

Financial condition is the measure of how healthy a city's finances are at a particular point in time.

Unless otherwise noted, information in this chapter is from the City's audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Other chapters use adopted budget information. The CAFR differs from the City's annual Adopted Operating Budget in the timing and treatment of some revenues and expenditures.

In February 2016, this Office published our first report on financial condition. This chapter builds on those efforts by providing both background information about the City's finances and measures of financial condition. See this chapter's endnotes for definitions and links to the City's numerous financial documents. For more information, see [Measuring San José's Financial Condition](#).

FINANCIAL CONDITION

WHAT IS FINANCIAL CONDITION?

Financial condition is the measure of how healthy a city’s finances are at a particular point in time. A city is considered financially healthy if it can deliver the services its residents expect with the resources its residents provide, both now and in the future. A city that is financially healthy is prepared to respond to residents’ needs as they change over time or when unforeseen events arise, while laying the groundwork for long-term projects that will impact services many years down the line.

Cities in poor financial condition are not able to provide the services that residents want, either now or in the future. They’re more susceptible to economic downturns—requiring cutbacks in services and maintenance—and they may have difficulty recovering from financial setbacks.

WHAT MAKES UP THE CITY GOVERNMENT?

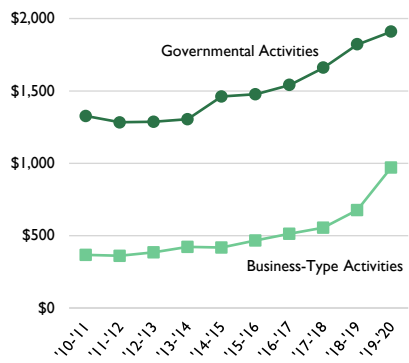
Most of what the City government does is considered to be a *governmental activity*, meaning that the programs and departments are funded by the public at large and can be used by everyone who lives in, works in, or travels to San José. This includes police, fire, libraries, roads, parks, and code enforcement. These governmental activities are primarily funded through the City’s *General Fund* (the City’s primary, unrestricted operating fund).

Many cities operate programs that don’t receive general tax revenue to support their operations. These are called *business-type activities*. For example, the Mineta San José International Airport is supported through fees from airlines and passengers and rent from concessionaires.

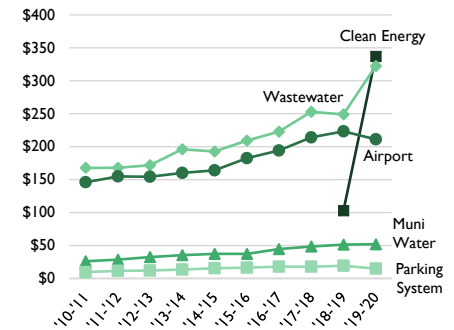
CITY REVENUES

The City received \$2.88 billion in revenues in 2019-20. Governmental activity revenue totaled \$1.91 billion, a 5 percent increase from 2018-19. This was primarily a result of an increase in grant revenues such as federal aid to support COVID-19 related expenditures and a \$43 million Pavement Maintenance grant from the VTA. There was also an increase in property taxes; however, some of the increases were offset by reductions in sales taxes and other revenues. Business-type activities, which included the first full year of activity for San José Clean Energy, generated \$971 million.

Total City Revenues (\$millions)

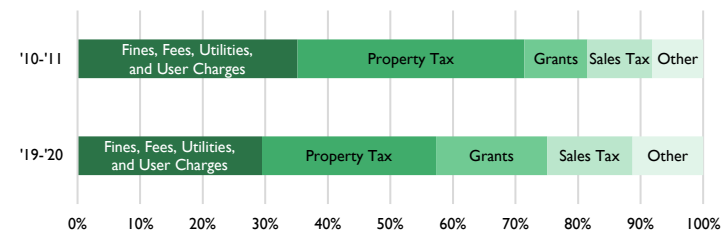


Business-Type Revenues by Source (\$millions)



The City relies on a number of funding sources to support its operations. Most California cities generate the majority of their revenue from taxes and fees. Grants made up a larger portion of the City’s revenues than in previous years. Property taxes, though more than a quarter of the City’s revenues, provided a smaller portion of the City’s revenues than a decade ago.

Governmental Activity General and Program Revenues by Type



REVENUE PER CAPITA

The City's revenue per capita has increased over the last seven years.

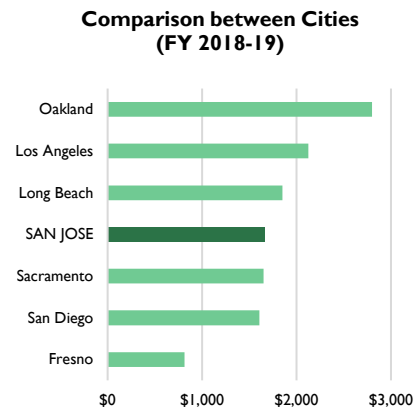
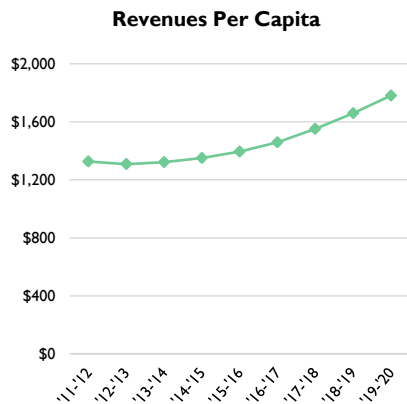
As a city's population increases, it is beneficial if the city's revenues also increase to maintain or grow service delivery for the expanding number of residents. Otherwise, the city may have to cut services or find new revenue sources.

Revenues per capita in the measures below include all governmental activity revenue. This includes taxes, fees, fines, grants, and other charges. Some revenue sources have restrictions on how they can be spent. In 2019-20, the revenues per capita increased despite the impacts of COVID-19 on the City's operating budget. This was primarily a result of an increase in grant funding, such as funding through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The City's revenues per capita have increased over the last eight years. The increase in revenues helped contribute to the City's operating surplus, shown later in this chapter.

The graphs below compare governmental funds revenue to population. A higher ratio means that there was more revenue generated per capita.

For this measure, a **higher** ratio indicates better financial condition.

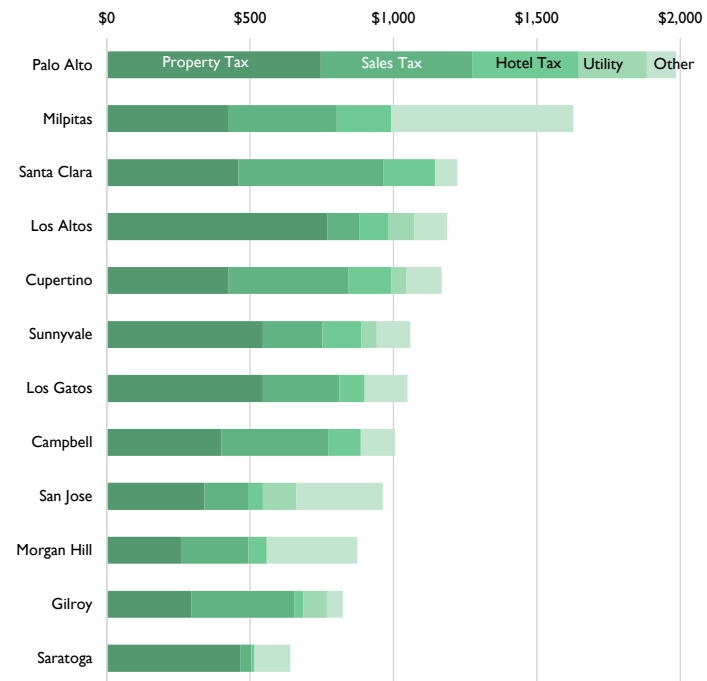


REVENUE PER CAPITA (CONTINUED)

San José received less tax revenue per capita than most of its neighboring cities (consistent with previous years). The City's tax revenues were only \$963 per capita in 2018-19. Of that, sales tax was only \$155. In contrast, Palo Alto received \$1,985 in taxes per capita, of which \$528 was from sales taxes.

The chart below shows only tax revenues. It doesn't include other sources of total governmental activity revenue that are included on the other charts on this page (such as fees and grants).

City Comparison of Tax Revenues Per Capita (2018-19)



Source: 2018-19 State Controller's City Data and California Department of Finance population estimates.

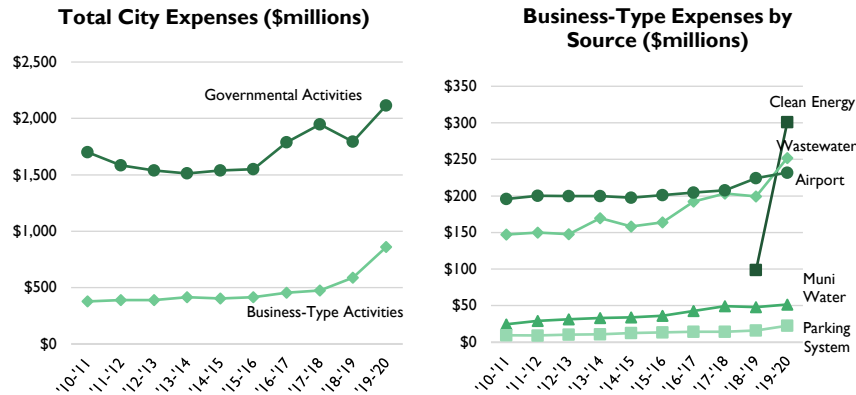
FINANCIAL CONDITION

CITY EXPENSES

The City's total expenses increased in 2019-20 to \$2.97 billion. The previous high was \$2.42 billion in 2017-18. These expenses include non-cash expenses such as depreciation (see "City Capital Assets and Spending" later in this chapter). Revenue sources are often restricted in how they can be spent. As a result, reducing expenses for one service does not necessarily mean that expenses can be increased for another service, because the revenue may not be transferable.

Governmental activity expenses, which make up the majority of City expenses, increased by 18 percent from the prior year. This was due in part to COVID-19 related activities, such as food distribution expenses. It was also a result of increases in pension and other post-employment benefit (OPEB) expenses, additional street pavement maintenance costs through a VTA grant, and increased garbage and recycling costs.

Business-type activities expenses increased by 46 percent from last year, largely because 2019-20 was the first full year of activity for San José Clean Energy. The implementation of new accounting standards to measure the costs of pollution remediation also resulted in a steep increase in reported expenses for the Wastewater Treatment System.



Note: In FY 2017-18, there were \$1 million of expenses from San José Clean Energy.

EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA

The City's expenditures per capita have increased over the last year.

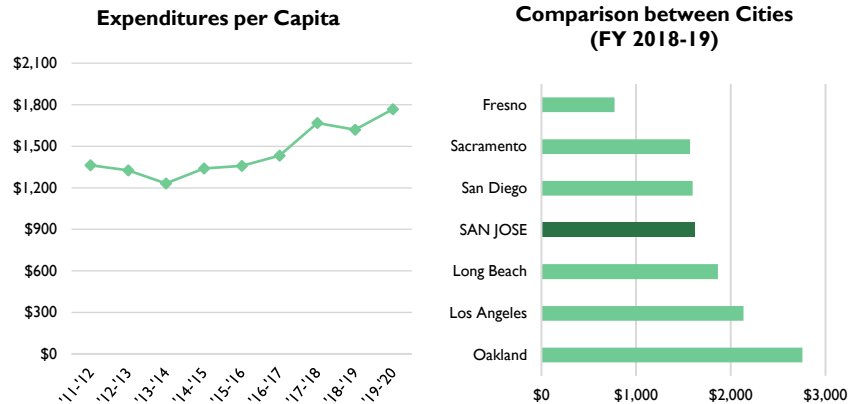
As a city adapts its service delivery over time and as its population changes, the amount of money expended per capita can shift. If the expenditures increase compared to population, it may indicate that new services were added, or that service delivery has become more expensive or less efficient.

As noted previously, expenditures related to COVID-19 contributed to the increase in expenses for governmental funds in 2019-20. Additionally, higher pension and OPEB costs and additional street pavement maintenance, garbage, and recycling costs contributed to the increase.

San José's expenditures per capita were mid-range compared to other surveyed jurisdictions. The level and types of service offered may vary between cities.

The graphs below compare governmental funds expenditures to population. A lower ratio means that there were fewer expenditures per capita.

For this measure, a **lower** ratio indicates a potentially lower level of service provided to residents.



OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT

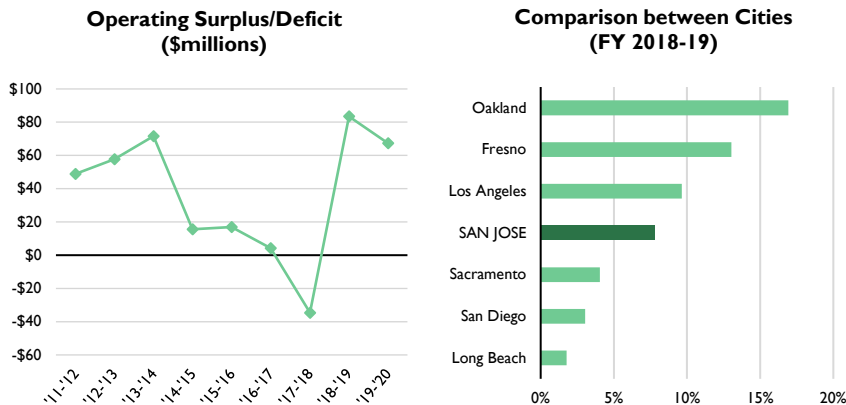
The City's General Fund had an operating surplus last year.

Ideally, a city's revenues will equal its expenditures; it will break even, rather than spending too little on services or too much. If the City spends too much on services, it has an operating deficit—it spent more than the revenues it brought in. Operating deficits that continue for years are unsustainable for a city's financial health.

In 2019-20, despite the impacts on the local economy from the COVID-19 emergency, the General Fund operating surplus was \$67 million. This was primarily a result of increased grant revenues, including CARES Act funding, and an increase in property tax revenues. Although there was an operating surplus in the General Fund, expenses exceeded revenues for governmental activities overall (leading to a decrease in net position, as seen later in this chapter). In addition, some of the revenues, such as CARES Act funding or other grant revenues, may be restricted for certain purposes.

The graph below to the left shows the difference between the City's General Fund total revenues and expenditures. The graph below to the right expresses this as a comparison ratio (surplus or deficit divided by revenues).

For this measure, a **higher** number indicates a better financial condition.



ABILITY TO PAY EXPENSES

The City had more cash available in its General Fund compared to the liabilities owed.

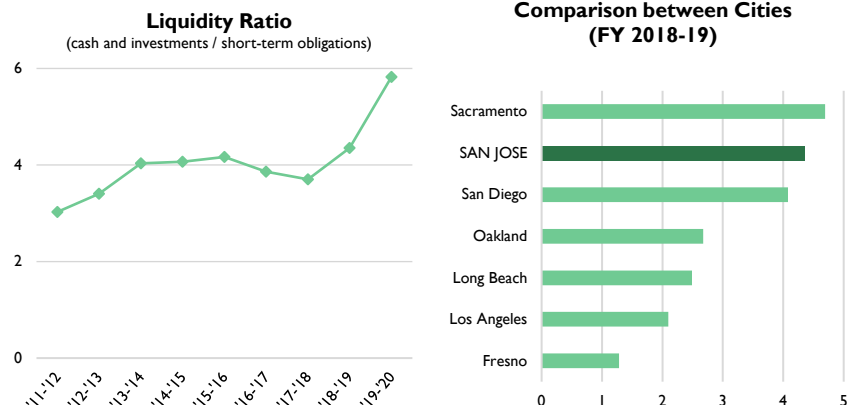
Cash and investments that can be quickly turned into cash enable the City to pay bills that will come due in the short term (within one year or sooner).

The amount the City had in its treasury in cash and investments compared to the liabilities owed increased dramatically in 2019-20. As of June 30, 2020, the City's cash and investments were nearly six times the amount that it owed within the next year. This was primarily a result of the receipt of \$178 million in CARES Act funding.

In 2018-19, San José's ratio of cash to liabilities was higher than most other cities surveyed. This means that San José was in a comparatively good position to pay short-term obligations with cash and investments compared to other cities. Note: these comparisons are for 2018-19 and do not reflect CARES Act funding.

The graphs below show the amount of money that the City has in cash and investments compared to the amount of short-term obligations the City owes, all within the General Fund. A higher ratio shows a better ability to pay short-term obligations.

For this measure, a **higher** ratio indicates better financial condition.



FINANCIAL CONDITION

BUILDING UP RESERVES

The City's General Fund unassigned fund balance reserves decreased compared to revenue.

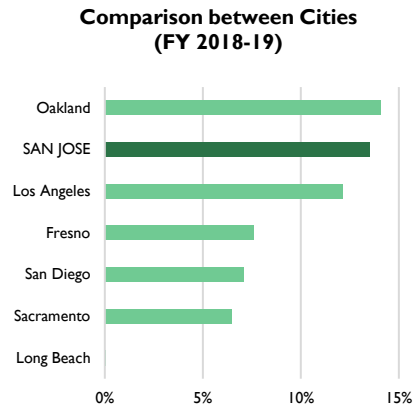
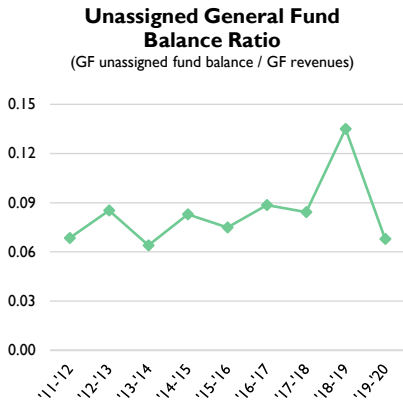
The City has several different reserves set aside. Of these reserves, the unassigned fund balance has the fewest restrictions on how it can be used. Within the unassigned fund balance are the City's safety net reserves: money that's set aside to pay for services and salaries when revenues take a turn for the worse.

The City's General Fund unassigned fund balance ratio decreased in 2019-20, as a result of a \$65 million decrease in the unassigned fund balance. However, overall total General Fund balances increased by \$46 million as a result of the previously mentioned operating surplus. This was driven primarily by an increase in the assigned fund balance (which reflects amounts intended to be used for specific purposes).

In 2018-19, the City's ratio was on the higher end compared to other jurisdictions.

The graphs below compare the money in the General Fund unassigned fund balance to total General Fund revenues. A higher ratio means that there was more money saved as compared to the revenues that were brought in.

For this measure, a **higher** ratio indicates better financial condition.



Note: Long Beach had a ratio of 0.03%.

NET ASSETS PER CAPITA

The City's net position has decreased.

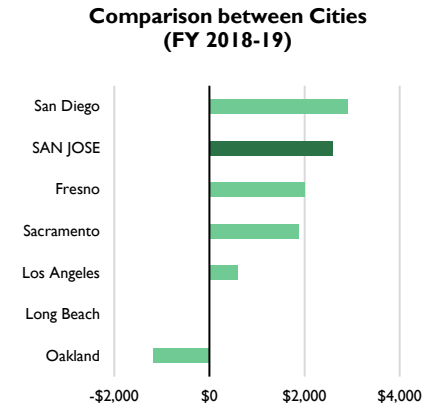
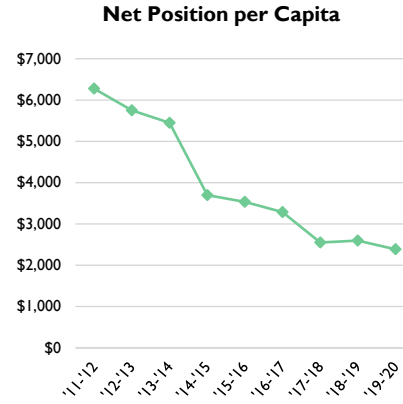
Revenues from the City's programs ideally should cover the expenses that the City incurs for those programs. In addition, what the City owns compared to what it owes (or its net position) can serve as a useful indicator of the City's financial condition.

In 2019-20, the City's net position for governmental activities (all funds) decreased because the City's expenses (including depreciation on its capital assets) for governmental activities exceeded its revenues. Expenses increased due to higher pension and OPEB costs and the growth in government expenses. The increase in expenses were partially offset by increases in revenues, including from CARES Act funding.

A change in accounting practices due to the addition of net pension liability contributed to the decline between 2013-14 and 2014-15. Similarly, in 2017-18, liabilities for OPEB costs were included for the same reason.

The graphs below show the City's net position per capita for governmental activities. A higher ratio means the City had more resources to provide services per resident.

For this measure, a **higher** ratio indicates better financial condition.



Note: Long Beach had a ratio of \$6.

CITY OBLIGATIONS AND DEBT

In total, the City had **\$7.6 billion** in obligations as of June 30, 2020. Of this, \$575 million was for short-term obligations and \$7 billion was for long-term obligations.

Short-term obligations are due within the next year. This includes things like accrued wages that City employees have earned, and accounts payable (money owed for supplies or for services rendered).

Long-term obligations are generally not due within the next year, but will need to be paid in the future. Long-term obligations include:

- The accrued vacation and sick leave that employees have earned but haven't taken.
- Bonds that the City has issued to finance the purchase, construction, and renovation of City-owned facilities. The payment of bond debt, called debt service, includes payment of principal and interest. *For more information, see the Finance Department chapter.*
- Pensions and other post-employment benefits (OPEB), which includes healthcare for retired City employees. *For more information, see the Retirement Services chapter.*

Who has to pay the City's debt?

Separate entities within the broad City organization are legally responsible for different parts of the City's debt. On the one hand, the City is not legally obligated to use the City's general revenues to pay the business-type obligations. On the other hand, the City's business-type revenues are restricted and may not be used to pay other debt obligations.

ABILITY TO PAY OBLIGATIONS

Less than three years of revenue would be required to pay the City's obligations.

A city the size of San José has both short- and long-term obligations that must be paid in the future, such as accounts payable and bonds payable. The fewer number of years of annual revenue needed to pay the City's obligations, the better the City's financial condition.

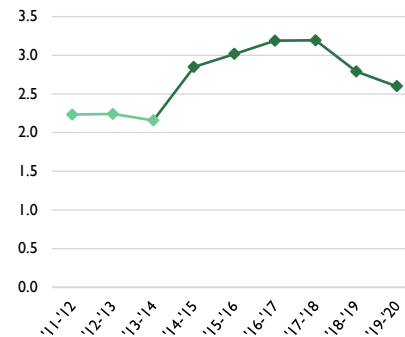
In 2019-20, 2.6 years of revenues would be required to pay the City's obligations (including governmental and business-type activities). In 2014-15, the City began including its net pension liability, which totaled nearly \$1.7 billion that year, to the calculation of total liabilities. OPEB liabilities were added in 2017-18, and totaled \$1.1 billion that year.

San José had more liabilities compared to revenues than most other cities surveyed in 2018-19.

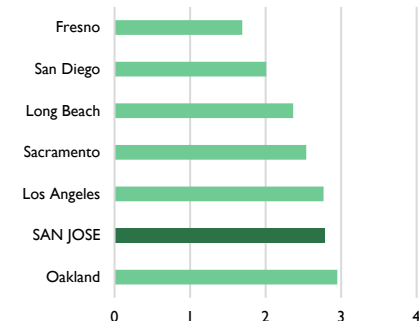
The graphs below compare the City's short- and long-term obligations to the City's annual revenues (including all governmental and business-type activities). A lower ratio shows that the City was able to pay a larger portion of its debts with annual revenues.

*For this measure, a **lower** ratio indicates better financial condition.*

Near-Term Solvency Ratio
(obligations / annual revenues)



Comparison between Cities
(FY 2018-19)



Note: 2011-12 through 2013-14 do not include net pension liability; 2017-18 on includes OPEB liabilities.

FINANCIAL CONDITION

AMOUNT BORROWED PER CAPITA

The amount the City had borrowed per capita increased.

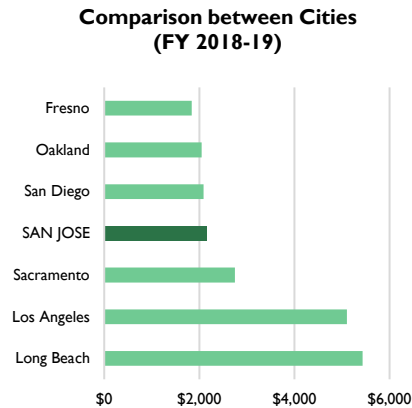
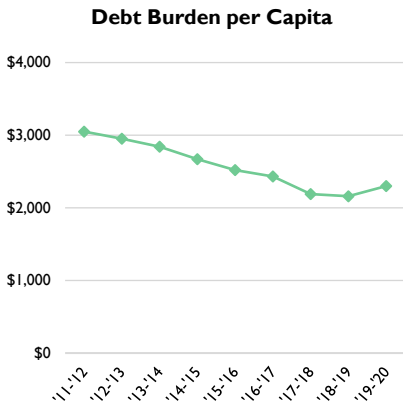
Having a low amount borrowed per capita would put a city in a better position, and potentially make it easier to borrow more money should the need arise.

After years of decline, the amount borrowed per capita increased in 2019-20, primarily resulting from the issuance of \$239.9 million in Measure T-related general obligation bonds. San José residents passed Measure T in November 2018, authorizing the City to issue up to \$650 million of general obligation bonds for various public improvements. The City's single largest source of long-term debt in the form of bonds was related to capital improvements at Mineta San José International Airport (\$1.1 billion total, to be repaid with Airport revenues). For more information, see the Airport and Finance chapters.

San José's debt burden per capita (including business-type activities) was mid-range of other cities surveyed, though a city's debt is highly dependent on what range of services a city offers.

The graphs below show the amount (including business-type activities) the City borrowed per capita. A lower ratio indicates that the City has less borrowed per capita.

For this measure, a **lower** ratio indicates better financial condition.



CAPITAL ASSETS AND SPENDING

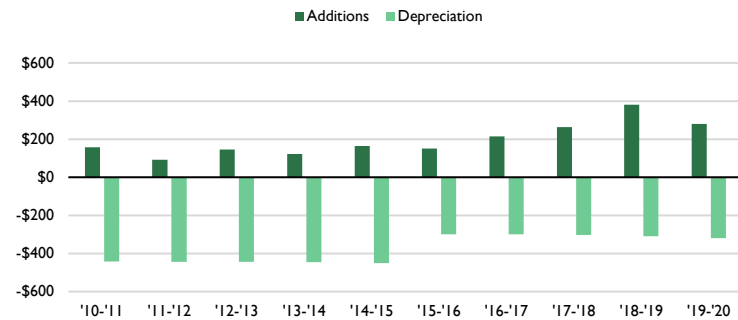
The City owns a variety of capital assets—land, buildings, vehicles, equipment, infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, sewers), and other assets with a useful life beyond one year. Capital assets also include construction projects currently being built but not yet completed (referred to as construction in progress). Paying for and maintaining these assets play a critical role in the City's financial condition.

At the end of 2019-20 the City owned \$7.5 billion of capital assets. This figure represents the historical purchase or constructed cost less normal wear and tear from regular use (referred to as *depreciation*).

Capital assets used for governmental activities totaled \$5.1 billion and assets used in business-type activities such as the Airport, wastewater treatment, and other business-type activities totaled \$2.4 billion.

In 2019-20, the City added \$280 million in capital assets and had a \$49 million transfer from the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency (SARA); however, these were offset by \$319 million in depreciation. Among the additions were capital projects at the Regional Wastewater Facility and the Airport.

Capital Asset Additions and Depreciation (\$millions)



Note: Capital additions do not include transfers.

CAPITAL ASSETS AND SPENDING (CONTINUED)

On an annual basis, the City administration prepares a status report on its deferred maintenance and infrastructure backlog. In January 2020, staff reported that the City faced an estimated \$1.6 billion deferred maintenance and infrastructure backlog, with an estimated additional \$91 million needed annually in order to maintain the City's infrastructure in a sustained functional condition. The transportation system (e.g., streets, street lighting) is most affected by the backlog.

Infrastructure Backlog (all funds as of January 2020 (\$millions))

	Current Backlog of Deferred Needs	Annual Ongoing Unfunded Needs
Airport	none	none
Building Facilities*	\$188.0	\$20.1
City Facilities Operated by Others	\$5.2	\$1.0
Sports Facilities	\$4.4	none
Convention Center/Cultural Facilities	\$67.5	TBD
Fleet	\$9.6	\$1.0
Parks, Pools, and Open Space	\$234.6	\$34.4
Sanitary Sewer	TBD	\$2.4
Service Yards	\$21.6	\$3.8
Storm Sewer	\$180.0	TBD
Information Technology**	\$28.4	\$4.3
Radio Communications	\$2.50	none
Transportation Infrastructure	\$871.8	\$23.7
Regional Wastewater Facility	none	none
Water Utility	none	none
Total	\$1,614	\$91

Source: [Status Report on Deferred Maintenance and Infrastructure Backlog, 2020](#)

* Annual ongoing is for Parks buildings only, remaining facilities to be determined (TBD).

** This estimate only includes deferred needs for technology infrastructure maintained by the Information Technology Department (IT). Other departmental IT needs are not included.

CHANGE IN VALUE OF CAPITAL ASSETS

The value of the City's capital assets increased slightly in the last year.

Most of the City's capital assets decrease in value over time because of depreciation. If the City doesn't replace or renovate its capital assets, the value over time decreases.

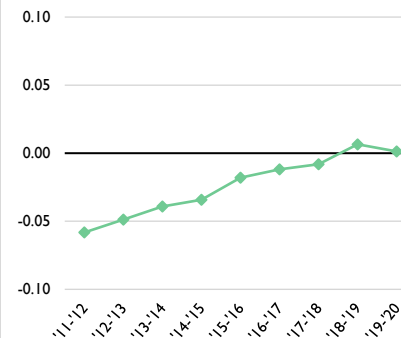
The value of the City's capital assets (net of depreciation) on June 30, 2020 was about \$10 million more than when the year started (about 0.1 percent above the value on July 1, 2019). This small increase indicates that the value of capital assets added was slightly greater than the depreciation of capital assets. A negative ratio would indicate that some capital assets may need to be renovated or replaced.

Compared to other cities surveyed, San José's capital assets increased in value by a smaller amount in 2018-19.

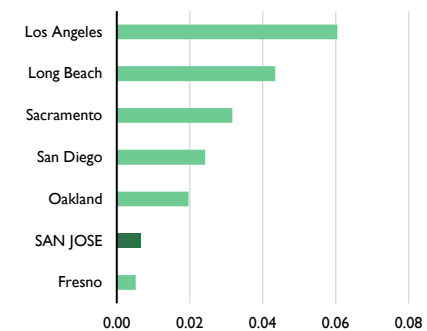
The graphs below show the difference in the value of capital assets at the end of the year, divided by the value at the beginning of the year.

For this measure, a **higher** ratio indicates better financial condition.

Capital Asset Value Ratio
(% change in value over the year)



Comparison between Cities (FY 2018-19)



FINANCIAL CONDITION

ENDNOTES

What Makes Up the City Government: Trust and Agency funds, including the Pension Trust Funds and the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency, are not included in revenues.

City Revenues: The City also doesn't receive 100 percent of the sales tax levied in Santa Clara County. CAFR Source: Government-wide Statement of Activities and Statistical Section (unless otherwise noted).

Revenue per Capita: This measure includes all governmental funds. Note: for all measures, San Francisco is not included as a benchmark city because it is a City/County structure. Formula: Total government funds revenues / Population. CAFR Source: Governmental Funds Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances, and Statistical Section

City Expenses: Trust and Agency funds, including the Pension Trust Funds and the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency, are not included in expenses. CAFR Source: Government-wide Statement of Activities

Expenditures per Capita: This measure includes all governmental funds. Formula: Total government funds expenditures / Population. CAFR Source: Governmental Funds Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances, and Statistical Section

Operating Surplus/Deficit: This measure includes only the General Fund. Formula: General Fund revenues – General Fund expenditures (for San José 5-year chart); (General Fund revenues – General Fund expenditures) / General Fund revenues (for comparison with other cities). CAFR Source: Governmental Funds Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances

Ability to Pay Expenses: This measure considers cash and investments held in the City Treasury in the General Fund, as compared to liabilities. It is important to note that measures of cash and investments are a snapshot as of a given date. As a result, information could change the following day as cash flows in and out in revenues and bills paid. Formula: Total General Fund Cash and Investments / (General Fund Liabilities – General Fund Unearned Revenue). CAFR Source: Governmental Funds Balance Sheet

Building up Reserves: This measure focuses on General Fund unassigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balance includes contingency reserves and budget stabilization reserves (designed to buffer against financial shocks) and certain earmarked reserves (set aside for a purpose but potentially available in a catastrophic need). This measure shows short-run financial position. Formula: Unassigned General Fund Balance / Total General Fund Revenues. CAFR Source: Governmental Funds Balance Sheet; Governmental Funds Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance

Net Assets per Capita: This measure considers only governmental activities. Business type activities are not included. Formula: Governmental Activities Net Position / Population. CAFR Source: Government-wide Statement of Activities and Statistical Section

ENDNOTES (CONTINUED)

City Obligations and Debt: The bonds and loans payable noted on this page includes some debt for which the City has limited obligation or is not legally liable. This includes City of San José Financing Authority lease revenue bonds; the City is responsible for making annual lease payments so long as there is beneficial use and occupancy of the leased facility. In addition to debt noted on this page, the City manages, but is not liable for, long-term debt associated with the former Redevelopment Agency and conduit financing related to multi-family housing revenue bonds. For more information on the total debt managed, see the Finance Department chapter. CAFR Source: Statement of Net Position

Ability to Pay Obligations: Other Post-employment Benefits (OPEB) begin to be included for 2017-18 data. Formula: (Primary Government Liabilities - Unearned Revenues) / Primary Government Revenues. CAFR Source: Government-wide Statement of Net Position and Statement of Activities

Debt Burden per Capita: This measure reflects all primary government bonded debt, which includes governmental and business-type activities. Population estimates are from the State of California, Department of Finance. Trust and Agency funds, including the Pension Trust Funds and the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency, are not included. Formula: Total Outstanding Debt for the Primary Government / Population. CAFR Source: Statistical Section

Capital Assets: Assets are valued at cost minus accumulated depreciation. Some assets may be fully depreciated. Trust and Agency funds, including the Pension Trust Funds and the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency, are not included. CAFR Source: Capital Assets Note Disclosure

Change in Value of Capital Assets: This measure represents the net value of all primary government capital assets, which includes those owned by governmental activities and business-type activities. Land, intangible assets, and construction in progress are not depreciated. Formula: (Ending Net Value of Primary Government Capital Assets - Beginning Net Value) / Beginning Net Value. CAFR Source: Capital Assets Note Disclosure and Reconciliation of the Changes in Fund Balances for Governmental Funds to the Statement of Activities

ADDITIONAL REPORTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

The City of San José prepares numerous financial and budgetary documents during the fiscal year. The **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)** provides the City's audited financial statements, notes to those statements, the City Management's Discussion and Analysis of the financial information and trends, as well as other essential information. All measures included in this chapter were calculated using data from the City's CAFR. The **Comprehensive Annual Debt Report** contains information such as recent debt issued by the City and the outstanding debt portfolio. The Annual Debt Report is a key document to better understand the City's debt, which is relevant for several measures presented in this report. Visit: [Finance Department's Report Homepage](#).