

## Local Government CECH-UP

### GLOSSARY

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**Amenities.** Special public goods and services that increase the attractiveness of an area and the quality of life for area residents. xix, 34

**Assessed value.** Assessed value is the dollar amount that an assessor, a county official, determines a property to be worth. The assessed value is calculated by taking a percentage of the real market value. xv, 5, 63

**Buffering.** The practice of providing certain barriers between residential, commercial, and industrial zones. xxv, 87

**Charges and user fees.** Payments for voluntarily purchased, publicly provided services that benefit specific individuals in a community. Examples are the admission price for the community swimming pool or recreation center, fees for holding a family reunion in a public park, parking fees at local government. xxiii, 67

**City administrator model.** The council is elected. The mayor's executive authority is in part delegated to a city administrator, who could have the wide range of powers that a city manager has or very limited powers and simply serves at the mayor's administrative assistant. This "compromise" model has been adopted in more than 100 Missouri cities. xviii, 32

**Conditional use.** Types of uses which tend to be problematic or have characteristics which may impact public health, safety, or welfare; but can be approved if such uses meet certain criteria. xv

**Council/manager model.** Council members are elected for a term that ranges from two to four years. The mayor is chosen from among the council members and serves a term of one year. He runs the council meetings but has no special administrative or veto powers. Council members make policy and then appoint a professional city manager to carry out the policy. The city manager works for the city council and has a great deal of control over local government decisions, such as appointment and removal of all city department heads, preparation of the city budget, and carrying out the budget plan after the council has approved it. viii, 32

**County commission model.** Composed of three elected officials—a presiding commissioner elected county-wide and serving four years and two associate commissioners representing half-county districts and serving two-year terms. xvi, 6-7

**County courthouse.** Where county business is transacted. 3

**County executive model.** Divide the legislative and executive functions. Legislative affairs are dealt with by county council members, who are typically elected from districts within the county. xvi, 7

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**County seat.** Location of the county courthouse. 3

**Federal income tax.** Provides the U.S. government with a large source of revenue. xxiii

**General-purpose government.** Cities and counties are examples of general-purpose government. They are responsible for a broad range of activities that might include law enforcement, road building and maintenance, land use, public health, and parks and recreation. xv, xvii. 2, 34

**Governing board.** Each special district has a governing board, which may be elected or appointed, to make decisions regarding the operation of the district. xxi, 57

**Home-rule charter.** Cities and counties are allowed to design their own governmental structures and make their own taxation and spending decisions. xv, xvii, 6

**Incorporation.** A procedure by which a group of citizens can win legal recognition for their municipality, establish a system of government, and acquire the authority to tax and spend for the welfare of the community. Two of every three people in Missouri live in an incorporated city or village. xvii, 28

**Infrastructure.** Basic facilities and equipment needed for a community to function. Stable bridges, modern water, sewage, streets, and efficient mass transit are examples. Businesses rely on these things for production and transportation. xix, 35

**Local personal income tax.** A tax on money a person receives as income. It is mainly a supplementary revenue source for large cities. xxiii, 66

**Mayor/council (mayor-aldermen) model.** The most commonly used structure in Missouri. The mayor represents the executive branch and the council represents the legislative branch. The council members may be called aldermen or alderwomen. They are elected from the different neighborhoods they represent. The mayor is elected by all voting city residents. xviii, 31

**Metropolitan area.** A central city of 50,000 or more people and the counties containing the suburbs around the city. A term used to describe an economic region. The largest metropolitan area in the state is located in and around St. Louis. Kansas City is next in size. Other metropolitan areas are in and around the cities of Springfield, Joplin, and Columbia. xix, 28

**Opportunity cost.** The next best alternative that is given up when a choice is made. 144

**Personal property.** Tangible property, other than real estate, money, household furniture, or wearing apparel owned by an individual. Personal property includes cars, trucks, airplanes, and motorcycles. xxii, 63

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**Plan.** A blueprint or guide for the orderly growth of a community. xxiv, 86, 91

**Planning.** A method used to create a community that is a good place for its residents to live, work, go to school, and play. xxv, 88

**Platform.** A list of issues on which the candidate has taken a particular position. Each position is a plank, and all of the planks form the platform on which the candidate stands. 52

**Property tax.** Tax on people's real and personal property. xxii, 63

**Real property.** Consists of land and buildings, including manufactured homes (built somewhere else and then assembled on a person's land). xiii, 63

**Revenue.** Money received. Local governments collect revenue to pay for public goods and services. 63

**Revenue bonds.** Loans taken out by a special district. The bonds are purchased by individuals as a financial investment. This is a way for special districts and other special purpose governments to borrow money from individuals and then pay those individuals back with interest. The special district then charges user fees and uses part of those fees to pay the bond holders back. 57

**Sales tax.** A tax on certain retail goods sold in a community. It is collected by the store. The store sends a portion of the tax to the state and a portion to the local government. xxii, 64

**Scarcity.** The situation of having limited resources and unlimited wants. Because of scarcity, citizens and government leaders must choose which services to offer. 52

**School boards.** Responsible for the general operation of a school district. xx, 51

**School districts.** Empowered with the authority to carry out a variety of activities with the sole purpose of providing fire public education for all persons living in the district. xx, 50

**Setback requirements.** State that a building can only be built a number of feet from the property line. By enforcing this rule the city ensures that her neighbors have privacy. xxv, 87

**Special districts.** Created by state legislation, which provides the district taxing authority to support its activities. Special districts may provide fire protection, ambulance services, libraries, sewers, roads, parks, and water. xxi, 57

**Special-purpose governments.** Serve a limited purpose. There are two general categories of special purpose governments: school districts and special districts. xx, 50

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**State and federal aid.** The federal government and the state give money to counties for highways. They give money to school districts to provide education. Even the federal government gives money to communities. xxiii, 67

**Strong-mayor model.** The mayor has broad authority to appoint and remove most department heads and to prepare the city's budget. There are no true examples of the strong-mayor model in Missouri. xviii, 32

**Superintendent .** Top administrative official in a school district. Responsible for carrying out the directives of the school board and for handling the day-to-day business of the district. xx, 51

**Taxes.** Mandatory payments people must make to pay for goods and services offered by government. xix, xxii, 35

**Weak-mayor model.** The mayor shares administrative and budgetary authority with the council and with independently elected executive officials. xviii, 32

**Zoning.** The city's laws or ordinances that tell how land can be used in various parts of the community. xxv, 93