# MOODY'S

#### CREDIT OPINION

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# City of Madison, WI, Madison Water Enterprise, WI & Madison Sewer Enterprise, WI

Update to credit analysis

#### **Summary**

<u>Madison</u> (Aaa stable) benefits from a strong and diverse economic base with significant institutional presence derived from its status as the state capital and site of the University of Wisconsin's flagship campus. The financial position is expected to remain solid, supported by growing revenue from ongoing development and strong fiscal management. These credit strengths offset the limited revenue raising flexibility and above average leverage.

The <u>Madison Water Enterprise</u> (Aa2 stable) and the <u>Madison Sewer Enterprise</u> (Aa2 stable) benefit from the institutional stability embedded in the city's economic base and solid legal provisions. Liquidity and coverage have improved in recent years, supported by regular rate increases which is trend that is expected to continue. These credit strengths are balanced against the water system's constrained rate-setting authority and above average leverage, with both enterprises maintaining system sizes that trail those of similarly-rated peers.

### **Credit strengths**

- » Strong and diverse economic base serves as the seat of government for the state, county, and city, as well as the state's flagship university
- » Solid demographic trends
- » Solid financial position with stable operations
- Customer base benefits from institutional stability of state capital and university (water and sewer)
- » Independent rate-setting authority with rates subject to City Council approval (sewer)

# **Credit challenges**

- » Above average leverage (issuer, GOULT, and water)
- » Limited revenue raising flexibility due to state-imposed levy limits (issuer and GOULT)
- » Constrained water rate-setting authority as increases necessitate approval by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (water)
- » System size trails those of similarly-rated peers (water and sewer)

# **Rating outlook**

The stable outlook on the city reflects the expectation that the credit quality will remain strong, supported by continued economic growth, long-standing government and higher education presences within the city, and continued financial stability.

The stable outlook on the water and sewer system revenue debt ratings mirrors the stable outlook assigned to the city because their close governance ties and customer bases that benefit from significant institutional presence.

## Factors that could lead to an upgrade

- » Not applicable (issuer and GOULT)
- » Strengthening of debt service coverage (water and sewer)
- » Substantial and sustained increases to system liquidity (water and sewer)

# Factors that could lead to a downgrade

- » Material narrowing of reserves or liquidity (issuer and GOULT)
- » Notable growth in leverage
- » Weakening of debt service coverage (water and sewer)
- » Material narrowing of system liquidity (water and sewer)

This publication does not announce a credit rating action. For any credit ratings referenced in this publication, please see the issuer/deal page on https://ratings.moodys.com for the most updated credit rating action information and rating history.

# **Key indicators**

Exhibit 1
Madison (City of) WI

	2019	2020	2021	2022	Aaa Medians
Economy		·			
Resident income ratio (%)	105.9%	108.3%	105.5%	N/A	173.0%
Full Value (\$000)	\$30,910,698	\$33,036,794	\$32,940,368	\$38,606,699	\$8,668,233
Population	254,977	258,366	265,447	N/A	35,992
Full value per capita (\$)	\$121,229	\$127,868	\$124,094	N/A	\$225,444
Economic growth metric (%)	N/A	0.4%	0.1%	N/A	-0.5%
Financial Performance			•	•	
Revenue (\$000)	\$582,325	\$574,754	\$628,947	\$691,521	\$101,177
Available fund balance (\$000)	\$146,652	\$150,304	\$160,722	\$194,989	\$58,570
Net unrestricted cash (\$000)	\$268,679	\$297,080	\$361,223	\$461,664	\$82,803
Available fund balance ratio (%)	25.2%	26.2%	25.6%	28.2%	61.7%
Liquidity ratio (%)	46.1%	51.7%	57.4%	66.8%	88.4%
Leverage			•	·	
Debt (\$000)	\$778,162	\$881,274	\$856,735	\$873,765	\$71,733
Adjusted net pension liabilities (\$000)	\$624,001	\$841,727	\$1,070,528	\$1,020,860	\$120,941
Adjusted net OPEB liabilities (\$000)	\$71,453	\$79,592	\$80,620	\$65,282	\$14,374
Other long-term liabilities (\$000)	\$59,062	\$66,976	\$69,048	\$69,375	\$3,750
Long-term liabilities ratio (%)	263.2%	325.3%	330.2%	293.5%	263.2%
Fixed costs	·				
Implied debt service (\$000)	\$55,367	\$56,736	\$63,110	\$60,091	\$4,989
Pension tread water contribution (\$000)	\$20,332	\$12,439	\$8,963	N/A	\$3,389
OPEB contributions (\$000)	\$3,253	\$3,529	\$3,239	\$3,706	\$523
Implied cost of other long-term liabilities (\$000)	\$4,178	\$4,306	\$4,796	\$4,843	\$245
Fixed-costs ratio (%)	14.3%	13.4%	12.7%	11.2%	11.6%

For definitions of the metrics in the table above please refer to the <u>US Cities and Counties Methodology</u> or see the Glossary in the Appendix below. Metrics represented as N/A indicate the data were not available at the time of publication. The medians come from our most recently published <u>US Cities and Counties Median Report</u>.

The Economic Growth metric cited above compares the five-year CAGR of real GDP for Madison, WI Metropolitan Statistical Area to the five-year CAGR of real GDP for the US. Sources: US Census Bureau, Madison (City of) WI's financial statements and Moody's Investors Service, US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Exhibit 2
Madison (City of) WI Water Enterprise

Madison (City of) WI Water Enterprise					
System Characteristics					
Asset Condition (Net Fixed Assets / Annual Depreciation)	36 years				
System Size - O&M (in \$000s)	\$18,182				
Service Area Wealth: MFI % of US median	119.0%				
Legal Provisions					
Rate Covenant (x)	1.25				
Debt Service Reserve Requirement	DSRF funded at lesser of standard 3-prong test (Aa)				
Management					
Rate Management	А				
Regulatory Compliance and Capital Planning	Aa				
Financial Strength					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Operating Revenue (\$000)	\$35,099	\$43,945	\$44,930	\$48,112	\$48,140
System Size - O&M (\$000)	\$17,627	\$16,474	\$16,949	\$16,649	\$18,182
Net Revenues (\$000)	\$18,161	\$29,073	\$28,530	\$31,447	\$29,673
Net Funded Debt (\$000)	\$199,167	\$203,272	\$193,783	\$182,275	\$167,125
Annual Debt Service (\$000)	\$13,514	\$16,968	\$14,057	\$15,624	\$18,358
Annual Debt Service Coverage (x)	1.3x	1.7x	2.0x	2.0x	1.6>
Cash on Hand	63 days	113 days	221 days	332 days	352 days
Debt to Operating Revenues (x)	5.7x	4.6x	4.3x	3.8x	3.5>

 $Sources: \textit{US Census Bureau, Madison (City of) Water Enterprise, Wl's financial statements and Moody's \textit{Investors Service} \\$ 

Exhibit 3
Madison (City of) WI Sewer Enterprise

Madison (City of) WI Sewer Enterprise					
System Characteristics					
Asset Condition (Net Fixed Assets / Annual Depreciation)	52 years				
System Size - O&M (in \$000s)	\$38,222				
Service Area Wealth: MFI % of US median	119.0%				
Legal Provisions					
Rate Covenant (x)	1.25				
Debt Service Reserve Requirement	DSRF funded at lesser of standard 3-prong test (Aa)				
Management					
Rate Management	Aa				
Regulatory Compliance and Capital Planning	Aa				
Financial Strength					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Operating Revenue (\$000)	\$37,923	\$40,947	\$42,740	\$47,618	\$50,965
System Size - O&M (\$000)	\$32,177	\$33,094	\$33,278	\$37,745	\$38,222
Net Revenues (\$000)	\$8,495	\$8,867	\$10,221	\$11,036	\$14,856
Net Funded Debt (\$000)	\$45,164	\$37,999	\$50,921	\$41,643	\$49,731
Annual Debt Service (\$000)	\$5,057	\$6,230	\$5,042	\$10,538	\$5,715
Annual Debt Service Coverage (x)	1.7x	1.4x	2.0x	1.0x	2.6x
Cash on Hand	224 days	98 days	180 days	145 days	238 days
Debt to Operating Revenues (x)	1.2x	0.9x	1.2x	0.9x	1.0x

Sources: US Census Bureau, Madison (City of) Sewer Enterprise, WI's financial statements and Moody's Investors Service

#### **Profile**

The City of Madison is the state capital of Wisconsin (Aa1 stable) and is home to the flagship campus of the University of Wisconsin. It is the state's second largest city with an estimated population of about 265,000.

The Madison Water Enterprise serves over 70,000 customers across the City of Madison, the Villages of Maple Bluff and Shorewood Hills, and a portion of the City of <u>Fitchburg</u> (Aa1). The water system is comprised of 23 deep wells, 33 reservoirs, and over 910 miles of water mains.

The Madison Sewer Enterprise serves about 70,000 customers within the City of Madison. The sewer system is comprised of 29 lift stations and 760 miles of sanitary sewer mains, all of which is used to pump waste to the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) for treatment.

#### **Detailed credit considerations**

#### Economy: strong regional economy supported by institutional presence

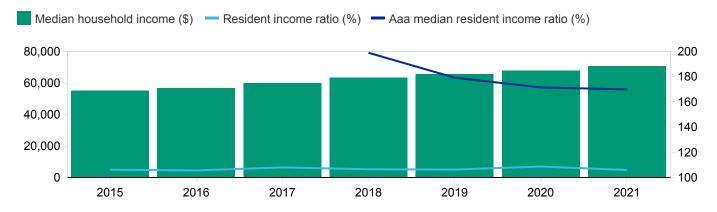
The strong and diversified regional economic base will remain a credit strength, supported by continued residential and commercial development and strong institutional presence. Residents and nearby commuters have access to the city's diverse mix of employment opportunities across large governmental, health care, technology, and insurance sectors. Larger employers in the city include the State of Wisconsin (45,000 employees) and the University of Wisconsin with its affiliated health care facilities (about 39,700 employees).

Regional economic growth remains strong and slightly outpaces the nation. Despite recent declines, residential development is expected to remain strong with more than 240 single-family and almost 2,100 multi-family units completed in fiscal 2022. Additionally, Madison's Metro Transit is undergoing a redesign to provide improved service to all areas of the city. Amongst its many goals, the redesign supports the city's goal of using 100% renewable energy sources and becoming carbon neutral by the year 2030. The expansion of the transit system is also expected to facilitate development along transit lines and increase access to areas of the city with available housing.

The service area for the city's water and sewer systems is also supported by the institutional presences of the state government and the University of Wisconsin's flagship campus. The customer base is predominantly residential for both water (82%) and sewer (85%) and has modestly grown over the past five years. Despite the expanding customer base, water consumption has generally been declining because of conservation efforts. The sewer system has modest customer concentration as the ten largest users comprise 13% of billings, including the University of Wisconsin and the state. The operating size of both systems slightly trail those of similarly-rated peers with annual water operating and maintenance (O&M) expenses at \$18 million and sewer O&M expenses at \$38 million.

Exhibit 4

Resident Income



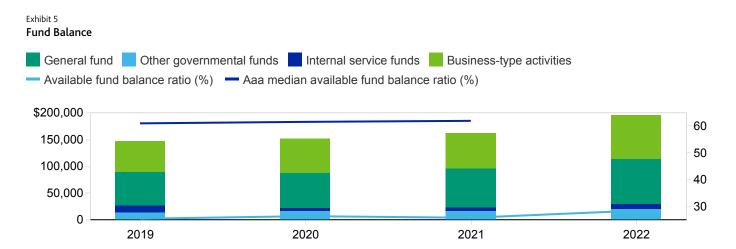
Source: Moody's Investors Service

#### Financial operations: solid financial position expected to remain stable

Madison's financial position is expected remain solid, supported by steadily growing property tax revenue stemming from continued development and sound utility operations. Business-type activities make up about 28% of total revenue and include the city's water utility, sewer utility, stormwater utility, transit utility and nonmajor enterprise (parking utility, convention center, and golf courses) funds. The adopted fiscal 2023 operating budget is balanced, supported in part by the City's plans to use about \$24 million in ARPA funding for revenue replacement between fiscal 2021 and fiscal 2024. The budget also includes a 3% cost of living (COLA) adjustment for general government employees to bring their wage increases in line with those of public safety employees. The city reports that year-to-date operations are tracking close to budget. The city currently faces a \$28 million operating gap for fiscal 2024 and plans to close the gap with about \$4.4 million in ARPA funding, \$6.7 million revenue from two TID closures, a 1% expenditure reduction across all agencies and a small use of fund balance.

The water system's liquidity and debt service coverage (DSC) is expected to remain solid over the next several years because of planned rate increases and a fairly level debt service through fiscal 2028. While coverage remains solid at 1.6x as of fiscal 2022, the system's liquidity has improved materially over the past several years to a strong 352 days cash on hand following a series of rate increases. Favorably, a larger 18% water rate increase was approved by the Public Service Commission and went into effect in March 2023, which support a stable financial profile.

The sewer system's liquidity and DSC is also expected to remain solid, supported by regular rate increases. Historically solid, DSC fell sharply to 1x in fiscal 2021 because the system's refunding of \$4.8 million outstanding sewer revenue bonds. Net of the refunding, fiscal 2021 DSC was a solid 1.8x and maximum annual debt service (MADS) coverage was 1.6x. Going into fiscal 2024, the system anticipates a 5% to 6% rate increase to maintain operations. DSC is expected to remain fairly level at a satisfactory 1.4x through fiscal 2025.

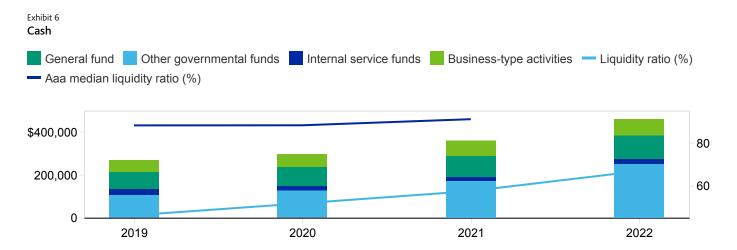


Sources: Madison (City of) WI's financial statements and Moody's Investors Service

#### Liquidity

The city's liquidity position is strong with net cash at \$462 million, equal to 67% of revenue. Liquidity is higher than fund balance because of \$127 million in cash across the city's capital project funds restricted for TID development and other capital purposes, about \$70 million in cash across other special revenue funds restricted for various uses, and \$22 million in cash restricted for debt service.

The water system closed fiscal 2022 with \$17.5 million in unrestricted cash, equal to a strong 352 days cash on hand. The sewer system closed fiscal 2022 with \$25 million in unrestricted cash, equal to a solid 238 days cash on hand.



Sources: Madison (City of) WI's financial statements and Moody's Investors Service

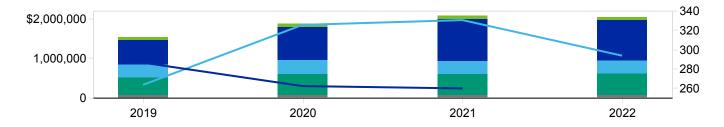
#### Leverage: above average leverage and solid legal covenants

Madison's leverage will remain above average relative to its peers because of regular borrowings to address capital needs, though that is somewhat mitigated by the city's rapid amortization schedule. The water and sewer systems' debt burdens were 3.5x and 1x operating revenue respectively by the close of fiscal 2022, but those are expected to somewhat moderate as rate increases come online in fiscal 2023 for both systems. The city is in the process of issuing \$116 million of general obligation unlimited tax (GOULT) notes for various capital projects across multiple departments, with about \$42 million specifically dedicated to environmentally beneficial and sustainability-minded projects. Following the sale, the city's total leverage would rise modestly to 309% of fiscal 2022 total revenue, which remains above average for the rating category. Additionally, the city is planning to issue roughly \$4.7 million water utility revenue to the State of Wisconsin Environmental Improvement Fund as security on a loan the city is receiving under the State's Safe

Drinking Water Loan Program. Adjusted fixed costs are moderate at 11% of fiscal 2022 revenue, but actual fixed costs are considerably higher given the city's rapid debt amortization compared to the 20 years assumed in our implied debt service calculations.







Sources: Madison (City of) WI's financial statements and Moody's Investors Service

#### Legal security

The city's GOULT debt is backed by the city's full faith and credit pledge, and is payable from ad valorem taxes unlimited as to rate or amount.

Debt service on the water system's revenue debt is payable from net revenue of the water utility. Legal provisions include a 1.25x rate covenant, an additional bonds test of 1.25x MADS coverage, and a debt service reserve fund funded at the lesser of MADS, 10% of original principal amount, or 125% of average annual debt service for all outstanding bonds. The system's revenue BANs are backed by the future issuance of revenue bonds, and are considered special obligations of the city payable from net revenues of the water utility and other funds appropriated by the city, if necessary.

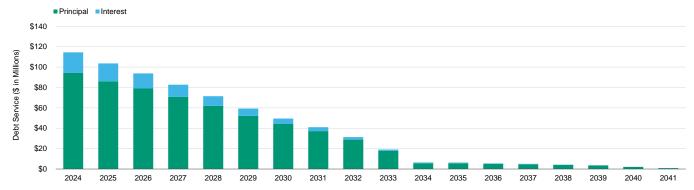
Debt service on the sewer system's revenue debt is payable from net revenue of the sewer utility. Legal provisions include a 1.25x rate covenant, an additional bonds test of 1.25x MADS coverage, and a debt service reserve fund funded at the lesser of 10% of principal amount or MADS.

#### Debt structure

All of the city's debt is fixed rate. Amortization is very rapid for with 95% of the city's general obligation debt scheduled to be paid off over the next ten years. The city's descending debt service schedule provides the city flexibility in structuring future bond issuances or accommodating material shocks in fixed costs should they materialize.

Exhibit 8

City's descending debt service schedule provides flexibility to address future capital needs without materially impacting fixed costs.



Source: City's offering documents

#### Debt-related derivatives

The city is not a party to any debt-related derivatives.

#### Pensions and OPEB

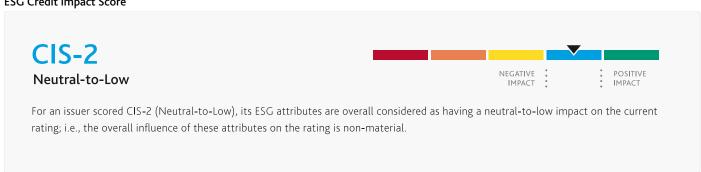
Madison participates in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS), a statewide cost-sharing plan. Contributions are determined using a level contribution actuarial method in an effort to keep employer and employee contribution rates at a level percentage of payroll over time, and are set at 100% of the plan's funding requirement. As a result, WRS remains one of the best-funded public employee retirement systems in the country. The city's adjusted net pension liability (ANPL) is about \$1 billion, representing 148% of total revenue in fiscal 2022. Moody's ANPL reflects the use of a market-based discount rate to value pension liabilities rather than the assumed rate of investment return on plan assets. In comparison, the city's reported net pension asset, based on the plan's 6.8% discount rate, was \$147 million in fiscal 2022.

Madison's other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligations do not pose a material cost to the city. The OPEB liability reflects an implicit rate subsidy for retirees who pay to remain on the city's health care plan, which are funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. The city's adjusted net OPEB liability is modest at \$65 million, or 9% of revenue in fiscal 2022.

#### **ESG** considerations

Madison (City of) WI's ESG Credit Impact Score is Neutral-to-Low CIS-2

# Exhibit 9 ESG Credit Impact Score



Source: Moody's Investors Service

Madison's ESG Credit Impact Score is neutral-to-low (CIS-2), reflecting neutral to low exposure to environmental, social, and governance risks.





Source: Moody's Investors Service

#### **Environmental**

The city's E issuer profile score is neutral-to-low (E-2), reflecting low exposure to environmental risks, including heat stress, water stress, and extreme rainfall. Madison maintains a comprehensive sustainability plan to adapt to changing environmental, social and economic conditions over time. Initiatives include improving water quality, reducing waste, and increasing the use renewable energy.

#### **Social**

The S issuer profile score is neutral-to-low (**E-2**), reflecting population growth, a diverse labor market, and strong educational attainment. Health metrics are also favorable: nearly 96% of the city's population has health insurance compared to the national rate of 91%. Overall demographics and educational attainment are strengths. Residents have easy access to basic services and the county scores favorably in health and safety.

#### Governance

Madison's G issuer profile score is neutral-to-low (**G-2**). The city is limited in its ability to raise revenue, however management utilizes a conservative budgetary approach and multi-year capital planning to maintain operating reserves in compliance with its formal fund balance policy.

ESG Issuer Profile Scores and Credit Impact Scores for the rated entity/transaction are available on Moodys.com. In order to view the latest scores, please click <a href="here">here</a> to go to the landing page for the entity/transaction on MDC and view the ESG Scores section.

# Rating methodology and scorecard factors

The US Cities and Counties Rating Methodology includes a scorecard, which summarizes the rating factors generally most important to city and county credit profiles. Because the scorecard is a summary, and may not include every consideration in the credit analysis for a specific issuer, a scorecard-indicated outcome may or may not map closely to the actual rating assigned.

The assigned rating differs from the scorecard-indicated outcome. The final rating is impacted by city's rapidly growing economy and strong fiscal management.

Exhibit 11

Madison (City of) WI

	Measure	Weight	Score
Economy			
Resident income ratio	105.5%	10.0%	Aa
Full value per capita	145,440	10.0%	Aa
Economic growth metric	0.1%	10.0%	Aaa
Financial Performance			
Available fund balance ratio	28.2%	20.0%	Aa
Liquidity ratio	66.8%	10.0%	Aaa
Institutional Framework			
Institutional Framework	Aa	10.0%	Aa
Leverage			
Long-term liabilities ratio	293.5%	20.0%	А
Fixed-costs ratio	11.2%	10.0%	Aa
Notching factors			
No notchings applied			
Scorecard-Indicated Outcome			Aa2
Assigned Rating			Aaa

The complete list of outstanding ratings assigned to the Madison (City of) WI is available on their <u>issuer page</u>. Details on the current ESG scores assigned to the Madison (City of) WI are available on their <u>ESGView page</u>.

Sources: US Census Bureau, Madison (City of) WI's financial statements and Moody's Investors Service

**U.S. PUBLIC FINANCE** MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE

# **Appendix**

Exhibit 12

#### **Key Indicators Glossary**

	Definition	Typical Source*
Fconomy	Definition	rypical source
Resident income ratio	Median Household Income (MHI) for the city or county, adjusted for	MHI: US Census Bureau - American
resident income ratio		
	Regional Price Parity (RPP), as a % of the US MHI	Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Full value	Fatherinal manifest colors of second consequents in the 20	RPP: US Bureau of Economic Analysis
Full value	Estimated market value of taxable property in the city or county	State repositories; audited financial
5 1.4		statements; continuing disclosures
Population	Population of the city or county	US Census Bureau - American Community
<del></del>		Survey 5-Year Estimates
Full value per capita	Full value / population	
Economic growth metric	Five year CAGR of real GDP for Metropolitan Statistical Area or	Real GDP: US Bureau of Economic Analysis
	county minus the five-year CAGR of real GDP for the US	
Financial performance		
Revenue	Sum of revenue from total governmental funds, operating and non-	Audited financial statements
	operating revenue from total business-type activities, and non-	
	operating revenue from internal services funds, excluding transfers	
	and one-time revenue, e.g., bond proceeds or capital contributions	
Available fund balance	Sum of all fund balances that are classified as unassigned, assigned o	
	committed in the total governmental funds, plus unrestricted current	t
	assets minus current liabilities from the city's or county's business-	
	type activities and internal services funds	
Net unrestricted cash	Sum of unrestricted cash in governmental activities, business type	Audited financial statements
	activities and internal services fund, net of short-term debt	
Available fund balance ratio	Available fund balance (including net current assets from business-	
	type activities and internal services funds) / Revenue	
Liquidity ratio	Net unrestricted cash / Revenue	
Leverage		
Debt	Outstanding long-term bonds and all other forms of long-term debt	Audited financial statements; official
	across the governmental and business-type activities, including debt	
	of another entity for which it has provided a guarantee disclosed in	
	its financial statements	
Adjusted net pension liabilities (ANPL)	Total primary government's pension liabilities adjusted by Moody's to	Audited financial statements: Moody's
, tojusted het pension tidstitutes (, ii ii 2)	standardize the discount rate used to compute the present value of	
	accrued benefits	
Adjusted net OPEB liabilities (ANOL)	Total primary government's net other post-employment benefit	Audited financial statements; Moody's
ridjusted flet of EB habilities (riffol)	(OPEB) liabilities adjusted by Moody's to standardize the discount	Investors Service
	rate used to compute the present value of accrued benefits	mivestors service
Other long-term liabilities (OLTL)	Miscellaneous long-term liabilities reported under the governmental	Audited financial statements
other long term dubinities (OETE)	and business-type activities entries	Addited infancial statements
Long-term liabilities ratio	Debt + ANPL + ANOL + OLTL / Revenue	
Fixed costs	DEDITIANTE FANGE FOLIE/ REVenue	
	Annual cost to amortize city or county's long-term debt over 20	Audited financial statements; official
Implied debt service		•
Dension treed watertult-util	years with level payments	statements; Moody's Investors Service
Pension tread water contribution	Pension contribution necessary to prevent reported unfunded	Audited financial statements; Moody's
	pension liabilities from growing, year over year, in nominal dollars, if	investors Service
ODED	all actuarial assumptions are met	A 10 10 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11
OPEB contribution	City or county's actual contribution in a given period	Audited financial statements
Implied cost of OLTL	Annual cost to amortize city or county's other long-term liabilities	Audited financial statements; Moody's
	over 20 years with level payments	Investors Service
Fixed-costs ratio	Implied debt service + Pension tread water + OPEB contributions +	
	Implied cost of OLTL / Revenue	
was a second sec		

<sup>\*</sup>Note: If typical data source is not available then alternative sources or proxy data may be considered. For more detailed definitions of the metrics listed above please refer to the US City and Counties Methodology . Source: Moody's Investors Service

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