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# CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 24, 2020

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# CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 24, 2020

1:00 p.m.

Meeting to be held electronically.

## **Agenda**

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Adoption of September 9, 2020 Minutes
3. Election of Chair
4. Election of Vice Chair
5. Developing an Action Plan – Facilitated Discussion
6. Correspondence – SWIFT Launches RFP to Expand High-speed Connectivity in Elgin County
7. Date of Next Meeting
8. Adjournment

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# CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE ORIENTATION SESSION

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**Meeting:** Connectivity Committee Orientation Session  
**Date:** September 9, 2020  
**Time:** 1:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Webex

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**Attendees:** Dave Mennill, Warden  
Tom Marks, Councillor  
Dominique Giguère, Councillor  
Shawn Southern, Community Member  
Justin Pennings, Community Member  
Joshua Kiirya, Community Member  
Mike Andrews, Community Member

**Staff:** Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer  
Jim Bundschuh, Director of Financial Services  
Alan Smith, General Manager of Economic Development  
Al Reitsma, Manager of Information Technology  
Cecil Coxen, IT Manager – Township of Malahide  
Katherine Thompson, Supervisor of Legislative Services and  
Community Relations  
Carolyn Krahn, Legislative Services Coordinator

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order

The Connectivity Committee Orientation Session met this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 1:08 p.m.

### 2. Introductions

The newly appointed members of the Committee introduced themselves to County Council members and staff supports.

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### **3. Review of Terms and Conditions and Code of Conduct**

The Supervisor of Legislative Services and Community Relations presented an overview of the Committee's Terms of Reference and Mandate and the Elgin County Code of Conduct.

### **4. Connectivity Challenges in Elgin County**

The Manager of Information Technology presented an overview of the connectivity challenges in Elgin County followed by a presentation from the General Manager of Economic Development on the current state of connectivity in the County.

### **5. Internet Forum**

The General Manager of Economic Development proposed that the Committee host a Rural Internet Forum to assist the Committee in its planning of next steps. The Committee reviewed the Forum's draft agenda.

### **6. Review of Preliminary Resources**

Councillor Giguère expressed her hopes that the Committee will work together to come up with a number of solutions to the connectivity challenges in Elgin. Warden Mennill agreed that addressing the County's connectivity challenges is a necessity, and Councillor Marks added that the pandemic has heightened the sense of urgency to address connectivity in the community.

### **7. Date of Next Meeting**

The Warden suggested the next meeting be facilitated by Jennifer Kirkham to help the Committee develop their plan of action. The Committee agreed to meet again on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. provided that Jennifer Kirkham was available to meet.

### **8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

# Connectivity Committee

Developing an action plan



# Agenda

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## Key topics for discussion

Understanding the challenges

Establishing our purpose and setting goals

Meeting our goals

Planning our next steps



**What are the challenges,  
barriers and issues related  
to internet connectivity in  
Elgin?**

# **PURPOSE & GOALS**

## **Strategic Plan**

Within the priority “Growing Elgin: To be the place where people want to live, work and play”, Council’s objective “enhancing quality of place” includes the development of a business case with private providers to ensure wider access to reliable, affordable internet.

## **Terms of Reference**

Members of the Advisory Committee shall:

- Develop a program to help solve Elgin’s connectivity challenges.
- Facilitate and enable stakeholder engagement and consultation sessions. Ensure the engagement and creation of opportunities for involvement of residents, stakeholders and businesses across Elgin County.
- Work in collaboration with staff and County Council in developing possible solutions and programs to support enhanced connectivity in Elgin County.
- Develop a plan for implementing the goals and directions recommended by the Committee, including metrics and deliverables.

## **How will we know if we have achieved our goals?**

- What do deliverables look like?**
- How can we measure our performance?**

# HOW CAN WE MEET OUR GOALS?

**1**

## *Feedback from ISPs*

How can we develop a business case for local providers?

**3**

## *Local Internet Forum*

What are the goals?  
Review the forum structure.

**2**

## *Local Programs*

What type of solution can be put in place to support local ISPs?

(Solutions should complement the SWIFT project.)

**4**

## *Committee Composition*

Is additional expertise required to support the Committee?

# Next Steps





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## SWIFT Launches RFP to Expand High-Speed Connectivity in Elgin County

The Elgin County RFP was released March 23, 2020. Contracts will be awarded, and service provider agreements will be put in place shortly after the RFP closes on November 27, 2020.

**(Elgin, ON)** September 8, 2020 - Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) is pleased to announce it has issued a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** for up to \$6.1 million to increase access to high-speed internet in Elgin County.

"Broadband has now become a necessary utility as essential activities such as work, education, shopping and accessing public services continue to move online," says SWIFT Board Chair, David Mayberry. "Our current reality has emphasized, more so than ever, the importance and need for greater connectivity across our region. That is why SWIFT, in partnership with the Government of Ontario and Canada, along with our municipal partners are pleased to announce that access to high-speed internet will soon be a reality for many more residents living in Elgin County."

"The need for fast, reliable connectivity has never been more pressing," says Elgin County Warden, David Mennill. "Elgin County Council is pleased that this significant milestone has been reached in a project that has been a priority of Council for several terms. This project will open up enhanced economic, educational and leisure opportunities for rural residents in Elgin County and across southwestern Ontario."

"This announcement brings us one step closer to achieving SWIFT's vision of greater digital equity between rural and urban populations in southwest Ontario," says Elgin County Councillor and SWIFT Board Member, Tom Marks. "Fast, reliable broadband internet will ensure that Elgin County residents and businesses have access to the same level of infrastructure as their urban counterparts and are able to compete provincially, nationally and internationally."

"SWIFT, through its public and private partnerships, is advancing the expansion of high-speed networks across our region to close internet service gaps," says SWIFT Executive Director, Barry Field. "In the race to increase connectivity in our unserved and underserved communities, today's announcement represents an important step in expanding broadband internet within the County to provide reliable access to high-speed services."

Prequalified service providers have until November 27, 2020 to submit network designs and proposals to address broadband service gaps in **eligible funding areas** throughout the County.



To identify high-quality projects, SWIFT will evaluate all eligible proposals against a predefined assessment criteria.

When evaluating and selecting projects for funding, SWIFT takes into consideration the following: ability to provide 50 Mbps down, 10 Mbps up (50/10) service or greater, number of premises passed, future scalability of the network, and service provider contribution proportion, among other project selection factors.

Selected and **approved projects** will be announced once SWIFT has completed its evaluation assessment, negotiated contracts and awarded funding to projects that score the highest based on the evaluation process.

Operating on a cost sharing basis, SWIFT will leverage federal and provincial funding to subsidize up to a maximum of 2/3 of the eligible costs for awarded projects to deliver reliable internet to more people living in Elgin County.

For more information about SWIFT, please visit [www.swiftruralbroadband.ca](http://www.swiftruralbroadband.ca).

### **Quick Facts:**

- SWIFT is currently overseeing a \$209 million Southwestern Ontario broadband expansion plan that will connect 22% of the region's underserved premises over the next 3 years.
- The Government of Ontario and Canada have committed up to \$63.7 million each to support SWIFT. The project also leverages additional funding from municipal partners and private sector investors.

### **About SWIFT:**

Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) is a non-profit regional broadband project initiated by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus to subsidize the construction of high-speed broadband networks across Southwestern Ontario.

The project was approved for funding under the New Building Canada Fund – Small Communities Fund (NBCF-SCF), a joint federal and provincial infrastructure funding program, and leverages additional funding from municipal partners and private sector investors to improve access to broadband services across the region.

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