



Statement from County of Grande Prairie Reeve Leanne Beaupre

This afternoon, Council voted to maintain the status quo with face coverings or masks being voluntary in the County of Grande Prairie.

While the County supports the recommendations of Alberta Health, Council has determined that wearing of masks should be left to the decision of individual businesses and members of the community.

We recognize there are strong opinions on either side of this issue, particularly around the effectiveness of masks. According to Alberta Health, although non-medical masks do not stop the virus completely, cloth masks, when worn and cared for properly, can be an effective barrier to prevent droplets travelling into the air when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks. For this reason, Council does support voluntary wearing of masks, particularly in public spaces where it may be difficult to maintain a distance of two metres.

Many businesses have already implemented mandatory masks in their establishments, and it is important to respect these requirements as they are there to protect staff or to meet requirements for reopening as part of the province's relaunch strategy. As cases increase, more businesses may require visitors to wear masks, and Council respects and supports businesses that have to make that difficult decision.

The past few months have been stressful for many, and there is still uncertainty of what is yet to come. We can take pride in how we have managed to minimize the spread of COVID-19 so far, and that is due to the concerted effort of everyone in our community.

By using all tools at our disposal as recommended by Alberta Health, including washing hands regularly and thoroughly, staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, social distancing, and voluntarily wearing a mask when out in public, we hope to keep our numbers low in our region. County Council encourages everyone to work together and made the right choices to protect each other.

More information on health and safety recommendations for residents and businesses can be found on the Provincial Government website at

www.alberta.ca/covid.