David M. Sanders, MA LLB
885 Wilkes Avenue
Winnipeg MB

May 28, 2013

His Worship Mayor Katz
and Members of Executive Policy Committee
The City of Winnipeg
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB

Dear Mayor Katz and Members of EPC:

Re: **Special Meeting of EPC, 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 28, 2013**
Audit Presentation – Brian Whiteside, City Auditor
Winnipeg Golf Services Operational Review, May 25, 2011

As you know, on Wednesday morning City Council will be asked to approve EPC's recommendations that four municipally-owned golf courses (Crescent Drive, Harbour View, Kildonan Park and Windsor Park) be leased to GolfNorth Properties Inc. for 20 years, and that the City-owned John Blumberg Golf Course at 4540 Portage Avenue be declared surplus to the City's needs and offered for sale to the private sector.

The Administrative Report supporting these recommendations states that they "represent the initial steps to implement the recommendations in the Audit Department's *Operational Review of Winnipeg Golf Services* (WGS)."

Presumably Mr. Whiteside is now to be asked to answer any questions members of EPC may have with respect to his November 2010 Report on WGS.

I would appreciate it if EPC would put the following questions to Mr. Whiteside this afternoon, and I look forward to hearing his answers now:

1. Are you the author of the five-page "Introduction" to the *Operational Review Final Report* prepared by Golf Convergence of Castle Rock, Colorado?

2. If so, did you agree that:

   "In the short-term, the most significant recommendation contained within the report is to contract out the management of the City-run golf courses. External firms bring best practice business processes to maximize the potential of these courses. **City of Winnipeg taxpayers will no longer have to subsidize the golf course operations which incurred an approximately $1 million loss in 2009. Instead the City will receive annual lease payments and the collection of property taxes that should result in net income from each course rather than the financial losses currently being incurred.**"

3. And did you also agree that:

   "In the longer-term, the report identifies that Winnipeg has a **surplus of open park space** when compared to other mid-western prairie based municipalities. The consultant recommends that the City divest itself from the operation of public golf courses since the need is adequately met in the private sector. Any surplus property can then be sold for commercial or residential development to raise capital for **reinvestment in other open park space**."

4. And did you also agree that:

   "**The sale of golf courses for commercial or residential development is advocated** to raise capital for judicious reinvestment and to enhance the balance between commercial, residential, and open park space **as part of a master plan for open space. Assiniboine, Canoe Club and Wildewood are three facilities whose sale is advised upon lease expiration.** The consolidation of St. Boniface and Windsor Park into one redesigned championship golf course, the allocation of park space, and the **sale** of land for residential development merits review."

   Does the City of Winnipeg have a "master plan for open space," and if so, how would these recommendations support its implementation?

5. Did you ever obtain a copy of Pros Consulting "Draft Level Service Report," December, 2009 – the Consultant's sole evidence of "City Council's historical practice to maintain all existing Open Space far greater than recommended by international standards." The Consultant stated that the City of Winnipeg maintains open park space at a rate that is 50% greater than required by comparable municipalities, i.e. 6 hectares(15 acres) versus the "accepted ratio" of 4 hectares (10 acres) per 1,000 population.

6. Do you know that Leon Younger, President of Pros Consulting, denied the existence of any such international standard for green space, in an interview with CBC Winnipeg on June 20, 2012. Mr. Younger suggested that 15-20 acres (6-8 hectares) of open green space per 1,000 population was common. The U.S. National Recreation and Park Association Database Reports excerpts now attached to this submission show that 25% of the jurisdictions surveyed have ratios of 20 acres per 1,000 people or more. If it is true that the City of Winnipeg has 3,631 hectares of open park space, then for the City's 2011 population of 663,617, that 9,096 acres indicates a ratio of only 5.5 hectares or 13.7 acres per 1,000 people – **far from excessive**. Adding the 600 hectares for the 12 golf courses owned by the City gives a ratio of 6.45 hectares or 15.9 acres per 1,000. If we look ahead to the City's official 2020 population projection of 752,800 people, the present city-owned open park space and golf course properties will represent a ratio of 5.7 hectares or 14 acres per 1,000 people. Again, not excessive in relation to the 75% Quartile of 20 acres per 1000.

7. Does the Consultant's Report contain any concrete evidence that Winnipeg has a 10% oversupply of public golf courses, and that therefore two should be closed?

8. Are you a City land use planner, or a City parks and recreation planner? Did you consult the City Park Strategic Planner or the Parks and Open Space Division of the Public Works Department before endorsing the Consultant's recommendations that the City sell all of its golf courses for commercial and residential development?

9. Do you agree that when the WGS Special Operating Agency was established on January 1, 2002, it was immediately saddled with $3,975,690 in long term debt at 6%, plus an additional $695,000 in long term debt at 6% for immediate capital improvements, for a total of **$4,670,690** of the accumulated "deficit" of WGS.

10. Do you agree that while the City of Winnipeg has annually extended credit to finance the "operating losses of the SOA,'" thereby increasing the accumulated "deficit," **the City of Winnipeg taxpayers have therefore <u>not</u> paid a dime to subsidize the Winnipeg Golf Services**? Do you agree that since 2002 the City of Winnipeg municipal mill rate on real property has **<u>not</u>** been used to provide any subsidy to WGS whatsoever?

11. Indeed, would you agree that since 2002 the WGS SOA has actually relieved the municipal taxpayer of substantial amounts equal to annual general government charges, transfers to the General Revenue Fund, interest on debt, property and business tax equivalents and depreciation charges?

12. Would you agree that if the four golf courses are leased out and John Blumberg is sold, **the municipal taxpayers are going to have to start paying an <u>additional $700,000 per year</u> for these ongoing City responsibilities?**

13. Do you agree with the Consultant, that this City accounting practice "places WGS effectively in **a self-perpetrating (sic!) cycle of financial deterioration.**" In other words, that the City itself is the perpetrator of WGS' apparent financial difficulties?

14. Asked under what circumstances, if any, can the City of Winnipeg golf courses be made profitable, Golf Convergence answered that it would be "highly improbable with current management." Do you agree that according to the WGS Operating Charter, the CAO, the CFO, the Director of Planning, Property and Development, and the Agency's COO have been responsible for the management of WGS?

15. The City Auditor has retained Ernst & Young to conduct a Real Estate Management Audit. The work to be done consists of an independent objective review of the policies governing real estate management and the processes and practices used for executing major land acquisitions, sales, transfers and external leasing transactions. The scope of the project will also entail a review of all major real estate transactions including those where commissions or management fees were paid with City of Winnipeg funds over the past five years. When do you expect to receive the Audit Report and make it public?

16. Do you agree that it would be much more prudent and responsible for the City Council to make no further major sales or leasing transactions until the City receives the Ernst & Young Real Estate Management Audit Report and considers and acts on its recommendations?

Thank you for your attention to these important questions.

Yours truly,

David M. Sanders, M.A., LL.B.

Golf Services - Special Operating Agency
Projected Statement of Operations & Deficit
For the Years Ended December 31

	2009 Actual (Audited)	2010 Council Adopted	2010 Projected Actual	Variance	2011	2012	2013
Revenues: (Note 4)							
Green Fees	1,748,862	1,813,172	1,732,643	(80,529)	1,905,770	2,013,371	2,105,969
Equipment Rentals	249,224	387,259	252,726	(134,533)	260,412	268,225	276,272
Concessions	56,721	83,430	49,170	(34,260)	45,887	47,264	48,681
Merchandise Sales	97,023	120,510	82,087	(38,423)	82,853	85,338	87,899
Other	78,594	28,405	20,551	(7,854)	22,847	23,532	24,239
Net Revenue-Leasing Operations	114,600	114,365	139,365	25,000	139,121	139,620	140,135
Total Revenues	2,345,024	2,547,141	2,276,542	(270,599)	2,456,890	2,577,350	2,683,195
Expenses: (Note 5)							
Salaries & Employee Benefits	1,278,584	1,419,715	1,412,205	(7,510)	1,428,383	1,462,673	1,492,384
Services	737,559	564,315	531,174	(33,141)	582,912	500,403	515,415
Materials,Parts,Supplies	293,611	288,946	338,613	49,667	334,157	344,185	354,512
Interest on Short Term Debt	15,269	177,694	44,593	(133,101)	50,012	57,479	45,918
Interest on Long Term Debt - Capital Plan	58,854	65,508	65,508	-	80,707	83,179	83,441
Total Expenses	2,383,877	2,516,178	2,392,093	(124,085)	2,476,171	2,447,919	2,491,670
Net Revenue	(38,852)	30,963	(115,551)	(146,514)	(19,281)	129,431	191,524
Allocated to the City: (Note 6)							
Property Tax Equivalents	234,754	240,052	253,615	13,563	247,253	254,670	262,310
Departmental Support Costs	49,451	50,935	50,935	-	52,463	54,036	55,658
Office Accommodation Costs	17,389	16,789	16,788	(1)	16,789	16,789	16,789
Provision for Payroll Taxes	24,015	26,474	25,586	(888)	25,586	26,353	27,145
Provision for Business Taxes	28,249	28,249	28,249	-	28,249	28,249	28,249
Interest on Long Term Debt - Acquired Assets	185,459	184,095	184,094	(1)	182,848	181,115	179,490
Transfer to General Revenue for 311	78,237	79,463	79,463	-	79,488	79,488	79,488
Transfer to BTS Internal Service Provider	-	1,667	1,667	-	1,667	1,667	1,667
City's Return on Investment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total allocated to the City	617,555	627,723	640,397	12,673	634,143	642,367	650,796
Other:							
Depreciation, Fixed Assets	274,353	317,311	320,311	3,000	343,161	290,781	273,029
Annual Audit Fee	9,951	10,172	10,172	-	10,477	10,792	11,116
Total Other and Allocated to the City	901,859	955,206	970,880	15,673	987,781	943,940	934,941
Net Income/(Loss)	(940,711)	(924,244)	(1,086,431)	(162,187)	(1,007,062)	(814,509)	(743,416)



City of Winnipeg

2013 - 2015
Adopted Operating Budget

Adopted by Council January 29, 2013

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA

Parks and Urban Forestry

Includes:

- *Park Grass Maintenance*
- *Park Amenity Maintenance*
- *Athletic Field Maintenance*
- *Park Pathway Maintenance*
- *Park Planning / Development*
- *Tree Planting*
- *Tree Pruning & Removal (non-DED)*
- *Dutch Elm Disease Control (DED)*
- *Weed Control*
- *Natural Areas Management*
- *Playground Management*
- *Winter Amenity Maintenance*
- *Boulevard Maintenance*

Description

To enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors by providing services that focus on maintenance, preservation and stewardship of parks, open spaces, the urban forest and natural areas.

This service includes park, boulevard, and open space maintenance; litter collection; athletic field maintenance; pathway maintenance; park planning and development (shared with Planning, Property and Development); tree planting, pruning, removal; Dutch Elm Disease control (inspection, removal, disposal, public education); weed control (inspection, serving of weed notices); natural areas management (replanting of native species, controlled burns, native and invasive species monitoring, education); playground equipment inspection and repair; and winter amenity maintenance (knock-down hockey rinks, pleasure skating rinks/ponds, toboggan slides/hills, park pathway snow clearing, cross-country ski trails and speed skating oval maintenance).

Key Goals

1. Maintain and improve parks, athletic fields, playgrounds and related amenities to meet community leisure needs and interests.
2. Provide natural environment and conservation education.
3. Preserve and enhance natural areas across the City's park and open space system.
4. Protect and enhance the urban forest through effective tree care practices and replacement planting.
5. Invest strategically in new and existing infrastructure.

Service Level Statistics

Description	2009	2010	2011
Number of park and open space sites	1,128	1,128	1,128
Total hectares of parks and open spaces	3,587[A]	3,587[A]	3,594[A]
Hectares of park and boulevard turf mowing	2,408	2,408	2,408
Park pathways/walkways maintained (linear km,)	239**[B]	239**[B]	239**[B]
Number of environmental program participants	8,648	8,021	8,143
Ecologically Significant Natural Areas	389	433	445
Number of athletic fields	604	604	604
Number of boulevard and park trees***	280,000	280,000	280,000
Number of trees planted	1,458	1,495	1,353
Number of DED trees & non-DED trees removed	4,969 / 1,935	5,636/1,609	5,129/1,704
Number of trees pruned	22,600	19,786	15,558
Number of playground equipment sites inspected & maintained (includes toboggan slide sites)	529	502	502

** Statistic only includes pathways, contained within park sites.

*** Estimated number of trees, multi-year tree inventory is being conducted.

[A] Includes 537 hectares of boulevards.

[B] Does not include 33 km of cross country ski trails.

Parks and Urban Forestry

Contributing Departments

Public Works 93 %
Planning, Prop. & Devl. 7 %

Operating Budget (in millions of $)	2011 Actual	2012 Budget	2013 Adopted Budget	Variance Expl.	2014 Projection	2015 Projection
Service revenue	0.605	0.563	0.578		0.587	0.596
Provincial funding (service specific)	1.004	1.010	1.560		1.560	1.560
Revenue	**1.609**	**1.573**	**2.138**	1	**2.147**	**2.156**
Salaries and benefits	17.794	17.009	18.184		18.752	19.157
Services	8.593	9.454	10.571		11.029	11.026
Materials, parts, and supplies	2.633	2.644	2.675		2.820	2.901
Assets and purchases	0.049	0.040	0.084		0.084	0.041
Debt and finance charges	1.750	1.841	1.703		1.141	0.758
Grants, transfers and other	2.204	2.548	2.865		3.153	3.180
Recoveries	(2.921)	(2.017)	(2.153)		(2.159)	(2.163)
Operating expenses	**30.102**	**31.518**	**33.928**		**34.819**	**34.899**
Transfer to Capital	7.984	4.050	4.781		4.457	4.125
Total Expenses	**38.086**	**35.568**	**38.709**	2	**39.276**	**39.024**
Mill Rate Support/(Contribution)	**36.477**	**33.995**	**36.571**		**37.130**	**36.868**
Full-time Equivalent Positions	**311**	**299**	**308**		**308**	**308**

Explanation of 2013 Change from 2012

(in millions of $)

1 Revenues

Requested increase in Provincial funding for Dutch Elm Disease management strategy	0.550
Increase in adult athletic field user fee revenue	0.060
Decrease in youth athletic field user fee revenue	(0.059)
Miscellaneous adjustments	0.014
	0.565

2 Expenses

Enhanced Dutch Elm Disease management strategy	1.100
Increase in salaries and benefits	0.766
Transfer to Capital	0.731
Increase in facility costs	0.344
Increase in tree pruning	0.250
Increase to fleet equipment and fleet-related accounts	0.218
Athletic fields enforcement	0.045
Decrease in debt and finance charges	(0.138)
Increase in recoveries	(0.136)
Miscellaneous adjustments	(0.039)
	3.141

Full-time Equivalent Positions

Increase of 9 due to Asset Management Initiative (1), Athletic Field Enforcement (1) and Strategy to manage Dutch Elm Disease (7).

Parks and Urban Forestry

Service Detail Sub-services (in millions of $)		2011 Actual	2012 Budget	2013 Adopted Budget	2014 Projection	2015 Projection
Park Grass Maintenance	Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
	Operating expenses	6.307	6.521	6.806	7.111	7.224
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		6.307	6.521	6.806	7.111	7.224
Park Amenity Maintenance	Revenue	0.226	0.049	0.051	0.051	0.052
	Operating expenses	3.684	2.834	2.930	2.951	2.936
	Transfer to Capital	2.797	0.743	1.541	1.500	0.751
		6.255	3.529	4.420	4.399	3.635
Athletic Field Maintenance	Revenue	0.254	0.376	0.391	0.398	0.404
	Operating expenses	1.866	1.651	1.639	1.591	1.575
	Transfer to Capital	0.233	-	0.200	0.100	0.064
		1.845	1.275	1.448	1.293	1.234
Park Pathway Maintenance	Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
	Operating expenses	0.259	0.428	0.441	0.451	0.452
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	0.151	0.074	-
		0.259	0.428	0.592	0.525	0.452
Park Planning/Development	Revenue	0.005	0.019	0.015	0.015	0.015
	Operating expenses	2.188	2.494	2.504	2.372	2.297
	Transfer to Capital	3.089	2.019	1.798	1.691	2.217
		5.272	4.495	4.288	4.049	4.500
Tree Planting	Revenue	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
	Operating expenses	2.043	1.581	1.629	1.655	1.619
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		2.042	1.581	1.629	1.654	1.618
Tree Pruning & Removal	Revenue	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002
	Operating expenses	3.195	4.463	4.690	5.028	5.081
	Transfer to Capital	0.233	0.388	0.191	0.194	0.192
		3.427	4.849	4.878	5.220	5.271
Dutch Elm Disease Control	Revenue	1.000	1.001	1.551	1.551	1.551
	Operating expenses	4.698	4.191	5.582	5.746	5.812
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		3.697	3.190	4.031	4.195	4.261
Weed Control	Revenue	0.080	0.080	0.082	0.084	0.085
	Operating expenses	0.829	0.824	0.873	0.906	0.917
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		0.749	0.745	0.792	0.822	0.832
Natural Areas Management	Revenue	0.040	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046
	Operating expenses	0.761	0.885	0.914	0.952	0.970
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		0.720	0.839	0.868	0.906	0.924
Playground Management	Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
	Operating expenses	1.123	1.335	1.382	1.284	1.193
	Transfer to Capital	1.631	0.900	0.900	0.899	0.901
		2.754	2.235	2.282	2.183	2.093

Parks and Urban Forestry

Service Detail Sub-services (in millions of $)		2011 Actual	2012 Budget	2013 Adopted Budget	2014 Projection	2015 Projection
Winter Amenity Maintenance	Revenue	0.001	-	-	-	-
	Operating expenses	1.055	1.391	1.460	1.519	1.542
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		1.055	1.391	1.460	1.519	1.542
Boulevard Maintenance	Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
	Operating expenses	2.096	2.919	3.079	3.252	3.280
	Transfer to Capital	-	-	-	-	-
		2.096	2.919	3.079	3.252	3.280
Mill Rate Support/(Contribution)		**36.477**	**33.995**	**36.571**	**37.130**	**36.868**

Additional Financial Information

Reserves Balance, December 31 (in millions of $)	2011 Actual	2012 Forecast	2013 Adopted Budget	2014 Projection	2015 Projection
Land Dedication Reserve	4.800	4.740	4.890	5.041	5.194

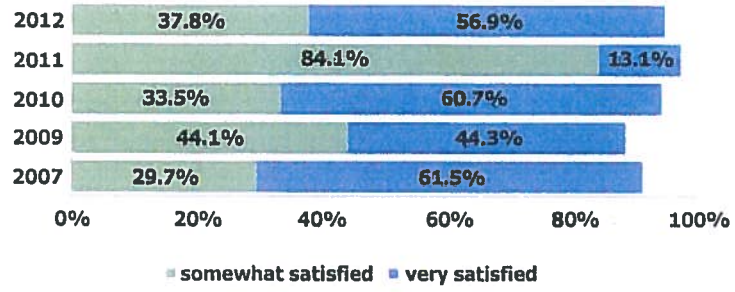
Capital Budget	2013 Adopted	2014 - 2018 Forecast	6 Year Total
(In millions of $)	9.255	35.374	44.629

Parks and Urban Forestry

Performance Measurements

Effectiveness Measurements

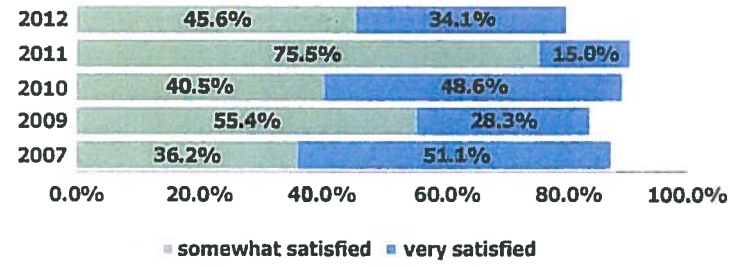
Citizen Satisfaction with Condition of Major Parks (eg. Assiniboine or Kildonan)



The percentage of citizens who were either somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with major parks and who use these parks remains high at approximately 95%.

	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Satisfied	91.2%	88.4%	94.2%	97.2%	94.7%

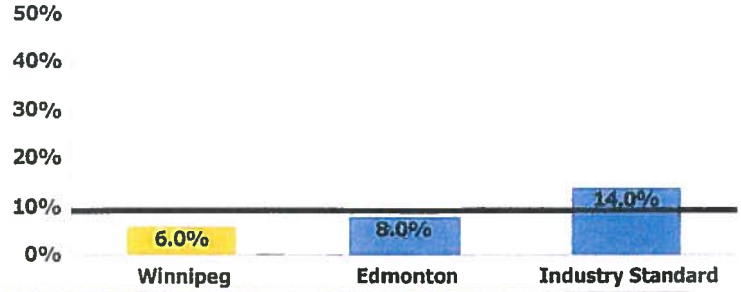
Citizen Satisfaction with Condition of Local Parks in Your Neighbourhood



About 80% of respondents were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the condition of local parks in their neighbourhoods.

	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Satisfied	87.3%	83.7%	89.1%	90.5%	79.7%

Percentage of Trees Pruned Annually Meeting Industry Standards (2011)

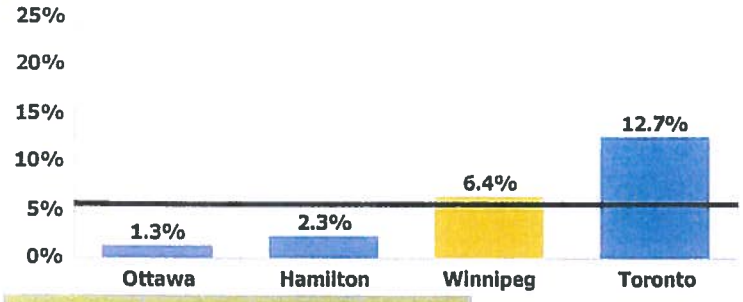


Winnipeg pruned 6% of an estimated 280,000 trees in the Urban Forest in 2011. The industry pruning standard is 14%. Winnipeg is moving to a 1 in 10 year pruning cycle with an additional investment of $250,000 each year for 5 years.

Wpg. Trend	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	9.3%	8.1%	8.1%	8.0%	6.0%

Parks and Urban Forestry

Parkland (Maintained and Natural) as a Percentage of Total City Area (2011)

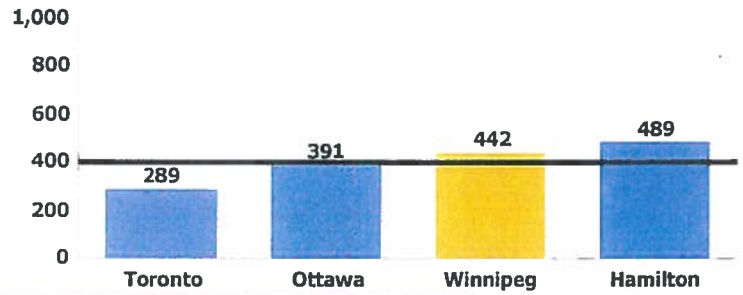


Winnipeg is slightly higher than the average of 5.7%.

Wpg. Trend	2009	2010	2011
	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%

Source: Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI)

Park Hectares per 100,000 Population (2011)

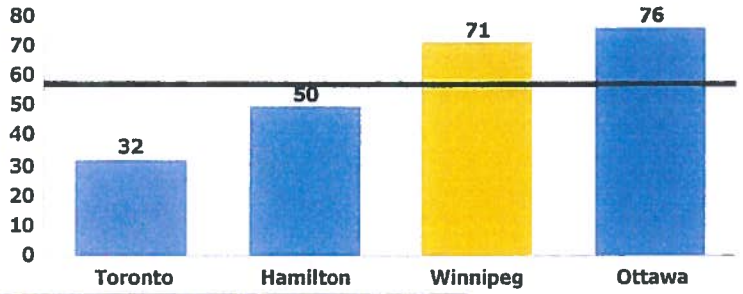


Winnipeg is above the average of 403 hectares per 100,000 population.

Wpg. Trend	2009	2010	2011
	454	446	442

Source: OMBI

Number of Playground Sites per 100,000 Population



Winnipeg is above the average of 57 Playground Sites per 100,000 Population when compared to three other cities.

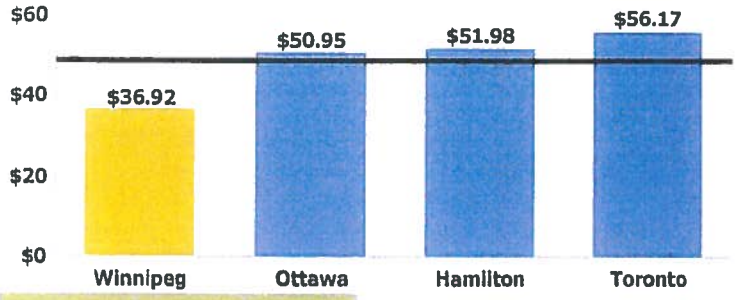
Wpg. Trend	2009	2010	2011
	52.3	71.6	70.8

Source: OMBI

Parks and Urban Forestry

Efficiency Measurements

Total Parks Operating Costs (Maintained and Natural) per Person (2011)

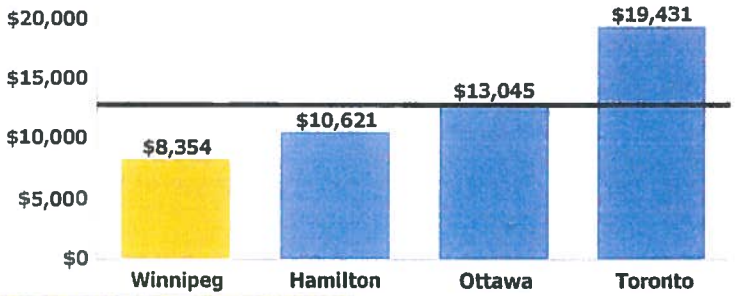


Wpg. Trend	2010	2011
	$37.89	$36.92

Source: OMBI

Winnipeg is below the average of $49.00 when compared with Hamilton, Ottawa and Toronto.

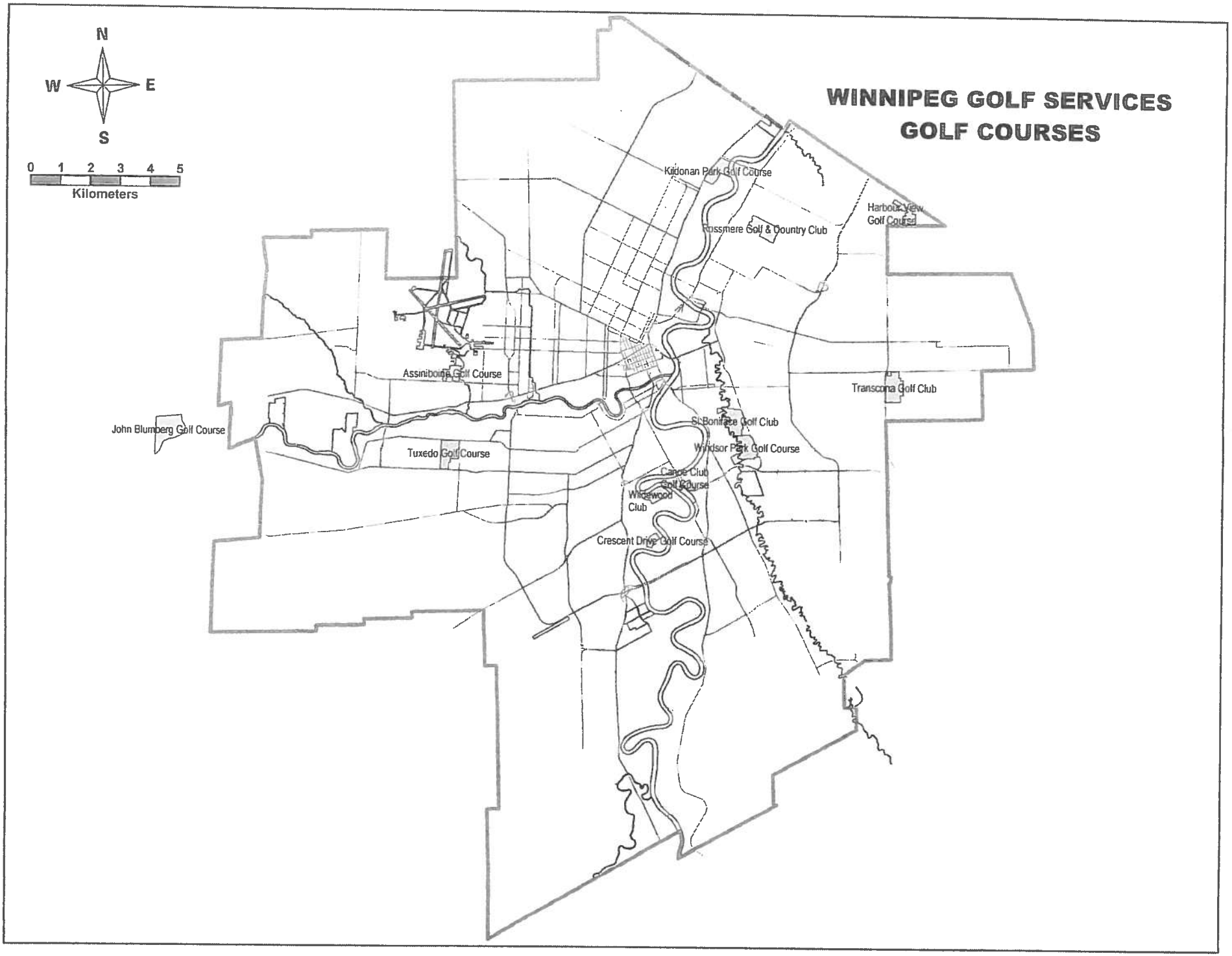
Total Operating Cost per Hectare - Maintained and Natural Parkland (2011)



Wpg. Trend	2010	2011
	$8,500	$8,354

Source: OMBI

At $8,354 Total Operating Cost per Hectare - Maintained and Natural Parkland in 2011, Winnipeg is below the average of $12,863 when compared with Hamilton, Ottawa and Toronto.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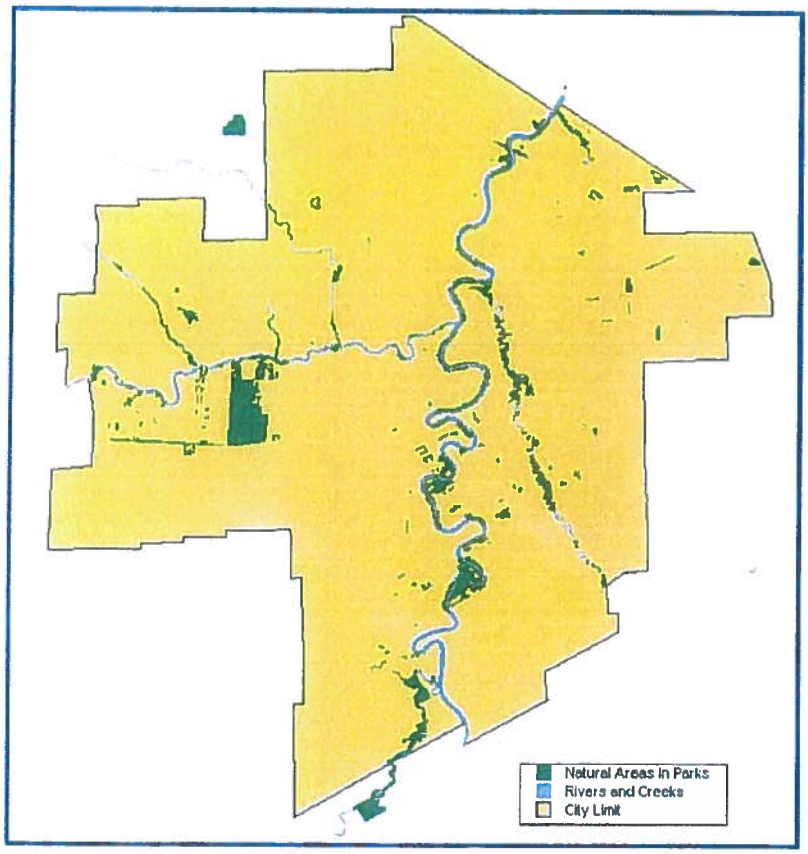
GOLF COURSES
Kildonan Park Golf Course
Harbour View Golf Course
Rossmere Golf & Country Club
Assiniboine Golf Course
Transcona Golf Club
John Blumberg Golf Course
St.Boniface Golf Club
Windsor Park Golf Course
Tuxedo Golf Course
Canoe Club Golf Course
Wildewood Club
Crescent Drive Golf Course

Welcome to Winnipeg's Wilderness!

Begin Your Journey of Natural Habitat in City Parks by clicking on an area of the map. A new map showing a close-up of that area will appear. By clicking on one of the green "habitat" areas you can view a species list and description for that site.



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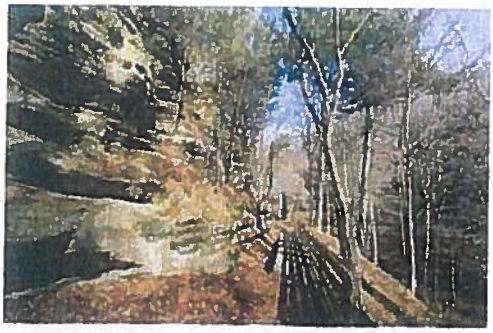


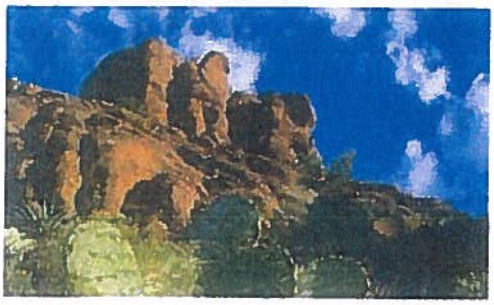




National Recreation and Park Association

Special Park District National Database Report









PRORAGIS, short for Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and Geographic Information System, is NRPA's cutting-edge, online management tool, designed for public park and recreation agencies—and FREE to all members of NRPA. PRORAGIS is a replacement for the NRPA standards that have guided land acquisition and development for the past 45 years. This data is much more accurate because you can compare standards with departments in your state or region and the data that is reported comprises actual numbers rather than a more generic national average. However PRORAGIS is multi-dimensional. It also provides assistance with the following typical park and recreation functions:

- **Benchmark survey of peers;**
- **Master planning of parks;**
- **Comprehensive jurisdiction planning;**
- **Strategic planning;**
- **Business and revenue-generation planning;**
- **Marketing of facilities, programs and tourist attractions;**
- **Justification and defense of departmental budgets.**

The PRORAGIS database gives us differing data pictures depending on the variables we choose. This means that in the future we expect to do some oversampling of PRORAGIS data to explore selected topics in more detail. These topics might include program operating data, fees and charges; and salary studies. However, as we are building the database the profiles from jurisdictional types are interesting to identify differences between each type.

The profiles in aggregate show the similarities and differences between the jurisdiction types. As the number of profiles increase it is likely that the overall character of the jurisdiction type will become more pronounced. The first group we studied was the County Departments, which we looked at in January. Some of you that are special agencies, but represent a county may find yourself in both categories.

This report focuses on profiles that have been submitted by Special Districts (35), Regional or Metro Authorities (4) and Independent Districts (7). There were actually more Profiles on the server than the 46 used for data. Many of them did not have key data points completed and thus could not be included in the aggregation.

As more agencies complete PRORAGIS profiles, the database for these groups will become more accurate and more useful to the members. It is probably not surprising that most of these agencies are located in Illinois. The following chart shows the distribution by state. If a state is not listed there were no profiles available from that state.

Jurisdiction State	Number
IL	23
CO	5
CA	3
GA	2
MI	2
OH	2
OR	2
KS	1
MD	1
MN	1
PA	1
TX	1
UT	1
WI	1

Your Jurisdiction

Regardless of how similar a department may seem to be for benchmarking or best practices analysis, you want to ensure that the target jurisdiction is a match to yours. Factors such as density, age ranges, population, finances, poverty, and growth rates, among others, are indicators of a similar jurisdiction's suitability as a candidate for benchmarking studies. In addition to the medians and averages the display of upper and lower quartiles shows how distributed the data may be. For example, the operating budgets in the jurisdiction data table below vary by 1,000% and the population varies by about 500%.

Are the jurisdictions of similar size? What about the wealth of residents or the budgetary expenditures? All of these factors can be important in assessing a suitable benchmarking partner.

Jurisdiction Data Category	Median	Average	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
Square mileage that your incorporated jurisdiction serves	60	316	12	396
Jurisdiction Total Operating Budget	$8,400,000	$16,311,028	$2,550,514	$20,342,504
Jurisdiction Capital Budget	$1,568,405	$6,688,155	$379,125	$5,201,053
Jurisdiction per Capita Income	$41,865	$43,612	$33,053	$56,744
Jurisdiction Median Household Income	$60,426	$71,288	$54,437	$99,000
Jurisdiction Population	52,000	135,590	26,319	121,778

Miscellaneous Benchmarking Ratios	Median	Avgerage	Low Quartile	Hi Quartile
Operating Expenditures per Capita	$205	$216	$67	$340
Operating Expenditures per FTE	$121,525	$374,951	$95,080	$227,400
Operating Expenditures per Acre of Land Managed or Maintained	$16,225	$32,871	$7,350	$33,369
Acreage of Parkland per 1,000 Population	12	19	6	20
Acres of Parkland Maintained per FTE	7	13	4	22
Jurisdiction Population Per Square Mile Served	1,866	2,299	298	3,203
Jurisdiction Population per FTE	908	12,654	460	3,003
Revenue per Capita	$60	$82	$19	$134
What is your department's TOTAL Earned Revenues for your fiscal year?	$2,307,684	$5,451,212	$525,249	$9,180,742
Revenue as a percent of Total Operating Expense (Cost Recovery Rate)	36.00%	36.07%	22.00%	50.13%
Revenue per Visitor	$9	$31	$2	$22
Total Operating Expenditures per Visitor	$46	$113	$12	$150
Total Capital plus Total Operating Expenditures per Capita	$264	$266	$88	$404
Total Capital Costs per Capita	$28	$54	$9	$62
Tax Cost per Capita	$119	$1,453	$33	$188

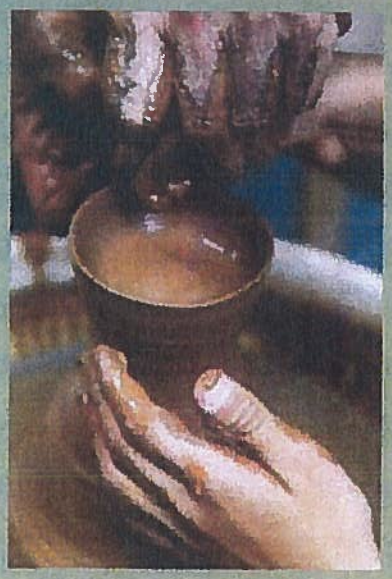
Note that these ratios do not denote winners and losers. No specific conclusion can be drawn without further analysis. The fact that one department does something for less money or with fewer people does not necessarily mean that they are doing the function better, just differently.

National Standards

The following data, though sparse, provides departments with a sense of the population standards that actually exist for facilities. We all knew that the former NRPA standards were not viable for most department operations, but there has never been a replacement for them until now. As more profiles are completed this table of population per facility will become an increasingly credible guide for use in master planning and funding. For example, if you are master planning for recreation centers you can choose to build to the median, the average, or at a logical point along the quartile line. If you review the data on the centers, you will note that larger centers have a higher population ratio.

For facilities like fitness centers, the population ratio is of little value. A fitness facility, often located in a larger recreation center usually has a minimum design size of 3,500 sq. ft. with maximum size dependent on the feasible clientele. Many fitness spaces are in excess of 10,000 sq. ft. to accommodate the mix of equipment desired for the fitness program.

Other standards are dependent on the profiles from specific areas of the country. For example, indoor ice rinks may have a fairly consistent standard nationwide. Outdoor ice rinks standards will only be of value when there are sufficient profiles from states in northern climates. Eagan, MN a city of 80,000 in Dakota County has two indoor ice sheets and 24 outdoor rinks. The old NRPA Standards indicated a need for 1 ice sheet per 50,000 residents.





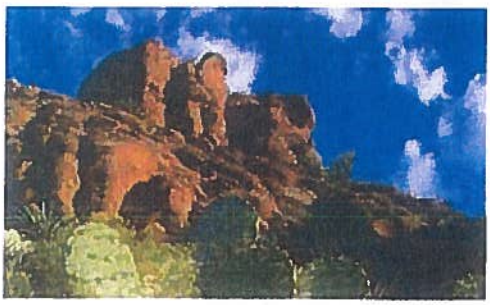




National Recreation and Park Association

PRORAGIS Database Report: Counties









NRPA'S CUTTING-EDGE, online management tool PRORAGIS, is designed for public park and recreation agency decision makers to enable them to easily compare and evaluate their agency's performance and needs against that of other agencies. PRORAGIS, an acronym for Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and Geographic Information System, replaces the NRPA Standards that have guided land acquisition and development for the past 45 years. The data is much more accurate because users can compare standards with actual numbers for departments in their state or region rather than the more generic national average. PRORAGIS data provides assistance with the following park and recreation functions:

- **Comparison survey of peers**
- **Master planning of parks**
- **Comprehensive jurisdiction planning**
- **Strategic planning**
- **Business and revenue-generation planning**
- **Marketing of facilities, programs, and tourist attractions**
- **Justification and defense of departmental budgets**

The PRORAGIS database allows you to customize variables and pull differing data sets based on your specific parameters. In the future, we will conduct oversampling of PRORAGIS data to explore selected topics in greater detail. These topics may include program operating data, fees and charges, and salary studies. Currently, the profiles from jurisdictional types provide information that allows you to identify differences between each type.

The aggregate profiles show the similarities and differences between the jurisdiction types. As the number of profiles increase, it is likely that the overall character of the jurisdiction type will become more pronounced. The first jurisdiction type we reported on was the special park district, and this second report focuses on counties.. It is possible some PRORAGIS participants will find themselves in both the special park district and county categories.

Using PRORAGIS data, this report focuses on profiles submitted by 84 counties and demonstrates data sets based on square mileage, operating budgets, capital income, jurisdiction population, jurisdiction population growth, jurisdiction demographics such as age, ethnicity, household income, and much more. We are confident you will find this information interesting and helpful in your own planning.

Background

In 1998, the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) Board of Directors was interested in learning how operations and capital activities of more than 3,000 counties nationwide compared to each other. Despite a concerted effort, NACPRO was unable to structure a data format that would allow for the collection of comparative data except in limited specific areas.

Some 13 years later, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) created PRORAGIS. The PRORAGIS database launched in January 2011 and has now been operating for more than a year and a half. During this time, 84 counties have completed profiles that include information about departmental programming, finances, park lands, personnel, etc. From the current profiles, we are able to compile an overview of county park and recreation systems across the country.

The Distribution of Profiles

To date, U.S. park and recreation departments have submitted more than 300 complete PRORAGIS survey profiles. In addition, more than 500 others have completed four or more of the seven survey sections that make a complete profile. Although 84 total counties are included in the analysis, for some of the tables throughout this report, there are only 60 to 70 total respondents for individual questions. This occurs because some participating departments do not answer every question in the survey.

Presented in the following table is the distribution of county participants by state. States that are not listed currently have no complete county profiles. Insofar as possible, NRPA recommends that departments encourage others in their state to develop profiles, growing a larger pool of potential benchmark partners. While the relatively small number of profiles currently in the PRORAGIS database impacts aggregate information, having benchmark partners will allow participants to run side-by-side reports in order to make direct comparisons.

Completed County PRORAGIS Profiles			
GA	10	LA	2
FL	9	NV	2
NC	8	NJ	2
CA	7	TN	2
VA	5	DE	1
MD	4	IL	1
MN	4	NM	1
WA	4	NY	1
MI	3	OK	1
OH	3	PA	1
SC	3	TX	1
WI	3	UT	1
AZ	2	WY	1
CO	2		

Your Jurisdiction

Regardless of how similar a department may seem for benchmarking or best practices studies, PRORAGIS users will want to ensure that the target jurisdiction is relevant as a match. Factors such as population density, age distribution, local finances, poverty levels, and population growth rates are indictors of a jurisdiction's suitability as a benchmarking candidate. In addition to medians and averages, a display of upper- and lower-quartiles provides insight as to how the data is distributed. For example, in the table below, operating budgets vary by 9,000% and population size varies by about 605%. On the other hand, population under age 18 only varies by 12%. The fact that the average may be larger than the median or even upper-quartile is indicative of high value outliers possibly distorting the results. Closer inspection of these numbers is warranted.

When evaluating a different jurisdiction for accurate benchmarking against your own, determine whether the two are similar in size, wealth of residents, or budgetary expenditures, among other factors. All of these can be important in assessing a suitable benchmarking partner.



Jurisdiction Data Category	Median	Average	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
Square mileage of jurisdiction area	604	1,359	405	1,208
Jurisdiction total operating budget	$35,013,500	$732,835,273	$2,640,243	$238,591,475
Jurisdiction capital budget	$4,019,323	$105,726,915	$413,500	$38,733,112
Jurisdiction per capita income	$30,503	$34,826	$25,089	$39,187
Jurisdiction median household income	$52,390	$57,524	$44,802	$60,826
Jurisdiction population	267,420	674,271	87,429	616,737
Percentage of jurisdiction population younger than 18 years of age	25%	25%	23%	27%
Percentage of jurisdiction population older than 65 years of age	12%	13%	10%	15%
Percentage of jurisdiction population below the poverty line	12%	12%	8%	16%
Jurisdiction population growth rate 2000-2010	12%	14%	6%	19%

Other Jurisdiction Data Sets of Value

PRORAGIS has great value as a database designed for comparative analysis. There are a number of different data sets that may initially seem strange but are included because they enable users to judge what characteristics they are looking for in a benchmark partner or best-practices study. For example, the following table is intended to give a sense of the demographic characteristics of a potential benchmark county. PRORAGIS reporting allows users to view individual county responses in aggregate or in side-by-side columns. This table presents aggregate numbers. Note

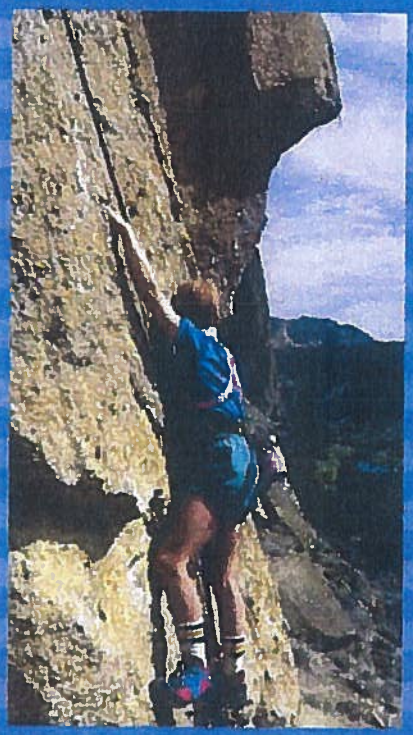
The following two tables provide an overview of aggregate park lands and trails data for participating counties. There appears to be significant variation in park attendance and park acreage as reported.

Park Lands	Median	Average	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
Park attendance	800,000	2,206,255	55,000	2,842,000
Parks or sites maintained and/or managed by your department/agency responsibility				
Number of parks or sites	20	67	8	41
Total number of acres	2,628	11,164	769	9,097
Percent of your acreage developed	50%	49%	19%	75%
Percent of your acreage undeveloped	70%	63%	37%	90%

What is the total mileage of greenways and trails managed by your agency?	Median	Average	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
a. Multi-purpose, no equestrian	10.00	20.50	1.00	33.00
b. Multi-purpose, equestrian permitted	3.00	30.14	0.00	13.00
c. Hiking/walking only	4.00	10.90	0.00	9.60
d. Bicycling only	0.00	2.96	0.00	0.00
e. Equestrian only	0.00	2.39	0.00	0.00
f. Other, please describe:	0.00	6.42	0.00	0.00
Total	31.00	73.30	13.00	91.20

As previously mentioned, the development of operating ratios is of immense value because it allows departments to measure certain aspects of performance across departments that may be wholly different. Furthermore, each department can determine what level of service they wish to provide to their citizens. A median response for acreage of park land per 1,000 residents is 13.1 acres.

Miscellaneous benchmarking ratios	Median	Average	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile
Operating expenditures per capita	$16.76	$29.69	$8.23	$45.32
Cost-recovery revenue	25.0%	31.7%	14.1%	50.0%
Acreage of park land per 1,000 population	13.1	15.8	6.3	18.5
Number of FTEs	82.0	276.3	16.0	253.0
Acres of park land maintained per FTE	46.6	114.3	17.1	93.3



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Excess Green Space

The man who provided the number that the city used to claim it has excess green space says there's no such thing as excess green space and Winnipeg should keep all of its golf courses.

Transcription:

CBC: Let's turn back now to golf courses and green space. The City of Winnipeg is saying little about its plan for our golf courses, but we know that it is getting some guidance from a report prepared in May of 2010. That report says that Winnipeg has an excess of public open space even without the golf courses, with more than 6 hectares per 1,000 people. So keep that in mind – more than 6 hectares per 1,000 people.

Leon Younger is about to help us understand it. He provided data for the golf course report. He says there is no such thing as excess green space. Younger is the President of Pros Consultants in Indiana.

So why do you say there is no such thing as an excess of green space?

Younger: Well, my feeling is that green space is really based on the community's values as it applies to the need for open space. Every community that I have worked with, and we have worked with over 900 communities, they vary by what is important to them, and to say that there is more in one city or another can vary by what is important to them, by town, and what sort of country and how dense the cities are. And so to say that it is more or less, I don't really agree with that.

CBC: Now you supplied Golf Convergence, the company that prepared this report for Winnipeg, a number of 4 hectares per 1,000 of people as a standard for the amount of public green space. How was that standard established?

Younger: Well, the standard for 4 hectares per 1,000 was a National Recreation and Park Association standard for a number of years, of 10 acres per 1,000 – a hectare is 2.5 acres, so they compare. And that standard area was across the U.S. and the National Recreation and Park Association decided that they would leave it up to the local community, but many people still use that standard as kind of the ongoing standard, but the standard can be as low as 4 or 5 acres per 1,000, which is in California which is a much more dense state where they have what they call a "Quimby" law which basically means that all cities will have a minimum of 5 acres per 1,000 at the standard, to as much as the mid-west, where most of the cities in the mid-west have 15-20 acres per 1,000. So it varies by the type of community and how dense it is and what is important to them.

CBC: Has the standard been changing over time, Mr. Younger?

Younger: Well, I think the standard has been going up over time. I think people really value a larger amount of open space than typical, and where they can protect watersheds, stream corridors, or where they can protect land that is part of the history of the community, those values have gone up.

I have some communities that have well above 20 acres per 1,000, but in most of the cities that I work with, anyway, 15 acres tends to be the norm.

CBC: In your view, should Winnipeg be trying to sell off its golf courses?

Younger: Well, I always look at a golf course as a park first, and a golf course second. And I think that when people just look at it as a single amenity, most golf courses that were created in the 60's and 70's, they weren't set up to be revenue sources in a recreational amenity, but in the process some of the golf courses, all over the United States anyway, have had difficulty basically in covering their operating costs. And so from my perspective, if people still look at it as if it wasn't a golf course and was a park, we would still have the cost to maintain it as a park.

In selling loff an asset like that, that does produce revenue, I think people have to give it time and maybe relook at how the golf course is used, how long it is, what are the revenue opportunities that could basically be supported by the golf course to help it support its operating cost.

But to sell a golf course, just for development, I have a really hard time with that.

CBC: If I want to stay with the numbers for one more minute here, I wonder what you told Golf Convergence about the changes that have been happening in the ratio – the number of hectares, we have 6 in our report, 6 hectares, and you are suggesting 15 is becoming somewhjat of a new norm in other places.

Younger: Basically, when Jim called me about it, he first asked what the standards are and how the standard has changed. Well, I said this standard has been on the low side about 10 acres per 1,000, and on the high side it has been about 15 acres per 1,000. I said it really needs to vary with what is important for the community. If people feel that they are over golf-supplied, that's a different thing, versus the land and the intent is maybe that the land could be used for other purposes. It is very difficult to buy land these days and most golf courses really are on pretty pristine spaces.

CBC: Why do you think the Golf Convergence Report that I am looking at sticks with the lower number? You are suggesting a range was offered to them as suitable for a city in terms of green space amounts.

Younger: You know, I never saw the report. When Jim called he just asked me about the standards across the country. So I don't know the context and the relationship to what it said, and maybe they looked at it from the perspective that maybe they were over-supplied, and they could consider that.

CBC: A lot of people don't consider golf courses as parks. A lot of people say I can't walk through it. Is there a way to make them more accessible to the general public?

Younger: Well, I think people have done that, they have put trails along the outside of golf courses for people to ride bikes, to walk, and to run, and where they have had excess property they have incorporated amenities that are associated that could support golf, as part of it. Sometimes people have leased land to restaurants, hotels, and other kinds of amenities that help support the golf courses. They have also changed the clubhouse to be more of a hospitality centre where they can host events outside of golf that helps create revenue for the golf course. I don't know how much space your golf courses have and so I don't know whether they have that kind of flexibility or not.

CBC: What are some of the ways that you see to help improve profitability for the courses, that may be your best examples?

Younger: The big thing is to introduce more people to the game. At least in the States, the average person is 47 years old, making over $75,000 a year, and tends to be white. What people are really pushing on is to grow the market in other ethnic groups and also encourage more women who used to play golf, and to grow the game to a larger wider audience. I think time is a big issue. Time just in general has been an issue for the last 10 years, and how much time people give up. The days of playing 5 hours of golf and an hour getting there and getting back for the game. It is hard to give it up. It just is.

CBC: Leon Younger is President of Pros Consulting, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

"Jim" is James Keegan, Managing Principal at Golf Convergence, in Castle Rock, Colorado.

DMS/bm