



Mayor's Blog

September 21, 2025 Blog

It's no secret that I think changes are needed to our school governance system. But a loss of local democracy by a transfer of decision making to Toronto is not the answer. The good news is we can both change the governance system AND keep a local democratic voice. We already have local democratically elected councils who administer budgets and deliver public safety through fire and ambulance and safe drinking water. Why not trust councils to also administer local schools and transportation? Leave teacher contracts and curriculum with the Ministry of Education, where it already is. This would give us both a more effective school system AND a local democratic voice.

Closing underutilizes schools as the Province has suggested is an oversimplified response (there are none in Zorra). There are many, many portables in the TVDSB. Could some of the students in portables be moved to permanent classrooms in schools? The most fiscally responsible thing to do is use the buildings we've already paid for, not close them. It seems there's always money to break the contract with the Beer Store, or build a 401 tunnel, or a parking lot for a spa in Toronto, but there isn't money for the children in our communities?

At the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference I spoke to several Ministers about issues important to Zorra and Oxford. Homelessness funding to transition people out of homelessness, community para-medicine to help people living at home waiting for long term care, childcare spaces, and rural schools. These conversations rarely result in a solution in the meeting, but are part of ongoing discussions that can lead to positive changes. For example, in the past we have got legislation that requires school boards to collaborate with municipalities on new builds, and \$720,000 for affordable housing and encampment response.

In September Zorra Council received a report on expected long-term growth and resulting land needs. While the report still predicts a higher rate of growth for Zorra and Oxford than the provincial average, it also is clear that we should not need to expand any Zorra village boundaries to accommodate that growth. In other words, the work council has done to get the type of growth we want, in the places we want, has worked, and is working. The world changes around us, and our only choice is how we respond to those changes. We are responding well, and we need to continue that work.

#doingourpart #growingstrongertogether

As always, feel free to contact me on any issue:

Marcus Ryan

Mayor, Zorra Township (and Warden, Oxford County)

email: mryan@zorra.ca

Phone: 1.519.425.2338