



NEWS RELEASE

StopGap Foundation Accessibility Ramps Coming to Niagara-on-the-Lake

For Immediate Release

July 16, 2025

At last night's [Committee of the Whole – General Meeting](#), Council supported the Town's launch of the StopGap Ramp Program, a practical and visible initiative aimed at enhancing access to business storefronts across Niagara-on-the-Lake.

This initiative is grounded in the Town's commitment to inclusion, as outlined within [Council's Strategic Plan](#). With a considerable portion of Niagara Region's population aged 65 and older, many Ontarians identifying as having a disability, and Niagara-on-the-Lake welcoming millions of visitors annually, the StopGap Ramp Project represents a meaningful and visible step toward reducing physical barriers and enhancing access to public spaces for everyone.

Accessibility advocate Pamela TurnerSmith brought this issue forward after years of highlighting the inaccessibility of businesses in Niagara-on-the-Lake, particularly within the Heritage District. Many local storefronts, especially those in older buildings, have steps at the entrance that make it difficult or even impossible for people with mobility challenges to enter, limiting their access to shops, services, and full participation in community life.

About the StopGap Program

StopGap ramps are lightweight, portable, and non-permanent wooden structures designed to address single-step barriers at storefront entrances. These ramps provide an immediate improvement for people using mobility devices, pushing strollers, or facing other physical access challenges.

Business Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Niagara-on-the-Lake businesses are encouraged to apply for a StopGap ramp by [completing the online form](#) on the Town's website at <https://www.notl.com/accessibility#stopgap>. A select number of ramps will be available on a first-come, first-served basis and will be provided free of charge to businesses that meet specific criteria, as outlined at the link above. Ramps will be delivered to businesses in the fall of 2025.



Staff will monitor uptake and track feedback from participants and the public to inform future planning and potential enhancements to the Town's program.

Learn more by reading the [Information Report](#) about the StopGap Program.

Quotes:

"Accessibility is not an overnight fix, but this solution will make a meaningful difference for those who need it most. I look forward to the continuous improvement of accessibility within Town, and see this as just a start!" – **Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa**

"I am excited to see the StopGap ramps throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake, striving to enhance the resident and visitor experience for all. This is a positive step toward improving our Town's accessibility." – **CAO Nick Ruller**

"Niagara-on-the-Lake continues to enhance its quality of life through community-driven ideas such as the StopGap Program. I thank Staff for working with local accessibility advocates, specifically Pamela TurnerSmith, to bring this initiative forward and into action, improving inclusivity throughout the community." – **Bruce Zvaniga**

"With last night's StopGap Ramp initiative endorsement, I'm very encouraged that Niagara-on-the-Lake Council is demonstrating that mobility rights are human rights. I hope our community will continue our quest to gain inclusivity for all citizens with disabilities." – **Pamela TurnerSmith**

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