



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Recognized for Environmental Leadership with Wege Award

For Immediate Release

May 27, 2025

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is proud to share that it has been selected as one of two second-place winners of the 2025 Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award by the Board of Directors of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

This award recognizes Niagara-on-the-Lake as a leading small community in environmental stewardship and sustainability, honouring its tangible contributions to protecting and preserving vital water resources within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, the largest source of surface freshwater in the world. It reflects the Town's ongoing leadership and dedication to environmental responsibility, as guided by [Council's Strategic Plan](#) and the environmental stewardship lens, which emphasizes the protection of water as a critical natural asset.

As part of this recognition, Niagara-on-the-Lake will receive \$2,000 USD to support the Heritage Trail Rehabilitation Project, a key community initiative aimed at enhancing a local resource.

"The Heritage Trail is such an important community asset," stated Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. "On behalf of Town Council, I extend thanks to the Heritage Trail Committee for their continuous dedication and hard work over the years in advancing this project."

The award was formally presented in mid-May at the Cities Initiative Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"It is an honour to be recognized by the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative as a contributor to positive environmental impact," stated CAO Bruce Zvaniga. "I would like to thank our Town Staff for their initiative in applying for this award."

The success of the Heritage Trail Rehabilitation project has been underway for eight years, driven by the dedicated efforts of the Town's Heritage Trail Committee. Thanks to the funds they've raised, the 10-kilometre trail is now nearing its halfway point.



About the Heritage Trail

The Upper Canada Heritage Trail follows a former railway corridor that once connected Niagara-on-the-Lake to Niagara Falls. Established in 1854, the railway boosted local tourism and commerce before being abandoned 100 years later. The corridor is currently being carefully restored into a multi-use trail that connects Niagara-on-the-Lake to York Road and eventually, the Bruce Trail on the Niagara Escarpment.

For more information, please visit <https://www.heritagetrail.ca/>

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative:

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of municipal and Indigenous government executives representing communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region. Together, they are working to promote economic prosperity in their communities and protect fresh water for the benefit of current and future generations. The Cities Initiative and local officials integrate environmental, economic and social agendas and sustain a resource that represents approximately 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater supply, provides drinking water for 40 million people, and is the foundation upon which a strong regional economy is based.

For more information, please visit <https://glslcities.org/>

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