



Office of the Lord Mayor  
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake  
1593 Four Mile Creek Road, P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0  
905-468-3266 • gary.zalepa@notl.com

---

# A Message from Lord Mayor Zalepa Regarding Regional Governance in Niagara

**For Immediate Release**

**February 19, 2026**

I am issuing this statement in response to recent correspondence from the Regional Chair regarding potential municipal amalgamation in Niagara.

Let me be clear. Niagara-on-the-Lake is strongly opposed to any proposal that would see our Town absorbed through amalgamation.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is the first capital of Upper Canada and a community with a distinct identity, proud history, and strong local governance. Any proposal that would fundamentally change our municipality must have a clear legislative foundation, a transparent process, and meaningful public consultation. None of that has occurred.

There was no prior consultation with the Town. Council and I were not contacted, briefed, or invited to discuss this before it was advanced. Given the major consequences for our residents, our economy, and our identity, the absence of engagement is unacceptable.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is also a key economic driver in this region. Our tourism sector, agricultural and wine industries, arts and culture community, and small businesses generate significant economic activity and jobs that benefit Niagara as a whole. It is difficult to understand why anyone would introduce this level of uncertainty at a time when our local economy is already facing real pressures. Creating instability for residents and businesses is not responsible leadership.

We support regional cooperation when it is based on respect, collaboration, and clear benefit. We do not support forced consolidation, and we will not support changes that strip Niagara-on-the-Lake of its local voice and local decision-making.

Council will be discussing this matter publicly, and we will continue to keep the community informed as more information becomes available. In the meantime, I will be advocating clearly and strongly for Niagara-on-the-Lake and the residents and businesses we serve.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is not an area on a map. It is a community with a history worth protecting and a future worth defending.

Sincerely,

**Lord Mayor**  
Gary Zalepa