



11. Parks Services

WHAT IS THE SERVICE?

Parks Services support the recreation and leisure needs of the community. Parkland includes both maintained parkland (such as sports fields, recreational trails, picnic areas, playgrounds) and natural parklands (such as ravines, watercourses, woodlots). Parks can vary in size and include a variety of features such as flowers and shrub beds, fountains, play structures, woodlots, paved areas and benches.

New parks, sports fields, and recreational trails are provided through public acquisition and through parkland dedication required under the *Planning Act* at the time of development.

The objectives of parks services include the provision of:

- ▶ Clean, safe, and welcoming parks and natural spaces for all residents to enjoy
- ▶ Opportunities for physical activity and both recreational and competitive sports
- ▶ A significant asset that increases the well-being and economic prosperity of the community
- ▶ A relaxing haven in an urban area

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES?

Issues facing the delivery of Parks Services are:

- ▶ Difficulty in establishing new parks in developed areas of municipalities due to the lack of available vacant land
- ▶ Pesticide use in parks and ongoing concerns with public safety and the environment
- ▶ Ensuring play structures and components are maintained and/or replaced to meet safety standards
- ▶ Meeting the growing demands of an increasing population and changing demographics

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

How much parkland is available?

FIG. 11.1 All Parkland in Municipality as a Percentage of Total Area of Municipality

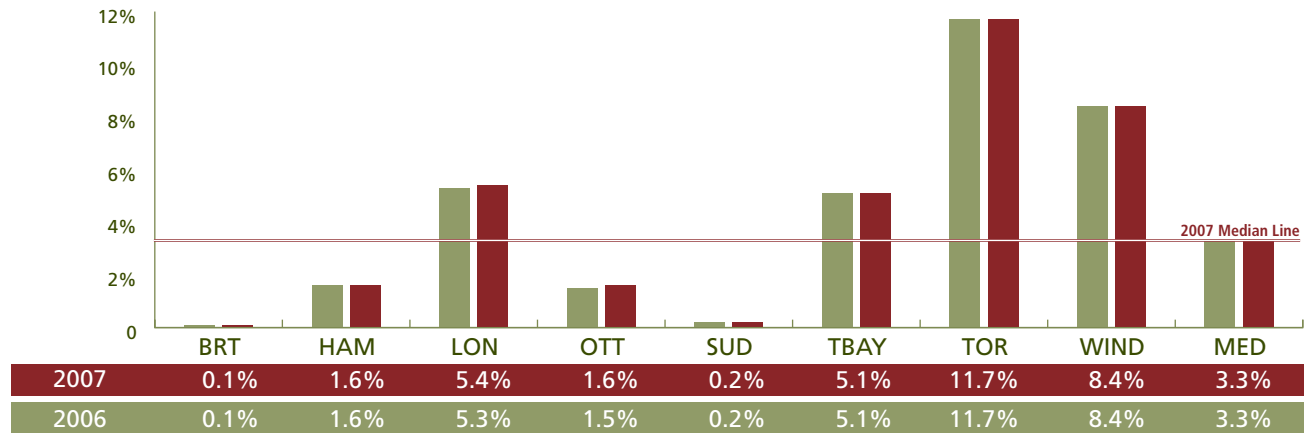


Figure 11.1 shows the percentage of the geographic area of the municipality that is maintained or natural parkland. Municipalities with a predominant urban form may find it more difficult to establish new parks within the developed core area. Other issues faced by some municipalities are geographic challenges such as topography and population density.

How much does parkland cost per person?

FIG. 11.2 Cost of Maintained and Natural Parkland per Person

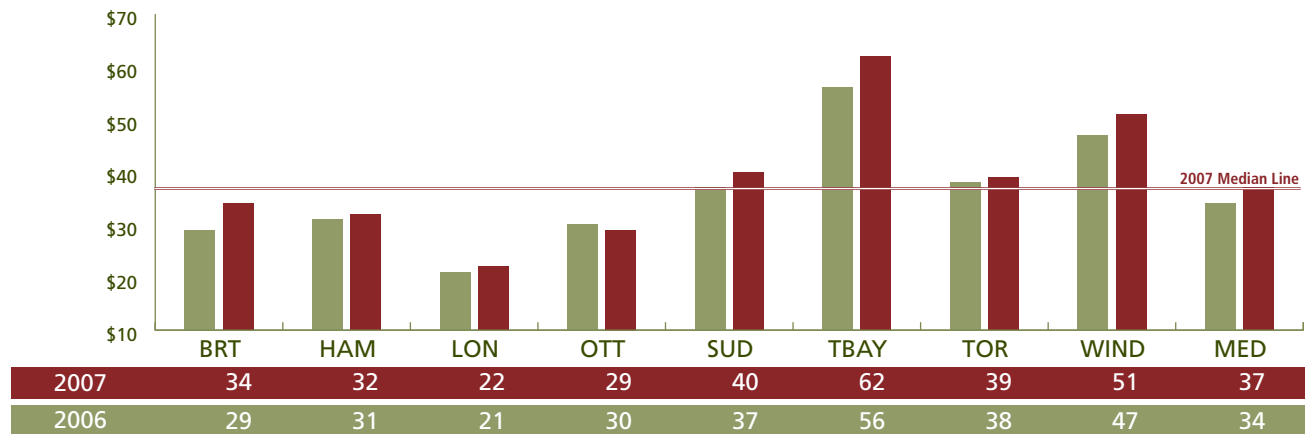


Figure 11.2 shows the cost of parkland (maintained and natural) per capita. Parkland includes a varying number and range of amenities (greenhouses, washrooms, playgrounds) and a broad range of turf maintenance levels all of which can contribute to a higher cost per person.

How much does parkland cost per hectare?

FIG. 11.3 Cost of Maintained and Natural Parkland per Hectare

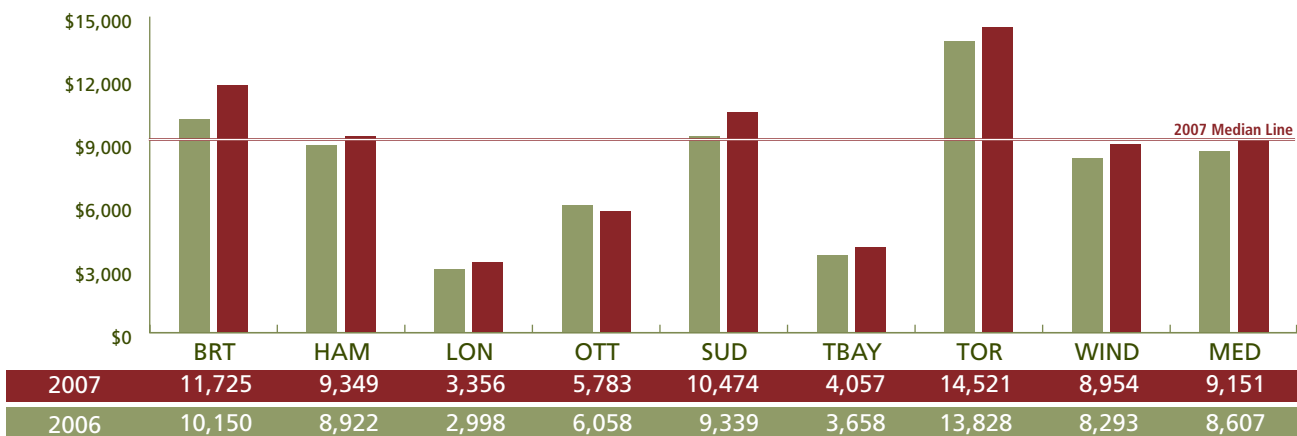


Figure 11.3 shows the cost of providing one hectare of parkland (either natural or maintained). Cost per hectare will also be impacted by the number of park sites, travel time between sites, and whether the site has on-site staff. Costs per hectare are reflective of the proportion of maintained parkland vs. natural parkland, as maintained parkland is more expensive to maintain.

What SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THESE RESULTS?

Each municipality's results are influenced to varying degrees by a number of factors, including:

- ▶ Mix – of natural and maintained parkland in each municipality
- ▶ Service standards - maintained parkland and levels of management applied to natural areas, such as frequency of grass cutting
- ▶ Type of sports fields - differences in the categories and types of sports fields and their facilities will affect costs
- ▶ Environmental factors - soil composition, weather patterns, etc.
- ▶ Population density – higher densities may mean more intense usage and require different maintenance strategies; for example, irrigation, artificial turf, and sport field and pathway lighting

For more information about the results, contact the Municipality's representative listed in Appendix F, page 94.