

An aerial photograph of Minneapolis, Minnesota, showing the city skyline, the Mississippi River, and several bridges. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

# Mayor and City Council Member Compensation Study

City of Minneapolis Human Resources Department  
Fall 2023

# Table of Contents

- 1** | Compensation Analysis Overview
- 2** | Findings: Mayoral Compensation
- 3** | Findings: Council Member Compensation
- 4** | Appendix



# 1. Compensation Analysis Overview

- Compensation Analysis Objectives
- Peer City Selection Criteria and Participants
- Questionnaire Details and Reception

# Informing Compensation for 2024

In August and September 2023, the City of Minneapolis Human Resources Department surveyed peer cities to **inform 2024 compensation packages for the mayor and city council members.**

## Analysis Inputs

Peer city questionnaire on direct and indirect compensation data

Supporting research on demographics, benefits, and cost of labor



## Analysis Outcomes

Insight into 2023 mayor and council member salaries and trends

Perspective on common retirement and fringe benefits landscape

Identification of salary adjustment methodologies

# Peer Cities by Size and Governance Structure

The questionnaire collected direct and indirect compensation information from the Human Resources departments of **12 peer U.S. cities**, based on the following features:



**'Strong-mayor'** who is the chief executive officer of the municipal government<sup>1</sup>



**Full-time council**, with a similar structure and jurisdiction population



**Similar GDP<sup>2</sup>, growing population<sup>3</sup>, and/or Greater MSP Partnership Peer City<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Ballotpedia ([https://ballotpedia.org/Mayor-council\\_government](https://ballotpedia.org/Mayor-council_government)).

<sup>2</sup>Federal Reserve Economic Data (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>).

<sup>3</sup>US Census Bureau data for 2022 (<https://www.census.gov/topics/population.html>).

<sup>4</sup>Minneapolis St. Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership.

# Participating Peer Cities (1/2)





















Strong-mayor



Council structure



Other peer metric

City (A-Z)*	Criteria	Population (2022) <sup>1</sup>	GDP (2021, in millions) <sup>2</sup>
Minneapolis	  	439,430	\$153,900 <sup>†</sup>
Atlanta	  	514,457	\$473,823
Boston	  	687,257	\$531,672
Columbus	  	929,492	\$154,510
Denver <sup>‡</sup>	  	738,594	\$253,399
Milwaukee	  	573,700	\$111,480

\*Austin and Charlotte responded to the questionnaire but have different systems than Minneapolis: Austin has a weak-mayor system and Charlotte has only part-time city council members. Both are only included in the appendix.




<sup>†</sup>2021 GDP for Hennepin County; FRED reports Minneapolis GDP combined with St. Paul.


















<sup>‡</sup>Denver is a consolidated city and county government.

<sup>1</sup>US Census Bureau data for 2022 (<https://www.census.gov/topics/population.html>).

<sup>2</sup>Federal Reserve Economic Data (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>).

# Participating Peer Cities (2/2)

-  Strong-mayor
-  Council structure
-  Other peer metric

City (A-Z)	Criteria	Population (2022) <sup>1</sup>	GDP (2021, in millions) <sup>2</sup>
Minneapolis	  	439,430	\$153,900*
Omaha	  	501,469	\$73,877
Pittsburgh	  	302,898	\$168,021
Seattle	  	762,687	\$479,966
St. Paul <sup>†</sup>	 	316,819	\$45,228 <sup>‡</sup>
Tampa	  	398,173	\$190,709

\*2021 GDP for Hennepin County; FRED reports Minneapolis GDP combined with St. Paul.  
<sup>†</sup>St. Paul reported only part-time council members; at the request of Minneapolis, it is included in the findings for mayoral pay, but not council member pay.

<sup>‡</sup>2021 GDP for Ramsey County; FRED reports St. Paul GDP combined with Minneapolis.  
<sup>1</sup>US Census Bureau data for 2022 (<https://www.census.gov/topics/population.html>).  
<sup>2</sup>Federal Reserve Economic Data (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/>).

# Questionnaire Focus: Salaries and Benefits

**City of Minneapolis**  
**Human Resources Department**  
**Compensation Questionnaire**

The City of Minneapolis Human Resources Department is responsible for designing, implementing, and administering compensation and classification for approximately 4,700 current employees and 1,000 job titles. The Department is surveying peer cities to inform 2024 compensation packages for the mayor and city council members.

The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete. Answers will be compiled into a final report for use by the Minneapolis Mayor and City Council. **Questionnaire results will be provided to participating cities.**

Please answer the questions to the best of your ability. Please reach out to Brenda Miller ([Brenda.Miller@MinneapolisMN.gov](mailto:Brenda.Miller@MinneapolisMN.gov)) if you have any questions.

\* Required

General Information

1. What is your name? \*

2. What is your email? \*

## Questionnaire Highlights

- Covered direct compensation, benefits, and council staff allowance
- Approximately 30 minutes to complete
- Responses shared with all participating cities to incentivize participation

**12/16\***  
cities responded

**75%**  
response rate





## 2. Findings: Mayoral Compensation

- Salary
- Benefits
- Insurance

# 2023 Mayoral Salary Data

City (A-Z)*	Raw 2023 Salary	Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor <sup>1</sup>	Increase Cadence
<b>Minneapolis</b>	<b>\$140,814</b>	<b>\$140,814</b>	<b>Annually</b>
Atlanta	\$202,730	\$196,066	Varies
Boston	\$207,000	\$188,270	Varies
Columbus	\$212,098	\$220,731	Annually
Denver	\$205,991	\$190,787	By term
Milwaukee	\$147,336	\$149,592	Varies
Omaha	\$114,088	\$128,916	Annually
Pittsburgh	\$127,151	\$134,716	Annually
Seattle	\$231,246	\$207,409	Annually
St. Paul	\$146,182	\$146,032	Annually
Tampa	\$180,918	\$184,007	Annually

# Minneapolis Mayoral Salary Below Average, Median of Peer Respondents

	2023 Minneapolis Salary	2023 Peer City Min Salary*	2023 Peer City Max Salary	2023 Peer City Average Salary*	2023 Peer City Median Salary*
Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor	\$140,814	\$128,916 (Omaha)	\$220,731 (Columbus)	\$168,425	\$166,800

## Most peer city respondents adjust the mayor's salary annually

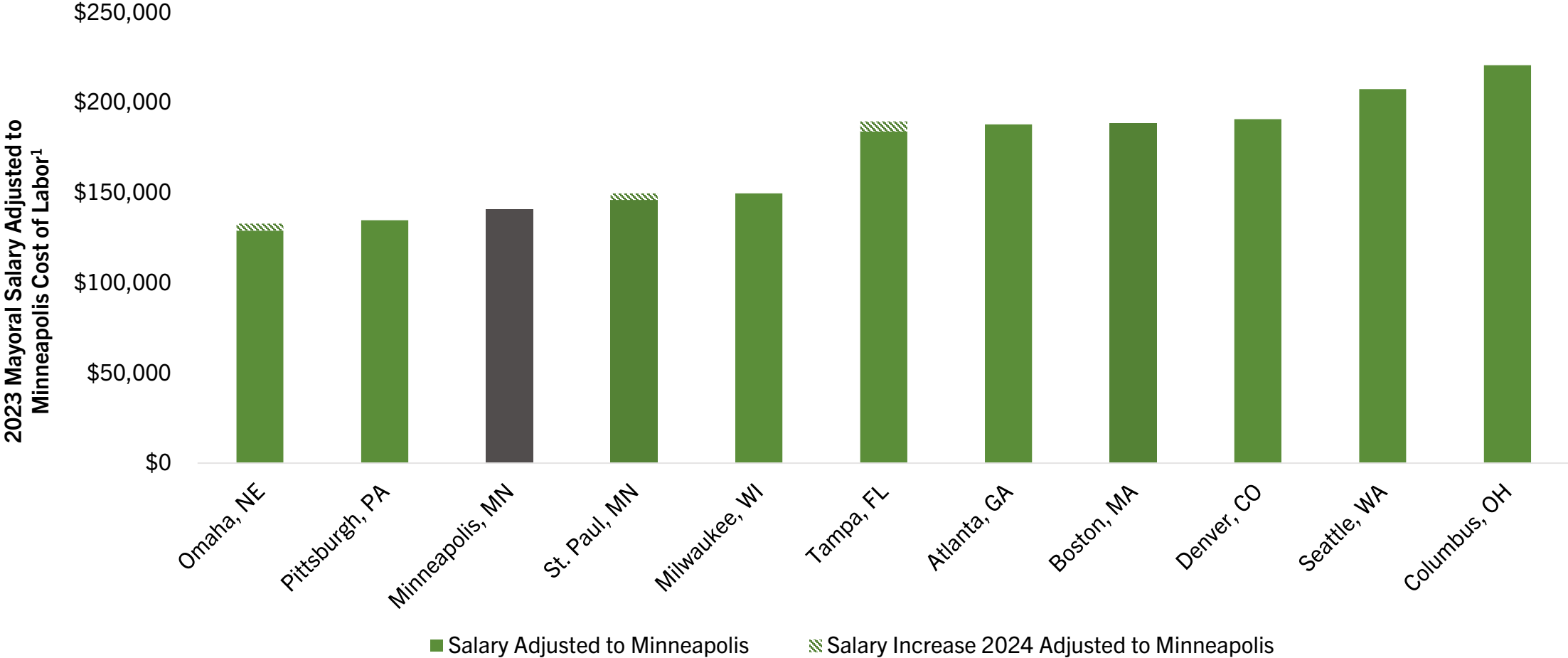
- Six responding cities adjust the mayor's salary annually
- Denver adjusts per term (four years)
- Atlanta and Boston adjust only by city ordinance

## Three peer city respondents have pre-determined increase percentages

- Omaha and Tampa: 3%
- St. Paul: 2.5%
- All other responding cities determine the appropriate increase at each raise occurrence

# Mayoral Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor

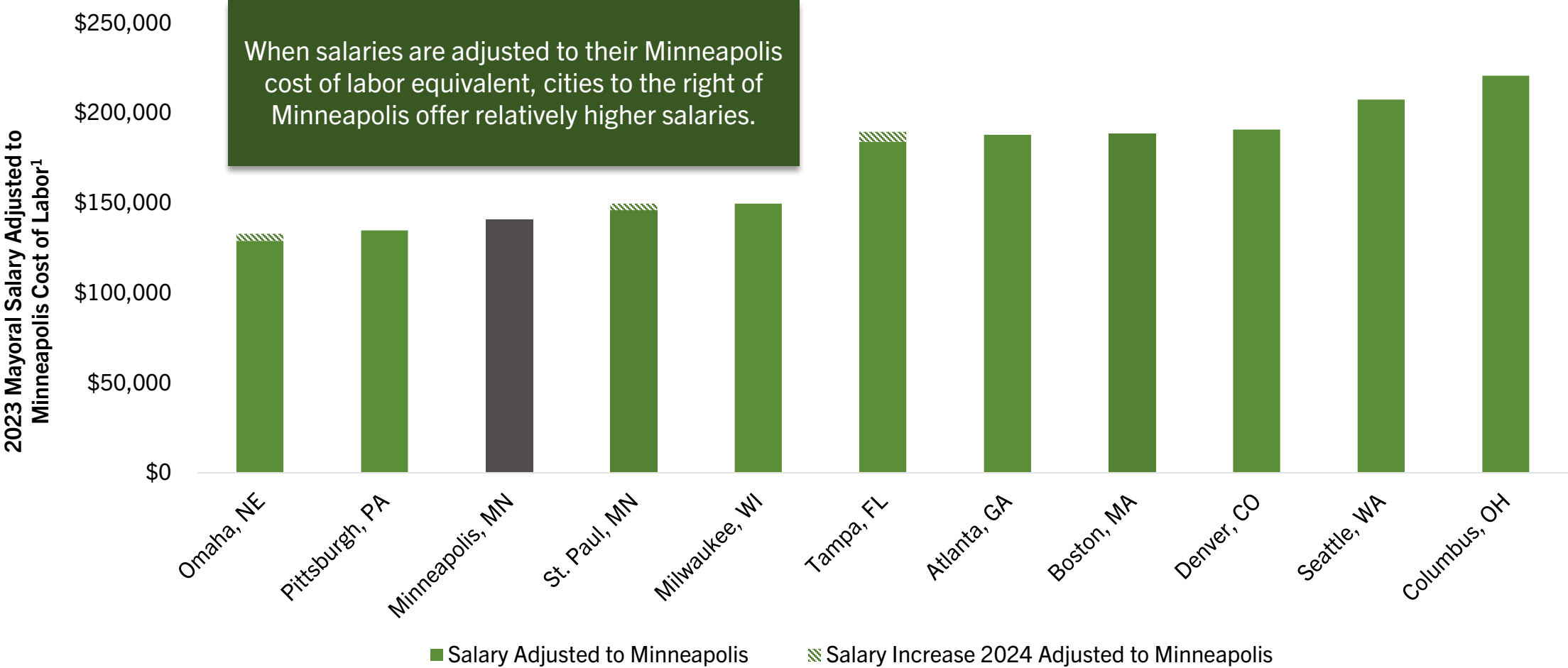
Minneapolis Mayoral Salary Among Lower Range of Responding Peer Cities



<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw 2023 salaries to their Minneapolis cost of labor equivalent using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

# Mayoral Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor

Minneapolis Mayoral Salary Among Lower Range of Responding Peer Cities



<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw 2023 salaries to their Minneapolis cost of labor equivalent using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

# Mayor Benefits Often Include City-provided Cell Phones and Cars

City (A-Z)*	Pension	Deferred Compensation‡	City-Provided Cell Phone	City-Provided Car
Minneapolis	†		City Budget	
Atlanta			City Budget	
Boston				
Columbus			City Budget	
Denver			Mayoral Budget	
Milwaukee			City Budget	
Omaha				
Pittsburgh			City Budget	
Seattle			City Budget	
St. Paul				
Tampa			Mayoral Budget	

# Mayor Benefits Often Include City-provided Cell Phones and Cars

## Key Benefits: Retirement, Car, Phone

All but one responding city provide deferred compensation/457 plans\*

Most responding cities provide mayors cars and cell phones for use on city business

Half of responding cities offer the mayor a pension

## Other Benefits Findings



Most responding cities **do not specify vacation or PTO** for the mayor, but expect them on call through their term



All responding cities offer council members **the same insurance options as other city employees**



All but **St. Paul** noted that the mayor pays the **same premiums as average city employees** (lower premiums in St. Paul)



# 3. Findings: Council Member Compensation

- Salary
- Staff
- Benefits
- Insurance



# 2023 Council Member Salary Data

City (A-Z)*	Raw 2023 Salary	Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor <sup>1</sup>	Increase Cadence
Minneapolis	\$106,101	\$106,101	Annually
Atlanta	\$72,360	\$76,013	Varies
Boston	\$103,500	\$92,543	Annually
Columbus	\$74,922	\$83,191	Annually
Denver	\$110,596	\$106,107	By term
Milwaukee	\$73,222	\$77,326	Varies
Omaha	\$41,683	\$48,408	Annually
Pittsburgh	\$81,137	\$87,738	Annually
Seattle	\$137,432	\$124,444	By term
Tampa	\$53,622	\$61,855	Annually

# Minneapolis Council Member Salary Above Average, Median of Peer Respondents

	2023 Minneapolis Salary	2023 Peer City Min*	2023 Peer City Max	2023 Peer City Average*	2023 Peer City Median*
Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor	\$106,101	\$48,408 (Omaha)	\$124,44 (Seattle)	\$83,974	\$81,330

**Five** responding cities pay **council presidents more** than other council members<sup>†</sup>

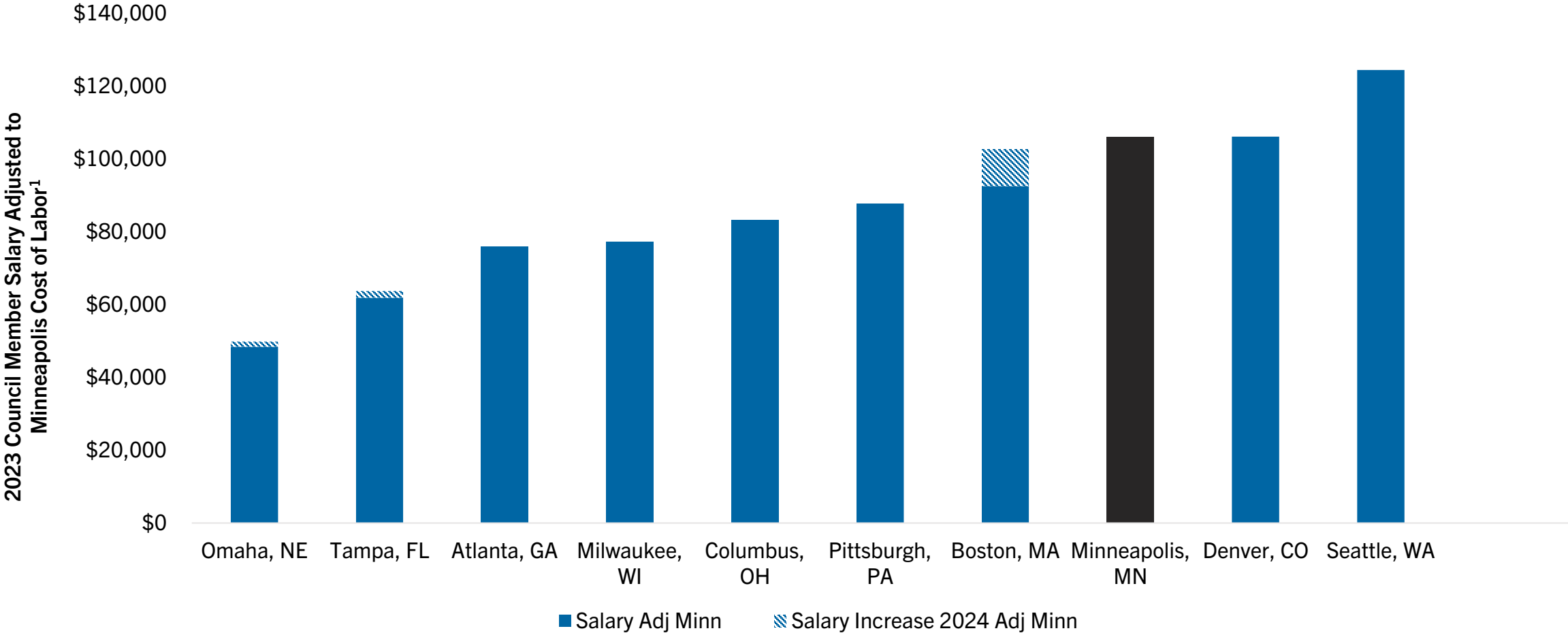
Atlanta	\$77,922 (2.5% higher)
Columbus	\$97,065 (19% higher)
Milwaukee	\$86,740 (12% higher)
Omaha	\$57,884 (20% higher)
Seattle	\$130,850 (5% higher)

**Most** responding cities determine council member compensation **during previous session**

- Boston voted to increase council member compensation by 11% in 2024
- Omaha and Tampa council members have a 3% pre-determined increase (same as their mayors)

# Council Member Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis

Minneapolis Council Member Salary in Upper Range of Peer Respondents



<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw 2023 salaries to their Minneapolis cost of labor equivalent using the Economic Research Institute’s Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

# Council Member Staff Allocations

	Methodology	Budget	Average Number of Staff per Council Member
Minneapolis	Provides a set number of staff	N/A	2
Peer Cities*	Most responding cities provide a set number of staff	Budgets vary depending on methodology	2

**Five** responding cities provide a specific number of staff to council members

- **Columbus, Denver, Milwaukee, Seattle, and Tampa** provide **one to five** staff members per council member (average of **two** per member)

**Two** responding cities provide council members a set budget to hire staff

- Atlanta provided a budget of **\$558,937<sup>†</sup>** per council member (16 members)
- Boston provided a budget of **\$303,142** per council member (13 members)

**Two** responding cities employed alternative routes of hiring staff

- **Omaha** has a set number of staff shared by all council members
- **Pittsburgh** provided both a budget and a set number to hire to each council member

# Council Benefits Often Include Pensions, Rarely Cars

City (A-Z)*	Pension	Deferred Compensation†	City-Provided Cell Phone	City-Provided Car
Minneapolis			City Budget	
Atlanta			City Budget	
Boston				
Columbus				
Denver			Member Budget	
Milwaukee			City Budget	
Omaha				
Pittsburgh			City Budget	
Seattle			City Budget	
Tampa				

# Council Benefits Often Include Pensions, Rarely Cars

## Key Benefits: Retirement, Car, Phone

All but one responding city provide **deferred compensation/457 plans\***

Half of the responding cities provide council members **cell phones** for use on city business

**Atlanta and Milwaukee** provide a car to council members for use on city business

## Other Benefits Findings



All responding cities offer council members **the same insurance options as other city employees**



All responding cities noted that council members pay **the same premiums as average city employees†**

# 4. Appendix

- Additional Data and Figures

# City Employee Insurance Options

Mayors and Council Members are Eligible for City Employee Plan\*

City (A-Z) <sup>†</sup>	Health	Dental	Vision	Disability	Life
Minneapolis					
Atlanta					
Boston					
Columbus					
Denver					
Milwaukee					
Omaha					
Pittsburgh					
Seattle					
Tampa					



# City Employee Insurance Offerings

Mayors and Council Members from All Responding Cities are Eligible for City Employee Plan\*

City	Health	Dental	Vision	Disability	Life
Minneapolis	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Atlanta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Austin†	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Boston	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charlotte‡	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Columbus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Denver	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Milwaukee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Omaha	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pittsburgh	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Seattle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
St. Paul‡	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Tampa	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

\*Data generated based on questionnaire answers and employee insurance plans published on official city websites, both of which differed in content and format among cities. Given varied and limited information, this table does not include whether a specific form of coverage is included in a different category.

†Austin has a weak-mayor system where the mayor presides at council meetings but does not have executive power.

‡Charlotte and St. Paul reported having only part-time council members.

# 2023 Mayoral Salary Data

**Note:** Charlotte is included below for reference, but dropped from analysis given it is an outlier among peer respondents.

City (A-Z)	Raw 2023 Salary	Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor <sup>1</sup>	Increase Cadence
Minneapolis	\$140,814	\$140,814	Annually
Austin*	\$134,191	\$128,575	Varies
Atlanta	\$202,730	\$196,066	Varies
Boston	\$207,000	\$188,270	Varies
Charlotte	\$42,881	\$49,252	Annually
Columbus	\$212,098	\$220,731	Annually
Denver	\$205,991	\$190,787	By term
Milwaukee	\$147,335	\$149,592	Varies
Omaha	\$114,088	\$128,916	Annually
Pittsburgh	\$127,151	\$134,716	Annually
Seattle	\$231,246	\$207,409	Annually
St. Paul	\$146,182	\$146,032	Annually
Tampa	\$180,918	\$184,007	Annually

\*Austin has a weak-mayor system, where executive power is more shared with the council.

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw 2023 salaries to their Minneapolis cost of labor equivalent using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

# Minneapolis Mayoral Salary Below Average, Median of Peer Respondents

	2023 Minneapolis Salary	2023 Peer City Min Salary*	2023 Peer City Max Salary	2023 Peer City Average Salary*	2023 Peer City Median Salary*
Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor	\$140,814	\$128,916 (Omaha)	\$220,731 (Columbus)	\$170,193	\$184,007

## Many peer city respondents adjust the mayor's salary annually

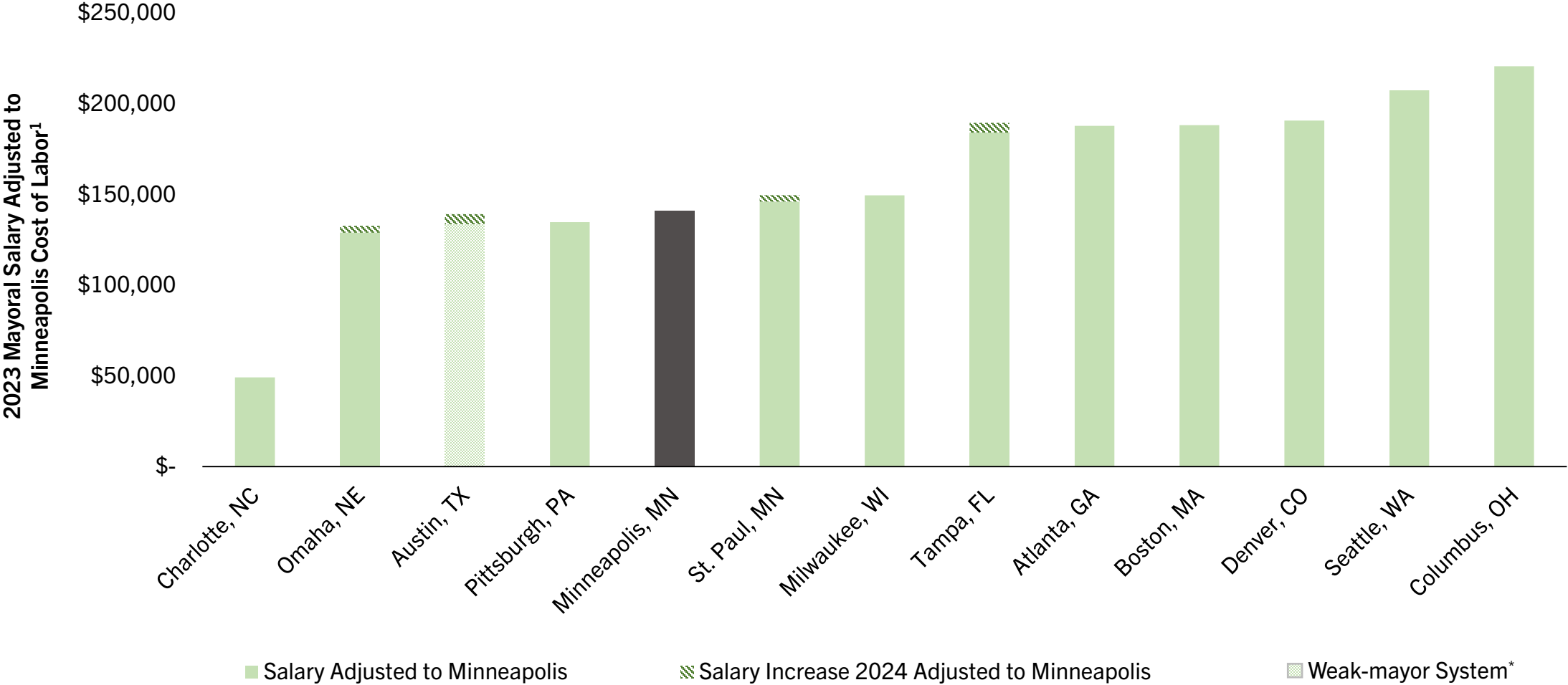
- Seven responding cities adjust the mayor's salary annually
- Denver adjusts per term (four years)
- Atlanta and Boston adjust only by city ordinance

## Four peer city respondents have pre-determined increase percentages

- Austin: 4%
- Omaha and Tampa: 3%
- St. Paul: 2.5%
- All other responding cities determine the appropriate increase at each raise occurrence

# Mayoral Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor

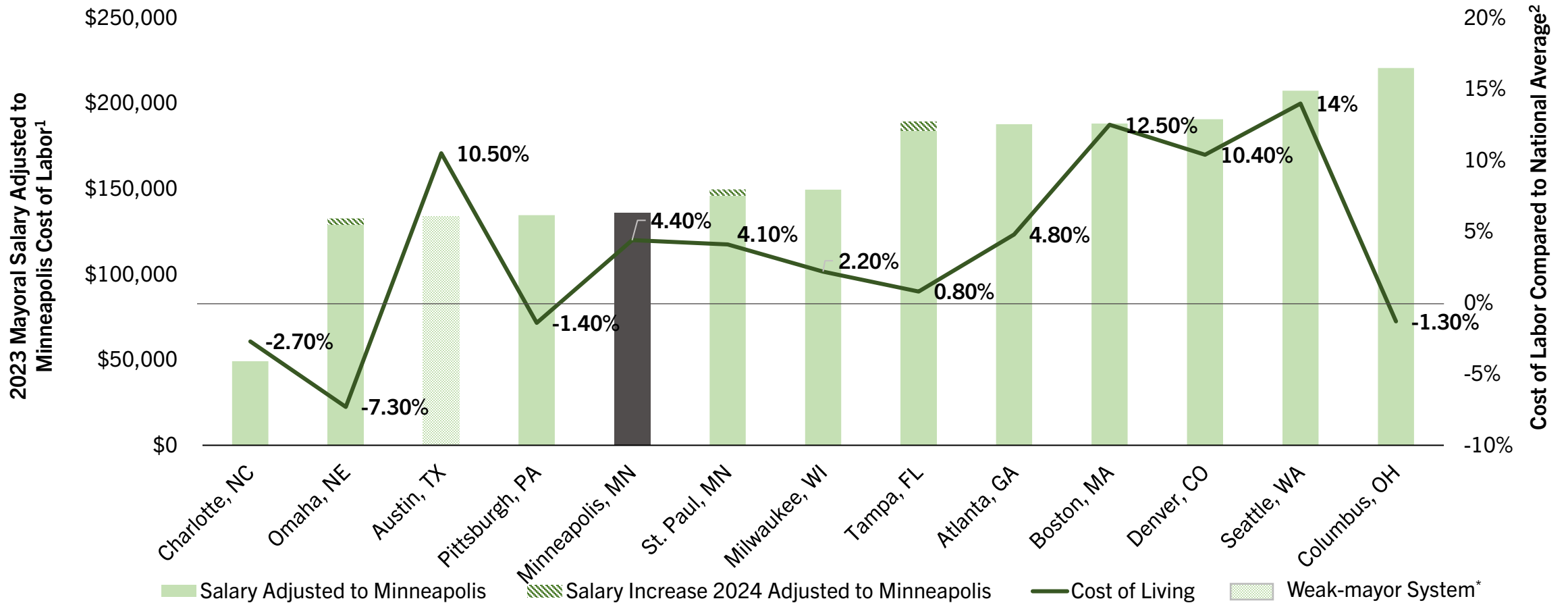
Minneapolis Mayoral Salary Among Lower Range of Peer Respondent Cities



\*Austin has a weak-mayor system where the mayor presides at council meetings but does not have executive power.  
<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw 2023 salaries to their Minneapolis cost of labor equivalent using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

# Mayoral Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor

Minneapolis Mayoral Salary Among Lower Range of Peer Respondent Cities



<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw salaries to their 2023 cost of labor equivalent in Minneapolis using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

<sup>2</sup>Calculated cost of labor compared to national average using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

\*Austin has a weak-mayor system where the mayor presides at council meetings but does not have executive power.

# Mayor Benefits Often Include City-provided Cell Phones and Cars

City (A-Z)	Pension	Deferred Compensation*	City-Provided Cell Phone	City-Provided Car
Minneapolis	†		City Budget	
Atlanta			City Budget	
Austin‡				
Boston				
Charlotte§			City Budget	
Columbus			City Budget	
Denver			Mayoral Budget	
Milwaukee			City Budget	
Omaha				
Pittsburgh			City Budget	
Seattle			City Budget	
St. Paul§				
Tampa			Mayoral Budget	

\*Deferred Compensation column reflects whether the city answered “Yes” to “Does the city have a deferred compensation program;” not necessarily indicative of mayor-specific benefit.  
 †Minneapolis offers a pension to the Mayor, who opted out for 2023.

‡Austin has a weak-mayor system where the mayor presides at council meetings but does not have executive power.

§Charlotte and St. Paul both reported having only part-time council members.

# 2023 Council Member Salary Data

City (A-Z)	Raw 2023 Salary	Adjusted to Minneapolis Cost of Labor <sup>1</sup>	Increase Cadence
Minneapolis	\$106,101	\$106,101	Annually
Atlanta	\$72,360	\$76,013	Varies
Austin	\$116,688	\$113,303	Varies
Boston	\$103,500	\$92,543	Annually
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Omaha	\$41,683	\$48,408	Annually
Pittsburgh	\$81,137	\$87,738	Annually
Seattle	\$137,432	\$124,444	By term
St. Paul*	\$73,091 <sup>†</sup>	\$73,095	Varies <sup>†</sup>
Tampa	\$53,622	\$61,855	Annually

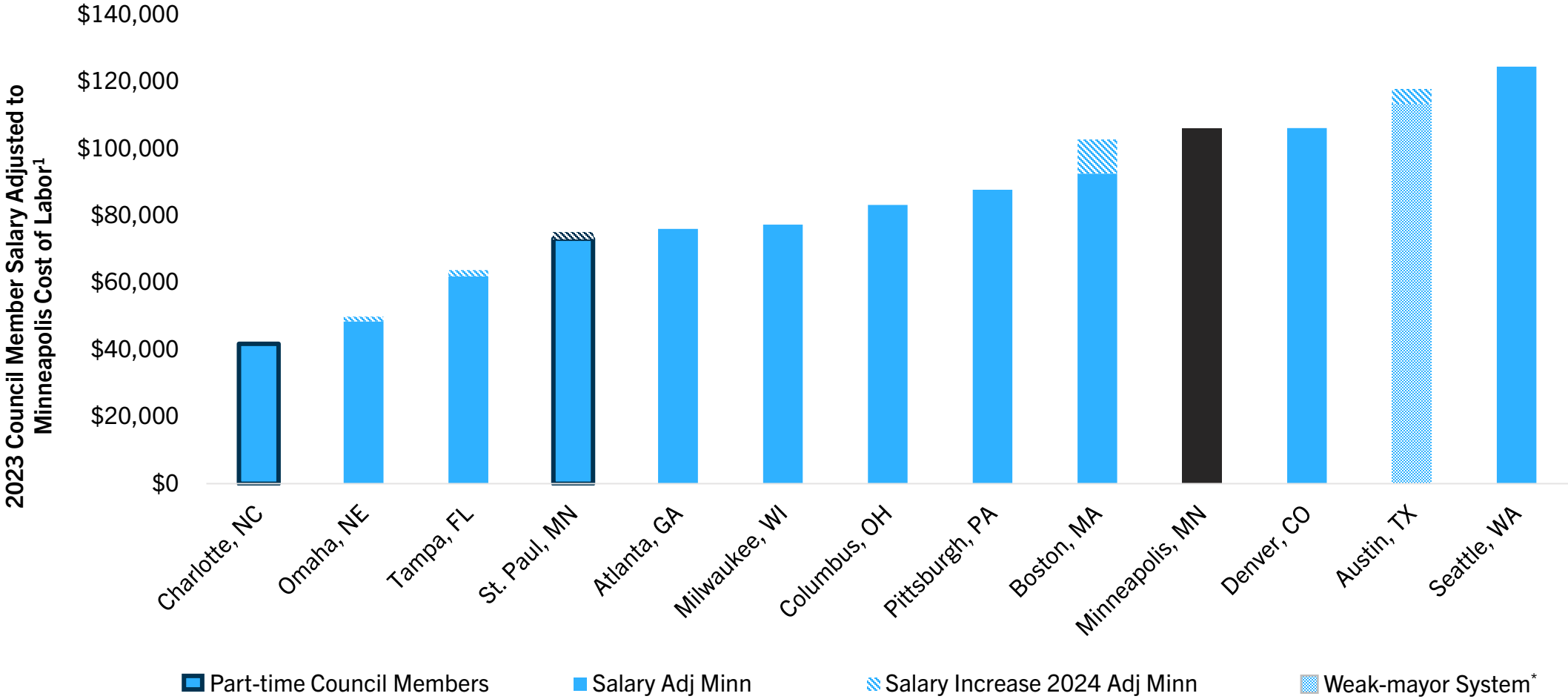
\*Charlotte and St. Paul reported having only part-time council members.

<sup>†</sup> St. Paul council member pay set by ordinance to 50% of mayoral pay.

<sup>1</sup> Adjusted raw salaries to their 2023 cost of labor equivalent in Minneapolis using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).

# Council Member Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis

Minneapolis Council Salary in Mid-High Range of Peer Respondents

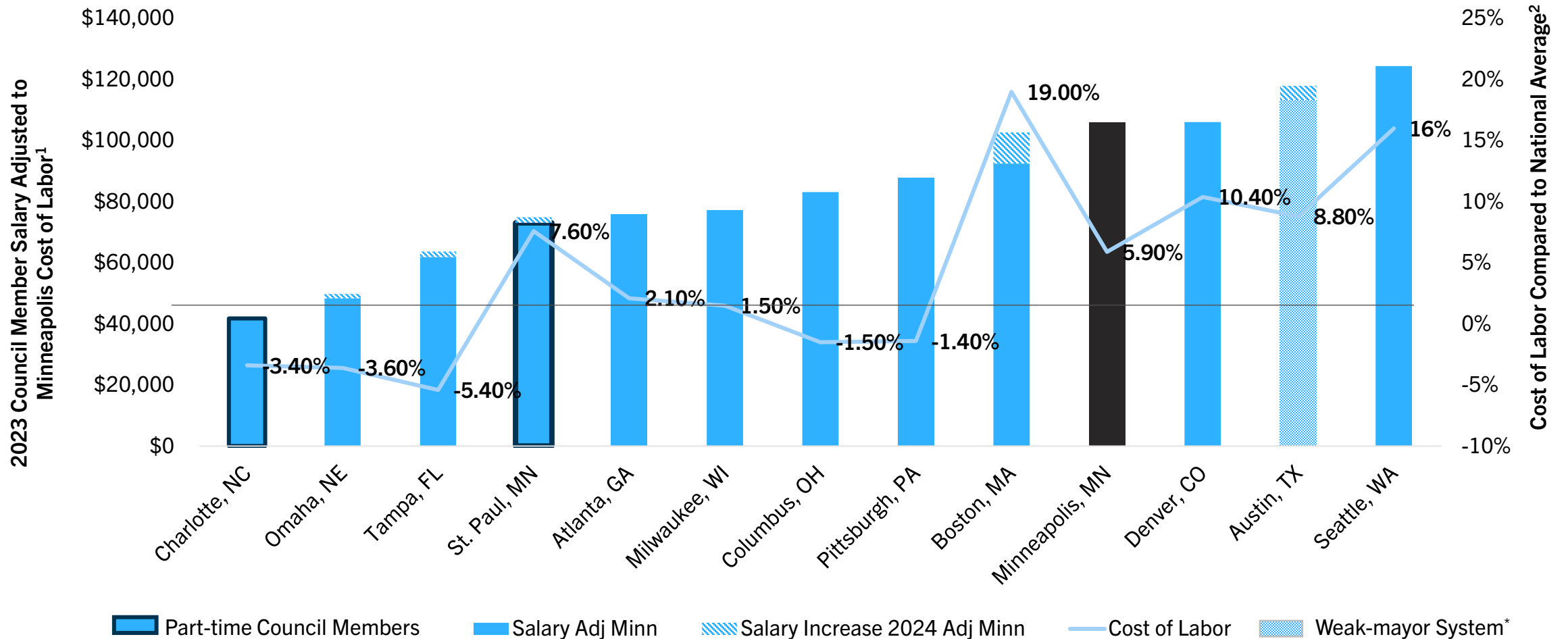


\*Austin has a weak-mayor system where the mayor presides at council meetings but does not have executive power.  
<sup>1</sup>Adjusted raw salaries to their 2023 cost of labor equivalent in Minneapolis using the Economic Research Institute's Geographic Assessor (<https://www.eri.com/geographicassessor>).



# Council Member Salary Adjusted to Minneapolis

Minneapolis Council Salary in Mid-High Range of Peer Respondents



# Council Benefits Rarely Include Cars

City (A-Z)	Pension	Deferred Compensation*	City-Provided Cell Phone	City-Provided Car
Minneapolis			City Budget	
Atlanta			City Budget	
Austin†				
Boston				
Charlotte‡			City Budget	
Columbus				
Denver			Member Budget	
Milwaukee			City Budget	
Omaha				
Pittsburgh			City Budget	
Seattle			City Budget	
St. Paul‡				
Tampa				