

HOW TO USE THE AIMS MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

THE GRADES

- ⇒ The Final overall grades and rank do not tell the whole story and must be viewed within a wider context. Ultimately, only you can decide if you are happy with the balance between what you pay in taxes and user fees and the services you receive.
- ⇒ All outcome measures in this report are based on a three year average (where available); data have been collected for the three most current years available: 2005, 2006 and 2007.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

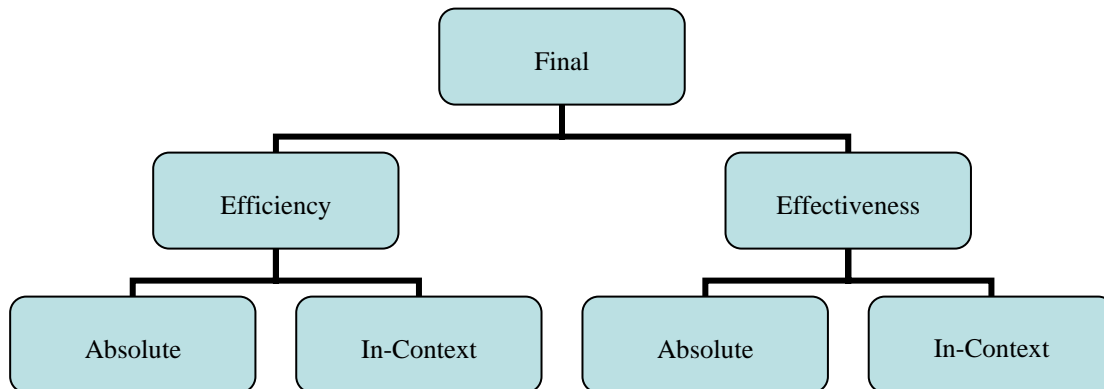
In assessing the performance of cities we consider both *efficiency* (how much things cost) and *effectiveness* (what you get for your money, and how reliable those services are).

For example, dollars spent per kilometre of water pipe is an efficiency measure, number of water main breaks per year measures effectiveness.

ABSOLUTE AND IN CONTEXT GRADES

ABSOLUTE GRADES measure the performance of each city relative to the rest of the largest cities and capitals in the country. Cities that exceed the national average earn grades of B- or better and cities that meet or fall below expectations receive a C+ or worse.

IN CONTEXT GRADES measure performance relative to reasonable expectations for the individual city based on that city's Input measures (see following page). Cities are expected to do at least as well as other cities have done in similar circumstances; cities with similar populations, area, revenues, debt, etc. Cities that exceed expectations earn grades of B- or better and cities that meet or fall below expectations earn a C+ or worse.



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MEASURES

INPUTS

Input measures are factors that will influence the policy and strategies of the administration but are generally outside of the city's control. We have broken these inputs into three categories:

People and Place includes (where available): population; square kilometres of the municipality; the dependency ratio (a comparison of the proportion of the population belonging to age groups, 0-14 years and 65 years and older to the "working age" population of 15-64 years); number of lane kilometres of municipal roads; number of immigrants as a proportion of the population; average annual snowfall (in cm); the crime rate; and traffic volumes.

Socioeconomic Status (SES) uses a number of measures to capture the social and economic conditions that exist within a municipality. Using census data from Statistics Canada, the SES score is a single number derived from a 10 point scale. The higher the number, the better a relative SES is to the other cities in the performance report.

Opportunities		Challenges
-Employment Rate	-Participation Rate	-Unemployment Rate
-Proportion of Adults with Post Secondary Education	-Proportion of Labour Force in High Status Occupations	-Proportion of Adults without a high school diploma
-Median Income	-Average Property Value	-Proportion of Single Parent Families
-Average Monthly Rent		

Financial History measures provide a look at the financial situation of your city in the three years immediately before this analysis. For historical perspective we look at revenue, debt, and the commercial property base for the years 2002-2004. We also consider current levels (2005-2007) of help coming from outside (federal or provincial transfers).

Note: Inputs are listed in order from largest to smallest. These "ranks" are not intended to reflect a value judgement by the authors. For example, having a rank of "1" for dependency ratio does not mean the best dependency ratio, only the highest.

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OUTCOMES

These are the measures where we actually assign grades to cities based on their own performance.

Governance & Finance examines the basic operations of city hall. The efficiency indicators include: operating costs for expenditures such as salaries and other administrative costs such as supplies and electricity; examining the city's long term debt; and user fees as a proportion of own source revenue. The effectiveness indicators used are the population per councillor and the population per city employee.

Taxation focuses on city taxes, both residential and non-residential, and asks the question how large is the city's tax **burden** and is it growing or shrinking? The effectiveness measures for this outcome focus on how large the property tax **base** is and if it is growing or shrinking.

Safety & Protection examines the efficiency of spending on policing and fire services and if these expenditures are increasing or decreasing as well as the effectiveness of providing residents with police and fire services. Effectiveness measures include monetary loss caused by fires (calculating the per fire loss as a measure of the efficiency and response time of the fire department) and change in crime rate.

Transportation efficiency measures how much is spent providing and maintaining streets, roads, sidewalks, lighting, etc. To assess the effectiveness of transportation services we focus on road quality and citizen satisfaction.

Environmental Health examines the operating costs for the provision of drinking water, wastewater (sewage) and the management of solid waste (garbage/recycling/compost collection and disposal). It also examines the average charges for municipal water and sewer. To determine the effectiveness of a city's environmental health services three measures were used: the number of boil water advisories issued; the percent of water tests that contain bacteria; and the number of times the wastewater mains became blocked and needed to be cleared.

Economic Development indicators focus on expenditures for planning and zoning, development, and heritage activities. This category uses the value of construction, number of new immigrants, and change in population to assess the effectiveness of economic development service.

For *Recreation & Culture*, recreation expenditures include services and facilities such as swimming pools and walking trails, while culture covers libraries and non-sporting events. To determine how effective the city's recreation and cultural services are the following indicators were employed: square metres of indoor recreation and cultural space; square metres of outdoor recreation and cultural space; and the kilometres of trails.

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INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

People & Place

Population- 114,943 / 25 means:

- 114,943 – the population of the city
- 25 – 25th largest city

Socioeconomic Status

SES- 40 / 19 means:

- 40 – 40th percentile, the city has a relative socio economic status that is higher than 39 percent of the other cities in the performance report.
- 19 – 19th most affluent city

Financial History

Total Revenues per Capita \$2,034 / 2 means:

- \$2,034 is the value of the city's revenues on a per capita basis.
- 2 – Second highest revenues per capita achieved.

The following four scenarios will help to interpret the result on each measure appropriately.

Scenario A

Absolute- A+ / 2

In Context- A- / 3

Total- A+ / 2

In absolute terms this city scores above the national average and ranks second overall in this measure. This excellent performance also represents a maximization of the potential created by the city's operating context. The total represents the combination of the indicator's results for absolute and in-context; it ranks second relative to the other cities.

Scenario B

Absolute- A+ / 2

In Context- C / 25

Total- A- / 5

In absolute terms this city scores above the national average and ranks second overall in this measure. Based on the context in which the city operates, however, there is a lot of room for improvement. Resting on its laurels might be a phrase to describe a score like this.

Scenario C

Absolute- C / 13

In Context- A / 2

Total- B- / 8

In absolute terms this city scores just below the national average. By adjusting for the context in which the city operates, this performance is offset as it performs a great deal better than expected given its inputs. Making the best of a bad situation is the description that applies here.

Scenario D

Absolute- F / 30

In Context- D / 30

Total- D- / 30

In absolute terms this city scores far below the national average. This performance is not offset by adjusting for the context that the city operates in as its performance is way below expectations. This measure should be an area of focus for residents, councillors and other stakeholders in the community. Demand better is the advice for people living in this community.