

## 12. Planning Services



### WHAT IS THE SERVICE?

Municipalities manage the growth and physical form of the city/region through its planning processes. The goal of planning services is the efficient and effective management of land and resources to ensure a healthy and enjoyable community – economically, socially, and environmentally - for its citizens to live, work, play, and shop.

Planning services can include:

- ▶ Overseeing the creation and management of a municipality's Official Plan, the overall master planning document required under Ontario's Planning Act
- ▶ Processing development applications received for specific projects. Municipal staff review and process the applications with regard to the framework of provincial legislation, Council-approved policies and by-laws
- ▶ Leading municipal strategic planning, including environmental initiatives, urban design, area studies and policy development
- ▶ Providing Geographic Information Services (GIS) or mapping information

### WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES?

Issues facing the delivery of Planning Services are:

- ▶ Balancing priorities – conflicting/multiple priorities, balancing citizens' concerns about the environment with the desire to encourage investment in the community in order to sustain economic growth
- ▶ Opposing demands - expanding opportunities for public participation in the planning process while streamlining the approvals process to meet Planning Act timeframes
- ▶ Provincial legislation - specific Provincial initiatives ('Places to Grow', 'Greenbelt') plus other Provincial policy statements can affect application volumes, the time spent on the application, and appeals
- ▶ Challenging timeframes - meeting legislated requirements for processing applications, given financial and human resource constraints
- ▶ Increased litigation – developers and builders increasingly seek legal action when their projects are denied or delayed
- ▶ Municipal funding - municipalities' shortfall of funds to replace or expand infrastructure (roads, water works, transit) impacts support for new developments

**WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?**

Note that the graphs are shown as single-tier or upper-tier to reflect differences in service delivery due to organizational form.

**What is the volume of applications processed?**

FIG. 12.1 Number of Development Applications Received per 100,000 Population

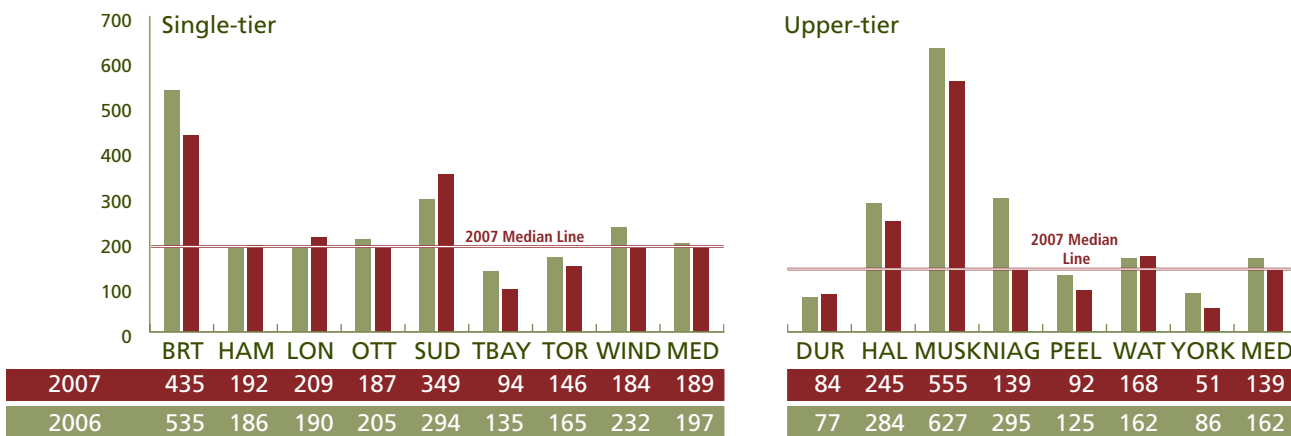
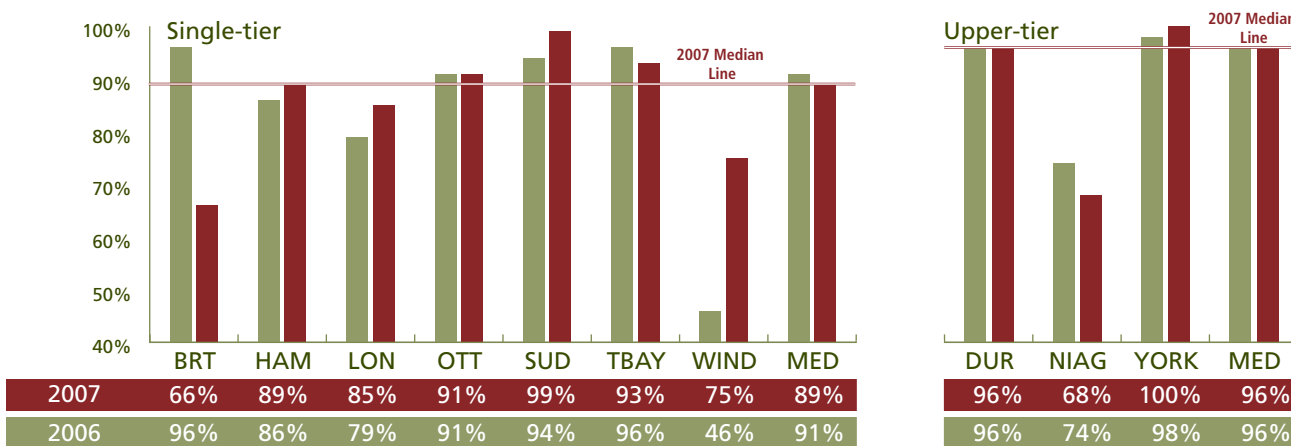


Figure 12.1 shows the number of development applications received per 100,000 population and reflects to some extent the robustness of the local economy. The types of applications include official plan amendments, zoning by-law amendments, plans of subdivisions, plans of condominiums, condominium conversions, minor variances, consents, part lot control, and site plan approvals, site plan control and removal of holding provisions.

**How quickly are applications processed?**

FIG. 12.2 Percentage of Development Applications meeting Planning Act Timeframes



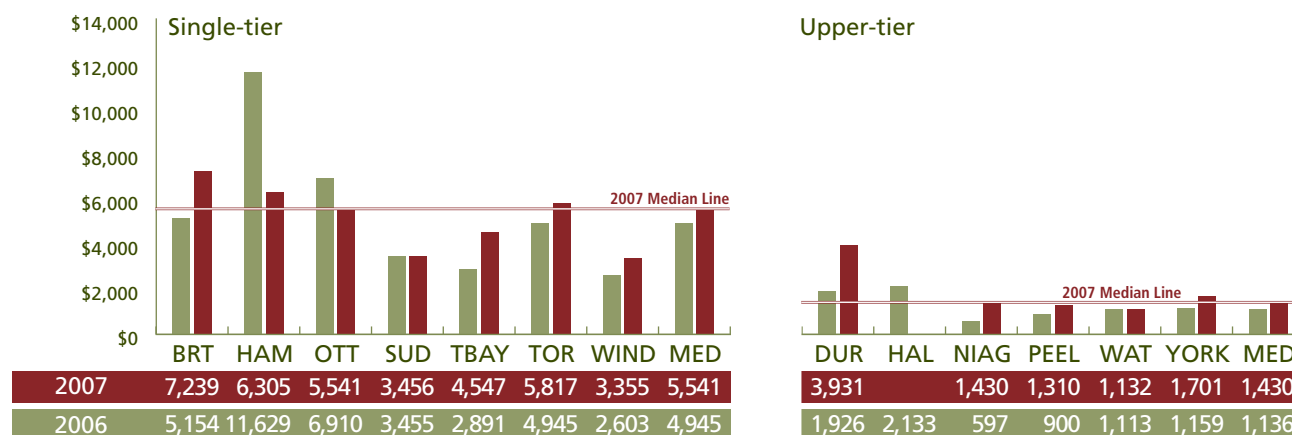
Note: Single-tier municipality Toronto data is not available for 2007 and 2006. For the upper-tier Municipalities of Halton, Muskoka, Peel and Waterloo there may be no data to report (please see paragraph below for additional information).

Figure 12.2 shows the percentage of development applications meeting *Planning Act* timeframes. The *Planning Act* sets out specific time standards for municipalities to process applications

received. Upper-tier municipalities only report information on legislative timelines where they are the approval authority. In some cases this would apply to very few or no applications, so there may be no data to report. All municipalities endeavor to meet or exceed these timeframes whenever possible. However, factors such as volume of applications and their complexity, will affect municipal results.

### What was the cost to process Development applications?

FIG 12.3 Development Planning Applications Cost per Development Application Received



Note: Single-tier municipality London and upper-tier municipality of Muskoka data not available for 2007 and 2006. Upper-tier municipality of Halton data is not available for 2007.

Figure 12.3 shows the average cost to process a development application. The variation in the cost per development application will be affected year-to-year by the volume of applications processed. Municipalities do not have unlimited flexibility to adjust their staffing levels in response to short-term fluctuations in volumes.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THESE RESULTS?

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

- ▶ Application variables - type, mix, and complexity (in terms of scope and magnitude) of applications received
- ▶ Government form - level of municipal governance (e.g., single-tier vs. upper- or two-tier) will impact the review process. Some applications may require dual review while other applications may only require single-tier review as upper-tier governments do not process some types of applications
- ▶ Organizational structure - differences among the municipalities can affect the process of reviewing applications by departments outside of planning (e.g., infrastructure)
- ▶ Public consultation - cost to process a given application can be affected by Council's decisions regarding the opportunities for public participation in the planning process
- ▶ Growth management - activities impact workloads and costs of service

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