



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Confirms Deliberate, Community-Focused Approach for 176 Wellington Street

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2026

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is reaffirming its approach to the future of the Former Hospital Site at 176 Wellington Street, emphasizing that decisions regarding this significant public asset will be made through a deliberate, informed, and community-wide process.

At its March 24, 2026, meeting, Council directed Staff to advance detailed analysis, design work, and financial modelling to fully understand the opportunities, constraints, and long-term implications associated with the site before determining a final development approach.

Recent public commentary has suggested that the Town has selected a preferred outcome for the site or is delaying action by not proceeding immediately with a Request for Proposals (RFP). This is not accurate. Council has not made a decision on the future use or development model for the site.

“This is one of the most important publicly owned sites in Niagara-on-the-Lake,” said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. “Council will not make a decision of this magnitude without first ensuring we have a complete and accurate understanding of what is possible, what is sustainable, and what delivers the greatest benefit to the entire community.”

The concept for the site is currently under review as one feasibility scenario, exploring its potential as a gateway, opportunities for community use, and the inclusion of structured parking. This scenario is being used to test site capacity, financial sustainability, and potential community benefit. It is not a final plan and does not preclude other options.

The Town is aware of calls to proceed immediately to an RFP process. Council has carefully considered this option and has determined that issuing an RFP at this stage would be premature.



An RFP is not the beginning of a process. It is the point at which a municipality has clearly defined what it is seeking to achieve. Currently, further work is required to:

- Establish a clear vision and objectives for the site
- Understand financial performance, risks, and long-term sustainability
- Evaluate potential development and partnership models
- Ensure alignment with community priorities across the municipality

Proceeding to market without this work would limit the Town's ability to fairly evaluate proposals and could result in outcomes that do not reflect the broader public interest.

The Town is also aware of public discussion of concepts shared by community organizations. At this time, the Town has not received a formal proposal, including detailed financial information, governance structure, or implementation plan, that would allow for a comprehensive evaluation of any specific concept.

Council welcomes ideas and interest in the site. However, all potential proposals must be assessed through a consistent and thorough process to ensure fairness, accountability, and alignment with community-wide priorities.

“It is important to distinguish between concepts and proposals,” added CAO Nick Ruller. “Before Council can evaluate any option, whether it originates from the Town or the community, we need complete information, including financial feasibility, long-term sustainability, and governance considerations.”

Ruller added that while the Town recognizes the passion and strong interest in this site that has been generated, Council's role is to ensure that decisions are grounded in careful analysis and not made prematurely based on any single idea or perspective.

“Our community cares deeply about this site and that matters,” said Ruller. “But our responsibility is to pair that passion with a disciplined, analytical approach to ensure we make the right decision, not just the quickest one.”

Importantly, Council's responsibility extends beyond any one neighbourhood or stakeholder group. The future of 176 Wellington Street must be considered in the context of its ability to deliver benefits across all five settlement areas and Niagara-on-the-Lake's rural community, both now and for future generations.

The next phase of work, now underway, will provide Council with:

- A clear understanding of site potential and constraints
- Refined cost estimates and financial projections
- Evaluation of development and partnership models



- Defined objectives to guide any future RFP or development process

Once this work is complete, Council will determine the appropriate path forward, including whether to proceed with a competitive market process.

“This is not about delaying progress,” added Zalepa. “It is about ensuring that when we take the next step, we do so with clarity, fairness, and a full understanding of what is best for the entire community.”

The Town remains committed to transparency and ongoing public engagement as this work progresses. Updates will continue to be shared as additional analysis is completed and options are refined. Residents are encouraged to learn more and stay updated on the project by visiting the [Town’s project page](#).

For immediate alerts, follow the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). [Subscribe](#) to receive Town news directly in your inbox.

Media Contact:

Marah Minor, Corporate Communications Lead

905-468-3266 | communications@notl.com