



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Shares Update on Niagara Regional Governance Review

For Immediate Release

March 3, 2026

At tonight's [March 3, 2026, Committee of the Whole – Planning Meeting](#), taking place at 6:00 p.m., Council will receive an update on the governance review process and on what the Town's Governance Working Group has advanced to date.

Following Niagara Regional Council's February 26 decision to initiate a governance review, the Town has continued to take a proactive, coordinated, and evidence-based approach to ensure Niagara-on-the-Lake's interests are clearly represented.

Coordinated Municipal Approach

Niagara-on-the-Lake has been working collaboratively with eight Niagara municipalities that share concerns regarding forced amalgamation. Together, the municipalities are advancing a unified position emphasizing that any governance discussions must be Niagara-led, consultation-driven, and grounded in comprehensive financial and operational analysis.

Joint correspondence to the Province and Regional Chair is being prepared to reinforce this coordinated municipal perspective.

Working Group Oversight

At its February 24 meeting, Town Council established a Governance Working Group including members of Council and the Senior Leadership Team. The Working Group was created to provide structured oversight and ensure the Town's response remains strategic, measured, and aligned with Council direction.

The Working Group continues to meet regularly to:

- Monitor regional and provincial developments
- Coordinate internal research and analysis



- Clearly articulate the Town's financial, operational, and governance interests
- Provide timely updates and strategic advice to Council

Work Completed to Date

The Town completed Phase One of its response, which included:

- Comprehensive analysis of municipal financial, operational, and asset data
- Review of service delivery models and statutory responsibilities
- Preparation and submission of the Town's formal documentation to the Province
- Participation in coordinated inter-municipal discussions
- Support for a unified municipal response to the Premier and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

The Town's submission to the Province is structured around key pillars that demonstrate Niagara-on-the-Lake's operational strength and governance realities, including:

- Fiscal Stability
- Infrastructure and Asset Management
- Housing and Development Efficiencies
- Economic Resilience and Tourism Management
- Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- Public Safety and Volunteer Fire Service Model
- Modernization, Fleet Management, and Provincial Grant Stewardship
- Workforce Capacity and Continuity

The purpose of this document is to ensure that any external governance review is informed by accurate, transparent, and data-driven information reflective of Niagara-on-the-Lake's distinct demographic profile, geographic footprint, service delivery model, and fiscal position. This document will be shared publicly following its formal submission.

Staff have also ensured consistent messaging, documentation readiness, and intergovernmental alignment.

As directed by Council, Staff time dedicated to this initiative is being formally tracked. To date, approximately 129 Staff hours have been allocated across multiple departments,



including senior leadership, finance, operations, and administration. This work has been undertaken alongside regular service delivery responsibilities.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to monitor developments at both the regional and provincial levels while maintaining active communication with municipal partners.

As part of the next phase, the Town will review its Strategic Plan, Corporate Work Plan, and Departmental Work Plans through the lens of potential governance scenarios. This prioritization exercise will support organizational readiness, informed decision-making, and long-term sustainability.

Council remains committed to ensuring that any governance discussions are grounded in due diligence, financial transparency, and meaningful public engagement.

Further updates will be provided as additional information becomes available. View the [Town's Governance Review one-pager](#) for 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](#)
- [Niagara-on-the-Lake Responds to Niagara Regional Council Initiating Governance Review](#)
- [Lord Mayor Zalepa's Video Update](#)

Quotes

“Any potential change to Niagara’s governance structure must clearly demonstrate financial benefit, improved service delivery, and protection of local representation. Niagara-on-the-Lake has a strong and stable municipal model, and we will continue to advocate for our residents and our community’s unique character.” - **Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa**

“This is a complex and important matter. Staff have undertaken significant analysis in a short period of time to ensure Council and the community are fully informed. We are



committed to a transparent, professional, and evidence-based approach as this process continues.” - **CAO Nick Ruller**

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