

CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 25, 2021
2:00 p.m.
Meeting to be held electronically.

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
 2. Adoption of February 11, 2021 Minutes
 3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof
 4. Connectivity Committee Action Plan – Reviewing the Connectivity Strategy
 5. Correspondence
 - a. Letter from WOWC and SWIFT regarding a Broadband Infrastructure Meeting with the MPs and MPPs of Western Ontario.
 6. Date of Next Meeting
 7. Adjournment
- 

Meeting: Connectivity Committee
Date: February 11, 2021
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Webex

Attendees: Tom Marks, Warden and Committee Chair
 Dominique Giguère, Councillor and Committee Vice Chair
 Duncan McPhail, Councillor
 Mike Andrews, Community Member
 Justin Pennings, Community Member
 Joshua Kiirya, Community Member

Staff: Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer
 Jim Bundschuh, Director of Financial Services
 Al Reitsma, Manager of IT
 Jeremy Sharkey, IT Coordinator
 Cecil Coxen, IT Manager – Township of Malahide
 Katherine Thompson, Supervisor of Legislative Services
 Carolyn Krahn, Legislative Services Coordinator

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The Connectivity Committee met this 11th day of February, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Councillor McPhail
 Seconded by: Mike Andrews

RESOLVED THAT the agenda be approved.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	

Councillor McPhail	Yes	
Mike Andrews	Yes	
Justin Pennings	Yes	
Warden Marks	Yes	
	5	0

- Motion Carried.

3. Adoption of January 28, 2021 Minutes

Moved by: Councillor Giguère

Seconded by: Councillor McPhail

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting be adopted.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	
Councillor McPhail	Yes	
Mike Andrews	Yes	
Justin Pennings	Yes	
Warden Marks	Yes	
	5	0

- Motion Carried.

Joshua Kiiryia joined the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

4. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None.

5. Connectivity Committee Action Plan – Reviewing the Connectivity Strategy

The Chief Administrative Officer reviewed the Committee follow up items coming out of the Connectivity Strategy Discussion Guide.

The Committee directed staff to determine the internal capacity to support the Committee’s action plan and to provide a follow up report with recommendations

for action items that can be completed by staff and action items that would require additional support from a consultant or technical expert.

Following the completion and review of a technical and current state assessment, the Committee agreed to determine the desired state of connectivity service levels in Elgin County.

6. Canada Infrastructure Bank – Director of Financial Services

The Director of Financial Services provided an overview of financing for large scale broadband projects available from the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB). According to the CIB, large scale broadband projects will have a minimum investment of \$50 million. The minimum investment amount would likely prevent local ISPs from qualifying for CIB funding.

7. Correspondence

- i. AMO Policy Update – Expanded Library Broadband**
- ii. Shawn Southern with a letter regarding his resignation from the Connectivity Committee**

Moved by: Justin Pennings
 Seconded by: Mike Andrews

RESOLVED THAT correspondence items 1-2 be received; and

THAT Shawn Southern’s resignation be accepted with regret.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	
Councillor McPhail	Yes	
Mike Andrews	Yes	
Justin Pennings	Yes	
Joshua Kiirya	Yes	
Warden Marks	Yes	
	6	0

- Motion Carried.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on February 25, 2021 at 2:00 pm.

9. Adjournment

Moved by: Councillor McPhail

Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

RESOLVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Recorded Vote

	Yes	No
Councillor Giguère	Yes	
Councillor McPhail	Yes	
Mike Andrews	Yes	
Justin Pennings	Yes	
Joshua Kiirya	Yes	
Warden Marks	Yes	
	6	0

- Motion Carried.

Connectivity Strategy Update

Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer

February 25, 2021



ElginCounty
Progressive by Nature

Agenda

- ▶ Discussion Guide: follow up
 - ▶ Elgin County Mapping Capabilities (presentation – Brian Lima, County Engineer)
 - ▶ Consultant Role – Committee Discussion
- ▶ Process for Letters of Support
- ▶ Next Steps

Discussion Guide

- ▶ On February 11, 2021, the Connectivity Committee reviewed a *Connectivity Strategy: Committee Discussion Guide*.
 - ▶ Introduction:
 - ▶ Executive Summary and Background Materials
 - ▶ Background Materials
 - ▶ Link to Council's Strategic Plan & Connectivity Committee Membership
 - ▶ Part I: Preliminary Data & Assessment of the Problem
 - ▶ The Problem
 - ▶ How Serious is the “gap”?
 - ▶ Follow up: technical assessment/needs assessment of served/unserved/underserved areas (**consultant**)
 - ▶ Survey Results
 - ▶ Lack of Telecommunications Infrastructure
 - ▶ Needs Assessment
 - ▶ Follow up: Step 1 – Mapping (considering local challenges/elevation/tree cover, etc.)

Discussion Guide

- ▶ Part I: Preliminary Data & Assessment of the Problem *Continued*

- ▶ Needs Assessment

- ▶ Follow up:

- ▶ Technical assessment/Needs Assessment of served/unserved/underserved areas (**consultant**)

- ▶ **After the technical assessment, the Committee will define the “desired state”**

- ▶ Step 1 – Mapping (considering local challenges/elevation/tree cover, etc.)

- ▶ Step 2 – Inventory assets (government & civic buildings) and include on map

- ▶ Ongoing work: assessment of demographic needs by municipality including economic challenges/opportunities and emergency preparedness

Discussion Guide

- ▶ Part II: Introduction & Planning – Developing a Connectivity Strategy
 - ▶ Introduction & Planning
 - ▶ What is a Connectivity Strategy
 - ▶ Importance of Community Engagement
 - ▶ Challenges to Connecting Elgin
 - ▶ Current State Assessment
 - ▶ Follow up:
 - ▶ Step 1 – Develop a connectivity map (to include SWIFT Network program, once approved)
 - ▶ Step 2 – Collect, organize and make publicly available baseline data and key contact information including:
 - ▶ Population and estimated number of households, businesses and institutions located within targeted service areas;
 - ▶ Types of available offerings from ISPs, including any related issues (capacity or speed limitations, if available)
 - ▶ Ongoing work: assessment of demographic needs by municipality including economic challenges/opportunities and emergency preparedness
 - ▶ Seek unbiased, objective technical expertise to assess which technology solutions are most cost effective and might work best in underserved/unserved areas of Elgin's municipalities. (**consultant**)

Discussion Guide

- ▶ Part II: Introduction & Planning – Developing a Connectivity Strategy *Continued*
 - ▶ Vendor Assessment
 - ▶ Follow up:
 - ▶ Step 1 – Collect, organize and make publicly available types of available offerings from ISPs
- ▶ Part III: Strategic Framework – Developing a Connectivity Strategy
 - ▶ Guiding Principles
 - ▶ Follow up: Review at a later date
 - ▶ Partnerships
 - ▶ Follow up: Review and support local ISP applications for external (non-County) sources of funding. Determine what financial support the Committee will recommend that Council provide (future meeting)
 - ▶ Non-Financial Strategies
 - ▶ Follow up: Consider “exit interviews” with local ISPs (what could we do better?)
 - ▶ Follow up: Explore measures to reduce deployment costs, speed up deployment and reduce barriers to entry.
 - ▶ **County Engineer – minimum depth requirement discussion, access to intersections, bridges, roads, etc.**
 - ▶ Leverage assets already in place
 - ▶ Follow up: Identify and map current public and community assets (vertical) – consider other privately-owned assets in future, if necessary
 - ▶ **County Engineer – update regarding tower on County property**

Discussion Guide

- ▶ Part III: Strategic Framework – Developing a Connectivity Strategy *Continued*
 - ▶ Non-Financial Strategies
 - ▶ Follow up: reduce administrative burden by working with Local Municipal Partners to understand and refine the local application requirements and permit processes and costs.
 - ▶ Follow up: establish a single point of contact in the County to work with telcoms (suggested Director of IT Services, once hired)
 - ▶ Contemplating funding
 - ▶ It is recommended that a funding program be designed following the technical assessment (**consultant**)
- ▶ Part IV: Next Steps/Implementation – Developing a Connectivity Strategy
 - ▶ Checklist Part I – covered in previous slides
 - ▶ Checklist Part II – included in Consultant Support slide (many items for future discussion)
- ▶ Part V: Additional Information & Resources
 - ▶ SWIFT Network Investment
 - ▶ Canada's Connectivity Strategy
 - ▶ Provincial/Federal Funding Programs
 - ▶ Additional Resources
 - ▶ Definitions

“Exit Interviews”

- ▶ Survey – ISPs who have recently completed work in Elgin
 - ▶ Suggested questions? (for discussion)
 - ▶ Challenges/Opportunities
 - ▶ Other?
- ▶ Opportunity for ISPs to have a discussion with Committee Members or present to the Committee.

Consultant Support – ideas

Discussion – what can be done in-house and what is more appropriately handled by a consultant (expert)

- ▶ Need expert support for the development of a community plan for connectivity including unbiased, objective technical expertise to assess which technology solutions are most cost effective and might work best to reach unserved/underserved areas of Elgin’s municipalities.
 - ▶ Consultant to recommend community specific solutions and possible funding program?
- ▶ Develop an overview and summary identifying existing last-mile and transport solutions, including key internet gateways/access points, “choke points”, areas of limited capacity, other? Documented support as to practical considerations around speed and availability.
- ▶ Identify technologies/network solutions available (wired, wireless, fixed wireless, last mile, satellite) and identify a solution for underserved/unserved areas, illustrating major network design and key components (building upon the maps developed in-house)
- ▶ Identify the best solution(*) for underserved/unserved areas (*) – Committee to define “best solution”
 - ▶ Identify key milestones and suggested timing?
 - ▶ Identify partnership and funding opportunities (ways the County can support ISPs)?
 - ▶ Public engagement?
- ▶ Develop a well-defined scope for the program including a budgetary framework with preliminary cost estimates (goal – most effective/impactful solution)

Letters of Support (no financial investment)

The Committee identified four (4) primary challenges that need to be addressed:

1. Availability
2. Affordability
3. Speed
4. Awareness

Discuss – under what circumstances would the Committee not provide a letter of support?

Suggest that Council delegate this responsibility to the Warden and reviewed by the Connectivity Committee when time permits.

Questions/ Next Steps



Thursday, January 14, 2021

Re: Broadband Infrastructure Meeting with WOWC and SWIFT – February 5, 2021

Dear MPs and MPPs of Western Ontario,

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) and Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) to invite you to an important **virtual meeting on Friday, February 5 at 1 p.m.**, to highlight the success of recent SWIFT projects and receive feedback on next steps from both the provincial and federal governments.

As you are aware, increased funding from both levels of government is urgently needed to address Southwestern Ontario's large connectivity gaps, and to allow our region to close the digital divide and restart its economy. This has never been more evident than during the last year, with the increase in demand for internet service as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This meeting, hosted by the WOWC along with SWIFT and its partners, will take place following the WOWC AGM, and will be attended by all the regional Heads of Council in Western Ontario. The presence of our MPs and MPPs for this discussion is critical in advancing this priority.

SWIFT, which has proven to be an effective and efficient means for implementing broadband within Southwestern Ontario, is prepared to act immediately and aggressively in order to implement a SWIFT 2.0 Gigaproject, aimed at providing broadband service to 95% of all residents in Southwestern Ontario, should funding be made available by the provincial and federal governments.

Specifically, the WOWC and SWIFT are seeking your guidance relative to this broadband expansion in Southwestern Ontario. The regional model continues to be one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to deliver broadband infrastructure projects over large geographic areas; however, a regional project requires the financial commitment of all three levels of government. Likewise, our partners in the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) and the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) share our support for a regional model.

Given the fast-approaching deadlines for applications for the Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) and Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) programs, the WOWC requires a definitive response for the 127 municipalities across Southwestern Ontario, representing some 3.5 million residents. If regional projects are not possible at this time, we need to find alternative ways of supporting our municipalities in navigating the different provincial and federal programs.

Time is of the essence, and we require your advice and guidance. Once again, we look forward to meeting with you on February 5 and working collaboratively in the mutual best interests of our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Ginn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jim Ginn, Chair, WOWC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Mayberry". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

David Mayberry, Chair, SWIFT