



Office of the Lord Mayor

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0

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A Joint Message from Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa and CAO Bruce Zvaniga Regarding the Provincial Announcement on Expansion of Strong Mayor Powers

For Immediate Release

April 10, 2025

Yesterday, the Ontario government announced the proposed expansion of strong mayor powers to [169 additional municipalities](#). According to the Government of Ontario, these changes will be implemented through amendments to existing regulations under the *Municipal Act*, with the proposed powers taking effect on May 1, 2025. The proposed regulatory amendments aims to provide mayors with enhanced authority to advance provincial priorities, particularly in accelerating housing development to address the ongoing housing supply crisis.

Please read the [Ontario government's news release](#) for more information.

The proposed strong mayor powers include:

- **Budgetary Authority:** Mayors are required to propose the municipal budget each year by February 1. Council may amend the proposed budget, but it can be vetoed. Council can override the veto with a two-thirds majority vote. If a mayor does not propose a budget by February 1, Council must prepare and adopt the budget.
- **Staffing Decisions:** Authority to appoint and dismiss certain municipal department heads, excluding statutory positions such as the Clerk, Treasurer, Fire Chief, Chief Building Official and others.
- **Committee Formation:** Power to create, assign functions to, and appoint chairs and vice-chairs of Committees of Council.
- **By-law Veto:** Ability to veto certain By-laws if the mayor believes they could potentially interfere with provincial priorities. Council may override such a veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

These measures are part of the province's strategy to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031. The proposed expansion of strong mayor powers is not tied to specific housing targets.



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In response to this forthcoming regulation, Town staff will undertake a comprehensive review of the Bill once it is finalized. An analysis will be prepared to assess its implications for Niagara-on-the-Lake, including potential impacts on governance structures, decision-making processes, and alignment with our local priorities and strategic plans. This analysis will be presented in a report to Council at an upcoming meeting, providing an opportunity for informed discussion and deliberation. Additionally, should this regulation take effect, the Town will communicate this to the public via a news release posted on the Town's website and social media channels.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lord Mayor
Gary Zalepa

Bruce Zvaniga
Chief Administrative Officer