



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Responds to Niagara Regional Council Initiating Governance Review

For Immediate Release

March 2, 2026

At its February 26, 2026, Committee of the Whole – General Meeting, Niagara Regional Council approved a motion to initiate a formal governance review for Niagara Region, marking the next step in ongoing discussions about regional governance and potential municipal amalgamation.

The approved motion includes the following direction:

- That a governance review of Niagara be initiated to address areas of duplication and improve service efficiency, based on data, a business case with financial analysis, and public consultation, including local area municipalities, commencing this term of Council;
- That Regional Council directs Regional Chair Gale to refrain from any further action and utilization of any further Regional resources of staff time in connection with a review of Regional governance or municipal amalgamation beyond the scope outlined in the motion; and
- That the resolution and amendment be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The motion emphasizes due diligence, including the development of a clear business case, financial analysis, and a process that includes public consultation and engagement with local municipalities before any governance changes are considered.

The Town has received many questions from residents about this process, including what municipal amalgamation means and what it could mean for Niagara-on-the-Lake. This news release is intended to provide clarity on what has been proposed, what has occurred to date, and how the Town is responding.

What Is Amalgamation



Municipal amalgamation refers to the consolidation of multiple municipalities into a single municipal government or into a reduced number of larger municipalities.

In Niagara's case, this could mean restructuring the current two-tier system of Niagara Region and its 12 local municipalities into either a single-city model, where all municipalities become one large municipality, or a four-city model, where municipalities are combined into four larger cities.

Under either scenario, Niagara-on-the-Lake would no longer exist as an independent municipality with its own Lord Mayor and Council. Amalgamation will affect how decisions are made, how services are delivered, how taxes are set, and how local priorities are represented.

While the Regional Chair has referenced both a four-city model and a single-city model as potential options, no further details have been provided regarding the scope, structure, or potential implications of these models, including how they may impact Niagara-on-the-Lake.

What Has Happened So Far

- **February 19, 2026:** Regional Chair Gale issued a letter to local Mayors (dated February 5, 2026), regarding potential municipal amalgamation, requesting feedback to the Province by March 3, 2026.
- **February 19, 2026:** The Regional Chair contacted the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to initiate outreach regarding a governance review.
- **February 24, 2026:** The Regional Chair attended a [Niagara-on-the-Lake Council Meeting](#) to discuss a potential review that could examine amalgamating Niagara's 12 municipalities into either a four-city or single-city model.
- **February 26, 2026:** [Niagara Region's Committee of the Whole – General Meeting](#) was held, where the motion referenced above was approved.
- **February 27, 2026:** During the State of the Region event, Regional Chair Gale acknowledged the direction provided by Regional Council on February 26 and confirmed municipalities are continuing to move forward on next steps.

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Response

Niagara-on-the-Lake Council has unanimously supported submitting formal feedback to the Province opposing municipal amalgamation and advocating for the protection of the Town's independence. Council's position is based on several key considerations.



Council believes any governance change must clearly demonstrate financial benefit and service improvements supported by data and analysis. Council is seeking clear evidence that amalgamation would benefit the residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Significant Staff time and resources have been dedicated to reviewing the Regional motion, analyzing potential impacts, and preparing the Town's formal response. A Working Group, including four Members of Council and senior Staff, has been established to support this work.

The Town's submission to the Province will be shared publicly following the March 3, 2026, Council Meeting and submission deadline, so residents can review exactly what is being provided on behalf of the community.

A detailed Staff report outlining the Town's analysis and recommendations will be presented at the March 3, 2026, Committee of the Whole – Planning Meeting. Residents are encouraged to review the [full report and agenda](#) materials for more information.

See below for previous Niagara-on-the-Lake communications on this matter:

- [Niagara-on-the-Lake Responds to Proposed Amalgamation](#)
- [A Message from Lord Mayor Zalepa Regarding Regional Governance in Niagara](#)

What Happens Next

The February 26 motion directs that any governance review must include a business case supported by financial analysis, public consultation, and engagement with local municipalities.

At this time, no final decision has been made, no amalgamation model has been approved, and no implementation timeline has been established. The Province ultimately has the authority to mandate governance changes.

Niagara-on-the-Lake will continue to participate constructively in the review process while advocating evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and meaningful public engagement.

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