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County**



Statewide, high propensity voters, men, self-identified liberals, self-identified Democrats and college educated voters are notably more inclined than other voter groupings to consider supporting a constitutional amendment to unify Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County. Because of the high overall number in the City of Saint Louis that says it would consider supporting a unification constitutional amendment, variations in potential support for a unification measure are smaller. St Louis County voters look more like voters statewide rather than Saint Louis City voters.

Support For and Choice Between Unification Approaches

Immediately following the test of likely support for the concept of a constitutional amendment to unify Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County, respondents were provided with bullet point summaries of two different approaches to unification, the “Full Unification” approach and the “New Municipality” approach. The “Full Unification” approach is a more radical departure from current local government structures while the New Municipality” approach follows an existing model for municipal and county government. The summaries for each unification approach are provided below:

FULL UNIFICATION

- Extend the boundaries of Saint Louis County to include the territory of the City of Saint Louis;
- Consolidate all government functions within Saint Louis County departments that are now exercised by Saint Louis City such as the city jail system, health department, the Sheriff’s department and the records recorder;
- Eliminate municipal governments within Saint Louis County, including the

government of the former City of Saint Louis and create a representative County legislative body, which would hire a non-partisan Chief County Administrative officer;

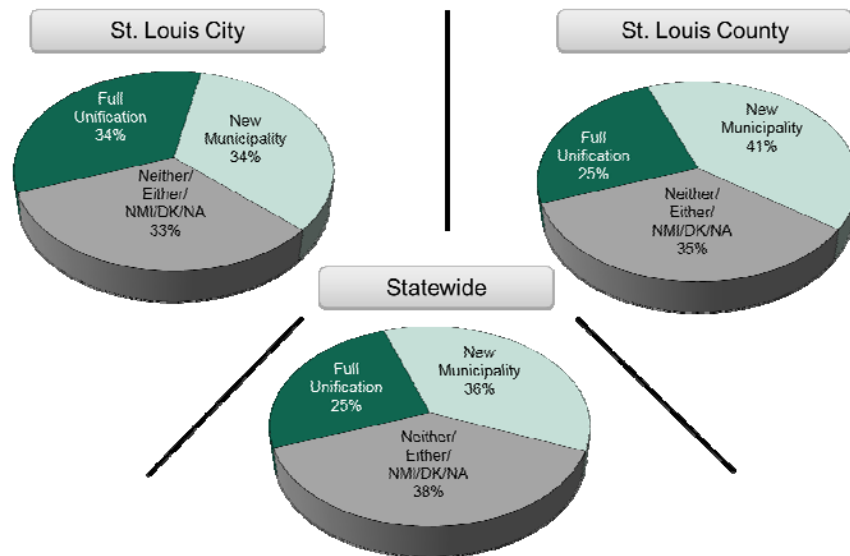
- Create an elected County Mayor who appoints department chiefs confirmed by the County legislative body;
- Complete the unification process within four years, phasing out overlapping and conflicting County and city government departments.

NEW MUNICIPALITY

- Extend the boundaries of Saint Louis County to include the territory of the City of Saint Louis;
- The City of Saint Louis would become the 91st municipality in Saint Louis County, like Florissant and Kirkwood, for example;
- Phase out duplicate City of Saint Louis departments such as the jail system, health department, the Sheriff’s department and the records recorder;
- Maintain municipal control of the police and fire departments and local land use zoning

Figure 2 shows that a third or slightly more refused to express a choice between the two unification approaches – which includes about a quarter who said “neither” approach. However, unification advocates should consider it a positive that approximately two-thirds of each of the three electorates expressed a choice on a subject that definitely is not top of mind and has been mostly a topic for discussion within limited expert groups.

**Figure 2:
Choice Between “Full Unification” and “New Municipality”**



While Saint Louis City voters registered a slightly larger number choosing the more sweeping “Full Unification” approach, voters statewide and in Saint Louis County gave pluralities to the more limited “New Municipality,” thus indicating an important difference of preference between Saint Louis City and County voters, as well as voters statewide. Table 1 below presents the most significant volunteered reasons why one or the other approach was preferred by voters in the City, County and Statewide samples. These comments show that voters seem to capture the main differences between the two approaches and make their choice based on preference for a more or a less radical approach to City-County unification.

**Table 1:
Reasons volunteered for Choice Between “Full Unification” and
“New Municipality” Approaches**

Statewide			
Full Unification		New Municipality	
Reason	%	Reason	%
More complete solution / streamlined / reasonable way to solve problem	16%	Makes sense / simpler approach / more manageable	16%
Eliminating municipal governments / waste to have two governments	15%	Merging the city with the county is a poor choice / should be separate	9%
Combine police and fire to be more safe	10%	Keeps the city in charge of its own government	8%
Want both city and county to merge / combine	10%	This is how most cities and counties in Missouri are now	5%
Less money when you cut out overlapping / save money	9%	Merger would help the city financially / would not lose tax dollars	4%
County would have more say of how government is run	6%	The Full Unification includes too much change	3%
		It would integrate the whole city and county together	
		Eliminates different departments and conditions/overlapping of services	
		Have control over the police and fire departments	
		Will allow city and county to maintain their individuality	

**Table 1, Continued:
Reasons volunteered for Choice Between “Full Unification” and “New Municipality” Approaches**

County			
Full Unification		New Municipality	
Reason	%	Reason	%
More complete solution / streamlined / reasonable way to solve problem	28%	Makes sense/simpler approach/more manageable	16%
Want both city and county to merge/combine	19%	Keeps the city in charge of its own government	7%
Eliminating municipal governments / waste to have two governments	18%	Merger would help the city financially/would not lose tax dollars	7%
Combine police and fire to be more safe	7%	The county would be more aware if they handled all aspects	7%
Result in a fresh change in the area	6%	The Full Unification includes too much change	6%
Less money when you cut out overlapping / save money	5%	Saves a lot of money	6%

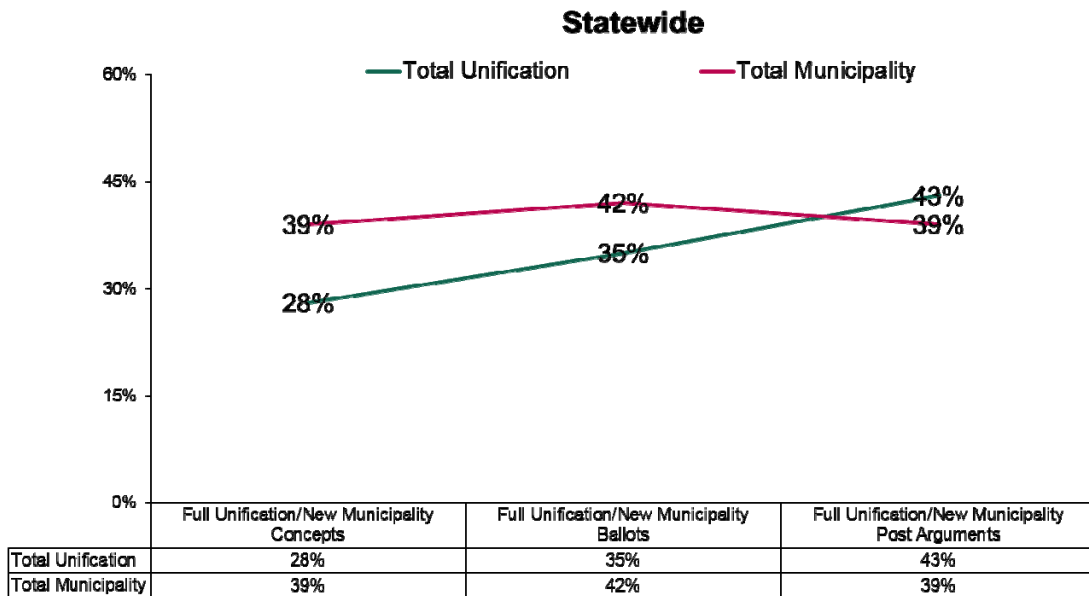
City			
Full Unification		New Municipality	
Reason	%	Reason	%
More complete solution / streamlined / reasonable way to solve problem	31%	Makes sense/simpler approach/more manageable	23%
Eliminating municipal governments / waste to have two governments	24%	It would integrate the whole city and county together	12%
Want both city and county to merge/combine	21%	Keeps the city in charge of its own government	11%
Better distribution of services / eliminating duplication of services	10%	Better for the city/more fair to the city	8%
Like having one person in charge / Too many appointed jobs in the city	10%	Will allow City and County to maintain their individuality	4%
County would have more say of how government is run	8%	Merging the city with the county is a poor choice / should be separate	3%

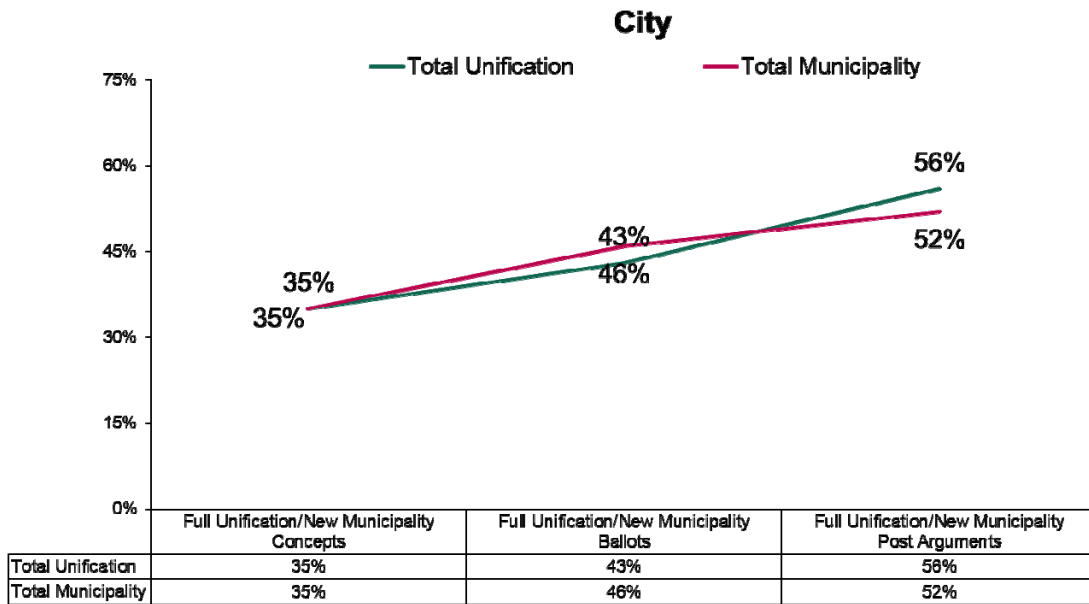
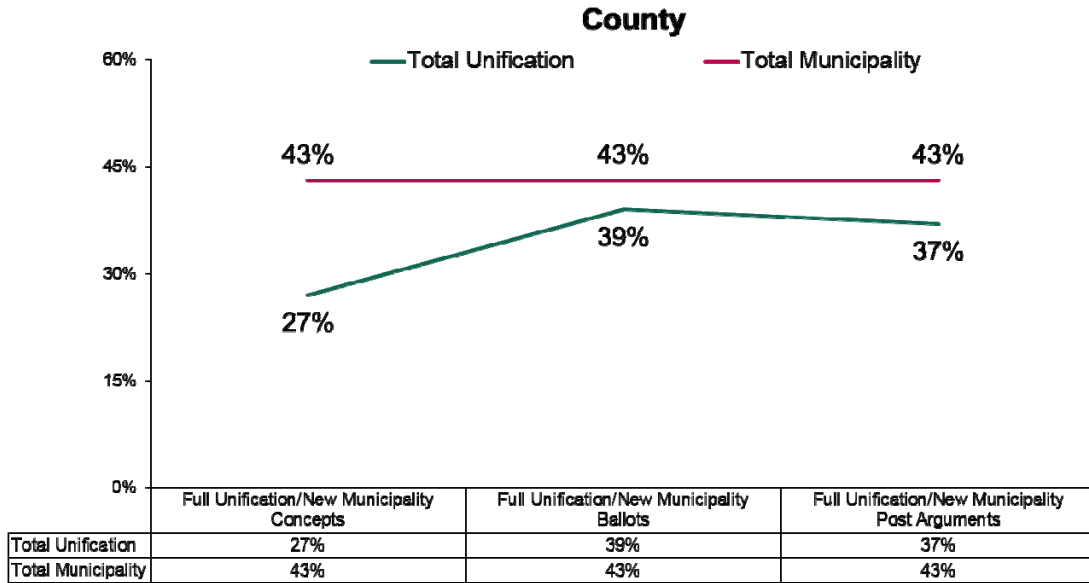
Figure 3 traces the support or preference for the two unification approaches through the course of the survey questionnaire. Beginning with an initial question regarding choice between the two options, (shown in Figure 2), voters statewide move from a plurality in favor of the “New Municipality” approach to a plurality in favor of the “Full Unification” after hearing batteries of supporting arguments for both concepts. City voters move from slightly more than a third in favor of “Full Unification” to a majority in favor of this more far reaching approach to unification. In contrast to voters statewide and in the City of

Saint Louis, a plurality of voters in Saint Louis County favor the “New Municipality” option throughout the survey.

Figure 3 also shows that the more survey respondents answered the survey’s questions, the more engaged they became with the unification issue by offering substantive responses to the favor/oppose or choice questions regarding the two unification approaches. These responses suggest that public discussion and/or organized communications on the unification issue would increase interest more broadly than currently exists.

**Figure 3:
Progression of Support for Unification Approaches Through
the Course of the Survey**





Prior to hearing argumentation in favor of each unification approach, survey respondents were asked regarding each unification option whether they would vote for it if it were on the statewide ballot in 2014. The middle column in Figure 3 shows the results statewide and for the County and City. The less radical “New Municipality” approach obtained small pluralities in each voter venue.

Table 2 provides the demographics of the vote for each unification approach if it were on the 2014 ballot. Statewide for “Full Unification,” these tables show little difference in support according to demographics. However, younger voters (18-49 years), show slightly more support compared to older voters. Voters identifying as independents not leaning to either major political party are a little more inclined toward “Full Unification” than self-identified Democrats or Republicans. Voters earning more than \$60,000 annually are also more supportive of the “Full Unification” approach by a noticeable margin. African-Americans are less enthusiastic than whites for this option.

There are no important differences at the statewide level according to gender, education level or having children at home. regarding a 2014 vote for “Full Unification.”

In contrast, as regards the “New Municipality” approach among statewide voters, men, voters who consider themselves to be either Republicans or Democrat, younger voters, and those with a college education or more show a tendency to favor this option.

Results for Saint Louis County show somewhat different patterns according the demographic groupings. First, more than eight in ten voters expressed an opinion about how they would vote if either of these two approaches were on the 2014 ballot. Also, political party differences are marked with more than three in five Republicans opposing either unification approach. Fifty percent of Democrats favor the “New Municipality” approach while 43 percent of Democrats say they would vote for the “Full Unification” concept. Support for “Full Unification” is noticeably higher among women, voters 18-49 years of age, political independents, non-college educated voters and voters earning less than \$60,000 annually.

Support and opposition for the “New Municipality” option is more evenly divided among demographic groups except by party, where Democrats and independents are much more amenable to this option than Republicans. Support for the “New Municipality” approach has no gender difference or income differentiation of note.

Pluralities of 43 and 46 percent of Saint Louis City voters say they would vote for the “Full Unification” and the “New Municipality” approaches respectively, if one or the other were on the 2014 state ballot. There is a gender gap with men being much more likely to express an opinion and to support either approach as compared to women voters. Political party is also a factor: Republicans are much more inclined to favor the “New Municipality” approach over “Full Unification.” Democrats are more evenly split in support and opposition to either concept, as are African-American voters. Although there are no important differences by education, higher income voters (\$60,000 a year or more)

are much more supportive of either approach compared to voters with income less than \$60,000 a year.

**Table 2:
Demographics of Support and Opposition for Unification Approaches if
They Were on the 2014 Ballot**

Statewide				
Demographic Group	Full Unification		New Municipality	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All Voters	35%	37%	42%	33%
Gender				
Men	36%	39%	46%	32%
Women	34%	35%	38%	34%
Age				
18-49	40%	39%	46%	33%
50+	33%	35%	39%	33%
65+	34%	33%	38%	32%
Race				
African-American	27%	58%	44%	41%
White	37%	34%	43%	31%
Non-white	31%	50%	35%	46%
Party				
Democrat	37%	41%	46%	45%
Independent	42%	30%	39%	37%
Republican	35%	36%	44%	31%
Education				
Non-College	34%	35%	39%	32%
College+	37%	39%	44%	34%
Children at home				
Yes	36%	39%	45%	40%
No/Refused	35%	36%	40%	35%
Income				
< \$60k	32%	33%	39%	32%
\$60k +	39%	36%	42%	36%

**Table 2, Continued:
Demographics of Support and Opposition for Unification Approaches if
They Were on the 2014 Ballot**

County				
Demographic Group	Full Unification		New Municipality	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All Voters	39%	47%	43%	43%
Gender				
Men	34%	51%	43%	46%
Women	43%	44%	43%	40%
Age				
18-49	49%	40%	45%	46%
50+	33%	51%	42%	41%
65+	36%	47%	41%	43%
Race				
African-American	38%	46%	39%	38%
White	41%	45%	43%	44%
Non-white	39%	50%	32%	52%
Party				
Democrat	43%	37%	50%	28%
Independent	60%	22%	41%	47%
Republican	29%	62%	31%	62%
Education				
Non-College	45%	40%	46%	40%
College+	35%	51%	41%	45%
Children at home				
Yes	36%	48%	25%	61%
No/Refused	40%	46%	51%	36%
Income				
< \$60k	46%	42%	41%	48%
\$60k +	39%	46%	43%	43%

**Table 2, Continued:
Demographics of Support and Opposition for Unification Approaches if
They Were on the 2014 Ballot**

Demographic Group	City			
	Full Unification		New Municipality	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All Voters	43%	33%	46%	35%
Gender				
Men	57%	26%	63%	28%
Women	31%	38%	32%	40%
Age				
18-49	47%	22%	50%	31%
50+	40%	41%	43%	38%
65+	57%	33%	53%	34%
Race				
African-American	43%	38%	44%	43%
White	41%	31%	46%	30%
Non-white	45%	38%	44%	43%
Party				
Democrat	42%	41%	45%	40%
Independent	53%	14%	40%	27%
Republican	43%	20%	71%	20%
Education				
Non-College	43%	29%	45%	32%
College+	43%	39%	48%	38%
Children at home				
Yes	55%	19%	63%	22%
No/Refused	39%	37%	41%	39%
Income				
< \$60k	38%	35%	44%	37%
\$60k +	58%	25%	61%	27%

Response to Arguments for the Two Unification Approaches.

Survey respondents were read batteries of statements in favor of each unification approach. After hearing each statement in favor of a given unification approach, respondents were asked if hearing it made them more inclined to support that specific approach to County-City unification.

The final column to the right in Figure 3 shows support for the two unification approaches recorded after respondents evaluated individual arguments in favor of each approach. As this graph shows, support for the “Full Unification” approach reaches a majority in the City of Saint Louis while a plurality in favor emerged for this concept among voters statewide. County voters, however, maintained the same plurality in favor of the “New Municipality” option. The only change among County voters was a 10 percent increase in support for the “Full Unification” approach, which given the steady percentage for the “New Municipality” would indicate that the “don’t know” or “need more information” responses diminished between the first and final support/opposition questions.

Table 3 provides the demographics of support and opposition after respondents heard arguments favoring one or the other unification approaches. Statewide, there are few variations of note: Younger voters prefer “Full Unification” while older age groups show less support, by comparison, and support either approach about equally. A majority (51 percent) of Republicans statewide – perhaps in response to the messages about greater government cost savings and lower taxes that “Full Unification” promises – supported “Full Unification” after hearing arguments in its favor. Only 42 percent of Republican voters favored the “New Municipality” option after hearing arguments in its favor.

Among Saint Louis County voters, however, Republican and independent support for either unification option pales in contrast to Democrats. Republicans and independent voters in Saint Louis County are particularly skeptical of the “Full Unification” approach. Gender differences among County voters are also important with women more supportive of either unification approach than men.

Among City voters, as with the responses to the 2014 ballot questions, men are more decided than women, and three in five or more favor both unification approaches. Younger (18-49) and older (65+) City voters also favor both approaches more than middle-aged voters. Voters with children at home were also more supportive of both options compared to those without children in the household.

**Table 3:
Approve/Disapprove of Full Unification or New Municipality Approach After
Hearing Statements in Support**

Statewide				
Demographic Group	Full Unification		New Municipality	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All Voters	43%	32%	39%	32%
Gender				
Men	43%	36%	39%	33%
Women	42%	29%	40%	32%
Age				
18-49	49%	30%	40%	35%
50+	39%	34%	40%	31%
65+	38%	33%	40%	30%
Race				
African-American	45%	27%	27%	34%
White	43%	32%	41%	32%
Non-white	42%	33%	28%	39%
Party				
Democrat	43%	34%	42%	31%
Independent	35%	28%	44%	27%
Republican	51%	30%	42%	33%
Education				
Non-College	41%	28%	41%	28%
College+	43%	37%	38%	37%
Children at home				
Yes	43%	27%	38%	33%
No/Refused	42%	35%	40%	32%
Income				
< \$60k	39%	31%	40%	30%
\$60k +	43%	33%	39%	35%

**Table 3, Continued:
Approve/Disapprove of Full Unification or New Municipality Approach After
Hearing Statements in Support**

County				
Demographic Group	Full Unification		New Municipality	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All Voters	37%	49%	43%	44%
Gender				
Men	31%	57%	38%	52%
Women	41%	42%	48%	38%
Age				
18-49	41%	47%	48%	46%
50+	35%	50%	41%	43%
65+	33%	53%	41%	44%
Race				
African-American	57%	33%	44%	30%
White	37%	48%	42%	47%
Non-white	52%	40%	47%	35%
Party				
Democrat	46%	30%	50%	29%
Independent	32%	54%	36%	53%
Republican	31%	64%	42%	52%
Education				
Non-College	44%	47%	43%	44%
College+	33%	50%	44%	44%
Children at home				
Yes	33%	52%	32%	58%
No/Refused	38%	48%	48%	38%
Income				
< \$60k	34%	42%	47%	33%
\$60k +	37%	53%	41%	53%

**Table 3, Continued:
Approve/Disapprove of Full Unification or New Municipality Approach After
Hearing Statements in Support**

City				
Demographic Group	Full Unification		New Municipality	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
All Voters	56%	33%	52%	30%
Gender				
Men	61%	31%	64%	19%
Women	51%	34%	42%	39%
Age				
18-49	62%	28%	55%	24%
50+	51%	36%	50%	34%
65+	66%	28%	64%	27%
Race				
African-American	58%	36%	52%	36%
White	53%	30%	53%	27%
Non-white	57%	37%	51%	35%
Party				
Democrat	49%	39%	52%	34%
Independent	62%	23%	47%	30%
Republican	75%	19%	66%	24%
Education				
Non-College	54%	33%	50%	31%
College+	56%	32%	53%	30%
Children at home				
Yes	75%	12%	68%	21%
No/Refused	50%	38%	48%	33%
Income				
< \$60k	57%	32%	56%	28%
\$60k +	63%	26%	54%	28%

The intensity of the effect of the various statements – as measured by the mean score of the multi-value response scale – shows that none of the arguments for either approach achieves a mean score of three, which is a rule-of-thumb score for arguments that translate well into effective political advertising. Nevertheless, the line graphs in Figure 3 illustrate that voters statewide and in Saint Louis County and Saint Louis City can be moved by argumentation in favor of the unification approaches.

The arguments that work the best for both the “Full Unification” and “New Municipality” approaches emphasize that:

- Unification of Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County will help end non-productive competition between Saint Louis region municipalities and focus the region’s energies on opportunities to bring jobs to the Saint Louis region
- Unification could save taxpayers substantial sums of money each year by eliminating City and County duplication of services and departments.

Tables 4 and 5 provide the percentages of voters who say that the various arguments would make them more inclined to support unification approaches, as well as the mean score for each argument.

**Table 4:
Arguments in Support of Full Unification Constitutional Amendment
Ranked by Much More Inclined
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statewide				
Statement	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	Mean Score
“Full Unification” of Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis will help end non-productive competition for businesses and jobs between Saint Louis County municipalities and focus the Saint Louis region’s energies on national and international opportunities to bring new jobs and business to the Saint Louis region.	23%	47%	53%	1.7
The “Full Unification” approach could ultimately save taxpayers 200 million dollars a year by eliminating the numerous duplicate departments in Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis.	22%	50%	50%	1.9
People in the Saint Louis region want to be proud to say they are from Saint Louis. Bringing together the City of Saint Louis with its rich cultural traditions and attractions and Saint Louis County with its economic strength and potential will move Saint Louis ahead on all measures of greatness, from a lower crime rate to greater educational achievement.	21%	45%	55%	1.3
The government cost reductions brought about by “Full Unification” will lead to tax reform and lower tax bills for businesses and individuals alike in the Saint Louis region.	20%	44%	56%	0.8

**Table 4, Continued:
Arguments in Support of Full Unification Constitutional Amendment
Ranked by Much More Inclined
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

County				
Statement	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don't Believe	Mean Score
The “Full Unification” approach could ultimately save taxpayers 200 million dollars a year by eliminating the numerous duplicate departments in Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis.	25%	50%	49%	1.0
“Full Unification” of Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis will help end non-productive competition for businesses and jobs between Saint Louis County municipalities and focus the Saint Louis region’s energies on national and international opportunities to bring new jobs and business to the Saint Louis region.	24%	50%	49%	1.5
People in the Saint Louis region want to be proud to say they are from Saint Louis. Bringing together the City of Saint Louis with its rich cultural traditions and attractions and Saint Louis County with its economic strength and potential will move Saint Louis ahead on all measures of greatness, from a lower crime rate to greater educational achievement.	20%	41%	53%	-0.2
The government cost reductions brought about by “Full Unification” will lead to tax reform and lower tax bills for businesses and individuals alike in the Saint Louis region.	20%	41%	59%	-0.5

**Table 4, Continued:
Arguments in Support of Full Unification Constitutional Amendment
Ranked by Much More Inclined
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statement	City				Mean Score
	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe		
“Full Unification” of Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis will help end non-productive competition for businesses and jobs between Saint Louis County municipalities and focus the Saint Louis region’s energies on national and international opportunities to bring new jobs and business to the Saint Louis region.	34%	61%	39%		2.8
The government cost reductions brought about by “Full Unification” will lead to tax reform and lower tax bills for businesses and individuals alike in the Saint Louis region.	28%	53%	47%		1.8
People in the Saint Louis region want to be proud to say they are from Saint Louis. Bringing together the City of Saint Louis with its rich cultural traditions and attractions and Saint Louis County with its economic strength and potential will move Saint Louis ahead on all measures of greatness, from a lower crime rate to greater educational achievement.	24%	48%	51%		1.5
The “Full Unification” approach could ultimately save taxpayers 200 million dollars a year by eliminating the numerous duplicate departments in Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis.	23%	51%	49%		1.7

**Table 5:
Arguments in Support of New Municipality Constitutional Amendment
Ranked by Much More Inclined
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statewide				
Statement	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	Mean Score
The “New County Municipality” approach for unifying Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis could ultimately save 20 million dollars a year by eliminating duplicate departments in Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis.	23%	47%	54%	1.5
The “New County Municipality” approach to unifying Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis will help end non-productive competition for businesses and jobs between Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis and focus the Saint Louis region’s energies on national and international opportunities to bring new jobs and business to the Saint Louis region.	21%	40%	60%	1.0
People in the Saint Louis region want to be proud to say they are from Saint Louis. Extending Saint Louis County’s boundaries to include the City of Saint Louis would include the City’s rich cultural traditions and attractions within Saint Louis County, which will give Saint Louis County a million plus population and will move Saint Louis ahead on all measures of greatness, from a lower crime rate to greater educational achievement.	19%	40%	60%	0.7
The “New County Municipality” approach leaves many key institutions of Saint Louis City government intact –such as the Board of Aldermen, the Police and Fire Departments and zoning administration – but eliminates duplicate departments such as the City Sheriff, jails and the health department, which are also County functions.	18%	38%	62%	0.5

**Table 5, Continued:
Arguments in Support of New Municipality Constitutional Amendment
Ranked by Much More Inclined
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

County				
Statement	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	Mean Score
The “New County Municipality” approach to unifying Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis will help end non-productive competition for businesses and jobs between Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis and focus the Saint Louis region’s energies on national and international opportunities to bring new jobs and business to the Saint Louis region.	26%	47%	53%	1.0
The “New County Municipality” approach for unifying Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis could ultimately save 20 million dollars a year by eliminating duplicate departments in Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis.	22%	55%	45%	1.4
People in the Saint Louis region want to be proud to say they are from Saint Louis. Extending Saint Louis County’s boundaries to include the City of Saint Louis would include the City’s rich cultural traditions and attractions within Saint Louis County, which will give Saint Louis County a million plus population and will move Saint Louis ahead on all measures of greatness, from a lower crime rate to greater educational achievement.	21%	42%	59%	-0.2
The “New County Municipality” approach leaves many key institutions of Saint Louis City government intact –such as the Board of Aldermen, the Police and Fire Departments and zoning administration – but eliminates duplicate departments such as the City Sheriff, jails and the health department, which are also County functions.	20%	44%	56%	0.9

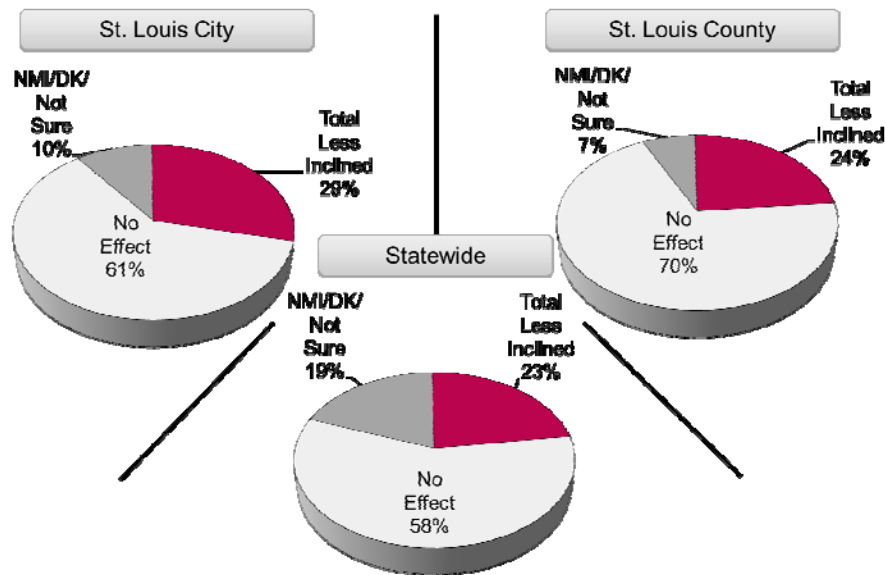
**Table 5, Continued:
Arguments in Support of New Municipality Constitutional Amendment
Ranked by Much More Inclined
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statement	City			
	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	Mean Score
People in the Saint Louis region want to be proud to say they are from Saint Louis. Extending Saint Louis County’s boundaries to include the City of Saint Louis would include the City’s rich cultural traditions and attractions within Saint Louis County, which will give Saint Louis County a million plus population and will move Saint Louis ahead on all measures of greatness, from a lower crime rate to greater educational achievement.	29%	48%	52%	1.8
The “New County Municipality” approach to unifying Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis will help end non-productive competition for businesses and jobs between Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis and focus the Saint Louis region’s energies on national and international opportunities to bring new jobs and business to the Saint Louis region.	29%	46%	54%	1.6
The “New County Municipality” approach for unifying Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis could ultimately save 20 million dollars a year by eliminating duplicate departments in Saint Louis County and the City of Saint Louis.	24%	46%	54%	1.0
The “New County Municipality” approach leaves many key institutions of Saint Louis City government intact –such as the Board of Aldermen, the Police and Fire Departments and zoning administration – but eliminates duplicate departments such as the City Sheriff, jails and the health department, which are also County functions.	22%	45%	56%	0.5

Response to Arguments Opposing Unification

After hearing arguments in favor of unification approaches, respondents were read four individual statements opposing unification. After hearing each one, voters were asked if the argument made them less inclined to support Saint Louis City and County unification. Figure 4 reports that roughly a quarter of respondents at each level said they would be less inclined to support unification after hearing these four opposition arguments. These results suggest that opponents would have the potential to stimulate significant opposition statewide and at the local level. These findings notwithstanding, as Table 6 shows, individual opposition arguments do not score well. The negative mean scores for several of these arguments indicate that more than half of respondents said they did not believe the argument or, on hearing it, would be less inclined to oppose unification.

**Figure 4:
Effect of Hearing Opposing Arguments**



**Table 6:
Arguments in Opposition to Unification
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statement	Statewide			
	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	Mean Score
There is no need for Unification. Local Saint Louis area governments are fully capable of cooperating on projects for the greater good of the Saint Louis region.	15%	31%	69%	-0.2
There simply is no need to for Unification with all the disruption and uncertainty it would bring. If it isn’t broken, no need to fix it.	15%	25%	75%	-1.1
Unification will make local government more distant from and less responsive to local voters. Saint Louis County voters will have to contend with the priorities and desires of City of Saint Louis voters, and City of Saint Louis City voters will find their votes diluted by the County’s suburban voters who may not care about City of Saint Louis residents’ needs.	14%	31%	69%	0.2
Unifying Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County is just a ploy among wealthy conservative interests to privatize or reduce essential government services.	11%	22%	78%	-1.7
Saint Louis is a black majority city. The City of Saint Louis’s African American majority would see its vote diluted by unifying City and County government.	8%	21%	79%	-1.4

**Table 6, Continued:
Arguments in Opposition to Unification
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statement	County			Mean Score
	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	
There is no need for Unification. Local Saint Louis area governments are fully capable of cooperating on projects for the greater good of the Saint Louis region.	19%	35%	65%	0.0
Unification will make local government more distant from and less responsive to local voters. Saint Louis County voters will have to contend with the priorities and desires of City of Saint Louis voters, and City of Saint Louis City voters will find their votes diluted by the County’s suburban voters who may not care about City of Saint Louis residents’ needs.	17%	33%	67%	-0.1
There simply is no need to for Unification with all the disruption and uncertainty it would bring. If it isn’t broken, no need to fix it.	17%	30%	71%	-0.4
Saint Louis is a black majority city. The City of Saint Louis’s African American majority would see its vote diluted by unifying City and County government.	13%	29%	71%	-0.7
Unifying Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County is just a ploy among wealthy conservative interests to privatize or reduce essential government services.	10%	20%	80%	-2.7

**Table 6, Continued:
Arguments in Opposition to Unification
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Much More Inclined”;
-10=All Respondents Say “Don’t Believe”)**

Statement	City			Mean Score
	Much More Inclined	Much/SW More Inclined	Less Inclined/Don’t Believe	
Unification will make local government more distant from and less responsive to local voters. Saint Louis County voters will have to contend with the priorities and desires of City of Saint Louis voters, and City of Saint Louis City voters will find their votes diluted by the County’s suburban voters who may not care about City of Saint Louis residents’ needs.	22%	34%	65%	0.4
There is no need for Unification. Local Saint Louis area governments are fully capable of cooperating on projects for the greater good of the Saint Louis region.	19%	33%	67%	-1.0
Unifying Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County is just a ploy among wealthy conservative interests to privatize or reduce essential government services.	17%	32%	68%	-1.1
There simply is no need to for Unification with all the disruption and uncertainty it would bring. If it isn’t broken, no need to fix it.	17%	30%	71%	-1.3
Saint Louis is a black majority city. The City of Saint Louis’s African American majority would see its vote diluted by unifying City and County government.	15%	26%	74%	-1.3

The Missouri Issue Environment

Table 7 shows the overwhelming importance Missouri voters attach to “jobs and the economy.” Obviously, to the extent county-city unification plans can be credibly positioned as a measure to improve the state’s economic climate, the better.

**Table 7:
Ranking of Important Issues Facing Missouri Today
(Mean score +10=All Respondents Say “Extremely Important Item”;
+1=All Respondents Say “Not Too Important Item”)**

Statewide				
Issue	Extremely/Very Important	Somewhat/Not Too Important	No Opinion	Mean Score
Jobs and economy	95%	4%	1%	8.4
The quality of education for Missouri children	93%	7%	0%	8.1
Crime including drugs	81%	18%	1%	7.3
The availability of health care at a reasonable cost	80%	18%	2%	7.2
The amount of state and local taxes you have to pay	61%	34%	5%	5.9

County				
Issue	Extremely/Very Important	Somewhat/Not Too Important	No Opinion	Mean Score
Jobs and economy	97%	3%	0%	8.4
The quality of education for Missouri children	96%	4%	0%	8.3
Crime including drugs	79%	19%	1% ¹	7.1
The availability of health care at a reasonable cost	88%	12%	0%	7.9
The amount of state and local taxes you have to pay	53%	44%	3%	5.4

City				
Issue	Extremely/Very Important	Somewhat/Not Too Important	No Opinion	Mean Score
Jobs and economy	94%	6%	0%	8.4
The quality of education for Missouri children	92%	6%	2%	8.3
Crime including drugs	88%	12%	0%	7.9
The availability of health care at a reasonable cost	90%	7%	2%	8.0
The amount of state and local taxes you have to pay	51%	47%	2%	5.3

¹ Percentages for “Crime including drugs” issue do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Summary Thoughts

- Unification of Saint Louis City and Saint Louis County is not an issue that is top of mind or a pressing concern for voters statewide or locally. Promoting unification would require a major undertaking to create interest and shape support.
- However, voters can be engaged on this concept and information and discussion in the survey did increase both interest in and support for unification.
- After all the information transfer in the survey questionnaire was completed, the “Full Unification” approach obtained a slight majority among Saint Louis City voters and a plurality statewide, but it failed to excite County voters who gave only tepid support for either the “Full Unification” or “New Municipality” approaches to unification. In short, the City and its suburbs have different perspectives on unification; the City electorate would likely become more interested in response to more information while the suburbs would likely remain wary.
- The more radical “Full Unification” approach ultimately engenders significant opposition from Republicans and independents. Differences in opinion on unification approaches also emerge between men and women and younger and older voters.
- Although there is some receptivity to the economic arguments for unification, particularly the lessening of unproductive intra-regional competition and cost savings from departmental consolidation, the relatively weak response to arguments tested in the survey underscores the importance of having thorough studies of the economic impacts and legal issues, as well as the politics, involved in unifying these jurisdictions.