Message from the Mayors of Oxford County

March 23, 2020 – 2:00 p.m.

Update to our communities

As our residents are aware, the Government of Ontario declared a state of emergency on March 17, 2020. We agree Ontario is in a state of emergency and fully support the Provincial declaration. Further, we fully support actions taken by the provincial government and our local and provincial public health authorities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also just learned of further direction from the Premier's Office today that we are already beginning to consider for its impacts on our community.

As the Warden and Mayors of Oxford County's municipalities, we want to assure residents and businesses that all Oxford municipalities are committed to responding responsibly, cooperatively, and with the full strength of our resources to this pandemic crisis.

The Provincial declaration provides Ontario municipalities with the necessary framework to manage the COVID-19 issues arising in their communities. In Oxford, a municipal declaration of emergency will be appropriate if or when our ability to maintain public services is compromised. At present, municipal services across Oxford continue to operate and, as such, Oxford County and all of our municipalities believe a municipal emergency declaration is not warranted at this time.

We are thoroughly focused on managing COVID-19 impacts and working with our health, community, municipal and provincial partners to ensure this happens. All municipalities in Oxford County are working with their emergency management coordinators and senior staff to pro-actively make informed decisions deemed necessary to protect our citizens and workers and support our ability to continue public services. We are using our emergency and business continuity plans to guide our priorities, decisions and operations. Communications, collaboration and co-operation are key in these unprecedented times.

Public health agencies, other health providers, and provincial authorities are the leaders in pandemic response and our municipal governments continue to follow their directives and take the actions we need specific to our communities. Locally, the Oxford-Elgin-St. Thomas Health Emergency Control Group is in regular contact, coordinating the efforts of Southwestern Public Health, local hospitals, paramedics, community health, primary care and other health partners. Residents and businesses can be further assured that Southwestern Public Health has been coordinating regular updates

with wardens, mayors, chief administrative officers, emergency management coordinators, and paramedic and fire chiefs across Oxford, Elgin and St. Thomas.

Oxford County has a unique government structure that serves us well. We are consulting with each other regularly, helping each other as needed and working closely together to monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our communities.

For ongoing updates about services delivered by Oxford County, please check the county and your town, township or city's website and social media. We extend thanks to our local media partners who are fulfilling a much valued service in sharing our updates.

Be assured, we are constantly monitoring the situation, will consider any and all options, and will take prudent and responsible actions as we deem necessary to do so. This has been a challenging task and we thank our employees for the great work they have been doing.

Above all, remember, if we work together, we can reduce the spread of infection:
- Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and often.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue.
- Dispose of tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- Keep surfaces clean and disinfected.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Look for information and updates from Southwestern Public Health.

Mayor Mark Peterson
Township of Blandford-Blenheim
blandfordblenheim.ca

Larry Martin
Mayor, Township of Norwich
norwich.ca
Warden, Oxford County
oxfordcounty.ca

Mayor Don McKay
Township of East Zorra-Tavistock
ezt.ca

Mayor David Mayberry
Township of South-West Oxford
swox.org

Mayor Trevor Birtch
City of Woodstock
cityofwoodstock.ca

Mayor Ted Comiskey
Town of Ingersoll
ingersoll.ca

Mayor Stephen Molnar
Town of Tillsonburg
www.tillsonburg.ca

Mayor Marcus Ryan
Township of Zorra
zorra.ca