



**Task Force on Consolidated Government  
Jacksonville City Council  
Council Member Lori Boyer, Chair**

**PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY ANSWERS**

**Question 1:**

From your Perspective, what have been the positive consequences of consolidation?

**Summary:**

Positive consequences include consolidation of services which made it easier for citizens to determine where to go when they needed a service because there was no city/county boundary; improved police, fire, and emergency services; reduced taxes/larger tax base; elimination of duplication of services; reduced corruption.

**Noteworthy Responses:**

- I like the continuity of services within all areas. There's less phone numbers to worry about trying to figure out -- for example, when someone's in St. Augustine, they have to know where the boundaries lie if they need City police vs County police. People don't intuitively know where the boundaries are. Consolidation makes sense.
- Ease of communication between the citizens and government. Ease of permitting (also a bad thing). National recognition as the largest land mass city in the continental US. Decrease in the number of services that get overlapped in counties or Parishes that have separate governments.

**Responses (87):**

1. Saving taxpayer \$\$
2. Consolidation of emergency services, mostly countywide utility services, and a decrease in the inevitable disputes that come with territorial boundaries. For example, if certain parts of the City were their own governmental functions (such as Oceanway or the Duval Oakleaf area), then the taxes gained from those areas would ONLY benefit those areas, and may lead to an increase in blight in poorer or previously built-out areas. Note: This question may be skewed - "consequences" is a negative term and implies that consolidation is a negative action, thus the question is asking people if, despite the negative actions of consolidation, are there silver linings?
3. Some city services saving money.

4. I haven't seen any yet.
5. I like the continuity of services within all areas. There's less phone numbers to worry about trying to figure out -- for example, when someone's in St. Augustine, they have to know where the boundaries lie if they need City police vs County police. People don't intuitively know where the boundaries are. Consolidation makes sense.
6. More services at a reduced cost.
7. It is suppose improve government spending but that does not happen. We have different elected officials including the City Council that will duplicate functions that being done by an internal City department. I am almost in favor of scrapping consolidation because of how poorly it is being run. I would rather have a mayor of Arlington, of Avondale and of Mandarin than to continue to have the same malfunctioning consolidated government.
8. N/A. I did not live in Jax at the time
9. None that I can think of.
10. None
11. More tax revune for the city / county as a whole, better services.
12. More area for business and homes
13. cost savings, better government, more open government
14. Reduced duplication of services between city and county governments.
15. When properly funded, services are shared among agencies which can produce cost saving.
16. Since consolidation occured over 35 years ago, I wouldnt know what to compare it to as almost all reading this
17. COJ was able to accomplish preservation project jacksonville a countywide land acquisition program without the buracracy of multiple city governments.
18. a more streamlined government makes budgeting easier for smaller communities. Not to mention greater access to services.
19. unsure
20. The school district is too large.

21. no divided governments
22. uniform services
23. Less duplication in services and strife over jurisdictions.
24. Hopefully less operating cost and elimination of service duplication and efficiency of services.
25. Savings by not duplicating bureaucracy
26. I'm not sure what effect it has on budgets and services. Based on my experience in a non-consolidated county with a much smaller population but a larger land mass, services here are below the standard that I saw there for more than 15 years.
27. none
28. Not sure as I did not live here when it was separate.
29. Some reduction in duplicity
30. A more national focus on Jacksonville.
31. The city had improved on the ISO ratings in Baldwin and other area as well. Thank to services of JFRD.
32. Better fire and police departments in regards to training, response and man power.
33. Lower taxes. Less confusion about permitting and government responsibilities. Office of General Counsel is probably one of the best things to come out of consolidation.
34. We are known for the largest city in the nation LAND MASS Wise.
35. Sense of being part of a Big City.
36. More income for the city Also, a stronger city government
37. Easier for customers to contact City to request help/support
38. consolidated local government
39. reduction in duplication of services at the city and county levels.
40. removing an unnecessary layer of government
41. Eliminated a corrupt government when founded and a poorly run city police dept.

42. Central government
43. I believe that consolidation works.
44. Larger tax base. Combining public services
45. There are no positive consequences for the Beaches residents resulting from consolidation.
46. Single point of accountability for law enforcement Some savings by eliminating duplicate services
47. Nothing
48. I moved here after consolidation. Seems like it was a good idea that would lower cost of services.
49. Better law enforcement.
50. The local government it easier to navigate. Though I haven't had to use these services personally, I would assume permitting and other local regulations are much easier to understand or find answers. It also forces the community to either work to accomplish things on a larger scale or not work at all. It seems to be an "all or nothing" negotiation scenario (which can be positive, or of course can be the negative result of "nothing"). There should be a positive effect on creating better, infrastructure such as roads and utilities, but that doesn't seem to have happened naturally unless it's part of some big initiative like the Better Jacksonville Plan.
51. It should be a positive consequence so perhaps I have not noticed it.
52. Money saved by reduction of duplicated services. City Council at-large members give citizens two representatives.
53. less people fewer bought parts hiring higher payed smarter people
54. better services
55. I try to make an opinion based on fact or data, and quite frankly I have not seen any data that suggests that we are receiving our tax dollars worth of services.
56. One place to contact instead of contacting City and County and not knowing which one is which.
57. combining city and county government and services.

58. Coordination of the services that fall under true consolidation - more should be done to intergrate the remainder like the sheriff's office
59. Less repetition of services
60. I have been able to use the Public Library without paying for it. It is much easier to be able to go to one source - the City - to find answers to government questions without having to figure out whether it is the county or the City's responsibility.
61. It helps a large group of folks focus on a common vision.
62. None The north side of town is very neglected, it take forever to get anything done. Not represented in a productive way.
63. Combined Police and Sheriff's Office
64. Possible cost savings by avoiding duplication of services
65. Fewer overlaps in city services. Costs consolidation.
66. not clear at this point
67. Although I imagine they exist, I can't think of one in terms of benefit for the beach municipalities
68. one city - one name
69. I can't say
70. Hard to say I have lived here for fourteen years and never have understood this county/city relationship with each other or the beaches
71. Less infrastructure, bureaucracy.
72. Marginal cost consolidations.
73. BETTER ORGANIZATION
74. consolidation of government services
75. Better organized and lower cost services.
76. Lower taxes, elimination of duplicated services for City/County services, and a more streamlined local government.

77. After living under a consolidated county/city government from day one, I really don't see any positive consequences.
78. Library services, although far away, and garbage pick up.
79. Seamless road system, area wide regulation of many things including bill boards, septic, etc.
80. In most cases it works well. Only have to deal with one police organization and taxes are clear, except the beaches and Baldwin.
81. Less bureaucracy \
82. Unity and less confusion
83. Broader tax base. Reduced corruption.
84. Ease of communication between the citizens and government. Ease of permitting (also a bad thing). National recognition as the largest land mass city in the continental US.  
Decrease in the number of services that get overlapped in counties or Parrishes that have separate governments.
85. less cost, more efficiency
86. none
87. Pooling resources

## Question 2:

From your perspective, what have been the downside of consolidation? If you identify any downsides, do you have any suggestions on how those might be overcome?

### Summary:

Loss of local control/identity and lack of community; each part of town feels forgotten, downtown feels that all the money and decision are made to benefit the suburbs, and the suburbs feel that all the money and effort are spent on downtown development; the city is too big, it seems many feel this because they don't receive the services they feel they should

### Noteworthy Comments:

- Important services, such as traffic signal maintenance, are marginalized by consolidated budgetary concerns and underfunded, and the skilled workers and technicians are grossly under paid, nor is there enough man power, equipment and materials available to provide proper services. This may be remedied by placing Traffic Engineering in another Department or making it its own Department.
- We as the "Tax Collector's Office" experience a 2% decrease in pay that was promised to be returned within 2 yrs which we didn't see yet. Also we don't experience getting raises like other companies because it always "it not in the budget or go thru your union". We do most of the City & State work compared to other counties but we get paid the lowest in the State of Florida in the Tax Collector's Office which I think is very sad!
- Lack of long range planning and needs of the community, stifled ingenuity and vision, master planning, i.e. transportation, development of "natural" assets, business development and cultural ambiance to the community, CBD and downtown.
- I have lived in this city for almost two decades. This city feels like it has no soul, no identity. Maybe the consolidation wiped clean all the identity that the smaller townships had before the consolidation. New York City was basically consolidated years ago but the burrows were able to keep their identity somehow. I don't know how to get it back.
- ... This perception of unequal investment with equal expectations of services is a big source of what can cause splintering and regionalism. Maybe there should be a way for local communities to hold non-binding ballot referendums (based roughly on precincts or streets) just for their area as a means to communicate regional priorities to the council and other county residents as a whole. Parts of town should not have to compete with each other. A sense of identity is fine for a particular part of town, that makes us diverse, but there should be an overarching and unifying identity as a city. We should not be competing as parts within a city, but as a whole city with other cities.
- The General Counsel's Office - it can't serve 2 masters as the City Council/Mayor battle has proven. But it's also EXTREMELY inefficient for some of the independent agencies. A billion dollar biz like JEA should be able to hire its own

lawyer - a highly trained specialist in energy law. There is no one on the OGC staff who serves that need like they should. The costs saved for legal consolidation do not make sense if rational exceptions aren't made. The OGC shouldn't have the final say in how we run our govt. and its different branches.

### **Responses (81)**

1. Loss of individual neighborhood identity and for some, meaningful representation in local government. Perhaps have a quarterly meeting with representatives from pre-consolidation municipalities and neighborhoods to report on issues in those areas. Would be a compliment to existing CPAC and neighborhood organization meetings and may be beneficial for City Council representatives as another way to hear from various parts of our community.
2. A lack of community. Jacksonville continues to try to find its identity. Do we focus on the neighborhoods and develop "community" there, or do we focus on what it means to live in and be from Jacksonville? I believe that this is one of the key factors that inhibits growth.
3. The economy of scale seems to save money, But, any local issues or concerns are ignored unless a person goes on TV
4. Allowing count seats at the beaches and Baldwin to continue to maintain governments. If you live at the beaches you pay too much taxes to operate a governing entity that should have been eliminated in a true consolidation.
5. Too many City Council leaders for the size Jacksonville is. We should have 9 City Council leaders, 11 at the most. The current number goes back to when consolidation was being put together and all the good old boys want to make sure they got a job.
6. I did not live in Jax at the time, however I feel that the culture in government is different from other cities that I have lived in
7. Important services, such as traffic signal maintenance, are marginalized by consolidated budgetary concerns and underfunded, and the skilled workers and technicians are grossly under paid, nor is there enough man power, equipment and materials available to provide proper services. This may be remedied by placing Traffic Engineering in another Department or making it its own Department.
8. We as the "Tax Collector's Office" experience a 2% decrease in pay that was promised to be returned within 2 yrs which we didn't see yet. Also we don't experience getting raises like other companies because it always "it not in the budget or go thru your union". We do most of the City & State work compared to other counties but we get paid the lowest in the State of Florida in the Tax Collector's Office which I think is very sad!

9. Dont know of any.
10. persistant perception of Jacksonville being a "country town".
11. none
12. Too many elected offices. Either each should have their own taxing district or there should be more consolidation.
13. Central services not being funded properly. ITD services the entire city. If they are not provided adequate funding the entire city suffers. ITD needs more programming resources to meet the unique needs of our consolidated government.
14. COJ develops budget with 'city' level expectations with county level revenues.
15. a giant machine is often difficult to control. Perhaps the task force might evaluate how services and departments are compartmentalized.
16. unsure
17. I do not know.
18. too unweildy/big
19. more things can fall between the cracks
20. Lack of long range planning and needs of the community, stifled ingenuity and vision, master planning,i.e. transportation, development of "natural" assets, business development and cultural ambiance to the community, CBD and downtown.
21. n/a
22. See above for initial answer.
23. city tasked with over sight of county property, the city of jacksonville has too much
24. Again, not sure.
25. The city is too big to effectively meet the needs of the diverse areas in Duval.
26. Loss of neighborhood identity and pride but yet there is tension between areas of town. It's like having many children and dressin them all the same. The beaches are so different from the north side etc.

27. No issue in helping the surrounding town we help any way.
28. I have lived in this city for almost two decades. This city feels like it has no soul, no identity. Maybe the consolidation wiped clean all the identity that the smaller townships had before the consolidation. New York City was basically consolidated years ago but the burrows were able to keep their identity somehow. I don't know how to get it back.
29. City Council is too large and dysfunctional. Reduce size of Council. Urban sprawl not avoided. This might have been avoided if Comprehensive Plans had been followed instead of constantly amended to accommodate growth. Downtown continues to deteriorate. Relocate downtown to St. Johns Towncenter.
30. Centralized services are a straitjacket for other departments, which have no budgetary control and no input into decisions that affect them.
31. Poor and Unprofessional Law Enforcement due to UNION, City Resources spread to thin, Failure to concentrate on Jax City Proper because of its size
32. Too many City Council districts. Focus of Council representation is too narrow, which distracts from the broader, City-wide good.
33. centralized police system seems impersonal and does not appear to foster trust. Precincts with permanent local officers and patrols
34. Decreased public safety Almost a 900 sq. ft. City and outlying areas having longer response times Easy answer would be more public safety employees, but in these times it may not be possible Maybe a better allocation of services
35. the fact that the beaches didn't join in the beginning
36. none
37. the City council is too large it should be reduced to 9 members, all from districts, none at large
38. General Counsels office does not represent the people. They have become the Mayors private lawyer.
39. none
40. I have not experienced any downsides.
41. More impersonal service

42. The Beaches towns/cities lost their local municipal court system and jail facilities along with most revenue sources due to consolidation.
43. Loss of public accountability of the Independent Authorities i.e., JEA, JTA, JAA and JPA. The financial reports of these groups are dauntingly complex and funds are often commingled. I'd prefer the Board of Education be consolidated with City/County government. We are, for example, running two county-wide transportation systems.
44. City is too big and doesn't have a cash flow to do what is necessary. Downtown will NEVER be a Miami or Atlanta.
45. Way too many city council persons. Cut out the at Large positions.
46. Some of the downsides seem to be related to the allocation of resources. Parts of town become territorial if they feel one section "gets more" of the pie than they do, or if they are not getting their "fair share" of what they "put in." Consolidation also doesn't allow for communities with different visions for their immediate neighborhoods to easily develop those goals. For example, one part of town might value beautification as a way to increase or maintain property values. Another part of town might want things left the way they are and to be left alone - in this specific scenario of beautification, if all of Jacksonville undergoes landscaping and beautification for resources spent to be equal, one part of town will be upset and see it as a waste, but if the city ignores beautification, then one part of town doesn't have a way for the goals of how they want community investment and improvement to be met. In consolidation, downtown seems to be a constant focus for improvement (which I actually personally agree with - I think having a safe and vibrant downtown is important and this comes with a sustainable residential community in my opinion) but sometimes that can be at the detriment of other areas of town that have created their own draw and their own demands for resources because of successful planning, desirability or natural resources. Citing two examples, the Beaches or the Town Center for example, are places where most Duval residents will frequent at least once, if not several times in a year. They will come from other areas of town and bring with them expectations for public safety and adequate infrastructure (drainage, roads, etc) when they are there. Downtown will also draw residents from all over the county, too for sporting events, plays/musicals or other special events (like One Spark) bringing the same expectations for safety and infrastructure. However, even with the same draw from all over the county and the same expectations of "visiting" residents for services, it seems that when there's a contest for resources and investment between - for example - one of the beaches and downtown - that downtown is more readily the winner of incentives of shared resources or city planning than one of the other popular points of interest in the county. This perception of unequal investment with equal expectations of services is a big source of what can cause splintering and regionalism. Maybe there should be a way for local communities to hold non-binding ballot referendums (based roughly on precincts

- or streets) just for their area as a means to communicate regional priorities to the council and other county residents as a whole. Parts of town should not have to compete with each other. A sense of identity is fine for a particular part of town, that makes us diverse, but there should be an overarching and unifying identity as a city. We should not be competing as parts within a city, but as a whole city with other cities.
47. All COJ publications should explain the city/county organization-new residents are often confused.
  48. fewer work orders get done quickly no money for parts an it takes longer to get parts
  49. valuing city working
  50. I try to make an opinion based on fact or data, however without info, it APPEARS that we are not getting our share of security that is necessary when our city expands in the summer, simply because of the increase of beachgoers.
  51. I don't know any.
  52. I'd like to see the beaches and Baldwin eventually consolidate with the City of Jacksonville
  53. here are too many components of the government that are not truly consolidated and as such the City should either fully consolidate or deconsolidate all together
  54. Reduction in services. Downtown and rural areas are much different in demographics and City and County should be seperate.
  55. I really cannot think of any.
  56. Priorities and needs of smaller communities are overlooked for the common good of the whole of Jacksonville.
  57. We are crowded with too many Dollar Stores and hardly and banks/ATM's, hospitals,healthcare and activities for our children
  58. The beaches having their own police. Let JSO handle law enforcement at the Beaches.
  59. Too great a focus on suburban development, much to the detriment of the urban core.
  60. NA

61. Often in the past, there have been too many employees doing what seemed to be "make do" work just to keep them employed. A great waste of personnel and financial resources.
62. seems like a lot of money goes downtown and not much comes back to the beach--crowds, litter on the beach, poor library ---the budget for new books and materials keeps getting slashed--it is embarrassing. Library is closed on Sundays--that's a joke.
63. Less control of the resources of the beach, lack of control of taxes, creating a government that is too big and a blurring of identities and characters of the very different communities that doesn't reflect the regional differences and tends to overshadow and create ongoing conflict with regard to the limitations of the arrangement.
64. the beaches seem to be like the red headed stepchild - an outcast
65. Jacksonville is too huge. It has no cultural center, just lots of sprawl connecting the various areas/neighborhoods, some with small centers. I believe that to be one of the main struggles and challenges in this town and the reason it never quite crosses that brink that the local media is saying Jax is always on the verge of. I think jax should scale back down. Look to Virginia as an example, cities are not in counties. They are independent and therefore there are distinctive centers ad smaller land areas that are easier to manage. perhaps that means un-consolidating. Driving an hour and a half and still being in Jacksonville is ridiculous.
66. From my perspective it is very confusing. Something more transparent about the purpose and the individual tax responsibilities and services citizens get and from whom
67. None
68. 1. SCHOOL SYSTEM!!! Any benefit of consolidation has been outweighed by a too-large school system stretched too thin. This has caused rapid flight of higher income earners to neighboring counties - thus making the problem worse. Jacksonville is in what insurance companies call a "death spiral" because we will soon have a majority of our citizens be impoverished. All this is directly tied to our failing schools - which is tied to the fact that the district is too big to serve its needs on the available resources. If each area of town had its own school district, we wouldn't have this problem for the city as a whole. If the consolidated government isn't changed and the school system boundaries with it, Jacksonville will fail. People will move to St. Johns county and will shop at the Town Center and that will be the only story for Jax. 2. The General Counsel's Office - it can't serve 2 masters as the City Council/Mayor battle has proven. But it's also EXTREMELY inefficient for some of the independent agencies. A billion dollar biz like JEA should be able to hire its own lawyer - a highly trained specialist in

energy law. There is no one on the OGC staff who serves that need like they should. The costs saved for legal consolidation do not make sense if rational exceptions aren't made. The OGC shouldn't have the final say in how we run our govt. and its different branches.

69. MORE WORK PER EMPLOYEE

70. Corruption Remove all elected officials at next election. They should all be fired for their poor performance.

71. I don't see any downsides to city/County consolidation.

72. There are too many decisions made that benefit the core Jacksonville (old city limits) have little or even a negative effect on major outlying population. There are areas of the city that have been neglected on occasion where more attention was given to core Jax. for what seems to be just giving the news media what they want to hear. The real issue is much bigger than the scope of this survey. After considering many facts (too numerous to list here) the important question has to be asked--Should we keep consolidation or get rid of it. 99.9% of the United States is governed by federal, state, county, city, or township or village. That's the way the country was set up and it still works well. There are natural protections that are a result. We don't have those protections in the non-core Jax areas. I will address other downsides of consolidation under questions below.

73. My area, Heckscher, east of Dames Point has very few services and we pay high taxes. No bus, sidewalks, pay to walk on beach, no senior centers, long response time from police, etc.

74. The Beaches communities' special status yet accessing all the same services for Jax

75. Until recently, the downtown area was forgotten and it just about closed up shop. At consolidation, people could actually go to the leading department stores in the area.

76. None

77. Can't think of any

78. Suburban sprawl caused by extending city services to cheap land.

79. Lack of identity for some neighborhoods especially in the urban core. Too easy to develop in the suburbs. Too easy to mitigate.

80. none,

81. Resources spread too thin - counties may be able to raise more revenue if they know they would directly benefit from the income

### **Question 3:**

As a resident, have you had any experience requesting a service, participating in a City-run program, or visiting a City facility where we should make a change? Please Explain.

#### **Summary:**

Nearly all were mentioned, parks, DMV, web/IT, senior services, disabled services, 630-CITY (Care System), code enforcement, etc.

#### **Noteworthy Comments:**

None stood out above the others.

#### **Responses (77):**

1. Web site search capabilities need to be improved.
2. Not at all. In fact, I typically speak to others about the opportunities/services in the City.
3. No, Because all our needs are met by our local government at the beaches.
4. I've been very happy with all my city experiences.
5. Try getting anything permitted at the beach! In addition, having to put in concrete aprons to meet the street on my north side property used to be a function of the govt. having to pay for what used to be a tax based city function as a private citizen doesn't seem proper when businesses get tax breaks.
6. Parks, our parks stink. They are closed and not funded correctly. We waste so much great park space with no activities being done in them. There are three places to camp in this county. All at the beaches and yet we have lots of land that should be included in places that families and youth groups could camp.
7. The DMV process was expensive to renew a license.
8. N/A
9. No
10. We called about our sewer line being clogged and they were out to our home within 20 - 30 mins! The service was very good and fast!!!
11. Treat everybody the same
12. no

13. We have too many libraries and community centers.
14. As a resident, I can see a definite need for funding to keep our parks properly maintained. Facilities at Hanna Park are broken and sectioned off because they have not been repaired/replaced. The camping facilities need attention.
15. n/a
16. no
17. parking, need to have free parking and must have rental bike for every body . No one like paid parking. Library need to have free parking
18. Love the children's services. Love animal care and control.
19. keep improving and investing in the library system
20. Yes, used license plate services and it went very well and all our questions were answered.
21. Poor IT services, support and ability to contact city on errors and issues, out of date information on websites, lack of update and coordination on links and changes in the intra city dept. and division web pages.
22. Nowhere in the City buildings or City-run events one could find recycling trash cans.
23. The city services clerks, admin, courts may be where old down town was, but the bulk of our business is done at ST Johns Town Center, The Avenues and Regency. My understanding is the down town area was the original retail hub which is no longer is. Downtown needs to be moved.
24. no
25. Not sure.
26. As a resident I have had trouble requesting a pickup service for large items no longer needed. I also feel that city facilities are very limited to one side of town. As an Arlington Resident there are no city run Gymnasiums for the Arlington Community to take part in a community center. Where as the Northside and downtown areas have numerous buildings some even less than 2 miles apart. It seems a it unfair that the Northwest Jacksonville gets more privillage in indoor Gymnasiums and community centers than any other side of Jacksonville. The centers should be evenly disbursed amongst the taxpayers.
27. No. Not at this time.

28. The current changes has slowed down service over the entire city.I pass by several city office as such as JEA,Fleet Service division,and many vacant city building that is waste.
29. We need the public libraries to be open more hours.
30. Right of way maintenance and City building maintenance is not adequate. Cleaning of thousands of drainage ponds and easements in residential subdivisions is not well-handled.
31. I have used the C.A.R.E. system a number of times and only once has it worked...
32. fund all of them properly or get rid of them. It seems we want to pretend we have comprehensive services, but many times they are spread so thin as to render them ineffectual. Roads, R/W & Parks maintainance, Libraries
33. Oh wow! You can't please all the people all the time! If people aren't happy about something involving something involving the city , the first place I'd look is to the employees. No matter how bad something may be, a positive attitude will trump the bad part
34. no
35. my experiences with city run events and buildings have all been good.
36. the need is there to hire smarter employees across the board
37. Yes. The curent mayor is totally ignoring our infrastructure. The roads are awful and the city has become a field of weeds and trash.
38. Changes? No When ever I need to make a request I call 630 CITY and they handle it
39. No.
40. No
41. As a graduate of the Jacksonville Beach Citizens Police Academy and a 70 year resident of the beaches communities; I have seen the results of having "consolidated" jails and courts. It is wasteful, inefficient, reduces revenues and raises law enforcement costs. "Justice delayed is Justice denied".
42. No.
43. Time frame in answering a call or email request needs to be better.

44. Just the general thought that I hope city agencies do everything in their power to encourage individual volunteerism and partnering with interested neighborhood businesses where that might be helpful to us citizens. It would cut our costs and give the individuals a more visible stake. Involvement, though sometimes messy, is an overall good empowering thing.
45. Most of my City of Jacksonville experiences have been pretty basic - driver's license/tax collector, voter registration, libraries, etc and all have been satisfactory. I have not had to deal with the city government on any in-depth level and as such am probably not an accurate judge. As a person who tends to somewhat follow local issues, I have had people ask me about how to get initiatives through the city council or through city hall (which I don't have much of an answer to) and most people I've known have complained about how long it takes or how hard it is to participate actively in moving something through city council or if they are trying to find information, how often they are ignored or treated by employees with a stone wall "you should know this" or "I can't be bothered" attitude. Though it's not true in every situation, there is a reputation that public employees forget they are actually in customer services fields, not comfy professional desk jobs. Their duties and performance are in the service sector, like an employee at the front desk of a hotel, not a business executive running a private company on his/her own time. I understand with civil service performance can't be tied to job security necessarily, but if there was a way to tie incentives/bonuses/something to customer service satisfaction ratings - have 2/3 of a city salary based on a flat rate and 1/3 based on performance "commission", that might help end the stereotype.
46. Expand city community and Senior Centers to the full city, not just downtown/core city.
47. i work here but wont live here!
48. at times very well
49. None personally.
50. Garbage. Garbage company says they deliver blue bins and they don't.
51. No.
52. no
53. No.
54. No experience in this area.

55. yes. City Hall, Town Hall meeting Legend Center meetings at FCCJ, Edward Water College and Hemming Plaza etc.
56. No
57. We have to address the problem of crime and vagrancy downtown. Until we handle that problem as NYC did in the 1990s, no effort to improve downtown will get traction.
58. Code enforcement is a difficult task that requires dedicated personnel and clear descriptions of violations. Perhaps the violations need to be rated i.e. 1 to 10 and the more serious should receive early attention.
59. no
60. The most obvious one for me is the handling of stray animals in the separate communities. It seems that the animals lose from the consolidation of animal control. Beach pets are much less likely to become adopted or reunited with their owners when they end up downtown. The beach needs its own shelter and services in this regard. Also I have personally found animal control to be very unresponsive and almost hostile to the general public as a volunteer and advocate in my past dealings with them- they are just too large and local or regional handling of unwanted and stray animals could ideally be much better done.
61. The DMV, Duval County Public schools headquarters is a nightmare, the fact that it would be normal to have to drive an hour just to say pay your sales tax license. Put offices in other areas of the county. As for the school board building, every department is so disconnected that no one there knows what's going on with the other or required as a whole. Completely inefficient and ineffective.
62. No
63. No
64. No.
65. When I have seen a stray dog in my neighborhood I was unable to reach animal control by telephone. They need to be more available and responsive to requests. Garbage and trash collectors should not place the empty containers in the street.
66. Trash service is poor and WAY too expensive.
67. I think the City Council could have better oversight of the independent boards and commissions, not more oversight but better.

68. Yes. I live in the northeastern Heckscher drive area. We depend upon the St. Johns River Ferry quite a bit. It is a big asset to all of Jax. and tourist. Our cities funding is a fraction of what it should be given the amounts spent on other JTA services such as the buses and the downtown rail system. We deserve as equal treatment and funding as any other part of the city. Even when we do visit the downtown area for theater, dining, or art related functions, the transients and homeless, and panhandlers pester you and make you feel concerned for your own safety, I can't figure out why so much of this is tolerated by the local authorities. In most cases such as the Jax Landing or the Florida theater, and others you have to park a good distance away and are forced to walk through these people, and most of them will approach you for a handout. So we minimize our visits downtown, especially at night.
69. Yes, seniors should be able to walk free on Huguenot in lieu of no senior facilities. We have the fewest city services in Jacksonville.
70. parks are generally lifeless unless they have football or baseball facilities. Do not limit early morning access to oceanfront parks
71. Fire and Rescue does great and JSO is slow on minor items, but this may be due to concentrating on high crime areas.
72. We need more code enforcement and right of way maintenance
73. Only problem I've had is since Mayor Brown came to office. He shut off communication with many sources and threatens all city employees with their jobs if they speak to anyone without his permission. What happened to the Florida Sunshine law where government is supposed to operate in clear view of the public?
74. Library system needs to be on a separate tax source. Planning Dept needs to be using different standards for different neighborhoods.
75. Neighborhoods importance is being diminished in this current administration, they only matter as votes. The department that handles the rights of way should be funded more to keep the city clean and beautiful.
76. waste management is not replacing trash cans with smaller receptacles in efficient manner - just making a list "will get around to it some time in the future"
77. Approximately 12 - 15 years ago, I desperately needed services to help my aged parents to get assistance with bringing their home up-to-code, and was on the list, but paperwork was consistently lost or misplaced, and about four years later a call was made to their home to start the process! One other issue was that I purchased a home by paying the back taxes in an older part of Jacksonville and asked the City to forgive the nuisance liens on the property so that I could improve it. It was

a bank owned property and the City did not go after the bank to pay those nuisance liens - now I am stuck with a growing debt that has not allowed me to develop the property because I am unable to pay the liens that should have been paid by the bank.

#### **Question 4:**

Are you aware of any function or activity in local government that is duplicated in more than one department, board, or authority? Or, duplicates a state or federal service program? If so, what?

#### **Summary:**

Various responses, but no central theme. See "Noteworthy Comments".

#### **Noteworthy Comments:**

- I have trouble understanding the purpose of the Neighborhoods Department. It seems to me that some services it provides are typically housing within a Planning and Development-type of department in other major cities. Additionally, I have noticed an extensive amount of investment in economic actions, yet these seem duplicative and perhaps costly in terms of salaries (specifically the Downtown Investment Authority and the Office of Economic Development. Additionally, some departments have grants activities managed within their departments, but there is also a city Grants Office.
- Yes ITD; the Sheriff, the Tax Collector, the Supervisor of Election, the Fire Department and the City Council all have IT personal working for them instead of using the City's IT department. Shame on all on them for duplicating the process. It causes a waste of money. It causes confusion when an application is implemented and not fully vetted. Just like what's going with the new healthcare system.
- Since consolidation we have the JTA, JEA, JPA, The Airport Authority. There have been instances where some of these have actually told the City Government what they will, or will not do.. Isn't this the "tail wagging the dog" I was astounded when I personally saw this happen on more than one occasion. Has or mayor and city council shirked all responsibility and accountability for the major activities in Jax,? Do the taxpayers have to live by the decisions of totally unelected authorities that are seemingly accountable to no one.
- 1. ... I do sometimes wonder why there are so many permanent commissions, boards and advisory boards. Do they actually affect council legislation? Does anyone listen to them? Are their conclusions or decisions binding? I understand temporary ones with specific purposes or specific fields of study, but when I scroll the city website on some of these --- I've never heard of them before and wonder why they exist when it seems elected officials and/or department heads are the ones making decisions anyway.
- 

#### **Responses (70):**

2. No - although independent authorities could make better (and more) use of "consolidated" services to improve cost savings for all.
3. I have trouble understanding the purpose of the Neighborhoods Department. It seems to me that some services it provides are typically housing within a Planning

- and Development-type of department in other major cities. Additionally, I have noticed an extensive amount of investment in economic actions, yet these seem duplicative and perhaps costly in terms of salaries (specifically the Downtown Investment Authority and the Office of Economic Development. Additionally, some departments have grants activities managed within their departments, but there is also a city Grants Office.
4. The water safety on river by the Fire Rescue and FWC and US Coast Guard.
  5. No
  6. Many social services are duplicated.
  7. Yes ITD; the Sheriff, the Tax Collector, the Supervisor of Election, the Fire Department and the City Council all have IT personal working for them instead of using the City's IT department. Shame on all on them for duplicating the process. It causes a waste of money. It causes confusion when an application is implemented and not fully vetted. Just like what's going with the new healthcare system.
  8. Not sure
  9. No
  10. No
  11. Nope
  12. solid waste
  13. JCC and Journey
  14. Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology
  15. GIS services and document management services are being duplicated. Licensing and maintenance costs for these services are expense and should be shared across the city as a whole.
  16. community services are duplicated in parks & recreation and senior services. Parks & recreation is geared to all ages and should be the provider of adult recreation & programming. the nutrition program could be a program offered.
  17. no
  18. I do not know.
  19. no
  20. No
  21. Building and Zoning, Utilities, Transportation LACK of METRO Government Consolidation between other surrounding municipalities "Task Force for cross-over services and future growth needs for Jacksonville Metropolitan Area including South Ga.
  22. n/a
  23. no.
  24. The independent authorities. Not sure why they have their own procurement departments, travel, etc. when it appears they follow our policies in the first place.
  25. None.
  26. Planning Commission seems to be a duplicative, unnecessary step, given changes that have occurred to responsibilities over the years. The interplay between City, State and federal water quality and environmental regulations is very confusing and should be looked at more closely in order to improve water quality.

27. I requested a Drainage issue in FEC Park and it took 2 months to get action because it did not fall under drainage it fell to the parks system
28. I'm not that smart
29. Parking Enforcement services are under the Office of Public Parking and Office of Disabled Services. This is confusing to the public and creates a dysfunctional system. The two areas need to be consolidated into one functional unit.
30. no
31. yes...Human Resources is located at COJ, JSO, JEA, JAA, JTA, DCSB, etc.
32. The zoning function is under the Planning Department but the enforcement is under the Neighborhood Department and they do not talk to each other very well
33. No.
34. No
35. I don't understand the question.
36. School and public transportation. In virtually all of Western Europe, the students use public transportation. In loco parentis begins when the student enters the school.
37. No
38. spending our tax dollars for the coj Human Rights commission is a redundant waste of the money of the citizens that could be better spent by us. There already is a Florida Commission on Human Rights. The city commission does more harm than good.
39. It seems as though every level of government likes to put hands into things like Veterans, Education and "jobs." I don't know that those things can be solved by the city. I do sometimes wonder why there are so many permanent commissions, boards and advisory boards. Do they actually affect council legislation? Does anyone listen to them? Are their conclusions or decisions binding? I understand temporary ones with specific purposes or specific fields of study, but when I scroll the city website on some of these --- I've never heard of them before and wonder why they exist when it seems elected officials and/or department heads are the ones making decisions anyway.
40. none
41. divison chief maken jobs then firing /demoting people to do same job
42. none
43. No
44. no.
45. No.
46. no
47. No.
48. No.
49. Wealth Watchers, Jaxport River Front Project, Southside development with less concentration on the Northside
50. Yes, The police departments of Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach and Neptune Beach. They also elect their own city government which is a waste.
51. NA
52. I'm sure there a many but, not having looked for a while, I can't think of them at the moment. A serious study of services provided by each dept., board, and/or

- authority would be a good start followed by a study of services provided by state or federal programs/agencies.
53. no
  54. We have too many police and fire departments at the beach, this is where the local beach community would be much better served in consolidating its own services- the economy of scale is not cost efficient or even sensible.
  55. city planning court system police
  56. I am not aware, but i try to stay as uninvolved with that as possible.
  57. I don't understand the bus system, fire and police services, who is in charge of what where !
  58. No
  59. NO
  60. No.
  61. Since consolidation we have the JTA, JEA, JPA, The Airport Authority. There have been instances where some of these have actually told the City Government what they will, or will not do.. Isn't this the "tail wagging the dog" I was astounded when I personally saw this happen on more than one occasion. Has or mayor and city council shirked all responsibility and accountability for the major activities in Jax,? Do the taxpayers have to live by the decisions of tottally unelected authorities that are seemingly accountable to no one.
  62. No
  63. no
  64. No
  65. I am sure there are many duplications but at this time I do not have inside information in order to verify it. I think there might be duplication in Public Works and in the licensing and certification area that possibly need a good look at. I see too many people sitting around talking doing nothing. Too many cashiers talking and doing nothing and then you have to wait in line.
  66. no
  67. None
  68. Veteran's Affairs
  69. No
  70. lots of "planning " departments but no action plans -- or timelines
  71. No

## **Question 5:**

Are you aware of any function or activity in local government that is performed in a single consolidated office, but could be performed more efficiently, at less cost, or with greater accountability if performed in the department, authority, or entity using the service? If yes, please explain your answer in detail.

### **Summary:**

Fewer answers (63), and many respondents answered no.

### **Noteworthy Comments:**

- Yes, Traffic Engineering. We shouldn't be under Streets and Drainage. Due to the safety sensitive nature of our work we should be under Public Safety. I believe if we were under Public Safety, we would be given due diligence on budgetary matters.
- Make the various, JPA, JTA, JEA authorities totally accountable to the city government and a much closer part of the city government with direct reporting to the Mayor or City Councilpersons so that there is a direct accountability to the taxpayers.

### **Responses (63):**

1. Need to move as much online as possible.
2. No. I believe activities such as this create unnecessary departments (such as the Neighborhoods Department).
3. All Give all functions and activities back to the beaches so they can save money and perform effective services for their residents.
4. no
5. We have print shop that is not fully utilized by all the local governments.
6. Not sure
7. Yes, Traffic Engineering. We shouldn't be under Streets and Drainage. Due to the safety sensitive nature of our work we should be under Public Safety. I believe if we were under Public Safety, we would be given due diligence on budgetary matters.
8. No
9. Nope
10. the city's surplus auctions, should be better advertised
11. none
12. Procurement is very close to becoming overwhelmed. Either additional resources need to be added or the function moved to the using departments.
13. no
14. I do not know.
15. no
16. No

17. Planning and Public Works
18. n/a
19. no.
20. Not sure.
21. Libraries
22. Need more in the department to provide better service.
23. The biggest problem right now is that all City departments are inadequately staffed due to budget cutbacks over the last few years. Nothing can be done efficiently under these circumstances.
24. Multiple departments could manage more efficiently have they had authority over their IT and public works budgets.
25. NO
26. Police - see #2
27. Not really, but see above
28. no
29. no
30. Less cost Stop buying Chevy trucks and get a dependable Nissan or Toyota save a lot of money with all the breakdowns the silverado has
31. No.
32. No
33. I don't understand the question. Is this an attempt to confuse the witness? We are made to pay for services we don't receive thru taxes on the one hand; while we are denied services on the other hand.
34. Streets and highways should be separated from public transportation to improve accountability.
35. Public Parking and Enforcement
36. It seems to be that any time a function is placed in a "department" that is not directly accountable to taxpayers that quality and efficiency drops while costs rise. Maybe it wouldn't be a horrible thing for every department head to be elected. Or have different council members who are chairs of particular committees have special oversight, accountability and ownership of specific unelected departments. However, I don't recommend either of these necessarily because then the mayor would have a difficult time leading with a direct clear agenda and accomplishing things quickly if there are a lot of cooks in the kitchen. So, simply stated, I think consolidated offices under an accountable public official is better than a conglomerate of departments under one big umbrella of one executive. Elected officials will put more pressure on their employees for stellar customer service and performance because their employees/department is a direct reflection of them to the voters. There is no hiding behind layers of government for protection in that scenario.
37. none
38. none
39. No
40. no
41. Not aware of any.
42. no

43. No.
44. There is not a common inefficiency as much as there is a lack of common priorities/needs. One neighborhood maybe focused on the immediate need of crime or after-school programs, where the priorities/needs of another maybe intergrating commerce into residential areas. The inefficiency is when trying to prioritize one community's needs over anothers.
45. yes. Wealth Watchers . Program does nothing to help the community
46. No
47. Waste water treatment and the efforts to decommission failing septic tanks.
48. I think whoever designed this survey must have seen something judging by the question.
49. break up school system into manageable neighborhood size
50. It occurs to me that minor infractions such as traffic tickets could be better handled locally in some way- rather than one central court for the whole county.
51. I am not aware, but i try to stay as uninvolved with that as possible
52. No
53. See above answer re: legal services exceptions
54. NO
55. JEA
56. No
57. Make the various, JPA, JTA, JEA authorities totally accountable to the city government and a much closer part of the city government with direct reporting to the Mayor or City Councilpersons so that there is a direct accountability to the taxpayers.
58. No
59. Not knowledgeable in this subject
60. no
61. None
62. Waste management calls to the 630 city, the city refers calls back to waste management.. lots of runaround in city department , no action
63. None

## **Question 6:**

Have you had any experience bidding on a contract, working for the City, or with some other City where you became aware of a process or City system in Jacksonville that should be changed or improved? Please explain.

### **Summary:**

Fewer answers (63), and many respondents answered that they did not have any experience bidding contracts with the city.

### **Noteworthy Comments:**

- I have created bids but not been part of responding to bids. The biggest problems I see are hindrances to using existing contracts already established by other outside agencies (State of Florida Contract, etc). We spend far too much time haggling over details in existing contracts. The process needs to be streamlined.
- Yes, lack of assessment of "value" engineering, performance labor and material bids, life cycle cost assessment and bid criteria. Low bidder is not necessarily best for the city or tax payers interest.
- minority set asides or JESEB mandated contracts won't work unless an incubation experience is first mandated. eg a \$ 30,000 bid not a \$ 400,000 bid
- As related to how we compare with other cities) Getting federal and state matching dollars is something that needs to be improved. For one of the largest cities in one of the largest states, I don't know if our elected officials in Tallahassee and Washington are weak or if we as a city aren't organized with strong clear goals to communicate forward, but for some reason we don't bring back federal and state incentives/investment or garner attention like other Florida cities do. We should be on par with Tampa, for example.
- Yes. Though intentions were great, the person assigned to manage the contract on the city's behalf was not knowledgeable in the specific area of the work to be performed and the outside vendor/contractor dictated the job in their favor. City employees cannot be experts in everything and must learn to use outside consultants more wisely and efficiently.

### **Responses (63):**

1. No.
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. no
5. All processes need to be continuously improved and reviewed. I lived in MN for 4 years and there was definitely a culture of continuous improvement and creativity that I have not found here in Jax
6. No but knowing that we have engineers who approve plans that effect signal maintenance, I believe the personnel who do the maintenance should be privy to the specifics of the planning.

7. No
8. Nope
9. none
10. no
11. N/A
12. I have created bids but not been part of responding to bids. The biggest problems I see are hindrances to using existing contracts already established by other outside agencies (State of Florida Contract, etc). We spend far too much time haggling over details in existing contracts. The process needs to be streamlined.
13. no
14. I do not know.
15. no
16. No
17. Yes, lack of assessment of "value" engineering, performance labor and material bids, life cycle cost assessment and bid criteria. Low bidder is not necessarily best for the city or tax payers interest.
18. n/a
19. no.
20. no
21. It is sad that JSO and the independent authorities get raises, bonuses, etc. every year but then our JEA bills increase, property taxes increase, the port wants city funding for dredging, etc. Also, make the Sheriff over the jail and appoint a police chief. Follow the travel policy.
22. No
23. Yes the city should watch some their employees who have the responsibility to write spec or specifications to purchase equipment and supplies that is Tailored and receive personal gain.
24. There's a lot of red tape.
25. NO
26. Seems we need more police officers They seem to take a while to respond to 911 calls Don't get me wrong, I don't believe they can help it, but when 911 is called response should be quick
27. no
28. procurement process is quite extensive
29. minority set asides or JESEB mandated contracts won't work unless an incubation experience is first mandated. eg a \$ 30,000 bid not a \$ 400,000 bid
30. N/A
31. No
32. I have owned and operated two small businesses and always made it a point not to bid on government contracts because the bidding system was rigged and the political corruption was was intolerable.
33. Yes. The city has shifted responsibility for correcting sanitation/recycling problems to the contractors. Quality monitoring of these services should be a City function.
34. No
35. no

36. (As related to how we compare with other cities) Getting federal and state matching dollars is something that needs to be improved. For one of the largest cities in one of the largest states, I don't know if our elected officials in Tallahassee and Washington are weak or if we as a city aren't organized with strong clear goals to communicate forward, but for some reason we don't bring back federal and state incentives/investment or garner attention like other Florida cities do. We should be on par with Tampa, for example. Another example is the Duval education system. This has to be one of the biggest, most egregious problems facing the city. My spouse and I grew up in areas of Florida with great public school systems. It was shocking to learn the huge swings in quality of education here or that public school wasn't a given for everyone as it had been for us in our communities growing up. This is a tragedy and completely unacceptable. To be a growing and attractive place to do business, it has to be a place with a well educated, highly skilled workforce. That comes with education. An area with stellar education opportunities attract those who want to bring their families to the area to live and work, too. The county will not be able to cut, nor spend, its way out of this issue.
37. None
38. working well
39. No
40. No
41. N/A
42. No
43. no
44. No.
45. Yes. Though intentions were great, the person assigned to manage the contract on the city's behalf was not knowledgeable in the specific area of the work to be performed and the outside vendor/contractor dictated the job in their favor. City employees cannot be experts in everything and must learn to use outside consultants more wisely and efficiently.
46. no, Summer programs,community grants
47. Yes. Our court system is overwhelmed with petty arrests. We should try some closed circuit court like other counties are doing. Also issue more NTA's rather than arrests. Our courts need to be open for full business and not take half days on Fridays.
48. Any reference to race, gender, or national origin should be removed from any bidding on contracts in the city. Those details have zero impact on the quality and price of services, and should therefor not be considered.
49. No, I have not.
50. No
51. no
52. The amount of red tape required to make public art happen in Jax is extremely antiquated as compared to public art initiatives in other cities in which I have lived.

53. Bidding on a contract with the city is fine. Working with the City and understanding when things are Mayor office decisions and when they are council is a nightmare
54. No
55. NO
56. No
57. None
58. no
59. no
60. No
61. Only problem I've had is since Mayor Brown came to office. He shut off communication with many sources and threatens all city employees with their jobs if they speak to anyone without his permission. What happened to the Florida Sunshine law where government is supposed to operate in clear view of the public?
62. not well organized
63. No

## Question 7:

Have you ever lived in another city? If yes, where? How does our government compare to there?

### Summary:

Various comments, some respondents feel Jacksonville is better, others feel its worse. See "Noteworthy Comments".

### Noteworthy Comments:

- Yes. Many places. A few Florida city to our south, a city in north central Florida, a small town in southwest Florida, Washington, DC, and briefly in New England. All local governments have their strengths and weaknesses. We seem to be a big city that thinks of itself as a small town. We're also a city perpetually brimming with potential...."perpetual potential." We don't realize how much we have to offer and as a result, don't believe in ourselves. Part of this is probably because a lot of people have never lived outside Jacksonville to have a comparison (either a good comparison or a bad comparison) so they don't know what they're missing or what could be. Or they do know and have accepted that it never will be. We are one of the most beautiful cities on the east coast. I appreciate those who take pride in it! Investment, investment, investment... and not cheap short sighted stuff either. Either invest right, big and for the long term or find something new.
- Yes. Yes. I have lived in other cities in the Southeast, Northeast, and Southwest. This government is not as efficient. This government seems to be too focus on providing for this government, rather than for the people. For example, there are significant issues with the Pension. In my last job (with a county government in the Southwest), I had to work 20 years to be 100% vested, and at 5 years I was only 25%! County employees would typically drive from 60-80 miles away to work, and they ENJOYED working there. In my opinion, this City is giving the pension away.
- Atlanta, GA, Homestead, FL, Key Largo, FL, Islamorada, FL, Peoria, IL to name a few and the seVICES here are so much more better than all those citys combined!!!
- Jefferson City,Tn where I lived for 15 years is a good old boy network.Jacksonville is similar in that there is an "old guard" that appears to want to maintain the small town feel Jacksonville has always had. These folks clash with the progressive folks that want to see change for a metropolitan Jacksonville
- YES Cincinnati, San Diego, Charleston SC, Lafayette La, With Exception to Lafayette evey aspect of their government is better and more of a strategic approach to Mass Transit, Downtown as a Living area, and friendler Cycling and Pedestrian cities

### Responses (63):

1. Yes (abroad, so totally different).

2. Yes. Yes. I have lived in other cities in the Southeast, Northeast, and Southwest. This government is not as efficient. This government seems to be too focused on providing for this government, rather than for the people. For example, there are significant issues with the Pension. In my last job (with a county government in the Southwest), I had to work 20 years to be 100% vested, and at 5 years I was only 25%! County employees would typically drive from 60-80 miles away to work, and they ENJOYED working there. In my opinion, this City is giving the pension away.
3. Atlantic Beach, FL 32233, No comparison. Atlantic Beach is the best of the 3 Beach cities and 10 times better than any Jacksonville government, past and future.
4. Yes, New Jersey and New York. The city in NJ was small so it can't compare. We even shared the neighboring city's post office at that time. It all seemed to work well until the taxes in that state skyrocketed. NY has it together. They're forward thinking and quick to get things done. Change seems to take too long in Jacksonville.
5. Yes. I think consolidation was a very forward-thinking solution and I'm surprised more municipalities don't do it.
6. Yes, poorly. I have traveled and lived in other places and this local government is only matched by our national government of being so fully dysfunctional. We have City Council leaders that propose changing ordinance just so they can line their pockets with money from private vendors not caring what their constituents want. We have a mayor that is more interested in getting his picture in the paper than working to improve the lives of citizens of Jacksonville.
7. Yes. Alexandria, VA, Charleston, SC, St. Cloud MN
8. Yes, I've lived in Goldsboro NC, Great Lakes IL and Norfolk VA; my opinion is that this city has some pretty severe management issues.
9. No
10. Atlanta, GA, Homestead, FL, Key Largo, FL, Islamorada, FL, Peoria, IL to name a few and the services here are so much more better than all those cities combined!!!
11. the other city, " Syracuse, NY " was better at recycling
12. no

13. Yes, Gwinnett County, Georgia. The City of Jacksonville government is more mayorally centric. This provides the mayor with much more power than a County Manager
14. No.
15. yes. Houston, St. Louis area. both are city governments
16. Jefferson City, Tn where I lived for 15 years is a good old boy network. Jacksonville is similar in that there is an "old guard" that appears to want to maintain the small town feel Jacksonville has always had. These folks clash with the progressive folks that want to see change for a metropolitan Jacksonville
17. yes. Palm Coast. Palm Coast has better benefits.
18. Yes. No real issues.
19. Gainesville, fl. not as big and more of a support to education.
20. Yes, I believe we have a superior system. ie. Norfolk, Va
21. I have lived in a number of cities including cities in Europe. My experience in Europe opened my eyes to how mass transit should ultimately work. One could get from anywhere to anywhere in Europe with a smooth transition between countries as well as cities. Of course, the citizens of Europe are taxed quite heavily to provide these services.
22. Yes, on scale 1 to 10 grade given is "6" just above average.
23. Yes. It is better here.
24. Yes. Ocala, FL. our customer service is deplorable. Our tax-payers are not getting some services in the manner which should be expected of our government and that needs to change. We are unable to provide said services in a bid to please a small portion of the population by catering to their needs whilst all others are suffering.
25. Yes, they have quicker service.
26. no
27. Yes. two other states. Any increases to taxes, fees, new stadiums, etc. were put to a vote (special election). It was not dependent on City Council to make those decisions.
28. Fayetteville nc.

29. Hire someone to over see spending with the Intelligence To determine the cost effectiveness, is worth the loss of service due to three cent on a bid. In other words the service over past five may exceed the one year low bid. The lower bidders is not what's best for the city of City of Jacksonville.
30. Yes I have lived in Topeka, KS and in Tampa, FL. It seems our city is too big for our government to handle.
31. No.
32. YES Cincinnati, San Diego, Charleston SC, Lafayette La, With Exception to Lafayette every aspect of their government is better and more of a strategic approach to Mass Transit, Downtown as a Living area, and friendlier Cycling and Pedestrian cities
33. Only in the military, and I wouldn't trade Jacksonville for anywhere else!
34. Yes, Norfolk, VA, Pensacola, FL, Orange Park, Winter Harbor, ME - Norfolk was the closest in organization but it was much more expensive to live there
35. no
36. Boston which is more neighborhood driven
37. Yes
38. Tallahassee. There was greater response from Jacksonville government than when I lived in Tallahassee in requested services.
39. No
40. Yes, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma among several others. The same "consolidated corruption" was present in both cities.
41. Yes, Oklahoma City, OK and New Orleans, LA. OKC. at the time I lived there, was relatively responsive and effective/efficient. NOLA was basically corrupt and inoperable.
42. Yes. School system needs major updating. Need to cut out political appointments given after an election.
43. I was born and lived my first 20 some years in Toledo Ohio. But that was 45 years ago. As a side note, the city has shrunk in those years as industries and people moved away.

44. Yes, Richmond, Va, Alexandria Va., Charlotte, NC; Norfolk/Va Beach, Va. Columbia, SC, Knoxville, Tn. Way below in quality.
45. Yes. Many places. A few Florida city to our south, a city in north central Florida, a small town in southwest Florida, Washington, DC, and briefly in New England. All local governments have their strengths and weaknesses. We seem to be a big city that thinks of itself as a small town. We're also a city perpetually brimming with potential...."perpetual potential." We don't realize how much we have to offer and as a result, don't believe in ourselves. Part of this is probably because a lot of people have never lived outside Jacksonville to have a comparison (either a good comparison or a bad comparison) so they don't know what they're missing or what could be. Or they do know and have accepted that it never will be. We are one of the most beautiful cities on the east coast. I appreciate those who take pride in it! Investment, investment, investment... and not cheap short sighted stuff either. Either invest right, big and for the long term or find something new.
46. Yes, Raleigh, N,C, and Tallahassee,Fl. We have greater access to Services
47. this government is not ran for the people but for the gov in office
48. n/a
49. Yes, Frederick MD, Baltimore MD, and Evansville IN. Our government is too complex doing to the structure of Jax City and Jax Beach.
50. Yes, Willow Grove, PA (outside of Philadelphia) and Brunswick, ME. Philadelphia is antiquated with it being a Commonwealth. Maine is very small and has a town hall very similar to Orange Park. Hard to compare those two to Jacksonville. Also lived overseas and it was English. That has a parliament. No comparison to our government. We are doing a good job. The City employees do work hard and the public perception is different that what actually happens.
51. No.
52. yes, Milwaukee WI - the government there is more effective, Fort Myers FL - Jacksonville is better
53. ye, baltimore, md. City and County government are seperate. Needs seem to be better met.
54. No.
55. Yes. I love Jacksonville. Two completely different towns, given size, diversisty, economic interests, unable to compare the two.

56. yes, New York, Orlando. Very slow in Jacksonville. City seems divided culturally ,Have to wait too long for service. Government sometimes make too much money with less work done. "Good old boy mentality in this city and who you know". School system need to be better and our children need jobs.
57. No
58. Yes. For long periods of time in Raleigh NC, Pensacola FL, Sacramento CA, Portland ME, Honolulu HI, Norfolk VA and overseas in the southern part of The Netherlands. Our government here seems to accept poor performance and planning as a normal part of business from The People Mover to garbage on public streets. Every place I lived, and Jax is my hometown, was better run in that respect than Jax with the exception of Honolulu HI. Norfolk was closer to Jax, but are doing a much better job revitalizing their downtown.
59. Yes. I lived in Chicago. Chicago is a great city with a history of top down government with some sleazy antics cropping up from time to time, but my goodness,that City WORKS!
60. unfavorable-we have a great park system but not the dollars to provide maintenance,
61. yes. Indianapolis, Indiana, Ft Myers Beach, Fl and Jacksonville, FL as well as Atlantic Beach. One thing that strikes me is the high density of police cars and officers in Atlantic Beach compared to anywhere else I have lived.
62. Yes. Richmond, VA, Satellite Beach, FL, Key West FL, Savannah, GA. It is inferior to all.
63. Yes. Anything is better than this convoluted 2 body system. When you add in the beaches Well that's a lot of extra government that spends valuable time fighting between the parties

## **Question 8:**

Are there any specific suggestions you have for improving local government?

### **Summary:**

Various comments. See "Noteworthy Comments".

### **Noteworthy Comments:**

- Pay Fair Wages including TOTAL Benefit package to "civil service" staff and employees. You get what you pay for, morale is the lowest seen in years.
- Allow more CPAC involvement when changes are being made to their neighborhoods with regard to decreased police/fire protection, improving roadways, changing state and federal roadway exits, entrances, new development, etc. In other words, in addition to advising CPACs on the changes, allowing them to have an input on these changes as well
- 

### **Responses (74):**

1. Continue to look at best practices in other cities.
2. This is a consolidated form of government, and we have allowed the government to sprawl. The local leadership needs to not look at the effects of consolidation, but rather the effects of multiple departments with unclear purposes and duplicative duties, with the objective of reducing the span of the government. My views are non-partisan. Services provided are necessary. The organizational structure of the City of Jacksonville is not necessary. My goal with this statement is not to voice layoffs or cutbacks, but rather to ask the City to concentrate on what services it provides, and what services it needs to provide. Hopefully as the organization is realigned, the personnel from former departments are reassigned to agencies created to address the GAPS.
3. all beach cities forming their own County, called Ocean County.
4. There needs to be better pay for employees since they are called upon to do such a multitude of duties since the last layoffs.
5. Government is for the people, by the people. ALL the people. It shouldn't be for/by the LOUDEST people. I appreciate this survey.
6. Remove beaches governments or contribute more to the beaches so that the mill age rates are the same across Duval county.
7. Stop playing politics and work together. Implement a plan for the entire City and stick to it. Don't do another study. You did not follow the last dozen studies. Other cities have a plan stick to it no matter which party is power.

8. Change in the culture of government. It stifles creativity and demands conformity. Create a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.
9. There are too many for me to list here.
10. No
11. Pay raise for city employess.
12. Enforce littering and odor laws
13. Practice civility, lead by example
14. The current regime is focused on marketing for expansion of growth downtown. I beleive they should have tried to get their internal house in order before wasting money on trying to build up downtown. Once things are running more efficient, then you focus on growth.
15. Properly fund central services so the other city departments and constitutionals are not forced to seek resources on their own. There is an inherent cost savings and improved efficiency when services are centralized and properly managed.
16. Better contract negotiations with our unions.
17. create more festival for downtown. need to create night attraction like Myrtal Beach, SC. Access free to pier at night for couples, dating.....ect they bring bussiness.
18. The pension issue. I do not think City employees should bare the brunt of issue.
19. Coordinate with the school system. The Mayor should meet regularly with Dr. Vitti and coordinate with the Children's Commission.
20. rework the pension fund. I know you are working on it but keep it on the front burner.
21. Pay Fair Wages including TOTAL Benefit package to "civil service" staff and employees. You get what you pay for, morale is the lowest seen in years.
22. n/a
23. de-consolidate and allow the county to run its portion of the county

24. Check on the folks who do absolutely nothing all day but make more money than the rest, not accountable to anyone. Also, seems to be an issue with the men making more as well as getting paid overtime.
25. Hire more people with certifications in more than one field
26. I believe the school system should be divided into smaller parts. The system right now is too big. Several smaller systems result in greater quality.
27. Perhaps mayors need some guidelines on the qualifications of a CAO
28. Get rid of appointed positions below the Dept. head level. Start putting more funding and personnel into protecting the natural environment. The State of Florida has shirked its' duties in this area, so the City needs to pick up the slack. Eliminate on-going corruption in the Human Resources Dept. (over the past 23 years) and anywhere there are managers that repeatedly break the Civil Service Rules with respect to promotion, layoffs, etc.. Make the Civil Service Board consist of members not affiliated with the City Administration or the Bargaining Units. If you continue to pay overtime to public safety, then you should apply the policy for general fund employees as well. Prevent the City lawyer from having the authority to tell the members of the Civil Service Board what to say and do. Treat City employees on the General Fund (non-public safety) to pay and compensation that is commensurate with the private sector and at least keeps up with the cost of living. There is no collective bargaining in good faith with the units when COJ employees have not had ANY kind of salary raise in excess of 15 years, including cola. Keep your hands off of the existing employees General Employee Pension Fund. Get your priorities correctly aligned with what will benefit most citizens. (ie. professional sports should not be a priority) Do the best you can to promote the important local government aspects like environmental protection, public safety, education, health and the economy (ie. clean industry). The citizens will decide and make their own entertainment. But, if the City insists on spending money on professional sports, then an equal or greater amount should be spent on the Arts and Music. With the proper balance, oversight and fiscal responsibility the City government could be extraordinary.
29. Problem Oriented Policing, Community Oriented Policing, CPTED Practices all implemented to the fullest extent possible this would start the drop in the pond ripple effect needed to get Jax Jump Started
30. Millage for public safety should be broken out separately so that the cost of other functions of local government (such as Libraries and Parks) are more transparent and better understood by the people.
31. Get a new mayor and most of council
32. Fund it. Past administrations lowered millage as the tax base went up giving the illusion of being conservative while the city grew larger and total revenues were

increasing. When property values declined they were forced to eviscerate departments and lay-off dedicated people in order to perpetuate the deceit.

33. Seems like the Mayor and city counsel need to work together to help the city. Seems like they're not working well with each other.
34. Quit letting the residents think they should receive services & education for free, our taxes are too low to provide the services we do
35. less politics....promote from within. is it really necessary to go externally for all appointed positions. Don't we have some good, qualified internal candidates to consider?
36. hire smarted employees
37. Make the sheriff an appointed position
38. No.
39. No
40. I think the towns and cities located on the barrier island should separate (secede) from Duval and St. Johns Counties and form a new county. A fitting name for the new county would be Ocean County.
41. YES, SPLIT IT UP. WE ARE WAY TO BIG TO TAKE CARE OF WHAT IS NEEDED IN THIS CITY.
42. Spend money like you received it from the old lady on my street who is living in poverty and continues to pay her taxes. Do not buy giant TV screens however you finagle it and rationalize it. That money could have stayed with taxpayers to decide how to spend it. I am not THAT old lady, but I cannot afford sports tickets or even dining out, thank you for spending my money on public safety and good roads.
43. Reduce the size of the administration portion, stop wasting time and money on downtown projects and help save the Northside, Westside and Arlington;
44. I've included many of those in other answers. They are merely ideas.
45. No
46. get rid of 100 or more appointed positions an dont implament them into the system
47. listen to people before making changes

48. Again, I would like to have more facts about how our tax money benefits our local Jax Beach community.
49. No
50. No.
51. More true consolidation of areas like school board, sheriff, etc
52. Have a separate tax for library system to sustain it. Property values have fallen causing cuts in system.
53. The City Council and the administration need to learn to work together. All elected officials need to stop worrying about getting reelected and their individual constituents and work at what is best for the entire city.
54. Yes.
55. Utilized the River walk and have more to do downtown, Provide water Ferries so people can go back and forth like downtown Savannah, Ga. Provide jobs for our youth. Help our student to be more educated and stay in school. No parking downtown, better parades, improve the housing situation, no more tax raises, improve small businesses and crime prevention
56. Build a new jail. Require our local judges to work a 5 day work week. Eliminate the police departments at the beaches along with their elected officials.
57. Have significantly less time in City Council meetings spent on recognizing people and organizations doing nice things and more focused on the problems they were voted in to address. You will get better citizenship buy in if those who show up to comment don't have to sit through three hours of self-esteem building exercises before substantive business is addressed.
58. Slim down government to the basics. Pay well for educated and dedicated people who know what is expected of them and see that they perform or are replaced.
59. Streamline the administrative support provided the council people. Make the council a true part time job with a stipend rather than a salary that some members use as their primary source of income. Pass the human rights ordinance.
60. Community boards for advising local city councils
61. Yes, remove the cities from the county. Keep the beaches independent as well
62. No

63. NO
64. cut the mayor's staff and admin and beef up the sheriff's dept and fire dept
65. Get rid of union labor contracts and make all jobs merit based. No more extended benefit packages for employees and especially management.
66. The City Council should be more neighborhood focused.
67. Get rid of consolidation.
68. taxation should not be based solely on property tax. Many people do not contribute to local government. Even if only \$20. everyone should help fund common services.
69. Longer terms for City Council president
70. No
71. Operate in the clear view of the public!
72. Stop cutting property taxes and starving city departments of their funding.
73. reduce by 50%, customer service training
74. Allow more CPAC involvement when changes are being made to their neighborhoods with regard to decreased police/fire protection, improving roadways, changing state and federal roadway exits, entrances, new development, etc. In other words, in addition to advising CPACs on the changes, allowing them to have an input on these changes as well

## **Question 9:**

What topics or issues would you like to have addressed by the Task Force?

### **Summary:**

Various Comments. See "Noteworthy Comments".

### **Noteworthy Comments:**

- I hope ultimately the task force will produce an actual published historical report. I also hope the taskforce does due diligence in finding out what most average, non-involved, people think (my guess is it's probably quite satisfactory) not just local leaders or activists with agendas. I think this task force is a great idea and a positive initiative. I hope the results and study are substantive, specific, quantitative, responsible and truthful. It would be easy to instead produce a report of generalizations or opinionated hunches, but I hope that won't be the case. I look forward to the task force's findings.
- Simplifying city services so that essential services are performed, and identifying gaps.
- Make sure the ferry is always funded. It is an important tool for those who use it to go to work. Much like a JTA bus! Also we need to aggressively pursue a better way to bring more business, entertainment and athletic events to town. We are losing ground to other Florida communities. We are also losing ground in growing our port, while the port of Savannah is growing.
- IT programs, when properly vetted, have the potential to save dollars, improve efficiency and improve the interaction between city and the public. We need sufficient resources to develop top tier IT services for city agencies. Provide the necessary funding to bring in and keep talent that can produce top notch programs. Once the systems are created, provide sufficient staff to maintain the systems.
- Tourism, we live in Florida and there is no reason for the billions of dollars that drive through or fly over our city every year to stop and spend that money here. Why? Bring in a theme park. We have a large navy population with many veterans living here in Jacksonville. Why can't we bring a large decommissioned navy ship downtown as a tourist attraction? Bring in tourists and clean up our downtown and you will solve a large percentage of our financial woes.
- Cutting library hours hurts PEOPLE who need that sort of enrichment help more than they need those giant TV screens. (I don't have a TV by the way because I can't afford the service on my budget). Since that Better Jax money grab was for libraries you really need to try harder to keep them open. (I volunteer at a private library about 40 hours a month so I know there are things that could be done)
- The issue of the cities that still have their own government in addition to the City of Jacksonville. We need to have agreements in place that specify who is responsible for the different areas that overlap. The library presentation certainly brought up a good point. Although I certainly don't want the libraries to become too separated from City government, I do think that many, if not all, of our

- departments get shortchanged because of the way the budget is handled. We have people without any knowledge of the departments making decisions based on a percentage that needs to be cut.
- CPAC boundaries should be adjusted to neighborhoods rather than the current boundaries.

**Responses (71):**

1. No additional.
2. Simplifying city services so that essential services are performed, and identifying gaps.
3. Forming Ocean County.
4. Make sure the ferry is always funded. It is an important tool for those who use it to go to work. Much like a JTA bus! Also we need to aggressively pursue a better way to bring more business, entertainment and athletic events to town. We are losing ground to other Florida communities. We are also losing ground in growing our port, while the port of Savannah is growing.
5. Reduce the number of City Council leaders; reduce, reduce. It is waste of money by having so many City Council leaders. Make downtown Jacksonville a place I want to bring my family not to be scare of being harassed or gross out by the activities those that have taken over the parks and library.
6. The culture of Governance
7. I know there are problems with the budget, but the workers and technicians of Traffic Engineering are grossly underpaid when compared to the national average pay rate of similar jobs in other cities. This has been an ongoing discussion within the ranks of Traffic Engineering. This has been presented to the Timing Engineer and the Director of Traffic Engineering with no results.
8. when can we receive appropriate "raises" under what circumstances!
9. Nothing right now.
10. illegal dumping
11. none
12. Crime in lower socioeconomic areas. Work on prevention with young people. More Private-Public partnerships to invest in this group.
13. IT programs, when properly vetted, have the potential to save dollars, improve efficiency and improve the interaction between city and the public. We need

- sufficient resources to develop top tier IT services for city agencies. Provide the necessary funding to bring in and keep talent that can produce top notch programs. Once the systems are created, provide sufficient staff to maintain the systems.
14. unsure
  15. more intertain for kid and family. need to create family day like Canada Day
  16. I do not know.
  17. no
  18. City budget
  19. Revamp the city laws and ordinances, stop the good ol " buddy" system with key elected, appointed and high ranking Officials.
  20. n/a
  21. city sewer services
  22. All mentioned above.
  23. Justice to many city employees with time on the job who was let doing the current city make over. Spending, change the lowest bid rules where the exclude any fir the betterment of the COJ.
  24. Tourism, we live in Florida and there is no reason for the billions of dollars that drive through or fly over our city every year to stop and spend that money here. Why? Bring in a theme park. We have a large navy population with many veterans living here in Jacksonville. Why can't we bring a large decommissioned navy ship downtown as a tourist attraction? Bring in tourists and clean up our downtown and you will solve a large percentage of our financial wows.
  25. How do get the public library's budget restored.
  26. Everything can be improved upon, and some minor adjustments may be in order, but it would be nice if the citizens can determine what constitutes an "improvement." Bigger is not always better. Define what is not working on multiple levels and based on multiple points of view before you start tinkering with it.
  27. see 8.
  28. CPTED SPECIFICALLY (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)

29. Inordinate amount of power and control enjoyed by police, fire, and their pension fund.
30. I would love public safety to be addressed! Those men and women are defenders of our city! Everyone sees them every day and when I see them they are always very helpful, courteous and caring! I saw a fire engine pull over in the pouring rain and help an elderly woman change her tire! I told a group of firemen that when I saw another fire engine at the grocery store and you know what they said? "That's our job ma'am! This is our city and we love her!" God bless them!
31. Educate the taxpayer on what high taxes really look like, and how other cities charge a lot for services and have high taxes
32. none
33. None.
34. None
35. Return our court systems and our revenue.
36. How the funds from the toll-removal bond issue are being used by JTA.
37. Taxes, schools,
38. Cutting library hours hurts PEOPLE who need that sort of enrichment help more than they need those giant TV screens. (I don't have a TV by the way because I can't afford the service on my budget). Since that Better Jax money grab was for libraries you really need to try harder to keep them open. (I volunteer at a private library about 40 hours a month so I know there are things that could be done)
39. SHow to stop the administration from wasting time and money over a dead area -- downtown and I was a property owner there.
40. I hope ultimately the task force will produce an actual published historical report. I also hope the taskforce does due diligence in finding out what most average, non-involved, people think (my guess is it's probably quite satisfactory) not just local leaders or activists with agendas. I think this task force is a great idea and a positive initiative. I hope the results and study are substantive, specific, quantitative, responsible and truthful. It would be easy to instead produce a report of generalizations or opinionated hunches, but I hope that won't be the case. I look forward to the task force's findings.
41. Increase transporation to polls on voting days and increase bus service throughout the city.

42. PEOPLE GETTING PAYED OVER A HUNDRED THOUSAND A YEAR  
THERE NOT WERTH IT
43. improving pay for line / lower workers
44. Increase security during summer months. Leveraging our beaches to make this a tourist destination for the Jax proper and the beaches.
45. no
46. Review contracts and agreements that the City has with the NFL and the Jaguars.
47. no
48. Better transit system. Buses are currently overcrowded and few and far between.
49. The issue of the cities that still have their own government in addition to the City of Jacksonville. We need to have agreements in place that specify who is responsible for the different areas that overlap. The library presentation certainly brought up a good point. Although I certainly don't want the libraries to become too separated from City government, I do think that many, if not all, of our departments get shortchanged because of the way the budget is handled. We have people without any knowledge of the departments making decisions based on a percentage that needs to be cut.
50. Primarily, we need to focus on our weaknesses, areas that we fail in, that make other cities more desirable - culture, pedestrian friendly, better/more efficient public transportation, etc
51. How federal dollars are distributed and who it is given to. Accountability, Why salaries are increased while nothing is done in the community. Why some elected official are afraid to represent the people when they get into office.
52. Consolidating the 3 beaches into Jacksonville to include Police and government officials.
53. Overlapping and duplication of programs and services.
54. I think we need an accountability check. Is the city really doing what it says it is--  
-what do we look like to outsiders--trash, overgrown medians, blighted neighborhoods, falling apart riverwalk, trains to no where, transportation to help us get out of our cars especially at night
55. Animal control

56. none
57. why is the city of jacksonville unwilling to honor the present interlocal agreement?  
why the drama? who benefits?
58. Keeping the beaches independent
59. None
60. EDUCATION.
61. Crime and punishment, especially punishment. What little there is is way too lax.
62. Police staffing.
63. How to transition back to an unconsolidated local government.
64. A system of tax in which everyone contributes, and to provide resources for those who contribute the most.
65. Mayoral - City Council relations. Budget deadlines - change the cycle from July to early in the year
66. Continue to make downtown the center of the community. Look at activities that would encourage visitors to our town.
67. This is the only issue that I would like to respond to and that is city transportation. There is not enough transportation in this city for the size of it. It would be nice to expand the tram out to the westside and to the northside. Also it needs to be a little faster like it is in Miami.
68. Operate in the clear view of the public!
69. CPAC boundaries should be adjusted to neighborhoods rather than the current boundaries.
70. government waste, please don't request international travel for city officials or additional office parties
71. Infrastructure in older communities, making it a priority - better drainage, fixing potholes, adding sidewalks, especially near schools, better lighting in older communities, more thorough follow-up with calls to 630-CITY relative to community issues.