

2023 Annual

# REPORT



Mackenzie County

FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
DECEMBER 30, 2023



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>MESSAGE FROM THE REEVE</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>MACKENZIE COUNTY, THE ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>03</b>
Governance	03
Council 2021 - 2025 Term	03
Salary and Benefits Disclosure	03
Establishment History	04
Demographics	04
2023 - 2024 Boards and Committees	05
<b>AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b>	<b>06</b>
2023 Audited Financial Statements	06
<b>2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>09</b>
Community Services	10
Operations	12
Planning & Development	15
Utilities	17
<b>2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>19</b>
2024 Operating Revenues	19
2024 Operating Expenses	21
2024 Projects	22
Long-Term Debt	24
Municipal Reserves	24
Inter-Municipal Collaboration	25
Grants to Other Organizations	26
<b>INTERNAL / EXTERNAL BOARDS &amp; COMMITTEES</b>	<b>28</b>
Agricultural Services Board (ASB)	28
Economic Development	32
Libraries	34

## FORT VERMILION CORPORATE OFFICE

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Fort Vermilion, AB, T0H 1N0  
Phone: 780-927-3718  
Fax: 780-927-4266

## LA CRETE SUB-OFFICE

9205-100 Street, Box 1690,  
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## ZAMA CITY SUB-OFFICE

1025 Aspen Drive, Box 11,  
Zama City, AB, T0H 4E0  
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## HIGH LEVEL SUB-OFFICE

10709-93 Street,  
High Level, AB, T0H 1Z0  
Phone: 780-926-5600  
Fax: 780-926-4080

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## *Our Vision...*

AN ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE,  
CHOICES IN COMMUNITY  
OPPORTUNITIES AND HEALTHY  
ECONOMIC CLIMATE.

## *Our Mission...*

THROUGH THE EFFECTIVE USE OF  
RESOURCES, PROVIDE A REASONABLE  
AND EQUITABLE LEVEL OF SERVICE AND  
ENDEAVOR TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE  
ECONOMIC CLIMATE.

## *Our Values...*

EFFICIENT, FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE  
ORGANIZATION THAT IS SINCERE AND  
APPROACHABLE, TREATS PEOPLE WITH  
RESPECT AND MAINTAINS A HIGH  
DEGREE OF INTEGRITY.



# MESSAGE FROM THE REEVE



In 2023, continued progress was made in the Fort Vermilion flood mitigation project. While there is still much work to be done in the coming years, it's encouraging to see successful relocations taking place.

May 2023 was a challenging time for our friends and neighbors of the Little Red River Cree Nation, as the Paskwa fire (HWF-030-2023) devastated Fox Lake, causing many residents to lose their homes and belongings. We extend our deepest gratitude to all the firefighters and everyone who contributed to making life a bit easier for those affected in the northern communities.

Mackenzie County manages over 2,300 km of gravel roads and numerous flood control channels requiring erosion repair. We appreciate residents' patience as we continue our efforts each summer to repair, rebuild, and maintain these essential infrastructures.

2023 has been an exciting year for Mackenzie County's administration team with the addition of Andy Banman as the new Director of Operations. Andy's extensive experience in road construction, equipment management, and his background as a journeyman heavy-duty mechanic make him a valuable addition to our team.

The hiring of our CAO Darrell Derksen is definitely one of the 2023 highlights for Mackenzie county. Darrell's time on council and familiarity with the region have ensured a smooth transition. His past experiences and genuine commitment to the well-being of Mackenzie County instill confidence in our council.

Despite a decline in the oil and gas industry affecting our linear assessment tax revenue, there are reasons to remain optimistic! We have seen growth in value-added agriculture and forestry, with potential for further expansion. With the youngest population per capita and a strong commitment to providing the best care for our seniors, Mackenzie County continues to be the best place to LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND PRAY.

Respectfully,

Reeve Josh Knelsen



# MACKENZIE COUNTY: THE ORGANIZATION

## GOVERNANCE

Mackenzie County is divided into ten electoral areas called wards. Each ward has a Councillor that has been elected by citizens within his/her ward boundaries. Each Council member serves a four-year term. The elected Council then elects a Reeve and Deputy Reeve from within, on an annual basis at their Organizational Meeting.

In addition to attending Regular Council Meetings (two per month during regular business hours). Council Members also attend community functions and serve on various internal and external committees. The Reeve is ex-officio for all Council committees and boards, while Councillors select representatives for these committees during their annual Organizational Meeting.

Council provides direction, makes strategic policy decisions, represents the public's interests, and performs the duties of Councillors as per the Municipal Government Act.

Council's effectiveness depends on Councillors providing input on their areas while thinking and voting for the whole municipality.

## COUNCIL 2021-2025 TERM

Reeve Josh Knelsen—Ward 1, Blue Hills/Buffalo Head Prairie

Deputy Reeve Walter Sarapuk—Ward 8, Rocky Lane

Councillor Dale Wiebe—Ward 2, La Crete Rural (2023-10)

Councillor Peter Braun—Ward 3, La Crete

Councillor David Driedger—Ward 4, La Crete/La Crete Rural

Councillor Ernest Peters—Ward 5, Blumenort

Councillor Garrell Smith—Ward 6, Fort Vermilion Rural

Councillor Cameron Cardinal—Ward 7, Fort Vermilion

Councillor Eileen Morris—Ward 9, High Level Rural (2023-12)

Councillor Lisa Wardley—Ward 10, Zama

## SALARY AND BENEFITS DISCLOSURE

Disclosure of salaries and benefits for municipal officials, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and designated officers (table below).



WARD	NAME	SALARY	BENEFITS & ALLOWANCES	2023	2022
Ward 1	Josh Knelsen—Reeve	69,760	1,169	70,929	75,179
Ward 8	Walter Sarapuk—Deputy Reeve	31,220	2,522	33,742	36,996
Ward 2	Dale Wiebe	8,458	984	9,442	-
Ward 2	Darrell Derksen	19,820	1,231	21,051	42,609
Ward 3	Peter Braun	49,480	4,996	54,476	52,004
Ward 4	David Driedger	38,360	4,440	42,800	45,043
Ward 5	Ernest Peters	33,580	4,201	37,781	38,438
Ward 6	Garrell Smith	38,070	2,532	40,602	40,559
Ward 7	Cameron Cardinal	58,510	5,448	63,958	73,508
Ward 9	Jacque Bateman	24,396	219	24,615	35,369
Ward 10	Lisa Wardley	60,940	4,439	65,379	69,721
	Chief Administrative Officer	74,526	2,246	76,772	-
	Interim Chief Administrative Officer	112,502	15,301	127,803	167,575
	Former Chief Administrative Officer	95,119	3,304	98,423	73,872

# MACKENZIE COUNTY: THE ORGANIZATION

## ESTABLISHMENT HISTORY

Mackenzie County became an incorporated municipality on January 1, 1995, when it was formed as a Municipal District from being an Improvement District.

The County received specialized municipality status on June 23, 1999, to address concerns about municipal government and management in a municipality that serves a number of unique communities within a very large territory. Therefore, provisions of the MGA and other enactments are modified.

Under the Specialized Municipality status, the following matters are not valid unless passed at a council meeting to which 2/3 of the Councillors present at the meeting vote in favour of the bylaw or resolution:

- a) Procedures of the Council of the municipality;
- b) Remuneration of Councillors;
- c) Property tax;
- d) Changing the number of Councillors, the boundaries of wards or the methods of selecting a chief elected official;
- e) Appointing and terminating the chief administrative officer;
- f) Adopting a budget;
- g) Any other matter designated by the Council pursuant to the procedure as established under clause (a).

Then, on March 8, 2007, the municipality's name was changed from Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23 to Mackenzie County.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Population .....	12,804 (2021 Federal Census)
Total Area of Municipality .....	8,186,963 hectares
Total Area of Farmland .....	790,000 acres
Number of Hamlets .....	3 (Fort Vermilion, La Crete, Zama)
Number of Dwelling Units .....	3,382
Number of Full-Time Positions .....	73
Number of Part-Time Positions .....	4
Number of Summer/Seasonal Positions .....	13
Length of Roads .....	2368.8 km
Length of Water Mains .....	175.2 km
Length of Wastewater Mains .....	73.9 km
Length of Storm Water Drains .....	11.6 km
Vehicle Fleet (incl. fire equip) .....	61 (cost ≥ \$5,000/unit)
Equipment (incl. graders) .....	181 (cost ≥ \$5,000/unit)
Building Structures .....	88 (cost ≥ \$5,000/unit)
Bridges (incl. culverts > 5' in dia.) .....	69 (cost ≥ \$5,000/unit)





# MACKENZIE COUNTY: THE ORGANIZATION

## 2023—2024 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

In addition to regular duties, members of Council serve on several boards and committees. These boards and committees can be internal (created by Council for a specific reason) or external (where the County has been invited by an outside organization to participate). Members of Council represent the interests of the municipality while serving on these boards and committees, and report back to the rest of Council.

Council currently has approximately 15 internal boards and committees. Meeting frequency and the number of Council appointees depends on the committee's terms of reference. Generally, the Reeve serves as ex-officio (appointed by position) on all County boards and committees. Council also participates on approximately 25 external boards and committees.

Council appoints Members-at-Large to various boards and committees depending on the committee terms of reference, either in an advisory capacity or as the result of statutory requirements. Some of these include the Municipal Planning Commission, Mackenzie County Library Board, Community Streetscape Committees, Appeal Boards and the Boreal Housing Foundation. Advertisements are placed in September of each year for available positions with appointments being made at the annual Organizational Meeting in October. Below is a list of the current boards and committees on which Councillors sit. Some committees are more active than others.

### Internal Boards/Committees

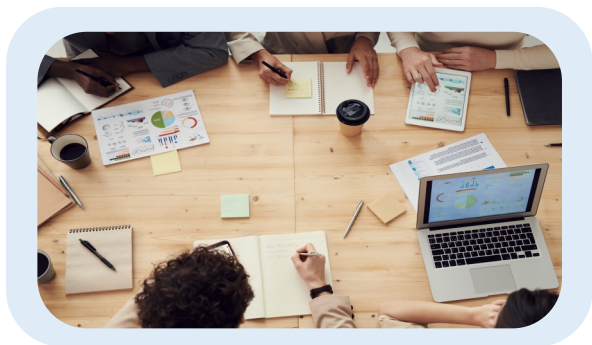
- Agricultural Appeal Board
- Agricultural Service Board (ASB)
- Assessment Review Board
- Committee of the Whole
- Community Services Committee
- Emergency Advisory Committee
- Flood Recovery Steering Committee
- Indigenous Liaison Committee
- Inter-Municipal Planning Commission
- Inter-Municipal Subdivision & Development Appeal Board
- Mackenzie County Library Board
- Municipal Planning Commission
- Subdivision & Development Appeal Board

### Ad Hoc Committees

- Janelle's Park Ad Hoc Committee

### External Boards/Committees

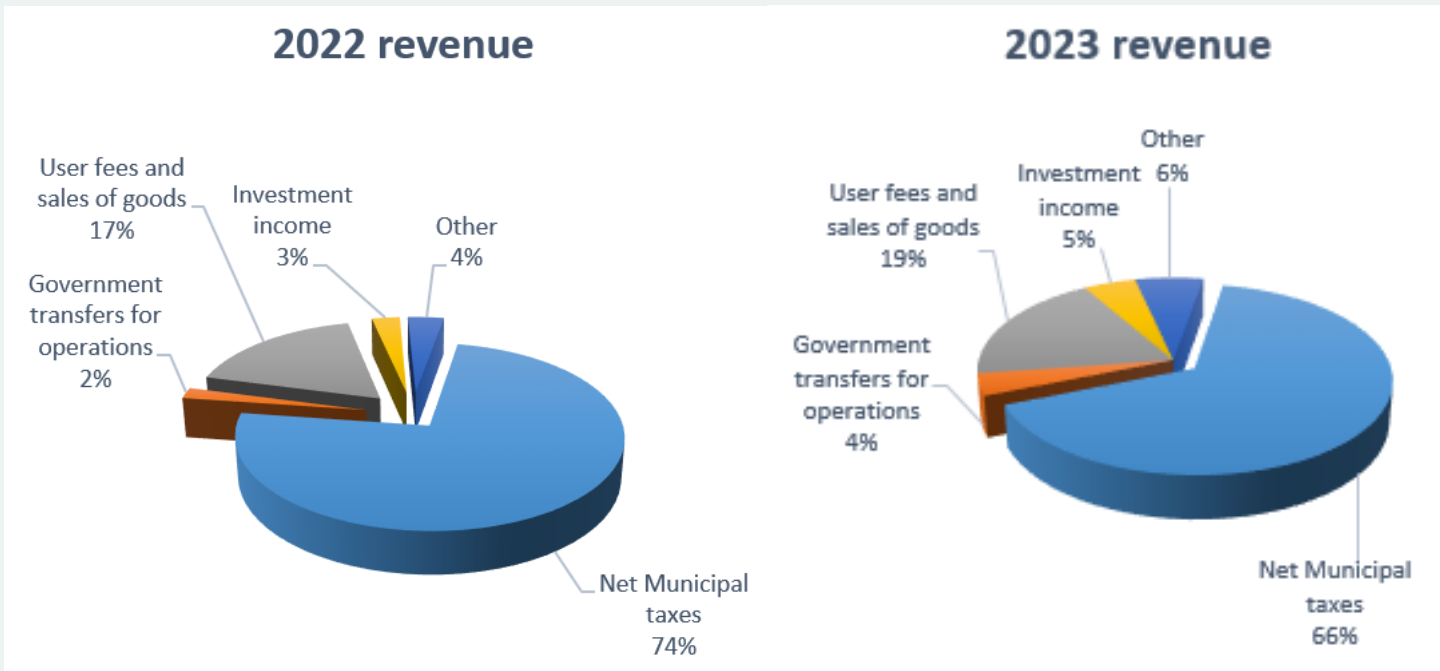
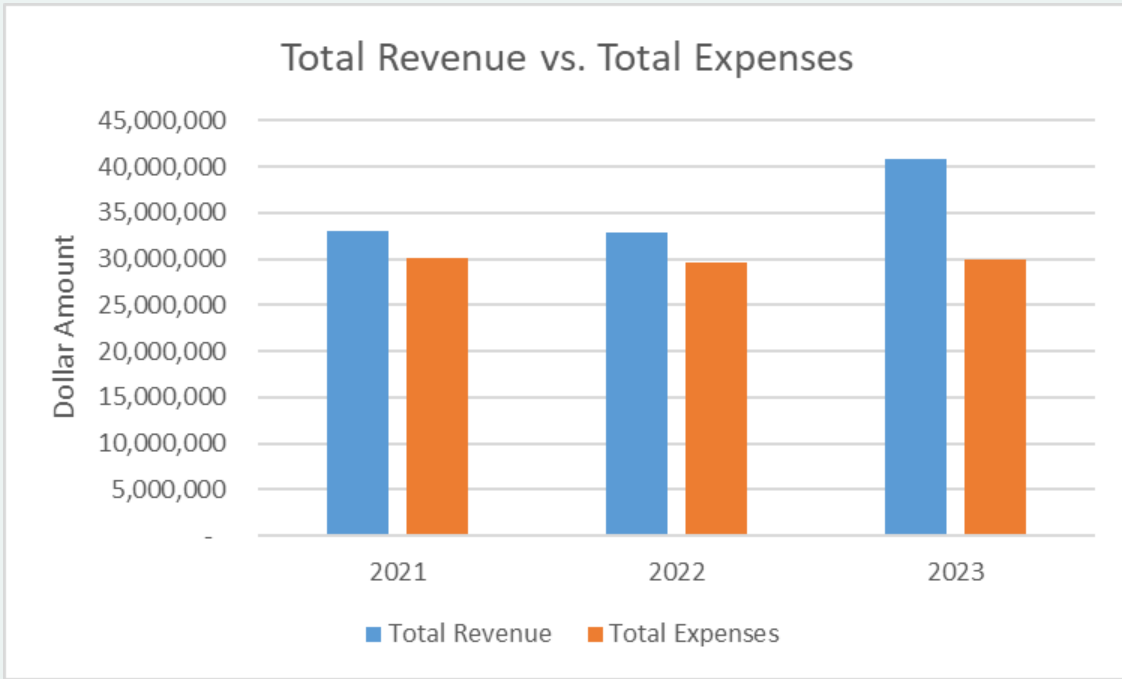
- Boreal Housing Foundation
- Community Futures Northwest
- FCSS Fort Vermilion
- FCSS La Crete
- FCSS Zama City
- Hay-Zama Committee
- La Crete Community Adult Learning Council
- Mackenzie Applied Research Association (MARA)
- Mackenzie Frontier Tourist Association (MFTA)
- Mackenzie Regional Community Policing Society (Victim Services)
- Mackenzie Regional Waste Management Commission
- Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance
- Northern Lakes College CEC, Fort Vermilion
- Northern Lakes College CEC, High Level
- Northwest Species at Risk (NWSAR)
- Recreation Board, Fort Vermilion
- Recreation Board, La Crete
- Recreation Board, Zama City
- Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
- Rural Health Professions Action Plan (RhPAP)
- The Northern Lights Forest Education Society
- Upper Hay Regional Forests Public Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Veterinary Services Incorporated (VSI)
- Water North Coalition (WNC)



# AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

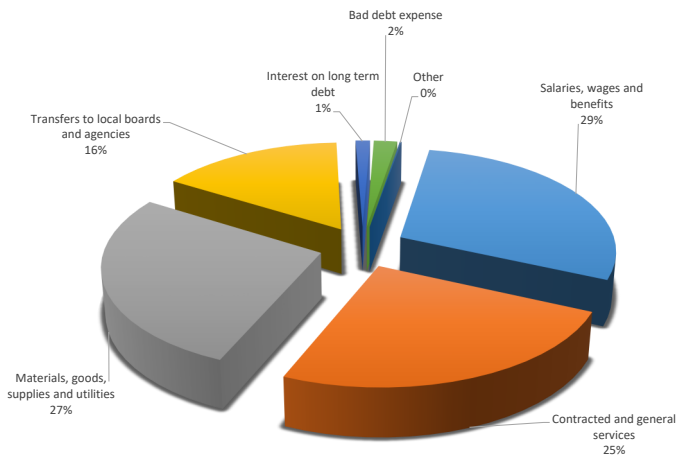
## 2023 AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS

Below is a snapshot of the year end details for 2023. The deadline to submit our Audited Financial Statements to Alberta Municipal Affairs is May 1st, 2024. A copy of the 2023 Audited Financial Statement has been posted on our municipal website.

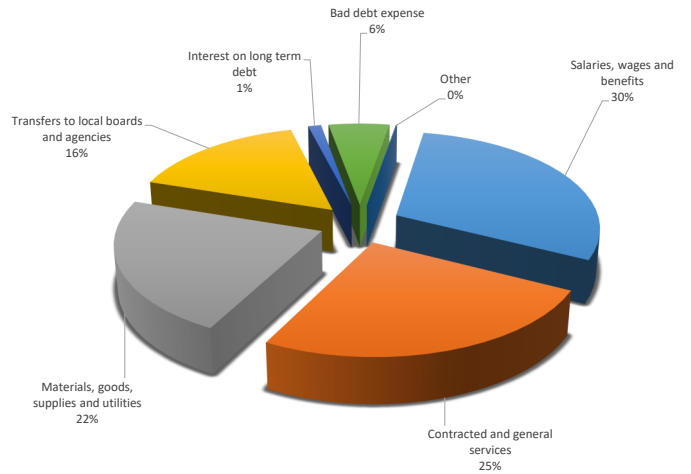


# AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2022 Expenses

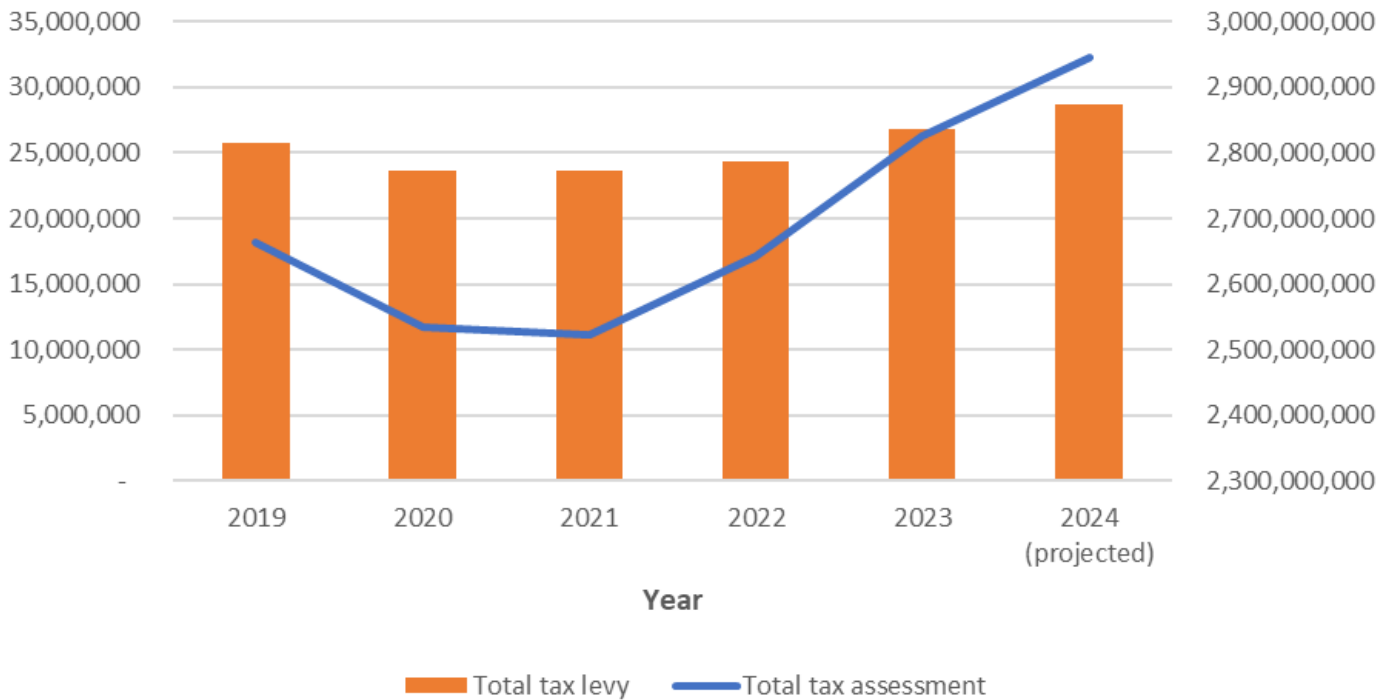


2023 Expenses



Mill rates and tax revenue to fund operations is calculated on assessment. Council reviewed operational requirements and funded operations on a user pay service and mill rate calculation. Municipal growth, and inflation increased assessment in the 2024 tax year.

Total Tax Levy vs Total Tax Assessment

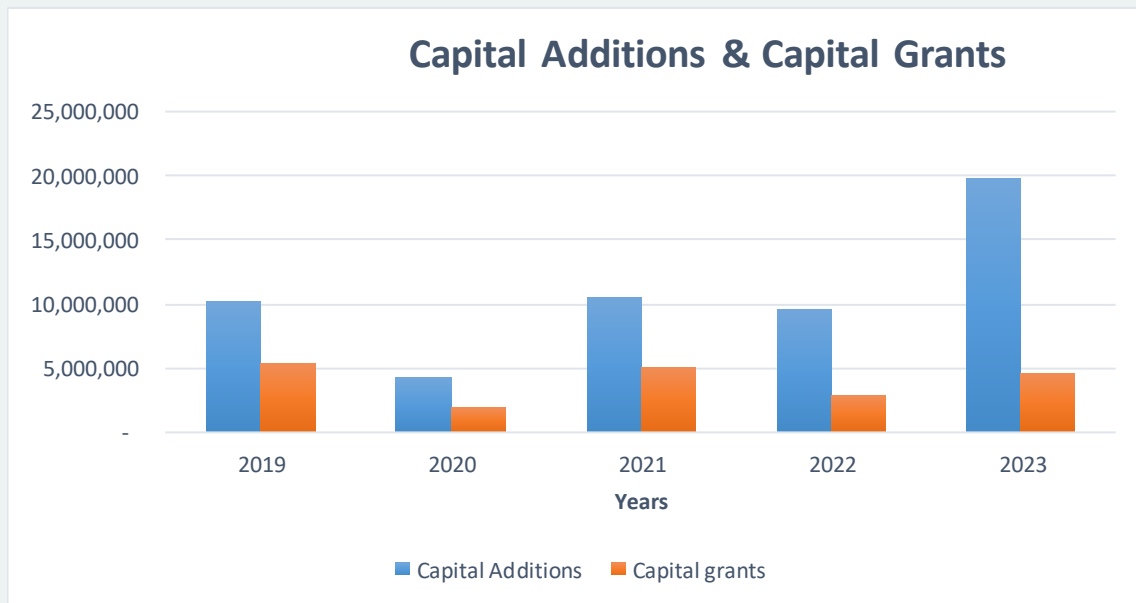
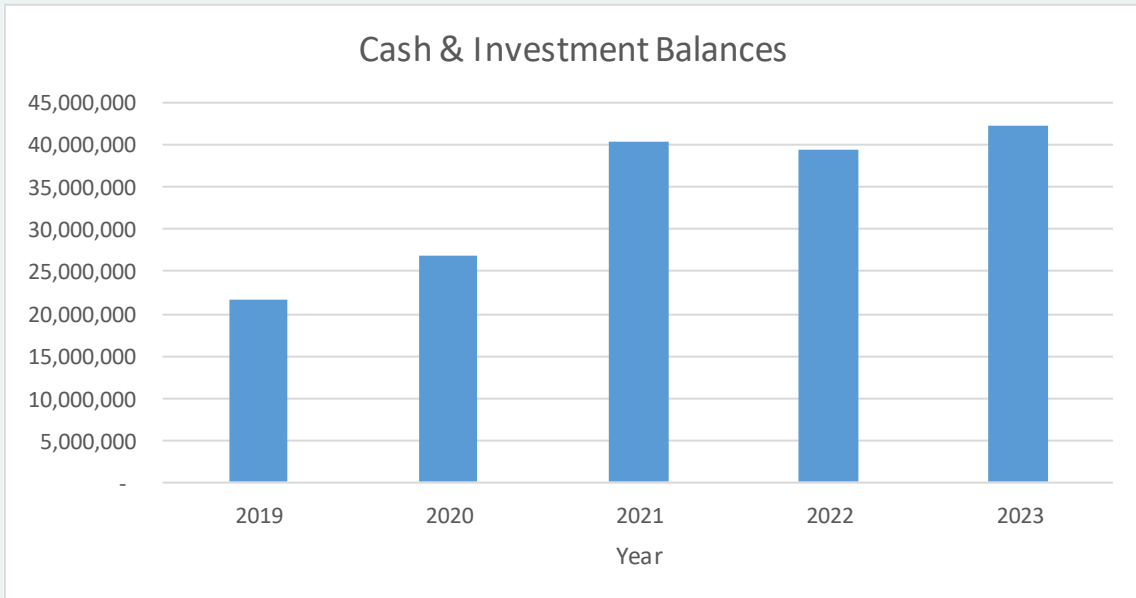




# AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Funds are used to pay for capital projects, future anticipated projects such as road repairs and gravel crushing. Some funds are invested longer term for better rates to assist with funding future projects. (See page 23)

Under the MGA, municipalities are required to develop a 5 year capital plan. The municipality has chosen to budget for and fund these projects over numerous years as to not negatively impact one base year of any project.



## ASSET MANAGEMENT

Data collection is ongoing with all departments. The focus for this department's summer staff has been traffic count data collection in various areas of the County. As well as data on culverts and pictures for bridge files. The Utilities Department has taken the initiative to incorporate data that assists staff when working in the field, whether its locating water shut off valves or accessing as built drawings for waterlines.

# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

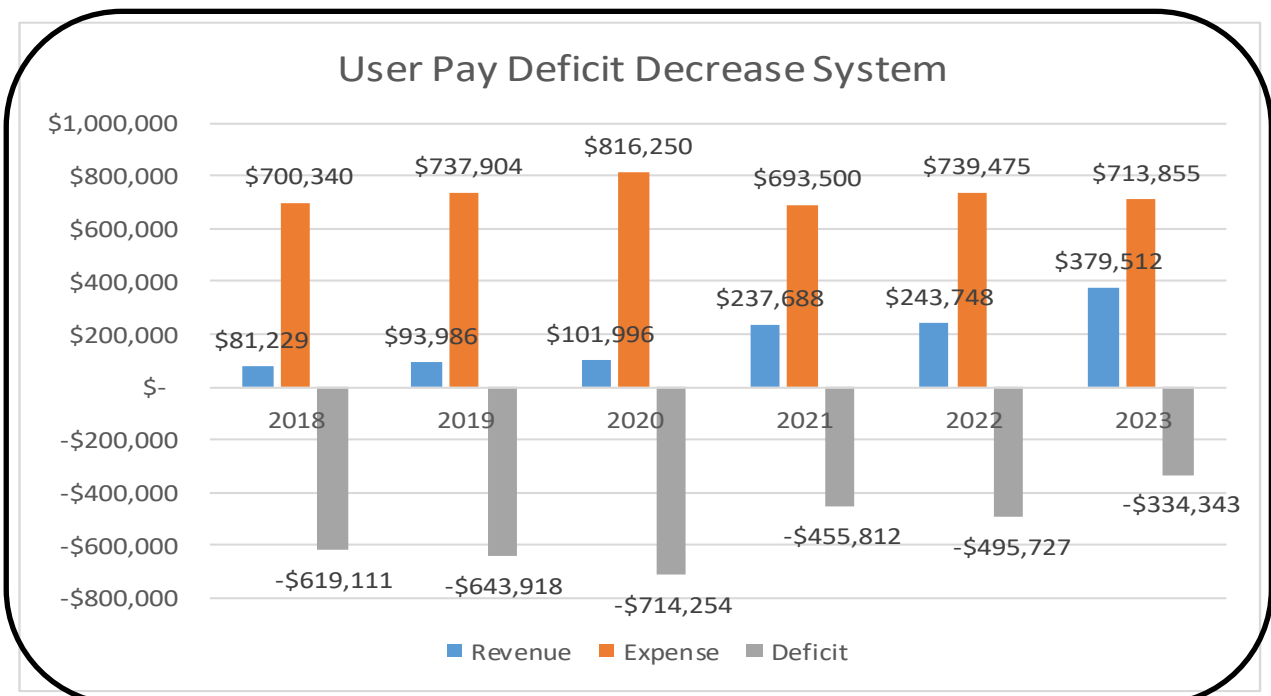
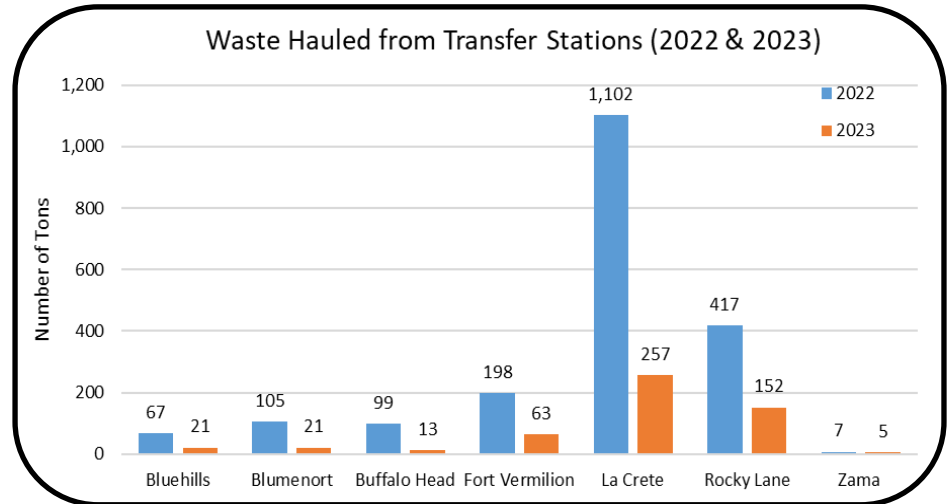
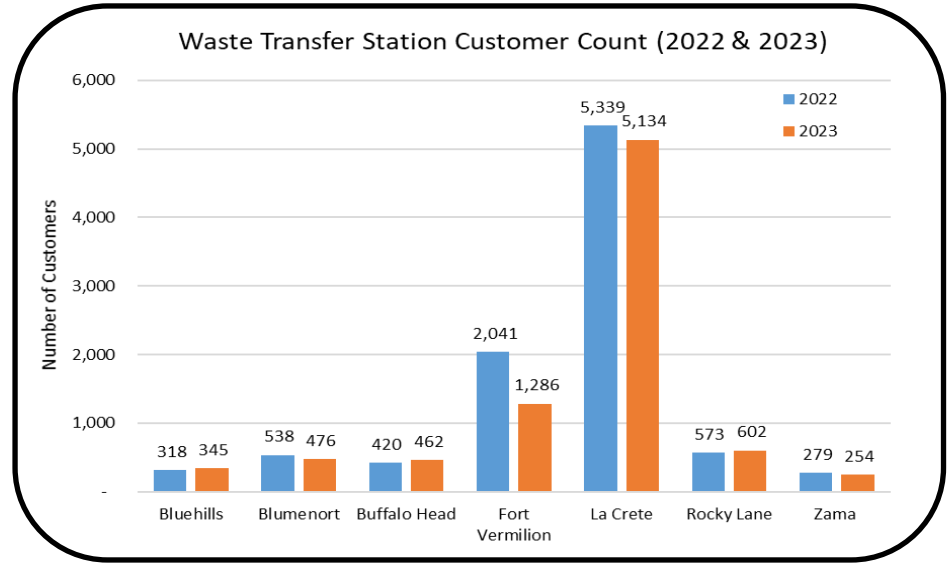
## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Waste Transfer Stations

Mackenzie County owns and operates seven solid waste transfer stations. Each transfer station has a contracted attendant responsible for the daily operations. The type of refuse that is allowed to be disposed of at the transfer station is regulated by policy set by Council.

The County also contracts the transportation of waste from each transfer station to the Mackenzie Regional Landfill. The Mackenzie Regional Landfill is administered by a Commission of equal representation from Mackenzie County, Rainbow Lake and the Town of High Level.

Mackenzie County is responsible for all costs of solid waste (generated within the County) that is disposed of at the Landfill with the exceptions of commercial and industrial waste. This includes waste that is collected from waste transfer stations, rural residential and hamlet residential areas. Tonnage amount for La Crete includes the waste collected from the residential reciprocals each week.



# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## Campgrounds, Green Spaces & Parks

There are a number of parks, green spaces and campgrounds within the area that are operated by the County, or through partnerships with local Recreation Societies, Non-Profits and Volunteers. These include:

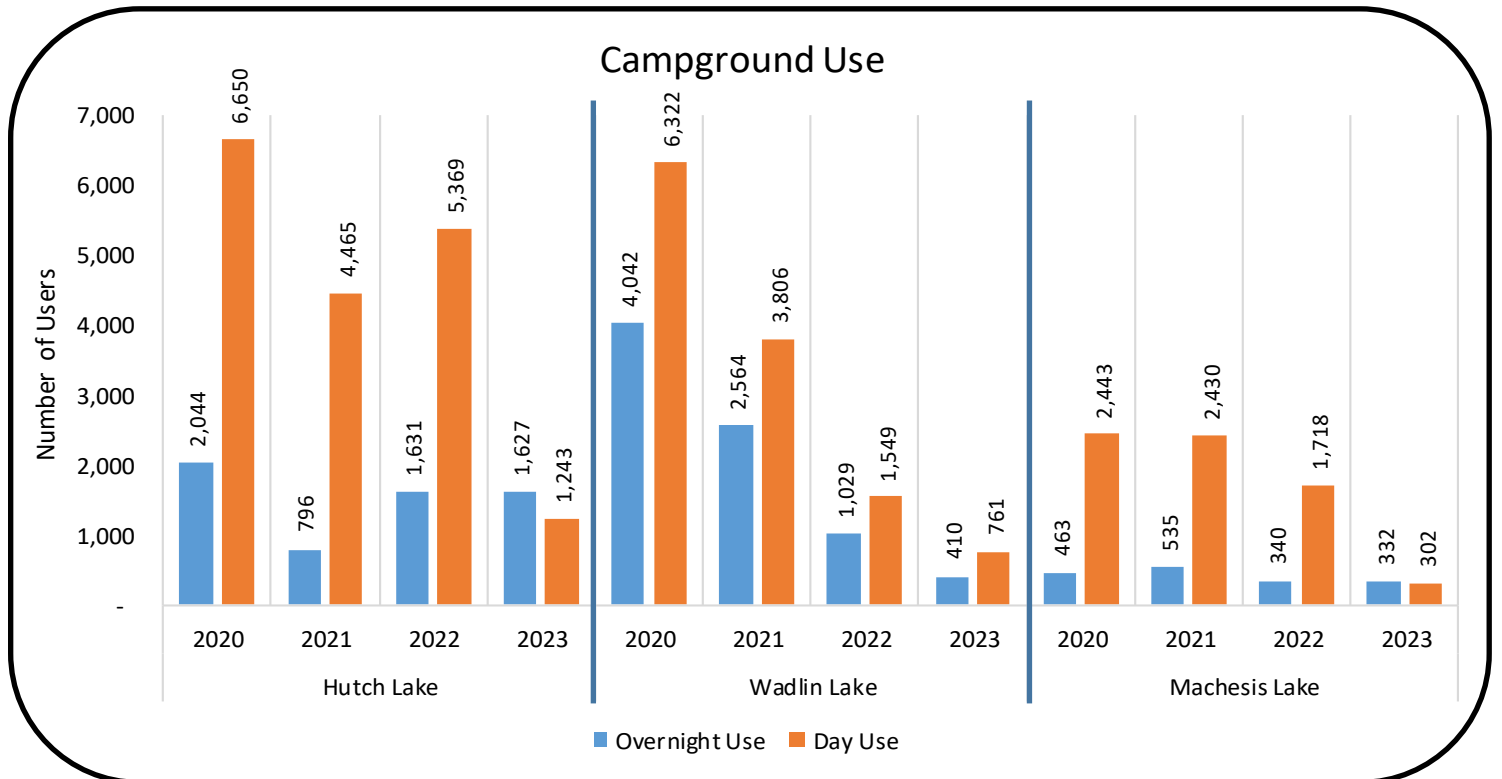
- Arena Parks (La Crete & Fort Vermilion)
- Atlas Landing
- Bridge Campsite (Fort Vermilion)
- Buffalo Head Tower Day Use Area
- D. A. Thomas Park (Fort Vermilion)
- Hutch Lake Campground (High Level)
- Jubilee Park (La Crete)
- Knelsen Park (La Crete)
- La Crete Ferry Campground (Partnership)
- Machesis Lake Campground (Rocky Lane)
- Mackenzie Housing Park (Fort Vermilion)
- Pioneer Park (Fort Vermilion)
- Reinland Park (La Crete)
- The Big Backyard Park (La Crete)
- Tompkins Landing Day Use Area
- Tourangeau Lake Day Use Area (La Crete)
- Wadlin Lake Campground
- Walking Trails (La Crete & Fort Vermilion)
- Zama Park & Campground (Partnership)

Maintenance of these facilities are provided by the Mackenzie County, these duties include:

- Grass trimming
- Grass cutting
- Weeding
- Flower beds
- Maintenance of playground equipment
- Boat launch care
- Garbage disposal
- Supply firewood

The Campgrounds operate from approximately mid May to late September. We track our visitors through postal codes and have logged visitors from all provinces of Canada, including two territories, United States, England, and Germany.

In partnership with Alberta Parks, the Machesis Lake Equine Campground opened in July 2016 with eight sites for overnight horse camping. This is the only facility of its kind north of Grande Cache and is adjacent to over 20 kilometers of trails.





# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## Fire Services

Mackenzie County operates four fire stations located in Tompkins Landing, La Crete, Fort Vermilion, and Zama. High Level rural residents are served by the Town of High Level Fire Department under a Regional Service Sharing Agreement. Members on the various fire departments are volunteers and are paid an honorarium by the County.

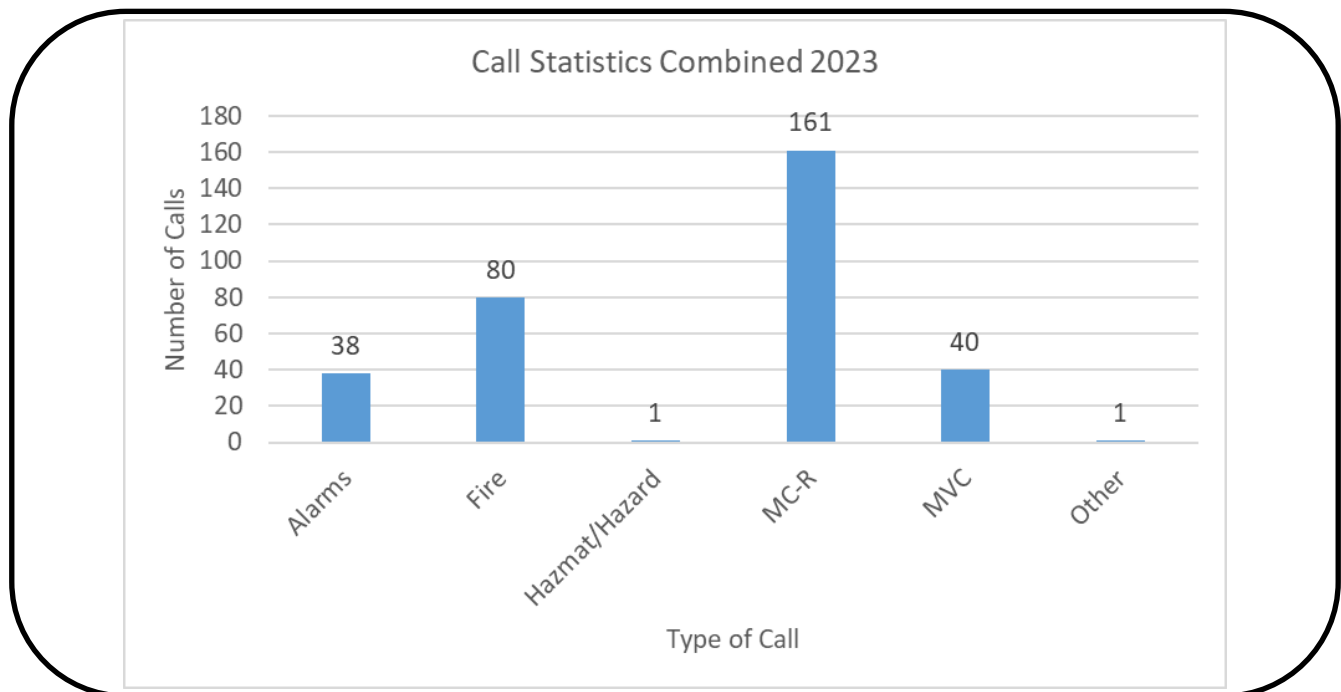
FORT VERMILION - 16 ACTIVE MEMBERS

LA CRETE/TOMPKINS - 36 ACTIVE MEMBERS

ZAMA - 6 ACTIVE MEMBERS

Becoming a firefighter requires a considerable amount of commitment and availability. *If you are interested in joining please contact your local Fire Department.* Some of the expectations and duties of a member are as follows:

- Attend training nights in order to maintain and build skills.
- Obtain appropriate fire/emergency training as per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- Respond to emergency calls, not only within the County, but also those in other fire districts.
- Be on voluntary call.
- Be a team player.
- Help maintain an organized and neat station, as well as the maintenance of equipment.



### FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE LEGEND:

**Alarms** - Responses to any Private or Commercial alarm system.

**Fire** - Responses to fires at any location including private residences, commercial properties, vehicle fires, or mutual aid to Forestry assisting with outdoor fires.

**Hazmat/Hazard** - Response to any hazardous materials leak or spill.

**MCR** - Medical Co Response calls to assist ambulance.

**MVC** - Response to any motor vehicle collision, including single vehicle accidents.

**Other** - Any response which does not fit into the 5 main response categories.

# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## OPERATIONS

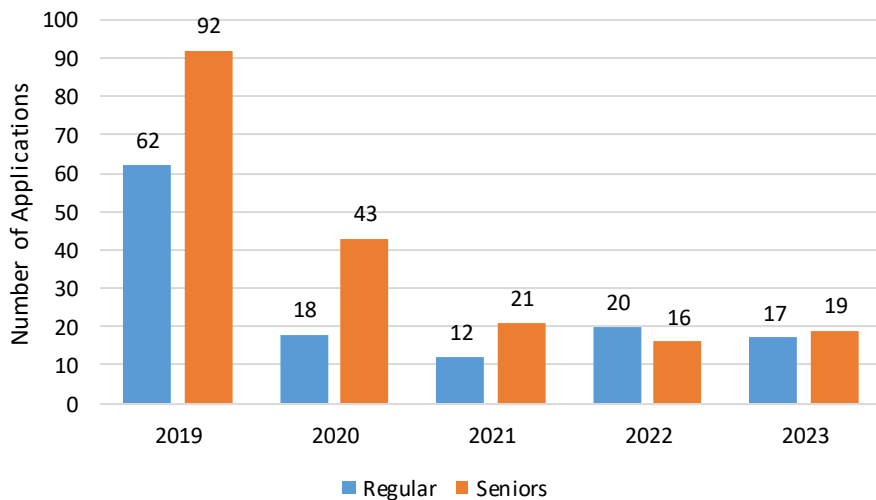
Mackenzie County provides a variety of operational services year round. The following graphs are intended to provide a glimpse into the daily operations of our municipal services.

### Dust Control Applications & Rural Residential Snowplowing

The County applies dust control, typically calcium chloride, along gravel roads; one passing zone every 30 km, major intersections, and other identified areas. Residents within the County may apply for dust control at a cost of \$1,500 + GST per 200 linear meters, for seniors (65 years and older) the fee is \$500 + GST per 200 linear meters. For 2023, there were a total of 36 applicants for the calcium chloride product.

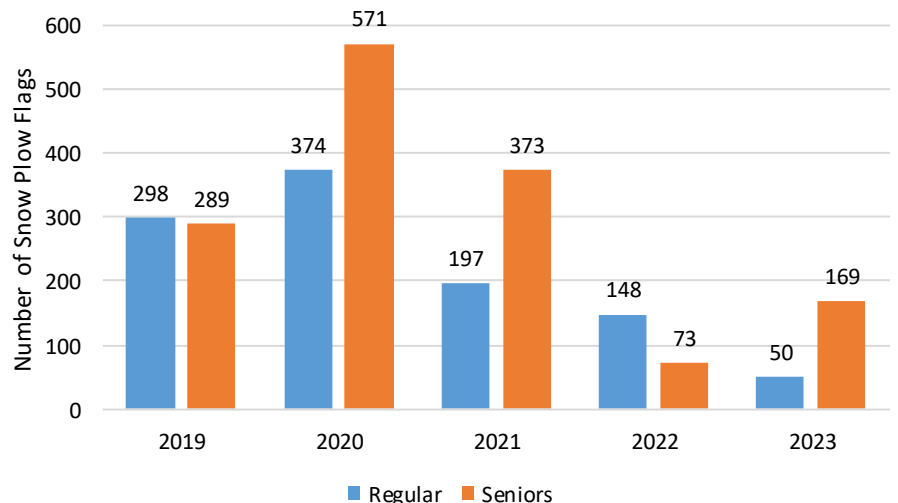
Mackenzie County has a winter maintenance program which offers plowing service (up to 1/4 mile) to rural residents. Residents may apply for snowplow flags for \$100, for seniors (65 years and older) the fee is \$40. In 2023, the County completed services 169 times for seniors and 50 times for other residents.

#### Dust Control Applications



**PLACE YOUR FLAG IN THE SNOWBANK FOR EASY RETRIEVAL BY GRADER OPERATORS**

#### Snow Plow Flags



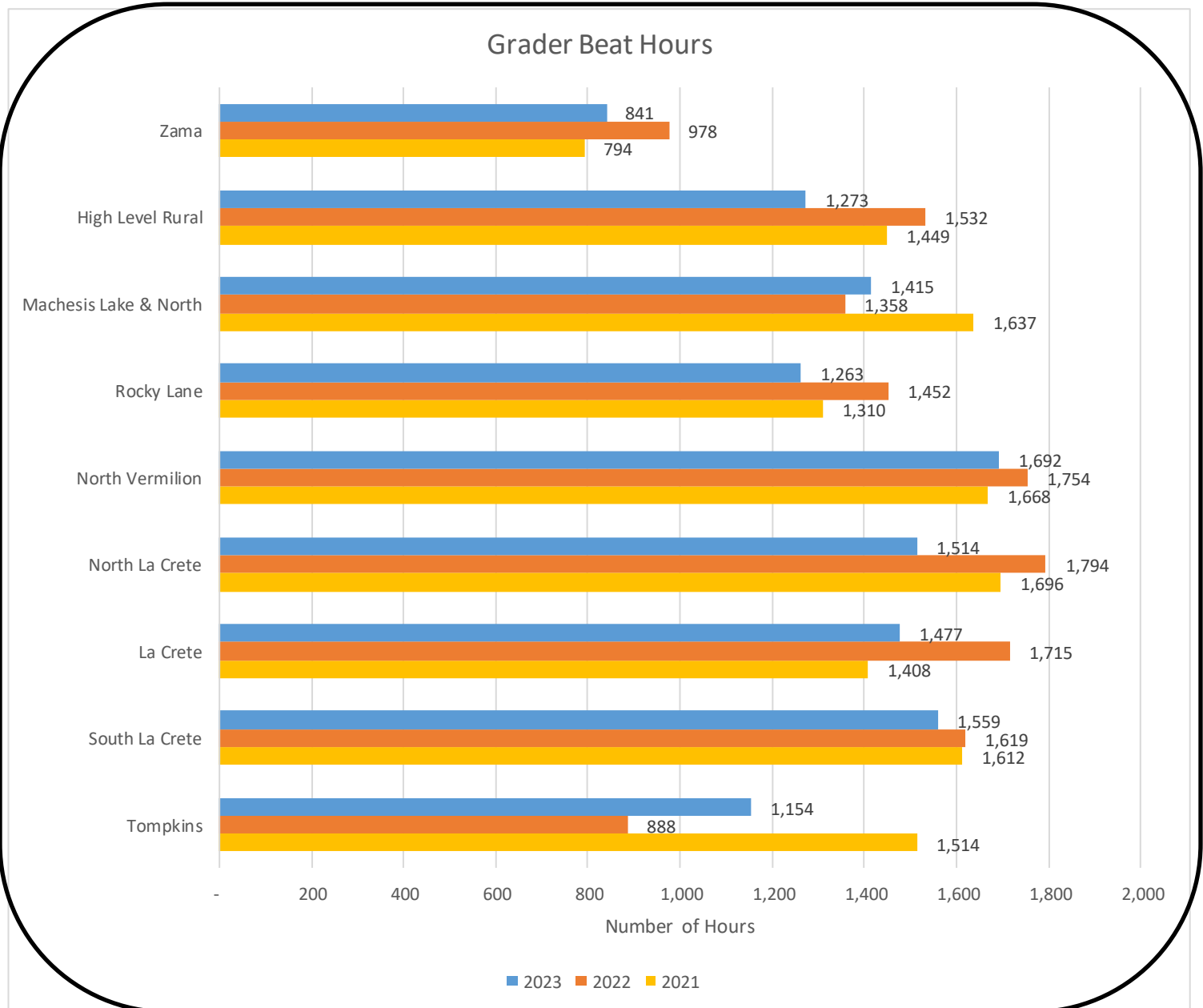
# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## Grader Beat Hours

Mackenzie County has nine grader beats. Hours of operation are indicated on the graph below.

Hours indicate machine hours in use, this does not include contracted or replacement graders. Other variances in unit hours are due to weather, number of dust controlled areas, staff vacancies, etc.

The average grader beat is 238 kilometers, with the exception of Zama.



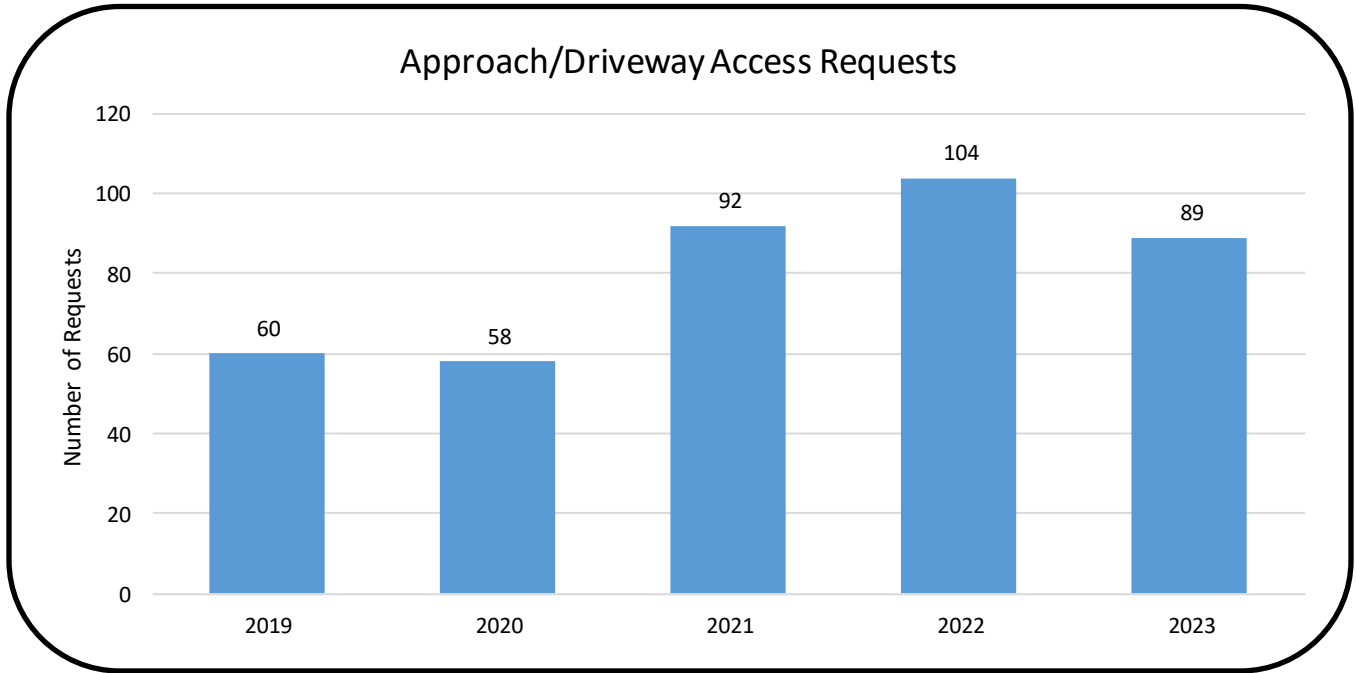
These hours do not include contracted graders.



# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## Approach/Driveway Access Requests

Accesses to quarter sections and new subdivisions require approval from the County. Standards for accesses/driveways can be found in Policy PW039 Rural Road, Access Construction and Surface Water Management Policy. The policy also outlines the application and approval process.



## Tompkins Crossing Ice-Bridge

Mackenzie County has an agreement with Alberta Transportation for the construction and maintenance of the ice-bridge on the Peace River at the Tompkins Crossing. The County subsequently tenders the contract work locally (typically every three years). The chart below identifies the opening and closing dates from winter of 2018/2019 to winter of 2023/2024, as well as the date the ice-bridge reached its maximum capacity of 63.5 tonne.

2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		LEGEND
Date	Tonne	Date	Tonne	Date	Tonne	
Jan. 2	5 Tonne	Dec. 24	5 Tonne	Jan. 2	5 Tonne	
Feb. 11	63.5 Tonne	Feb. 18	63.5 Tonne	Feb. 19	63.5 Tonne	MAXIMUM TONNE
Mar. 28	CLOSED	Apr. 11	CLOSED	Apr. 7	CLOSED	CLOSED FOR SEASON
2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		
Date	Tonne	Date	Tonne	Date	Tonne	
Dec. 22	5 Tonne	Dec. 16	5 Tonne	Jan. 3	5 Tonne	
Jan. 27	63.5 Tonne	Feb. 6	63.5 Tonne	Feb. 22	63.5 Tonne	
Mar. 26	CLOSED	Apr. 4	CLOSED	Apr. 1	CLOSED	

# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

The Planning and Development department is responsible for the operational functions of development permits, safety code permits, subdivision applications, Land Use Bylaw revisions including rezoning, mapping/GIS, engineering standards, future planning, environmental and regional planning. The department is based out of the La Crete office and provides service to other areas of the municipality at the request of the client.

The Planning and Development department has completed the Municipal Development Plan and is currently working on the Land Use Bylaw update and Fort Vermilion Redevelopment Plan. The project was awarded to O2 Planning and Design to update these existing documents that are outdated.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is the statutory document used to help regulate land use in Mackenzie County. Mackenzie County's MDP is a document that provides clear direction for growth and development in the County over the next 20 years. Working in tandem with the Land Use Bylaw and other statutory plans, the MDP provides a framework for the County's future and is an important decision-making tool for Council, County Administration, developers, residents, and other stakeholders. The intent of this MDP is to support well-managed and fiscally sustainable growth and development that will ensure a high quality of life for all County residents now and in the future.

The County has grown substantially over the past several years and is anticipated to grow to 26,000 people over the next 20 years.

The pillars within the MDP are:

- Expanding the economy and industry
- Supporting agriculture
- Growing our communities
- Responding to a changing environment
- Building partnerships

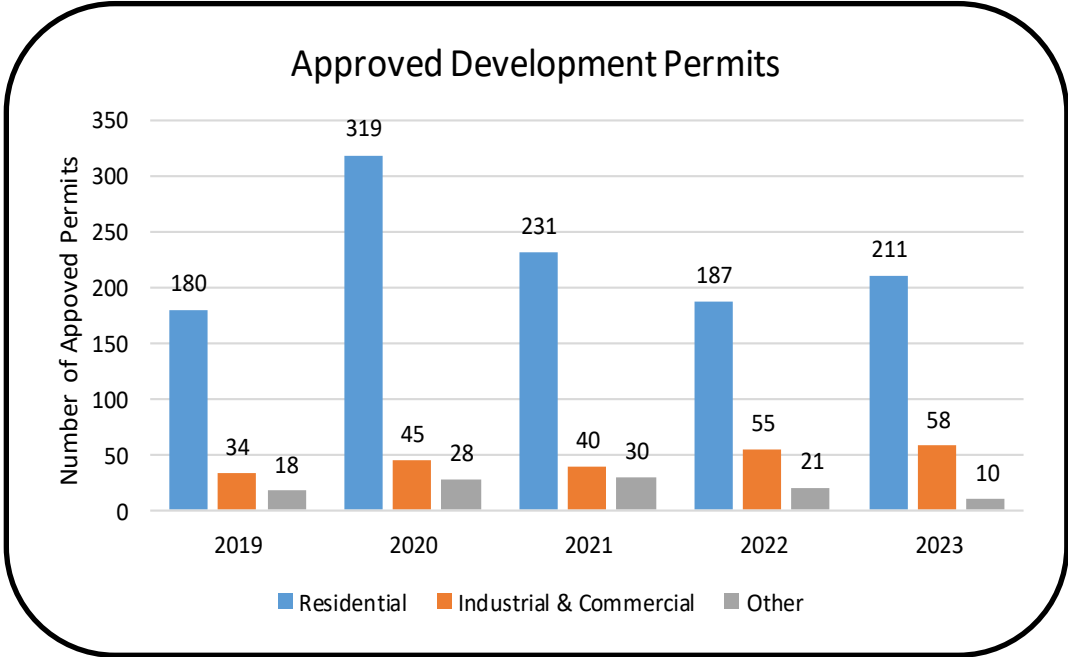
The Land Use Bylaw is a living document that is used to regulate specific land uses in each zoning district. This is the document referenced for development permit approvals and is applicable for day to day use within the department.



# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## Development Permits/Safety Codes

In terms of operations, the number of development permits in 2023 has slightly increased at 279 approved development permits. 211 of those permits were for residential uses ranging for new homes to garages to sheds. 58 permits were for industrial/commercial type uses.



Development permits have been remained steady over the past 5 years, there is a lot of local investment for business and residences to help increase our tax base.

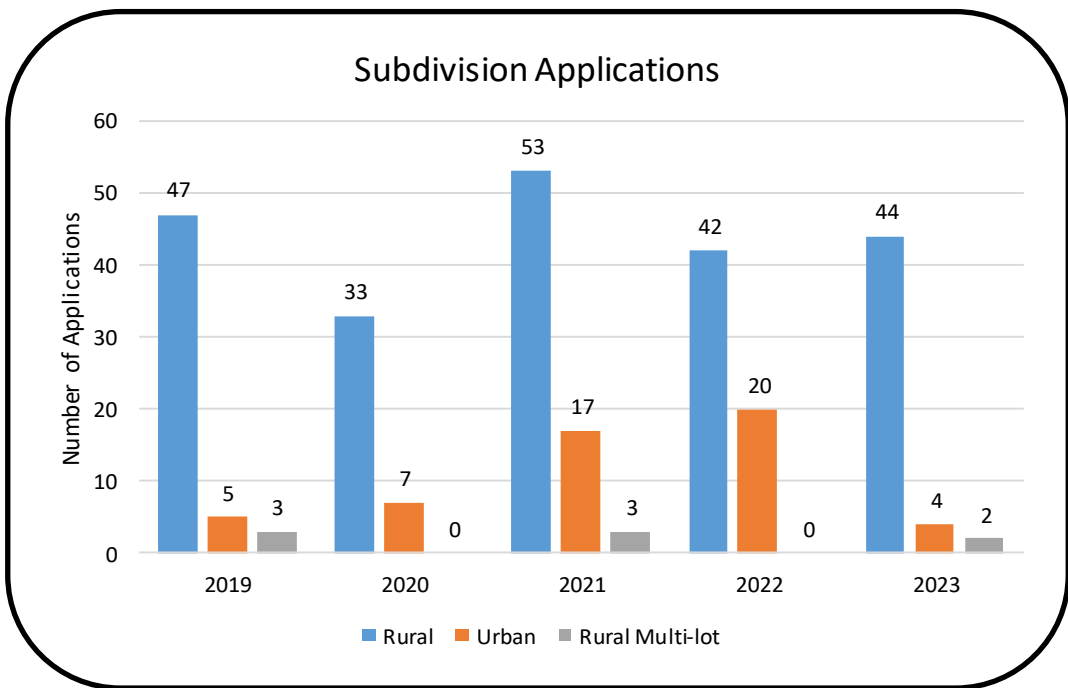
There was one (1) development appeal in 2023.

The number of development permits did decrease in 2022. This is a direct impact of the inflation rates and the high costs of living. It is worth noting that there has been an increase in industrial and commercial development permits which means there is still active investment in the region.

Permits in 2020 include permits issued for the Fort Vermilion flood properties. 2022 & 2023 permit figures include those issued for the relocation of properties from the flood plain.

## Subdivisions

Subdivision applications remain steady with both urban and rural lot development. This number is a direct indication of the population growth of the County and the need for additional lots to ensure there is housing for families.





# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## UTILITIES

The Utilities Department is responsible for overseeing the water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems. Operationally this includes water and wastewater treatment, distribution and collection maintenance programs like hydrant flushing, sewer flushing and valve exercising. Other areas of operations include account connects/disconnects, meter installs and repairs.

Our department operates three Water Treatment Plants within Mackenzie County. The Fort Vermilion Water Treatment Plant which draws water from the Peace River. The La Crete Water Treatment Plant that draws water from four wells that are located adjacent to the Peace River. As well as the Zama City Water Treatment Plant which draws water from two wells. The Utilities Department follows Provincial and Federal regulations, along with the Fisheries Act, when performing all of their duties.

In 2023, the Utilities Department worked on several projects throughout Mackenzie County. Some of the projects include:

The Rocky Lane Water Point building was replaced. The old building was from the 1980's and was in need of an upgrade to better service the community.

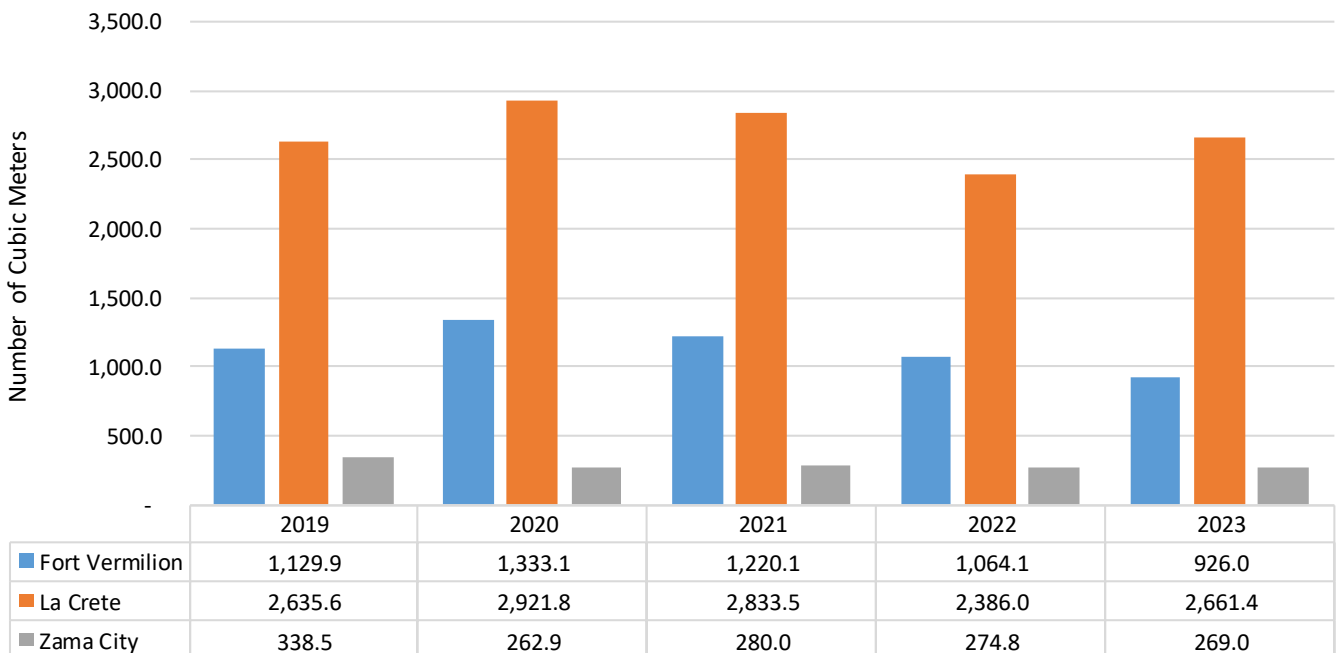
The reservoir fill valve was replaced at the La Crete Reservoir/ Pump Station. The reservoir is used to hold potable water. The valve replacement will allow the Plant to productively store water before it is distributed to your homes or businesses. Construction on the fourth well is complete, and is expected to be operational in early 2024. The four combined wells will provide La Crete and the surrounding areas with a substantial water source as they grow and expand.

The Zama Water Treatment Plant Upgrade, which replaced old infrastructure in the Pumphouse was completed. The Water Treatment Plant upgraded its Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. SCADA is used to control and monitor the water/ wastewater systems remotely. It allows operators to view real-time data and be notified of any potential issues immediately.

### Utility Services Rendered - 2023

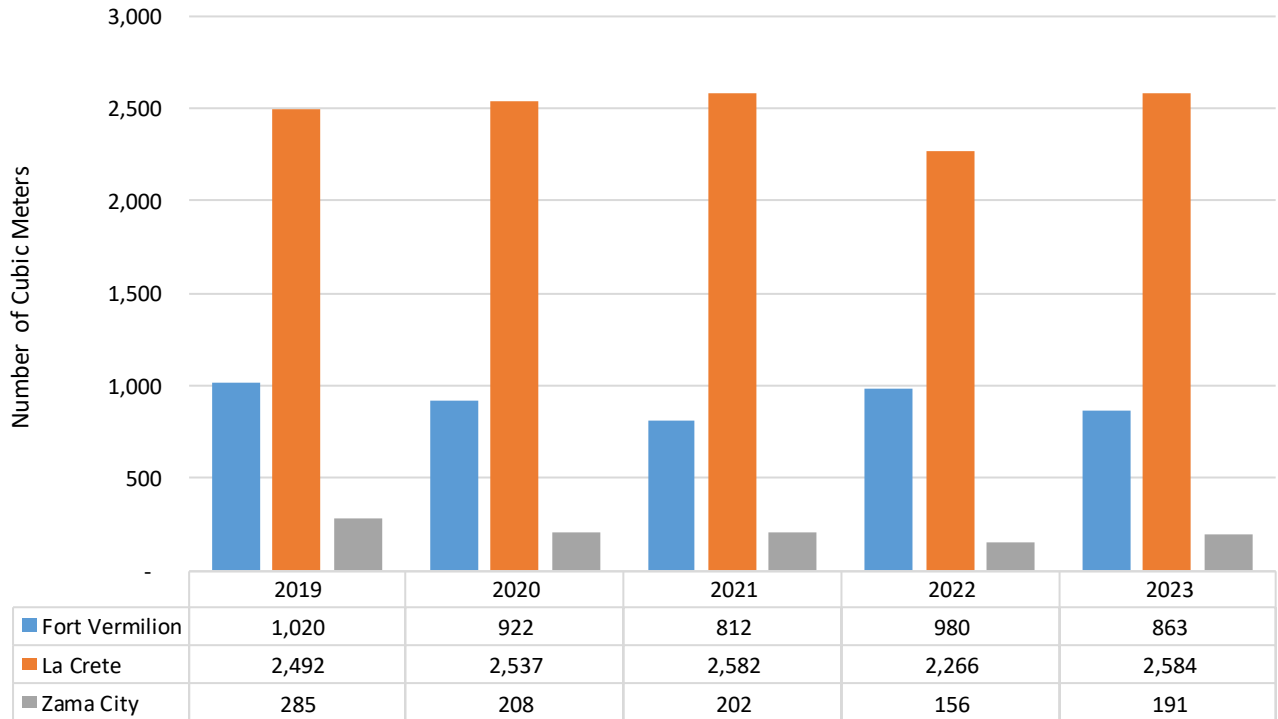
- New Installs = 53
- Meter Changes = 25
- Water Meter Service Calls = 184
- CC Locates/Repairs/On or Off = 205
- Miscellaneous Service Calls = 231
- Miscellaneous Sewer = 13
- Main Service Line Tie In = 3
- CC Service Tie In = 44
- Rural Service Tie In = 6

Treated Water - Single Day Maximum

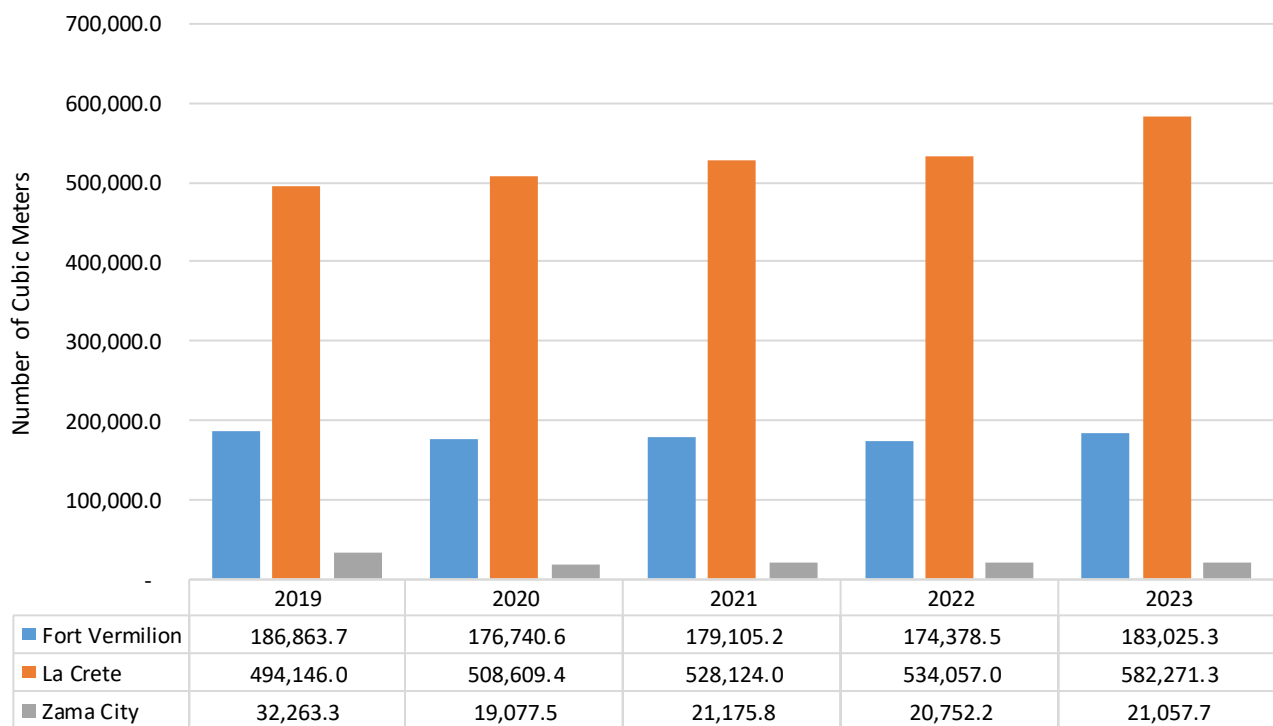


# 2023 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## Treated Water - 3-day Peak Average



## Treated Water - Annual Total



# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

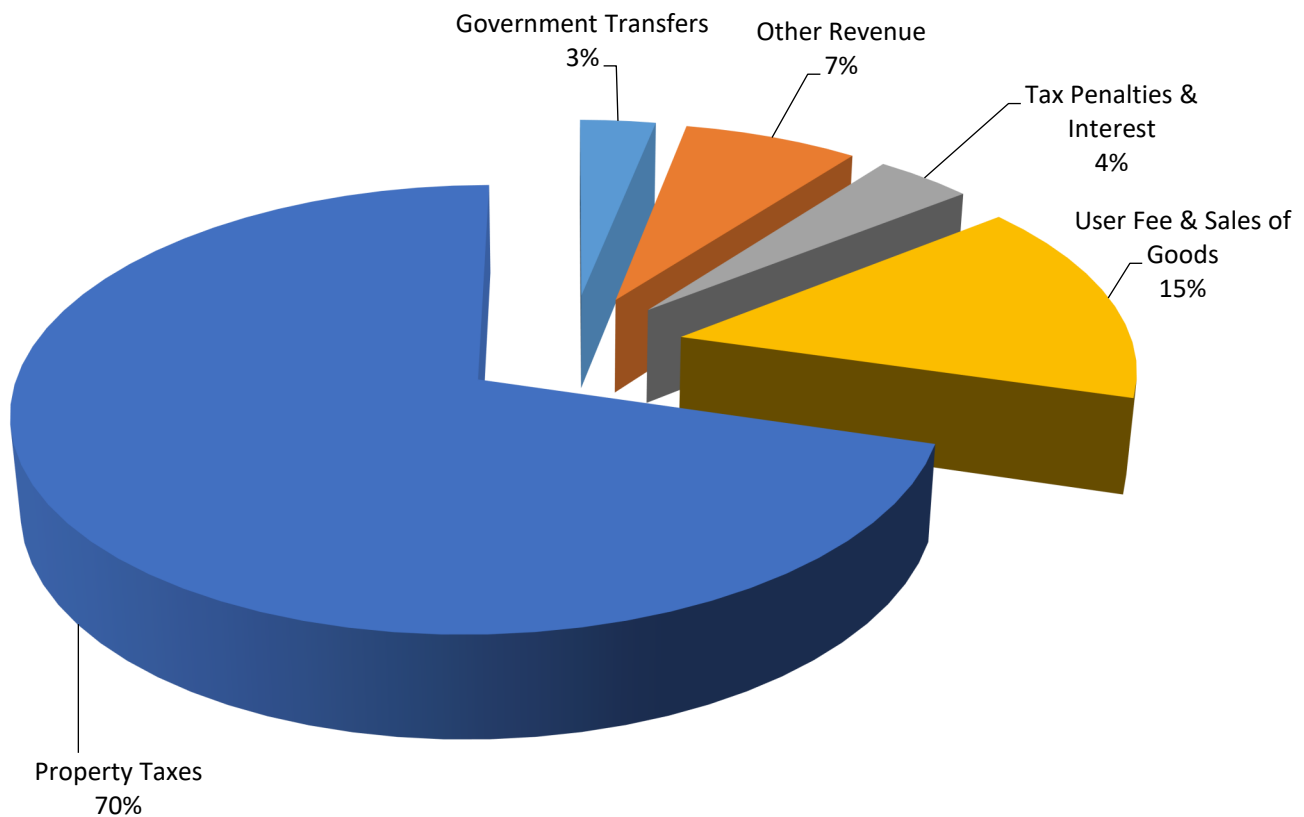
## 2024 OPERATING REVENUES

Under the Municipal Government act, each council must adopt an operating and capital budget for each calendar year. Mackenzie County Council reviewed, deliberated and adopted the 2024 operating and capital budgets. Council has the drive and energy to build a fiscally responsible, results oriented culture and enjoy working in a publicly accountable environment.

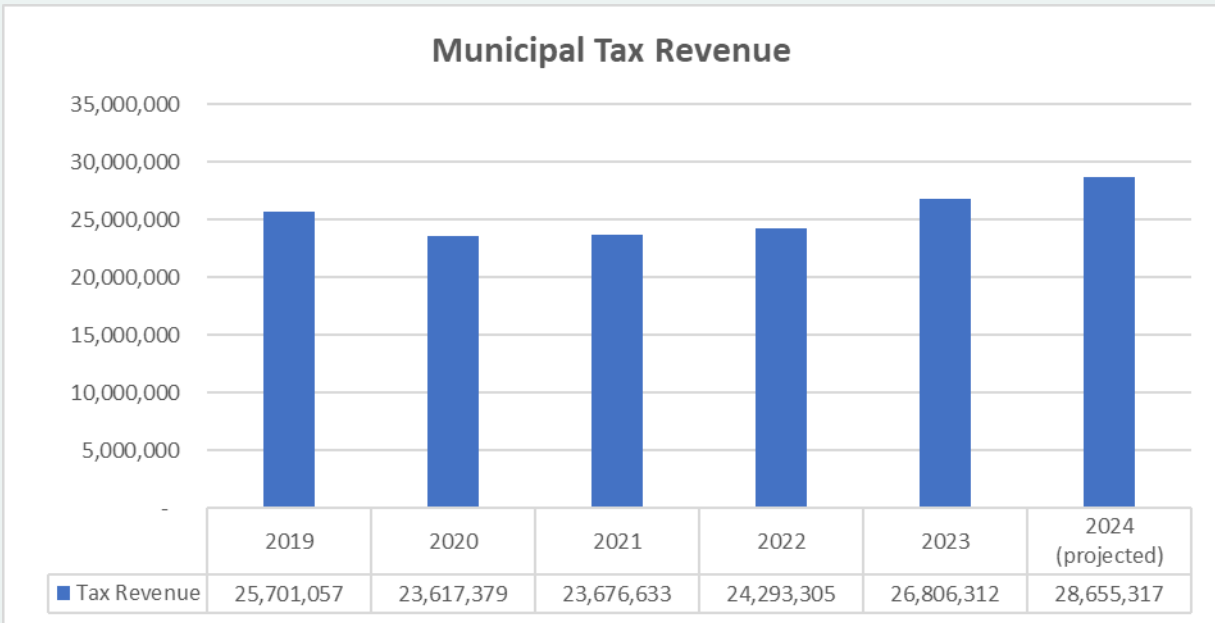
Council continued to develop the 2024 budget on a tax and user pay supported budget, while limiting the effect of service levels. User pay revenue increases assisted in offsetting the shortfall in revenue from some reductions in government funding programs, while limiting the impact to the residential and non-residential mill rates. This is again a budget that prioritizes maintaining essential services and programs and supports initiatives to help decrease the burden on our residents unless services are chosen. This budget continues to be forward-thinking, ensuring our investments support community sustainability and a quality of life residents enjoy.

Total operating revenues are projected to be \$40.67 million (primarily due to growth and inflation).

### 2024 Operating Revenues - \$40,668,404 (excluding requisition amounts)

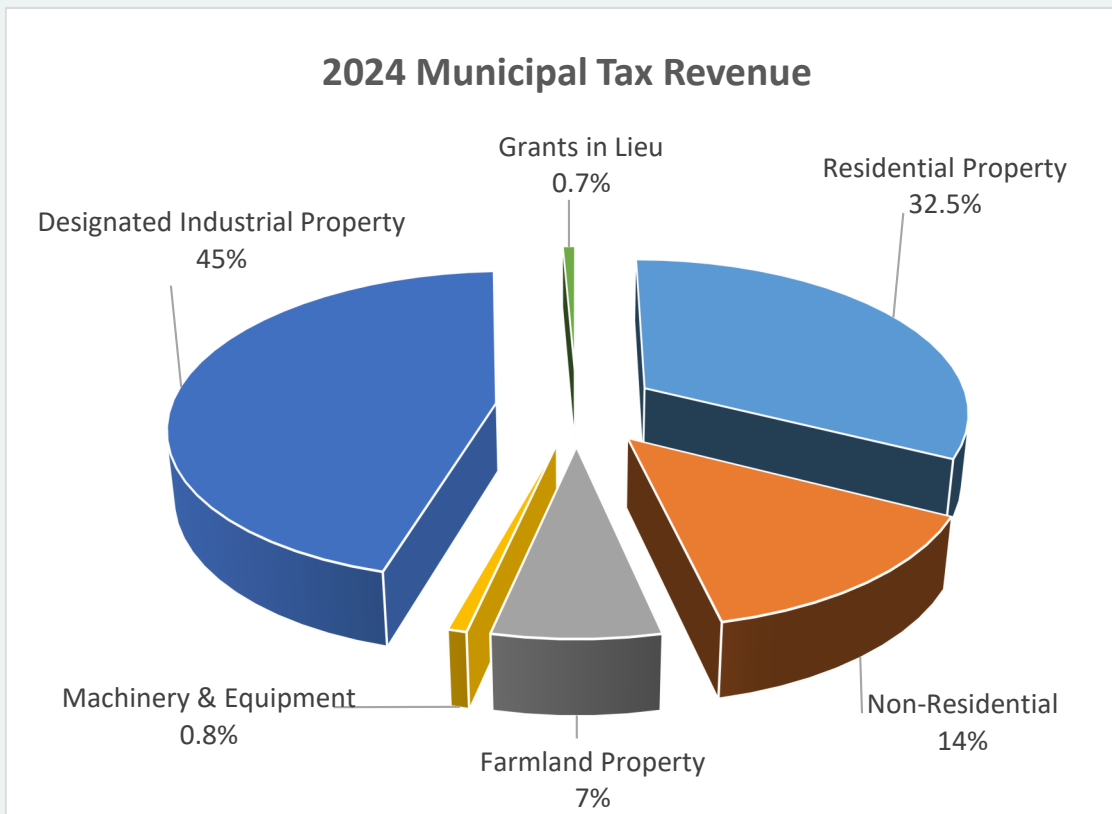


# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



This chart does not include requisitions.

Designated Industrial Property is assessed by the Provincial Assessor. These property types are defined as, facilities regulated by the Alberta Energy Regulator, National Energy Board (now called Canadian Energy Board) and Alberta Utilities Commission. Most commonly recorded as linear, previously.





# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

## 2024 OPERATING EXPENSES

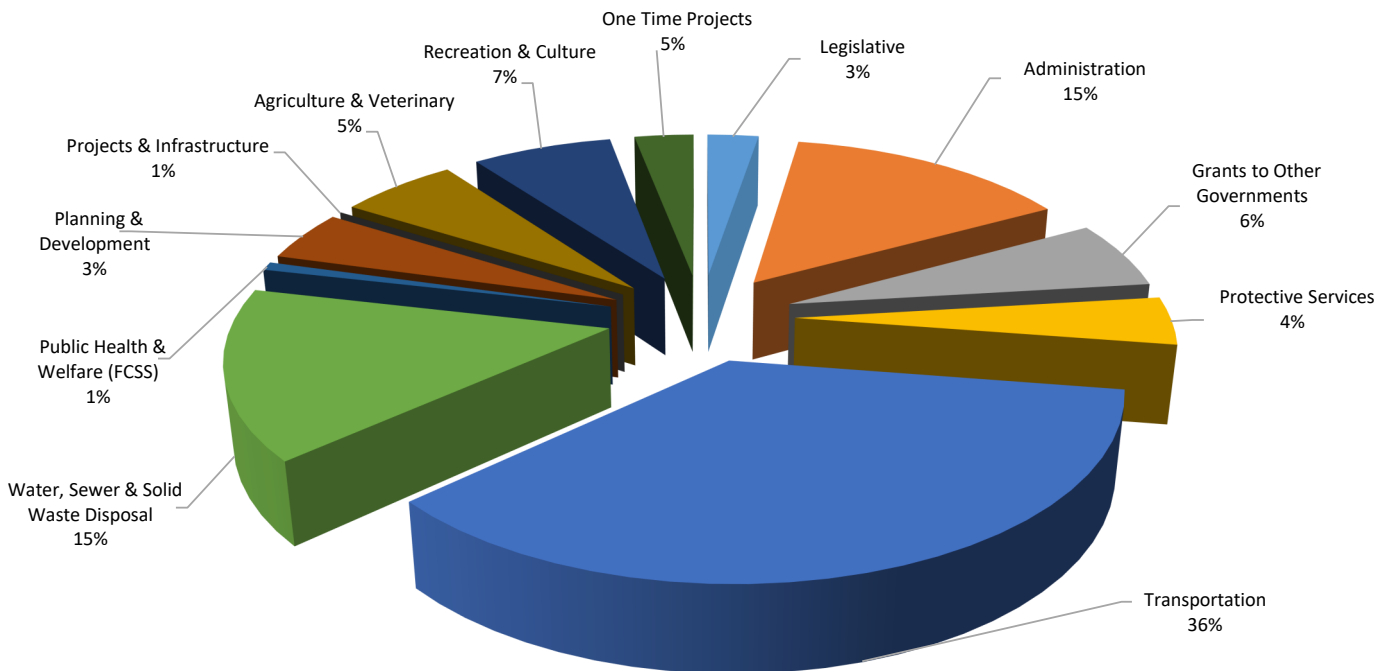
Total operating expenses, excluding requisition transfers but including amortization of tangible capital assets, are projected to be \$50.81 million, which is an overall 5.9% increase from 2023. The increase is primarily due to the increases in fuel, utilities, costs of goods & supplies, carbon tax and police funding.

The schools requisition transfer is \$6,728,698 (2023 - \$6,379,443), and the seniors lodge requisition transfer will be \$486,502, where as the 2023 amount was primarily funded by the provincial government.

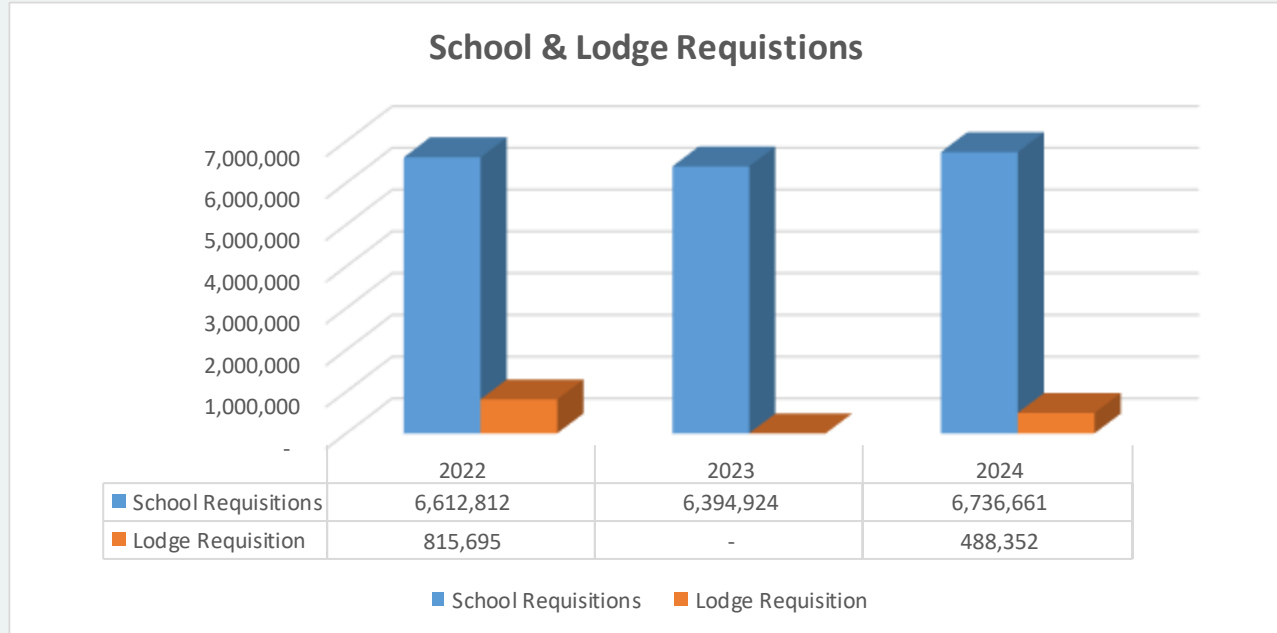
As non profit organizations play a large part in municipal recreation and support to residents, Council approved operating expense grants of \$565,850 to various non-profit groups and bursaries, \$390,154 to FCSS (Family and Community Support Services), a total of \$1,371,110 to 3 recreation boards, and \$259,442 to the Mackenzie Library Board operating 3 municipal libraries.

In order to support the regional services provision, the County entered into agreements with the neighbouring municipalities of the Towns of High Level and Rainbow Lake. The 2024 transfer to these local governments is projected to be \$2,250,000.

2024 Operating Expenses



# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS



## 2024 Projects

### Administration

- Zama Backup Generator
- Fuel tanks

### Agriculture

- TWP RD 109-0 E from RGE RD 15-5 to RGE Rd 15-1 (5 miles) Rebuild

### Fire Department

- Squad overland truck
- Jaws of life
- Emergency management equipment

### Transportation

- Rotary Mower attachment
- Graders x2
- Plow/sander truck
- Wheel loader
- Gravel trailer (wagon)

### Transportation Cont.

- Heliport RD (3 miles) Rebuild
- Angle Road (.5 miles) Rebuild
- 91 St Intersection Upgrade
- TWP RD 108-1 E of HWY 88 (2 miles) Rebuild

### Water/Sewer Treatment & Distribution

- Fort Vermilion Truckfill Backup Generator
- Waterline east of La Crete
- Blue Hills Water Distribution

## 2023 Significant Projects

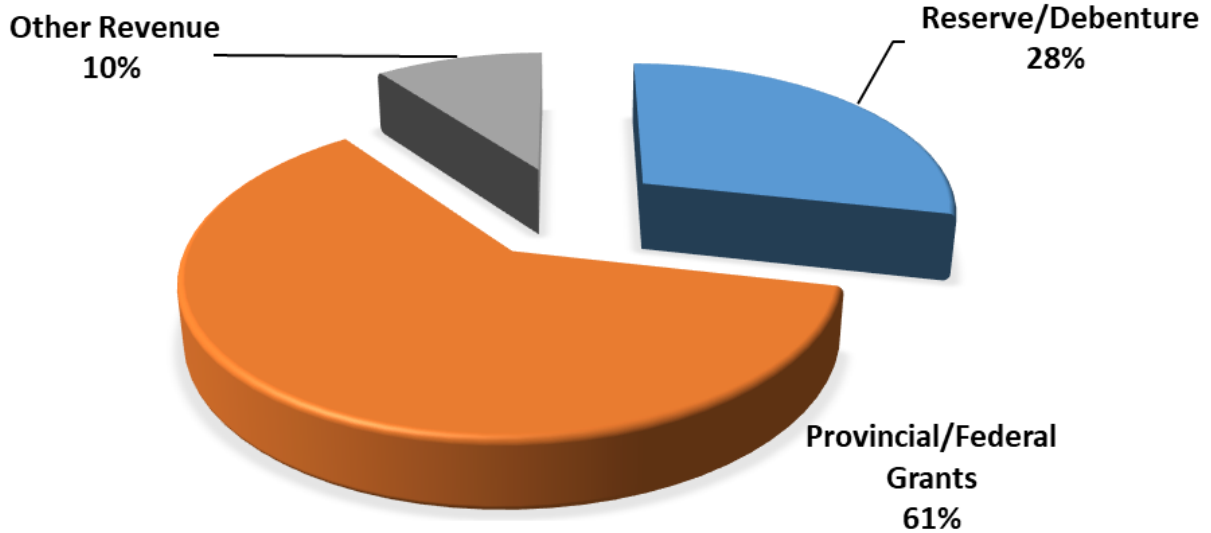
- AFRRCs Radios
- Fort Vermilion sidewalk sweeper
- Graders x3
- Multiple road projects
- Bridge maintenance
- Zama water treatment plant scada upgrade

# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

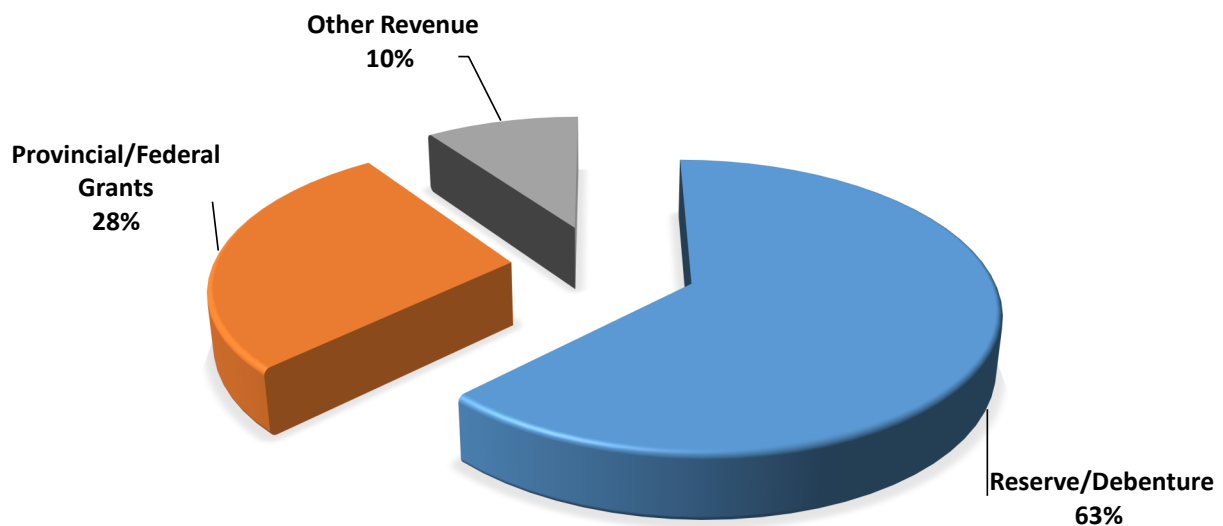
**Debenture**—Is a form of unsecured debt that the County has and can use to fund longer term projects at a reasonable interest rate. The repayment of the debentures are undertaken over multiple years (3-25 years), (See page 9).

**Reserves**—Are funds allocated by Council motion to assist in funding future capital and operational needs.

## 2023 CAPITAL PROJECTS



## 2024 CAPITAL PROJECTS

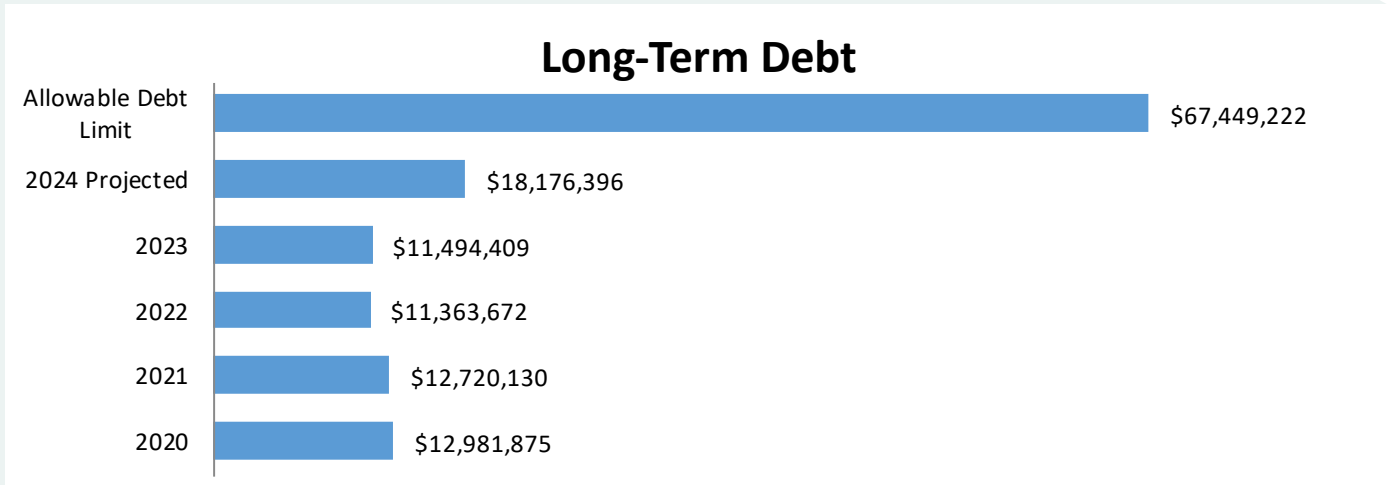


# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

## LONG-TERM DEBT

The County has an option to borrow funds for major capital projects, if fiscally responsible to do so. Currently, all of the County's debentures are arranged through the Alberta Capital Finance Authority who offers low fixed rates.

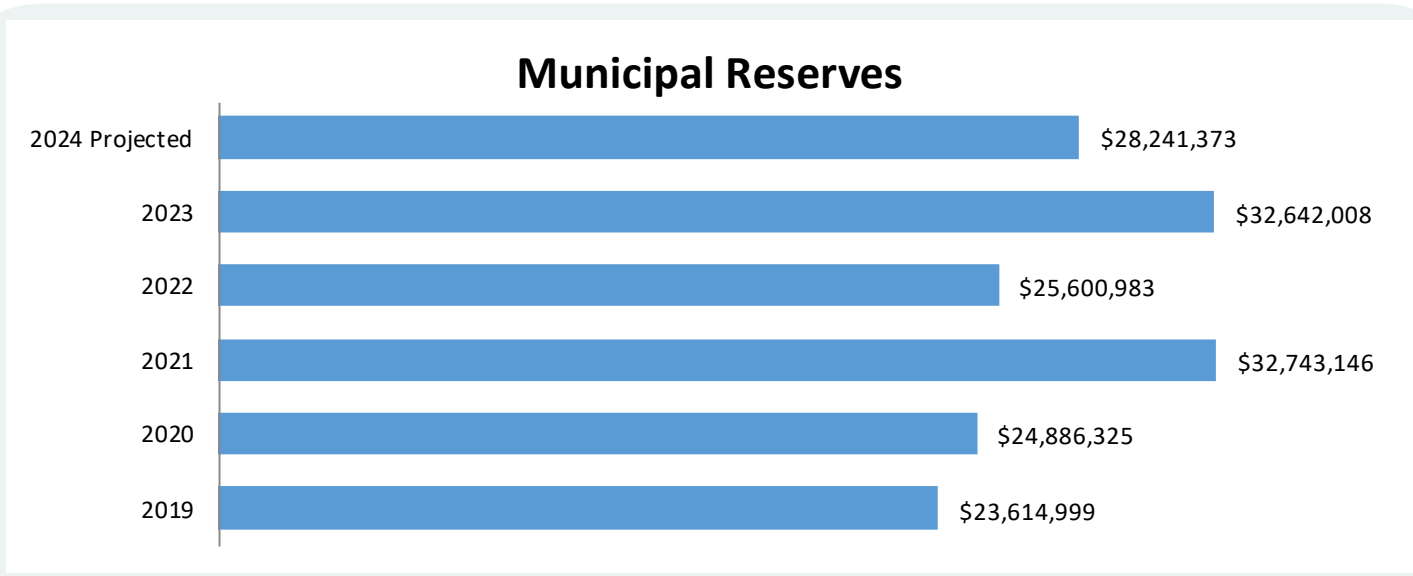
The Municipal Government Act and Alberta Regulation 255/00 defines the debt limits for municipalities. If the borrowing takes place as intended based on the preapproved bylaws, the County will be at 15% of its allowable debt limit on December 31, 2023 as permitted under MGA, AR 255/00.



## MUNICIPAL RESERVES

In general, establishing reserves and setting aside a specified amount of funds annually assists in long term financial planning, and assists in maintaining a stable taxation structure. Council has established various reserve policies. These policies define the purpose, permitted uses (must have a motion of Council), targeted minimum and maximum reserve levels, and the annual minimum contributions.

Under the MGA, municipalities are required to develop a 5 year capital plan. The municipality has chosen to budget for and fund these projects over numerous years as to not negatively impact one base year of any project.





# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

## INTER-MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION

The Mackenzie Region has three incorporated municipalities within its boundaries: Mackenzie County, Town of High Level and Town of Rainbow Lake. Three municipalities are continually working together on regional sustainability initiatives.

### Agreements with the Town of High Level

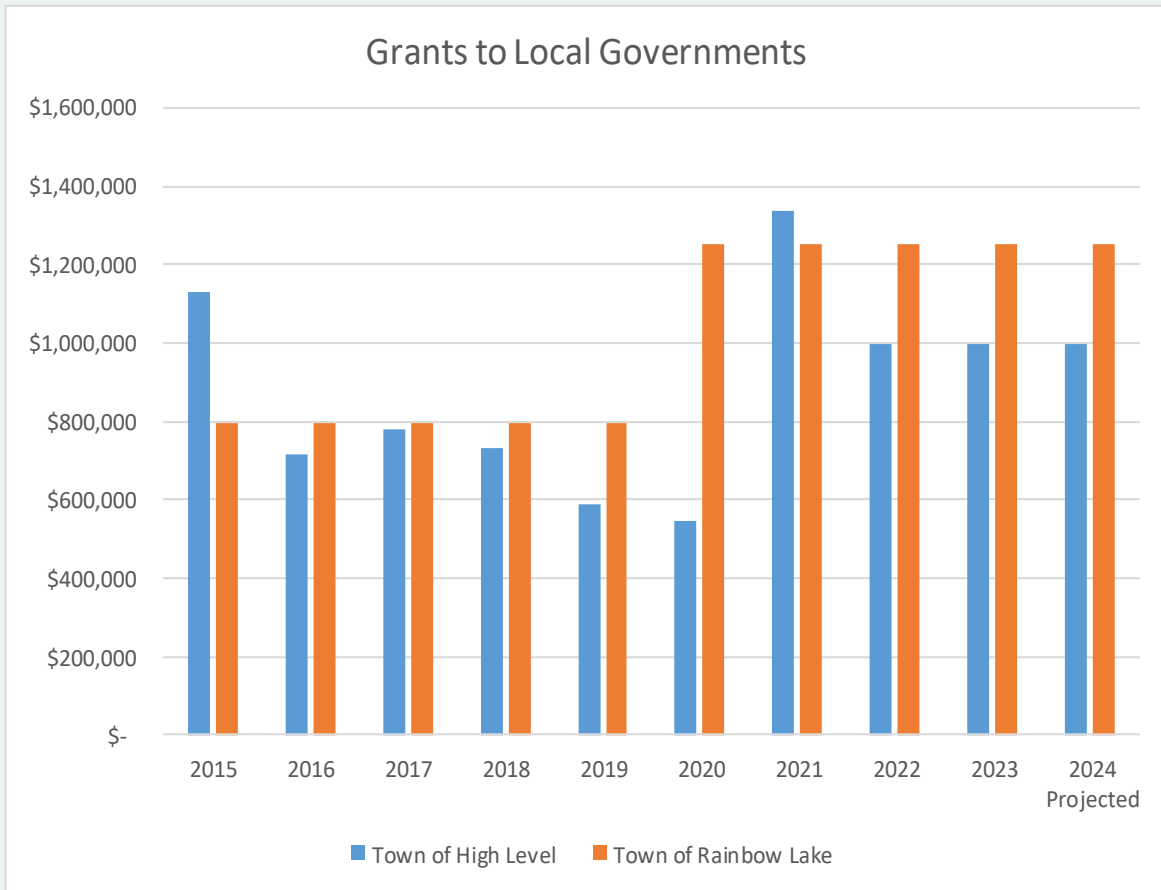
Mackenzie County has a Regional Service Sharing Agreement (RSSA) and an Inter-Municipal Development Plan (IMDP) agreement with the Town of High Level. The purpose of the RSSA is to share certain services provided by the Town to the County's residents residing within close proximity to the Town and/or regionally. These services are recreation, airport, fire protection, and potable water (Footner line north of the Town).

The County continued deliberations with the Town of High Level regarding the annexation of lands north of High Level to the airport.

### Agreement with the Town of Rainbow Lake

Mackenzie County Council recognizes the small urban center, "one industry town" challenges experienced by the Town of Rainbow Lake. Therefore, the County and the Town entered into a revenue sharing agreement. The agreement is meant to assist the Town through a consistent and predictable funding source. The Town uses this funding for provision of services to their residents. The current agreement began in 2020, and funds the Town of Rainbow Lake with \$1,250,000 annually.

Alberta municipalities are encouraged to collaborate with each other for the provision of services. Cooperation and collaboration promotes effective and efficient use of resources and reduces duplication of services. The chart below shows the cost-shared amounts provided by Mackenzie County to the Town of High Level and the Town of Rainbow Lake since 2015.



# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

## GRANTS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

County Council recognizes the value of volunteers and the non-profit groups operating within the region and the wide range of services and events offered by each and every organization. The County offers grants to non-profit organizations to assist in capital projects, operations or event-based services. These applications are available in the fall of each year with a deadline of October 15th. The 2024 operating budget includes \$2,586,556 in funding that will be provided to FCSS, Recreation Boards, and numerous other non-profit organizations.

The chart below identifies the Council approved grants during budget deliberations.

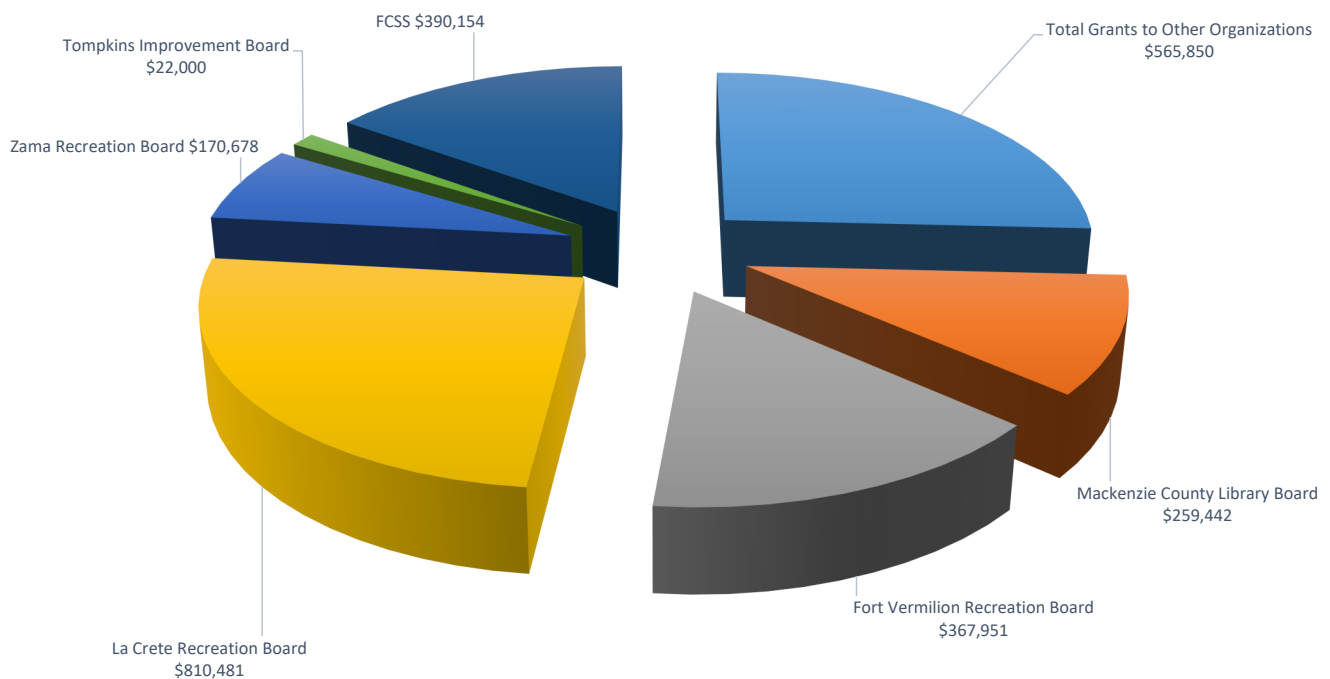
The County has an operating agreement with many of the local non profit groups whereby the County pays all conventional utilities. These groups include the La Crete Agricultural Society, the La Crete Heritage Centre, Fort Vermilion Recreation Board, La Crete Recreation Board, and Zama Recreation Board, the Rocky Lane Agricultural Society Indoor arena, and the 3 local Library facilities.

The County provides operating and capital funding to the Fort Vermilion, La Crete, and Zama recreation boards. The recreational boards operate the County-owned facilities and provide a range of programs and activities to local residents and visitors.

The County provides funding towards the provision of FCSS programs and activities which is 80% funded by the provincial government grants.

The County has a cemetery funding policy whereby each cemetery that is located within Mackenzie County receives a \$600 maintenance grant annually.

Grants to Other Organizations



# 2024 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

## GRANTS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

Organization	2024 Budget	2023 Budget	2022 Budget
Fort Vermilion Agricultural Society - Heritage Centre	\$27,750	\$27,750	\$27,750
Fort Vermilion Area Board of Trade	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Fort Vermilion Friends of the Old Bay House Society	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
Fort Vermilion Grazing Reserve	\$0	\$40,000	\$0
Fort Vermilion Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 243	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$31,637
Fort Vermilion Seniors' Club	\$6,500	\$6,000	\$6,000
High Level Agricultural Exhibition Association	\$0	\$4,900	\$7,000
High Level Rural Community Hall	\$0	\$0	\$16,000
L.A. on Wheels Society	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
La Crete Area Chamber of Commerce	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
La Crete Agricultural Society	\$115,000	\$103,000	\$103,000
La Crete Community Equine Centre	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
La Crete Ferry Campground Society	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
La Crete Field of Dreams Stampede Committee	\$0	\$0	\$9,000
La Crete Meals for Seniors	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
La Crete Polar Cats	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
La Crete Seniors Inn (drop-in centre)	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Mackenzie Ski Hill Society	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0
Rainbow Lake Youth Center	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000
Rocky Lane Agricultural Society	\$25,000	Gravel + \$25,000	Gravel + \$25,000
Zama Chamber of Commerce	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Mackenzie Frontier Tourist Association	\$17,500	\$12,500	\$12,500
Frontier Vet Services	\$75,000	\$85,000	\$85,000
Fort Vermilion Mackenzie Applied Research Association (MARA)	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)	\$28,000	\$28,000	\$28,000
High School Bursaries	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$25,000
Cemeteries	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
Miscellaneous Support of Events	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$565,850</b>	<b>\$638,250</b>	<b>\$611,487</b>
Mackenzie County Library Society (incl. utilities)	\$259,442	\$262,082	\$282,265
Fort Vermilion Recreation Board	\$367,951	\$378,775	\$366,379
La Crete Recreation Board	\$810,481	\$619,916	\$565,083
Zama Recreation Board	\$170,678	\$171,663	\$154,076
Tompkins Improvement Board	\$22,000	\$31,200	\$0
<b>Total Grants to Other Organizations</b>	<b>\$2,196,402</b>	<b>\$2,101,886</b>	<b>\$1,979,290</b>

# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

## AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD (ASB)



Mackenzie County’s Agricultural Service Board (ASB) consists of two municipally appointed Councillors and three municipally appointed members at Large.

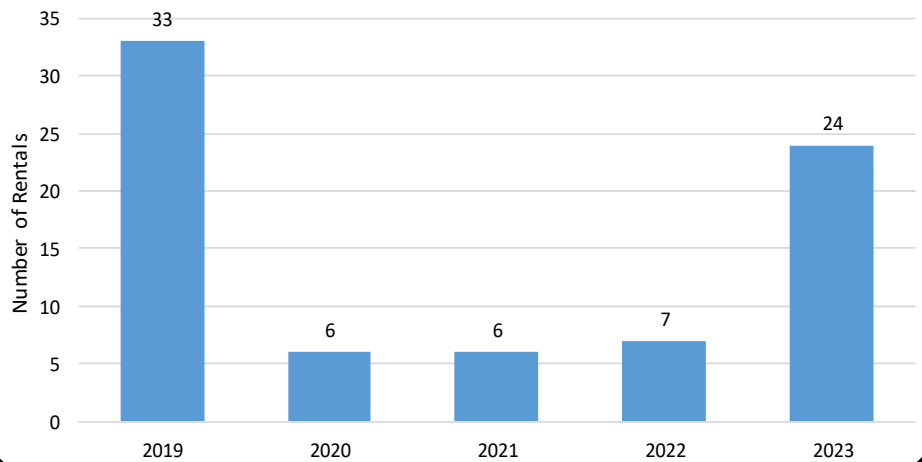
ASBs are established under the Alberta Agricultural Service Board Act and are responsible for administering and enforcing the provincial agricultural related acts; Weed Control Act, Agriculture Pest Act, Soil Conservation Act, Livestock Disease Act, and the Agricultural Service Board Act. This is achieved through our Strategic Plan (available on the Mackenzie County website) where the goals and strategies are outlined. The Strategic Plan has been updated this past year.

- Encourage development of new value-added agri-businesses.
- Promote sustainable agricultural policies and practices.
- Surface Water Management
- Appropriate land uses and preservation of agricultural lands within Mackenzie County and continual agricultural land expansion.
- Advocate for retention of industry professionals and public education.

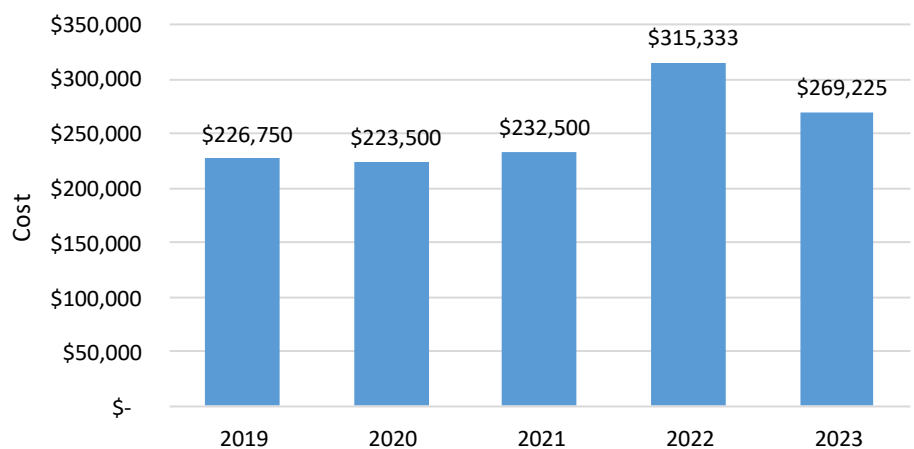
The ASB works closely and provides financial assistance to Mackenzie Applied Research Association (MARA).

MARA coordinates and conducts all applied agricultural and environmental research and provides extension services to local agricultural producers all from their farm in Fort Vermilion. This research is greatly beneficial for all producers in Mackenzie County in all aspects of agriculture operations. As a non profit, MARA relies heavily on Grants supplied by Mackenzie County. These Grants include a \$50,000 operating grant and also a \$10,000 environmental streaming grant that is in budget until 2025.

Pump & Pipe Rentals



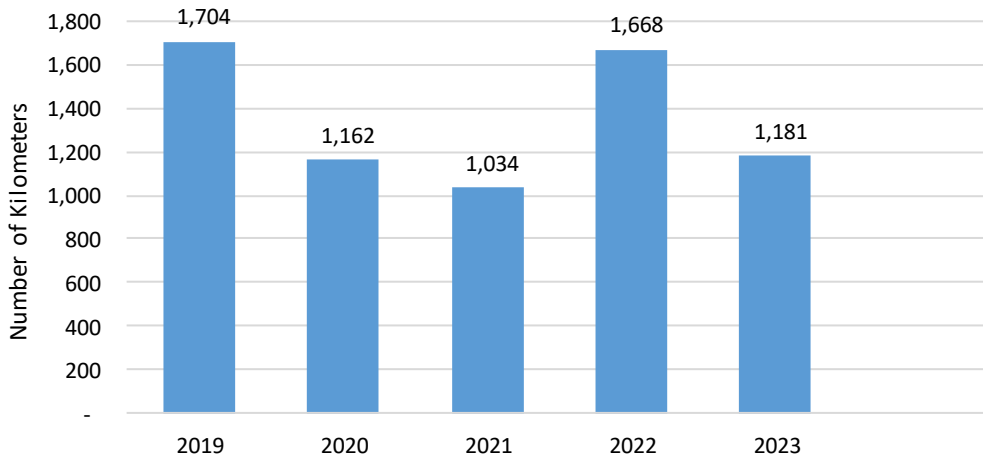
Roadside Grass Mowing



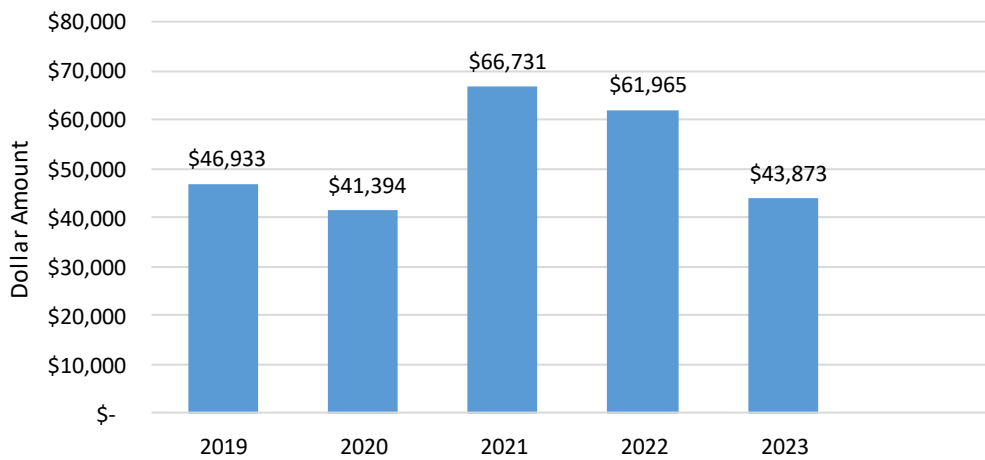


# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

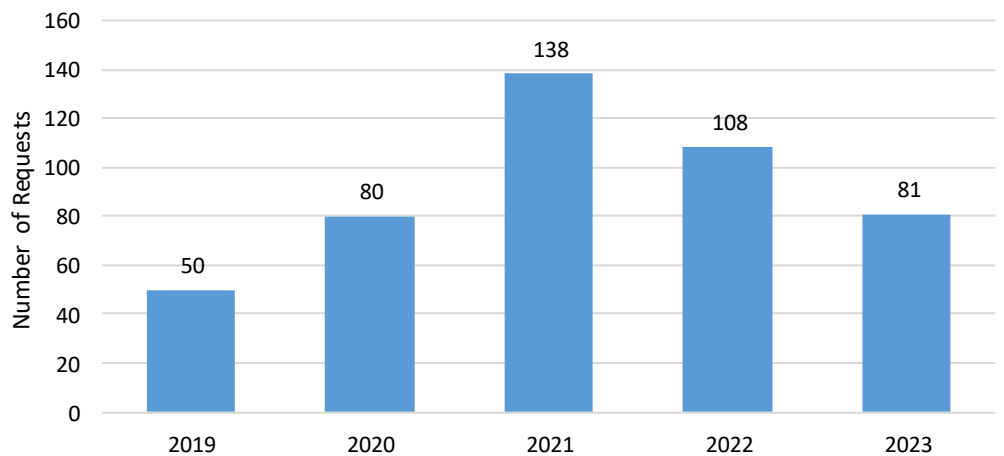
## Roadside Spraying - Kilometers Covered



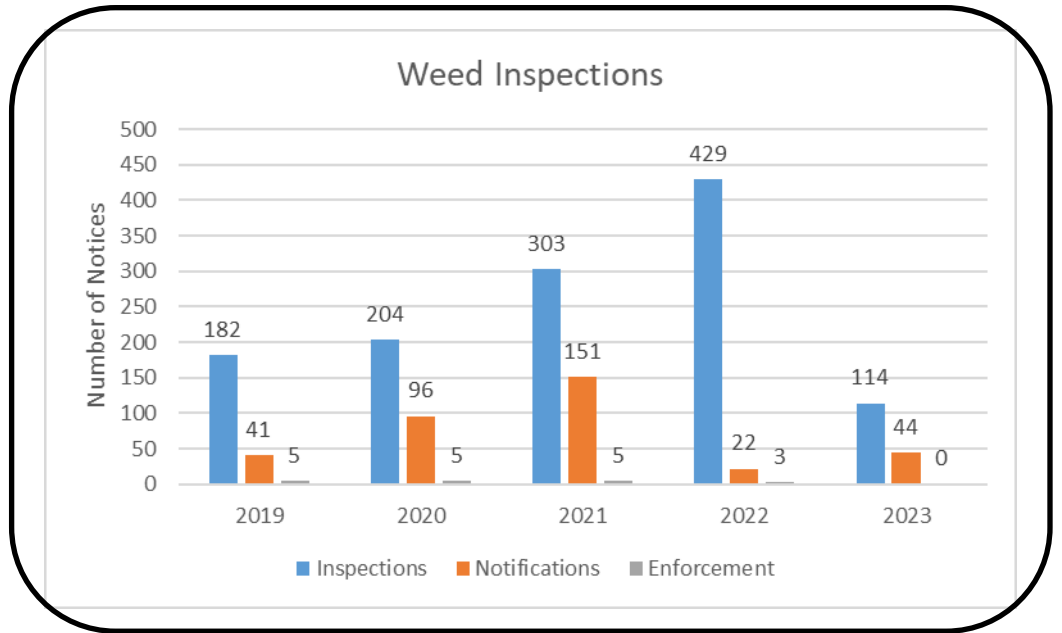
## Roadside Spraying - Cost



## "Do-Not-Spray" Requests



# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES



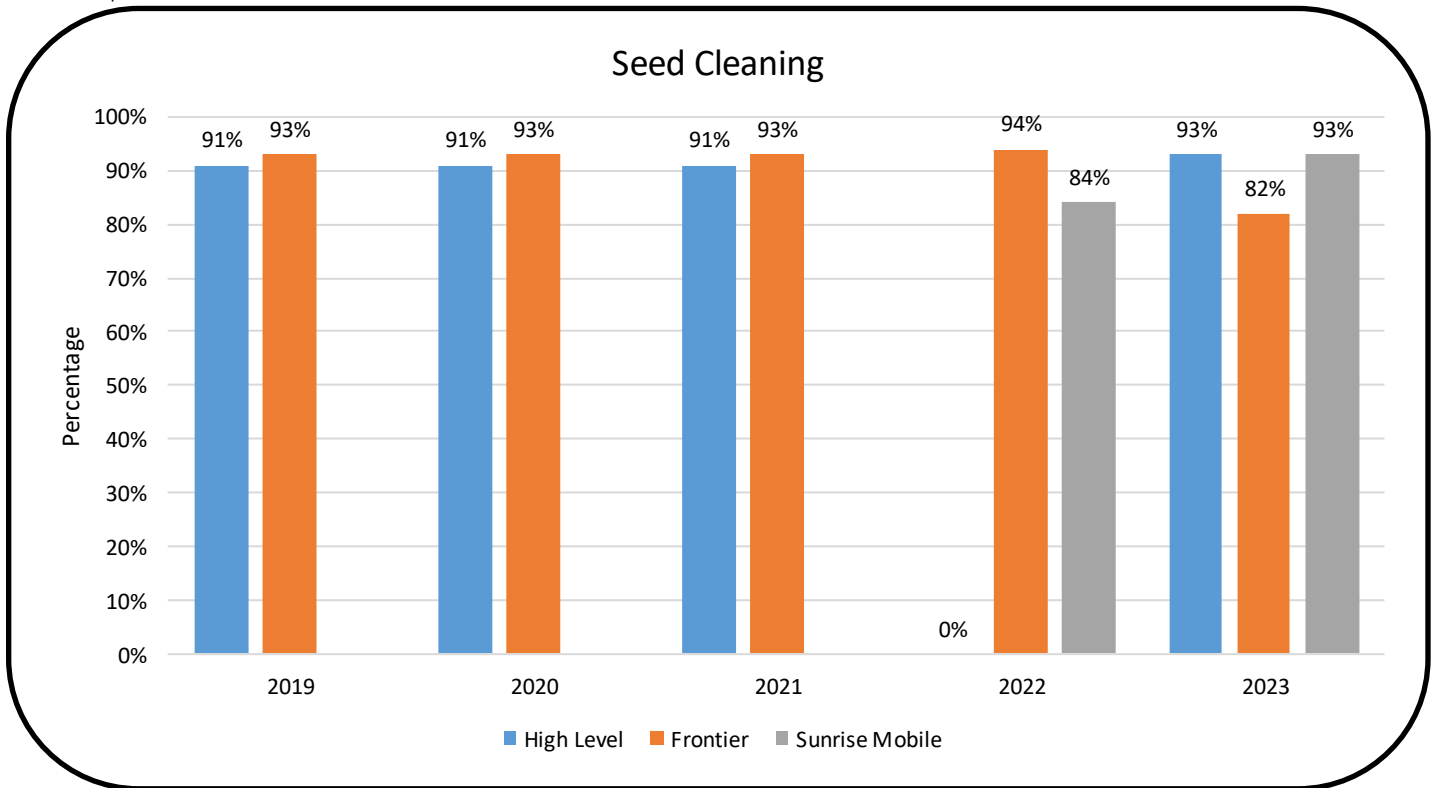
## Seed Cleaning Plant Inspections

Licenses are issued to Seed Cleaning Plants under the authority of the Weed Control Act. The purpose of licensing is to protect users from the spread of weeds due to faulty practices, design or maintenance of seed cleaning plants.

Plants are rated in two categories:

1. The design, maintenance and operation of the plant relating to the prevention of cross contamination of seeds.
2. The quality of the end product or seed produced.

The chart shows the scores of the High Level Seed Cleaning Co-op and the Frontier Seed Cleaning Co-op inspections. Plants must achieve at least 50% to operate.



# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

## Beaver Control

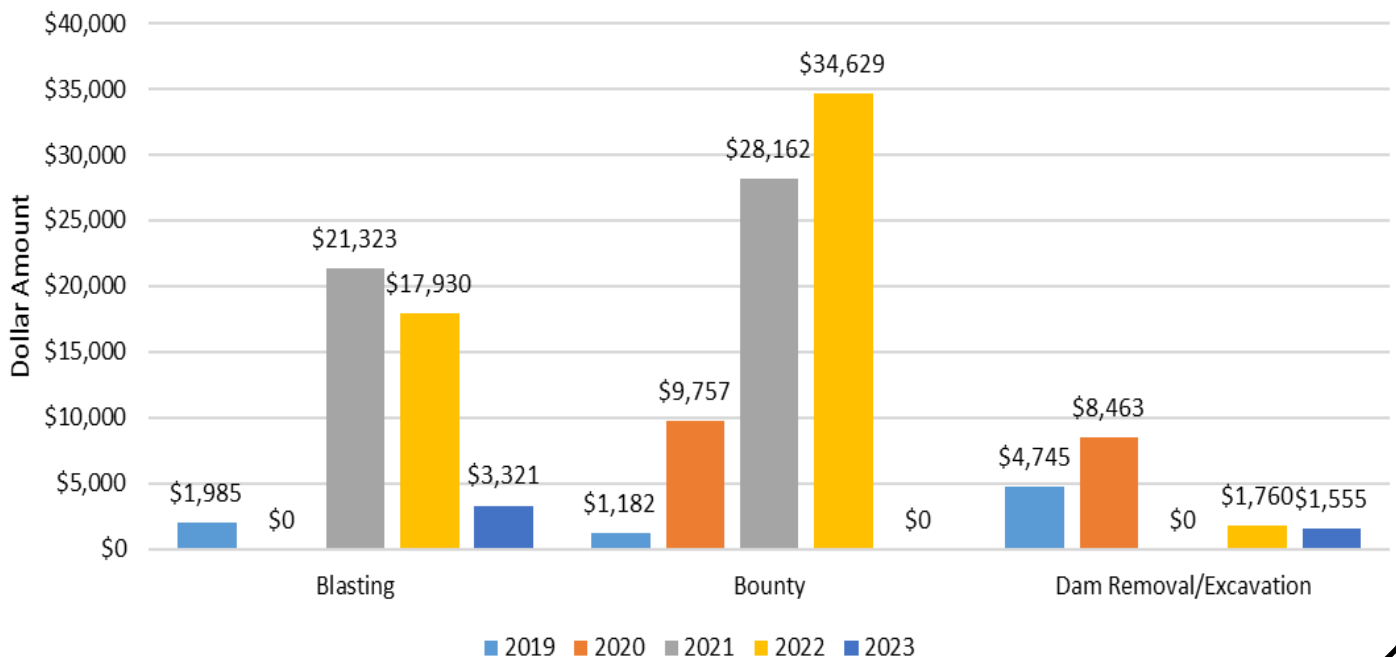
The County has a beaver bounty program to help producers deal with problem beavers that are flooding their agricultural land.

When a complaint is received from a landowner, the Agricultural Fieldman will inspect the area and decide which method of dam removal is appropriate (backhoe or blasting). Members from one of the two Local Trappers Associations will remove the beaver from the problem area to help ensure that the problem dam will not be recurring. The Local Trapper's Association receives a \$50 bounty for each beaver tail collected from problem areas.

The agricultural department now offers farmers support with beaver control at cost.



Beaver Control



# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mackenzie County recognizes the importance of a thriving and growing economy. We support economic activity through various decisions. Some examples are: we strive to keep a tax rate that is competitive, we prioritize a quick turnaround time for permits, we're flexible on zoning changes, and are willing to cost share on major infrastructure.

Additionally, Mackenzie County is a member of REDI, the Regional Economic Development Initiative for Northwest Alberta. This is a partnership of local governments and industry to advance economic development opportunities in the region. Below are highlights from REDI:

As part of its mandate to foster economic development and diversification in the region, REDI has spent the past year preparing the communities in our region to become more investment ready. REDI, in collaboration with Invest Alberta, has also provided coaching and training to local stakeholders on how to attract and retain investors and facilitated networking and collaboration among key partners. REDI is confident that the region is well-positioned to welcome new investments and support existing businesses in the coming years.

### Invest Alberta: Regional Investment Initiative

- REDI worked with Invest Alberta on the 'Alberta CAN: Regional Investment Initiative,' a collaborative venture aiming to raise the REDI region's profile as a high-impact, high-value investment destination.

### Site Selection Identification and Marketing Documents

- REDI created eleven certified sites spread across six communities in Northwest Alberta, with a two-page promotional document for each accredited site.
- REDI developed the criteria of thirty-three requirements to demonstrate that the property is primed for development and ready for investment.

### Investment Readiness – Community Profiles

- In 2023, REDI created six community investment documents highlighting opportunities in Alberta's Northwest.
- Proper promotional and educational material will allow REDI to focus on specific foreign investors.

### Foreign Direct Investment Promotional Video

- During 2023, REDI created a regional foreign direct investment video to raise investor knowledge, awareness, and interest in investing in Northwest Alberta.
- The video focused on the positives of our region and highlighted the value proposition of business cases.

### Video Series That Promotes Local Businesses

- REDI showcased successful businesses in our region that turn agricultural crops into marketable, value-added food products.
- The video series will focus on these companies and widen our scope in 2024.

### Northern Transportation Advocacy

- REDI is focused on northern transportation infrastructure and its impact on our ability to move our products to market.
- This coming year, REDI will focus on building awareness amongst governments and industry on the potential value of several infrastructure opportunities, such as a rail line connecting Northern Alberta with Alaska, the expansion of Highway 58 east through Wood Buffalo National Park and the connection to Fort Smith and eventually south to Fort McMurray, and West from Rainbow Lake to Fort Nelson.
- Corridor through the REDI region via Northwest Territories/Yukon with links to Norman Wells and port developments in Tuktoyaktuk.

### Digital Service Squad

- The digital service squad provided services and technical support to eligible small businesses in the REDI geographic region at no cost to the business.
- Eligible small businesses applied to the regional digital service squad for free technical support, such as help developing digital transformation plans and setting up and adopting digital technologies such as websites, Google business profiles, social media, e-commerce, and more.





# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

## REDI (continued)

### Looking Ahead to 2024

REDI will work with Invest Alberta on the 'Alberta CAN: Regional Investment Initiative,' a collaborative venture aiming to raise the REDI region's profile as a high-impact, high-value investment destination. The Initiative is designed to enhance investment attraction capacity, identify investment opportunities, and provide an avenue for ongoing, mutually beneficial collaboration. A series of collaborative information workshops will take place with Invest Alberta representatives playing the role of investors/site selectors and providing feedback on what assets and information investors are searching for during a tour of the community.

The objective is to create a community investment portfolio highlighting the opportunities in Alberta's Northwest. REDI plans to identify eleven certified sites across six communities and will develop promotional material for each site. Community profiles will be created with demographics and employment stats along with other relevant information for the community. The promotional and educational material will be available on the "Invest Alberta" website.

Also, in the works is a video series on the region's successful businesses, focusing on companies that process raw natural resources into commercial products. REDI would like to also create a regional foreign direct investment video to entice foreign investors to the region.

REDI is concentrating on northern transportation infrastructure and its effect on the regions ability to move local products to market. This coming year, emphasis will be on building awareness amongst governments and industry on the potential value of several infrastructure prospects.

### REDI Pillars

REDI's mission is to *promote and strengthen Northwest Alberta's economy by highlighting and investing in our key industries.*

- *Agriculture ~ Our region offers exceptional agricultural potential, and Northwest Alberta agriculture accounts for a large part of the local economy.*
- *Forestry ~ Northwest Alberta has vast timber resources. Forestry activities in our region employ a significant portion of the area's labour force.*
- *Energy ~ Strong petroleum reserves in our region allow Northwest Alberta oil & gas development to contribute significantly to Alberta's economy.*
- *Transportation ~ Important work is being done in and around Northwest Alberta all the time. We've got the infrastructure that it takes to transport what's needed.*
- *Tourism ~ Northern Alberta tourism has become popular with those looking for outdoor adventure. There's plenty to do in our unique region all year round.*
- *Communities ~ Our commitment to a strong and diverse economy allows our residents to enjoy a high quality of life in any one of our small but active communities.*

Visit Regional Economic Development Initiative, Northwest Alberta online, [www.rediregion.ca](http://www.rediregion.ca)



# INTERNAL/EXTERNAL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

## LIBRARIES

**MISSION STATEMENT** *To enrich lives and communities through universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning and literacy.*

**VISION STATEMENT** *To develop strong libraries that are dynamic community destinations for knowledge, inspiration, innovation and cultural awareness.*



The Mackenzie County Library Board (MCLB) was jointly created by the Province of Alberta and Mackenzie County on November 12, 1998. We are governed under the Provincial Libraries Act which sets out the powers and duties of the Board, and gives the Board full management and control of public library services within Mackenzie County. The Alberta Libraries Act charges library boards with providing 'comprehensive and efficient service' to their communities, while allowing the ability to adapt and be responsive to community needs.

The MCLB has three member libraries located in the Hamlets of Fort Vermilion, La Crete and Zama City. The MCLB has a reciprocal partnership agreement with the Town of High Level Library to offer services across jurisdictional lines. The MCLB partners with the La Crete Library and Zama City Library Societies to provide day to day operation of their respective libraries, through detailed operating agreements. The MCLB recently assumed the operation of the Fort Library in conjunction with the Librarian.



### Mackenzie County Libraries La Crete ~ Fort Vermilion ~ Zama City Annual Report 2023

We had 143,825 trackable checkouts... That is about 11 items per County resident	5301 library active cardholders, that encompasses over 41% of our current population!!	All three libraries offered unique programs and events over the year	We continued to add to and promote our e-services in 2023!

The libraries added 3756 new items last year	Bringing the total in-house collections to 86,471 items	Music downloads & streaming. eBooks, Comics Magazines, Languages	The library had 3381 open hours in 2023! Plus program partnerships and events!

Inter-library loans within our region 652 times

In 2023 Our Funding came from:  
65% Municipal  
21% Provincial  
13% Library /Other  
2023 Municipal and Provincial contribution total \$322,097 (not including building and utilities)

Services delivered by 12 Dedicated staff and hundreds of Volunteer Hours!	Our libraries have 10 public computers and over 700 sq m of space	There were also 100's of connections to our WiFi, many connecting from the parking lots

Non-traditional lending like cake pans, snowshoes and even items like a jerky gun and an egg incubator!	Community support of our programs, outreach and non-conventional lending continues to grow!	More home-schooling and community supports!





**Mackenzie County**