



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake to Begin Review of Outdoor Pickleball Location

For Immediate Release

February 25, 2026

At its February 24, 2026, meeting, Council approved a motion directing Staff to keep the pickleball courts at Virgil Sports Park closed for the remainder of the 2026 season and to identify an appropriate alternative outdoor location to support pickleball play this year.

Council's decision was informed by growing awareness of noise-related impacts associated with outdoor pickleball facilities, particularly when located in close proximity to residential areas. Recent studies and emerging best practices recommend that courts be situated several hundred feet away from homes to help mitigate sound impacts. As research and community experience continue to evolve, municipalities are adapting their approaches to ensure recreational amenities are thoughtfully and sustainably integrated into neighbourhoods.

The Town recognizes that pickleball is an important recreational and social activity for many residents. At the same time, it has a responsibility to consider the well-being of surrounding neighbourhoods and to respond to new information as it becomes available.

"Council understands how much pickleball means to many in our community," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. "As more information has become available about noise impacts and appropriate court settings, we have a responsibility to learn and adapt. Our goal is to ensure that residents can continue to enjoy pickleball in a location that is sustainable, respectful of nearby homes, and aligned with best practices."

A portion of Council's discussion was held in Closed Session in accordance with the *Municipal Act*, 2001, Section 239(2)(e), due to litigation concerns.

Staff have been directed to explore options for outdoor play during the 2026 season, including reviewing potential locations, operational requirements, and community impacts. This work will also reflect the shared responsibility of the municipality and



facility users to ensure that recreational growth occurs in a manner that is considerate and informed by emerging standards and community feedback.

“Staff are committed to approaching the next steps thoughtfully and collaboratively,” said CAO Nick Ruller. “We are focused on identifying a viable outdoor solution that supports players while adapting to the evolving understanding of pickleball-related impacts.”

Staff will continue to meet with the NOTL Pickleball Club to work on a solution. The Town will continue to provide updates as Staff advance their review and bring forward potential alternatives for Council’s consideration.

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