

Owen Sound

Council values the professionalism and commitment of the Owen Sound Police Service and recognizes the benefits of community-based policing. The question is not service quality. The question is long-term affordability and sustainability for Owen Sound taxpayers.

PURPOSE:

The City of Owen Sound respectfully seeks guidance from the Ministry of the Solicitor General to review the process, prerequisites, expected timelines, and engagement requirements should Owen Sound Council wish to formally request an OPP costing assessment.

This would allow Council to proceed with a clear understanding of the requirements before determining whether to take any further steps.

CONTEXT:

In 2022, Council initiated a corporate-wide Service Review. Since that time, Council and Administration have examined municipal service areas to identify efficiencies, sustainability measures, modernization opportunities, and transparent approaches to managing public resources. Police Services were not included in that review.

Through recent correspondence to the City, the Owen Sound Police Service Board identified the need to undertake a comprehensive review of the OSPS facility to determine whether the existing building can reasonably accommodate the current and future operational needs of the service or whether alternative accommodation options should be considered.

Under the Community Safety and Policing Act, the municipality is legislatively responsible for providing and maintaining adequate police facilities, necessitating this request.

At the Council meeting of July 27, Council received a Staff Report that sought to retain a consultant, at a cost of

up to \$100,000, to undertake a facilities needs assessment of the OSPS building.

Council did not approve the Staff recommendation to engage with a consultant, but rather had discussion about financial costs around the sustainability and affordability of community policing vs the Provincial OPP model, since the City would be required to provide a facility in either option.

Council passed the following resolution: R-260727-009
“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-26-071 respecting a facility needs assessment for the Owen Sound Police Service building, City Council directs staff to bring forward a report in September 2026 outlining the steps required to obtain a costing estimate from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).”

This request arises from the same principle applied across City operations: ensuring every major municipal service remains financially sustainable for taxpayers over the long term.

Owen Sound

Evaluating Policing Service Delivery Models Through Comparable Municipal Benchmarks:

BMA benchmarking identifies a significant cost gap between Owen Sound's municipal policing model. Collingwood offers a practical, evidence-based benchmark for assessing policing affordability in Owen Sound.

The BMA benchmarking study provides a useful comparison because it examines municipalities of similar size and operating scale.

In 2024, Owen Sound reported police net costs of \$383 per capita compared to a cohort average of approximately \$206 per capita, while Collingwood reported \$193 per capita. Owen Sound also reported police net costs of \$399 per \$100,000 of assessment, compared to \$103 in Collingwood.

These results place Owen Sound at the upper end of the comparator group and suggest there is value in understanding how different policing delivery models influence costs.

While several municipalities in the BMA cohort fall within a similar population range, Collingwood is one of the most relevant comparators when considering an OPP policing model.

Both communities serve as regional centres, support tourism and commercial activity, and are frequently used as municipal benchmarks to each other. Unlike Owen Sound's community policing model, Collingwood receives policing through the OPP, making it a particularly

meaningful comparison when exploring alternative service delivery options.

Geography further strengthens the comparison. Owen Sound is effectively surrounded by municipalities policed by the OPP, including Meaford, Georgian Bluffs, Chatsworth, and The Blue Mountains.

As a result, OPP policing is already the predominant policing model throughout much of the surrounding region.

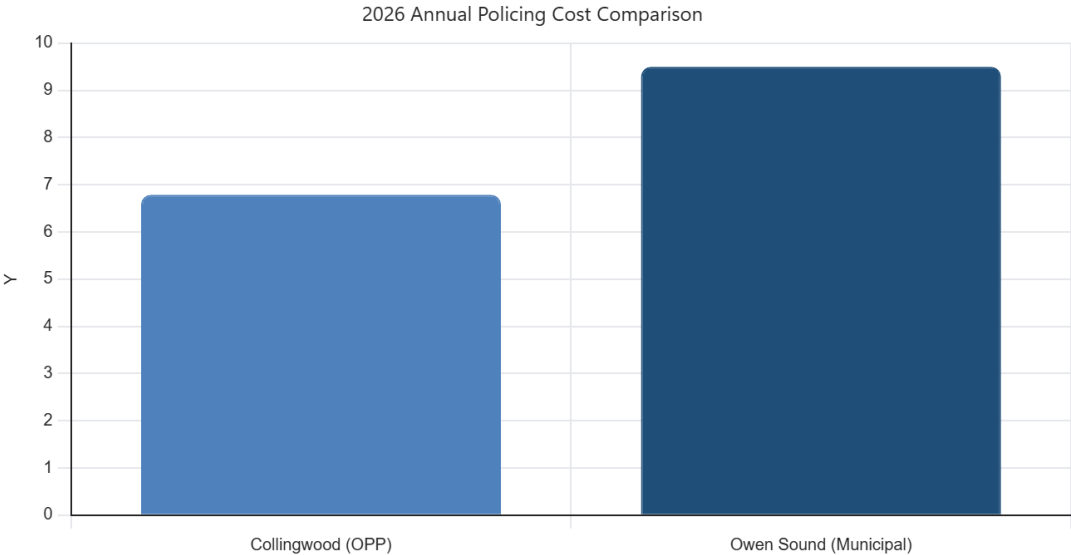
For these reasons, Collingwood has been used as the primary comparator within the BMA group when evaluating an OPP costing.

It combines similar population size, regional significance, geographic proximity, and a different policing delivery model, providing for a practical and objective reference point as the City continues its broader service review and financial sustainability work.

Owen Sound

ANNUAL COST GAP
\$2.7M

Less annual tax levy pressure if a comparable cost structure were achieved. ~\$116 per resident based on approximately 23,000 residents

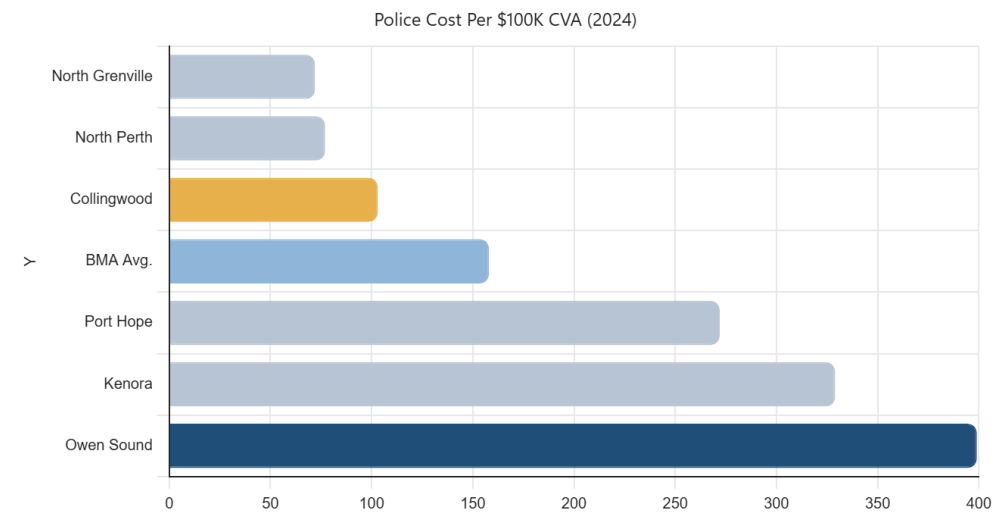
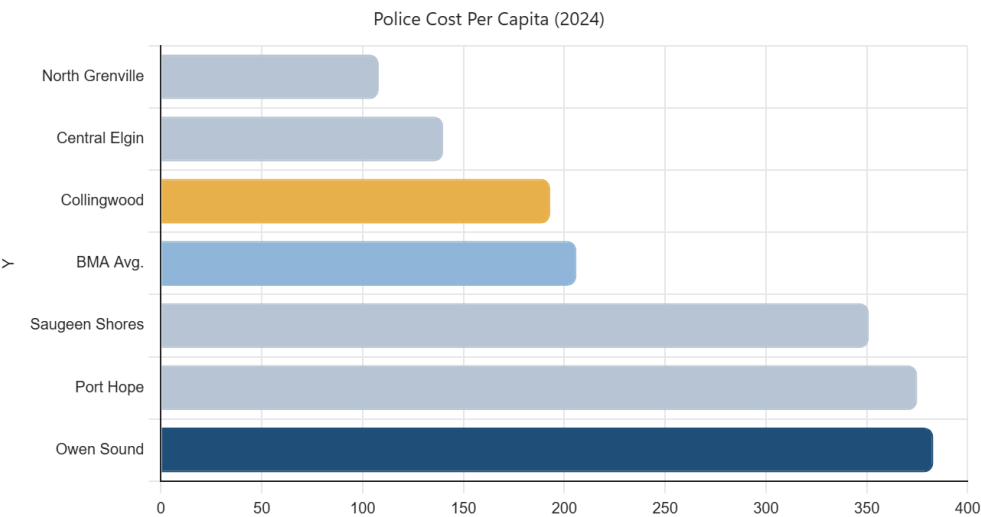


	Collingwood	Owen Sound	
Base Service	2,928,349.00		
Calls for Service	3,310,252.00		
Uniformed Officers		7,974,952.00	
Civilians and Dispatch		1,188,821.00	
	6,238,601.00	-	9,163,773.00
Overtime	264,921.00	-	** included in Uniformed O
Court Security	287,042.00	300,685.00	
Prisoner Transport	29,998.00	7,375.00	
Police Board Costs	-	31,725.00	
Year End Adj	734,614.00	0	
	7,555,176.00	9,503,558.00	
2026 Billing before SAC	6,673,400.00	9,503,558.00	
2026 SAC	230,093.00		
2024 Adjustment	- 116,518.00		
Total Billing	6,786,975.00	-	9,503,558.00
			2,716,583.00

Owen Sound

Owen Sound is nearly DOUBLE cost per capita.
\$193 v. \$383 (Collingwood v Owen Sound)

Owen Sound is about 3.9x Collingwood
per \$100 CVA.



Owen Sound

Requested guidance from the Solicitor General:

The City is seeking clarity on the process so Council can determine whether it wishes to formally proceed with an OPP costing assessment.

Specifically, the City requests guidance on:

1. What formal steps are required for a municipality currently served by a municipal police service to obtain an OPP costing assessment?
2. What data, documentation, Council resolutions, Police Service Board engagement, or background studies are typically required before the Province will undertake (approve) such a review?
3. What opportunities exist for consultation with the municipality, the Police Service Board, police leadership, Council, and community stakeholders?
4. What timelines and key decision points should Council understand from initial inquiry through completion of a costing assessment?
5. Are there recent examples or best practices from Ontario municipalities that have explored or completed a similar review?