



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: 2023 Investment in Local Communities

From: Aaron Stauch, Director Government Relations

Date: June 5, 2025

Report Number: GR-2025-009

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

Bruce County provides upper-tier municipal services to the eight local municipalities in the County. Each of those municipalities provide tax levy to Bruce County to provide these services, this portion is based on the weighted assessment of each local municipal. This report is the second annual report on Bruce County's investment in local services. In addition to providing information regarding the investment Bruce County makes in each community, this provides insight into how Bruce County performs in relation to other comparable municipalities in the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC).

In 2022, the eight local municipalities provided \$56.5 Million in levy contributions to the Bruce County, while the County generated over \$65 Million in additional value. In 2023, the eight local municipalities provided \$63 Million in levy contributions to Bruce County, while the County generated over \$72.8 Million in additional value. These numbers only account for the operational component of Bruce County's budget. This report will build on the foundation of the 2022 report, and report on the \$27.7 Million the County has invested in capital projects throughout 2023.

QUICK COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Every year, Bruce County collects money (called "levy") from residents in the eight local municipalities to help pay for services that benefit the entire County, such as paramedics, long-term care, housing, roads, and libraries. This report shows how those dollars were allocated in 2023. Each municipality got more back in services and infrastructure than they paid in.

County-wide Highlights

- \$63 million was contributed by local municipalities through the levy.
- Bruce County invested over \$163 million back into local communities.
- The County also brought in more provincial and federal funding than in 2022, a 17.6% increase over last year (well above the average for similar counties).
- Despite rising costs, Bruce County kept tax increases lower than most peers.

What Did Each Community Get?

Every municipality in Bruce County received more services and capital investment than they contributed through taxes. Each municipality saw their contributions multiplied by 1.75 to 5 times.

What Was Funded?

Bruce County used the money to provide or improve:

- Healthcare: 7,900+ paramedic calls, long-term care, and public health
- Infrastructure: Roads, bridges, and major capital repairs
- Community Services: Libraries, museums, housing units, childcare spaces
- Growth Management: Planning services and economic development

Some projects benefited all communities (like technology upgrades), while others were specific to local needs (like bridge repairs or housing improvements).

How Was This Measured?

Bruce County used:

- Population and household data from each town
- Service call volumes (e.g., how many paramedic or housing units)
- Real costs per service, based on municipal financial reporting to the province

This allowed the County to fairly calculate how much value each town received.

Key Takeaways

- The overall expenditure in each community was greater than the local municipalities tax levy contribution to the County
- Bruce County is managing tax dollars well, attracting provincial and federal funding, and making strategic, data-driven decisions.
- This report helps ensure transparency and fairness, so that every municipality can see the return on its investment.

BACKGROUND:

Each year municipalities across Ontario report on their financial situation to the provincial government through Financial Information Returns (FIRs). These submissions provide a relatively consistent approach to comparing municipal finances and are used as the primary data source for completing this report. In addition to the information presented in the FIRs, the County compiled 2023 service volume data that can be tied to each local municipality (i.e., paramedic calls for service). Through these data sources we can benchmark ourselves against comparable municipalities and measure our investment in local communities. Please note that detailed operational and capital investment analysis can be found in Appendix A (Investment in Local Services & Capital).

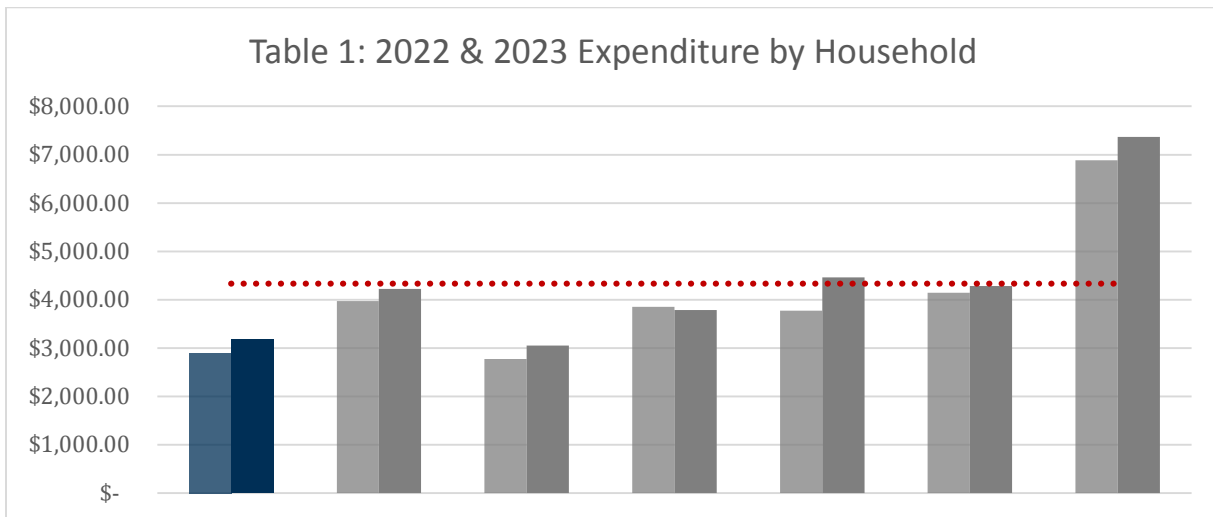


Table 1, above, outlines Bruce County's (highlighted in Blue) 2022 and 2023 total operational expenditures in contrast to comparable Counties. Bruce County's expenditure by household was \$3,169.50 in 2023, an increase of 9.3% compared to 7.5% across the comparable municipalities.

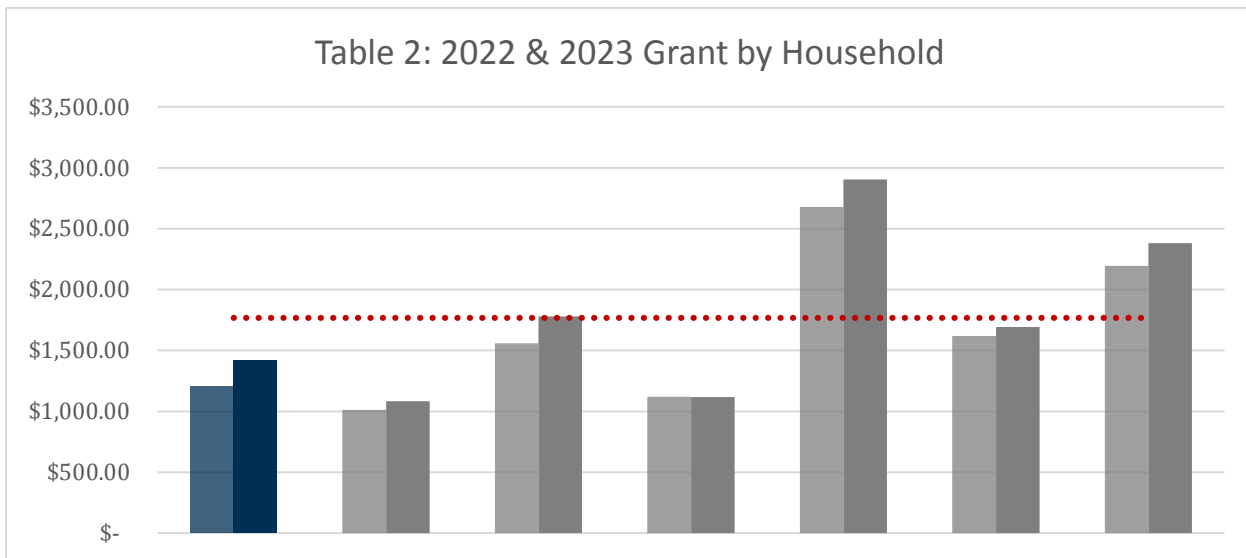


Table 2, above, outlines Bruce County's 2022 and 2023 total provincial and federal funding in contrast to comparable Counties. Bruce County's funding by household was \$1,417.85 in 2023, an increase of 17.6% compared to 8.6% across the comparable municipalities.

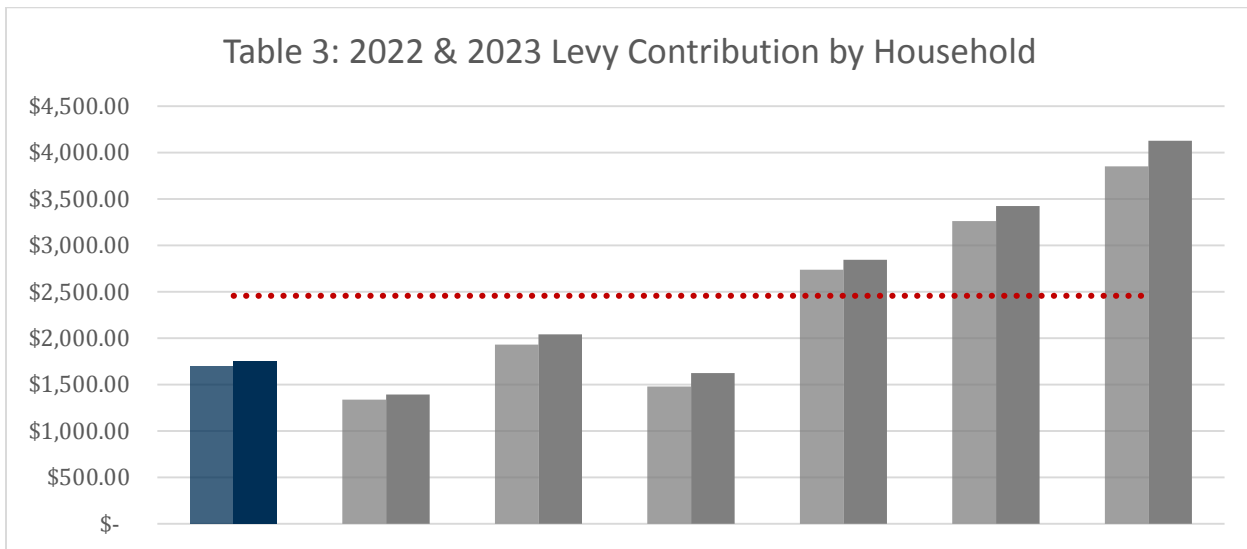
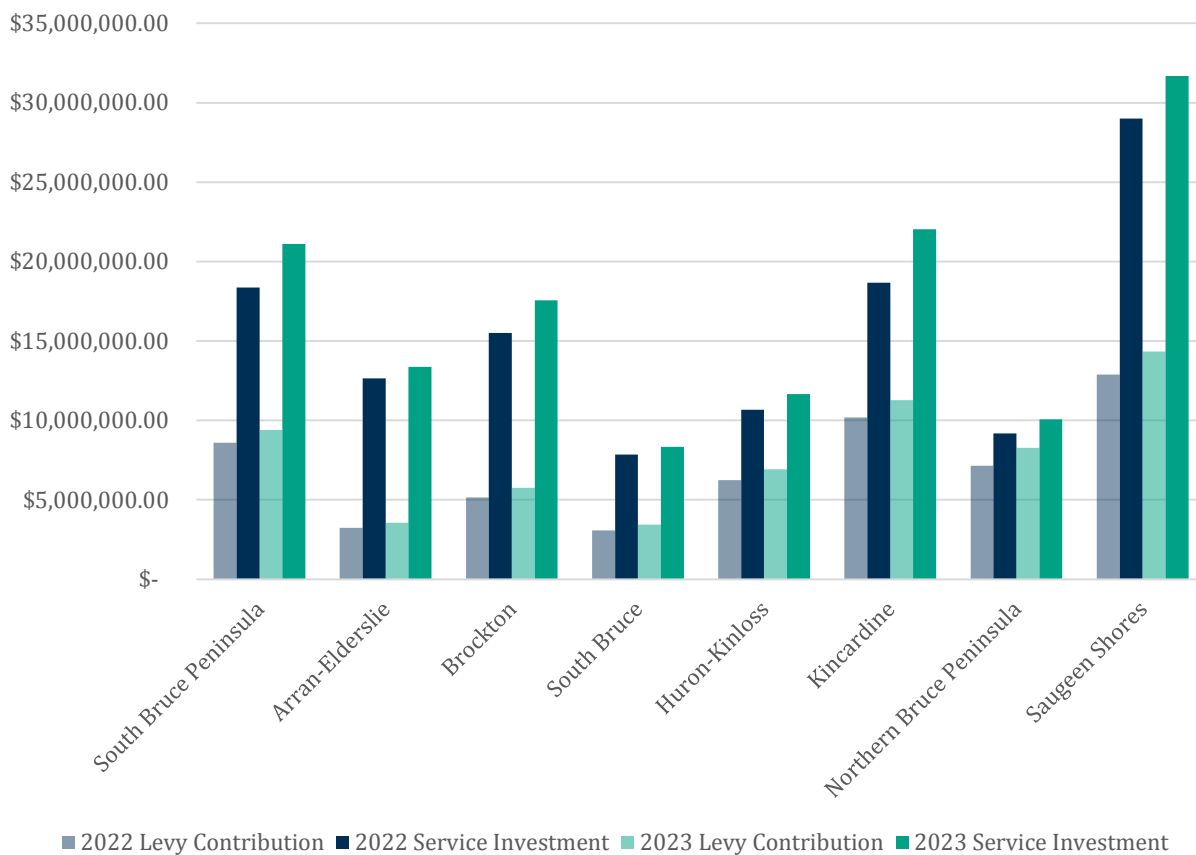


Table 3, above, outlines Bruce County’s 2022 and 2023 total levy assessment per household in contrast to comparable Counties. Bruce County’s funding by household was \$1,751.65 in 2023, an increase of 3.4% compared to 5.6% across the comparable municipalities. Please note that this levy increase does not include capital, as such does not match what is outlined in budget documents.

The 2023 data begins to provide trending data that can be monitored over time. Bruce County demonstrates strong value added services to its local municipalities. While operating expenditures per household increased by 9.3%, slightly above the 7.5% average of comparator counties, Bruce County significantly outpaced its peers in gaining increased provincial and federal funding, with a 17.6% increase in grants compared to the 8.6% peer average. At the same time, the County maintained low levy increases, with the levy per household rising only 3.4%, below the 5.6% average increase across comparators. Together, these trends reflect effective financial management, strong leveraging of external funding, and a continued commitment to delivering high-quality services while minimizing the burden on local taxpayers.

In addition to comparing Bruce County performance against comparator municipalities, this report allows local municipalities to understand how Bruce County invests its budget in local communities. Table 4, below, outlines the levy contribution made by each municipality in Bruce County and shows the investment received in return for both 2022 and 2023.

Table 4: 2022 & 2023 Levy Contribution & Service Investment



As can be seen in the table, each municipality in Bruce County saw an increase in investment in local services that exceeded the total levy contribution for both 2022 and 2023. To illustrate the investment made to each local municipality, Bruce County identified cost drivers across its major service areas. These drivers were used to calculate a per-unit cost of service, enabling a clear allocation of total investment by community. Table 1 summarizes the cost drivers by department, including the total service volume for 2022, the calculated cost per unit, and the rationale for each approach.

Chart 1: Departmental Cost Drivers

Department	Cost Driver	2022 Cost Per Unit	2022 Service Volume	2023 Cost Per Unit	2023 Service Volume
Administration (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 0299)	Cost Per Household	\$119.04	42,030	\$121.46	42,220
Long-Term Care (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1220)	Cost Per Household	\$861.49	42,030	\$866.92	42,220
Planning (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1810)	Number of Inquiries	\$5,202.44	436	\$5,346.91	471
Transportation (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 0699)	KMs of Road Maintained	\$24,019.43	675	\$26,898.31	675
Paramedics (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1030)	Calls for Service	\$1,974.14	7,671	\$1962.92	7,981
Library (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1640)	Active Users	\$206.88	19,880	\$210.17	21,325
Museum (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1645)	Members	\$8,186.75	419	\$8,711.28	458
Ontario Works (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1210)	Caseload	\$23,076.59	504	\$27,911.73	566
Housing (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1499)	Units	\$19,875.03	666	\$19,310.46	698
Childcare (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1230-)	Space	\$5,710.09	1788	\$7,770.52	2,075
Public Health (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 1010)	Cost Per Household	\$31.28	42,030	\$29.49	42,220
Ec. Dev. (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 0499, 0899, 1610, 1820, 1840)	Cost Per Household	\$46.03	42,030	\$56.36	42,220
Other (FIR Schedule 40 - Line 0499, 0899, 1610, 1820, 1840)	Cost Per Household	\$27.90	42,030	\$5.65	42,220

Chart 2, below, outlines a detailed breakdown of the operational and capital investment made in each municipality. As can be seen through table, the share of households and levy are within 3% of each other across all local municipalities across Bruce County. In addition, all municipalities receive an investment in local services and capital more than their levy contribution, and their share the investment in within 7% of their levy contribution for all

municipalities. It should be noted that 1% of the levy in 2023 was \$629,829. It should also be noted that while this report attempts to allocate investment by municipalities there are many investments that support the entire County.

In addition to the services volumes and cost drives, this analysis looked at capital investments by department and community. This is the first year Bruce County has provided this analysis. It is important to note this capital snapshot does not provide details about historical capital investments. This report should be viewed as beginning the reporting of capital investment, and that ultimately capital should be examined over a 5-10-year period. However, based on the overall investment in each community this report demonstrates that investments in services and capital exceed levy contributions. Table 5 and 6, outline Bruce County’s capital investments by community and department.

Table 5 - 2023 Capital Investment by Community

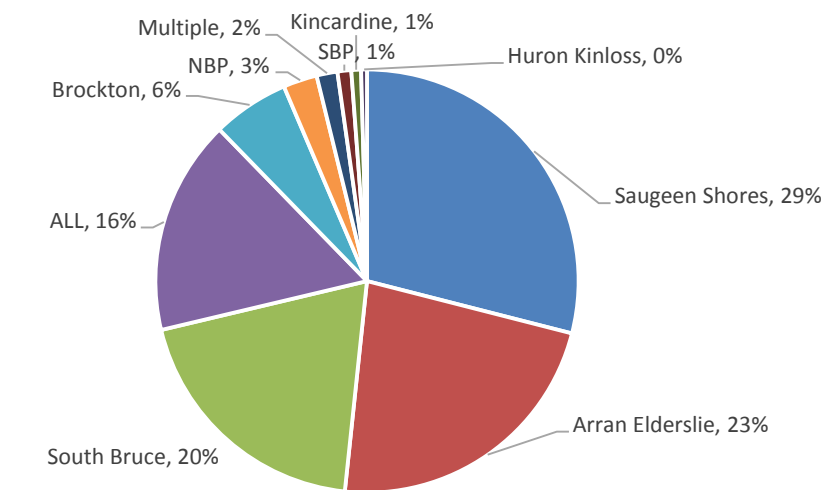


Table 6 - 2023 Capital Investment by Department

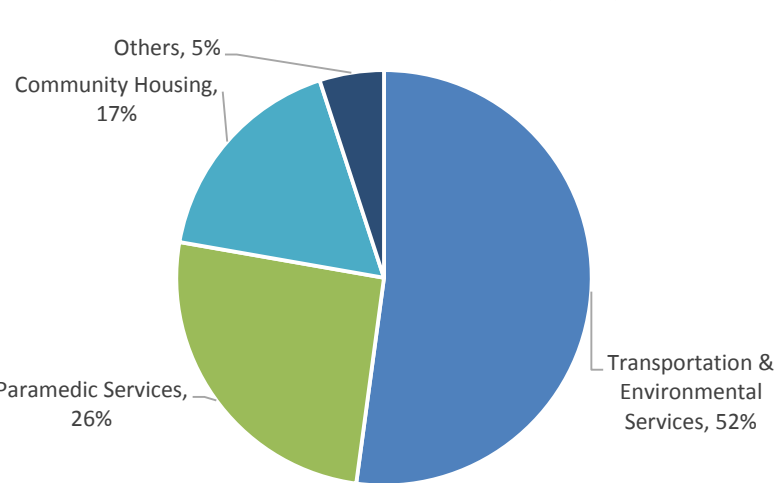


Chart 2: Investment in Local Communities

Municipality	Households	%	Share of Investment
South Bruce Peninsula	7,508	18%	14%
Arran-Elderslie*	3,089	7%	12%
Brockton*	4,468	11%	12%
South Bruce*	2,533	6%	9%
Huron-Kinloss	4,107	10%	7%
Kincardine	6,431	15%	14%
Northern Bruce Peninsula*	5,101	12%	7%
Saugeen Shores*	8,983	21%	25%

Municipality	Levy	%	Investment in Excess of Levy
South Bruce Peninsula	\$9.4M	15%	\$12.8M
Arran-Elderslie	\$3.6M	6%	\$16.5M
Brockton	\$5.7M	9%	\$14.0M
South Bruce	\$3.4M	5%	\$19.6M
Huron-Kinloss	\$6.9M	11%	\$5.3M
Kincardine	\$11.2M	18%	\$11.8M
Northern Bruce Peninsula	\$8.3M	13%	\$3.0M
Saugeen Shores	\$14.3M	23%	\$26.5M

Municipality	Operational	Capital	Total
South Bruce Peninsula	\$21.1M	\$1.1M	\$22.2M
Arran-Elderslie	\$13.3M	\$6.6M	\$20.0M
Brockton	\$17.6M	\$2.1M	\$19.7M
South Bruce	\$8.3M	\$5.7M	\$14.1M
Huron-Kinloss	\$11.7M	\$0.6M	\$12.2M
Kincardine	\$22.0M	\$1.1M	\$23.1M
Northern Bruce Peninsula	\$10.1M	\$1.2M	\$11.3M
Saugeen Shores	\$31.7M	\$9.2M	\$40.8M

*Note: the 2023 FIRs for these municipalities were not yet posted to the provincial site, their 2022 household counts were used for this analysis.

While this report offers a robust picture of Bruce County's local investments, several limitations should be noted:

- **Data Timing & Match:** At the time of this report, 2023 Financial Information Returns (FIRs) for several local municipalities were unavailable; 2022 household counts were used in their place, which may affect accuracy for per-household metrics. The impact of this mismatch should be minimal.
- **Allocation Approximations:** Per-unit cost estimates rely on service volume proxies (e.g., calls for service, caseloads, or road kilometers), which may not capture all nuances of service delivery and intensity.
- **Capital Project Attribution:** Some capital investments have county-wide benefits or span multiple communities. As such, geographic attribution of capital investment is based on best available estimates and may not fully reflect shared infrastructure impacts. Capital projects will fluctuate from year to year based on the needs identified in the County's Asset Management Plan.
- **Comparator Counties:** Peer municipalities were chosen from the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC), but contextual differences (population growth, geography, FIR reporting approaches, and service mandates) may influence relative comparisons.
- **Operational & Capital Scope Only:** The report does not include cost offsets from user fees, non-governmental grants, or future liabilities (e.g., asset management pressures), which could provide additional context.

Based on the 2023 analysis of levy contributions, operational performance, and capital investment across the local municipalities in Bruce County this report will continue to support Bruce County in:

- **Maintaining a Balanced Investment Approach:** this annual report will continue to inform the Bruce County budget and other operational and capital decisions as we continue to make efforts to ensure all local municipalities receive value commensurate of their levy contributions, while meeting the County's obligations to plan for future growth and service demands through data informed decision making.
- **Enhancing Transparency:** this report will continue to an essential tool in transparently outlining how Bruce County invests in our local communities. It will also support dialogue with the local Councils, and citizens to keep all informed about the work being done at the County level.
- **Expanding the use of Service-Level Benchmarks:** Where feasible, introduce additional performance indicators alongside financial metrics (e.g., paramedic response times, library usage rates, road condition ratings). This will provide a fuller picture of both the efficiency and effectiveness of County services.
- **Refining Cost Allocation Methodology:** continue developing the per-unit cost allocation model by improving data sources for all County services programs.

- **Aligning Reporting with County Strategic Priorities:** Future reports will explicitly link major investments to Bruce County's Strategic Plan objectives, helping demonstrate how funding decisions support broader goals.

The 2023 analysis reaffirms Bruce County's commitment to transparency regarding investments in local community. Despite economic pressures, Bruce County maintained below-average levy increases while significantly increasing its draw on provincial and federal funding. These gains were strategically reinvested into frontline services and capital infrastructure, with each local municipality receiving more in services than it contributed through the levy. This annual investment snapshot not only offers accountability to local Councils but also illustrates Bruce County's success in maximizing value from our investments. As we move forward, these insights will help inform budget decisions, infrastructure planning, and equitable service distribution across all local municipalities.

Note: this report and a community specific infographic will be sent to the Clerk for each community as communications to that municipality's Council. This will also be presented and discussed at a joint municipal forum in July, where all area elected officials will be invited.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal, and IT considerations.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Each department was consulted on their cost drivers.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

NA

Report Author:

Aaron Stauch, Director Government Relations

Departmental Approval:

Aaron Stauch, Director Government Relations

Approved for Submission:

Sean Morphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

NA

Appendix A - Local Operational & Capital Investment

		South Bruce Peninsula	Arran-Elderslie	Brockton	South Bruce	Huron-Kinloss	Kincardine	Northern Bruce Peninsula	Saugeen Shores
2023 Households	42,220	7,508	3,089	4,468	2,533	4,107	6,431	5,101	8,983
2023 Levy Contribution	62,982,857	9,409,893	3,560,147	5,744,050	3,445,694	6,924,465	11,273,887	8,278,197	14,346,525
% Share of Households		18%	7%	11%	6%	10%	15%	12%	21%
% Share of Levy		15%	6%	9%	5%	11%	18%	13%	23%
Government Administration									
Operational Cost Per Unit	121								
Operational Investment	5,128,148	911,941	375,198	542,695	307,665	498,847	781,126	619,580	1,091,098
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	236,772	42,105	17,323	25,057	14,205	23,032	36,065	28,607	50,377
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0								
Long Term Care									
Operational Cost Per Unit	867								
Operational Investment	36,601,534	6,508,866	2,677,928	3,873,417	2,195,919	3,560,457	5,575,189	4,422,180	7,787,579
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	382,208	67,968	27,964	40,448	22,931	37,180	58,218	46,178	81,321
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0								
Planning									
Operational Cost Per Unit	5,347								
Inquires	471	86	27	44	46	46	85	58	79
Operational Investment	2,518,393	459,834	144,366	235,264	245,958	245,958	454,487	310,121	422,406
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	851	151	62	90	51	83	130	103	181
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0								
Paramedics									
Operational Cost Per Unit	1,963								
Calls for Service	7,981	1,751	641	1,104	234	437	1,438	579	1,797
Operational Investment	15,666,099	3,437,080	1,258,234	2,167,068	459,324	857,798	2,822,685	1,136,533	3,527,375
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	409,563	72,833	29,965	43,343	24,572	39,841	62,385	49,483	87,141
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	6,647,551	67,148							6,580,403
Transportation									
Operational Cost Per Unit	26,898								
Road KMs	675	95	137	109	92	93	76	32	41

Operational Investment	18,156,356	2,555,339	3,685,068	2,931,915	2,474,644	2,501,542	2,044,271	860,746	1,102,831
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	1,136,251	202,060	83,133	120,246	68,170	110,530	173,075	137,281	241,756
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	13,226,778	216,095	5,521,139	855,152	5,447,853	17,344	244,196	434,526	490,473
Library									
Operational Cost Per Unit	210								
Active Users	21,325	3,441	1,997	2,465	1,129	909	3,900	1,566	5,918
Operational Investment	4,481,951	723,207	419,717	518,078	237,286	191,048	819,677	329,132	1,243,807
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	565,232	100,515	41,355	59,817	33,911	54,984	86,097	68,291	120,262
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	13,784						13,784		
Museum									
Operational Cost Per Unit	8,711								
Memberships	458	17	28	8	4	1	20	1	379
Operational Investment	3,989,765	148,092	243,916	69,690	34,845	8,711	174,226	8,711	3,301,574
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	170,935	30,397	12,506	18,089	10,255	16,628	26,037	20,652	36,369
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0								
Ontario Works									
Operational Cost Per Unit	27,912								
Caseload	566	95	42	122	32	33	85	26	131
Operational Investment	15,798,037	2,651,614	1,172,292	3,405,231	893,175	921,087	2,372,497	725,705	3,656,436
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	0								
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0								
Housing									
Operational Cost Per Unit	19,310								
Units	698	82	67	102	45	66	148	14	174
Operational Investment	13,478,704	1,583,458	1,293,801	1,969,667	868,971	1,274,491	2,857,949	270,346	3,360,021
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	1,534,113	272,812	112,242	162,350	92,040	149,233	233,678	185,351	326,408
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	3,212,427	18,847	778,505	799,541		105,838	114,902	293,782	1,101,012
Childcare									
Operational Cost Per Unit	7,771								
Spots	2,075	184	234	185	49	157	457	119	690
Operational Investment	16,123,829	1,429,776	1,818,302	1,437,546	380,755	1,219,972	3,551,128	924,692	5,361,659
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	0								
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0								

Economic Development										
Operational Cost Per Unit	56									
Operational Investment	2,379,440	423,137	174,090	251,808	142,755	231,463	362,439	287,483	506,265	
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	0									
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0									
Public Health										
Operational Cost Per Unit	30									
Operational Investment	1,249,299	222,163	91,404	132,209	74,952	121,527	190,295	150,940	265,809	
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	0									
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0									
Other										
Operational Cost Per Unit	6									
Operational Investment	238,190	42,357	17,427	25,207	14,290	23,170	36,281	28,778	50,679	
Capital Investment w/ County Wide Impact	103,527	18,410	7,574	10,956	6,211	10,071	15,769	12,508	22,027	
Capital Investment Specific to Municipality	0									
Total Operational Investment	135,809,745	21,096,864	13,371,744	17,559,795	8,330,539	11,656,070	22,042,248	10,074,946	31,677,538	135,809,745
Total Capital Investment	27,639,992	1,133,289	6,631,771	2,135,088	5,720,199	564,763	1,064,337	1,276,762	9,137,731	27,663,939
Total Investment		22,230,154	20,003,515	19,694,883	14,050,738	12,220,833	23,106,585	11,351,708	40,815,269	163,473,684
% Share of Value		14%	12%	12%	9%	7%	14%	7%	25%	100%
Value in Excess of Levy		12,820,260	16,443,368	13,950,834	10,605,044	5,296,368	11,832,698	3,073,512	26,468,744	100,490,827

Notes:

Household counts are from Schedule 2 of each municipalities FIR

Expenditures by service area are from Schedule 40: Total Expenses After Adjustment from Bruce County FIR by Service Area

Total Installments are from Bruce County Levy Sheet to Locals

Arran-Elderslie, Brockton, South Bruce, Northern Bruce Peninsula, and Saugeen Shores FIRs have not been posted for 2023 yet. Household numbers reflect 2022 for these municipalities